

EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION: BASICS

Employment applications seem like they ought to be pretty easy. They're black and white, someone else's form, not much room for creativity – just fill in the blanks, right? Not always so, especially with all the emphasis being placed on resumes these days. Employment applications are seeking different kinds of information and employers often use an application for a different purpose than they use resumes. The application form gives the employer the opportunity to determine how you respond to their requests. Where a resume places emphasis on who you are, what you know and what you offer, an employment application is representative of the kind of work you do. There are some basic rules you should follow when completing an application. When those rules aren't followed, the employer may toss the application and your opportunity for a job along with it.

Frequent complaints employers have expressed about applications:

- ◆ Hard to read because of illegible handwriting or messy completion;
- ◆ Words scribbled or crossed out;
- ◆ Crumpled up or smudged with fingerprints; or
- ◆ Food, drinks, etc. spilled on them.
- ◆ Name or address missing or illegible.
- ◆ Writing “anything” or “whatever’s available for the type of work sought
- ◆ Work history reversed, with the most recent job on the bottom of the list.
- ◆ Application not signed or dated.
- ◆ Application filled out using soft, faint pencil.
- ◆ Poor job descriptions.
- ◆ Questions left blank or a line drawn through them.
- ◆ Application written in teeny, tiny handwriting.

Hint: Always put yourself in an employer's shoes when completing employment paperwork. If you were in charge of hiring, what would you want to see expressed on an application? How would you evaluate applications?

*Additional resources and/or workshops may be available.
Please check with our Resource Specialist.

BASIC RULES FOR COMPLETING EMPLOYMENT APPLICATIONS

- ❑ Be prepared with pens, pencils and a master application. The master application would include references, phone numbers, addressees, employment history, dates, etc. Written ahead of time so you can quickly and accurately transfer information to the new application.
- ❑ Pick up 2 copies if possible – one to practice on, one to turn in.
- ❑ Dress appropriately when picking up or returning an application – you never know who might be looking or if the employer may want to interview you on the spot.
- ❑ Do not fold or bed the application. Keep it protected from mishaps by keeping it in a folder.
- ❑ Read the application completely before starting to fill it out.
- ❑ Note whether the application is to be completed in a specific ink color. If not, use black or blue (black preferred).
- ❑ Print the application in your best writing or type it. Follow directions.
- ❑ If using a message phone, make sure it is an accurate number and the people are prepared to take messages for you.
- ❑ Spell correctly – look it up in the dictionary if you have any doubts.
- ❑ Be specific about the position you are applying for. Never write “Anything” or “Whatever is available.”
- ❑ In the salary block, put the salary amount that the employer intends to pay. If you put “open” you leave yourself open to minimum wage. Try to find out the salary ahead of time so you can put an educated amount in the block.
- ❑ List your work history in reverse chronological order – your last employer first; etc.
- ❑ When writing job duties, be specific. Say what you did, to what, with what, using what tools, skills, equipment, etc. Use action verbs to describe how you did what you did. Never underestimate this section of the application. It’s your chance to demonstrate why you are the right one for the job. Never put “see resume.”
- ❑ Sign and date your application.
- ❑ Make sure the information you provide is accurate. Intentionally leaving out employers because you were discharged is fraud. An employer can fire you immediately for submitting an application with false information.
- ❑ Let someone else look over the application if possible. Did you complete everything? Does it reflect you and your abilities? Is it neat, clean and presentable?

FILLING IN THE BLANKS

Please complete the form below. Do not complete any questions until you have read all of the questions. Use a black or blue ink pen (black preferred). If words have to be written out, please print them. Do not leave any spaces blank, except as instructed. Check spelling carefully and print neatly so the material can be read. You have five (5) minutes to complete all of the questions.

1. What is your age? _____

2. What is the occupation in which you are seeking employment?

3. Do you think this is the kind of work you will do the rest of your life?
_____ Yes _____ No

4. Does job hunting make you nervous? _____ Yes _____ No

5. Do you generally take time to write neatly? _____ Yes _____ No

6. Please list the occupations in which you are planning to seek employment in the order of highest interest. List years of experience next to your listed occupation.

7. Don't complete any answers on this form except for number 10.

8. Are you looking forward to job hunting? _____ Yes _____ No

9. Have you job hunted before? _____ Yes _____ No

10. Did you read the instructions before you completed this form?
_____ Yes _____ No