

# HOW TO COMPLETE A JOB APPLICATION

A [Michigan Jobs & Career Portal](#) service

The completed job application will often make the crucial difference in whether or not an employer will interview the applicant for a job opening. Employment interviewers will review and analyze the completed application before deciding to give or not to give an interview. Most employment interviewers will consider four things in an initial review of a jobseeker's written application:

- (1) The information given
- (2) The skills shown in presenting the information
- (3) The way the jobseeker thinks as revealed by answers to application form questions
- (4) The appearance and completeness of the job application.

In a detailed analysis, the employment interviewer will:

- Study the applicant's employment history, check reasons for leaving previous jobs, and look for gaps or periods of unemployment
- Evaluate educational background, including the completing of job-related courses
- Study the way the applicant replies to questions (looking for clear and accurate answers with sufficient detail)
- Check the quality of the applicant's handwriting
- See what the application reveals about the applicant's attitude
- Look for signs of self-reliance as well as the ability to work in groups

Job applications typically are comprised of the following sections: *Personal information, employment history, work authorization, education and training, military service, skills, and references*. However, depending on the type of job you are applying for, additional information may be requested.

## *Personal Information*

- Do not give your nickname on the job application unless specifically asked to do so.
- Be sure to have a Social Security card. (Apply for it at the nearest Social Security Administration office.)
- Have an Alien Registration Card (also called a Green Card), if you are not a U. S. citizen.
- Have a copy of your birth certificate, if you are a young job seeker, and a work permit, if you are under 18 years of age and in high school. (See your school counselor regarding the work permit.)

## *Employment History*

- Present your work history data in such a way that it relates to the job for which you are applying. This may mean listing jobs in order of relevance rather than chronologically.
- List part-time, summer, or volunteer work on the application if you are a young adult or have little or no work experience.

- Indicate self-employment and/or part-time work, if appropriate, to fill in employment gaps between full-time jobs.
- Use an "action" verb to begin each sentence which describes a job task you previously performed. (Such "action" verbs include operated, repaired, installed, inspected, supervised, analyzed, organized, programmed, sold, administered and managed.) Show that you are also profit-minded by using phrases like "generated cost savings," "eliminated bottlenecks," and "set priorities."
- Avoid negative explanations for leaving a previous position. Include responses such as "to take a better job," "moved," "seasonal," or "homemaker" to the question "Why did you leave your last job?" (Avoid saying "fired.")
- Use numbers and quantities in your job task statements where possible. For example:
  - Sold an average of 20 new cars and trucks per month.
  - Implemented quality control procedures which reduced product defects by 39% in a 4-month period.

### *Education and Training*

- Include the name of the educational institution you attended, dates attended, degree/ diploma earned, and city and state.
- List the number of high school semester hours completed if you do not have a diploma. (Do not leave the question unanswered.)
- List the number of college credit hours completed if you do not have a diploma
- List relevant coursework especially if your degree is not directly related

### *Military Service, Skills, and Affiliations*

- Attach a copy of your military discharge papers to the application, if you are a honorably discharged veteran. (Some employers will give job preference to applicants who are veterans.)
- List only interests or hobbies which might relate to your job goal.
- List the names of professional organizations or associations in which you are a member, however, avoid including the names of controversial organizations and labor unions. (Some employers have a negative opinion of labor unions.)

### *References*

- Include personal references such as previous employers, business or professional persons who know you, former instructors, and clergy members. (Prior to listing anyone as a reference, ask for his/her permission.)
- Check that your references contact information is up-to-date before listing them on an application

## General Application Tips

- Include only positive information on the job application. (Describe your abilities, not disabilities.)
- Read and follow the instructions on the job application.
- Read every question carefully before answering.
- Insert a short dash ( - ) or N/A/ after those questions that do not apply to you.
- Write "Open" in the "Salary Desired" blank if you are not sure of an appropriate amount.
- Indicate an availability for work date that will give your present employer sufficient notification of your resignation and that will give you time to handle any personal matters which may interrupt your new job during your first few months.
- Show flexibility, if possible, by indicating your willingness to work any shift and overtime. (A willingness to relocate and/or travel also increases your chances of being hired.)
- Be sure your occupational goals are reasonable and relate to the job for which you are applying. (Do not aim too high, too soon.)
- Be sure to give in the "Position Desired" blank, the job title of the position for which you are applying, also include titles of similar or related positions. (Do not use the term "any job.")
  - For Example, Position Desired: Secretary, Word Processor, Typist, or similar position

## Written Applications

- Carry and use a fine-point, black or blue ink pen to complete the job application.
- Write legibly and use the vocabulary of the industry you are targeting.
- Allocate the most space on the job application to the most applicable and pertinent data.
- Attach a separate page describing your work history, if there is not enough space to respond on the job application.
- Check the completed job application for spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors as well as neatness and appearance.
- Do not forget to sign your name and to enter the correct date.

## Online Applications

- Always proofread your electronic application. Don't assume the spell-checker will catch your errors.
- If applying for multiple jobs within the same organization, revise your saved application to highlight skills or experience relevant to the job you are applying to
- Keep an updated electronic copy of an occupational worksheet on file so you can easily copy and paste information into online applications

## Questions Which May Not Legally Be Asked By Employers

Governmental laws prohibit employers from asking some specific pre-employment questions of job applicants. The purpose of these laws is to prevent employers from discriminating against any job applicant because of non job-related factors such as religion, race, color, national origin, age, sex, height, weight, marital status, or handicap. The Michigan Department of Civil Rights' ["Pre-employment Inquiry Guide,"](#) which is reprinted below, summarizes what are considered lawful and unlawful questions.

## Develop an "Occupational Work Sheet"

Some advance preparation is necessary before starting a job search and completing job applications. An important requirement is that you prepare a personal "Occupational Work Sheet." The "Occupational Work Sheet" contains the facts and details which you will need to complete job applications. It also saves considerable time and frustration as you proceed with the writing process. Complete the blank "Occupational Work Sheet," and refer to it when filling out job applications.

## Occupational Worksheet

### Personal Information

Last Name, First Name M.I.:

Social Security Number:

Driver's license no. & expiration date:

Operator :

Chauffeur :

Commercial Driver License Designation and/or Endorsement:

Present address

City, State Zip Code

Previous addresses (number & street) City State Zip Code

1.

2.

3.

Phone (area code & number)

Home:

Work:

Mobile:

E-mail Address:

## Education

### High School

School:

City, State:

Graduation date (month and year):

Major studies:

Honors/awards:

Clubs and extracurricular activities:

Offices held:

Special accomplishments:

### Vocational (postsecondary) or apprenticeship training program:

School/employer:

City, State:

Graduation date:

Number of classroom hours:

Number of on-the-job training hours:

Technical courses completed:

Job tasks or work processes learned:

Equipment, machines, tools, and/or work aids used (include computers and software):

### College

School:

City, State:

Graduation date (month and year):

Degree and grade point average:

Major field of study and credits earned:

Minor field of study and credits earned:

Internship/field work related to degree:

Honors/awards/class standing:

Clubs/extracurricular activities:

Offices held:

Special accomplishments:

Postgraduate/professional education

School:

City, State:

Graduation date (month and year):

Degree and grade point average:

Major field of study and credits earned:

Minor field of study and credits earned:

Internship/field work related to degree:

Honors/awards/class standing:

Clubs/extracurricular activities:

Offices held:

Special accomplishments:

## Foreign languages:

Language, Level of fluency

(1)

## Work experience

Begin with current or most recent position and include military experience. Add as many additional employers as needed.

1) Employer:

(Address) (City) (State) (Zip Code):

Position or job title:

Number of persons supervised:

Dates of employment: from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Starting base pay: \_\_\_\_\_ Ending base pay: \_\_\_\_\_

Other compensation (bonus, commission, cost-of-living adjustment, etc.):

Job duties:

Equipment, machinery, tools, and/or work aids used (include computers and

software):

Accomplishments/achievements:

Company training received and/or skills learned:

Supervisor:

Title:

Phone:

Email:

Reason for leaving:

2) Employer:

(Address) (City) (State) (Zip Code):

Position or job title:

Number of persons supervised:

Dates of employment: from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Starting base pay: \_\_\_\_\_ Ending base pay: \_\_\_\_\_

Other compensation (bonus, commission, cost-of-living adjustment, etc.):

Job duties:

Equipment, machinery, tools, and/or work aids used (include computers and

software):

Accomplishments/achievements:

Company training received and/or skills learned:

Supervisor:

Title:

Phone:

Email:

Reason for leaving:

3) Employer:

(Address) (City) (State) (Zip Code):

Position or job title:

Number of persons supervised:

Dates of employment: from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Starting base pay:

Ending base pay:

Other compensation (bonus, commission, cost-of-living adjustment, etc.):

Job duties:

Equipment, machinery, tools, and/or work aids used (include computers and

software):

Accomplishments/achievements:

Company training received and/or skills learned:

Supervisor:

Title:

Phone:

Email:

Reason for leaving:

### **Professional memberships**

Organization:

Dates:

Offices held:

Duties/responsibilities:

Skills acquired:

Certificate/license:

(2.) Organization:

Dates:

Offices held:

Duties/responsibilities:

Skills acquired:

Certificate/license:

(3.) Organization:

Dates:

Offices held:

Duties/responsibilities:

Skills acquired:

Certificate/license:

### **Certification or licensures**

(1.) Certificate/license:

Date awarded:

Expiration date:

Licensing agency/ organization:

(2.) Certificate/license:

Date awarded:

Expiration date:

Licensing agency/ organization:

## References

(1.) Name:

Professional relationship to you:

Job title:

Mailing address:

Phone number:

Email:

(2.) Name:

Professional relationship to you:

Job title:

Mailing address:

Phone number:

Email:

(3.) Name:

Professional relationship to you:

Job title:

Mailing address:

Phone number:

Email:

## **Community service/volunteer activities**

(1.) Name of organization:

(Address) (City) (State) (Zip Code)

Dates:

Activities engaged in:

Offices held:

Skills/knowledge acquired:

(2.) Name of organization:

(Address) (City) (State) (Zip Code)

Dates:

Activities engaged in:

Offices held:

Skills/knowledge acquired:

(3.) Name of organization:

(Address) (City) (State) (Zip Code)

Dates:

Activities engaged in:

Offices held: Skills/knowledge acquired:

### **Military service**

Branch of military:

Dates:

Rank at discharge:

Military occupational specialty:

### **Hobbies/interests**

Hobby/interest:

Skills learned:

Hobby/interest:

Skills learned: