

Job Search Workbook



 **KANSAS WORKS**

"Your Workforce Network"

Introduction	2
Job Search Basics	3
Managing Your Job Search	3
Using Technology to Get Hired	3
E-mail Etiquette	4
Skills, Interests and Values	6
Soft Skills	6
Technical Skills and Talents	7
Determine Your Skills	7
Access Your Skills, Values and Interests	9
Work Experience	10
Educational Experience	11
Career Exploration	12
Career Goals	12
Where to Find Job Information	14
Applications	16
Tips for Completing an Application	16
Cover Letters	17
Tips for Writing Cover Letters	17
Cover Letter Format	18
Cover Letter Example	19
Resumé Preparation	20
What is a Resumé?	20
Effective Resumés	20
Four Types of Resumés	21
Action Verbs	23
Chronological Resumé Format	24
Chronological Resumé Example	25
Functional Resumé Format	26
Functional Resumé Example	27
Combination Resumé Format	28
Combination Resumé Example	29
Targeted Resumé Format	30
Targeted Resumé Example	31



Michael C. Snell



The Kansas Department of Commerce administers the **KANSASWORKS** workforce system, which links businesses, job seekers and educational institutions to ensure that Kansas employers can find skilled workers. The system includes various workforce centers, which are located statewide to connect businesses with job seekers in their area.

In addition, the system integrates Kansas universities, community colleges and technical schools so they can tailor their curriculum to the needs of Kansas businesses. The result is a seamless network in which Kansas workers receive job-specific training and Kansas businesses can find well-trained employees.

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Information for this booklet was pulled from various job seeker websites such as jobsearch.about.com, collegegrad.com, quintcareers.com and best-interview-strategies.com.

Interviewing	32
Before the Interview	32
How to Answer Interview Questions	32
Traditional vs. Behavioral Interview	33
Preparation for the Behavioral Interview	35
At the Interview	36
Questions to Ask the Interviewer	37
Closing the Interview	37
After the Interview	38
Thank You Letters	39
Tips on Writing Thank You Letters	39
Thank You Letter Format	40
Thank You Letter Example	41
Testing/Assessments	42
How to Prepare for Assessments	43
Websites	44
Job Search Websites	44
Other Useful Websites	44



Introduction

Everyone has skills, but not everyone knows how to market those skills to find the right job.

This workbook will help you define and market your skills, as well as provide helpful information to assist you in your job search.

The following items are discussed in this workbook:

- Identify your skills and talents – What sets you apart from the competition?
- Document your work and educational experience – A good resumé should include dates of employment and demonstrate how you have helped your employers make money, save money or improve their bottom line. Focus on the company to which you are applying, not your wants, and remember to customize each resumé for each job to which you apply.
- Define your career goals and how you plan to meet them – Find a mentor in the field you are interested in. If unsure about an industry, sign up for a temporary job to see what you think. Temporary jobs can lead to full-time employment.
- Identify occupations matching your experience and talents.
- Prepare your materials (cover letters, resúms, information for applications) – Ask someone you trust or a **KANSASWORKS** representative to review for grammar, layout and other suggestions.
- Take assessments – Take the Kansas Career Pipeline assessments and others recommended in this workbook.
- Contact employers – Network with everyone you meet. Get involved with activities that align with your interests and the job you want.
- Prepare for interviews – **KANSASWORKS** representatives can do mock interviews and coach you to help ease anxiety.
- Go to interviews – Be early, be prepared with questions and take extra resúms and anything else that demonstrates you have the skills to do the job.
- Thank the interviewer – Send a thank you note.
- Evaluate your interview – How could you have improved the interview?
- Follow up on the job – Negotiate and accept the job.

If you need additional assistance, contact a **KANSASWORKS** center near you, visit **KANSASWORKS.com** or call (877) 509-6757.

Find this resource online at:

KANSASWORKS.com

Job Seeker Resource

Career Plannings Tips & Tools

Job Search Workbook





Harland Schuster

Managing Your Job Search

To be truly successful, you should consider a job search a full-time job.

- Wake up early to begin searching and search all day (40 hours a week).
- Plan your time and determine what must be accomplished each day.
- Be your own boss or appoint a friend to be your boss to ensure you carry out your job responsibilities.
- Apply for jobs early in the day. This will make a good impression and give you time to complete applications, interviews or tests. You may also want to call employers to find out the best times to apply. Some companies take applications only on certain days, or within specific hours, during the week.
- Fill out applications completely. Do not write, "See resumé." This is a poor reflection on your work ethic and shows employers you do not follow directions properly.
- Keep a record of all employers you contact, the date of your contacts, people you talk to and special notes about your contacts.
- Save time and money by applying with several companies in the same part of town, when possible.
- Be prepared. Develop a master application with dates, addresses and other information about previous positions. Have resumé, pens, maps and job information with you at all times. You never know when a lead will come your way.
- Follow up on new leads immediately. If you hear about a job, call right away. Do not wait until the next day.
- Network by telling everyone you know you are looking for a job. Stay in touch with friends and contacts (e.g., church pastor, former co-workers, hair stylist, neighbors, relatives, etc.).

Using Technology to Get Hired

Employers who are hiring are receiving hundreds of resumé and applications for each position. Only the most qualified and proactive job seekers are attracting the attention of hiring managers.

Times have changed, and the old job search rules no longer apply. You must embrace technology by creating a strong online presence, networking and using new strategies to market your personal brand. The following strategies will help you kick start your job search and find that next opportunity.

You must have a basic understanding of the Internet. This will help you search for jobs, research companies and send e-mails. You must also communicate effectively online.

1. Create an online presence – a common practice for hiring managers is to Google candidates before calling them for interviews. Check into LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. These are great tools, but be cautious. Do not post anything you would not want a potential employer to see or read.

2. Create your own Web page or blog devoted to your job search. They are not expensive to create and can help in your job search. Check out Google.com profiles or other free website solutions.
3. Post your resumé on career sites such as **KANSASWORKS.com** or Monster.com.
4. Network using professional organizations or alumni associations.
5. Develop your own personal brand. Be an expert in your field — write papers pertaining to your field and post them online. Volunteer at industry events that show your passion for what you do.
6. **KANSASWORKS** Virtual Services provides high-definition video conferencing to job seekers for interviewing and job search workshops. Speak with staff at a Kansas workforce center near you, visit **KANSASWORKS.com** or call (877) 509-6757.

Successful job candidates are those with good communication skills and passion and who bring value to a company. Use these tips, and you are on your way.

E-mail Etiquette

Communication via electronic means has become commonplace even on the employment scene. Here are some tips to assist you when communicating via e-mail:

- First Contact with an Employer – For a first contact, only use e-mail when the employer has invited you to do so with instructions on their website, job ad, verbal conversation or other advice. Otherwise, send a resumé and cover letter via hard copy.
- Responding to Employers – If an employer e-mails you, it is permissible to respond via e-mail. Be careful to read the e-mail for instructions. For example, you may be asked to do some follow-up online or with another person. Always follow cues from the employer regarding preferred method of contact.
- Thank You Notes After Interviews – An e-mail thank you is acceptable, especially if the hiring decision is happening quickly after the interview. An e-mail will most likely be seen before a hard copy.
- Keep It Professional – Think like the person to whom you are sending the e-mail. Your e-mail alias, your subject line and your content all need to be clear and appropriate for the recipient.
- E-mail Alias – “Hotdogdude@hotmail” is not appropriate. Without a professional address, you will not be taken seriously or viewed as professional.
- Subject Line – Make it clear and meaningful to the recipient, as in “Application for Graphic Designer Listing 84G11.” A blank subject line is unacceptable. “Read this” and “Information” are meaningless and may be interpreted as containing a virus.

- Greeting – Don't misspell a person's name. If you are writing to John Smith, use "Dear Mr. Smith." Use "Ms." for women, as it is the feminine equivalent to the masculine "Mr." The only exception to this is when a woman uses another salutation such as "Mrs." or "Dr." for herself. If you do not know the name, but you do know the department where you must send your letter, use "Dear Human Resources Department staff," or "Dear Hiring Manager at XYZ, Inc."
- Content – Use business-like writing style and be clear, concise and to the point. Start by stating why you are writing. "I'm applying for the accounting internship position your firm advertised through the XYZ University Accounting Department." Provide brief information about yourself. "This May, I will graduate from XYZ University with a bachelor's degree in human services. My experience includes two internships in community mental health agencies." The same rules of hard copy correspondence apply to business e-mail.



Skills, Interests and Values

If you have been a homemaker, student, volunteer or participated in some other personal activity, these skills may be applied to jobs. For example, planning and organizing a large family gathering requires communication and organization. Volunteering on a committee can demonstrate your responsibility, attendance and technical skill depending on the role you played on the committee. All these transfer into skills employers seek.



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Soft Skills

Soft skills are the skills all employees must have in order to succeed in the workplace regardless of the type of job. Employers place great importance on these skills and an employee who has them is considered valuable. These skills are separate from the technical knowledge you may need on the job, such as computer experience.

To employers, soft skills (also known as employability skills) are as important as technical skills. Your personal characteristics and behavior affect your ability to interact successfully with others. Personal characteristics associated with outcomes that are important in the workplace include job performance, organizational abilities, productive work behaviors and teamwork. These are skills needed to keep the job once you get it.

Soft skills include:

- Attendance – Coming to work on time, coming every day, giving notice for days off, calling in sick only when absolutely necessary and calling your supervisor if you are going to be late.
- Communication/Interpersonal Skills – Communicating with co-workers, managers and customers in a pleasant and professional manner. Seeking advice when needed and practicing listening skills. Expressing yourself clearly so you will be understood. Being polite, not argumentative, in accepting and expressing criticism. Remaining calm in all situations and maintaining good eye contact.
- Team Work – Working in a cooperative manner with others to achieve team goals and identify needs.
- Initiative/Motivation – Beginning or following through energetically with your job duties or a task without prompting or direction.
- Responsibility – Working hard toward reaching a goal. Completing required and expected duties. Being aware of time schedules. Managing personal responsibilities and working effectively with little or no supervision.
- Appearance/Hygiene – Understanding and adhering to dress code policies. Wearing appropriate work clothing. Displaying good personal hygiene and grooming (e.g., shower, clean clothes, brush teeth and brush/comb hair). Being aware of your personal and professional appearance.
- Flexibility – Willing to cheerfully accept special projects or fill in for absent employees. Embracing ideas from others or changes in the middle of a project.
- Problem Solving/Conflict Resolution – Identifying problems, evaluating all possible solutions, selecting a course of action and evaluating the outcomes. Willing to negotiate to help resolve differences of opinions and interests in a positive manner.

Technical Skills and Talents

Technical skills and talents are the skills you possess to accomplish a job (computer skills, operating equipment, understanding procedures, research, etc.). These are hard skills employers review to determine if you are able to perform the work.

Determine Your Skills

To help determine your skills and talents, list your hobbies, club memberships, sporting activities, church and school involvement and areas of interest. List tasks you perform well or strong skills you possess, even if you have not been paid for these skills.

Your list may look like it has nothing to do with job skills or experience, but that's okay. The purpose of this list is to help you determine the skills you already have that can be transferred to a job.

All hobbies, sports and activities involve transferable skills, knowledge and abilities. Look at each item on your list. On the next page think about the skills or talents it takes to perform that activity. List your activities and skills as demonstrated in the example chart.



Example

Hobbies, Sports and Activities Things I Do Well	Skills, Knowledge and Talents Involved
Playing Basketball	Positive interaction with others (be a team player) Utilize math (keep track of scores) Reach, lift, jump, stoop and run
Homemaking	Manage budgets Ability to handle multiple tasks Knowledge of human development Skills in teaching and training
Fixing Cars	Ability to diagnose mechanical problems Skill in using tools Knowledge of electronics
St. Patrick's Day Parade Coordinator	Capacity to create printed materials Skill in advertising Organizational skills Competence to lead others Knowledge of fundraising Communicate professionally

Complete the table below. Use action verbs to describe your soft and technical skills. See page 23 for a list of action verbs.

Hobbies, Sports and Activities Things I Do Well	Skills, Knowledge and Talents Involved

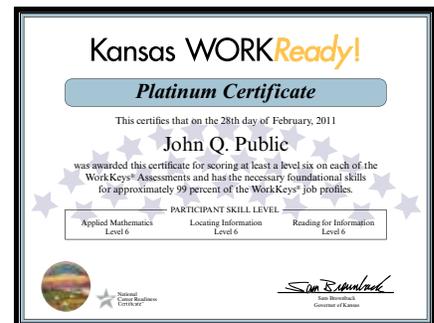
Access Your Skills, Values and Interests



Another means of determining your talents is to complete a formal assessment of your skills, values and interests.

This will help determine which careers are suitable for you and which are not. You may also find that your skills and abilities match an occupation you never considered. There are many career assessment tools to help you gather this information and generate a list of occupations best suited for you. For example:

- O*NET can help you match your skills to desired occupations. This tool includes a *Skills Search* designed to help identify occupations you may want to explore. This is done by selecting a set of skills from six broad groups of skills to create your customized skill list.
- The Kansas Career Pipeline helps measure your career interests, skills and work values, explore occupations, establish educational strategies and ultimately connect with Kansas employers who need your talents. Kansas Career Pipeline includes three different assessments evaluating interest, skills and work values.
- The Kansas **WORK**Ready! Certificate is based on the nationally recognized certificate from ACT WorkKeys® informing employers of your skills before you even walk into the interview room. It measures your skills in three areas—reading, locating information and math—and certifies you as a Platinum, Gold, Silver or Bronze candidate. If you are interested in taking this assessment, contact your local Kansas workforce center, visit **KANSASWORKS.com** or call (877) 509-6757.
- The Kansas **WORK**Talent! Assessment was developed by ACT to provide insight into your personal characteristics and work-related behaviors. This will help you learn to rely on your personal strengths and adopt some different behaviors to make you even more employable and successful in the workplace. If you are interested in taking this assessment, please contact your local Kansas workforce center, visit **KANSASWORKS.com** or call (877) 509-6757.



Additional information may be found on page 42 "Testing/Assessments."

Work Experience

Now that you know your skills and interests, it is time to review your work experience. Write down your previous employment history. Concentrate on the details of positions within the last seven years, including all part-time, military, volunteer and self-employment work. Make sure all dates, job titles and applicable contact information are accurate. Write down your main duties for each job. Be prepared to discuss with a potential employer in an interview any times when you were not employed.

Think about the skills, knowledge or abilities it took to perform each work duty and write them down. In addition, list the kind of work characteristics involved with the duties (organization, self-management, etc.). Here are a couple of examples:

Job	Work Duties	Skills or Talents	Work Characteristics
Farm Worker Smith and Sons May 2008—April 2009	Selected vegetables and fruits Inspected fruit for damage and ripeness Used hoes, shovels and shears to plant, cultivate and prune	Performed quickly, skillfully and safely Labeled outside and alone for long periods	Ability to work quickly, skillfully and safely
Customer Service Representative Jones Financial Group April 2009—present	Answer customer phone calls Update customer accounts Answer customer questions or complaints	Display proper phone etiquette Comprehend stock market Locate information quickly Experience with computer skills Serve customers	Polite/accommodating Organization Problem solving Attention to detail Time management

Complete your work experience list below. A list of action verbs is available on page 23.

Job	Work Duties	Skills or Talents	Work Characteristics

Educational Experience

Now it's time to examine your educational history. List schools you attended with dates and major studies or courses completed. List most recent history first. List honors, accomplishments, skills and expertise (e.g., computer software applications, machinery operation, etc.). Also list activities you have participated in to increase your overall knowledge (e.g., training or certification, military services, relevant community or volunteer work). Then ask yourself what classes or training you liked and why you liked them as shown in the example below.

Degree, Certificates, Awards and Honors	Classes or Training I Enjoyed and Why
BA Biology Certificate of Microsoft Office Training Gold Star Sales Award Employee of the Month, Oct. 2009 Outstanding Attendance Award	Webpage design – enjoyed creativity and starting something from scratch Scuba diving – enjoyed contact with nature and adventure

Complete your educational history in the following table.

Degree, Certificates, Awards and Honors	Classes or Training I Enjoyed and Why

Career Exploration



Wichita State University

At this point, you have completed your self-assessments and know your values, interests and skills. You may also have a list of careers that align with assessment results. You now need to narrow your list of careers so you can pursue the one you find most desirable. There are hundreds of career options out there. Think hard about your choice of occupations and you will find a fulfilling and successful career. It could take some time and energy to make a decision.

Gather information in career fields you are thinking about pursuing. You will need to do some research and narrow down your career choices. The first step is to gather basic information about each career on your list, such as job descriptions, employment statistics, job outlook, earnings and educational and training requirements.

For basic information about career fields, use America's Career InfoNet. You'll find occupational, demographic and labor market information at the local, state and national levels. This site is constantly updated. Other helpful sites are **KANSASWORKS** and Kansas Department of Labor.

Once you have enough information to decide what career(s) you would like to pursue, it's time to dig deeper. You need to learn as much about your narrowed list of occupations as possible. Once this is complete, you should be able to narrow your list to one. You can always continue your research and change your mind. Remember, nothing is set in stone.

Career Goals

With a few career options in mind, it's time to figure out how to reach your goal of actually working in that field. Perhaps you lack a few skills for the career or there are no jobs currently open. Identify what steps will help you gain experience for your career choice. Maybe you need to take some classes, get a degree or find an employer offering on-the-job training. To help determine what to do, list your career choice in one column (the type of work you want to do five or 10 years from now). In the opposite column, list what jobs, education or experience you can get to help you reach your goal as demonstrated below.

Career I would like to have	Jobs/education/experience to help reach goal
Police Officer	Security Guard, Correctional Officer, Administrative Assistant in Police Department, Court Clerk, Police Academy
Writer	Book Store Sales Clerk, Library Assistant, English Course
Lawyer	Legal Secretary, Paralegal, Paralegal Course, Court Clerk, Law School

Complete your career goals in the following table.

Career I would like to have	Jobs/education/experience to help reach goal

Today's workplace is very competitive. You need to have a variety of skills to give you the competitive edge. You may be choosing a career, deciding whether to change careers, re-entering the workforce or recovering from a job loss. Staff at Kansas workforce centers is ready to help at no cost. You may also visit **KANSASWORKS.com** or call (877) 509-6757. Additionally, career information is available at your local library, community and technical colleges and universities.



Where to Find Job Information

If you know what job skills you have and what you like to do, you are ready to look for a job. You can look for job openings through the following sources:

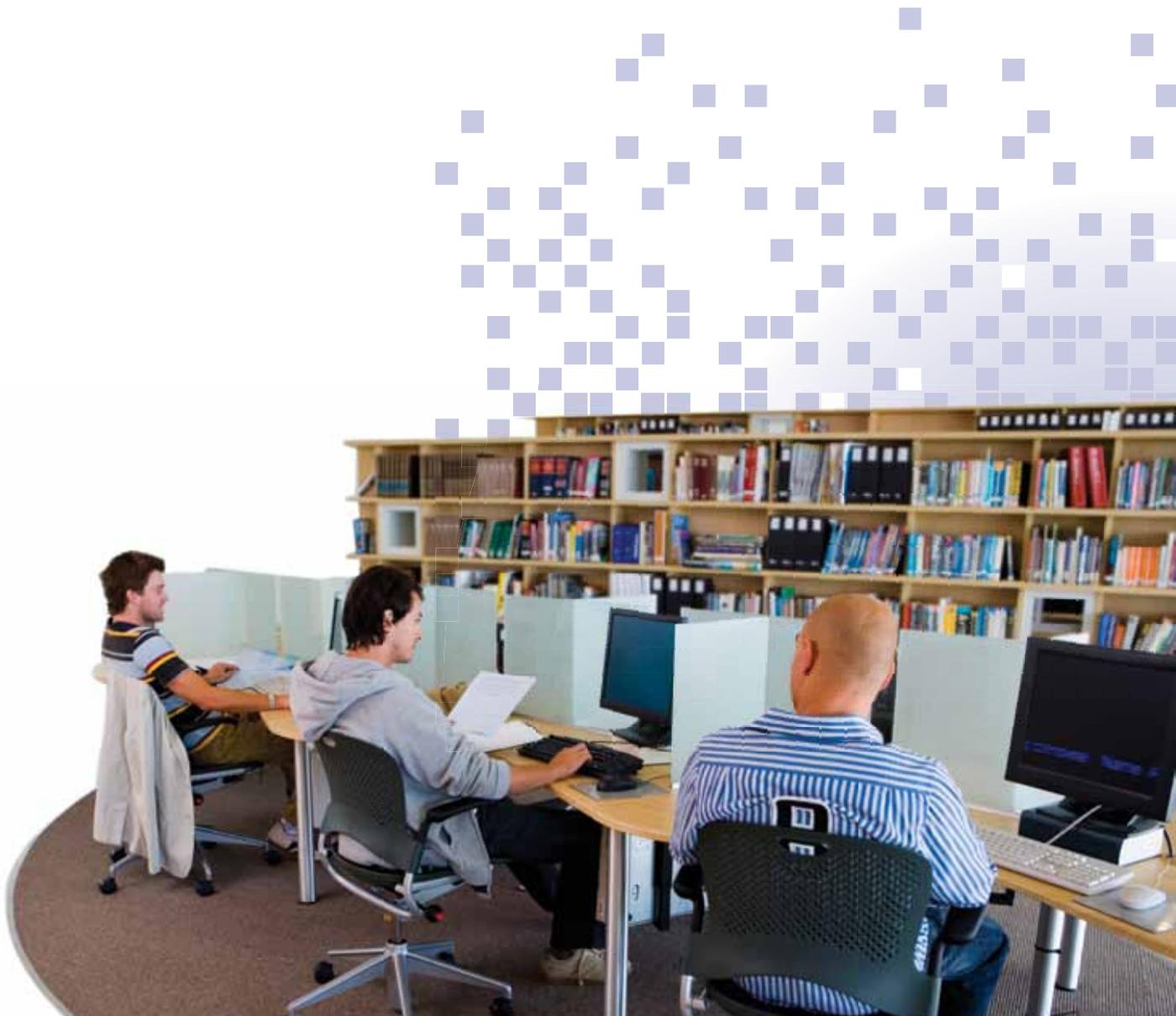


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- **Networking** is the key to a successful job search and the number one way people get jobs. Networking consists of building on personal contacts and making yourself known to potential employers. Talk with anyone who may know of an opportunity that would be right for you, including colleagues, recruiters, other job seekers, career professionals, etc.
- **Social Networking** provides a great way to make connections with potential job opportunities and promote yourself across the Internet. This can help you describe yourself, your major strengths and the benefits an employer would receive by hiring you. Check into LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. These are great tools, but be cautious. Do not post anything you would not want potential employers to see or read. Employers will check these sites. They want employees who can respect their company and its customers.
- **Kansas Workforce Centers** provide assistance in finding jobs and offer a variety of other services at no cost. For a list of workforce centers, visit **KANSASWORKS.com** or call (877) 509-6757.
- **Company Websites** are used more than ever to direct applicant flow. Many companies accept resumés and/or have resumé builders directly on their sites. Review the employment or career section of the site for job opening information and the application process. You may also contact employers directly (even if they are not advertising openings) and speak to their personnel office. You may consider using WatchThatPage.com for any additions to their employment page. When an update posts (e.g., new jobs) it automatically alerts you.
- **Federal, State and Local Government Personnel Offices** list a wide range of job opportunities. Phone numbers may be found under government listings. The State of Kansas has a Civil Service Job site.
- **Public Libraries** have books and other materials on occupations and often post local job announcements. Some also have networking events or free computer classes.
- **Newspaper Ads** list jobs, but remember, the newspaper contains less than five percent of the vacancies in your area. If you are qualified, send your resumé. These ads are usually time sensitive, so don't delay.
- **Local Radio or Television Stations** often announce available jobs.
- **Community and Technical Colleges** offer counseling and job information to students and alumni.
- **Churches and Community Organizations** frequently offer employment services or provide job search assistance.
- **Veterans' Placement Centers or Organizations** often have job listings for members. Contact the Veterans Employment Representative at a Kansas workforce center near you, visit **KANSASWORKS.com** or call (877) 509-6757.

- **Unions and Apprenticeship Programs** provide job opportunities, information and training. Contact the Kansas Apprenticeship Council (785) 296-4161, relevant labor union or Kansas workforce center for information. You may also visit **KANSASWORKS.com** or call (877) 509-6757.
- **Professional Associations** often have websites and publications that post job opportunities. There are numerous professional organizations for a variety of industries and career specialties. Many national conferences and local chapter meetings are great networking venues.

**Under the Civil Rights Act of 1964, all sources listed above serve persons of any race, color, religion, sex or national origin. The Age Discrimination Employment Act of 1967 forbids discrimination of older workers. Both laws forbid employers to discriminate in hiring.*



Applications

A job application is often an employer's first impression of you. Employers often ask job seekers to fill out an application before an interview. The manner in which you complete your application often tells an employer how well you will perform your job. Since the product you are selling is yourself, it is worth the time and effort to complete the application as best you can.

Tips for Completing an Application

- Read the entire application before answering any questions. If you complete the application by hand, be sure to print legibly.
- Fill in all blanks providing complete, detailed information. If a question does not apply to you, write "NA" (not applicable) to show you did not miss the question. Do not write "see resumé" on the application.
- Be sure all names and addresses are spelled correctly. Carry your Social Security card, military discharge, special licenses and other such information with you for reference. Because of identity theft, instead of entering your Social Security number on the application, you may state, "Will provide at interview or upon hire."
- Have your background and experience list with you so you can correctly enter titles, dates and addresses. *Kansas Career Keepers* are available at Kansas workforce centers to record your employment history.
- Use appropriate job titles for your previous positions and for the positions you are seeking. Have a specific job(s) in mind. Do not ask for "just anything."
- If you are not sure of the wages or salary of the job for which you are applying, write "negotiable" until you have a chance to discuss the job responsibilities with the employer.
- If you do not have a telephone, ask a friend or neighbor for permission to use their number. Indicate on the application this is a number where a message may be left.
- Ask three people (who are not related to you and who will give you a positive reference) if you may use their names for references. Know the current address, occupation and telephone number(s) for each. Some employers ask for business references or names of previous supervisors. If you have not held a job before, it is permissible to use teachers or family friends as references.
- If there has been a special situation in your past, such as a criminal conviction, it may be best to write, "Will explain in person" in the appropriate blank. This will give the employer a chance to ask questions and you to disclose information. If you'd like additional assistance in preparing answers regarding criminal offenses, visit with staff at a Kansas workforce center near you, visit **KANSASWORKS.com** or call (877) 509-6757.
- After you complete the application, check it over to make sure the information is thorough and accurate. If you have any questions about the application, ask the person in charge to explain it to you. Usually, you will be asked to sign a statement that the information you provided is true. False statements or intentional omissions are grounds for dismissal after being hired.
- If asked, agree to sign a statement giving the employer permission to contact your past employers and check your school and work records. Not giving permission gives a potential employer the impression you have something to hide.

Cover Letters

If you are applying for a job that requires a resumé, you should always write a cover letter to accompany your resumé. The purpose of a cover letter is to:



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- Introduce yourself and serve as a marketing tool.
- Explain how you discovered the job.
- Explain how your job skills will benefit the company.
- Show the employer why they should read your resumé or application form.
- Include past experience not on your resumé or application.
- Ask for a job interview.
- Tell the employer you will follow up.

Tips for Writing Cover Letters

- Write a separate cover letter tailored to each job for which you apply.
- Include your address, telephone number and e-mail address.
- Address each letter to a specific person (the person who would actually supervise you or the person with hiring authority). Blind letters are not as effective. You can obtain a contact name by calling the personnel department of the organization. If you cannot get a contact name, address the letter by title (e.g., Dear Customer Service Supervisor).
- Create a strong first paragraph stating why you are interested in the position.
- State the position you are seeking and the source of the job opening (newspaper ad, friend, etc.).
- Highlight your job qualifications and what you can bring to the company. It helps to have a completed resumé before this step.
- Try to identify something about yourself that is unique or of interest to the employer.
- Show you've done some homework on the company (you know what they do, their interests and challenges). Check out the company's website, if available.
- Request an interview. If possible, suggest a specific date and time that is mutually agreeable.
- Convey personal warmth and enthusiasm.
- Keep your letter short and to the point.
- Use proper grammar and correct spelling. Proofread your letter and have someone else review it.
- Type/print letters on standard-sized (8-1/2" x 11") white or standard color paper that matches your resumé.

Cover Letter Format

YOUR NAME

Your Street
Your City, State, Zip

Your Home Phone
Your E-mail

Date

Name
Title
Company Name
Company Address
Company City, State, Zip

Dear Name or Title:

INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH — Specify the position for which you are applying, how you became aware of the opening (e.g. newspaper ad, **KANSASWORKS.com**, radio, etc.). You want to capture the reader's attention. Show you have done some research on the company by talking about new projects the company has taken on or citing something you read about them. Reference your enclosures.

BODY — In this paragraph, talk about your responsibilities, actions accomplished and results achieved in past jobs. Use descriptive and concise action statements. Indicate how your experience would benefit the company. Do not repeat your entire resumé, but mention those items most appealing to the employer.

CONCLUDING INFORMATION — This is the section where you close your letter. Express your interest in an interview for a position or in learning more about the company's opportunities and hiring plans. Indicate what your follow-up plan will be (e.g., *I will contact you next week to schedule a mutually agreeable meeting time, etc.*). Be sure to mention how you may be reached. Finally, thank the employer for his/her time and consideration (e.g., *Thank you for your time and consideration*).

Respectfully,

{Leave four spaces for handwritten signature}

Your Name (typed)

Enclosure: Resumé

Cover Letter Example

JULIE ALDEN

1275 Apple Lane
Topeka, KS 66612-2345

(123) 456-7890 [H]
jalden@email.com

April 4, 2011

Patty Turner
Human Resources Manager
Patty's Place
1234 Sailor Drive
Topeka, KS 66612-2345

Dear Ms. Turner:

I am writing in response to your ad in the XYZ paper April 1, 2011, regarding the position of human resources manager. I have heard great things about Patty's Place and have enclosed my resumé for your consideration.

As my resumé indicates, I have eight years human resources management experience with increasing responsibility. I have a strong background in creating and implementing training and human resources policies and procedures. Over the past three years, our company has experienced a 15 percent increase in retention and a 40 percent reduction in grievances. Our company has exceeded production goals by 10 percent.

I strongly believe my professional experience and standards would be an asset to your organization, and I am an excellent candidate for your position as a human resource manager. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and discuss my skills further. I will follow up with you next week. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Julie Alden

Julie Alden

Enclosure: Resumé

Resumé Preparation

Today there are very few jobs where a resumé is not required. The average employer spends seven seconds scanning a resumé. Yours needs to stand out. You need to market yourself.

What is a Resumé?

The resumé is your marketing tool and summarizes your background. It provides an employer with an outline of your abilities, education, work experience, special knowledge and training. It is your opportunity to attract an employer's attention and separate yourself from all the other applicants competing for the job.

Effective Resumés

When preparing a cover letter or resumé, remember to visit a Kansas workforce center or visit **KANSASWORKS.com** to utilize resource materials or seek assistance. For a location near you, visit **KANSASWORKS.com** or call (877) 509-6757.

Resumé Tips:

- Type your resumé. Use standard-sized white paper or resumé-specific paper.
- Print on one side only.
- Do not fold, staple or bend the resumé.
- Use fonts like Arial, Times New Roman, Tahoma or Verdana with text at 9-12 points and headings at 10-14 points.
- Keep your resumé simple, bold and professional.
- Do not use shading, graphics or boxes. Limit use of underline, italics and vertical lines.
- Do not use abbreviations.
- Your resumé should be neat, clean and professional looking.
- The layout of your resumé should make reading or scanning easy. Large amounts of white space are effective.
- Be specific. Use clear and concise sentences. One page is standard, but if you have more than 15 years experience, two pages is acceptable.
- Use a header to put your name on a separate line at the top of each page.
- Make sure your contact information is correct. Include a cell phone and e-mail address, if available.
- Use bulleted or highlighted statements beginning with action verbs to describe your accomplishments and duties. Try not to repeat the same words.
 - Watch the verb tense. For current employment experience, use present tense. For previous experience, use past tense.

- Since duties on a functional resumé are arranged by category and not past/present jobs, you may use either present or past tense. Choose one or the other and use that one throughout the resumé.
- Do not use “ing” verbs (managing, acting, etc.). Use keywords to match your skills and abilities to the requirements of the job.

A list of action verbs can be found on page 23.

- Make sure there are no spelling, grammar or punctuation errors. Proofread carefully and have someone else review it as well.
- Add numbers or hard data to your resumé. In a sea full of letters, numbers really stand out (e.g., reduced costs by 17 percent during the past 10 years). Numbers draw attention and show results achieved. Be positive and focus on benefits and results.
- Do not use the words “I,” “me” or “my” in your resumé. Your resumé is not a personal correspondence and should not include details about your personal life.
- Never lie.
- If you can direct your resumé to a person in the organization who is responsible for hiring, you will be much more successful at getting your foot in the door.
- Ensure the language is consistent. Construct each description or summary in a similar manner, including grammar, punctuation and length.
- Do not include salary or wages, unless specifically requested by the employer.
- Always send a cover letter with your resumé.
- When using a Career Objective, ensure it is easy for the reader to see why you are a good fit for the job (e.g., “Seeking a position in sales where 10 years of customer service experience will add value,” or “Seeking a position where three years of management experience will contribute to success.” Be sure to adjust your Career Objective for the different types of jobs to which you apply.
- In some cases, a Summary of Qualifications should be used in place of the Career Objective. List your best characteristics to align with the details of the job (e.g., “Reputation for writing clear and concise explanations for technical and nontechnical users.”). Be sure your list reflects how you want to be summarized as a potential candidate.
- References are no longer necessary on your resumé. You do not even need to state “References available upon request.” Employers will request your references when they are ready.

Four Types of Resumés

There are numerous ways to format a resumé. Four primary types are discussed in this section. Review all of them and find a format that works for your situation and career experience. Then use the information you gathered on pages 8–11 to develop your resumé.

Chronological Resumé Format		
Advantages	Disadvantages	Best Used By
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widely used format • Logical flow, easy to read and prepare • Showcases career progression and growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasizes gaps in employment • Not suitable if you have no work history • Highlights frequent job changes • Emphasizes employment but not skill development • Emphasizes lack of related experience and career changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals with steady work record • Individuals whose recent employers or job titles are impressive

Functional Resumé Format		
Advantages	Disadvantages	Best Used By
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasizes skills rather than employment • Organizes a variety of experience (paid and unpaid work, other activities) • Disguises gaps in work record or a series of short-term jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viewed with suspicion by employers due to lack of information about specific employers and dates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals who have developed skills from other than documented employment and who may be changing careers • Individuals with no previous employment • Individuals with gaps in employment • Individuals with frequent job changes

Combination Resumé Format		
Advantages	Disadvantages	Best Used By
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlights most relevant skills and accomplishments • De-emphasizes employment history in less relevant jobs • Combines skills developed in a variety of jobs or other activities • Minimizes employment gaps and absence of directly related experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be confusing if not well organized • De-emphasizes job tasks and responsibilities • Requires more effort and creativity to prepare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career changers or those in transition • Individuals re-entering the job market after some absence • Individuals who have grown in skills and responsibility • Individuals pursuing the same or similar work as in the past

Targeted Resumé Format		
Advantages	Disadvantages	Best Used By
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personalized to company/ position • Shows research • More impressive to employer • Written specifically to employer's needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time-consuming to prepare • Can be confusing if not well organized • Must be revised for each employer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone – because any of the other formats can be made into a targeted resumé

Action Verbs

Action verbs give your resumé power and direction. Begin all skill statements with an action verb. If you cannot find the word you are looking for, use a thesaurus. For employment history, use the same grammatical structure, punctuation and verb tense (i.e., current history in present tense; previous history in past tense). Do not use “ing” verbs (managing, acting, etc.).

Below is a list of verbs to use on your resumé:

achieve	deliver	inspect	purchase
address	design	instruct	recommend
administer	determine	integrate	reconcile
advise	develop	interpret	record
allocate	diagnose	interview	recruit
analyze	direct	investigate	reduce
approve	dispatch	improve	represent
arbitrate	document	judge	report
arrange	draft	lecture	resolve
assemble	edit	maintain	review
assign	enlist	manage	schedule
attain	establish	mediate	screen
audit	evaluate	moderate	select
catalogue	examine	motivate	solve
chair	execute	negotiate	specify
classify	expedite	observe	spoke
collect	explain	operate	strengthen
communicate	extract	organize	summarize
compile	fabricate	oversee	supervise
compose	facilitate	participate	tabulate
conduct	forecast	persuade	train
consolidate	formulate	plan	translate
contract	generate	prepare	troubleshoot
control	guide	present	utilize
correspond	hire	prioritize	validate
create	implement	process	verify
critique	increase	produce	visualize
delegate	initiate	promote	write

Chronological Resumé Format

YOUR NAME

Your Street
Your City, State and Zip

Your Home or Cell Phone
Your E-mail

OBJECTIVE (OPTIONAL)

The Objective Statement appears at the top of your resumé and expresses your interest in a specific type of job or specific job vacancy. It should include one to three lines of text summarizing the position you are applying for and your main qualifications. Be concise and specific and demonstrate the value you will add to the organization.

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS (OPTIONAL)

The Summary of Qualifications section allows you to state your skills, values and interests to gain the attention of the reader. It is an excellent place to include keywords and requirements stated in a job description to support your job goal. It is also a good place to highlight skills such as working with computer programs. It should be no longer than three to four sentences and can be in paragraph or bullet form.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Company, City, State • Month Year Began – Month Year End • Job Title (be specific)

- Start with your present or most recent job and list jobs in reverse chronological order (e.g., January 2008—Present, December 1999—January 2008 and April 1997—December 1999)
- Emphasize the duties that are important to the job you are seeking
- Use numbers, percentages, statistics and examples to illustrate achievements (e.g., supervised eight employees)
- List your accomplishments in bullet format using action verbs (present tense for current employment; past tense for past employment)

EDUCATION

School, City, State • Month Year Graduated/Attended • Diploma, Certificate or License (whichever applicable, include special honors such as graduated Cum Laude, with Honors or GPA)

- If you list a college degree, do not list high school
- If you did not complete the course, do not add it to your resumé
- Include certifications, licenses and coursework relevant to the job for which you are applying

For new college graduates, the Education section should be after Summary of Qualifications. For those with full-time work experience, this section should follow your Work Experience section.

For new graduates, the trend is to list your GPA in this section. If you decide to do this, use the GPA that puts you in the best light, either overall GPA, school or college GPA or major GPA.

AFFILIATIONS/INTERESTS (OPTIONAL)

Include only if you have room on your resumé for it. Items from this section are often used as an icebreaker by interviewers looking to start an interview on an informal basis. This section should only include professional memberships and non-controversial activities/interests.

Chronological Resumé Example

SAMANTHA CLARK
1378 Eastern Avenue
Beattie, TX 88765-1233

(901) 555-1212 [H]
sclark@email.com

OBJECTIVE

To manage people, interface with customers and work with highly technical software or hardware applications.

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

Highly motivated, creative and flexible executive assistant with 10 years experience working for top-level executives. Skills include building effective, productive working relationships with internal and external customers and excellent computer skills, including Microsoft Office certification and on-the-job desktop publishing experience.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Company XYZ Inc., Beattie, TX • April 2005 – Present • Executive Assistant, Marketing

- Manage the daily calendar of the vice president for internal and external meetings
- Manage phone lines of vice president; screen, determine nature/urgency of request, transcribe voicemails, delegate and follow up to ensure resolution
- Prioritize and prepare letters, presentations, agenda, meeting minutes, notes, templates, spreadsheets and expenses
- Sort and distribute all mail, faxes, photocopies, etc., to the vice president and marketing directors
- Manage invoicing process for marketing department and ensure monthly invoices are submitted to finance
- Schedule on/off-site meetings, retail store visits, conference calls, luncheons and prepare all necessary documents, materials, equipment, catering for vice president and directors

Company ABC, Beattie, TX • June 2001 – April 2005 • Senior Administrative Assistant

- Developed and managed the president's schedule on a daily basis
- Scheduled internal and external meetings and coordinated logistics for group and client events, ensuring all marketing materials shipped in a timely fashion
- Coordinated quarterly Board of Directors Meeting (document preparation, conference call set up, catering)
- Arranged corporate travel
- Liaised with multiple law firms on a regular basis coordinating signatory fulfillment for numerous corporate and fund-related documents

EDUCATION

Best Community College, Best, SD • May 2001 • Office Professional Certificate • 3.92 GPA

- Elected class president
- Involved in campus and community activities

AFFILIATIONS/INTERESTS

- Member, Leadership Development Program, 2001-2002
- Member, Professional Women's Network
- Treasurer, Hill County Lions Club

Functional Resumé Format

YOUR NAME

Your Street
Your City, State and Zip

Your Home or Cell Phone
Your E-mail

OBJECTIVE (OPTIONAL)

The Objective Statement appears at the top of your resumé and expresses your interest in a specific type of job or specific job vacancy. It should include one to three lines of text summarizing the position(s) you are applying for and your main qualifications. Be concise and specific and demonstrate the value you will add to the organization.

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS (OPTIONAL)

The Summary of Qualifications section allows you to state your skills, values and interests to gain the attention of the reader. It is an excellent place to include keywords and requirements stated in a job description to support your job goal. It is a good place to highlight skills such as working with computer programs. It should be no longer than three to four sentences and can be in paragraph or bullet form.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (A.K.A. PROFESSIONAL SKILLS OR PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS)

Determine three or four general categories related to the position for which you are applying (e.g., communication skills, office skills, technical skills, entrepreneurial skills, etc.). Under each category, detail three or four of your skills and qualifications. List accomplishments to demonstrate your ability to perform the job duties required. Since duties on a functional resumé are arranged by category and not past/present jobs, you may use either present or past tense. Choose one or the other and use that one throughout the resumé. Use numbers, percentages, statistics and examples to illustrate achievements (e.g., supervised eight employees).

WORK HISTORY

Company, City, State • Month Year Began – Month Year End
Job Title (be specific)

EDUCATION

School, City, State • Month Year Graduated
Diploma, Certificate or License
GPA

- List certifications, licenses and coursework relevant to the position
- List honors and awards
- For new college graduates, the Education section should be after Summary of Qualifications. For those with full-time work experience, this section should follow your Work Experience section.

For new graduates, the trend is to list your GPA in this section. If you decide to do this, use the GPA that puts you in the best light, either overall GPA, school or college GPA, or major GPA.

AFFILIATIONS/INTERESTS (OPTIONAL)

Include only if you have room on your resumé for it. Items from this section are often used as an icebreaker by interviewers looking to start an interview on an informal basis. This section should only include professional memberships and non-controversial activities/interests.

Functional Resumé Example

KIMBERLY ELLIS
2395 E. 1200 Road
Harrisburg, GA 21221

(123) 456-7890 [H]
kellis@email.com

OBJECTIVE

Contribute to your organization's success with exceptional customer service, managerial and people skills.

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Solid managerial and administrative experience
- Dedication and drive as a hard-working individual
- Superlative communication and team-building skills

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Interpersonal and Teamwork Skills

- Entrusted to process confidential employee records, such as salary changes, vacation/absenteeism reports and performance appraisals
- Interacted with a wide variety of personalities while scheduling meetings/appointments

Customer Service and Sales Skills

- Interacted with clients and utilized excellent organizational skills to arrange and coordinate special events including weddings, receptions and holiday parties, as well as everyday lunch and dinner planning
- Delivered excellent customer service and conducted in-house sales promotions while functioning as food server, beverage server and hostess

Managerial and Supervisory Skills

- Proved multi-tasking abilities by scheduling and supervising staff, consisting of kitchen workers, bartenders and food servers while functioning as clubhouse assistant manager at country club and simultaneously serving as pool manager and swim instructor
- Served as right-hand to lead managers of an entertainment company in an administrative assistant capacity

WORK HISTORY

- *Blue Ribbon Technologies, Inc., Pasadena, CA • April 2006 – Present*
Administrative Assistant
- *The Brew Station, Pasadena, CA • November 2005 – April 2006*
Beverage Server
- *City of Entertainment, Pasadena, CA • January 2005 – December 2005*
Office Manager
- *Bellringer Buffet, Pasadena, CA • September 2004 – December 2004*
Server

EDUCATION

- *California State University, Northridge, CA • May 2001*
General Studies, Marketing and Management. Alumni Member of Alpha Delta Pi
- *Boswell Secretarial College, Pasadena, CA • May 1996*
Associate in Applied Science. Specialized in Accounting, Business and Office Management

AFFILIATIONS/INTERESTS

- Member, Leadership Development Program, 2005–2007

Combination Resumé Format

YOUR NAME

Your Street
Your City, State and Zip

Your Home or Cell Phone
Your E-mail

OBJECTIVE (OPTIONAL)

The Objective Statement appears at the top of your resumé and expresses your interest in a specific type of job or specific job vacancy. It should include one to three lines of text summarizing the position(s) you are applying for and/or your main qualifications. Be concise and specific and demonstrate the value you will add to the organization.

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS (OPTIONAL)

The Summary of Qualifications section allows you to state your skills, values and interests to gain the attention of the reader. It is an excellent place to include keywords and requirements stated in a job description. It is a good place to highlight skills such as working with computer programs. It should be no longer than three to four sentences and can be in paragraph or bullet form.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (a.k.a. Professional Skills or Professional Accomplishments)

Determine three or four general categories related to the position for which you are applying (e.g., communication skills, office skills, technical skills, entrepreneurial skills, etc.). Under each category, detail three or four of your skills and qualifications. List accomplishments to demonstrate your ability to perform the job duties required. Watch the verb tense. For current employment experience use present tense and for previous experience use past tense. Use numbers, percentages, statistics and examples to illustrate achievements (e.g., supervised eight employees).

WORK HISTORY

Company, City, State • Month Year Began – Month Year End • Job Title (be specific)

- Start with your present or most recent job and list jobs in reverse chronological order (e.g., January 2006 – Present, December 1997 – January 2006 and April 1992 – December 1997)
- Briefly describe two or three main duties performed in each job (current employment in present tense; previous in past tense)
- Emphasize duties important to the job you are seeking
- Use numbers when applicable (e.g., supervised eight employees)

EDUCATION

School, City, State • Month Year Graduated • Diploma, Certificate, or License • GPA

- List certifications, licenses and course work relevant to the position
- List honors and awards

For new college graduates, the Education section should be after Summary of Qualifications. For those with full-time work experience, this section should follow your Work Experience section.

For new graduates, the trend is to list your GPA in this section. If you decide to do this, use the GPA that puts you in the best light, either overall GPA, school or college GPA, or major GPA.

AFFILIATIONS/INTERESTS (OPTIONAL)

Include only if you have room on your resumé for it. Items from this section are often used as an icebreaker by interviewers looking to start an interview on an informal basis. This section should only include professional memberships and non-controversial activities/interests.

Combination Resumé Example

SHIRLEY ADAMS
1234 56th Avenue, Apartment #203
Tucson, AZ 85725

(520) 555-5555 (H)
sadams@email.com

OBJECTIVE

Position as a general office worker utilizing skills in customer service.

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

Dependable worker with more than 10 years of transferable experience. Proven clerical, customer service and communication skills in a variety of settings. Upbeat, positive attitude with a history of producing quality results and satisfied customers. Computer literate.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

General Office

- Organized and implemented group activities in an efficient manner
- Scheduled appointments
- Maintained accurate financial records and timely invoice payments
- Answered phones and took accurate messages
- Prepared reports and created documents using Microsoft Office products
- Located desired information using the Internet

Customer Service

- Welcomed customers and visitors in a professional and courteous manner
- Provided customers with desired information in a timely manner
- Assisted customers with concerns
- Received exceptional rating from company's secret shopper

Communication

- Utilized Internet e-mail as an effective communication tool
- Established rapport with diverse individuals and groups
- Demonstrated ability to express ideas in a team environment and influence action

WORK HISTORY

Company ABC, Tucson, AZ • June 2008 – Present • Office Assistant

- Collect, count and disburse money, execute basic bookkeeping and complete banking transactions
- Communicate with customers, employees and other individuals to answer questions, disseminate or explain information, take orders and address complaints
- Answer telephones, direct calls and take messages
- Compile, copy, sort and file records, business transactions and other activities

EDUCATION

Maricopa County Action Program, Phoenix, AZ • May 2008 • GED

AFFILIATIONS/INTERESTS

- General Office Volunteer – Salvation Army, Tucson, AZ – 5 Years
- Elected Secretary – Parent Teachers Association (ISD 01), Tucson, AZ – 5 Years
- Event Coordinator – Neighborhood Involvement Program, Phoenix, AZ – 3 Years
- Group/Activities Leader – Girl Scouts of America, Phoenix, AZ – 4 Years

Targeted Resumé Format

YOUR NAME

Your Street
Your City, State and Zip

Your Home or Cell Phone
Your E-mail

SUMMARY OF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

The Summary of Qualifications section allows you to give high impact statements about your qualifications. In this resumé format, this section should be bulleted. State your skills, values and interests to gain the attention of the reader. It is an excellent place to include keywords and requirements stated in a job description to support your job goal.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

This section should include professional organizations of which you are a member. Items listed should be relevant to the position for which you are applying.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (a.k.a. Professional Skills or Professional Accomplishments)

Job Title (be specific)

Company, City, State, Year Began – Year End

This section should cover your career experiences and is similar to a chronological resumé. The difference is you will want to focus on your experience directly matching the job for which you are applying. List your accomplishments in bullet form. Make sure there is enough detail and highlight important points. Items listed should answer what you saved, achieved and/or made in your position(s).

EDUCATION

School, City, State • Month Year Graduated

Diploma, Certificate or License, GPA

- List certifications, licenses and course work relevant to the position
- List honors and awards

For those with full-time work experience, this section should follow your Work Experience section.

For new college graduates, the Education section should be after Summary of Qualifications and the trend is to list your GPA in this section. If you decide to do this, use the GPA that puts you in the best light, either overall GPA, school or college GPA, or major GPA.

Targeted Resumé Example

ANN KINNEY
506 10th Avenue
Kansas City, MO 66118

(913) 123-4567 (H)
akinney@email.com

SUMMARY OF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

- Experienced manager with expertise in human relations and project management
- Extensive background in staff recruitment and retention
- Staff training and development
- Superb written and oral communication skills
- Organizational and strategic planning
- Program marketing
- Contract negotiation and compliance
- Knowledge of federal and state employment law

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Society of Human Resources Management
- Portland Human Resources Management Association

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Clinical Director
Riverbend Inc., Chicago, IL • 2005 – 2010

- Senior management of a Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) accredited treatment facility. Responsible for all aspects of program management, including clinical, administrative and fiscal
- Responsible for recruiting, orienting, training and supervising 50 staff. Reduced staff turnover from 38 percent to 14 percent by improving staff orientation and training, professional development and mid-level management coaching
- Provided oversight of all aspects of staff performance – performance evaluation, progressive discipline, mediation of staff disputes and grievance procedures in accordance with state and federal laws
- Increased annual revenue by 38 percent through program marketing

Program Director
R. Dykeman Center, Chicago, IL • 1998 – 2005

- Administrative, clinical and human resources management of an outpatient mental health center – 60 full-time employees and 45 contract employees housed in various locations
- Responsible for the recruitment, supervision and performance evaluation of medical and administrative staff
- Provided training to enhance workplace performance at all levels of staffing
- Independent consultant to several small businesses, law firms, non-profit agencies and school districts on staff grievance procedures, team building and the setting and achieving of organizational goals

EDUCATION

University of Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany • May 1997
Doctor of Psychology in Clinical Psychology • 3.8 GPA

Interviewing

Interviews can be a little overwhelming, but with the proper preparation, you'll be ready. Below are some general tips to get you focused. After a few interviews, you'll feel more confident.



Michael C. Snell

Before the Interview

- Plan Ahead – Research the company, the position and if possible, the people you will meet at the interview. Review your work experience. Be ready to support past career accomplishments with specific information targeted toward the company's needs. Have your facts ready.
- Be Prepared – Take the following items with you to the interview: copies of your resumé, Social Security card, birth certificate, driver's license, union card, military records and a list of references, both work and personal. Also bring any supporting documents to help you close the deal and be hired (e.g., an architect should bring his portfolio).
- Role Play – Once you have finished studying, begin role-playing (rehearsing). Use the general questions provided below. Write down answers if it helps make your presentation more concise. Try to keep your answers to the information your new employer will want to know.
- Create and Rehearse – You have a limited amount of time to make an impression on someone. Create and rehearse a 30-second statement, also called an "elevator speech." Be prepared with the following information:
 - Who you are;
 - What business or field you are in;
 - What is your unique selling proposition and what makes you different from the competition; and
 - What benefits will employers derive from your services?

Here is an example: "Hi, my name is Abby Smith, and I have five years experience as a Marketing Manager in a fast-paced advertising company. I love to build relationships with people, and I work a lot in the community building alliances and partnerships. My passion is working on projects with people."

How to Answer Interview Questions

Interviewers often begin an interview by asking you to tell them about yourself. It is helpful to think about your response before going to the interview so you do not stumble with a response.

Questions asking "what if" are often difficult to answer. For example, what would you do if your supervisor told you to do something illegal? These questions should be answered based on your knowledge, experience and personal values. Remember, your solution is not as important as your attitude. A calm approach is best – do not rush into an answer. It is best to cushion your answer by saying something like, "One thing I might consider would be..." Then, if the interviewer does not like your solution, you can consider a different approach.

Interviewers are not allowed to ask questions concerning marital status, religion, ethnicity or national origin, age (other than if you are between the minimum and maximum age required for the job), children, childcare arrangements, pregnancy or disability. Most employers who ask for this information do so in casual conversation or out of ignorance. Think about how you will answer or avoid answering such questions.

Traditional vs. Behavioral Interview

In a traditional interview, you will be asked a series of questions that typically have straightforward answers like “What are your strengths and weaknesses?” or “What major challenges and problems did you face? How did you handle them?” or “Do you desire a typical work week?”

In a behavioral interview, an employer has decided what skills are needed in the person they hire and will ask questions to find out if the candidate has those skills. Instead of asking how you would behave, they will ask how you behaved in the past (what you did, what you said, how you reacted or how you felt). The interviewer will want to know how you handled a situation, instead of what you might do in the future. Behavioral interview questions will be more pointed, more probing and more specific than traditional interview questions. Follow-up questions will also be detailed.

Examples of Traditional Interview Q&As

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself? Prepare ahead of time by developing your own 30-second personal branding statement to tell clearly who you are, your major strengths and the clear benefit your employer received. The advantages of this approach are quickly gaining their attention and interest in knowing more.

Sample answer: “I’m a seasoned retail manager strong in developing training programs and loss prevention techniques resulting in revenue savings of over \$2.3 million for Acme Corp. during the past 11 years.”

2. What is your greatest weakness? Be careful with this one. When you’re asked what your greatest weakness is, try to turn a negative into a positive.

Sample answers: “Being organized hasn’t always been my strongest point, but I implemented a time management system that really improved my organizational skills,” or “I like to make sure my work is perfect, so I tend to spend a little too much time checking it. However, I’ve created a good balance by setting up a system to ensure everything is done correctly the first time.”

3. Do you prefer to work independently or on a team? When the interviewer asks this question, they want to know if you’re a team player or would rather work on your own.

Sample answer: “I am equally comfortable working as a member of a team or independently. In researching the LMN Company, your mission statement and the job description, I could see similarities to my previous position where there were some assignments requiring a great deal of independent work and others where the team effort was most effective. As I said, I’m comfortable with both.”

4. Why are you the best person for this job? The best way to respond is to give concrete examples of why your skills and accomplishments make you the best candidate for the job. Take a few moments to compare the job description with your abilities, as well as mentioning what you have accomplished in other positions. Be positive and reiterate your interest in the company and the position.

Sample answers: "I've got extensive experience in [name the appropriate field] and have the specific skills you are looking for," or "I'm a fast learner. I adapt quickly to change and will hit the ground running" or "I'm dedicated and enthusiastic about helping this company meet its goals and will provide top-quality results with minimal oversight. I'm an outstanding performer who takes pride in my work. You won't have any regrets when you hire me."

5. What is your greatest strength? This is one of the easier interview questions you'll be asked. When you are asked questions about your strengths, it's important to discuss attributes that qualify you for the job. The best way to respond is to describe the skills and experience directly correlated with the job for which you are applying.

Sample answers: "When I'm working on a project, I don't want to just meet deadlines. Rather, I prefer to complete the project well ahead of schedule" or "I pride myself on my customer service skills and my ability to resolve what could be difficult situations."

6. How do you handle stressful situations? Give some examples of stressful situations you've dealt with in the past. Tell how you use time management, problem-solving or decision-making skills to reduce stress.

Sample answers: "I react to situations, rather than to stress. That way, the situation is handled and doesn't become stressful" or "I actually work better under pressure and I've found I enjoy working in a challenging environment."

7. What major challenges and problems did you face? How did you handle them? Be sure to include specific examples of how you handled a particular difficult situation. Discuss how you researched the issue and contributed to finding a solution.

Sample answers: "During a difficult financial period, I was able to satisfactorily negotiate repayment schedules with multiple vendors" or "When the software development of our new product stalled, I coordinated the team that managed to get the schedule back on track. We were able to successfully troubleshoot the issues and solve the problems within a very short period of time."

8. I see from your application you have been convicted of a crime.

Will you explain this to me? Be prepared to answer questions about your criminal record. Do not be lengthy in answering the question. Be truthful and accountable.

Sample answers: "I'm glad you asked because I want you to feel comfortable hiring me. I want to assure you it had nothing to do with my previous employers. I made some poor choices I wish I hadn't made, but I have matured and will never make those same choices. Since then, I've taken the time to decide what field I would like to get into, have enrolled in several clerical courses and can type 50 wpm. I am familiar with several software programs for word processing and have excellent phone skills. I am very interested in learning all I can about this industry and I know I would be an asset to your organization," or "When I was younger I got mixed up with the wrong crowds and got in trouble for breaking into cars. We all do things when we are young we regret. I used the time to my advantage by completing an air conditioning and heating training program and received my certificate. I've researched several air conditioning companies in the area and yours is well respected. I would really like to be a part of your team" or "In my past, I was involved with drugs, but that is all behind me and I've taken control of my life. I have two years experience in food service and want to stay in this industry and learn as much as possible. Because of my past, when you hire me, your company is eligible for the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, which can save you up to \$2,400. Are you familiar with this program?"

Preparation for the Behavioral Interview

The best way to prepare for a behavioral interview is to refresh your memory and consider some special situations you have dealt with or projects you have worked on. Prepare stories to illustrate times when you have successfully solved problems or performed memorably. The stories will be useful to help you respond meaningfully in a behavioral interview. Remember, your answer is not as important as your attitude. A calm approach is best – don't rush into an answer.

Examples of Behavioral Interview Q&As

1. Give me an example of a problem you faced on the job and tell me how you solved it. This is a great question to show your ability to be creative and problem solve. Choose a problem you might face in the job you are interviewing for.

Sample answer: "I think it is important to get information and clarify the problem first before coming up with possible solutions. If you skip this step, other people's time can be wasted. For example, at my last job we had a problem where the situation was "X," the action I took was "Y" and the positive outcome was "Z." I was commended by Keith in Accounting for solving the problem and getting the project back on track."

2. What did you like best and least about your previous job? This question reveals a lot about you. You want to be sure to include the things you liked especially those that will appeal to the hiring manager. Give specific examples of how your last job allowed you to show your skills. Never make statements such as “I liked my last company because they gave me a lot of vacation days,” or something similar. When answering what you liked least, keep it short and do not be negative.

Sample answer: “What I liked best about my previous job was getting to work with a wide variety of people. This really allowed me to learn how to be patient, handle different situations and provide excellent customer service. What I liked least was there didn’t ever seem to be enough time to complete all the paperwork required. I know the paperwork is necessary, but I really prefer to utilize my time and talents to provide service to customers.”

3. Describe a situation when working with a team produced more successful results than if you had completed the project on your own. The hiring manager wants to learn more about your thought process. You will want to show your ability to solicit ideas from others, listen carefully and persuade people to your point-of-view.

Sample answer: “I have worked both as a member of a team and independently in my career. I enjoy both and can do both equally well; however, I do think working with others has brought better results to projects. For example, at XYZ, I was asked to chair our committee on implementing a new process for taking customer orders. I was able to bring the team together for several meetings, stay in contact via e-mails and together we developed a new process that received great reviews from our boss. It also really improved the time it took to input information and in turn really made the customers a lot more satisfied as well.”

At the Interview

- Dress appropriately for the interview and the job. Dress at a level above the position you are interested in obtaining. For men and women, a nice conservative suit is appropriate.
- Always go to the interview alone. Arrange for a babysitter and transportation. Plan to arrive 10 to 15 minutes early and be relaxed before the interview.
- Remember that your first impression is made when you walk through the door. Introduce yourself and shake hands firmly. Be friendly to everyone you meet. You never know who will be involved in the final hiring decision.
- Maintain eye contact with your interviewer. Show you want the job with your interest.
- Take notes. Show the interviewer you are serious about their time, what they say and it demonstrates your organizational skills.
- Listen and adapt. Be sensitive to the style of the interviewer. Pay attention to those details of dress, office furniture and general decor, which will afford helpful clues to assist you in tailoring your presentation.

- Try to relate your answers to the interviewer and his or her company. Focus on achievements relevant to the position.
- Encourage the interviewer to share information about his or her company. Demonstrate your interest. Some suggested questions to ask the interviewer are provided in the next section.
- Be positive. Avoid negative comments about past employers. Answer questions in a clear and concise manner. Show how your experience and training will make you productive in the shortest time with minimal supervision.
- Thank the interviewer.

Questions to Ask the Interviewer

At the end of the interview, the interviewer will probably ask if you have any questions. Asking questions shows your interest in the company or the position. It is also your chance to clarify any item not thoroughly explained during the interview. Here are a few sample questions you might ask at the end of the interview:

- How would I be trained or introduced to the job?
- Will you please describe the department's goals for the year?
- What are the opportunities for growth and advancement in this company?
- Will you list the major job duties I would be performing in a typical day? Be sure you have a good understanding of the job (duties, work hours, etc.).
- When do you plan to make a hiring decision?
- What can one do to exceed your expectations in this role?
- Do not ask about benefits or salary in the interview. Save this for the offer stage. Most likely, the employer will tell you.

If you do not have any questions, say something like, "Thank you, but I think you have given a good description of what the job involves and have answered all my questions. I am very interested in the job and am sure I would be an asset to the company."

Closing the Interview

- If the employer does not offer you a job or say when you will hear about it, ask when you may call to find out about the decision.
- If the employer asks you to call or return for another interview, make a written note of the time, date and place.
- Thank the employer for the interview and reaffirm your interest and qualifications for the job.
- Ask for the interviewer's business card. If more than one person did the interview, ask for a business card from each.
- Send a thank you note immediately. If necessary, clarify any points you did not make well or overcome any employer hesitation. Reinforce your interest and qualifications.

See "Thank You Letters" on page 39 for more information.

After the Interview

Make each interview a learning experience. After it is over, ask yourself these questions:

- What points did I make that seemed to interest the employer?
- What questions did I have the most difficulty answering?
- Did I present my qualifications well? Did I overlook important qualifications for the job?
- Did I learn all I needed to know about the job?
- Did I ask all the questions I had about the job?
- Did I talk too much? Too little?
- Was I too tense? Too relaxed?
- Was I too aggressive? Not aggressive enough?
- Was I dressed appropriately?
- Did I effectively close the interview?

Make a list of specific ways you can improve your next interview. Remember, practice makes perfect. The more you interview the better you will get. If you plan carefully and stay motivated, you can market your job talents.



Thank You Letters

You should plan to send a thank you letter within 24 hours of your interview. Some professions expect a mailed hard copy while others find an e-mailed thank you appropriate. Follow the cues from the employer regarding the preferred method of contact.

Tips on Writing Thank You Letters

When you write your letters, use these guidelines:

- Use the same paper stock you used for your resumé and cover letter.
- Write clearly and concisely.
- Be sincere – most people can tell when you are not being honest.
- Proofread your letter and make corrections. Check for spelling, grammar, typos, etc.
- Keep a copy of thank you notes and replies for your records, especially, if you have attempted to restate or clarify topics discussed.
- Mention the day of the interview and job title.
- Talk about your interest in the company and the position for which you interviewed. Be specific about why you are interested and how you are a good fit for the team.
- Say you want the job.
- Address any questions you feel you did not fully answer during the interview. This letter is your last chance to make a positive impression on the interviewer.
- There will probably be several people interviewing, so set yourself apart from other candidates so the interviewer will remember you. Highlight a key point the interviewer will recall and therefore remember you.
- If you meet with more than one person, send them all thank you letters, each one a bit different because you don't know who is making the decisions.
- If the company communicated its specific needs, issues or challenges, use your thank you letter to show how you can meet their needs.
- If the company communicated its ideal qualifications for a candidate, use your thank you letter to outline how you meet or exceed those qualifications.

Thank you letter samples are on the following pages.

Thank You Letter Format

YOUR NAME
Your Street
Your City, State, Zip

Your Home Phone
Your E-mail

Date

Name
Title
Company Name
Company Address
Company City, State, Zip

Dear Name or Title:

FIRST PARAGRAPH — Thank the person with whom you interviewed being sure to remind them of the position for which you interviewed. Refer to how impressed you were with the company or how enthusiastic you are about the possibility of learning more about the company. Highlight a key point from the interview that will make you stand out.

SECOND PARAGRAPH — In this paragraph you could offer information you may have forgotten to mention in the interview or refer to how your experience relates to the position. Include a brief statement explaining how these relate mentioning your qualifications, skills and education, if applicable to the position.

THIRD PARAGRAPH — Thank the interviewer once again for taking the time to meet with you. Make sure the employer knows you are still interested in the position. Tell the employer you look forward to hearing from them and can provide additional information, if necessary.

Sincerely,

{Leave four spaces for handwritten signature}

Your Name (typed)

Thank You Letter Example

JULIE ALDEN
1275 Apple Lane
Topeka, KS 66612-2345

(785) 123-4567 [C]
(123) 456-7890 [H]
jalden@email.com

April 4, 2011

Patty Turner
Human Resources Manager
Patty's Place
1234 Sailor Dr.
Topeka, KS 66612-2345

Dear Ms. Turner:

Thank you for meeting with me last Friday about the Administrative Assistant position. I was very impressed with your facility and believe my qualifications would be a good match for Patty's Place.

As discussed in my interview, I have more than 10 years experience in an office setting and feel my skills match your needs. My affiliation with the Society of Human Resources Management will also be of value to your company. I welcome the opportunity to learn new responsibilities working for your company and am very interested in the position.

Again, thank you for taking the time to meet with me. I would be pleased to provide any further information and look forward to hearing from you. You may reach me at either my home or cell phone as listed above.

Sincerely,

Julie Alden

Julie Alden

Testing/Assessments

Some jobs may require testing or assessment. Usually, the job announcement or ad will mention required tests. Tests that may be given include:

- Assessment tests – Predict your ability to learn and perform job tasks.
- Practical tests – Measure what you know and what you can do in a job (e.g., word processing speed for a secretarial job or knowledge of street names and routes for a firefighter job).

Below are some online resources available to improve your basic computer skills:

- NimbleFingers™ – This site offers online typing test tutorials. Learn basic keystrokes.
- Learn 2 Type – This site offers a typing test and free lessons on typing.
- Microsoft Digital Literacy – This site offers a curriculum introducing you to the computer and its many uses. Upon completion, you will earn a certificate.
- Microsoft Word Tutorial – This site will take you through a tutorial on the functions and tools available in Microsoft Word.
- Learn Free – This site offers courses about everyday life, math and money, computers, Microsoft Office, e-mail, Internet and online classes.
- Kansas **WORK**Ready! Certificate – This is based on the nationally recognized certificate from ACT WorkKeys® informing employers of your skills before you ever walk into the interview room. It measures your skills in three areas – reading, locating information and math – and certifies you as a Platinum, Gold, Silver or Bronze candidate. Benefits to you are:
 - Leads to higher starting salaries
 - Improves your chances for career advancement and promotions
 - Makes interviews less stressful because your skills are already documented
 - Provides you the confidence of knowing your specific strengths
 - Allows you to assess your skills and choose the best career for you

If you are interested in taking this assessment, please contact your local Kansas workforce center, visit **KANSASWORKS.com** or call (877) 509-6757.

- **WORK**Talent! Assessment – This assessment, developed by ACT, will help you gain insight into your personal characteristics and work-related behaviors. You will learn to rely on your personal strengths and adopt new behaviors to make you even more employable. For this assessment, visit a Kansas workforce center near you, visit **KANSASWORKS.com** or call (877) 509-6757.

How to Prepare for Assessments

Brush up on job skills related to your job field. For example, if you are taking a typing test, practice typing. If you are taking a construction test, review books and blueprints.

Here are some tips to help you with most tests:

- It is natural to be nervous about tests.
- Make a list of what you need for the test (pencil, eyeglasses, ID, etc.). Check it before leaving.
- Get a full night's sleep.
- If you are sick, call and reschedule the test.
- Arrive early at the test site.
- If you need any special accommodations, tell the test administrator in advance.
- If you do not understand the test instructions, ask for help before the test begins.
- Work as fast as you can. Do not linger over difficult questions.
- Find out if guessing is penalized. If it is not, guess on questions you are not sure about.
- After the test, find out what your scores actually mean.

For many jobs, your work talents and other capabilities will count more than your test scores.



Websites

Job Search Websites

Bureau of Labor Statistics – www.bls.gov
Career Builder – www.careerbuilder.com
Career One Stop – www.servicelocator.org (skills match)
GI Jobs – www.gijobs.com
GovernmentJobs.com – www.govtjobs.com
Explore Careers – www.careeronestop.org
Kansas Career Pipeline – www.kansascareerpipeline.org
Kansas Civil Service Job Search – www.jobs.ks.gov
KANSASWORKS – www.KANSASWORKS.com
Monster – www.monster.com
NationJob.com – www.nationjob.com
O*NET – www.online.onetcenter.org
Retiree Careers – www.retireecareers.com
Senior Job Bank – www.seniorjobbank.org
Seniors4Hire – www.seniors4hire.org
USA Jobs – www.usajobs.opm.gov

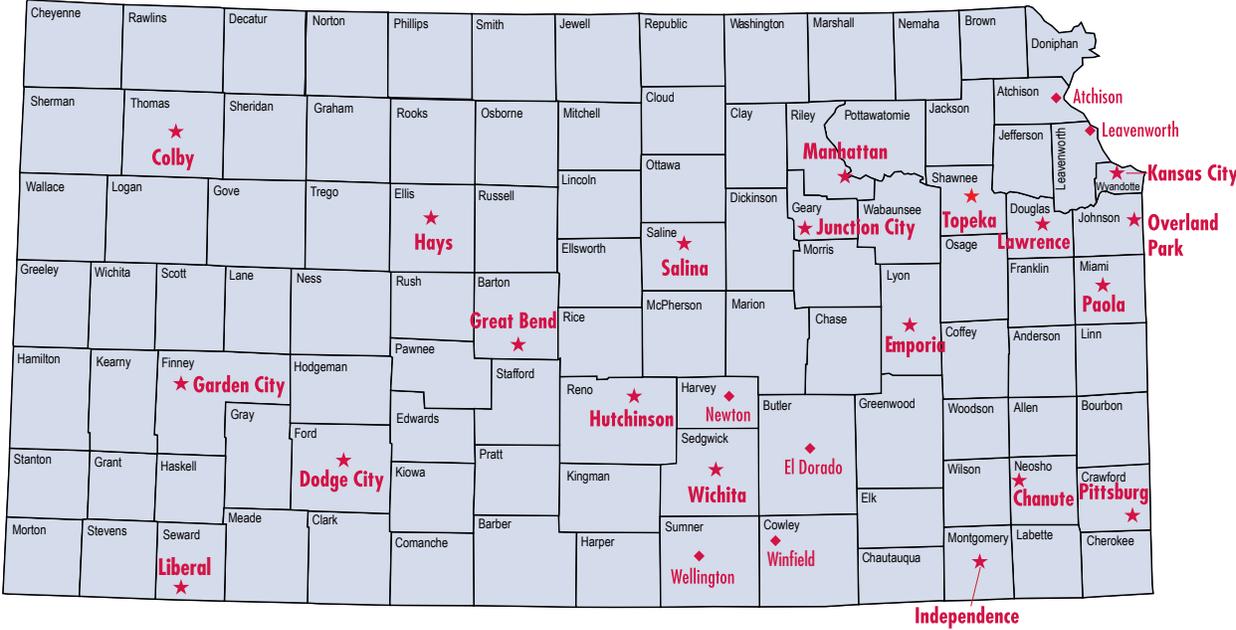
Other Useful Websites

Housing Information – www.realtor.com
Job Corps – www.jobcorps.gov/home.aspx
Kansas Career Zoom – www.careerzoomkansas.com
Kansas Colleges and Universities – www.kotn.org/colleges.html
Kansas Commission on Disability Concerns – www.kcdcinfo.com/
Kansas Communities – <http://skyways.lib.ks.us/towns>
Kansas Labor Market Information – www.dol.ks.gov/lmis/about.html
Kansas Newspapers – www.usnpl.com
Kansas Registered Apprenticeship Program – www.kansasapprenticeship.org
Moving Calculators – www.homefair.com
Relocation/Moving Quotes – www.moving.com
Tips for Finding the Right Job – www.doleta.gov
ThinkKansas – www.thinkkansas.com

The Kansas Department of Commerce is an equal opportunity employer/program—auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities and other barriers to employment.

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For more information:

(877) 509-6757

E-mail: workforcesvcs@kansasworks.com

KANSASWORKS.com