

# **JOB SEEKER GUIDE**

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## **TIPS FOR FINDING THE RIGHT JOB**



**Job Service**  

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MONTANA

A proud partner of the American  Job Center network

You need a job. Somewhere an employer is looking for someone like you. But how do you find that employee and get that job?

Do you have job skills? Yes! What you need to know is how to market your talents effectively to find the right job.

**This booklet will help you:**

- Evaluate your interests and skills
- Find job information
- Write résumés and letters of application
- Plan and prepare for job interviews
- Plan your time
- Take tests

Under the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended in 1991, all of the sources listed in this booklet are required to serve persons of any race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 forbids agencies discriminating against older workers. Both laws forbid employers discriminating in hiring.

In addition, the Americans with Disabilities Act under Title I prohibits employment discrimination against “a qualified individual with disabilities.” A qualified individual with a disability is “an individual with a disability who meets the skill, experience, education, and other job-related requirements of a position held or desired, and who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of a job.”

If you believe you have been discriminated against, you can contact the Department of Labor & Industry’s Human Rights Bureau at 1-800-542-0807 or (406) 444-2884 TTY or by logging onto [www.montanadiscrimination.com](http://www.montanadiscrimination.com).



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Content from this booklet is primarily an excerpt from the MONTANA CAREER GUIDE produced by Montana Department of Labor & Industry. The CAREER GUIDE and other publications, including Job-Hunting Tips for Seniors, Tips for Workers with Criminal Records, Tips for Workers with Disabilities, and a Soft Skills Checklist are available at [lmi.mt.gov](http://lmi.mt.gov).

# GETTING STARTED

- Make a “To Do List” every day. Outline daily activities to look for a job.
- Apply for jobs early in the day. This will make a good impression and give you time to complete applications, have interviews and take tests.
- Be sure you follow the employers’ referral instructions exactly as stated. Some companies take applications only on certain days and times during the week.
- Write down all employers you contact, the date of your contacts, people you talk to, and special notes about your contacts.
- Apply at several companies in the same area when possible. This saves time and money.
- Be prepared. Have an information application and résumés, pens, maps and job information with you at all times.
- Follow up leads immediately. If you find out about a job late in the day, call right then! Don’t wait until the next day.
- Network. Tell everyone you know that you are looking for a job. Stay in touch with friends and contacts.
- Research and read about how to get a job.
- Search job sites on the Internet such as [www.montanaworks.gov](http://www.montanaworks.gov).



# NETWORKING

## It's Who You Know

Many positions are filled either from within the company, through professional recommendations, or through word of mouth. The upside? You DO know people and there are countless opportunities to meet even more!

## It's All About Networking

Networking might be the most important part of job hunting, but it's surprisingly simple. Networking is meeting and talking with people. That's it! A casual conversation based on a mutual hobby could reveal connections to a potential employer.

## Here's How to Make Networking Work for You:

### **Ask everyone you know about employment opportunities.**

Take all the people you know, then add to that all the people they know. That's hundreds, if not thousands, of connections. Chances are, somebody you're connected to will have information about a job opportunity. Ask your parents, your friends, your friends' parents, your parents' friends, your cousins, your former teachers, your former co-workers, and anyone else you know. Opportunities can come from surprising places.

### **Social and Professional Organizations**

From your local rotary club to your church to your rugby league, organizations are a great place to network. Chances are, someone will know about a job opening.

### **Online Social Networks**

You've got 300 Facebook friends, that's 300 set of eyes helping you find your next job. Use them. Someone's bound to know someone who's hiring. Join a professional-oriented social network, such as LinkedIn, to expand your contacts.

### **Contact the Company**

Make a list of companies in your chosen field. Visit the company and let them know you are interested in working for them, even if there are no posted job openings.

Introduce yourself to the human resources or hiring director, let them know what type of job you are looking for, leave them a copy of your résumé, and ask for a business card.

## Employment Agencies

Many companies use employment agencies to save themselves the step of screening job candidates. Employment agencies are often used to find temporary employees, but even if you're looking for permanent full-time work, accepting a temporary position can help build your résumé, and gain you valuable connections. If a permanent position opens up, the employer will already know and remember you.

# ONLINE RESOURCES

## **montanaworks.gov**

The official State of Montana jobs board, [montanaworks.gov](http://montanaworks.gov), is hands-down the most comprehensive listing of local employment opportunities in the state. The site lets you create a profile, save job listings, and post résumés that employers and recruiters can view.

## **Online Networking**

A LinkedIn profile is practically a requirement for job hunting. It is an online professional networking tool that lets you showcase your most impressive qualifications and accomplishments, and gets your professional profile in front of recruiters and hiring managers.

Here are some tips to maintaining an impressive LinkedIn profile:

- Always use a profile picture of yourself (not your pet/child/favorite movie). If possible, have your portrait taken professionally.
- Connect to as many professionals as you can, and make sure to endorse their skills. Usually, they'll be happy to reciprocate.
- Share articles and other helpful resources related to your career field. This will get you views and establish you as being engaged and active in your field.
- Join LinkedIn groups related to your interests. This is an excellent way to connect with people you might never otherwise have met.
- Display samples of your work.
- Use LinkedIn's Job Search feature.

When submitting a résumé online, you'll need 3 file types:

- **Original** - Keep your original résumé file for easy editing. You can tailor it to each position you apply for. Some employers even ask for résumés in a Word doc (or compatible) format.
- **PDF** - PDFs are ideal for electronic submission because your résumé will look, email, and print exactly how you designed it.
- **Plain Text** - Make a copy of your résumé without formatting and saved as a .txt file. This version is for pasting into electronic submission forms.

## **Online Job Postings**

Read the submission instructions thoroughly and follow them to the letter. If an attachment is requested, send a PDF or the specified document type. If you're asked to use an electronic form or paste your résumé into an email, use the plain text version. Following instructions demonstrates attention to detail and makes you look good to a potential employer.

# JOB SERVICE MONTANA

Job Service Montana offices are part of a statewide network of workforce development centers that collaborate with community partners to provide customer focused employment and training opportunities. These centers assist in preparing, training, and connecting a highly skilled workforce to local businesses. There are Job Service offices throughout Montana that can be located by going to [jobservices.dli.mt.gov](http://jobservices.dli.mt.gov).

## Employment Resources

### Registration

Registering with Job Service Montana is the first step in your job search. This will connect you with local job openings across Montana. It is also a requirement in order to receive unemployment insurance. Searching for jobs is easy and accessible through [montanaworks.gov](http://montanaworks.gov), the central job posting hub for the Montana Department of Labor & Industry. Job Service can help you register and provide training on how to use the site.

### Application, Résumé, Cover Letter, Interview Assistance

Job Service Montana can guide you through the online registration and application processes many companies require. Job Service Montana offices have access to applications from companies across Montana, and can help you complete them in a professional manner. Workforce Consultants can help you build your résumé and cover letter to effectively and accurately highlight your experience, skills, and training. Interviews are essential to securing a new job. Job Service Montana staff can help you prepare for a variety of interview types, and even help you practice with mock interviews. Workforce Consultants can also teach you how to negotiate your wages and benefits.

### Resource Centers

Resources available to job seekers include computers, internet access, copy and fax machines, printers, telephones, and career information through MCIS.

### Labor Market & Career Information

Knowing which occupations are in demand will help you make an informed decision for your future. Job Service staff can help you find and understand information about in-demand jobs, wage rates, employment projections, and health and safety statistics.

### Veterans and Eligible Spouses

Priority service is given to those who have served in active military service, and to their qualifying spouses. As a veteran, you may benefit from additional services and be given preference in employment training and placement services.

### Disability Resource Coordinator

If you have a disability, a Disability Resource Coordinator can help you find community resources to assist in removing employment barriers, such as access to training, transportation and housing. Job Service Montana can also provide consultation to employers about providing reasonable accommodations to employees with disabilities.

# INTRODUCTION TO MCIS (MONTANA CAREER INFORMATION SYSTEM)

All the career planning tools you need. All in one place!

## **All-in-One Career Planning System**

MCIS is truly your one-stop destination for career planning tools and resources. From exploring occupations to writing a résumé to planning next year's classes, MCIS does it all.

## **Reality Check Budget Calculator**

Find out how much money you'll need to make to support the lifestyle you want. Reality Check generates a list of occupations that pay enough to support your choices.

## **Interest Assessments**

How do you know which occupations are right for you? MCIS has several interest assessments to help you focus your search on the kinds of work most suited to your interests and strengths.

## **Personalized Portfolios**

Create a personal portfolio to save the results of your assessments, financial aid searches, and occupation info. Portfolios can be transferred from middle school all the way through college.

## **Occupational Information**

Learn what a job pays, tasks performed, education and training required, and much more. Sorting and filtering tools make it easy to find the information you need among more than 600 occupations.

## **Course Planners**

Generate a course plan based on your career goals. MCIS suggests plans of study based on the career cluster you choose, and displays graduation requirements to help you choose your courses.

## **Education Resources**

MCIS helps you find information on schools and programs of study from all over the U.S. You can search for institutions that match your preferences and compare up to three schools side-by-side.

## **Financial Aid Info**

MCIS helps you search for scholarships and grants. You can sort and filter the results to display only those you qualify for. The "Paying for School" section answers the most common financial aid questions.



## Application Tracker

Application Tracker helps you track and record your college application process from your initial research on schools to completing applications to managing your acceptance.

## Résumé Creator

Save information about your work history, then automatically generate and edit a professional résumé in the style of your choice. You can store your résumés and information in your portfolio for later use.

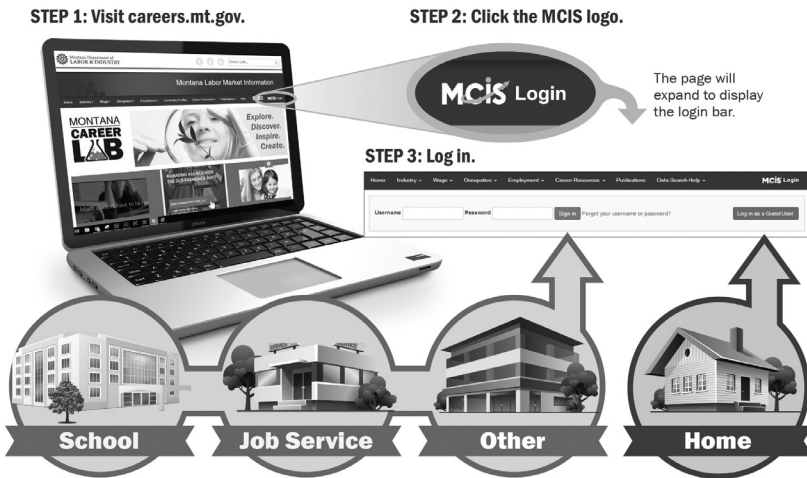
## Accessing MCIS

**STEP 1:** Visit [careers.mt.gov](https://careers.mt.gov).

**STEP 2:** Click the MCIS logo. The page will expand to display the login bar.

**STEP 3:** Log in.

If you are accessing MCIS from a school, Job Service Center, Adult Basic Ed program, Vocational Rehab Center, or other institution with an MCIS account, ask someone to set you up with a username and password. This will allow you to create a personal portfolio, which you'll need in order to use some of MCIS's more useful features and save the results of your searches and assessments. Once you have login credentials, you can access MCIS from anywhere.



If you are accessing MCIS from home and don't have a username and password, you can log in as a guest user. This option is limited to Montana residents. You can save your work if you create a portfolio.

Enter your city and zip code.

## You're In!

# JOB APPLICATIONS

Employers use applications to screen potential employees. They use the information from the applications to determine who they are going to call for a job interview. Sometimes employers ask you to fill out an application on the spot. Make a good impression by being prepared. Dress well and bring any information you might need (see sample below).

For a Job Service generic application that you can print or fill out electronically, go to [www.wsd.dli.mt.gov/job-seeker/employment-applications](http://www.wsd.dli.mt.gov/job-seeker/employment-applications).

## Job Application Sample

### EDUCATION:

Level of Education	Name & Location of School	From: (Mo./Yr.)	To: (Mo./Yr.)	Subject Studied/Degree or Certification Earned	Year Grad.
High School					
College					
Other Training Opportunities					

### EXPERIENCE: (Paid work experience, volunteer, related school experience, etc.)

Dates: (Mo./Yr.)	Name & Address of Employer	Supervisor	Phone No.	Salary	Position	Reason for Leaving

### ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS:

Volunteer Work
Skills and Abilities
Licenses or Certificates
Awards or Honors

### REFERENCES: (Preferably people familiar with your work/training)

Name	Relationship to You	Address	Day Phone

## Job Application Tips:

- Be prepared. When filling out your application in person or online, you will need the address, phone number, and beginning and ending dates of employment for each previous employer, as well as starting and ending wages for each previous job.
- Read and follow instructions carefully. Remember to sign your application if requested.
- Complete the application as neatly as possible. Neatness and legibility count; the application is a reflection of you. If completing it by hand, be sure to use only a blue or black pen.
- Tailor your answers to the job you are seeking. Give details of skills and accomplishments. Include experience from all sources, including previous jobs, schools, clubs and volunteer work.
- Don't provide any negative information. As with any job search correspondence, never include negative information about a previous employer or coworkers.
- Always answer questions truthfully. Many applications ask your reason for leaving your last job. You should try to be as positive as possible and leave longer explanations for the interview. You can be terminated for providing false information on your application.
- Provide references. Employers want to see that there are people who will provide objective information about you as an employee. Pick your references carefully and make sure you ask if they are willing to be a reference for you before you list them. Possible references include past employers, teachers and family friends. Focus on professional references who can speak of your skills and accomplishments on the job.
- Proofread once and proofread again. Take time to thoroughly proofread the application, checking for all errors, especially typos and misspellings.
- Answer questions about felony convictions truthfully. For explanation, an option is to write, "May we discuss?" A Job Service Workforce Consultant can advise individuals who would like more assistance.
- Fired, terminated or discharged. Some applications ask about firings separately from the Reason for Leaving item in your work history. If you were fired, use discharged or terminated rather than fired because the terms are less emotionally charged. For your explanation, use, "May we discuss?"

# COVER LETTERS

Your cover letter is your first real chance to present “You” to a potential employer. It is your opportunity to express interest and enthusiasm for a job opening, and a chance to show off your writing skills. Above all, your cover letter should clearly express what you have to offer an employer.

## Cover Letter Tips

- Read application instructions carefully and follow them. If they say no cover letters, don't send one.
- The format of your cover letter should match your résumé.
- Inquire about a specific job opening. Mention the position title and gear your letter specifically to that position. Customize your cover letter for each job.
- Be brief, concise, and direct.
- Show your personality. It may be a formal business letter, but don't be boring. Give the hiring manager a reason to remember you.
- Refer to, but don't repeat your résumé. Highlight your most relevant achievements and use them to prove you are perfect for the position.
- Make it about them. Show off your qualifications, but don't focus exclusively on yourself. Tell them why you're the best person to help them achieve their goals.
- Research the company's goals, culture, and language. Show interest in the company, not just the paycheck.
- Proofread multiple times. Have someone else proofread for you. Some mistakes may be invisible to you.

## Formatting Cover Letters

- Address your letter to a specific person. If you don't know their name and title, call and ask, or use “Dear Hiring Manager.”
- First paragraph: state your reason for writing, and how you heard about the position.
- Middle section: state your qualifications and how they fit the company's goals.
- Closing paragraph: Specifically request an interview. Restate your interest in the position and express your enthusiasm.
- Leave four blank lines between your closing and name. This is where your signature goes. Always sign physical letters by hand.
- Follow up with a phone call or email to arrange an interview, restate your interest in the job, and find out where they are in the hiring process.

## Cover Letter Example

# Jane Q. Public

1234 Streetname Dr. | Hometown, MT 59808 | (406) 555-1234 | Email@email.com

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June 17, 2025

Ms. Helena M. Forbes, HR Specialist  
Millenium Communications  
1408 King Parkway  
Townsborg, MT 59715

Dear Ms. Forbes,

I recently had the pleasure of speaking with Henry Battrell, your representative at the Missoula job fair. We discussed the Marketing Manager position at Millenium, a position for which I believe I am uniquely suited, having previous experience both in team management and in the communications industry.

Henry mentioned that Millenium has plans to expand into online marketing and video production. While studying film and television production at Montana State University, I led a team that produced a series of online videos promoting community involvement on campus. The series is currently featured on MSU's homepage and has received over 300,000 views.

Your position description notes that the Marketing Manager will take an active, hands-on role in all major projects, and I wouldn't have it any other way. Not only have I managed teams that included writers, graphic artists, videographers, and voice-over actors, I also possess the skill set to take on a wide variety of the tasks myself. I am fully-versed in video production software Adobe Premiere Pro and After Effects, as well as print and web media production tools Adobe InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator, and Dreamweaver.

Thank you for considering me as a candidate. I welcome the opportunity for a personal interview to discuss this position further. I will contact you in the next few weeks to arrange a mutual time to meet.

Sincerely,



Jane Q. Public

Enclosure: Resume

# RÉSUMÉ WRITING

**Your résumé exists for a single purpose:** To get you a job interview. The key to writing a résumé that gets you noticed is understanding what the employer needs, and focusing every item in your résumé on proving that you are the candidate who can get them the results they want.

## Résumé Tips:

- Write a customized, targeted résumé for each job.
- Tell employers what you can do for them.
- Use key words from the job posting that explain how your skills and experience match their business needs.
- Don't be modest in your résumé. Even if you're filled with self-doubt, never let your résumé show it.
- Your résumé should be well-organized, attractively designed, and free of errors.
- Your main selling points should be identifiable at a glance.
- Good design is about function, not flashiness. Keep your layout modest and elegant, but above all easy to read.
- Find someone you trust and ask them to proofread.
- Grammatical errors indicate poor attention to detail. One or two mistakes may not disqualify you from a job, but they might give another applicant the edge.

## Formatting Résumés

- **Name** - Your name front and center at the top of the first page in a large, easy-to-read font. Make it the largest text on the page.
- **Contact Information** - Include your mailing address, phone number, email address, and any other relevant contact information. Make sure your email address sounds professional.
- **Professional Summary** - Highlight 2-3 of your most impressive accomplishments and traits. Include a reference to the position you're applying for.
- **Work History** - List your work experience in reverse chronological order (most recent first). You don't need to list every job you've ever held. Include only those relevant to the position you're applying for, or that provide evidence of skills you possess.
- **Education** - List your degrees, diplomas, certificates and other relevant education credentials. If you have a college degree, it's generally not necessary to include high school info.
- **Skills** - List any skills you possess that weren't covered in the Work History section. It's a good idea to summarize your computer skills here, so employers can find them at a glance. Include skills learned from hobbies, but only if they are relevant.

# Jeffrey D. Lebowski

1234 Streetname Dr. | Hometown, MT 59808 | (406) 555-1234 | Email@email.com

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## Professional Summary

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- Technical writer/graphic designer with 12 years of professional experience.
- Specializes in expressing complex ideas with plain, concise language and simple, attractive graphics.
- A voracious learner who acquires and implements new skills quickly.
- Eager to apply my talents and experience in a brand manager position.

## Work History

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### Technical Writer/Graphic Designer

Apr. 2004-Present

Central Montana Home for the Criminally Insane - Helena, MT

- Create detailed instructions on the proper care and feeding of our clients.
- Use persuasive speaking skills to procure new clients.
- Drafted the charter for our Western Montana expansion and was instrumental in both facilities planning and securing funding through government grants.
- Nominated for Administrator's Award in 2005.

### Writing Instructor

Jan. 2002-Apr. 2004

Montana State University - Bozeman, MT

- Developed writing curriculum, facilitated classroom discussions, instructed students on proper grammar and persuasive writing techniques.
- Conducted one-on-one workshops with each student for every major assignment.
- Tutored students from diverse backgrounds and majors in the resource center.

## Education

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### Master's Degree, English Literature

Montana State University, Bozeman, MT

### Bachelor's Degree, Media and Theater Arts/English Literature

Montana State University, Bozeman, MT

## Skills

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**Computer Skills:** Proficient in Adobe InDesign, Illustrator, Photoshop, Word, Excel, and Outlook. Working knowledge of HTML and CSS coding.

**Other skills:** Illustration, proofreading, time management, public speaking

## Résumé Do's and Don'ts

### DO

- Be specific. Don't say you're "results-oriented." Use specific examples of results you've gotten.
- Focus on accomplishments more than job duties. Show how you went above and beyond.
- Mention your awards and honors. Even those unrelated to work show a reputation for excellence.
- Create a portfolio in MCIS. Use your saved information to create résumés in multiple formats.

### DON'T

- Pack your résumé with every job, promotion, and skill you've ever had. Keep it focused and relevant.
- Submit a "cute" résumé. Make sure your design is appropriate for the job you're seeking
- Exaggerate your qualifications. It can be grounds for firing.
- Go longer than two pages. A single page is even better.

For additional help, contact your local Job Service Montana office to find out about résumé workshops, or to make an appointment with a Workforce Consultant.



MCIS can automatically output your résumé in several different styles. Open "Résumé Creator" under the "My Portfolio" tab, enter your information, and choose the type of résumé you want to create. You can save multiple résumé files to your portfolio.



## Choose the Proper Résumé Format for the Situation

The two main résumé formats are CHRONOLOGICAL and FUNCTIONAL. The one you choose will depend both on your work history and the job you're applying for.

### A Chronological Résumé:

- Focuses on positions you've held and companies you've worked for.
- Lists all the jobs you've had, going back 10 to 15 years.
- Begins with your most recent job and continues in reverse chronological order.
- Highlights your skills and accomplishments

Use a Chronological résumé if...

- You want to highlight your progression up the career ladder.
- You have a lengthy and stable work history.
- Are seeking a position in the same industry as most of your previous jobs.
- Want a competitive edge. Employers prefer this format, and it works much better with résumé-filtering software that large firms use.

### A Functional Résumé:

- Focuses on your accomplishments, skills, abilities, and experience with specific tasks.
- Emphasizes how the skills you've attained will transfer to the position you're seeking.
- Should contain a list of jobs held, but that should not be the focus of the résumé.
- Should be used with caution. They are often used to cover up a problematic work history.

Use a Functional résumé if...

- You are changing careers and your past positions are all in an unrelated industry.
- You have a limited work history. Skills and accomplishments come from all over, not just formal paid positions.
- You have a problematic work history that includes large gaps in employment.

# JOB INTERVIEWS

**The employer wants to know two things:** that you're qualified for the job, and what you can do for the company. When the interviewer asks about you, explain how your skills, knowledge, experience, and abilities will benefit the organization.

## Before the Interview

- **Research the company** - This step is mandatory. To prepare answers to likely interview questions, you need to know how the company works and what it needs. Find out what the business does, how it is structured, what its goals are, and what challenges it faces. A thorough knowledge of the company demonstrates your interest in the business, and allows you to show how your skills, knowledge, and experience can help their bottom line.
- **Learn to speak their language** - Scour the company website for key terms they use to convey their core values and principles. Using language that reflects their values back to them shows you are a good fit for their corporate culture.
- **Get your documents in order** - Bring an extra copy of your résumé and other application materials, and put together a list of references. If appropriate, compile a portfolio of your best work to show off.
- **Rehearse your answers** - Research common interview questions and plan how you'll answer them. Think of anecdotes from past jobs that illustrate your successes or problems you've solved.
- **Be prepared for the tough questions** - Know how you're going to address anything problematic in your work history, such as employment gaps, having been fired, having a criminal record, etc. Try to put a positive spin on it.

## During the Interview

- **Keep it professional** - Your answers should be work-related so avoid giving personal information such as marital status, whether you have children, your political affiliation, your religion, etc. Getting too personal may expose you to bias.
- **Show enthusiasm** - Employers respond well to genuine interest in the job. They want employees who are motivated by the work itself, not just the paycheck.
- **Stay positive** - Have a "can do" attitude toward potential challenges and project confidence that you are up to the task. Avoid negative comments about previous bosses or coworkers.
- **Use discretion** - Be honest in your answers, but avoid troublesome areas. Don't talk about your financial or personal problems. Don't bring up salary or benefits.
- **Show them what you can do** - Offer a demonstration of your services. After the interview, ask the hiring manager if there is a project you can help out with to demonstrate your abilities.

## After the Interview

Show appreciation. Thank your interviewer on the way out. Follow up with a handwritten or email thank you note in the next few days.

## Common Interview Questions

### 1. Tell me about yourself.

The interviewer wants to know if you can answer an open-ended question in a focused and articulate way. They are asking about your professional background, not your personal life.

- If your qualifications are a great fit for the job, emphasize them. Begin with your most recent job, then highlight your most relevant professional and educational experiences.
- If your work history doesn't match the job opening, emphasize how your skills and experience will transfer to the new job.
- Mention hobbies only if they are relevant to the job or show off your best attributes.

### 2. Why did you leave your last job?

If you left voluntarily:

- Emphasize that you're looking for new opportunities. Cite specific aspects of the position you're seeking that your previous job didn't offer.
- If you were laid off:
- This doesn't reflect poorly on you. Simply explain the employer's situation that led to the layoffs.

If you were fired:

- Admit it and don't attempt to deflect the blame. Explain the situation and what you learned from it.

### 3. Why do you want to work here?

Describe the aspects of the company you most admire, then show how those aspects align with your skills and experience, as well as your personal values.

### 4. Why should we hire you?

Connect your skills and experience directly to the company's needs and goals. Use your research and be as specific as possible.

### 5. What is your greatest strength/weakness?

Discuss a strength that matches a specific business need you've identified in your research. Use a personal success story to illustrate this strength. Choose a weakness that doesn't directly affect the job you're seeking. Describe how you're working to improve yourself.

## 6. Tell us about a time...

Job interviews usually have questions asking you to recall anecdotes from your work history.

- What is your greatest achievement?
- Describe a problem you've encountered and how you overcame it.
- Recall a time you had to deal with an angry customer and how you fixed the situation.

Come prepared with stories that not only show off your best qualities, but tie directly in to the company's business needs.

## 7. Do you have any questions for us?

Always answer "Yes." Prepare questions that demonstrate your desire to succeed in their organization. Some examples:

- What are the keys to success in this job?
- What are the biggest challenges in this job?
- How does this company measure success?
- What growth opportunities does this position offer?
- When can I expect to hear back from you?

If you would like to practice interviewing with a Workforce Consultant, contact your local Job Service to set up an appointment.

### **Project Professionalism**

Your appearance speaks volumes about your character and habits.

#### **Arrive early**

Arrive 10 minutes early. Scout out the interview location the day before, looking out for construction or other hold-ups.

#### **Look your best**

- Dress appropriately.
- Hair and makeup should be neat and understated.
- No heavy perfume or cologne.

#### **Body language**

- Look the interviewer in the eye.
- Sit up straight and be alert.
- Don't chew gum.
- Smile when appropriate.

# SOFT SKILLS

When looking for work, your soft skills can be as important for a job as your knowledge and ability. Soft skills are people skills that help you successfully interact with others, including your supervisors, co-workers, customers, and others you'll interact with on a daily basis. During the interview, employers often ask questions to determine if you have the soft skills needed for the particular job.

## What are Soft Skills?

- Non-technical skills common to every job.
- Workplace basics every employee must have to remain employable.
- The number one thing employers are looking for in job applicants.
- What employers most often say is lacking in the applicant pool.

## Five Major Soft Skills Categories:

- **Workplace Basics** - All about professionalism and dependability.
- **Attitude** - Do you make clients feel welcome, or uncomfortable?
- **Communication** - Do you listen? Ask questions? Speak and write clearly?
- **Teamwork** - Can you take and give criticism gracefully? Resolve interpersonal conflicts?
- **Problem Solving** - Can you apply critical thinking to a situation and devise creative solutions?

### Here are some Workplace Basic soft skills to follow:

- Show up on time. Customers expect someone will be ready to help them when the doors open. If other workers depend on you getting your work done, being late prevents them from doing their job. When running late, let your boss know as soon as possible.
- Dress appropriately. Dress according to the standards set by the business. Jeans and work shirts are appropriate for a job in a garden center, but not for a bank. Find out about the dress code before your first day of work.
- Use appropriate language for the workplace. Foul or insensitive language can make your coworkers uncomfortable working around you. It creates a hostile work environment.

### Here are some Attitude soft skills to follow:

- Be eager to learn and to meet new challenges. Businesses constantly face new challenges and need employees who are flexible and eager to improve. Workers stuck in the old ways of doing things hold the company back.

- Accept new tasks gladly. Accepting a new assignment with “No problem” and a smile shows that you will complete the task to the best of your ability. Responding with an irritated sigh signals that you’re not up to the task.

**Here are some Communication soft skills to follow:**

- Be an active listener. To understand what a client or supervisor wants, you must listen carefully, and ask them to clarify anything you don’t fully understand. Practice focusing on the speaker and not letting your mind drift. Let others finish speaking before adding your thoughts.
- Never check your cell phone during a conversation. Pay attention to the person in front of you, using body language and eye contact to show you are truly listening to them. Checking your phone during a conversation makes the other person feel devalued.

**Here are some Teamwork soft skills to follow:**

- Give credit to others for their ideas and efforts. Often, a few people get credit for a successful project that many others contributed to. Giving credit where it’s due ensures that no one feels undervalued. Taking credit for the work of others causes resentment and can sabotage future teamwork.
- Speak your mind, but phrase opinions positively. Progress and improvement depend on everyone contributing their best ideas, so voice them. Sometimes it is necessary to point out what isn’t working, but to do so constructively requires carefully-considered phrasing so it doesn’t register as blame or negatively.

**Here are some Problem Solving soft skills to follow:**

- Assess problems and find solutions. Every business encounters problems. Employees who can identify the source of the problem and offer viable solutions are highly valued.
- Approach your supervisor with possible solutions rather than just problems. Often, you understand the realities of your job better than your supervisor does, making you the ideal candidate for proposing solutions. Coming to your supervisor with solutions rather than just problems shows that you can take responsibility for your success.

The Soft Skills Checklist can be found at <http://lmi.mt.gov/Portals/135/Publications/Career-Pubs/CG-SoftSkills.pdf>.

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**For more information about job searching and strategies, contact one of the Job Service Montana offices.**

# REGIONAL STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES CONTACTS

## **Idaho**

Department of Labor  
317 West Main Street  
Boise, ID 83735  
(208) 332-3570  
[www.labor.idaho.gov](http://www.labor.idaho.gov)

## **Montana**

Department of Labor & Industry  
P.O. Box 1728  
Helena, MT 59624  
(406) 444-2840  
[www.dli.mt.gov](http://www.dli.mt.gov)

## **North Dakota**

Department of Labor  
600 East Boulevard Avenue  
Department 406  
Bismarck, ND 58505  
(701) 328-2660  
(800) 582-8032  
[www.nd.gov](http://www.nd.gov)

## **Oregon**

Bureau of Labor and Industries  
800 NE Oregon Street, Suite 1045  
Portland, OR 97232  
(971) 673-0761  
[www.oregon.gov](http://www.oregon.gov)

## **South Dakota**

Department of Labor  
123 W. Missouri Ave  
Pierre, SD 57501  
(605) 773-3101  
[www.dlr.sd.gov](http://www.dlr.sd.gov)

## **Utah**

Department of Workforce Services  
P. O. Box 45249  
Salt Lake City, UT 84145  
(801) 530-6800  
[www.utah.gov](http://www.utah.gov)

## **Washington**

Department of Labor and Industries  
P.O. Box 44000  
Olympia, WA 98504  
(360) 902-5800  
[www.lni.wa.gov](http://www.lni.wa.gov)

## **Wyoming**

Department of Workforce Services  
614 South Greeley Highway  
Cheyenne, WY 82002  
(307) 777-8650  
[www.wyomingworkforce.org](http://www.wyomingworkforce.org)



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