

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Step 1: Prepare for a Job

Staying organized will pay off by reducing the stress of developing your resume, and helping you to remain positive and determined while filling out job applications and answering questions during your job interview.

The first steps in preparing for a job are:

- **Create a Portfolio.** A portfolio is a handy place to keep important information that you will need as you develop a resume, look for a job, and fill out job applications.
  - Create a Portfolio folder.
  - Use the Personal Information worksheet to collect your information and keep it in your portfolio folder.
  - For additional portfolio content suggestions, click on the *Jobs* tab and then select *Organize Yourself*.
  
- **Create a folder for each job search.** A folder for each job search will help you keep track of information that was submitted to the organization, who you spoke to, and other interview information.
  - Use the Job Search Record worksheet to collect this information and keep one in each job search folder.

### Where do you find these worksheets in [www.illinoisworknet.com](http://www.illinoisworknet.com)?

1. Log on to [www.illinoisworknet.com](http://www.illinoisworknet.com) and select *Individuals*.
2. Click on *Tools* and select the link *Documents* to view Printable Documents.
3. Scroll down and click on the links to the *Personal Information Worksheet* and *Job Search Record*.

## Step 2: Prepare Your Resume

A resume informs potential employers about your employment background and education experience. Your goal is to create a resume that provides important information that potential employers can easily understand and that entices them to invite you for a job interview. While a variety of resume styles are available, each style uses short, active phrases that show accomplishments and emphasize people skills such as customer service, teamwork, and leadership. Employers also look for evidence of regular attendance, motivation, and honesty.

1. Log into [www.illinoisworknet.com](http://www.illinoisworknet.com) and select *Individuals*.
2. Click on *Jobs*.
3. Click on *Prepare your Resume*.
4. Use the following information and tools to help you develop your resume.
  - a. Resume Builder
  - b. Resume tutorials
  - c. Tips
  - d. Worksheets



Do you have Internet access at home? Do you have friends or family with Internet access?

To find more locations where Internet access and Illinois workNet professionals are available, visit [www.illinoisworknet.com](http://www.illinoisworknet.com) and select *Individuals*. Click on *Learn More About Finding A Location Near You* and enter your ZIP Code.

Click on *Show/Hide Services* to see what services are available at that location.



Use the *Job Planner* on your personalized home page to link you to basic job search information in [www.illinoisworknet.com](http://www.illinoisworknet.com).



Watch the Illinois workNet Resume Builder video series to begin building your professional resume today.

- e. Reference materials (e.g., dictionary and thesaurus)
5. Save your worksheets and customized resume in the appropriate job search folder that you created in the previous step.

### Step 3: Research Job Opportunities

Using proven strategies for getting job leads will help you make the best use of your time. Here are four good strategies to use together:

**Professional Networking.** [Professional networking](#) is connecting with multiple groups of people to make contacts. Networking online is popular and efficient because you can connect with people from any location. Connecting through social networking sites means finding out who your friends, family, and acquaintances know and helps to make connections. To learn more about Professional Networking:

1. Log into [www.illinoisworknet.com](http://www.illinoisworknet.com) and select *Individuals*.
2. Click on *Jobs*.
3. Click on *Professional Networking*

You can also network by going to local job search events. Use [www.illinoisworknet.com](http://www.illinoisworknet.com) to find local events such as job fairs, workshops, job clubs and more.

1. Log into [www.illinoisworknet.com](http://www.illinoisworknet.com) and select *Individuals*. If you are already logged in to your My Illinois workNet account, click on *Home*.
2. Click on *My Events and News*. You can expand the number of search miles or change the ZIP Code.

**Use job boards and job search engines.** Job boards and job search engines post thousands of job openings daily on the Internet. You can search them by location, occupation or industry.

1. Log into [www.illinoisworknet.com](http://www.illinoisworknet.com) and select *Individuals*.
2. Click on *Jobs*.
3. Under *Find a Job* select a job board or job search option.
  - a. CareerBuilder – Search this job board for jobs in Illinois' key sectors.
  - b. Illinois Skills Match – By answering a series of questions about your skills and interests, you will be entered into a searchable database so that employers looking for those kinds of skills can find you.
  - c. Job Boards – Find the job you are looking for *FAST*, based on your specific job search criteria and with this job search tool that draws from national and local job boards, government sites, recruiters, hospitals, educational institutions, newspapers, and web sites of all employers with over 500 employees. To view job listings from local businesses that are not accessible using the Illinois workNet Job Search Tool, access local job boards by typing in your ZIP Code.



Look at web pages for local employers or associations in Illinois' Key Sectors.

- Go to the *Home* page and click on the *Key Sectors* icon.
- Select an industry.
- In the top right section, you will find either a local employer or association. Click on the link to view their profile and contact information.

**Talk to potential employers in your area.** Calling potential employers to inquire about job openings is a good strategy too. Many job openings are not advertised, so ask potential employers about job openings and their hiring process. Research the employers in your area that hire people in your field.

- Use the Potential Employers search in Illinois workNet. Think of this search as the phone book yellow pages. It provides contact information for potential employers. The employers may or may not have a job opening posted; however, they are legitimate businesses that employ individuals within the career area and career name you selected. The employer listings are updated twice each year to add new employers, update contact information, and delete those that go out of business.

1. Log into [www.illinoisworknet.com](http://www.illinoisworknet.com).
2. Click on *Jobs*.
3. Click on *Potential Employers*.
4. Select a career area, enter a ZIP Code, and select the miles to begin your search.



When you are logged into your *My Illinois workNet Account*, save shortcuts to potential employers you find in Illinois workNet. (Click on *Add Page to my Shortcuts*.)

## Explore jobs in Key Sectors

Do you have skills that would transfer to jobs in Illinois' key sectors?

Explore jobs, wages, occupational outlook, requirements and more through the Key Sectors Pathway.

1. Go to *Home* page and select *Key Sectors*.
2. Select an industry.
3. Select an industry pathway in the *For Individuals* section.
4. Select an occupation/job and save a shortcut to the information (click on *Add Page to my Shortcuts*).
5. Using this form, record the following information about the occupation you selected.



Do you know what the **top 10 fastest growing occupations** are in your area?

1. Go to *Home* page and click on *Key Sectors* icon.
2. Select an industry.
3. Click on your region in the Regional Economic Snapshot map.
4. Select the report for the **Top 10 Fastest Growing Occupations by Region**.

## Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

1. Why are you interested in this occupation? (✓ all that apply)
  - I've always wanted to do this type of work.
  - I have some credit hours towards this occupation.
  - I've wanted to go back to school for a long time.
  - The job will provide an excellent salary to support my family.
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Identify the entry level hourly salary range (25%) of this occupation (*Wages & Trends* link):

For Illinois \_\_\_\_\_

For your local area \_\_\_\_\_

3. According to the *Employment and Outlook* (link) information, how many opportunities for this occupation are available annually?

For Illinois \_\_\_\_\_

For your local area \_\_\_\_\_



Try to identify occupations with a **HIGH** number of annual openings when you look up *Employment and Outlook*.

4. According to your interest profiler definition and the working conditions/physical demands of this position, why do you feel you will be successful in this occupation? (✓ all that apply)

- I've worked at similar jobs all my life.
- I've worked at similar jobs briefly.
- I have no experience but feel very capable of doing it.
- I've not done the work before, but would like to try it.

6. Do you have experience and/or skills/abilities in this occupation? (✓all that apply)

- I've done this work for \_\_\_\_\_ years.
- I've done this work for \_\_\_\_\_ years. I want the degree, too.
- I've done this work briefly before.
- I've never done this work but it looks interesting.
- I've never done this work.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**QUICK TIP** Look for local training programs and financial aid/scholarship information on the left side of your computer screen. Click on the *Education* link for more information.

6. Is a license or certification needed for this occupation?

\_\_\_\_\_

7. What other types of related occupations are you interested in?

\_\_\_\_\_

8. What training or program of study do you need to prepare for this occupation?  
(Click on *Training Programs* link.)

\_\_\_\_\_

## Step 4: Apply for a Job

**Be Cautious When Posting an Online Resume. Use caution when selecting resume posting sites or when responding to job ads. Any personal information you post online or send in a hard copy resume can be open to misuse and breach of personal security.**

The first step in safeguarding your privacy and security is to be very selective about the web job-site where you choose to post your resume. An impressive or well-known name is not a guarantee of security. Many of these sites sell your information to anyone willing to spend a minimal amount. If you are not properly selective about resume posting sites, you may experience some of the following negative results:

- Your identity can be stolen.
- You may receive spam and unwelcome mail.
- Head-hunters or job recruiters can receive commission for selling your information without your permission or knowledge.
- Your resume may be too widely distributed.
- You may be forced to reveal too much personal information.

Review the following criteria before selecting a resume posting site:

- Read the fine print concerning their privacy policy.
- Be certain your resume will not be sold or sent to other sites.
- Select sites that do not require personal information such as your name, address, Social Security Number (SSN), date of birth (DOB), personal email address, or phone number to appear on the posting.
- Select only a few sites, preferably ones covering jobs related to your field and in your geographical location.

When you post your resume online, be sure not to include your references to protect their privacy. You can simply write on your resume that references are available upon request. This way you avoid potentially releasing your references' information to the public and losing permission to use those people as a reference.

If you are currently employed, be mindful that your employer may be looking through resume posting sites and

it is possible to be fired if you are seen as disloyal. Guard against this possibility by not providing your personal information or listing the name of your current employer. Never list the company phone number, address, or email address.

If you receive replies expressing interest, make certain it is from a legitimate business and do not provide ANY personal information or send any money.

## Step 5: Prepare for Interviews

### Research the company or organization

Do your homework. Research as much as you can about the company. Here are some specific items to review:

- the overall size of the firm, its locations, and its history
- the industry, market, and competitors
- recent news about the company, awards it has won, and its community involvement
- new products or services it is offering
- its reputation among employees and in the community

### Learn about the interviewer

If you can, find your interviewers' full names and titles BEFORE the interview. Don't be afraid to ask if your interview will be one-on-one or in front of a group.

To help you keep track of important information about the interview, use the Pre-interview worksheet. Don't forget to include a copy in your job search folder.

1. Log on to [www.illinoisworknet.com](http://www.illinoisworknet.com) and select *Individuals*.
2. Click on *Jobs*.
3. Click on *Prepare for an Interview*.
4. Scroll down and click on the link to the *Pre-interview worksheet*.
5. On the *Prepare for an Interview* page, scroll down and look at the resources to prepare for different types of interviews, such as: *panel interviews, phone interviews, information interviews* and *group interviews*.

### Prepare answers to open-ended questions

The interviewer will ask open-ended questions to allow you to describe yourself in a unique way. Be prepared to start with "Tell me about yourself." Here are some of the most common tough questions.

For each question, make sure to have complete yet short answers prepared.

- Tell me about yourself.
- List your three greatest strengths and weaknesses.
- Tell me about an accomplishment you are proud of.
- How would your professors (friends, coworkers) describe you?
- Why do you want this job?
- In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our organization?
- Tell me about your work habits.
- Describe your ideal job.
- Define success. Define failure.
- What do you know about our company's products or services?

You should also be ready to describe situations such as, "Tell me about an instance when you had a conflict with your supervisor. How did you handle it?" The employer will use this rule: past performance predicts future behavior.

### **Prepare for tests that may be required for the position.**

Having basic skills such as basic computer skills, math, reading, and writing can be the determining factor in getting the job you want.

Illinois workNet has links to tools to help you review or practice math, reading, writing, typing, Microsoft Access, Excel, PowerPoint, Word, and more.

1. Log on to [www.illinoisworknet.com](http://www.illinoisworknet.com).
2. Click on *Jobs*.
3. Click on *Skills and Interests*.
4. Scroll down to the *Basic Skills* section and select the appropriate link to practice your skills.

### **Alert your references.**

Tell your references that you've been selected for an interview to alert them that they may be contacted by the interviewer. Be sure to give all of your references your resume so they can refresh themselves about your qualifications. Ask your references if they know someone at the company where you are being interviewed. Try to contact that person before the interview to find out as much as you can about what it's like to work there.

### **PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!!!**

Contact a local Resource Room near you and find out if they perform mock interviews or ask friends or family members to ask you potential interview questions.

### **Dress for Success**

Make a good first impression. Dress neatly and conservatively. Remember you are being judged on your overall appearance. If you are not sure what to wear, check out [www.best-job-interview.com](http://www.best-job-interview.com) and click on *Dress for Success* for recommendations on dressing appropriately for a job interview.

Remember, don't chew gum or smoke. Take a notebook that has extra copies of your resume, recent news clippings about the company, and a list of written questions that you want to ask.

### **Be prepared to negotiate salary and benefits**

Do your homework and research the industry salary range for the position you are applying for and know what you can reasonably accept. Take into consideration your geographical location, experience, education, and present monthly expenses. Use the Negotiation Practices and Monthly Expense Worksheet's *do's* and *don'ts* for negotiating salary and benefits, including a "Monthly Expenses Worksheet" to better assist you in making sound decisions in your job search.

1. Log on to [www.illinoisworknet.com](http://www.illinoisworknet.com) and select *Individuals*.
2. Click on *Tools* and select *Documents* to view Printable Documents.
3. Scroll down and click on the link to the *Negotiation Practices and Monthly Expense Worksheet*.

## **Step 6: During the Interview**

**Make a good initial impression.** Dress for success, have a firm handshake, smile, put energy in your step, and make direct eye contact.

**Arrive early.** If necessary, drive to the actual interview site prior to the interview to determine traffic patterns, parking, etc. Busy employers have turned away tardy interviewees. Make sure that your car is clean inside and out. Employers may watch you enter the building and escort you to your car afterwards to see how neat and organized your car is.

**Conduct yourself professionally.** You may meet your interviewer in the hallway or on the elevator. Be courteous and pleasant to all people you meet. Be sure to look closely at the interviewer's business card. If you can't pronounce his/her name, be sure to ask how.

**Answer questions thoroughly with rich examples.** Elaborate on questions and give specific details. If an employer asks, "Did you like your last job?" Don't answer simply "yes". Rather, state what parts of the job you enjoyed and why.

**Watch your body language.** Sit squarely and maintain good posture. At times, leaning forward will demonstrate enthusiasm and interest. Don't cross your arms or lean your head in a downward position. You do not want to lead others to think that you are closed, aloof, or distant. Maintain good eye contact.

**Have questions prepared.** Bring specific questions to ask the employer. Be sure not to ask those questions that the employer has already answered for you during the interview. It will appear as if you were not listening. Asking questions demonstrates interest in the position as well as in the company. Here are some sample questions to ask if they're not already covered on the company's website or in the interview:

- What is its mission and vision for the next 5 years?
- What future plans does the company have?
- What are the challenges the company is facing?
- What is the working environment like? What are its core values?
- How would you describe the atmosphere of this department?
- Is this a new/existing/revised job? If it's new/revised, why was it created?
- Where does this position fit within the company's structure?
- How does a person in this position divide his/her time? What activities will he/she perform?
- Can you give me more detail about the position's daily/weekly/monthly responsibilities?
- What are the 2-3 most important things you would want this person to accomplish?
- What kinds of co-workers would someone in this position have?
- What kinds of opportunities are there in the company for personal growth and career advancement? Is there a tuition reimbursement program?
- Is there a mentoring program that this person would be involved in? How many hours of orientation and training will this position involve?
- How would your employees characterize your management style?
- Where would you like this (department) (organization) to be in five years?
- How often do you evaluate employees' performance?

**Demonstrate enthusiasm and sincerity.** An excellent way to demonstrate enthusiasm is by making a well-researched presentation. Answer your questions in a way that reflect your knowledge of the employer and how you can be useful to this company. Answer the questions honestly and without hesitation. If you don't know the answer to a question, say so – but also tell the interviewer that you'll give her/him a complete answer within 24 hours.

**At the interview, let them know you are interested.** Some employers state that after an interview, they are unsure if the candidate is truly interested in the position. Hopefully you have demonstrated interest and enthusiasm throughout the interview, but do not be afraid to state in closing that you are very interested in the position.

**Before you leave, did you cover everything?** Often, in closing, an employer might ask if there were skills, qualities or accomplishments that were not discussed. Take this time to tell the interviewer about relevant skills that were not covered. Seize this opportunity even if everything was covered. Emphasize a particular point again. However, do not inquire about salary or benefits in the initial interview unless the employer raises the issue.

**Thank the interviewer.** Always thank the interviewer for his/her time whether or not you want that particular position.

## Step 7: After the Interview

### Send a thank you note.

Send a thank you note to the interviewer immediately after the interview. Be sure that it is handwritten. Take time to thank the interviewer and emphasize a specific point about the interview, if desired. You can also answer any questions that may have been vague or unclear during the interview. This simple act of courtesy will demonstrate your uniqueness and seriousness about the position.

### Evaluate your performance after the interview.

Take time to jot down the parts of the interview where you demonstrated competence such as “I described my past work experience well.” Also, jot down those parts that were of difficulty to you such as “I stumbled on the question ‘What are your weaknesses?’” The list of strengths on your list will help build your confidence for future interviews and the difficulties you encountered will demonstrate areas where you may need more practice.

Use the Post-interview Worksheet to assist you in evaluating your performance during the interview:

1. Log on to [www.illinoisworknet.com](http://www.illinoisworknet.com) and select *Individuals*.
2. Click on *Tools* and select *Documents* to view Printable Documents.
3. Scroll down and click on the link to the Post-interview Worksheet.

### Contact your references.

Let them know how the interview went; specifically, what questions you were asked and how you addressed them. Find out if your references were contacted and the kinds of questions they were asked. If you need additional help or additional resources while preparing for the interview, feel free to contact the trained staff at a local Resource Room near you.