



Opportunities for
Ohioans with
Disabilities

Job Search Preparation Guidebook

Contents

Contents	1
Introduction.....	4
Section 1: About You.....	5
Your Employment Goal	5
Your Skills and Qualifications	6
Experience.....	6
Transferrable Skills.....	6
Qualifications.....	7
Elevator Pitch.....	8
Your Network	8
Gaps in Employment.....	9
Criminal History.....	9
What Your Record Shows.....	9
How to Talk About Your Record	10
Professionalism	10
Hygiene and Appearance.....	10
Appropriate Attire	10
Communication	11
Reliability	11
Section 2: About the Resume.....	12
Creating a Resume.....	12
Creating a Cover Letter.....	12
Connecting the Dots	13
Customizing the Letter	13
Closing Strong.....	13
Section 3: About Disability	14
Reasonable Accommodations and the ADA.....	14
Disclosing a Disability.....	14

Section 4: About the Job Search15

Job Postings	15
Online Job Advertisements.....	16
Company Websites	16
Job Search Websites.....	16
The Hidden Job Market.....	16
Completing a Job Application	17
Minimum Qualifications	17
Required vs. Preferred Credentials	17
Keeping Track of Your Job Search	17
Following Up Appropriately and Timely.....	18
Employer Partners.....	18
OhioMeansJobs	18
Register at OhioMeansJobs.....	19
Post Your Resume	19
Practice Your Skills.....	19
Social Media.....	19

Section 5: About Employer Contacts20

Setting a Professional Voicemail Greeting	20
Leaving Professional Voicemail Messages	21
Keep it Short.....	21
Speak Slowly and Clearly	21
Introduce Yourself.....	21
Say Why You Are Calling	21
Leave a Call-Back Number.....	21
Include a Good Time to Reach You	22
End with “Thank You”	22
Creating a Professional Email Address.....	22
Use Your Name.....	22
If Your Name is Taken	22

Scheduling Interviews.....	23
The Mock Interview	23
Preparing for a Mock Interview	24
The Real Interview	24
Virtual Hiring.....	25
Job Search Plan.....	25
Section 6: Preparing to Keep the Job	26
Understanding Expectations	26
Asking for Feedback	26
Being Flexible.....	27
Being Reliable	27
Receiving OOD Support.....	27
Job Retention.....	27
Job Coaching	27
References	28

Introduction

Job Search Preparation (JSP) will help you gain new job-seeking skills as you search for the right job. There are many parts to a successful job search, and we hope to address many of them in this guidebook.

If you are an Ohioan with a disability and would like to connect with Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD), please visit [OODWorks.com](https://oodworks.com) to learn more about OOD services.

You may use this guidebook on your own or with a Job Developer. You or your Job Developer can decide which sections are most helpful. Throughout the guidebook, there are links to resources. Click on the links to learn more about individual topics.

This document is organized into six sections. Each section will provide knowledge, skills, or materials to help you conduct a successful job search.

First, you will identify what makes you a good candidate for your employment goal.

Next, you can use those skills to make a resume. A resume helps you market yourself to employers.

Third, you will review disability in terms of employment. You will learn about the Americans with Disabilities Act, essential job functions, and how to request reasonable accommodations. With this knowledge, you can talk with your employer about what you need to perform the job successfully.

In the fourth section of the guidebook, you will learn how to tie resources together when looking for a job.

In the fifth section of this guidebook, you will review how to talk with employers and prepare for job interviews. This will include common interview questions, creating a plan for the interview day, and reviewing information about the job and employer.

In the sixth section of the guidebook, you will review what is needed to start the job, keep the job, and grow with the employer.

Let's get started!

Section 1: About You



In this section:

1. Your Employment Goal
2. Your Skills and Qualifications
3. Your Work History
4. Your Network
5. Gaps in Employment
6. Criminal History
7. Professionalism
8. Hygiene and Appearance
9. Appropriate Attire
10. Communication
11. Reliability

Your Employment Goal

You want to find a job that is a good fit for you. You have created a plan with Vocational Rehabilitation staff to make progress toward your employment goal. Now, it's time to start putting that plan into action!

In the following box, write your employment goal.

Employment Goal

In the next section, you will review why this employment goal is a good match for you.

Your Skills and Qualifications

The first step in identifying your skills and qualifications is to review your experience. Your experience includes more than your work history. It is anything that shows you have the knowledge and skills needed to perform the job. This could include education or unpaid work like volunteering.

Experience

In the following box, list your experiences. For each experience, include one to two bullet points that provide more detail about each experience. Details can include daily responsibilities or special projects.

Experiences

If you have trouble thinking through your experience, use this [sample application](#) as a guide. The sample application can help you organize your work history, education, and other important information. It can also guide you when completing an actual job application.

Transferrable Skills

Transferrable skills are the skills and experience you bring to your next job. They can be hard or soft skills. For example, if you worked as a cashier at a retail store, you probably helped customers, so customer service would be your transferrable skill.

Hard Skills

Hard skills are related to specific technical knowledge or training. For example, a truck driver might list navigation, route planning, and a commercial driver's license.

Soft Skills

Soft skills are personal traits that can help a person work and interact effectively with other people. Examples include reliability, leadership, time management, and communication.

Use this [skill inventory](#) to learn more about your hard and soft skills. Then, write five of each in the following boxes.

Hard Skills

Soft Skills

Qualifications

Qualifications are the skills and experience needed to do a specific job. You will identify your qualifications by comparing your skills and experience with the essential functions of your job goal.

To learn more about the essential functions of your job goal, visit [My Next Move](#). This website lets you type your job goal and read the expected tasks, skills, and abilities. Then, write your qualifications for your job goal in the following box.

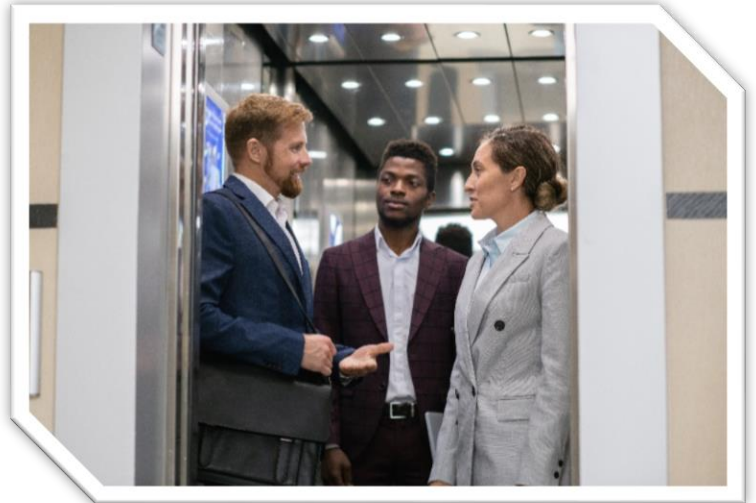
Qualifications

Elevator Pitch

An elevator pitch is a brief way of introducing yourself and getting across a key point or two. It is named for how long it should take to deliver, which is usually the time of a short elevator ride (about 30 to 60 seconds).

An elevator pitch should include:

- Who you are
- Your qualifications
- Your employment goal



An elevator pitch can also answer common interview questions, like, “Can you tell me a little about yourself?”

Write your elevator pitch in the following box. Time it to take 30 to 60 seconds. Practice saying it out loud until it feels comfortable. Use this [elevator pitch tool](#) if you need help.

Elevator Pitch

Your Network

Who you know can be important when looking for a job. Up to 85% of jobs are found through networking rather than simply filling out an application. Many people ask friends or family for suggestions for a doctor when they have health needs or for photographers when they want pictures taken. You can do the same for jobs.

Use this [networking worksheet](#) to guide your thinking about how each person in your network might be helpful.

Gaps in Employment

Many everyday situations or events can lead to employment gaps. Taking time off work for health or childcare is a typical example. Some employers may see a significant gap in employment as a warning sign.

If you have employment gaps, be prepared to explain them. In the provided box, briefly outline your reasons for the gaps and review them with your Job Developer. Think about how to discuss these gaps positively during interviews.

Reason for Employment Gap

Criminal History

Many job seekers with criminal records worry about questions about their backgrounds. But having a criminal record does not mean you can't get a job.

According to Monster.com, 73% of human resources (HR) professionals reported that their company conducts criminal background checks on applicants, and 46% of employment applications have a section about criminal history. That's why preparing yourself to address these questions is important if you have a criminal history. Although this topic can be uncomfortable, it's a necessary step toward finding a good job fit.

What Your Record Shows

First, find out what your record will show and the dates of any convictions.

- If it's sealed, there's no need to tell employers. It won't appear in a background check.
- If you're asked about convictions within the past seven years, you don't need to report convictions that happened more than seven years ago.
- If you're only asked about felonies, don't report misdemeanors.

How to Talk About Your Record

Second, you need to know how to talk about your record. Don't make excuses for your actions. Instead, show how you have been responsible since then and made changes to improve your chances of success. Try this template from Monster.com:

“I served [X] years at a correctional facility [X] years ago. From the experience, I learned: [list two to three personal lessons]. I changed my life [point to two to three real examples of positive change]. I can bring value to your company by [mention two to three ways you will contribute].”

Prepare yourself ahead of time to address your criminal history. Keep explanations short and to the point. Try not to get discouraged. You can still bring value to a company!

Professionalism

Professionalism begins the moment you start a job search. A lack of professionalism can cost you an interview or a job.

Hygiene and Appearance

How you present yourself can say a lot about you. Messy hair, wrinkled clothes, or body odor make a poor impression. Someone qualified for a job may not be hired because hygiene does not seem important to them.



Think about your hygiene. Could you improve? You could ask your Job Developer, “Does my hygiene seem appropriate? If not, how can I improve?” These discussions aren't easy or fun, but it's best to fix issues before they affect your job search.

Appropriate Attire

Appropriate clothing for work and the interview will depend on the work environment. Business professional clothing is often expected for an office assistant, while functional, safety-focused clothing is usually the priority for an auto mechanic.

During face-to-face or video interviews, appearance makes a difference and can leave a good first impression. You can discuss appropriate clothing for your job goal with your Job Developer. If you don't have appropriate clothing, speak with your job developer or OOD counselor.

Communication

The ability to communicate with supervisors, coworkers, and customers is important in many jobs. If your disability causes a communication barrier, visit the [Job Accommodation Network](#) to explore possible solutions.

Here are a few other tips that can help with your communication:

- **Listen.** Being a good listener is one of the best ways to be a good communicator.
- **Ask questions.** When something is unclear, asking questions is a great option. Asking questions can help you understand your job duties, reduce mistakes, and show that you want to learn and do a good job.
- **Use good body language.** Body language includes eye contact, hand gestures, and tone of voice. Even if body language isn't one of your strengths, working on these skills can improve your communication.

Reliability

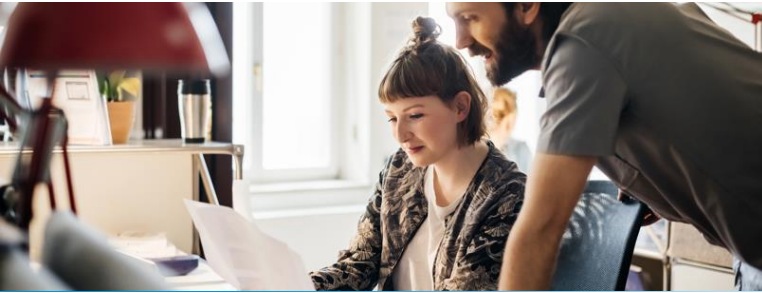
Being reliable means you do what you promise, and people can count on you. If you ever wonder whether you are reliable, ask yourself these questions:

- Do I finish my work on time?
- Do I respond to requests on time?
- Do I show up to work on time and leave at my scheduled time off?

These behaviors can show your reliability and let your employer know they can count on you.

How you look and act on the job can send a message to an employer. Employees who show professionalism in the workplace are often seen as more valuable.

Section 2: About the Resume



In this section:

1. Creating a Resume
2. Creating a Cover Letter

Creating a Resume

The most popular job search tool is the resume. Your resume is your chance to show that you are a good fit and have the right skills and experience for the job. Job offers don't come from resumes alone, but a strong resume can increase your chances of being invited to an interview.

What makes a resume good? OOD developed [resume standards](#) using employer feedback. Use them to create or update your resume. You can also get your employment history from the sample application you already completed. Your Job Developer is there to help. OOD's [resume development kit](#) and [editable resume templates](#) are other helpful resources you can use to get started.

Creating a Cover Letter

Not every job requires a cover letter, but it is best to include one if given the option. A cover letter is your opportunity to brag about your accomplishments and stand out from the competition.

Here is a simple three-step approach to writing cover letters called the "Three Cs." To create an effective cover letter:

1. **Connect the dots** between your goals and the employer.
2. **Customize** your letter to show why you are a good fit for the job.
3. **Close strong**, so the employer wants to learn more about you.

Connecting the Dots

One way to set yourself apart from other candidates is to connect the dots between your information about the employer and why you want to work there.

Visit the employer's website to research the company's mission statement and values. You can use this information in the first paragraph of your cover letter. Explain to the employer that you want to work for them because of something you learned from their website. For example, if the website mentions that the employer provides time for employees to volunteer during work hours, you could say you are looking for a workplace that gives back to the community.

You can also connect the dots with the employer if your reason for applying to the company isn't obvious. For example, if the employer is not in your city, you can explain that you're planning to move nearby.

Customizing the Letter

Customization is the key to an effective cover letter. Use keywords from the job description to align your education and work experience with the employer's needs. You can include relevant numbers, data, and accomplishments that make you stand out. This is time to be specific. Your cover letter must never be considered "one size fits all."

Closing Strong

First and last impressions are equally important, so finish strong. Your closing should include a summary of relevant skills and how they will be helpful in that position. Make sure to highlight transferrable skills that will lead to success in a new role, especially if you are a new graduate or changing careers.

Lastly, end the letter by thanking them for their consideration. You don't need to end with a common statement: "Please feel free to reach out to schedule an interview." The employer knows you want an interview and has your contact information. Instead, try mentioning when you plan to follow up on your application.

Section 3: About Disability



In this section:

1. Reasonable Accommodations & the ADA
2. Disclosing a Disability

Reasonable Accommodations and the ADA

During your job search, you may be asked questions related to disability. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law that protects qualified individuals from employment discrimination.

The ADA requires employers to provide reasonable accommodations unless doing so would cause undue hardship. A reasonable accommodation is any adjustment to help the employee perform essential job functions. Reasonable accommodations can be made during the application process or on the job.

If you need an accommodation to be successful, it is your responsibility to request a reasonable accommodation and work with your employer to find a solution. If an existing accommodation no longer meets your needs, work with your employer to modify it or request something else.

Every company has a different process for requesting accommodations, but talking with Human Resources is usually a good first step. Be prepared with ideas and suggestions. The [Job Accommodation Network \(JAN\)](#) has many accommodation recommendations and ideas.

Disclosing a Disability

The choice to disclose a disability is up to you. You can decide when and what information to disclose. Reasonable accommodations are covered under the ADA, so you must disclose that you have a disability to request one. You can disclose using your preferred method (email, in person, etc.) If you're nervous, try rehearsing the conversation with someone you trust.

Section 4: About the Job Search



In this section:

1. Job Postings
2. Online Job Advertisements
3. Hidden Job Market
4. Job Applications
5. Job Search Tracking
6. Appropriate and Timely Follow-Up
7. Employer Partners
8. OhioMeansJobs
9. Social Media
10. Job Search Plan

At this point, you have what you need for a job search. Now, it is time to put these tools to use. We'll look at different ways to find job openings and introduce best practices to help you succeed. Knowing how to find and apply for a job effectively will increase your chances of finding employment.

Job Postings

Some job postings are very detailed, and some are not. When a job is posted online, the job description may have information about minimum qualifications. Before applying, be sure that you meet those minimum qualifications. While completing the application, read carefully what type of materials the employer asks for. These materials could include a resume, cover letter, references, or other relevant information.

When a “Now Hiring” sign is the only way a job opening is advertised, it's best to walk in and talk with the employer. Your Job Developer can help you prepare. Do you have a folder with copies of your resume and a sample application? Are you ready to meet with the hiring manager and give your elevator speech?

Online Job Advertisements

Much of the modern job search happens online. Employers may refer you to the company website or popular job boards to see their job openings.

Company Websites

Employers may refer you to their Careers webpage. How do you find that page? Use an internet browser to search for the employer's name, followed by Careers. A direct link may appear as a result. You can also click around the employer's website for keywords like Hiring, Careers, or Employment. From there, you can search for positions by job type or location. You can try this on your own or with your Job Developer.

Job Search Websites

Various online job boards and websites have gained popularity. Popular job boards include OhioMeansJobs, Indeed, CareerBuilder, ZipRecruiter, Monster, and Snagajob.

Employers post jobs on these sites, and the sites do the work to gather your information for the employer. You may be able to limit your search to the type of job and location you are looking for. Pay attention to the options you select when creating your account. Do you want to receive emails each day with new job leads? You might want to discuss this with your Job Developer. You can set up the account according to what works best for you.

The Hidden Job Market

Jobs filled without being made public are part of a hidden job market employers use to avoid the extra time and expense of online applications. Hiring managers can receive hundreds of resumes for each job opening, which can take several hours to review. Instead, employers can hire internally, use recruiting firms, or get employee referrals. You can learn about these job openings before they're posted by going directly to the source. Job openings can be divided into four stages:

1. No open job exists.
2. There is no formal opening, but some people know an opening may soon exist.
3. An opening exists but is not advertised.
4. The position is advertised.

Use your network to learn about positions in the second and third stages. Which of your contacts could get you more information about a job or employer?

Completing a Job Application

When employers look at an application, the first thing they do is check for the minimum qualifications. If your resume does not show that you meet the job's minimum qualifications, you will likely not be contacted for an interview. That is why it is important to modify your resume for each position.

Minimum Qualifications

The minimum qualifications for a position could be a combination of education, experience, and transferable skills. Let's say a job advertisement lists strong communication skills as a requirement. Make sure your resume clearly states that you have strong communication skills. You could add this to your resume's summary or in your description of a previous job.

You can also use language from the job description when customizing your resume. Doing this can catch the hiring manager's attention while reviewing resumes. It will also alert [Applicant Tracking Systems \(ATS\)](#) while they scan resumes and compare them to the job requirements.

Required vs. Preferred Credentials

When a job description lists specific credentials, remember to list them on your resume. If you don't have one of the required credentials, it may be better not to apply for that position. It's unlikely your application would be considered, so completing one may not be a good use of your time.

However, completing an application may be worth it if a credential is only listed as preferred. In these cases, highlight where you exceed preferred qualifications in other areas.

Keeping Track of Your Job Search

You will create many accounts with different job search and company websites while you hunt for a job. It is important to have a safe and easy way to track your passwords, usernames, and completed applications. A [job application tracking tool](#) can help you stay organized. You may access this with Google Docs, Microsoft Word, or even a printed version using pen and paper.

In the next section, you will learn how good tracking can help with following up.

Following Up Appropriately and Timely

Tracking applications can be difficult. A reliable way of organizing the information helps. It is also important to use this information to follow up with employers. Following up with the employer can help you stand out from the competition.

Note any contact information the employer provides during the application process. You may get names, email addresses, or phone numbers for the hiring manager or Human Resources team. Then, follow up with that person one week after submitting your application. You may want to talk with your job developer about appropriate and timely follow-up. You can also use the tips in [Section Five: About Employer Contacts](#).

Find more information in this document about [following up](#) appropriately.

Employer Partners

OOD has developed partnerships with many employers in Ohio to support their efforts to recruit and hire qualified candidates.

The [Employer Partner Jobs List](#) on OOD's website includes typical job openings with OOD Employer Partners. You can:

- Search the list for jobs and employers of interest.
- Click the link in the Website column to visit employer websites, view their current job openings, and find more information.
- Narrow search results by using filters.
- Download a copy of the list by clicking the download icon.

Once you complete an application with one of OOD's Employer Partners, notify your Job Developer. Then someone from OOD's Business Relations team will review your qualifications for the position you're interested in and let the employer know.

OhioMeansJobs

OhioMeansJobs is a website for job seekers. It offers job postings and many other resources to help with your job search and more.

Register at OhioMeansJobs

OOD requires participants receiving job search assistance services to register with OhioMeansJobs at [OhioMeansJobs.gov](https://ohioMeansJobs.gov). From the homepage, click **Sign Up** to create a short profile.

Post Your Resume

After signing up, the next step is to upload your resume. You can post a resume you've already created by clicking on **Upload an existing resume** or click **Create a resume** to start a new one if you don't already have one.

Practice Your Skills

Then, you can take advantage of all the resources available through OhioMeansJobs.

Interview Skills

You can find **Practice Interviews and Tips** on OhioMeansJobs by taking the [Guided Tour](#) and clicking the **Practice Interviewing** box.

Assessment Tests

You can also find **Assessments and Training** via the [Guided Tour](#) and click the **View OMJ Core Assessment Tests** box. These resources will help you prepare for the assessments employers use to find out if you are qualified for the job.

Social Media

Many job seekers have personal social media accounts. Some platforms, like LinkedIn, allow for professional networking, which can benefit your job search.

While interacting on social media, it is important to consider how an employer may feel about what they find on your account. Are you sharing memes with offensive language or images? Are you making references to drug or alcohol abuse or criminal activity?

You may want to make your accounts private, delete them, or remove content that an employer may feel is inappropriate. Learn more from these [social media tips](#).

Section 5: About Employer Contacts



In this section:

1. Setting a Voicemail Greeting
2. Leaving Voicemail Messages
3. Creating an Email Address
4. Scheduling Interviews
5. Practicing with Mock Interviews
6. Interviewing
7. Virtual Hiring

This section teaches you how to contact employers, schedule and prepare for interviews, and follow up professionally.

Setting a Professional Voicemail Greeting

Many employers rely on phone conversations during the application process. An employer might call to schedule an interview or to ask a few basic questions. In case you are not able to answer the call, you will want to create a professional voicemail greeting to let the employer know they have reached the right person.

One option is to record a basic greeting. Most voicemail systems allow you to record only your name. When recording, choose a quiet area, speak clearly, and use your full name (first and last).

Another option is to record a short, personalized voicemail greeting. For example:

“Hi, you have reached [Your First and Last Name]. Please leave a message, and I will get back to you soon. Thanks!”

Check out this [example voicemail](#). When looking for a job, try to answer your phone as often as possible and turn up the ringer volume so you don’t miss a call from a potential employer. You never know when they might call to schedule an interview.

Leaving Professional Voicemail Messages

Let's say an employer calls you about a job you want, but you missed their call. They leave a voicemail asking you to call them back. You call back but get their voicemail. Now, you need to leave a voicemail. Here are seven tips to remember when leaving a voicemail message.

Keep it Short

A voicemail should not be very long. It's only to let the person know you received their call and want to get in touch. Try practicing your short message a few times before calling.

Planning what you are going to say ahead of time will help you feel confident.

Speak Slowly and Clearly

Any time you make a job-related call, choose a quiet place where you will not be interrupted. Background noise can make it difficult for the person to hear you or your voicemail.

Speaking clearly and slowly, especially when leaving your name and contact information, makes it easier to take down your information without missing the rest of your message.

Introduce Yourself

Start your message by introducing yourself, including your first and last name.

"Hi, this is [Your First and Last Name]."

Say Why You Are Calling

Many employers are trying to hire for multiple positions at once. Help them quickly remember who you are by mentioning which job you are calling about.

"I'm returning your call about the [Job Title] position."

Leave a Call-Back Number

This is the #1 thing people forget to do when leaving a voicemail. Make it as easy as possible for the employer to contact you. You can leave your phone number twice if you want—once at the beginning of the message and again at the end.

"You can reach me on my cell phone at [Your Phone Number]."

Include a Good Time to Reach You

If you are in class or at work during regular business hours, include one or two good times to reach you. This will help the employer find a time when you can have a conversation—which is the goal!

“I’m free today from [Time] to [Time] and tomorrow from [Time] to [Time].”

End with “Thank You”

Everyone likes to feel appreciated, and employers are no different! Being polite goes a long way to helping you create a positive first impression. Thank the employer for calling you and tell them again that you’re interested in the opportunity.

“Thanks again for calling me about the [Job Title] position. I’m looking forward to learning more about it.”

Creating a Professional Email Address

Many people use technology to communicate, which means they can form a first impression of you without ever seeing or hearing you. So, when employers try to reach you through email, it’s good to have a professional email address that presents a professional image.

Use Your Name

A professional email account uses your first and last name or initials in the address.

👍 JessicaJones@gmail.com is a good example of a basic professional email address.

👎 JessicaLuvsToParty1989@gmail.com is an unprofessional or everyday email address.

If Your Name is Taken

If you have a common name and your preferred email address has already been taken:

- **Try changing domains.** *JessicaJones* may be taken on Gmail but free on Outlook.
- **Add a number to your email address.** *JessicaJones1* and *JessicaJones2018* are both great alternatives.
- **Incorporate your middle name or initial.** Try *JessicaAJones*, *JessicaJonesA*, or *JessicaAnnaJones*.

Avoid using your birth year in your email address. Although it is illegal, age discrimination can happen. Don’t give someone a reason to disqualify you as a candidate.

Having an email account just for job seeking can help keep your personal inbox clutter-free and ensure important emails aren't lost. It's a good tool for job seekers, but you don't need to use it forever. You could decide to use it only when actively looking for a job.

Scheduling Interviews

An interview is a big step toward a job offer, so your goal is to get an interview as soon as possible. Try to meet with the hiring team within three days—but keep your schedule flexible. They have the job you want, so you need to work around their availability.

If you receive an email inviting you to schedule a call or interview, respond as soon as possible. Try to make it within 24 hours at the most. You don't want to give the employer a chance to choose another candidate. Taking too long to respond could cause you to lose the opportunity.

Questions to ask yourself when setting up the interview:

- Do I need a ride?
- Do I need any reasonable accommodations for the interview?
- Do I have the address of the interview location?
- How long will it take to get there?
- Have I scheduled time to practice interviewing with my job developer beforehand?

The Mock Interview

Now that you have an interview scheduled, it is time to prepare for the big day by doing a mock interview with your job developer. A mock interview will help you practice:

- Answering difficult questions
- Developing interview strategies
- Improving your communication
- Reducing stress before interviews

Mock interview questions are usually general, similar to questions asked during first-round or screening interviews. If you prefer more job-specific interview questions, you can work with your Job Developer to research questions focused on a particular company or career field. Practicing with these types of questions is great for second-round or later interviews.

For example, if you are searching for a janitorial job, the interviewer can ask a series of janitorial interview questions so you can practice responding. Examples could include:

- What types of janitorial machinery and chemical products are you familiar with?
- Can you work around the public when cleaning?
- Can you lift heavy things and stand for long periods?
- What steps would you take if you noticed a problem requiring major repairs?

Preparing for a Mock Interview

Take your mock interview as seriously as you would an actual interview and prepare as you would for a hiring manager.

- Arrive 10–15 minutes early
- Bring your resume and any other materials you would bring to an actual interview.
- Bring a notebook and pen to note what your mock interviewer tells you.
- Dress in professional clothing.

Mock interviews are a great way to practice for actual job interviews. During a mock interview, you can practice answering realistic questions and get immediate feedback about your answers.

Reviewing and repeating will improve your interview responses and behavior.

Schedule a mock interview with your Job Developer. They will give you information about how to prepare and may use the opportunity to rate your performance.



The Real Interview

After your mock interview, you should be more prepared for an actual job interview. Review your progress using the resources on OhioMeansJobs to ensure you are prepared. Review the [OhioMeansJobs “Fast Track” course](#) and then check out these [behavioral interview tips](#).

One day before the interview, complete the following checklist to make sure you are ready:

- ☐ **Early Arrival.** Do you know the address? Do you know how to get there? Will you need to pay for parking?
- ☐ **Professional Appearance.** Is your alarm set early enough to shower and brush your teeth? Are your clothes picked out, clean, and ironed?
- ☐ **Documentation.** Read the [I-9 form](#) to make sure you have what you need to complete it. Gather the identification/documentation needed BEFORE attending the interview.
- ☐ **Questions for the employer.** Have you researched the employer? Do you have at least three questions to ask them when the time comes?
- ☐ **Pen and paper.** Do you have a way to take notes during the interview?

Follow up with your Job Developer after your interview to discuss what's next, like sending a follow-up email. Remember to get the interviewer's name so you can follow up personally.

Virtual Hiring

A **virtual** or **video interview** uses video technology to allow people to interview for jobs without being in the same place. Instead of meeting face-to-face, you connect online using a computer or other device. You'll need:

- Computer or device with a built-in or external video camera and microphone
- Reliable internet connection
- Headphones, if needed

If you are offered a virtual interview and do not have access to the needed equipment, contact your Job Developer or VR counselor for help.

A video interview often follows the style of a traditional, in-person interview, but there are a few things to keep in mind. Use our [Virtual Interviews guide](#) to prepare for a virtual interview.

Job Search Plan

The planning phase is almost over! Combining what you have done so far, work with your Job Developer to complete an OOD Job Search Plan.

Section 6: Preparing to Keep the Job



In this section:

1. Understanding Expectations
2. Asking for Feedback
3. Being Flexible
4. Being Reliable
5. Receiving OOD Support

Congratulations on accepting the job offer! Getting a new job is exciting, so now it's time to prepare for keeping it. Let's review some ways to set yourself up for success on the job.

Understanding Expectations

Do you remember reviewing the job description in section three? Job descriptions are often used to create performance evaluations. Your supervisor should be clear about what is expected of you. If you have questions about what you should be doing each day, it is best to ask when you are first starting.

Ask for a written job description. If one is unavailable, ask your supervisor for details about your job duties. Then, do what is expected. Employees who can be counted on to get the job done each day are valuable to employers.

Asking for Feedback

There is nothing wrong with asking for feedback about your performance. It's a great way to ensure you are doing what you're supposed to, which is an important part of success.

Discuss any problems with the job as they come up. Then, cooperate with others to address the issue.

Being Flexible

When you start a new job, you might know other ways of doing things. Maybe you liked how your old job tracked defective parts or logged phone calls. But being flexible and willing to learn how your new employer wants things done is important.

Give new processes a chance. This will show your employer that you want to work as a team and follow instructions.

Being Reliable

If you are hired to work 40 hours each week, your employer will expect you to be at work for 40 hours each week. If your shift starts at 8 AM, arrive several minutes beforehand so that you are ready to begin work on time.

Don't take days off without a good reason. If your lunch break is 30 minutes, take exactly 30 minutes. If you are someone who does what they say they will do, your supervisor will notice. Employers want to keep employees they can count on.

Receiving OOD Support

OOD provides two types of on-the-job support for eligible job seekers—job retention and job coaching.

Job Retention

With job retention, the Job Developer stays in contact with you for 90 days. At first, they will contact you and the employer every week and ask for feedback on your performance. The Job Developer provides guidance and can help find and fix potential problems like performance issues or new physical demands.

Job Coaching

During job coaching, a Community Rehabilitation Provider comes to work with you. They help you learn the job while the employer trains you. This service may already be on your Individualized Plan for Employment. You should contact your OOD counselor once you are hired if you would benefit from additional support to help you succeed at work.

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