



**OhioMeansJobs.com**

## **Career Pathway Handbook for Career Coaches**

*A joint project between Cygnet and Mathematica for the  
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services  
Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program  
(CCMEP)*



Jodie Sue Kelly (Cygnet)

Jonathan McCay (Mathematica)

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## Table of Contents

<b>STEPPING INTO YOUR CAREER PATH: AN INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Participant Quick Start Guide .....	6
Career Coach Quick Start Guide .....	7
Stepping Stones to Career Success .....	8
Career Pathway Planning Worksheet .....	9
<b>HOW TO USE THE ACTIVITIES WITH YOUTH .....</b>	<b>11</b>
Getting Started with the Activities .....	11
Brief Overview and Purpose of the Activities .....	13
Questions to Introduce the Activities to the Youth .....	18
Debriefing Questions to Conclude the Activity with the Youth .....	23
Troubleshooting.....	24
Conclusion.....	24
<b>APPENDIX OF CAREER PATHWAY ACTIVITIES.....</b>	<b>25</b>
Career Pathway Activities Quick Links.....	26
<b>DECIDING ON A CAREER .....</b>	<b>27</b>
1. Choosing a Career .....	27
2. Exploring In-Demand Jobs.....	30
3. What if I have a Criminal Record? Re-entry to the Workforce.....	33
4. How Much Do You Need to Earn? Budgeting.....	38
5. How Does Working Compare to Cash Assistance?.....	40
6. Can I work and Still Get Child Care Subsidies?.....	44
7. Making the Most of Your OWF Time.....	46
<b>PREPARING FOR A CAREER.....</b>	<b>48</b>
8. Training for a Career: Earning Credentials .....	48
9. Getting Your High School Equivalency Diploma/GED .....	51
<b>GETTING THE JOB .....</b>	<b>53</b>
10. Writing a Powerful Cover Letter .....	53
11. Writing a Powerful Resume.....	57
12. Customizing Cover Letters and Resumes.....	66
13. Preparing for the Job Interview .....	69
14. Preparing for a Virtual Job Interview .....	81
<b>GROWING IN YOUR CAREER.....</b>	<b>84</b>
15. Successfully Starting your Job .....	84
16. Getting a Raise or Promotion.....	88

## STEPPING INTO YOUR CAREER PATH: AN INTRODUCTION

Two of the most important goals of Ohio's Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP) are to help job-seeking youth gain and retain employment to strengthen their economic stability. Ohio has many resources and tools available for participants to use with their career coaches in developing career pathways on the [OhioMeansJobs.com](http://OhioMeansJobs.com) website. A career pathway is an organized approach to career planning for anyone wanting to enter a career. Creating a career pathway means plotting a course for identifying occupational interests, determining education, training needs and establishing an action plan for reaching career goals. A career pathway may lead to college, vocational school education, apprenticeship, or a specialized job training. It may include a first job or multiple jobs that prepare the participant for their ultimate career goal.

The resources on the [OhioMeansJobs.com](http://OhioMeansJobs.com) website will help participants identify their interests, find training, develop job searches, get a job, and build job retention skills. This toolkit provides activities and tools to help participants explore career pathways, set goals, and ultimately take action toward a personalized career path.

The toolkit is organized into four sections which generally align with the progression of career pathways: (1) Deciding on a career, (2) Preparing for a career, (3) Getting the job, and (4) Growing in your career. Career coaches should use this toolkit only when participants are motivated and ready for these activities. The base CCMEP Coaching Model curriculum provides the foundation for working with CCMEP participants across a broad set of areas relevant to participants' lives. Begin with the basic CCMEP Coaching Model Stepping Stones to Success (Figure 1, page 5) to engage the participant in a discussion about whether they are ready to discuss their career path. If the participant expresses interest in the Education/Training Career Path areas, the career coach should transition to this Career Pathway toolkit and use the Stepping Stones to Career Success (Figure 2, page 5) to further explore the participant's starting point.

If a participant is not interested in a career yet, career coaches can discuss the positive aspects of entering and having a career. For example, some positive aspects of working in a career can include: increased earnings, health insurance benefits, paid vacation and sick leave, retirement savings (sometimes with employer contributions), earned income tax credits, and the ability to cover the cost of things your family needs and wants.

Occasionally when using the Stepping Stones to Career Success, you may find that a participant initially responds with "confident and good to go" (green zone) for one of the topics. As a career coach, it is a good idea to explore these responses further, in addition to any that are less confident (red, orange and yellow zones). A participant may be optimistic and overestimate their own readiness. An example could be the participant rating Job Search as "confident and good to go" because they have a resume and have applied for jobs before. The career coach might ask to see their resume and review to ensure it: (1) Is in a good format [not just chronological but displays the participant's strengths effectively]; (2) Includes relevant

information and accomplishments; (3) Includes work and volunteer experience; and (4) Includes the participant's skills and credentials.

The career coach should also make sure the participant understands their resume must be customized for each job they apply for with the keywords used in the job posting and description.

The following figures show the relationship between the CCMEP Coaching Model Stepping Stones to Success (Figure 1) and the Stepping Stones to Career Success (Figure 2). As you can see, the Stepping Stones to Career Success (Figure 2) is a more detailed expansion of the last area on the CCMEP Coaching Model Stepping Stones to Success (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Stepping Stones to Success (in the base CCMEP Coaching Model curriculum)

**Goal4 It!™ for CCMEP**

### Stepping Stones to Success

MY NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE / /  
MY SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

**1** What is your overall stress level right now? (FILL IN A CIRCLE)

I am VERY stressed! I am not stressed at all.

**2** Where do you feel you currently are in these areas of life? (Fill in a circle in each Pathway row)

		AREA OF SIGNIFICANT NEED	AREA OF NEED	STABLE, BUT COULD IMPROVE	THRIVING	"Growing and doing well"
<b>Housing</b>	I do not have housing, or my housing is not safe.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I have stable and safe housing.
<b>Transportation</b>	I have no transportation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I have reliable transportation and a back up plan.
<b>Personal Well-Being</b>	My personal well-being or my mental health needs my attention.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I am doing well, am mentally healthy, and am fully able to work.
<b>Family Well-Being</b>	Family challenges interfere with my progress, or I have no child care.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	My family is well and I have safe, reliable child care (as needed).
<b>Social Support</b>	I don't have good friends.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I have good friends I can trust
<b>Financial Health</b>	I do not have enough money to cover my basic needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I have enough money to cover my basic needs and am able to save some money too.
<b>Legal</b>	My legal history or involvement with the court system is holding me back.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I have no current legal issues.
<b>Education/ Training</b>	My education is off-track and I don't know how to get it back on track.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	My education is on track and I am gaining the skills I need.
<b>Career Path</b>	I don't know what my career path looks like, where to start, or have experience.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I know what I want my career path to look like and I am making progress toward it.

Figure 2. Stepping Stones to Career Success (in this handbook)

### Stepping Stones to Career Success

MY NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE / /

Take some time to reflect on the following topic areas related to your career success. Where would you say you are currently at each of these areas? Which area jumps out at you as the most important for setting a goal today?

		NEED HELP	READY TO EXPLORE	MAKING PROGRESS	CONFIDENT AND GOOD TO GO		
Deciding on a career	<b>Career Awareness: Choosing a Career</b>	I don't know what career I want.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I know what career I want.
	<b>Career Decision: In-Demand Jobs</b>	I don't know which careers are in demand in our region.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I know which careers are in demand in our region.
	<b>Working Hard for My Money</b>	I don't know what I need to earn to meet my current expenses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I know what I need to earn to meet my current expenses.
I don't know what I should expect to be paid in my job.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I know what I am likely to be paid in my job.	
Preparing for a Career	<b>Credentials</b>	The career I want may require a license, diploma, or certificate, but I don't know.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I have a license, diploma or certificate for the career I want.
		I am not sure how to pick a high-quality school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I know how to pick a high-quality school.
	<b>High School Diploma / GED</b>	I don't have a high school diploma or GED.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I have a high school diploma or GED.
Getting the Job	<b>Job Search</b>	I don't have a resume, cover letter, or experience applying for jobs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I have a resume and cover letter and have experience applying for jobs.
	<b>Job Interviewing</b>	Interviewing for a job makes me uncomfortable, and I'm not sure how to get better.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I am comfortable interviewing for a job.
Growing in your Career	<b>Starting a Job</b>	I'm not sure how to succeed or what to expect starting a new job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I feel confident starting a new job.
	<b>Career Growth</b>	I don't have a plan for advancing my career.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I have a plan for advancing my career.

## Participant Quick Start Guide | Stepping into Your Career

This guide will help you plan and work toward your career of choice.

### DECIDING ON A CAREER

Figuring out the right career path can be challenging and stressful. Taking things one step at a time, you can find the right fit for you! Get started by:

- Explore careers that match your interests and skills
- Learn more about which careers are in-demand locally
- Research the experience you will need
- Find out what you can expect to earn
- Research training and credentials you will need



### PREPARING FOR YOUR CAREER

You have made a big decision about your career goal. Now it's time to prepare with the right credentials, education, training, and experience needed to get started and advance in your field.

- Consider the skills and training you already have, and explore what additional training you might need
- Map out a plan and timeline for going back to school and getting additional training or credentials and experience you will need
- Identify ways to grow in your career



### GETTING THE JOB

You have the skills and the experience to go for the job – congratulations! Now, it's time to make sure your resume is polished and your interviewing skills are top-notch. You've got this!

- Find the right job posting that matches your skills
- Write a powerful resume and strong cover letter
- Prepare for your interview and build confidence by practicing your answers to the tough questions
- Apply for jobs by customizing your resume and cover letters



### GROWING IN YOUR CAREER

You have come a long way and now you are in a job. Keep up the great work! But, what's next?

- Explore career growth options with your career coach and your employer
- Identify how you might skill up to prepare for the next promotion or a new position and create a plan to advance
- Identify ways to stand out with your current employer, such as volunteering for specific tasks and extra hours, being productive, and being reliable

## Career Coach Quick Start Guide | Career Pathways Coaching

This guide will assist you in helping a participant through the process of exploring, preparing for, obtaining, and growing in the career of their choice.

### Goal pursuit frames all your work with CCMEP participants!

Follow these easy steps to coach the youth through career decision making to growing in a job.

- A. When the participant is ready to explore careers or set a career path-related goal, turn to the Stepping Stones to Career Success in the Career Pathway Handbook.
- B. Find out what the youth wants to explore.
- C. Use open ended questions to find out what the youth wants to learn and to help the participant think about what they want to get out of the activity.
- D. Give the youth a copy of the activity as a paper, electronic or a pdf fillable form.
- E. When the youth has finished, use debriefing questions to help the participant synthesize what they have learned in the activity and apply that to their own lives.



#### 1 DECIDING ON A CAREER

- Start with *Stepping Stones to Career Success*
- Set goal(s) based off the areas that are most motivating to the participant
- Explore which step and activities of the Career Pathway Handbook are most relevant to the participant
- Incorporate an activity into a goal plan according to the participant's motivation
- When the participant is confident and ready, move to the Preparing for a Career step



#### 2 PREPARING FOR A CAREER

- Set a medium- or long-term goal with the participant related to the preparing for a career step
- Set short-term goals that facilitate action between each meeting, including relevant activities from the Career Pathway Handbook
- Regularly review progress and revise plans
- Connect participant to relevant services and training providers
- When the participant is confident and ready, move to the Getting the Job step



#### 3 GETTING THE JOB

- Set a goal or two with the participant related to this step –getting a job
- Connect the participant with placements at work experience, job shadows, and jobs according to their goal(s)
- Regularly review progress and revise plans, including revisiting the *Stepping Stones to Career Success*
- When the participant has gotten a job and feels confident, move to the Growing in the Career step



#### 4 GROWING IN THE CAREER

- Provide job retention support and make any needed referrals
- Set short-term goals for succeeding in the current job
- Set long-term goals for career growth and advancement
- Revisit *Stepping Stones to Career Success* periodically
- Provide follow-up services and supports to help the participant grow

## Career Pathway Handbook for Career Coaches

### Stepping Stones to Career Success

MY NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Take some time to reflect on the following topic areas related to your career success. Where would you say you are currently at in each of these areas? Which area jumps out at you as the most important for setting a goal today?

			NEED HELP	READY TO EXPLORE	MAKING PROGRESS	CONFIDENT AND GOOD TO GO	
Deciding on a Career	<b>Career Awareness: Choosing a Career</b>	▶ I don't know what career I want.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I know what career I want.
	<b>Career Decision: In-Demand Jobs</b>	▶ I don't know which careers are in demand in our region.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I know which careers are in demand in our region.
	<b>Working Hard for My Money</b>	▶ I don't know what I need to earn to meet my current expenses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I know what I need to earn to meet my current expenses.
		▶ I don't know what I should expect to be paid in my job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I know what I am likely to be paid in my job.
Preparing for a Career	<b>Credentials</b>	▶ The career I want may require a license, diploma, or certificate, but I don't know.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I have a license, diploma or certificate for the career I want.
		▶ I am not sure how to pick a high-quality school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I know how to pick a high-quality school.
	<b>High School Diploma / GED</b>	▶ I don't have a high school diploma or GED.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I have a high school diploma or GED.
Getting the Job	<b>Job Search</b>	▶ I don't have a resume, cover letter, or experience applying for jobs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I have a resume and cover letter and have experience applying for jobs.
	<b>Job Interviewing</b>	▶ Interviewing for a job makes me uncomfortable, and I'm not sure how to get better.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I am comfortable interviewing for a job.
Growing in your Career	<b>Starting a Job</b>	▶ I'm not sure how to succeed or what to expect starting a new job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I feel confident starting a new job.
	<b>Career Growth</b>	▶ I don't have a plan for advancing my career.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I have a plan for advancing my career.



**Career Pathway Planning Worksheet** | Stepping into Your Career Path

Use this worksheet to plan and keep track of key steps along your path toward the career of your choice.

**MY NAME** Click or tap here to enter text.

**DATE** Click or tap here to enter text.

**My Career Goal:**

**Careers I'm interested in:**

**Training and Credentials I need:**

**Employers I can apply to for a job:**

**Things to do to prepare for applying:**

**Jobs I have applied for:**

**Job hired for:**

**Ideas to succeed at my job and for career growth:**

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## HOW TO USE THE ACTIVITIES WITH YOUTH

### Getting Started with the Activities

The aim of this Career Pathway Handbook is to assist youth in identifying and entering a career of their choice. The activities in this handbook guide participants through a series of powerful exercises that help the participants improve career awareness, make career decisions, increase their ability to get a job and begin to build a career pathway. Each activity provides a step-by-step process to help a participant obtain the information or complete the tasks necessary to make forward progress. Most of the activities are based on [OhioMeansJobs.com](http://OhioMeansJobs.com) and the tools that are available online.

The activities are designed to provide participants with information and strategies they can use immediately. The focus of the activities is to provide tools that help youth feel empowered to make their own choices and not to simply meet the mandates of the Ohio Works First (OWF) program.

The handbook is designed to be used by those career coaches who want to help a youth make better career choices and build a foundation today for future success.

While the activities are organized sequentially, each participant will have varying needs and levels of readiness for each phase of this process. Career coaches use their discretion in using the activities in this handbook to best support the participant.

Ideally, activities would be introduced to the participant when the youth has expressed interest in a subject on the Stepping Stones for Career Success tool or verbally during a coaching session. Rather than simply assigning an activity to a participant, the coach would get the participant ready to learn by setting expectations around the goals of the activity. The coach can find a description of the purpose and objectives of each activity in the section called “Brief Overview and Purpose of the Activities” found on page 13.

To prepare the youth for each activity, a series of open-ended introductory questions has been provided. The more the career coach can get the participants to be open and talk about their needs, the higher the motivation to complete the activity. The questions are starter questions. Career coaches can go more in depth.

The next step would be to give the participant a copy of the activity. In the appendix, you will find career coaching activities that are available in three formats. First, the forms can be printed and handed to those participants who prefer paper and pencil. Second, for those participants who prefer to use their mobile phone or computer, there are links provided for an online version of the activities. Third, fillable forms can be shared with a participant to complete.

Once the participant has completed the activity, the handbook provides debriefing questions for the coach to use with the youth. The goal of the debrief is to help the youth take meaning from the activity and apply the learning to their own situation.

## Brief Overview and Purpose of the Activities

There are sixteen career path activities found in the Appendix. Each activity is designed to solve a problem that is often experienced by young adults as they take steps on their career pathway. Below is a brief description of each of the activities.

### 1. Choosing a Career

**Problem:** *Youth does not know what career he/she wants to go into. Youth wants to enter the job market at a higher level than their education and experience would allow. Youth needs realistic information about the level of effort required to be qualified for a specific job.*

This activity is designed as a starting place for youth who have not chosen a career direction or are not realistic about the level of effort required to reach a specific job within a career.

This activity helps match the youth to occupations that are in high demand in Ohio and are based on the youth's individual likes and dislikes.

Some youth are willing to work hard to learn the skills needed to enter the job market at a higher level. Other youth want to put in minimal effort to get started on a career path. This unit matches youth to jobs in their career field based on the level of effort that they plan to exert.

### 2. Exploring in-demand jobs

**Problem:** *Youth is making a career path decision and does not know the outlook of that career.*

As youth make their career decisions, it is important for them to consider the long-term potential of that job. The evolution of the job market is a natural occurrence. Over time, as the economy grows the technology advances, some jobs simply get phased out. New jobs are created while other jobs grow.

Entering a field where there is an increasing number of openings and opportunities will make it easier for the youth to get a job and to experience career advancement and long-term growth.

If the youth is on the fence about what job they want to do or what they could study, learning about in-demand jobs might help narrow the choices.

### 3. What if I have a Criminal Record? Re-entry to the Workforce

**Problem:** *The participant has a criminal record that could have an impact on their career choice.*

Getting a good job can be hard for almost anyone. It can be extra difficult if the participant has a criminal record. Many companies perform criminal background checks on job applicants, and many of them will quickly reject the applicant if the check reveals any arrests or convictions.

This activity is designed to help youth explore different strategies to enter or re-enter the workforce. The activity covers topics such as how to seal the record, how to use the Work Opportunity Tax Credit ([https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/wotc/pdfs/WOTC\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/wotc/pdfs/WOTC_Fact_Sheet.pdf)), how to obtain bonding through the Federal Bonding program, which employers have taken the Fair Chance Business Pledge, and how to handle a criminal record during a job interview.

### 4. How much do you need to earn?

**Problem:** *Youth don't have a budget and don't know what he/she needs to earn to meet their monthly living expenses. Youth often expect that the employer will pay them a higher salary than he/she is likely to be offered.*

Youth will make a budget in this activity and make many lifestyle choices using a tool that is housed on OhioMeansJobs.com. One goal is to have the youth begin to understand the strong connection between the lifestyle choices they make and the salary that will be needed to support those choices.

A second goal of the activity is to give youth a realistic estimate of what wage an employer is likely to offer for a particular job. The activity takes the participant to <https://www.payscale.com/>. By answering the questions presented, the youth will get a realistic estimate of a likely wage.

### 5. How does working compare to cash assistance?

**Problem:** *Many youth believe that cash assistance will pay better than working. They are fearful that if they go to work that they will lose SNAP, their medical insurance, and other benefits.*

This activity will help youth gather objective information. It will take them step by step through the risks and benefits of working versus getting OWF. The activity touches on Section 8 housing, childcare, medical insurance, food stamps, as well as cash assistance. Youth are often making decisions based on rumor and opinion. This unit walks them through an information gathering process so they can make an objective determination based on their unique situation.

## 6. Can I work and still get childcare subsidies?

**Problem:** *Youth believe that if they get a job that they will either lose their childcare or have to pay the full price.*

This activity helps the youth to find information on the Ohio Childcare program and demonstrates what happens to their childcare when they have a working income. In almost all cases, the activity will show that they will not lose childcare and any co-pay that might be required is minimal.

## 7. Earning Credentials

**Problem:** *There are many options for earning credentials: 2-year schools, 4-year schools, certificate programs and apprenticeships. Many youth are not aware of which schools offer which programs within their region or throughout Ohio.*

This activity walks youth through various options for earning credentials based on the career path the youth has chosen and identifies schools or programs in the area and across the state that offers the credential, license, or diploma.

## 8. Making the Most of Your OWF Time

**Problem:** *Youth can get OWF for up to 36 months. Many have no sense of urgency and do not necessarily use their time wisely to prepare for a better financial future.*

This activity is designed to help youth understand OWF time limits and to plan accordingly. Ideally, youth will use their time to earn credentials and gain skills. It is in their best interest to save some of their time for the unknowns in life.

## 9. High School Diploma/GED

**Problem:** *Ohio offers a variety of methods for obtaining a diploma or GED. Youth can take classes in person or online. Youth can take the GED or the HiSET. There are pros and cons of each method which youth often do not consider.*

This activity helps the youth decide on the best fit. The youth will take some online sample assessments and activities that will identify what their strengths are and what gaps need to be closed. The youth can decide if this type of online work is appropriate to their learning style or whether an in-person class is a better fit.

## 10. Writing a Cover Letter

**Problem:** *Job seekers hate writing cover letters and want to skip this step in the job search process. However, 65 percent of hiring managers want to see a cover letter.*

This unit makes writing a customized cover letter simple and fast. A template is provided as a guide. The cover letter can be saved and updated in OhioMeansJobs.com.

## 11. Building a Resume

**Problem:** *Youth often have challenges writing a resume. For some, it is a first job. For others, they have a series of short-term jobs that make them appear to be risky to hire; others do not know how to write a competitive resume.*

This unit shows the youth how to write a resume using templates on OhioMeansJobs.com. There are sample resumes for youth to follow within the activity.

## 12. Customizing Cover Letters and Resumes

**Problem:** *Youth are using the same resume and / or cover letter for each position they apply to and are not customizing each to address the qualifications the job description requires.*

This unit shows the youth how to identify the key qualifications and ensure that each are included in a cover letter and resume.

## 13. Preparing for the Job Interview

**Problem:** *Youth are likely to be asked challenging questions during a job interview that they must be prepared to answer. Most youth have not planned nor practiced winning answers to difficult questions and as a result do not perform well at the interview.*

This activity provides scripts and templates on how to build strong interview answers to challenging questions. The activity also directs youth to the OhioMeansJobs.com website to the Interviewing Center where they can practice and record their answers.

## 14. Virtual Job Interviewing

**Problem:** *Many employers have found that conducting virtual job interviews is faster and more convenient for screening and hiring new employees than in person interviews. Job seekers who do not have much experience using virtual applications will be at a disadvantage as they interview.*

This activity helps the youth understand what to expect during a virtual interview and gives them tips and strategies to help them mentally and physically prepare to make a positive and lasting impression during the interview process.

## 15. Starting a Job

**Problem:** *The first thirty days on a job are critical for setting the stage for success. New employees are watched closely. With little to no work experience, youth often make rookie mistakes that could have been prevented.*

This activity provides instruction to the youth on how to make the most of the first 30 days on the job. It covers how to make good first impression and how to build a positive relationship with the supervisor and coworkers.

## 16. Career Growth

**Problem:** *Research shows that far too often, youth who get entry level jobs do not advance on those jobs. Five years later, they are still languishing in the entry level position and are still being paid entry level wages.*

This unit provides a step-by-step strategy to help an entry level worker acquire the skills, education, work habits and attitudes that increase the chances of upward mobility.

## Questions to Introduce the Activities to the Youth

The way in which an activity is introduced will either stimulate interest and motivation in the youth or will create resistance and pushback. Asking questions as a way of introducing the activity prompts the youth to think about the subject. Questions help to focus the participants' attention on the lesson and helps them to see how they can benefit from the activity. Career coaches will get a higher level of motivation when the youth can see the value of the lesson.

Simply assigning activities without input from the youth is likely to create resistance. It will feel like busy work. Youth may comply but are less likely to do the activity with enthusiasm and are more likely to feel like the activity is a waste of time unless it feels like their idea. The difference in motivation will be apparent.

Listed below are starter questions to introduce each activity. As the coach interacts with a particular youth, they will likely think of other questions that generate interest. Use whatever works to get the participant motivated to learn. As a participant shows a need to explore a section, the career coach can use the following questions to help the participant.

---

### 1. Career Awareness: Choosing a Career

You indicated that you are interested in more information about careers. Let's talk more about choosing a career.

- What gets in the way of deciding? What makes it difficult to decide?
- What information do you need that would make it easier for you to decide?
- How would your circumstances be different if you were to decide about a career?

### 2. Career Decision: In-demand jobs

You indicated that you would like more information about in-demand careers. Let's talk more about exploring in-demand jobs in our area.

- Pretend for a moment that you prepared for a high demand job and that you had the skills and experience to be successful in that career field. Tell me what that would feel like.
- What would be some advantages to finding a job that is in-demand in our area?
- What information or resources might be helpful to you?

### 3. What if I have a Criminal Record? Re-entry to the Workforce

One of the things that you have talked about is the challenge that you may face finding an employer who will overlook your criminal record.

- What do you know about strategies ex-offenders have used successfully like having your record sealed, federal bonding insurance and tax credits given to an employer for hiring you?
- There is a program called Fair Chance Pledge. Employers pledge to not hold a criminal record against an applicant. What is your level of interest in learning which employers in our area have made a commitment to the Fair Chance Hiring program?
- What benefits do you see for learning more about your options?

### 4. How Much Do You Need to Earn?

You indicated that you're unsure of how much you need to earn to meet your expenses or what you should expect to be paid.

- What is more important to you: the money that you earn or the work that you do? Why?
- What financial goals do you have for yourself over the longer term?
- What, if anything, scares you financially about going to work?
- Where would you like to be financially three months from now?

### 5. How Does Working Compare to Cash Assistance?

You are thinking that by going to work that you may lose financially and so working right now scares you.

- How familiar are you with the rules on section 8 housing vouchers, eligibility for SNAP and Medicaid, the federal earned income tax credit (EITC), the child tax credit, and other financial implications of working?
- Often, people have bad information and make decisions based on that incorrect information.
- How could it benefit you to explore how working would impact your eligibility for those programs?
- Would it surprise you to know that you can work and still be eligible for SNAP, Medicaid, childcare and section 8? Would it surprise you to know that EITC and the child tax credit can add 1000's of dollars of income for you and your child(ren)?

## 6. Can I work and Still Get Childcare Subsidies?

One of the things you have expressed concern about is losing your childcare if you went to work.

- Can you talk about how childcare currently works for you?
- Childcare is a need's-based program. Some people pay nothing, and some people pay a co-pay. How would it help you to be able to guesstimate how your childcare would or would not change if you got you a job and were earning a paycheck.

## 7. Making the most of Your OWF Time

OWF is a time-limited program. It is a good idea to plan to make full use of the time that you have available since you never get that time back. Once it is gone it is gone.

- What do you know about the time-limits and where you stand on those?
- What would happen to you if you ran out your time? How might that impact you and your child(ren)?
- How might it be helpful to learn more about time limits, what they mean and how they work?

## 8. Training for a Career: Earning Credentials

You indicated that you could use more information about credentials and which school in the area, and across the state, provide training for those credentials.

- What has been your experience with school or vocational training? Positive, negative, or a mix?
- How do you think a credential might help you get into the career of your choice?
- What changes would you need to make to enable you to go to training or school?
- What would you like to change in the next three to six months that will move you toward earning that credential?

## 9. Getting your High School Diploma/GED

You indicated that you don't have a high school diploma and want to earn one. Let's talk more about exploring a high school diploma or GED, and how having one may benefit you over your lifetime.

- What has been your past experience in a school? What worked for you and what didn't?
- How do you think earning your diploma/GED would help you?
- What might need to be different this time to be successful?
- What would you like to do in the next three months that moves you closer to earning your high school equivalency diploma?

## 10. Job Search: Writing a Powerful Cover Letter

You indicated that you want help with cover letter.

- Talk to me about the status of your current cover letter.
- What experience do you have creating a cover letter?
- What kind of help would you like getting your cover letter ready to go?

## 11. Job Search: Writing a Powerful Resume

You indicated that you want help with your resume.

- Talk to me about the status of your current resume.
- What experience do you have creating a resume?
- What kind of help would you like getting your resume ready to go?

## 12. Job Search: Customizing Cover Letters and Resumes

You indicated that you want help customizing your resume and cover letter.

- Talk to me about the status of your current cover letters and resumes.
- What experience do you have creating a “customized” cover letter or resume?
- What kind of help would you like getting your cover letter and resume ready to go?

## 13. Preparing for a Job Interview

You indicated that you’re ready to learn more about interviewing. Let’s talk about getting better at interviewing for a job.

- Have you ever had an interview?
  - If yes, how did it go? How did you feel about it?
    - What do you think you did well? What didn’t go so well?
    - What, specifically, would you like to improve?
    - Can you think of any questions that you struggle to answer? What questions are easy for you to answer?
  - If no, what questions do you think you will be asked? How might you answer them?

## 14. Preparing for a Virtual Job Interview

You indicated that you’re ready to learn more about virtual job interviewing. Let’s talk about getting better at interviewing for a job.

- Have you ever had an interview or a virtual interview?
  - If yes, how did it go? How did you feel about it?
    - What do you think you did well? What didn’t go so well?
    - What, specifically, would you like to improve?

- Can you think of any questions that you struggle to answer? What questions are easy for you to answer?
- If no, how do you think you might need to prepare differently? What might be the same?

## 15. Successfully Starting your Job

You indicated that you could use some support on starting a new job—what to expect and how you can succeed. It's important to make a good first impression with your new employer and get started on the right foot. Let's talk more about how to get started with a job.

- What excites you about starting this job?
- What are you concerned about?
- What questions do you have about the new job?

## 16. Career Growth: Getting a Raise or Promotion

You indicated that you could use more information on planning for career growth. Let's talk more about exploring a plan to get a raise or promotion.

- If everything turned out well for you in this job, what would that look like?
- When you think about raises and promotions, what comes to mind?
- If you look ahead to three or six months from now, how do you want things at your job to be different or better?
- What can you do to ensure that happens?



## Debriefing Questions to Conclude the Activity with the Youth

Debriefing is a critical part of any activity. If there is no discussion of the activity, then it will feel like busy work, limiting the value of having done the activity and making future activities have less meaning.

Debriefing is one of the most important parts of any experiential activity, because it enables participants to connect the activities and the lesson they learned to their individual situation. Debriefing helps learners gain insights into what they learned, and how they are learning is unique to each individual situation.

Listed below are general-purpose debriefing questions that the career coach could use after any of the activities. The career coach can add questions and dig more deeply depending on the activity and the participant.

### Review, Assess, Plan (RAP) Questions:

- How did that go for you?
- What, if anything, got in your way? How did you respond?
- What is something you learned by completing this unit?
- How can this new information help you as you move forward?
- What next steps are you ready to take?
- As your career coach, is there anything you would like my help with?

## Troubleshooting

At times, participants may struggle to complete the activities in this Handbook. As their career coach, you play an important role in helping participants address “potholes” they encounter along the way toward their goals, uncover ambivalence, and discover what they truly care about and want to achieve. When a participant gets “stuck” – is not making progress – start by exploring the fit of the goal and activity:

- Let’s step back: Is this the right goal for you? Do you still feel motivated around the goal we last set together, or has anything changed?
- If you still feel committed to and motivated by your goal, let’s take a close look at the plan to get it down. How could we change your plan to set you up for success?
- If the plan feels right, but something else is getting in your way, let’s reconsider your pothole. What is tripping you up? How might you overcome it, work through it, or avoid it?

For more troubleshooting help, refer to the guidance on **Motivational Accountability** (pages 8-9), **Asking Meaningful Open-Ended Questions** (pages 10-11), and **Potholes and Detours** (pages 38-40) in the [CCMEP Coaching Model](#) manual curriculum.

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## Conclusion

After completing the activities within this toolkit, the participant should have completed each of the career pathway steps applicable to them and have successfully entered a career with a plan for growth. The participant should feel confident in the information they have obtained working through this process and now have a completed career pathway [see page 9] based on their specific goals and motivation. The process you have used to assist the participant is based on the science informed CCMEP Coaching Model approach to goal pursuit. At this point, the participant should feel comfortable using the techniques learned through the CCMEP Coaching Model to set and achieve their own goals, including their long-term career goals.

There may be times when a participant falters in their motivation or they deviate from their career pathway. This is okay! Each participant is encouraged to make their own choices and to create and modify their goals and career pathway along the way. As a career coach, you can help the participant by providing information and by helping them break their goals down into achievable steps.

## **APPENDIX OF CAREER PATHWAY ACTIVITIES**

## Career Pathway Activities Quick Links

Activity	Link
1. Choosing a Career	<a href="https://forms.office.com/g/r8y0P3LAN0">https://forms.office.com/g/r8y0P3LAN0</a>
2. In-Demand Jobs	<a href="https://forms.office.com/g/kxBirWs8nH">https://forms.office.com/g/kxBirWs8nH</a>
3. Dealing with Criminal Record	<a href="https://forms.office.com/g/NTkEL4V6hi">https://forms.office.com/g/NTkEL4V6hi</a>
4. Budgeting	<a href="https://forms.office.com/g/5xLRc5L1v1">https://forms.office.com/g/5xLRc5L1v1</a>
5. Work vs Cash Assistance	<a href="https://forms.office.com/g/RtAjueW6ts">https://forms.office.com/g/RtAjueW6ts</a>
6. Working with Childcare Subsidies	<a href="https://forms.office.com/g/WG2NdFG03b">https://forms.office.com/g/WG2NdFG03b</a>
7. Making the Most of OWF	<a href="https://forms.office.com/g/tuwKAJm2HM">https://forms.office.com/g/tuwKAJm2HM</a>
8. Training and Credentials	<a href="https://forms.office.com/g/Kj2d7J5mcs">https://forms.office.com/g/Kj2d7J5mcs</a>
9. Attaining Your HS Diploma/GED	<a href="https://forms.office.com/g/n7v1FNZxNr">https://forms.office.com/g/n7v1FNZxNr</a>
10. Writing a Cover Letter	<a href="https://forms.office.com/g/EWBWdUpq94">https://forms.office.com/g/EWBWdUpq94</a>
11. Writing a Resume	<a href="https://forms.office.com/g/U8ck46gTp1">https://forms.office.com/g/U8ck46gTp1</a>
12. Customizing Cover Letters and Resumes	<a href="https://forms.office.com/g/cswdvLqqgw">https://forms.office.com/g/cswdvLqqgw</a>
13. Job Interview Prep	<a href="https://forms.office.com/g/B41Dw4f3PP">https://forms.office.com/g/B41Dw4f3PP</a>
14. Virtual Interviews	<a href="https://forms.office.com/g/5QJTSqGDEs">https://forms.office.com/g/5QJTSqGDEs</a>
15. Starting the Job Successfully	<a href="https://forms.office.com/g/CPzaaNPx9R">https://forms.office.com/g/CPzaaNPx9R</a>
16. Getting a Raise or Promotion	<a href="https://forms.office.com/g/btZPyxSG1F">https://forms.office.com/g/btZPyxSG1F</a>

## DECIDING ON A CAREER

### 1. Choosing a Career

Not sure what career is best for you? This unit will help you identify what careers relate to your interests and what they pay.

For an online version of this unit use this link:

<https://forms.office.com/g/r8y0P3LAN0>

Name: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

Email address: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

Go to [OhioMeansJobs.com](https://ohiojobs.com) and click “**Log In / Sign Up.**”

- A. Click on “**Go to OH|ID,**” enter your login information and click “**Log in.**”
- B. Click “**For Job Seekers**” in the masthead then hover over “**Build Your Career.**”
- C. Scroll down and click on “**Career Preparation**”.
- D. Find and click the tile labeled “**What's Your Career Profile.**” Then click “**Get Started.**”
- E. Click “**Start**” to answer the questions about what you like and dislike doing.
- F. Click “**Next**” after each section of questions. Then click “**Get Score**” to see the results. Which two characteristics did you score the highest on?  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**
- G. Click the “**View Occupations**” button to see careers that might be a good match for you. Careers that are in high demand will have a “thumbs up” icon. Careers in high demand are worth considering because the number of jobs in those careers is growing.
- H. Using this selection of careers, consider how much effort you want to spend to get a job in this career field. Set the “**level of effort**” drop-down menu first to “**very low**” and click “**update**” to see what careers are available in your interest area with little effort. Then set the “**level of effort**” button to “**low**” and click “**update**” to see what jobs you could get if you made a low-level effort. Repeat the process for “**high,**” “**very high,**” and “**stretch.**”

Fill in the following table with one job title and the wage rate at each level of effort that interests you.

Level of effort	Job Title	Wage
Very Low	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Low	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
High	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Very High	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Stretch	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

- I. As effort goes up, wages also go up. Workers who have more skills and knowledge generally get paid more than people with fewer skills and less knowledge. So, the greater the effort, the higher the potential financial reward.
- J. Reset the “**level of effort**” button to match the effort you want to expend investing in your future. Click “**update.**” You will now return to a list of jobs that match your interests and effort. On the right, a column will display how many jobs are available statewide or in your region. The higher the number of job openings for a particular type of job, the more that job is in-demand.

Which two jobs have the highest number of job openings?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

- K. Look over the list and select two jobs that you would like to learn more about. Check two boxes of occupations and click “**compare.**”
- L. You will now see a matrix that summarizes the two jobs you chose to compare. Click each of the job titles (in blue) at the top of the matrix to see a list of work activities and duties for that job. You may need to navigate “back” one screen to “compare” again.

Job One:

**Job title:** Click or tap here to enter text.

One job duty I already know how to do:

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

One job duty I would need training to do:

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

Job Two:

**Job title:** Click or tap here to enter text.

One job duty I already know how to do:  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**

One job duty I would need training to do:  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**

- M. Can you picture yourself doing these work activities every day in a career? You want to be sure to pick a career that you would enjoy doing since you spend much of your time at work. Doing tasks you enjoy makes the workday pass by quickly. Doing tasks you don't enjoy will make time pass slowly.

Does either of these jobs interest you? Why or why not?  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**

- N. If neither of these jobs interests you, go back to your “**Career Profile**” and click “**View Careers**” again. See if there are other jobs that you want to explore. If so, then read more about those jobs and imagine yourself in the job.
- O. If none of the jobs interest you click on “**For Students**” under “**Explore Careers**,” click on “**Learn About Career Types**.” Once that page loads, click on “**Career Pathways**.”
- P. There are 16 career clusters listed on the page. Scroll through them and find a career cluster that interests you. Click on that tile.

What career cluster did you pick to explore?  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**

What entry-level job interests you?  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**

- Q. Read about the work activities, skills, knowledge and experience needed for this job. Can you picture yourself doing these work activities every day in a career?  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**
- R. If that job does not interest you then you may want to continue exploring your options. Read about other careers. Or you may want to go back to step C and D and click “**Change Your Answers**” to review the list of what you like to do and do not like to do. Make adjustments to get a new list. Then explore those jobs using the steps outlined above.

## 2. Exploring In-Demand Jobs

Exploring in-demand jobs is a good move for anyone trying to make a career decision. In-demand jobs offer an easier job search, more opportunity for financial and career advancement, and long-term growth.

If you are on the fence about what job you want to do or what you could study, learning about in-demand jobs might help you narrow your choices.

For an online version of this unit use this link:

<https://forms.office.com/g/kxBirWs8nH>

Name: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

Email address: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

Go to [OhioMeansJobs.com](https://ohiojobs.com) and click “**Log In / Sign Up.**”

- A. Click on “**Go to OH|ID,**” enter your login information and click “**Log in.**”
- B. Click “**For Job Seekers**” in the masthead then hover over “**Build Your Career.**”
- C. Scroll down and click on “**Career Preparation**”.
- D. Find and click on the tile labeled “**Top Jobs in Ohio.**”

Read “In-demand jobs have important qualities for Ohio’s workers.”

What three criteria does a job have to meet to be an “in-demand” job in Ohio?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

- E. Click “**Launch**” on the right side of the screen.
- F. Using the drop-down menu, set the region of Ohio (Northeast, Southwest, Central, etc.) you are interested in learning more about.
- G. Set your current education level (no formal educational credential, high school diploma, some college, college, etc.)
- H. Set your “**Preferred Experience**” level (no preferred experience, little or no preparation needed, some preparation needed, etc.)

List up to four jobs that most interest you. Write the job title, the median wage, and the number of openings in the following chart.

### Jobs I am Interested In

Job Title	Median Salary	Number of openings
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

- I. Return to [OhioMeansJobs.com](http://OhioMeansJobs.com)
- J. Click "**For Job Seekers**" in the masthead.
- K. Go to the "**Build Your Career**" heading. Scroll down and click on "**Career Preparation.**"
- L. Click the tile labeled "**Specialized Job Search Tool.**"
- M. In the "**Occupation Search**" section, scroll to "**Keyword Search**" and enter a career you want to explore from the list that you typed above. Then select "**Go.**"
- N. You will now see a list of jobs in that occupational area that are a good match to your keyword search. Any job with a thumbs-up icon means that is an in-demand career. Scroll through the list and click on a job that you want to explore.

Gathering information on the job you want to train for is an important step in making a career decision. Answer these questions about each job that you are interested in. If more than one, then open this form multiple times.

What is the job title of the job you want to research?  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**

See "**Activities**" on the left. List at least five specific work activities for this occupation.  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**

Click "**Skills**" on the left. What are the key skills required to do this job?  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**

Click "**Knowledge**" on the left. What knowledge does a worker in this field need?  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**

Click "**Typical Education**" on the left. What training is required to get this job?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

Click **“Pay”** on the left. What is the median salary for someone entering the field?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

How are you feeling about this job choice?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

### 3. What if I have a Criminal Record? Re-entry to the Workforce

Ex-offenders often have an extremely hard time finding jobs. Although they have paid their debt to society, negative consequences continue to create obstacles. This unit will outline strategies to help those who were involved in the justice system to re-enter the workforce.

For an online version of this unit use this link:

<https://forms.office.com/g/NTkEL4V6hi>

Name: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

Email Address: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

Go to [OhioMeansJobs.com](https://ohiojobs.com) and click “**Log In / Sign Up.**”

- A. Click on “**Go to OH|ID,**” enter your login information and click “**Log in.**”
- B. Go to “**For Job Seekers**” in the masthead. Scroll to the column “**Build Your Career**” and then click on “**Restored Citizens.**”
- C. Click on the “**Job Search Guide**” tile.
- D. “**Download**” the attachment on the right side of the screen. This guide is designed for people who are applying for a job and have a criminal record. Read through it to see what you might need to know.
- E. Go back to “**Restored Citizens**” and click on “**Job Searching with a Criminal History.**”
- F. Read through the information provided. What have you learned that might be important to you when looking for a job?  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**

#### Expungement or Sealing Your Record

When applying for some jobs, apartments, student loans, licenses, business loans, etc., those reviewing your application will likely see your past criminal record. A sealing of your record allows you to have all public references to your prior criminal conviction cleared and your court file sealed. Once your record has been sealed, Ohio Sealing Statute states that the old criminal record should be treated as if it never occurred. For many people, the most valuable benefit of Sealing a Record is being able to reply “no” when asked by a potential employer if they have ever been convicted of a crime.

- G. Ohio Justice and Policy Center provides high quality legal services to Ohioans free of charge. Go to their website to read about their services. <https://ohiojpc.org/>

Within the Ohio Justice and Policy Center is a program called “Second Chance” which you can find on their website. Second Chance is set up for people with involvement in the justice system. Do a site Search for “Second Chance.”

The Second Chance team can answer questions and help clients navigate:

- Record sealing or expungement
- A Certificate of Qualification for Employment (CQE)
- Collateral sanctions of a conviction and how they will affect job, housing, and education prospects
- Court fines and fees mitigation

Email Second Chance at [secondchance@ohiojpc.org](mailto:secondchance@ohiojpc.org) to find out what they can do for you.

- H. Ohio has a new law that helps people who have a court record. Some charges can be expunged and others can be sealed. Use this link to learn how this works in Ohio: <https://www.courtnewsOhio.gov/inDepth/2023/May/default.asp> In addition, your local re-entry coalition or citizens circle might be able to help with local resources to expunge records: <https://drc.ohio.gov/systems-and-services/2-reentry-services/coalitions-citizen-circles-and-video-in-reach>

Does sealing your record seem like a viable option to work on? Why or why not?  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**

### Work Opportunity Tax Credit

The **Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)** is a federal tax credit available to employers for hiring individuals from certain targeted groups who have consistently faced significant barriers to employment. To learn more click the following link:

<https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/work-opportunity-tax-credit>. The WOTC has two purposes: To promote the hiring of individuals who qualify as a member of a target group, and to provide a federal tax credit to employers who hire these individuals. This tax credit is a big benefit to an employer who does hire you.

- I. Find out if you are eligible. Several groups of individuals are eligible including ex-felons. The **definition of an ex-felon for WOTC** is a person who has been convicted of a felony under any federal or state law and is hired not more than 1 year after the conviction or release from prison for that felony. To read more about this, visit the WOTC link above.

Do you think that you would be eligible for the “Work Opportunity Tax Credit” if you were offered a job?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

- J. Contact your career coach/case manager if you have questions about eligibility for WOTC. Your case manager can you refer you to the staff member who can certify you as eligible and explain how you can use this to help you to get a job.

Did the WOTC staff person say that you were eligible?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

### Federal Bonding

The Federal Bonding Program is a program sponsored by the government through the Department of Labor. This program was created to help high-risk, but otherwise qualified, job seekers who have offers of employment. The Federal Bonding Program offers an insurance policy that protects employers against any possible losses incurred due to actions by high-risk employees. The program is designed to help **ex-offenders** and **felons** who are qualified to work but need a second chance.

The bonds are free of charge to both the applicant and the employer and can be issued for any job at any employer in any state. Any full or part-time employee paid wages (with Federal taxes automatically withheld) can be bonded, including persons hired by temporary employment agencies.

An applicant can be bonded the same day the job offer is made.

K. To read more about federal bonding insurance use this link:

<https://drc.ohio.gov/Portals/0/FBP%20Brochure%20-%20external%207-3-2019.pdf>

L. The Federal Bonding Program is currently administered by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (DRC). To obtain further information or to initiate the bonding process, please contact the [DRC Ohio Central School System](#) at (614) 728-1923 and/or email [DRC.OCSS2Serve@odrc.state.oh.us](mailto:DRC.OCSS2Serve@odrc.state.oh.us).

How does the federal bonding program help the employer and the ex-offender?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

### Who Will Hire Someone with a Conviction?

There are many employers who are willing to hire individuals who do not have a clean record. The search may take a little longer, but many employers are willing to give people a second chance.

M. In your search engine, type “employers who hire people with felons in Ohio.” You will get a link to a page that lists current job openings in Ohio.

N. To see a list of employers who have taken the "Fair Chance Business Pledge" and will hire people who need second chances, visit the following link: <https://www.monster.com/career-advice/article/ex-felon-job-seekers-business-pledge>

- O. A second website will ask questions about your conviction, your crime and will match you to employers in your area who have taken the “Fair Chance Business Pledge.” Go to: <https://www.honestjobs.com> and create an account.

Did you see jobs or employers that interest you? If so, which ones?  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**

### Answering An Interview Question

If you do get an opportunity to interview, you will need to be prepared to talk about your background. You will want to build an answer and then practice saying it until it is comfortable.

**Build your answer: Is there anything in your personal history that I should be aware of before doing a background check?**

If you have been convicted of a crime that is not a sealed court record or is something likely to show up in a background check, admit to it rather than hide it. Assume responsibility for it and do not blame anyone. Talk about what you have done since that time. End by restating your commitment to doing a good job for the employer. See the sample exchange below of an employer and interviewee talking about a criminal history.

#### Sample Exchange:

**Employer:** “Is there anything in your personal history that I should be aware of before doing a background check?” (“Have you ever been convicted of a crime?” Or “On your application, you wrote ‘will discuss at the interview’ in your answer to the question about whether you have ever been convicted of a felony. Could you explain that to me now?”)

**Interviewee:** “I want you to know that in the past I made a poor decision and was convicted of a felony. I regret my actions and commit myself to changing. Since then, I have taken courses, obtained my high school diploma, and volunteered at the community center. I have learned from that mistake. I understand you might have concerns about this, but I am committed to doing an excellent job for you.”

#### **Build your Answer/Response:**

Admit that there is a problem in your background:  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**

Explain your regret and what you have done since that time.  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**

State your commitment to do a good job for this employer:  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**

If you are eligible for the Work Opportunity Tax Credit <https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/work-opportunity-tax-credit> or Federal Bonding, add this to your answer if your felony conviction has come up in the interview:

**Interviewee:** "I do want you to know that if you hire me, your company is eligible for a tax credit on your federal taxes. I am also eligible for federal bonding insurance which insures your company for up to \$5000.00 for a six-month period. That gives me six months to prove myself."

## 4. How Much Do You Need to Earn? Budgeting

You might have already chosen a career path, or maybe you are still exploring. This activity will help you figure out what income you need to cover your expenses. Deciding on a career pathway will, in part, determine your financial future. A good starting place is figuring out not only what you need to live on but also where you want to be in the future.

For an online version of this unit use this link:

<https://forms.office.com/g/5xLRc5L1v1>

Name: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

Email address: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

Go to [OhioMeansJobs.com](https://ohiojobs.com) and click “**Log In / Sign Up.**”

- A. Click on “**Go to OH|ID,**” enter your login information and click “**Log in.**”
- B. Click “**For Job Seekers**” in the masthead then hover over “**Practice Your Skills.**”
- C. Scroll down to “**Career Skills**” and click.
- D. In the “**Top Tools**” section, click on the tile called “**Target Salary Calculator.**”
- E. Click “**Launch.**”
- F. Select one of two budget calculators. If you already have a budget, then select “**Budget Calculator.**” If you do not have a budget or need to guess your expenses, then select “**Ohio Lifestyle Calculator.**”
- G. Answer all the budget questions.
- H. Click the “**Next: Results**” button when complete.

You will go to a page that shows the target salary that you will need to earn to meet your budget. You will see your gross annual target salary, your net annual target salary, and your target hourly rate. This is what you need to earn to meet your current needs.

What was your gross annual target salary?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

What was your net annual target salary?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

What was your target hourly rate?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

Does this annual salary surprise you? Does this seem like more or less than what you thought?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

- I. In the “**Budget Breakdown**” section, click on “**View Jobs**” to search potential jobs within your gross annual target salary. You can search with or without supplemental income. Decide what works best for you. You see a list of jobs that will pay you the gross annual target salary that you need to make ends meet. You can add location and radius to narrow the list.

Scroll through the jobs and see if any interest you. Click the job title (in blue) to see a more detailed description of that job by viewing the “**Details**” and “**Summary**” tabs.

Name several jobs that fell within your target salary that interest you.

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

- J. If the job is one that you are interested in, click the “**Save to my Profile**” option after clicking on “**Actions**”. Now you will be able to find it easily.
- K. Go to the search bar at the top of the page or go to your web browser. We are leaving OhioMeansJobs.com for this step. Type <https://www.payscale.com/for-individuals/> into your internet browser.
- L. Click the purple button that says, “**See my earning potential.**”
- M. You will have two options: “Current Job” or “Job Offer.”

Choose the option that is the most appropriate for your situation. Answer the questions presented to you, and you will get an estimate of what you might expect to be paid in this job in your geographic area.

## 5. How Does Working Compare to Cash Assistance?

If you are not sure how working might impact you financially, then this activity might help to work through the financial impacts of working. This can help you decide whether working will help you and your family have more income when compared to cash assistance.

For an online version of this unit use this link:

<https://forms.office.com/g/RtAjueW6ts>

Name: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

Email address: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

- A. How much do you receive monthly on cash assistance?  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**
- B. How much do receive on SNAP?  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**
- C. What other sources of income do you receive monthly?  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**
- D. Add together your monthly cash assistance, your SNAP and any other sources of income that you receive. If you multiply that by 12, you will know your annual resources. What is your annual number? Write this number down because you will need it. Label it “D”.  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**
- E. Now let’s calculate your income if you decided to work rather than receive cash assistance. Think about how many hours you might want to work per week and multiply that by the hour wage of the job you want to work at. For example, if you want to work 30 hours a week at \$10.45 (minimum wage), then your weekly wage would be \$313.50. Most jobs in Ohio pay more than the minimum wage even if it is an entry level job. If you know the salary of the job that you want, use the wage that you know. If you do not know the salary, then use the minimum wage because that is the least amount of money that you would earn. Multiply hours you want to work x the hourly wage. This is your projected weekly wage. Write that number here.  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**
- F. Multiply your weekly wage (E above) by 4.33 weeks per month to figure out your monthly income. Write this number down because you will need it. We will refer to it as “F”.  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**
- G. Many people believe that if they go to work that they will lose their SNAP benefits. That is not necessarily true. If you want to read more about SNAP, how it works, of if you would be eligible, go to: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/recipient/eligibility>.

Go to the link above and click on the “**SNAP income limits**” section.

Use the monthly income that you calculated in “F” above to see if you are eligible for SNAP. You may not get as much as you get now if you have some income, but the chart will show you if you will still be eligible for some SNAP benefits.

Based on the chart and based on the monthly income that you calculated, would you still be eligible for SNAP?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

- H. **Earned Income Tax Credit:** The federal government has a program called Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). By design, the EITC only benefits people who work. The Earned Income Tax Credit helps low- to moderate-income workers and families get a tax break. If you qualify, you can use the credit to reduce the taxes you owe – and/or increase your refund. See: <https://www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/individuals/earned-income-tax-credit-eitc>

To get an estimate if you would qualify for EITC and how much you could qualify for, you need to multiply your monthly income (Item F above) by 12. That will give you an annual income. Write this number down because you will need it. We will call this number “H.”

What is your estimated annual income?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

Follow the link above to see if you would be eligible for EITC based on annual income and the number of child(ren) who are your dependent(s). Each year the numbers change. For current numbers, go to <https://www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/individuals/earned-income-tax-credit-eitc> and click on the box that says “**Check if You Qualify.**” Then click on “**Use the EITC Assistant**” and answer the questions.

Would you qualify? Yes, or No?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

So how much money could you expect to get for EITC? Below the chart that you just visited at Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)/Internal Revenue Service (irs.gov) is a box that shows the Maximum Earned Income Tax Credit that you can receive based on the number of dependents that you have. Each year the tax credit goes up, so you will want to check current figures by searching for the current [EITC Table](#).

### **Maximum Credit Amounts**

The maximum amount of credit you can claim. This is money the IRS sends to you when you file your federal income tax.

- No qualifying children: \$600
- One qualifying child: \$3,995
- Two qualifying children: \$6,604
- Three or more qualifying children: \$7,430

Look at the chart and the number of children that you have. Write down the maximum credit amount that you could receive? Write this number down. We will call it “H-1.”

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

- I. **Child Tax Credit:** The federal government has another tax program called the Child Tax Credit that helps lower income families who are trying to raise children. If you qualify for the Child Tax Credit, then you can receive \$2000 per child (as of the 2022 tax year) who you claim as a dependent on your tax form. A credit is money that the federal government sends to you. To figure out how much you could receive, multiply the number of children who you claim as a dependent by \$2000 (as of the 2022 tax year) per child. For more details, and current tax credit see: <https://www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/individuals/child-tax-credit>.

Write this number down. We will refer to it as “I.”

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

- J. Look back at your answers to your total estimated annual income (Item H), Earned Income Tax Credit (item H-1) and the Child Tax Credit (Item I). If you add those together, what would be your resources for last year if you worked and took advantage of those programs?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

How does that compare to the amount that you get on OWF and SNAP? (Item D).

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

- K. If you worked and had earnings, EITC, and the child tax credit, how could that make a positive difference in your life? What could you do then that is hard for you to do now?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

- L. **Medicaid:** Did you know that if you go to work, you can still be eligible for Medicaid? To see how much you can earn based on your family size in Ohio and still qualify for Medicaid, go to <https://www.benefits.gov/benefit/5940>. Scroll down and find section on Annual Household Income. Click on “View Table” (or “Select Household Size”). Find your family size and see how much you can earn and still qualify for Medicaid.

- M. **Section 8 Housing:** What happens to Section 8 Housing if you go to work? That is a key question that many ask. Eligible families are generally required to pay 30 percent of their adjusted gross income towards rent. HUD deducts \$480 per dependent in a family, so multiply the number of dependents that you have by \$480. Subtract that from your monthly income. Section 8 residents do get a utility allowance for any utilities they pay that are not included in the rent. Those utilities count toward the 30 percent. If you want to figure out how that might impact you, take your annual gross income (Item H) and multiply it by 0.30. That is the maximum that you would pay toward your rent.

What is your estimated annual income x 0.30?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

If you subtract your contribution for your rent from what you calculated in Item J, how much would you have left?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

Is that more or less than what you calculated in item D which was your annual resources on OWF and SNAP?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

- N. Childcare is another consideration. OWF participants can receive childcare even if they go to work. Because this is so important, there is a separate unit that is just about childcare. Ask your career coach for that unit if you want to figure out how going to work might impact you.

This unit was designed to help you to think about the amount that you will have available for you and your child(ren) if you work versus using up OWF cash payments. There are more benefits to working than listed in this unit including vacation time, sick time, company paid benefits, retirement programs, tuition reimbursement programs and more. Each employer has different offerings.

## 6. Can I Work and Still Get Child Care Subsidies?

Some people believe that if they go to work they will lose their childcare and must pay for childcare on their own. That is typically not true. If you are eligible and need childcare to work or participate in an approved activity, you remain eligible. This unit will help you to get an estimate of how much you can earn and still get help with childcare.

For an online version of this unit use this link:

<https://forms.office.com/g/WG2NdfG03b>

Name: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

Email address: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) helps parent(s) who are working or in school pay for childcare through the Publicly Funded Child Care (PFCC) program.

- A. Copy this link into your browser to read who is eligible for child care assistance:  
<http://www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/num/JFS01309/pdf/>

Do you think that you meet the eligibility guidelines for childcare that are listed on the flier?  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**

You may be required to pay for part of your childcare in the form of a copayment once you are working. The amount you pay is based on your gross income and family size. Most parents who are transitioning to work from OWF still qualify for childcare and have either no copay or a small copayment.

- B. To get an idea of how much you can earn and still be eligible for childcare in 2023, copy and paste this link into your browser:  
<https://emanuals.ifs.ohio.gov/ChildCare/ChildCareManual/CCMPL/CCMPL-168-A.stm>  
 Search the internet for an “**Update to Child Care Income Eligibility Standards**” or ask your career coach for these figures for the current year.
- C. Notice that there is a column in the link above that says what you can earn to be eligible initially. The last column lists what you can earn monthly and continue to receive childcare subsidies.

Based on how many are in your family, reading across the chart, what is the maximum that you can earn monthly and still qualify for childcare?  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**

For example, in 2023 a family of two becomes ineligible if they make over \$59,160 a year. A family of three becomes ineligible if they make over \$74,592 a year. A family of four becomes ineligible if they earn over \$90,012 a year. Is the entry level job in the career that you are training for likely to pay above those earning levels?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

As an example of the amount of a co-pay, if a family of 2 earns \$10.00 an hour and works 40 hours a week, the family will earn \$1680 per month in wages. The co-pay for childcare through the Ohio Childcare program at that family size and income level is about \$27.40 a week or about \$109.60 a month.

If the same family earns \$11.00 an hour and works 40 hours a week, the family will earn \$1848 per month in wages. The co-pay for childcare would then be \$33.06 a week or about \$132.24 a month.

At about \$30.81 an hour (or \$4931 per month), the family of 2 would no longer be eligible for subsidized childcare. Most participants who are starting their career earn below \$30.81 per hour.

How is it an advantage that the Childcare Program still helps people with childcare even after they find a job and are earning an income?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

How could it help you?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

## 7. Making the Most of Your OWF Time

### Ohio Works First (OWF) IS TIME LIMITED

Ohio's Works First (<https://www.benefits.gov/benefit/1674>) is an income safety net for when you are going through rough times. What does the time limit mean? You may only receive cash assistance as an adult in Ohio for a total of three years in your lifetime. Any month in which you receive cash benefits counts toward the three-year (36-month) time limit. If you leave and then come back on cash assistance, the count picks up where it left off. It does not start over and time used while living in another state counts here and time you spend on cash in Ohio will most likely count if you move to a different state.

The time limit could have an impact on what type of training that you want to do. For example, if becoming a Licensed Practical Nurse takes 2 years (24 months) of schooling and you only have 14 months left of cash assistance, going to school is not out of the question but it will be complicated. Since OWF is limited, you want to use your time wisely.

For an online version of this unit use this link:

<https://forms.office.com/g/tuwKAJm2HM>

Name: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

Email address: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

How much time do you have left? If you do not know, ask your case manager. They will know. **Click or tap here to enter text.**

How have you used the time that you have already received cash assistance through OWF? Did you use it to get your GED? To earn a certificate? To move ahead in some way that will pay off in your career? Explain.

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

Saving some of your time for later in your life is a good idea. You never know what kinds of experiences could cause you to need Ohio's Works First program again in the future. If you have used up all your time now, then you will have no time in the future. What kinds of circumstances could you find yourself in that could mean you need Ohio Works First in the future?

- I could lose my job and not be able to find another job quickly enough.
- I could be needed at home by a disabled child or parent so I couldn't work.
- I could have a troubled pregnancy and not be able to work temporarily.
- I could need to quickly flee domestic violence and need a means of support.
- I could decide that I want to go back to school so I could earn a good income and need OWF cash assistance to support me and my child(ren) as I complete my education.
- I could become disabled.
- Other: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

Given the amount of time that you have left now, how much time do you want to save for the future and how much do you want to use now?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

Of the time you want to use now, what is the best way to use that time you do have to prepare for your future?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

Are there any training programs or certificate programs that you might want to go to now or in the future that are longer than a few weeks? If yes, what would you like to be trained in? How long is the training? Have you saved enough time to make this a reality?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

If you do not save any time on OWF cash assistance for the future and something befalls you, what are your options? How would you and your child(ren) survive? What is your Plan B and your Plan C?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

## PREPARING FOR A CAREER

### 8. Training for a Career: Earning Credentials

Credentials are important to career success. Licenses, diplomas, and certificates demonstrate to employers that you have the skills and knowledge to do the job. Employers will look at your application and resume to see what credentials you possess. Credentials not only open doors to the job market; they also help you earn more money. Some credentials are quick to earn, while other credentials take years.

This unit will help you to identify schools in your area that offer the credentials needed for the career that interests you.

For an online version of this unit use this link:

<https://forms.office.com/g/Kj2d7J5mcs>

Name: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

Email address: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

Go to [OhioMeansJobs.com](http://OhioMeansJobs.com) and click “**Log In / Sign Up.**”

A. Click on “**Go to OH|ID,**” enter your login information and click “**Log in.**”

Which area do you want to explore?

- Post-Secondary 2- or 4-year program leading to a degree. (Go to Section A below)
- Technical or vocational school leading to a certificate or license. (Go to Section B below)
- An Apprenticeship where you learn on the job. (Go to Section C below)

**Section A:** Post-Secondary 2- or 4-year program leading to a degree.

- I. Click “**For Job Seekers**” in the masthead.
- II. In the “**Build Your Career**” column, click on “**Planning for College.**”
- III. Click on the “**Guide to Higher Education**” tile.
- IV. Click on “**Launch.**”
- V. Click on “**Visit the School finder.**”
- VI. Select which type of school/program you want to apply to, and then use either the “**Quick Match**” or “**Keyword Search**” to find schools in a chosen area.
- VII. Answer the questions in the school finder to identify colleges in your area.
- VIII. You will now see a list of schools in the area. Click a school name to view the school profile, costs, programs and more.
- IX. Do a Google search using the name of the school. You might find information on their website, or you might need to call the school to get the necessary information.

What school or program interests you? Talk to your coach about next steps.  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**

### **Section B:** Technical or Vocational Certificates and Licenses

Some careers require career and technical education. These programs vary in length and topic. To learn about technical training programs, view the steps below.

- I. Click "**For Job Seekers**" in the masthead.
- II. In the "**Build Your Career**" column, click on "**Career Preparation.**"
- III. Click on the "**Get Your Diploma as an Adult**" tile.
- IV. Scroll down to "**Additional Adult Learner Resources**" at the bottom of the page and click on "**Ohio Department of Higher Education**" link
- V. At the top of the landing page choose "**Students.**"
- VI. Under '**What Type of Student Are You?**' choose "**Adult Learner.**"
- VII. Beneath "**Postsecondary Workforce Certificates**" choose "**Technical Center Workforce Programs**'
- VIII. This will display options for technical training broke out regionally. You might find the information on its website, or you might need to call the school to obtain the information.

What school and program interests you? Talk to your coach about next steps.  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**

### **Section C:** Apprenticeship

An apprenticeship is a program that trains a worker to become skilled in a particular trade. Apprenticeships combine hands-on work with classroom learning so the apprentice is applying the lessons in the job. To learn more about Ohio apprenticeship programs, view the steps below.

- I. Click "**For Job Seekers**" in the masthead.
- II. In the "**Build Your Career**" column, click on "**Career Preparation.**"
- III. Click on the tile called "**Learn a Skilled Trade.**" Below the launch button in the "**For More Information**" section is a link called "**ApprenticeOhio.**" Click there.
- IV. Click on the tile called "**Career Seekers.**" Informational resources on Apprenticeship will populate on the left side tab.
- V. Read the section, "**What is an apprentice?**"
- VI. Read the section, "**Why become an apprentice.**"
- VII. Read: "**How to become an apprentice.**"
- VIII. Applying to become an apprentice is just like applying for a job. Anyone interested must apply directly to a registered Apprenticeship Ohio program.

Click “**Overview**” from the options on the left. Click the “**Launch**” on the “**Statewide Registered Apprenticeship Dashboard**” tile.

- IX. Click on the “**Click here for Current Sponsors**” link at the top.
- X. Search for opportunities and apprenticeship offered by county.

If you see an apprenticeship that is interesting to you, list it below. Talk to your coach about next steps.

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

## 9. Getting Your High School Equivalency Diploma/GED

Today, most jobs, even at the entry level, require that you have a high school or equivalent diploma. Ohio's high school equivalency diploma will show an employer that you have the same skills that they would expect of a high school graduate.

Your diploma demonstrates that you can function on the job and are ready to participate in college and trade school courses.

For an online version of this unit use this link:

<https://forms.office.com/g/n7v1FNZxNr>

Name: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

Email address: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

Go to [OhioMeansJobs.com](https://ohiojobs.com) and click "**Log In / Sign Up.**"

- A. Click on "**Go to OH|ID,**" enter your login information and click "**Log in.**"
- B. Click "**For Job Seekers**" in the masthead, then hover over "**Build Your Career.**"
- C. Click on "**Career Preparation.**"
- D. Click on "**Get Your Diploma as An Adult.**"
- E. Read through your options and watch the short video titled "**Ohio's Options: Adult Diploma Programs.**"
- F. What would be some advantages of having your diploma? What would having your diploma mean to you?  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**
- G. What do you think is the best way to go about getting your GED?  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**
- H. Do you want to work on your GED in a classroom/program or online? Which would work better for you and why?  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**
- I. On the far right, under "**For More Information n,**" click on "**Assessments and Training.**"
- J. Click on the blue icon that says, "**Visit Online Training Center.**"
- K. You can now see all of the online options available for brushing up and studying for your high school equivalency. To get started, click on "**Prepare for Your High School Equivalency Test.**" Then scroll down to "**GED Test Preparation Tutorials, eBooks and**

**Flashcards.** A good place to start is with “**Introduction to the GED Test.**” Click on “**Start Tutorial**”. You will land on the “**Course Introduction**” page. Click “**Start Tutorial**” again.

- L. Click and read the four sections:
- Lesson 1: About the GED—What to Expect
  - Lesson 2: Getting Comfortable with the Test
  - Lesson 3: Responding to Different Question Types
  - Course Summary
- M. You can test yourself to figure out where you stand. In the masthead, hover over “**All assessments.**” Scroll down and hover over “**Prepare for Your High School Equivalency Test.**” and click “**Are You Ready?**” There are six practice tests (i.e., Skills Check) that will give you an idea of what you need to study to pass the test. Set aside some quiet time to take each of the pretests and record your scores in the spaces below.

Reading 1	Score:
Reading 2	Score:
Language 1	Score:
Language 2	Score:
Math 1	Score:
Math 2	Score:

How did you feel about working on your GED online? Does this seem like a good option for you now that you have spent some time working online? Why or why not?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

Click on “**Return to OhioMeansJobs**” in the masthead. Click “**For Job Seekers**” in the masthead, then hover over “**Build Your Career**” and click on “**Career Preparation.**” Click on “**Get Your Diploma as An Adult.**”

- N. Click on the blue “**Launch**” button. This will take you to the Ohio Department of Education website.
- O. In the “**How Do I?**” section click on “**Find a diploma program near me?**” to get information about schools or programs in your county that offer classes.

What center is in your area? What is the contact information?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

- P. What would be your next step to begin classes? What step are you ready to take?
- Click or tap here to enter text.**

Talk to your career coach to try to learn about all the options in the community to get your equivalency diploma. Decide which option is best for you.

## GETTING THE JOB

### 10. Writing a Powerful Cover Letter

A cover letter can be as important in your job search as your resume. Because it accompanies your resume, it should not repeat what is on your resume. Cover letters give you an opportunity to mention experiences and accomplishments that might not neatly fit into your resume, and they give you a chance to highlight the skills you have that the employer listed in the job posting. Using the steps below, create a cover letter that you can save to your OhioMeansJobs.com profile and modify every time you apply for a job.

For an online version of this unit use this link:

<https://forms.office.com/g/EWBWdUpq94>

Name: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

Email address: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

Go to [OhioMeansJobs.com](https://ohiojobs.com) and click **“Log In / Sign Up.”**

- A. Click on **“Go to OH|ID,”** enter your login information and click **“Log in.”**
- B. There are a number of resources on the internet to help identify what should be included in a cover letter, to view examples of cover letters and to create a cover letter using a template.

Navigate to your dashboard by clicking on **your name** in the top right and then click on **“Dashboard”** from the drop-down. Click on **“Documents.”** In the **“My Cover Letters”** section click on **“Manage Cover Letters.”**

- C. You will see **“Wondering what to write? Check out our advice on cover letters and beyond.”** Click on **“cover letters and beyond.”** This takes you to Monster.com and more information on cover letters. On the far-right side in the **“Browse Advice Articles”** section, click on **“Cover Letters”** and then click on **“View all.”** A list of cover letter samples will be displayed. Select and read at least 2 example cover letters.
- D. Return to [OhioMeansJobs.com](https://ohiojobs.com). Click **“For Job Seekers”** in the masthead, then hover over **“Practice Your Skills”** and click on **“Interview Skills.”**
- E. This will take you to the **“Prepare for All Kinds of Interviews.”** Click **“Launch.”**
- F. Click **“Visit the Interview Practice Center.”**
- G. In the mast head click on **“Interviews”** and then click on **“Interview Curriculum.”**

- H. Click on the tile called “**Written Curriculum.**” Click on “**Module 2**” and from the expanded list click on “**Cover Letter Advice & Examples.**” Read that section.
- I. Now let’s work on creating a cover letter. Navigate to your “**Dashboard**” in OhioMeansJobs.com by clicking on “**Return to OhioMeansJobs**” in the top right corner of the masthead.

Click on “**My Profile**” and then click “**Dashboard**” from the dropdown. Click on “**Documents.**” In the “**My Cover Letters**” section click on “**Manage Cover Letters.**”

- J. Click “**Create a New Letter.**” From the template drop-down menu, you will have two options. One cover letter is for a recent college graduate. The other is for a person with relevant work experience. If you have not recently graduated from college, select the “**Relevant work experience**” template.
- K. Add a title to your cover letter. This will not appear in your cover letter. It is just an easy way for you to identify your cover letters. You can create and save up to five cover letters, which is useful if you are applying for different types of jobs.
- L. You will see a cover letter template that you will need to edit. The information that needs to be added or edited is contained within brackets. You can also delete the entire template and compose your own cover letter within the template.
- M. If you know the hiring manager’s name, insert it in the salutation. If you do not know his or her name, use “Dear Hiring Manager” or “Dear Sir/Madam.”
- N. The first paragraph should include information about why you are writing.

Mention the position you are applying for and where you found the job listing. Include the name of a mutual contact if you have one.

Examples:

*“I was interested to see your job posting on OhioMeansJobs.com for a retail sales associate and would like to learn more about this opportunity.”*

*“I recently saw a posting on OhioMeansJobs.com for a production worker. Please consider me for that position.”*

If using a mutual contact or a referral:

*“I recently learned about the production worker position from Larry Johnson. I am interested in learning more about the position and would love an opportunity to meet with you.”*

- O. To write a powerful cover letter, have a job description for the position that you want to apply for in front of you. Address the attributes and qualifications that are outlined in the job description. The second paragraph should describe what you have to offer the employer. Mention specifically how your qualifications match the job. Remember, you are interpreting your resume, not repeating it. Be sure to use the same terms contained in the job

description whenever possible to make it easier for the reader to see how you are qualified.

For example, if you are looking for a retail sales associate job and the job posting says,

*“We are seeking Retail Sales Associates who are friendly, well-spoken, and can multitask in a fast-paced environment,”* address those characteristics in your cover letter.

You might say,

*“I am friendly and enjoy engaging with people from all walks of life. I have developed strong conversational skills and can relate well to customers. I recognize that in a retail environment, days can be long, hectic, and require multitasking. I am up for that challenge.”*

If you are applying for a job as a production worker and the job posting says,

*“Must be willing to learn new skills, can work with minimal instruction, and has attention to detail,”* address those competencies in your cover letter.

You might say,

*“I am eager to learn new skills and be an asset to your company. I have always paid attention to details, which has served me well as a backyard auto mechanic. Once someone shows me how to do something, I learn quickly and require minimal oversight and instruction.”*

P. The final paragraph concludes by thanking the employer for considering you:

*“Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope to have the opportunity to discuss the opening with you in person.”*

OR

*“I would like a chance to meet in person to discuss your needs and my qualifications. I can be reached at ###-###-####. Thank for you for your consideration. I look forward to speaking to you.”*

Q. Click **“Save Letter.”**

R. Click **“View”** to review what you wrote.

S. Click **“Send”** to send a copy of your letter to your career coach for feedback.

Another platform to use is [Canva.com](https://www.canva.com). You must create an account to use the platform, but you can use it for free. [Canva.com](https://www.canva.com) allows the user to use a theme with graphics in creating a cover letter.

T. Review the following sample cover letter on the next page.

Betsy Franks  
121 Franks Road  
Smalltown, OH 12121  
[Betsyfranks@gmail.com](mailto:Betsyfranks@gmail.com)  
443-994-2900

November 1, 2023

Human Resources Director  
Golden Living  
123 East Medical Avenue  
Milltown, OH 61232

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am submitting my resume in response to an ad I found on OhioMeansJobs.com for a nurse's aide position. I am extremely interested in the position.

I recently completed the Certified Nursing Assistant program at Central Community College and am eager to begin a career in nursing. I am interested in a full-time position, and I understand that weekends and holidays are part of the job requirements. Working weekends and holidays will present no problem for me. While in my nursing program, I was involved in many projects and tasks that required working together in teams. I enjoyed team learning, getting different perspectives, and working with others.

I would be excited to have an opportunity to interview for this position. I can be reached at 443-994-2900 or through email at [Betsyfranks@gmail.com](mailto:Betsyfranks@gmail.com). I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,

*Betsy Franks*

Betsy Franks

## 11. Writing a Powerful Resume

Resumes are used to apply for jobs. Employers generally decide whom to interview based on the cover letter and the resume, so use both to make a favorable impression. A resume gives the employer a summary of your skills, abilities, and accomplishments. By following the steps listed below, you can create a solid resume to use when applying for jobs.

For an online version of this unit use this link:

<https://forms.office.com/g/U8ck46gTp1>

Name: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

Email address: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

Go to [OhioMeansJobs.com](https://ohiojobs.com) and click “**Log In / Sign Up.**”

- A. Click on “**Go to OH|ID,**” enter your login information and click “**Log in.**”
- B. Click on **your name** in the top right and then click on “**Dashboard**” in the dropdown.
- C. Under “**Profile Strength**” click on “**Upload or Create a Resume.**”
- D. Click on the “**Create a resume**” tile near the bottom.
- E. In the “**Resume Basics**” section, under “**Resume Title**” name your resume. Employers can see the resume title when they are searching for candidates so this is your first chance to tell them about yourself and should be a positive description of you or what job you are trying to obtain. You should have several versions of your resume.
- F. In the “**Resume Status**” area, click the inactive box for now. You do not want it to be active until the resume is complete and your career coach has reviewed it.
- G. Before you begin working on your resume, look at Tanya Heard’s resume on the next page. Tanya worked at the Dari-Delite as a counter clerk. Notice that she did not spend much time thinking about what her duties were and so only listed three duties. She did not list any activities, skills, or workshops. Her email address is not professional. Her resume does not give an employer a compelling reason to bring her in for an interview. A resume should be one page long, even if you have no experience.

## Tanya Heard's Sample Resume

### **Tanya Heard**

101 Hickory Lane  
Grove City, OH 43123  
443-555-1212  
hotmama@aol.com

### **Work Experience**

Counter Clerk  
5/2018–9/2018 Dari-Delite, Dayton, OH  
Wait on customers.  
Serve food.  
Clean tables.

### **Education**

9/2015–5/2018 Dayton Public Schools,  
Dayton, OH  
GPA: 2 out of 4 High School

- H. Look at Julie Leery's resume on the next page. Julie spent more time outlining her duties and therefore gave the employer more information and reasons to consider her for a position. Notice that she listed activities, courses she took in high school, and her skills. This is a more complete resume and a good example of what you want to create. She was able to stretch her resume to fill one page.

## Julie Leery's Sample Resume

Julie Leery  
101 Hickory Lane  
Grove City, OH 43123  
443-555-1212  
cygnet84@aol.com

### Work Experience

Counter Clerk

5/2018–8/2019 Dari-Delite, 123 Main Street, Grove City, OH 43123

- Provided outstanding customer service, solved customer problems, delivered customer satisfaction, and built customer loyalty
- Promoted from food prep to counter clerk after three months on job
- Multitasked while working quickly and accurately
- Delivered fast, friendly service to customers
- Responded quickly and responsibly to customers and team members
- Adapted to flexible schedule needs of the manager including weekends, holidays
- Cross-trained to work in multiple areas of the restaurant
- Handled 250–300 customers at checkout per shift
- Collected cash and credit card payments totaling several thousand dollars a day with 99.9% accuracy

### Education

9/2015–5/2018 **Dayton Public Schools, Dayton, OH**

GPA: 2.0

- High School anticipated graduation date: May 2024
- Course work included:
  - Child development
  - Computer skills
  - Business English

### Skills

- Operate cash register
- Use a computer
- Provide excellent customer service
- Reliable, timely, and dependable
- Work well with others in a team environment

- I. Finally, look at Jessica Smith’s resume on the next page. She has not held a job and did not graduate from high school. She is doing a community service placement at Goodwill Industries and so has added it under Work Experience, because community service mirrors a job. She also added workshops that she attended at the Career Center, which enhances her “Education” section. Jessica also listed skills that an employer might be interested in and made her resume fill an entire page.

## Jessica Smith's Sample Resume

Jessica Smith  
101 Hickory Lane  
Grove City, OH 43123  
443-555-1212  
jessicasmith@gmail.com

### Work Experience

Inventory Specialist  
1/2021 – Present  
Goodwill Industries, Dayton, OH

- Accept donations from the public
- Sort donations into sellable and not sellable
- Press and hang clothing
- Clean and prep donations for sale
- Distribute tax receipts to people who donated merchandise
- Clean work area at the close of the day
- Train new volunteers

### Education

OhioMeansJobs Career Center, Dayton, OH  
4/2019–5/2019  
Vocational courses

- Customer Service Training Certification
- Work Keys Certification
- Basic Computer Skills Training
- Job Readiness Training

Dayton General High School, Dayton, OH  
9/2014–5/2017

### Other Skills

- Bilingual: Spanish and English

- J. To create a resume that is customized for a job opening, read the ad for the job. What has the employer listed as the qualifications for the job? Make sure you address each qualification and requirement on your resume or cover letter.
- K. Now it is your turn. Complete the **“Work Experience”** section adding your most recent job first. Think about all of the things you did at your jobs, whether it was a paid job, a volunteer job, or a community service site. If you struggle to remember what you did at your job or if you struggle to think of how to describe a task that you have done, look up job postings or a job description for a similar job and read through the duties. Add those duties to the **“Describe this work experience”** box. It’s best to add one duty per line. Do not write full sentences. Please note that if you do not have work experience yet, you can select the **“I don’t have any work experience”** box.
- L. Complete the **“Activities”** section, which includes extracurricular activities, sports you played, or any volunteer work you have done. Activities such as caring for a sick relative or chaperoning a school trip can be listed as volunteer activities.
- M. The next section is **“Education.”** Fill in your most recent education first. If you have taken any vocational training courses or workshops anywhere, including at the OhioMeansJobs Center, list those first. (See Jessica Smith’s resume for an example.) Then list your academic training such as community college and high school. If you have not had the chance to attend any workshops or go to any vocational training, think about your high school experience and list a few classes you took. (See Julie Leery’s resume for an example.) If you are still in high school, you can list that information and enter the estimated date when you will graduate.
- N. Complete the **“Target Job”** section. This section will not appear on your resume. This section gathers information so that the OhioMeansJobs.com online job posting system can match you to open jobs. You cannot continue without completing this section, and you must answer all of the questions. The more target industries you choose and the more occupations you select, the greater your chances are of being matched to a job.
- O. The last box on this page is **“Target Job Locations.”** You have two options: work within your area or look for jobs in other locations. If you are not planning to move, pick your area as your target job location.
- P. Click **“Create”** and you will land on a page that summarizes your resume.
- Q. Your results from the last step are compiled on this page. Scroll down and review each section to make sure that all the information is correct. Each section will give you the option to **“Edit”** or to **“Add.”** Look for typos, errors, or omissions.
- R. You might not have a resume that fills one page. Scroll down to the **“Skills”** area and click **“Add.”** Add a minimum of 4 skills and up to a maximum of 10 skills you have. Review the abbreviated skills finder worksheet on the next page and select 4 to 10 that apply to you. Click **“Submit”** when finished.

**Abbreviated Skills Finder****Personality traits/assets:**

Active  
 Adaptable  
 Careful  
 Considerate  
 Cooperative  
 Dependable  
 Reliable  
 Determined  
 Easy going  
 Efficient  
 Flexible  
 Friendly  
 Good-natured  
 Honest  
 Productive  
 Responsible  
 Resourceful  
 Dedicated  
 Warm  
 Friendly

**Work related skills:**

Ability to work overtime  
 Consistent employment  
 Experienced Supervisor  
 Anticipate customer needs  
 Multitasking  
 Experienced in (*insert role here*)  
 Clear verbal/written communications

**Credentials:**

High School Diploma  
 Occupational license or credential (e.g.,  
 CDL, STNA, etc.)  
 Associate Degree  
 Bachelor's Degree

**Transferable skills:**

Carry/Lift a load  
 Assemble/Collect data/information  
 Adjust/align tools or equipment  
 Budget time or resources  
 Check for quality  
 Clean/organize  
 Collate, sort and organize  
 Monitor/control costs  
 Cut to measurement  
 Cooperate with others  
 Teamwork  
 Meet deadlines  
 Drive machines or equipment  
 Analyze information  
 Follow through on tasks  
 Customer service  
 Relationship building  
 Develop customer loyalty  
 Meet and greet the public  
 Assist with special projects  
 Perform computer and office tasks  
 Prepare routine reports  
 Order supplies  
 Organize data and information  
 Supervision/Management

- S. Above your resume information, click "**What will Employers See?**" You can see what information the employer will get about you. If there is something that doesn't belong or isn't correct, go back and review/edit those sections.
- T. Click on "**Select Resume Sections.**" To add or eliminate resume sections, check or uncheck the box on the left-hand side of each section. If a section is blank, then you would want to delete it.
- U. Then click on "**Select Resume Formats.**" You can select from number of built-in formats including a functional resume, a chronological resume, or an entry level resume. Check whichever format makes the most sense for your background. You can "**Save as a Word Doc**" or "**Print**" to have a hard copy in hand.
- V. Use either the back arrows or click on "**Resume Format**" in the breadcrumbs at the top and find "**I'm Finished**". When you have reviewed all sections and are satisfied, then click the "**I'm finished**" button.
- W. You can now email your resume to your career coach for review by selecting "**Actions**" then "**Send**".
- X. When you are satisfied with your resume, set the resume status found under the name of your resume to "**Active**" rather than "**Inactive.**" Changing the status to active will allow employers to search for your resume and OhioMeansJobs.com to refer job openings to you.

## 12. Customizing Cover Letters and Resumes

Many job seekers apply to jobs using generic cover letters and just insert the company name and the job title into the appropriate blanks with a broad explanation of why they are a good fit for the job. That approach is a mistake.

In today's highly competitive job market, customizing both your resume and cover letter to each individual position will differentiate you from other applicants and demonstrate that you are the ideal fit for the opportunity. This is often the difference between getting an interview and being passed over.

If you follow these steps, then you will know how to write a customized cover letter and resume which will increase the odds that you will land an interview.

- A. Find a job description for a job that you want to apply to or for a job on a career path that you are interested in.
- B. Read the job description carefully. Read what the employer has listed. Ads will often list qualifications, details of the job as well as personality characteristics. Here is an example of an ad for a nursing assistant.

### Nursing Assistant

- The Nursing Assistant is to render good service to the resident in the form of nursing care.
  - Can consistently follow oral & written directions.
  - Has the ability to work as a team of professionals.
  - Possesses strong communication skills.
  - Must have basic computer knowledge and ability with an aptitude to learn medical software.
  - Must be articulate and personable as well as be able to relate professionally and positively to residents, incoming visitors, and associates at all levels.
  - Must maintain regular and punctual attendance. Can work days and every other weekend.
  - Must have the ability to work in a team.
- C. To customize a cover letter and resume, the job applicant would make a list of all the requirements that the employer has listed in the job posting and make sure that each requirement is addressed. The first step in customizing a cover letter or a resume is to make a list using the job description.

The following table is the list of qualifications and characteristics that the employer is looking for. Placing a check mark in the table will help make sure each qualification is covered in a cover letter and resume.

Qualifications	Cover letter	Resume
A team player	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Basic Computer Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reading/Writing Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strong communication skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Articulate and personable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relate professionally and positively to the public	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain regular attendance and punctuality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can work days and every other weekend	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to learn medical software	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- D. When applying for a job and sending a cover letter and resume, you will want to go through the same process. List everything that the employer lists in the ad. Then read your cover letter and resume. Have you covered everything that the employer mentioned?
- E. Which of these resume blurbs come closest to what the employer is looking for?

### **Mary**

**Nursing Assistant**, Valley Nursing Home, Valley City, OH

March 2022-Present

- Assisted residents to and from activities as required.
- Reported resident health or behavioral changes to supervisor.
- Monitored vital signs of patients.
- Maintained cleanliness and hygiene in the patient's room.
- Provided residents with bathing, dressing, and grooming care.

### **Samantha**

**Nursing Assistant**, Golden Age Home, Cincinnati, OH

October 2022 - Present

- Provide competent and comforting care to elderly residents.
- Maintains personal, direct, or intimate rapport, depending on the conversation.
- Able to interpret body language, such as gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact.
- Worked closely with other team members to provide quality care to residents.
- Proficient in computer and medical software and can quickly learn new systems and programs.
- Related well to patients, their families, and members of the public.

- Worked rotating shifts including weekends.
- Solid attendance and dependability.
- Strong reading and writing skills.

Notice that Mary did not address the skills and qualifications that the employer thinks are essential. Samantha did. Therefore, Samantha would be more likely to be called in for an interview than Mary. Notice that Samantha restated all the qualifications that the employer listed in the job listing. Mary's did not and so her resume blurb feels like she wrote one resume and uses it for all the jobs to which she applies. This is known as a generic resume and is not effective. Samantha customizes. Samantha will likely get a job faster.

## 13. Preparing for the Job Interview

Employers use the cover letter and resume to decide whom to bring in for a job interview. The more you prepare for the interview, the more relaxed you will feel. Anticipating the questions based on the most frequently asked questions in job interviews and then practicing your answers in advance will give you an advantage over the job seekers who did not prepare for the interview. This unit will help you prepare for and practice your answers, which will help you be confident in the interview.

For an online version of this unit use this link:

<https://forms.office.com/g/B41Dw4f3PP>

Name: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

Email address: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

Go to [OhioMeansJobs.com](https://ohiojobs.com) and click “**Log In / Sign Up.**”

- A. Click on “**Go to OH|ID,**” enter your login information and click “**Log in.**”
- B. Click “**For Job Seekers**” in the masthead, then hover over “**Practice Your Skills.**”
- C. Click “**Interview Skills,**” which will take you to the “**Prepare for All Kinds of Interviews.**”
- D. Click “**Launch.**”
- E. Click “**Visit the Interview Practice Center.**”
- F. In the mast head click on “**Interviews**” and then click on “**Interview Curriculum.**”
- G. You will now see two options in the Interview Practice Center: “Fast Track” and “Mastery Track.” Fast Track is good for anyone who has an interview in the next day or two. Mastery Track is more complete and is for people who want to improve their interview skills and do not have an interview set up. Depending on your situation, click “Fast Track” or “Mastery Track.”

Watch the videos in the track you have chosen. Fast Track will take approximately 1 hour and 40 minutes. The Mastery Track will take around 4 hours from beginning to end.

**I picked:**

- Fast Track
- Mastery Track

- H. Here is a list of the toughest interview questions you should be ready to answer. Review the questions below and think about how you would answer them.

***Why should I hire you?***

***Why are you the best candidate for this job?***

***Tell me about yourself.***

***What are your strengths?***

***What is your biggest weakness?***

***Have you ever been fired or asked to leave a job?***

***Why did you leave your last job?***

***Why have you held so many jobs?***

***Is there anything in your personal history that I should be aware of before doing a background check? (Have you ever been convicted of a felony?)***

- I. Listed below are some answers to the question, **“Why should I hire you?”** or, **“Why are you the best candidate for this job?”** None of these answers are extraordinarily strong. Read through them and try to figure out why they are not strong answers. (The statements in parentheses after each answer tell why it is not a good answer.)

**“Because I need a job.”** (The applicant’s need and not the employer’s need.)

**“I don’t know.”** (Unprepared; no time spent thinking about what the employer needs.)

**“Wow. That is a really hard question.”** (Unprepared.)

**“I need the money to support my family.”** (Applicant’s need and not the employer’s need.)

**“I am the best applicant for the job.”** (No information provided about why you are the best applicant.)

**“Because I can walk to work, and the schedule is good for me.”** (Applicant’s need and not the employer’s need.)

Notice that none of the answers helps the employer see how the interviewee will bring value to the employer. The answers were about the applicant’s needs and not the employer’s.

- J. Let’s look at how to create a better answer. Read through the following list of reasons that an employer should hire you. **Put a mark beside 10 reasons why an employer should hire you.** Be prepared to elaborate on your selected responses.

**Reasons for Employers to Hire You or Why You are the Best Candidate for the Job**

- I am willing to work hard and be productive.
- I am both quality and production oriented.
- I get along well with supervisors and co-workers.
- I am a quick learner and take instruction well.
- I have a solid history of being reliable.
- My punctuality and attendance are strong.
- I am willing to work overtime, do jobs, or work schedules other people may not like.
- I have proven successes from prior work experiences.
- My transferable skills add value to the job.
- My personality fits the job.
- I have a long-term interest in the field.
- My education has prepared me for the job.
- I avoid mistakes but learn from them if I make one.
- I am interested in a career, not just a job.
- I have a lot of personal drive and pride to do good work.
- I am motivated to work in this type of job.
- I am willing to both follow direction and lead, if needed.
- My energy level is much higher than that of most people.
- I am willing to take on added responsibility.
- I have a lot of determination to succeed and work hard.
- I feel that I owe my employer a day's work for a day's pay.
- I will not ask for advancement or raises until I've earned them.
- I can work under both minimal and close supervision.
- I have researched the job and the company, and I fit here.
- I am loyal to companies willing to invest in me. I am willing to help people when they need it.
- I will do extra work to get ahead.
- You can count on me when you cannot count on anyone else.
- I have taken tests that show I have an aptitude for the job.
- I enjoy learning new things so I can do the job better.

- K. Now complete the following template using 3 of the 10 reasons you identified in the last step.

**Why Should I Hire You? Why are you the best candidate for the job?**

*“This is an interview question that I have given some serious thought to, and aside from the fact that I have the skills to do the job, I think I am the best candidate for these three reasons . . .”*

1. Click or tap here to enter text.
2. Click or tap here to enter text.
3. Click or tap here to enter text.

*“So, for these three reasons, I think that I am the best candidate for the job.”*

- L. Read your answer aloud. Try to sound natural. Practice saying it into the mirror until you are satisfied you could say it during the interview.
- M. Go to the interview practice center again. In the masthead click **“Interviews”** and then click **“Practice Sets”** in the **“Practice”** column. Click on the **“General”** tile. You will land on a page that has a series of boxes. Look for the section labeled **“Top Ten Questions.”** Click on the tile called **“Practice with Stacey.”** Click **“Next Question”** repeatedly, or scroll down the list of questions, until you arrive on the question, **“Why are you the best candidate for this job?”**

Stacey will ask you, **“Why are you the best candidate for this job?”** Click the red **“Start Recording”** icon. State the answer you practiced above. Click **“Stop Recording”** when you have completed your answer. Then click **“Save Answer”** and your answer will be uploaded to your profile. Please note that you will need to be using a smartphone or a computer with a video camera to record, but it is still helpful to practice saying your answer out loud even if you cannot record it.

- N. Click the white play icon in the center of the screen to watch the video you just recorded. If you are satisfied with how you look and how you sound, you are ready to move on. If you want to try again, click **“Re-record.”**
- O. Now click on **“Interviews”** in the masthead and click on **“Build Answer”** in the **“Answer”** column. Complete the following **“Build an answer”** templates by clicking **“Start”** on the following tiles. Write answers that you could use during an interview. Use the **“Build Your Answer”** sections later in this section to craft a response.
- P. Click **“Save & Publish”** when you have completed each section. Close out of each section by clicking on the **“X”** in the masthead to move to a new section.

Tell me about yourself.

Talking about strengths. What is your greatest strength?

Talking about weakness. What is your biggest weakness and how are you working on improving in this area?

Why do you want to work here?

Click on the **“Free-Form Answer”** tile to enter the following questions and your prepared responses.

Why have you held so many jobs?

Is there anything in your personal history that I should be aware of before doing a background check?

- Q. Click on **“Interviews”** in the masthead and then click on **“Practice Sets”** in the **“Practice”** column. Stacey should appear at the bottom of the page. Click her name to record your answers and review how you sounded. You can navigate to different questions by scrolling down the list of existing questions. If you are satisfied, move on. If you want to try again, click **“Re-record.”** Stacey may not have a similar question for all the questions. In that case, use any question to record your answer. The idea is to hear and see what you sound like and whether are not you are satisfied with the answer you built.
- R. Continuing in the **“Interview Practice Center,”** click **“Interviews”** in the masthead and click **“My Videos”** in the **“Practice”** column. On the far right is a drop-down menu next to each interview question. Click **“Review Yourself.”** Watch the video and evaluate your responses using the scale provided. You can also email or share a link of your recorded answer to your career coach by clicking **“Actions”** in the row of the question and clicking **“Share.”**
- S. Once you feel comfortable with your answers, do a practice interview with your career coach, a friend, your parent, or other person who can play the role of the employer. Practice makes perfect!

**Build your answer: Tell me about yourself**

- i. **Specify what type of work you are seeking.**  
“I am interested in a career in Click or tap here to enter text because Click or tap here to enter text.”
- ii. **Tell the interviewer about any related experience (paid, volunteer, or school) you have had.**  
“I have more than year(s) of related experience working as a Click or tap here to enter text. In that job, I Click or tap here to enter text.”  
OR  
“I just finished a certificate program at (school) and I learned Click or tap here to enter text.”
- iii. **Tell the interviewer about your most relevant marketable skills.**  
“I think my best job-related skills are Click or tap here to enter text.”  
“I can Click or tap here to enter text.”
- iv. **Tell the employer about your best personality traits.**  
“I guess I’d describe my personality as a person who is Click or tap here to enter text.”
- v. **Define a point of pride, an achievement, or a success relevant to the job.**  
“If I had a highlight, aside from raising my family, it would be the time Click or tap here to enter text.”
- vi. **Give the question back to the interviewer.**  
“Is this the type of information you’re looking for?”

## Build your answer: What are your strengths?

To compose a strong answer to this question, review the job description or job posting. What skills, knowledge, or personality traits did the employer list? If the employer lists dependability and you are dependable, build your answer around that attribute. If the employer is looking for a team player, then your strength could be your ability to work well with others.

For example, if the job description says that the employer is looking for a team player, then a strong answer to **“What are your strengths?”** would be,

*“I feel my greatest strength is my ability to work with people. I enjoy talking to people and asking questions. I get along well with others. I am comfortable asking questions to find out people’s needs, and I listen carefully and try to really hear what they are saying. My ability to work with people makes me a great fit for this position.”*

If the job description says, **“must be reliable,”** then a strong answer to **“What are your strengths?”** would be,

*“I feel my greatest strength is my dependability. You will be able to count on me being here and working hard. If you checked with my career coach, she will tell you that if I have an appointment, I am there on time; that I follow through with my commitments; and I do what is asked of me.”*

### Your script:

Look at the job description and identify one qualification you think you meet. Use that as one of your greatest strengths.

i. **Identify one of your greatest strengths.**

“I think that my greatest strength is Click or tap here to enter text.”

ii. Describe that strength.

Click or tap here to enter text.”

## Build your answer: What is your biggest weakness?

We all have weaknesses. No one is perfect. When asked this question on a job interview, pick a weakness that the employer would not consider an essential quality or skill for this position.

For example, in a customer service position, getting along well with others is an essential skill for the job. To answer the weakness question, don't use shyness, not being able to get along with people, or trouble controlling your temper. All of those answers reflect problems with qualities that are essential to the job. A better answer would be to choose a weakness in a skill or ability that is not essential to the job.

Here is an example of how to answer the weakness question:

"I am not sure I would call it a weakness, but there are some areas that I am working on. One area that I am working on is to improve my financial-planning skills. I have made a few mistakes in the past that I don't want to make again. I have been taking classes to understand banking, retirement, budgeting, and credit. It isn't something that I learned in school, so I am trying to learn all I can now. I hope to be able to apply what I learn personally to my job. Having a basic financial literacy will help me understand business practices, and I think that is an asset."

- i. **Remove the word weakness and change it to improving.**  
"I don't know that I want to call it a weakness, but there are some areas I have been working on improving."
- ii. **List one work-related area or personality trait you are trying to improve.**  
"One of the areas I am working to improve is my Click or tap here to enter text."
- iii. **Say why you are working on it.**  
Click or tap here to enter text.
- iv. **Indicate what actions you have taken to work on it.**  
Click or tap here to enter text.
- v. **Say what you have learned from working on it.**  
"I have found that since I began working to improve, I Click or tap here to enter text."
- vi. **Say how this will help the employer.**  
"Based on what I have learned, I think you will see that I put in the time to work on my weaknesses to turn them into strengths. Click or tap here to enter text."

**Build your answer: Why have you held so many jobs?**

If you have worked at many jobs for a short time, be ready to explain that to an employer. From an employer's perspective, hiring someone who has worked many short-term jobs is risky. Employers like to hire people who will stay on the job.

- i. **Admit the mistake of not focusing on a career.**  
“I know I should have spent more time thinking about a career instead of jumping from one job to another.”
- ii. **Specify a career direction and how you determined what it was.**  
“I worked with a career counselor and looked at what I have done best and what I enjoyed and decided on **Click or tap here to enter text.** (career field). Now I am ready for a career and not just a job.”
- iii. **Turn job-hopping into a positive experience.**  
“I can say that by having a number of different jobs, I learned something from each one of them that I think would be beneficial to a new employer.”
- iv. **Link a skill you developed in your last position that would be relevant to the job you are applying for.**  
“In my last position as a **Click or tap here to enter text.** I learned how important it is to **Click or tap here to enter text.** As a **Click or tap here to enter text.** (position you are applying for), I think this would be important.”

**Build your answer: Is there anything in your personal history that I should be aware of before doing a background check?**

If you have been convicted of a crime that is not a sealed court record or is something likely to show up in a background check, admit it rather than hide it. Assume responsibility for it and do not blame anyone. Talk about what you have done since that time. End by restating your commitment to doing a good job for the employer. Here is an example conversation:

**Employer:** *“Is there anything in your personal history that I should be aware of before doing a background check?” (“Have you ever been convicted of a crime?” Or, “On your application, you wrote ‘will discuss at the interview’ in your answer to the question about whether you have ever been convicted of a felony. Could you explain that to me now?”)*

**Interviewee:** *“I want you to know that in the past I made a poor decision and was convicted of a felony. I regret my actions and have committed myself to changing. Since then, I have taken courses, obtained my high school diploma, and volunteered at the community center. I have learned from that mistake. I understand you might have concerns about this, but I am committed to doing an excellent job for you.”*

- i. **Admit that there is a problem in your background.**  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**
- ii. **Explain your regret and what you have done since that time.**  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**
- iii. **State your commitment to do a good job for this employer.**  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**

**Build your answer: Have you ever been fired from a job or asked to leave?**

Being fired from a job or being asked to leave a job is a red flag to an employer. If either of these situations has happened to you, be prepared to explain what happened in a positive light. Do not blame anyone else or talk negatively about a past employer.

- i. **Tell the employer what happened. Talk positively about it as a learning experience.**  
*“I was desperate for work and did not think carefully about my career, and so I ended up taking the wrong job.”*  
**Click or tap here to enter your answer.**

- ii. **What did you learn that shows the employer you will not repeat the experience?**  
*“I learned that I needed to take time to figure out my career interests and my qualifications so that I would head in a direction that was a better fit for both my employer and me. I want a win-win for both of us.”*  
**Click or tap here to enter your answer.**



## Build your answer: Why did you leave your last job?

Interviewers are looking for red flags with this question. They want to make sure you left the last job for a good reason. You want the interviewer to think, “That sounds reasonable.” Do not talk negatively about any past employers, co-workers, or supervisors.

Here are some answers that will make the employer think, “That sounds reasonable.”

*“I loved my job at the XYZ company and was happy there. But I was needed at home to care for a family member and had to leave. The issue has resolved, so I am able to work again without issue.”*

*“Although I liked my job and was learning a lot, I took time out to raise my children. They are all set now, and I am ready to work again.”*

*“Business slowed down, and everyone’s hours were cut. I decided that was a good time to leave and get some additional training to build my skills. So, I completed an STNA certification program and am ready to get back to work.”*

- i. **State what happened while staying positive.**  
**Click or tap here to enter your answer.**
  
- ii. **Say something that indicates the problem is resolved and that you are ready to go back to work again.**  
**Click or tap here to enter your answer.**

## 14. Preparing for a Virtual Job Interview

Virtual interviewing became essential in 2020 for most companies when in-person job interviews were suddenly stopped due to COVID and social distancing rules were recommended. Employers have learned that virtual interviewing has advantages. It is more time efficient for the hiring manager and more convenient for the job applicant. Virtual interviews are not going away.

Virtual interviews require a different type of planning and practice. This unit will outline considerations that you will want to plan around if you find yourself doing a virtual interview.

For an online version of this unit use this link:  
<https://forms.office.com/g/5QJTSqGDEs>

Name: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

Email address: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

### Technology

Generally, when an employer schedules a virtual interview, he/she will send you a link to join the interview either as a text message or in an email. Different employers use different platforms like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc. You will want to make sure that you have downloaded the app based on the program that the employer will be using. If you haven't downloaded it in advance of the meeting, then you will be delayed joining the meeting thus risk making a bad impression.

- A. Are you most likely to use a phone or a computer to do a virtual interview?  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**
- B. Do you know how to download apps onto your phone or computer?  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**
- C. Does your device have a working camera and microphone?  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**

Talk to your career coach about how to download and how to make the technology work. One option is to come to the center any time you have an interview and use our equipment.

## Reduce Distractions and Adjust Lighting

Do not let the interviewer be distracted by your surroundings. The background should be distraction-free, clean, and in a functional space in your home or wherever you are taking the interview from. If you are not happy with your own space, use our offices. If you do use your own house, remember, silence your phone, turn off the television and music, and turn off all notifications on your laptop (or wherever you are taking the interview from). Make sure children are occupied and pets are not freely roaming in camera range.

D. When you think about the environment that you have available for a virtual interview, what adjustments, if any, do you need to make in your environment to reduce distractions?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

Think about lighting in your house. Big windows with natural lighting are ideal. A lamp can be used. Do a trial run with skype, facetime or another video program. Notice the way in which you are lit. Some lights make faces look green on screen; others make people look washed out. Moving a lamp closer and further away from the workspace can change the look on screen.

Position your webcam so that it is at eye-level when you sit down and be sure that you have sufficient lighting in the room so you can be clearly seen without shadows or too much backlight. Turn on all the lights in the room and close the curtains to prevent glare if you are recording in the daytime. Record yourself for a few minutes to make sure that your outfit and environment look acceptable. If you plan to use your phone, think about how you can hold it steady during the interview. Can it be leaned on something rather than being held in your hand?

E. What adjustments do you need to make to give you good lighting?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

## Dress to Impress

What you wear on a video interview is just as important as what you wear for an in-person interview. One difference is that white and light colors do not look good on camera so when you can, select something that is a dark color. Avoid bright colors or tops that are significantly patterned. Bright colors and patterned shirts distract. Employers will notice hair, jewelry, and make-up. Treat the video interview the same way you would treat an in-person interview.

F. Do you have something that would work for a virtual interview?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

## Body Language and Eye Contact Matter

Body language can help you or hurt you on a virtual interview. Non-verbal cues are just as powerful, and sometimes more so, than the words you say. In a job interview, you need to pay as much attention to your body language as you do to the answers you give.

Here are some tips:

- Look directly at the camera. Don't look at yourself.
- Sit up straight.
- Lean in a bit. It shows interest.
- Don't fold your arms.
- Nod when appropriate to show that you are listening and understand.
- Smile genuinely.

G. Given the list above, what do you need to work on?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

## GROWING IN YOUR CAREER

### 15. Successfully Starting your Job

Congratulations on your new job! This is an exciting step forward in your career pathway. Your first days and weeks on the job will include lots of information. It may be hard to keep track of everything, so it's important to stay organized. Your first 30 days on the job will be critical to your success. You will be watched more closely and will want to do your best to shine! Making a good first impression at a new job is important. It can set the tone for your relationships with your supervisor and coworkers moving forward. Let us start with your first day. Then, you can use OhioMeanJobs.com for more information on how to be successful beyond the first day.

For an online version of this unit use this link:

<https://forms.office.com/g/CPzaaNPx9R>

Name: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

Email address: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

- A. Make sure you know when to arrive and when it is okay to leave for the day. What are your work hours?

**Click or tap here to enter text** to **Click or tap here to enter text.**

**Tip:** It is best to show up early to work, especially the first couple of days. It is especially important to be on time. And since you are getting used to a new commute, it is a good idea to give yourself extra time to get to work and to be a little early.

What time do you need to leave your house to be to work 10 minutes early?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

- B. Make sure you know what clothing to wear to work. Be sure to ask what to wear for the first day of work ahead of time. And, if you do not have the clothes you need, talk with your career coach—they can help you get the clothes needed.

**Tip:** If you are not sure about the dress code, contact your employer and ask. What will you wear to work?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

- C. Most employers have policies regarding the use of company internet, cell phones, and other devices on the job.

**Tip:** Avoid using your cell phone when you are supposed to be working. Ask your family and friends not to call you while you are at work unless it is an emergency. What will you do with your cell phone while at work?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

- D. Your job may allow for one or more designated breaks during your working hours.

**Tip:** It is important to know when your break times are, how long they last, and what you can do during the time. Just like arriving on time, be timely about your breaks. Make a plan!

My Break Time:

**Click or tap here to enter text** to **Click or tap here to enter text**.

What I plan to do during break:

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

- E. Think about what you will eat during your first days on the job and what you might eat during your break.

**Tip:** Unless you know the company policy, it is best to bring your lunch the first couple of days until you see what other workers do and whether there are places to buy a meal nearby if needed. What can you pack for lunch and snacks?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

- F. Write a list of questions you would like to have answered on your first day or first week of the job. At a job interview, the employer only covers the job duties briefly. There is much more to know about the job including your new responsibilities, your employer's expectations, and company policies. If you think through the questions you have in advance, you will not only impress your new employer with your enthusiasm, but you will also better understand how to be successful on the job.

**Tip:** Take a notebook and a pen with you for your first few days. You will receive lots of new information and it will be hard to remember everything! Write down important policies or guidance you get from your supervisor or human resources. Your notebook might be a good place to keep paperwork and handouts that you receive. What questions do you want answered?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

- G. Often (but not always), employers will give you an employee handbook or a personnel policy manual to follow. If you get one, be sure to read it. Employee handbooks cover policies for taking time off for vacation and sickness, as well as how and when to notify your supervisor or make requests in advance. In addition, handbooks cover health care benefits such as medical and dental, short- and long-term disability, worker's compensation (if you are injured on the job) and family medical leave or other unpaid leave requests. You may also find policies on dress code, use of company property, and use of personal cell phones. Company policies set the rules and expectations that all employees are expected to follow. What company policies do you want to ask your supervisor or human resources about?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

- H. Some jobs begin with a “probationary period,” which means that your employer could decide to end your employment within a specific time period if they decide that things are not working out. It is important to know the terms of your probationary period, if you have one.

**Tip:** Think of your probationary period as your first impression phase. Your supervisor will probably monitor your work closely to make sure you are meeting expectations. Although it’s always important to do your best at work, it is especially important during this period. Be sure to ask about a probationary period and jot down the specific rules so you can remember them.

Do you have a probationary period?  Yes  No

If yes, how long does it last?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

What are your key job responsibilities? List them out so you can be sure to meet expectations!

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

- I. For more tips to be successful on the job, go to [OhioMeansJobs.com](http://OhioMeansJobs.com) and click “**Log In / Sign Up.**”
- J. Click on “**Go to OH|ID,**” enter your login information and click “**Log in.**”
- K. Click “**For Job Seekers**” in the masthead, then hover over “**Practice your Skills**” and click “**Job Search Skills.**”
- L. Click on “**Read More.**”
- M. Click “**Visit the Interview Practice Center,**” and then click “**Interviews**” in the masthead.
- N. Click on “**Interview Curriculum.**”
- O. Click “**First 90 Days Curriculum**” which includes videos on how to succeed at your job. Here are some key videos to watch:
- Introduction to this Course
  - Being a Detective
  - Managing First Impressions
  - Your Day 1 Goals
  - Your First Manager Meeting
  - Get Quick Wins
  - Day 30 Checklist
  - Day 60 Checklist
  - Day 90 Checklist

- O. Under the video you will see a “Transcript” tab and a “Resources” tab. Click on the “**Resources**” tab. There are 15 worksheets you can download and print. Look over these worksheets to see which are useful to you at your job.

## 16. Getting a Raise or Promotion

To get a raise or promotion, you need a plan. Often, employers try you out as a part-time employee until you prove yourself. Employers will start you at a lower wage until you demonstrate you are worth more. To move up and get higher-paying positions, you may start at a lower-level position. Your first months of a job are important to your success because everyone is watching to see what type of employee you will be. This activity will help you to think through the steps that you can take to get ahead.

For an online version of this unit use this link:

<https://forms.office.com/g/btZPyxSG1F>

Name: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

Email address: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

- A. Think about how you want to get ahead. There are many ways to get ahead. Every situation is different. Some people have jobs that are survival jobs and are just a placeholder until they can find what they are really interested in. Others have jobs that they have a passion for and want to move up and make more. Thinking about your situation, which of the following things most interests you?
- Finding a job in a field I am interested in
  - Getting training and qualifications necessary for a job that that I like
  - Finding a career where job benefits are offered
  - Earning a raise
  - Increasing my hours on my current job
  - Getting a promotion
- B. If you chose one of the first three talk to your career coach. There are other activities and exercises that can help you figure out what you want to do, what types of training are available, and what careers offer company benefits. If you answered one of the last three, then you are working on the right activity.
- C. Considering the feedback you have received, both formal and informal, what favorable perceptions do supervisors and co-workers have of you as an employee? Do they view you as hard-working? Capable? Likeable? Responsible? Professional? Cooperative? A good problem-solver? List all favorable perceptions that your supervisor or co-workers have told you.

Favorable feedback:

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

Of these favorable perceptions, which ones would help you get more hours, build toward a pay raise, or earn a promotion?

Favorable perceptions that will help me:  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**

- D. What less-than-favorable perceptions, if any, do supervisors or co-workers have of you as an employee?

My supervisors and co-workers might view me less favorably on:  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**

Of these less favorable perceptions, which ones might work against your chances for a promotion, more hours, or a pay raise?

The less favorable perceptions that could work against me getting more hours, a pay increase, or a promotion:  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**

Of the less favorable perceptions listed, how could these perceptions be improved? What could you do to favorably change these perceptions?  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**

- E. How visible are you within the company? In what ways, and by what means, do others have an opportunity to observe your work and performance?

Others are able to observe my work by my involvement in these activities:  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**

- F. What could you do to further expand your responsibilities beyond your job description?

I could expand my responsibilities by:  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**

- G. What accomplishments have you made at work that make you feel proud of the work you do?

My accomplishments include:  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**

- H. What is your long-term career goal? Where do you eventually want to be on the career ladder?

My career goal is:  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**

- I. What job titles at your present job would help you reach your career goal? List each step.

These job titles will lead me to my career goals:  
**Click or tap here to enter text.**

J. What additional training or education would you need to move to the next step?

The next job step would require:

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

K. Where can you receive the training or education needed?

I can receive training or education at:

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

L. What specific skills would the next job step require? (Examples: computer skills, supervising others, decision making, scheduling, budgeting, customer service).

The next position would require the following skills:

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

M. Of the skills listed above, which would you need to develop?

I would need to develop these skills:

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

How could you develop or acquire these skills (Examples: mentorship, on-the-job training, courses, a degree program, self-study, a training program, a volunteer position, community work, cross-training).

I could develop these skills by:

**Click or tap here to enter text.**

N. Based on everything you have outlined above, what are the steps you can take that will help you to earn a promotion or a raise?

**Click or tap here to enter text.**