

# 3

## **Employment and Career**

This section has information about getting a job and the things you need to prepare and practice to be a person an employer may want to hire.

**Examples of information to keep in this section might include:**

- ☐ Resume
- ☐ Sample Cover Letter
- ☐ Letters of Recommendation
- ☐ List of References
- ☐ Information about high school work experience
- ☐ Certifications (CPR, First Aid, etc.)
- ☐ Completed Interest Inventories (ECIS portfolio)
- ☐ Master Job Application/Job Information Sheet
- ☐ Practice Interview Questions with Your Answers
- ☐ Idaho Career Information System (CIS) Information
- ☐ ADA rights related to career

# Ten Steps to Planning Your Career:

1. Develop a career plan. Think about what you want to do and find out more about the kind of training, education, and skills you will need to achieve your career goal.
2. Assess your skills and interests. Think hard about what you enjoy, what you are good at, what kind of personality you are, and the values you hold.
3. Research occupations. Find out more about the nature of the jobs that interest you, such as educational requirements, salary, working conditions, future outlook, and anything else that can help you narrow your focus.
4. Compare your skills and interests with the occupations you've selected. The career that matches your skills, interests, and personality the closest may be the career for you.
5. Choose your career goal. Once you've decided what occupation matches up best with you, then you can begin developing a plan to reach your career goal.
6. Select a school that offers a college degree or training program that best meets your career goal and financial needs.
7. Find out about financial aid to help support you in obtaining your career goal. If you haven't already done so, begin saving for college.
8. Learn about job hunting tips as you prepare to graduate or move into the job market.
9. Prepare your resume, and practice job interviewing techniques.
10. Go to your career guidance center (at your middle school, high school, or college) or local library for additional information and help on career planning, or check out our other internet resources\*.

\*From **CareerShip website – an online career exploration adventure** – go to <http://mappingyourfuture.org/planyourcareer/careership/>

From the website: “Welcome to the guided tour of Planning a Career. On this tour, you can find out how to choose a career and how to reach your career goal. You can also pick up useful tips on job hunting, resume writing, and job interviewing techniques.”

# Getting Started with a Personal Inventory

If you don't know what kind of job you want then ask yourself what you do well and enjoy doing. Next make a list of those things you do well and enjoy doing. Add to this list your skills, training, talents, and experiences. When completed, this personal inventory should include not only education, training, and job experience, but also any hobbies, sports, or charitable activities you engage in that display talent or initiative.

Using a categorized list or **Personal Inventory Form** will allow you to better organize your list and highlight your interests, strengths, and weaknesses. Your personal inventory will be used to build your resume. The purpose of the resume is to convince the employer that you have the skills and abilities to successfully fulfill the job requirements.

## PERSONAL INVENTORY FORM

**Full Name** (First) (Middle) (Last):

**Present Address:**

**Birth Date:**

**Telephone:**

**E-mail:**

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### Work Experience

(Start with your most recent job)

#### 1. Job title:

Describe what you did on this job:

What did you like about this job?

What did you dislike about this job?

Accomplishments/awards/honors:

**2. Job title:**

Describe what you did on this job:

What did you like about this job?

What did you dislike about this job?

Accomplishments/awards/honors:

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**Education and Training****High School:**

In what subjects did you do best?

What subjects did you like most?

What subjects did you like least?

Clubs/organizations (list offices held):

Honors/awards/accomplishments:

**College/Universities:**

Name, degree, and year completed or number of years/semesters completed:

In what subjects did you do best?

What subjects did you like most?

What subjects did you like least?

Clubs/organizations (list offices held):

Honors/awards/accomplishments:

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**Additional Information**

Hobbies/Interests:

# Resume Worksheet

Make the information on this worksheet thorough and complete. Save it as a lasting resource; update it as the years pass. Use the information as a “menu” you can use to create a unique resume for each job you seek.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date updated: \_\_\_\_\_

## I. Personal Information

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Temporary Address (if different): \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## II. Education

Elementary School: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Overall GPA: \_\_\_\_\_

High School: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Year graduated or number of years completed: \_\_\_\_\_ GPA: \_\_\_\_\_

College or University: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Degree: \_\_\_\_\_

Major(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Minor(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Date obtained: \_\_\_\_\_ Major GPA: \_\_\_\_\_ Overall GPA: \_\_\_\_\_

Other schools attended (except high school), training or certifications received, licenses obtained:

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**III. Experience Information** (consider all experience—paid, unpaid, volunteer, etc.)  
(you should repeat this section for any of the experiences you have had)

Position title: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates employed (months & years only) From: \_\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of supervisor(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Duties and responsibilities: \_\_\_\_\_

Quality attributes you found important and used successfully in this position.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Specific performance accomplishments or contributions you made to this job:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Combine the duties, qualities and accomplishments together and write a strong job description.

**IV. Talents and Skills**

Write here your special talents, skills, training, languages (artistic, computer skills, special licenses, significant achievements), etc:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**V. Activities**

1. Memberships in clubs or community groups, volunteer & religious organizations.

Include name of the association, offices held and the dates. Add any significant activities attributed to your leadership:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Awards and Honors (academic, athletic, social, civic. Any scholarship not based on financial need):

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3. Creative professional activities (articles written, inventions, projects presented or displayed):

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## VI. Personal References

List references on a separate page, not on your resume. Avoid using family and relatives. Generally, three or four professional or academic references and one personal reference will be sufficient. *Be sure to get permission from any reference before using their name!* Send each a thank you note for volunteering to help you, and keep them informed on your job search progress.

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_  
Position: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_  
Position: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_  
Position: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_  
Position: \_\_\_\_\_

1. *Make a copy of this blank worksheet before you fill it out.*
2. *Put your completed worksheet in your binder and keep it for future use.*
3. *Use the information here to start to build your resume.*
4. *Update your resume worksheet annually. Go through the past year and consider your experiences and accomplishments, recording them while they are fresh in your mind.*



# Job Interview Checklist

## **Preparation. Two or three days before the interview**

- \_\_\_ I have collected information about the business.
- \_\_\_ I know the first and last name of the person(s) who will be interviewing me.
- \_\_\_ I know why I want to work for the business.
- \_\_\_ I have read through some common interview questions.
- \_\_\_ I have prepared some answers to common interview questions. I know how I am going to answer these questions and/or I have created a cheat sheet.
- \_\_\_ I have prepared a list of questions that I would like to ask the interviewer.
- \_\_\_ I have an up-to-date resume with complete references ready to take to the interview.
- \_\_\_ I know exactly where the interview will take place and how long it will take me to get there.
- \_\_\_ I have decided what to wear to the interview.
- \_\_\_ I have scheduled a full night's sleep before the interview.

## **The Day of the Interview, Did You Remember to Bring...**

- \_\_\_ I have a copy of my resume, references, letters of recommendation.
- \_\_\_ I have paper and pen for notes.
- \_\_\_ I have my pad that contains the company research I have done and/or my list of questions.
- \_\_\_ I have paid special attention to personal hygiene and my choice of clothing.

## **The Interview — Travel time and Arrival**

- \_\_\_ I am leaving early in case of traffic jams or unforeseen problems. I do not arrive more than 10 minutes early.
- \_\_\_ I am relaxed, friendly, and business-like with everyone I meet.
- \_\_\_ I introduce myself to the receptionist and confirm my appointment.

## **The Interview — Setting the Scene**

- \_\_\_ I greet the interviewer by name and shake his or her hand.
- \_\_\_ I maintain positive body language, e.g., I maintain eye contact, keep my hands in my lap, and sit up straight.

## **The Interview — Exchanging Information**

- \_\_\_ I stay on topic and ask for clarification where necessary and when appropriate.
- \_\_\_ I use specific examples rather than general statements when giving information about my education, training, transferable skills, and work experience.

## **The Interview — Conclusion**

- \_\_\_ I ask any suitable questions that have not already been answered.
- \_\_\_ I summarize, with enthusiasm, my interest in the position and the business.
- \_\_\_ I state my appreciation for the interview.
- \_\_\_ I confirm, if already noted, their response date. If this date is not definite, I make arrangements to contact them.
- \_\_\_ I shake hands if appropriate and say goodbye.

## **The Interview — Follow-up**

- \_\_\_ I stay home the day they said they would call.
- \_\_\_ If I have arranged to call them back on a certain date, I make sure that I have reviewed my telephone protocol.
- \_\_\_ I write and send the interviewer(s) a thank you letter.
- \_\_\_ If I am offered a position, I give them a written answer (whether to accept or to decline) within the week.

# Interviewing Tips

## DO

- Take identification (driver's license, state ID card, Social Security card, or passport) and extra resumes.
- Arrive at least 15 minutes early.
- Smile.
- Greet everyone in a polite and friendly manner.
- Shake hands firmly.
- Try to relax.
- Be polite and friendly.
- Show enthusiasm for the opportunity to work.
- Speak clearly and distinctly.
- Allow the employer to finish what he or she is saying without interruption.
- Listen carefully.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Tell the interviewer that you are willing to work hard.
- Use the interviewer's name in the conversation.
- At the end of the interview, ask when you might hear about a decision.
- Thank the interviewer for his/her time.
- Send a thank you letter expressing your interest in the job and the company.

## DON'T

- Chew gum or use tobacco before or during the interview.
- Slouch.
- Fidget.
- Be late.
- Be rude or present a negative attitude.
- Mumble.
- Stare off into space.
- Forget the name of the interviewer.
- Go to the interview without doing research about the company.

# Ten Common Interview Questions

1. What experience have you had?
2. Why did you apply for this position?
3. What do you plan to be doing five years from now?
4. Tell me something about yourself.
5. What is your greatest strength?
6. What is your greatest weakness?
7. Why should I hire you?
8. What amount of pay do you require?
9. What days and hours can you work?
10. What will your references or former employers say about you?

# Soft Skills: The Competitive Edge

What do employers look for in new employees? It may not be what some young job seekers expect. While the three "R's" (reading, writing, and arithmetic) are still fundamental to every employee's ability to do the job, employers view "soft" skills as even more important to work readiness. Younger workers often lack these skills, which include:

- Professionalism or work ethic
- Oral and written communication
- Teamwork and collaboration skills
- Critical thinking or problem-solving skills

Companies have identified the following competencies as key to the success of young workers in the workplace.

## Professionalism

Make sure your resume is "dressed to impress." Having an organized resume is essential to making a positive first impression. A good tip is to have a college professor or a career counselor read your resume before you submit it to a potential employer.

Once you have been called for an interview, it is important to research the company and find out more about your potential job responsibilities. This will help you ask better questions during your interview, and make sure you are well-informed if they offer you a job.

Business etiquette and work ethic go hand in hand for employers. Some tips when it comes to making a good impression once employed include:

- Dressing properly for the work setting
- Arriving on time and staying productive until you leave
- Turning cell phone ringers off while at work and returning phone calls and text messages while on breaks or after work hours
- Using computers, if you have access to them, only for work-related tasks
- Speaking in a respectful manner with supervisors, peers, and customers or clients

Also remember that even when you are technically "off-duty" in the lunchroom or at a reception, you are representing the organization and are expected to act professionally. Don't contribute to office gossip or banter around too much with your co-workers. Although you are allowed to have fun and enjoy your job, you are still there to work.

## **Enthusiasm**

Enthusiasm is also essential to success. When interviewing, you are likely to stand out in an employer's mind if you show excitement about the job. Prior to the interview learn about the business. Think of questions you might want them to answer, because asking questions is one way to show interest. Other strategies include arriving a few minutes early to the interview, dressing professionally, and staying engaged in the conversation.

Once you have the job, keep showing your enthusiasm by taking initiative and seeking new and more challenging work. In some work settings, this may mean doing things that need to be done before being asked.

## **Communication Skills**

Communicating ideas in the workplace is different than in a school setting. In a classroom, the instructor usually leads group discussions or assigns written homework, and students respond or ask questions when directed to do so. In the workplace, sometimes your supervisors may ask you for your opinion or ask you to put your opinion in writing. More often than not, however, they assume that if they need to know something, you will bring it to their attention. The challenge of communicating in the workplace is learning how and when to share your ideas or concerns.

If you need to tell your supervisor about something that is not going well, it is important to remember that both timing and your attitude are extremely important. It is best to wait to talk to your supervisor about a problem when you and your boss have time to focus on your discussion and not during a “rush” time at work. Another proactive strategy would be to talk to your supervisor or another senior employee about how you could do your job more efficiently.

Listening is also an important communication skill. One way to improve your listening comprehension skills is to ask questions. Other tactics include restating what you thought you heard to confirm you understood correctly, and taking notes.

## **Teamwork**

Successful businesses rely on team players. This skill is so important that many employers include teamwork as part of the job performance review process if working with others is essential to the job. In the workplace, knowing how and when to lead and follow takes practice, as does knowing how to avoid unnecessary conflict. Working on a team also allows you to build closer relationships with your co-workers, which can make any job more fun and interesting. When working on a team, make sure that the workload is shared and that everyone is communicating.

## **Problem Solving and Critical Thinking**

Problem solving and critical thinking is the ability to use knowledge, facts, and data to effectively solve workplace problems. Employers are usually appreciative when new employees are able to offer insight and fresh perspective into better and more efficient ways of doing things. When you are tasked with solving a problem, you don't always need to answer immediately. The ability to develop a well thought out solution within a reasonable time frame is a skill an employer will value greatly.

**Reference** Are They Really Ready to Work? Employers' Perspectives on the Basic Knowledge and Applied Skills of New Entrants to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century U.S. Workforce (2006). From an in-depth survey of 461 business leaders conducted by the Conference Board, Corporate Voices for Working Families, the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, and the Society for Human Resource Management.





# Idaho Department of Labor - American Job Centers

The Idaho Department of Labor is the primary point of access to a full range of labor market and education services. Services of more than 17 programs have been brought together in its 25 local offices (job centers) throughout the state to meet the needs of workers, students and businesses. Each center offers a variety of self-service options, a comprehensive resource area and highly trained staff knowledgeable about the many programs and services available.

For those seeking employment or education, the Department of Labor provides one-stop access to national, state and local job listings; career guidance and specialized workshops designed to help individuals seeking employment or changing careers; and education and training services as well as resources in the community that can assist in achieving employment goals. Businesses can obtain qualified workers, gain vital labor market information for making good business decisions, and learn about options for increasing the skills of current workers. Visit their website at [www.labor.idaho.gov](http://www.labor.idaho.gov)

## Northern Idaho Offices

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Bonnors Ferry:  
6541 Main Street  
Bonnors Ferry, ID 83805  
Phone: 208-267-5581  
Fax: 208-267-3797  
Email: [bonnersferrymail@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:bonnersferrymail@labor.idaho.gov)

Lewiston:  
1158 Idaho St.  
Lewiston, ID 83501-1960  
Phone: 208-799-5000  
Fax: 208-799-5007  
Email: [lewistonmail@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:lewistonmail@labor.idaho.gov)

Grangeville:  
305 N. State Street  
Grangeville, ID 83530-0550  
Phone: 208-983-0440  
Fax: 208-983-0302  
Email: [grangevillemail@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:grangevillemail@labor.idaho.gov)

Orofino:  
410 Johnson Ave.  
P.O. Box 391  
Orofino, ID 83544-0391  
Phone: 208-476-5506  
Fax: 208-476-3471  
Email: [orofinomail@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:orofinomail@labor.idaho.gov)

Moscow:  
1350 Troy Road, Suite 1  
Moscow, ID 83843-3995  
Phone: 208-882-7571  
Fax: 208-882-8324  
Email: [moscowmail@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:moscowmail@labor.idaho.gov)

Sandpoint:  
2101 W. Pine St.  
Sandpoint, ID 83864-9327  
Phone: 208-263-7544  
Fax: 208-265-0193  
Email: [sandpointmail@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:sandpointmail@labor.idaho.gov)

Kootenai County:  
600 N. Thornton St.  
Post Falls, ID 83854  
Phone: 208-457-8789  
Fax: 208-773-5773  
Email: [kootenaicoutymail@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:kootenaicoutymail@labor.idaho.gov)

Silver Valley:  
35 Wildcat Way, Suite A  
Kellogg, ID 83837-2253  
Phone: 208-783-1202  
Fax: 208-783-5561  
Email: [silvervalleymail@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:silvervalleymail@labor.idaho.gov)

St. Maries:  
105 N. 8<sup>th</sup> Street  
St. Maries, ID 83861-1845  
Phone: 208-245-2518  
Fax: 208-245-2012  
Email: [stmariesmail@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:stmariesmail@labor.idaho.gov)

### Southwestern Idaho Offices

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Boise:  
219 W. Main St.  
Boise, ID 83735-0030  
Phone: 208-332-3575  
Fax: 208-334-6222  
Email: [boisemail@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:boisemail@labor.idaho.gov)

Emmett:  
2030 S. Washington St.  
Emmett, ID 83617-9450  
Phone: 208-364-7780  
Fax: 208-365-6599  
Email: [emmettmail@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:emmettmail@labor.idaho.gov)

Meridian:  
1090 E. Watertower Lane, Suite 100  
Meridian, ID 83642  
Phone: 208-364-7785  
Fax: 208-895-8441  
Email: [meridianmail@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:meridianmail@labor.idaho.gov)

Payette:  
501 N. 16<sup>th</sup> St. Suite 107  
Payette, ID 83661-0179  
Phone: 208-642-9361  
Fax: 208-642-7150  
Email: [payettemail@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:payettemail@labor.idaho.gov)

Canyon County:  
4514 Thomas Jefferson Street  
Caldwell, ID 83605  
Phone: 208-364-7781  
Fax: 208-454-7720  
Email: [canyoncountymail@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:canyoncountymail@labor.idaho.gov)

McCall:  
299 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
P.O. Box 966  
McCall, ID 83638-0966  
Phone: 208-634-7102  
Fax: 208-634-2965  
Email: [mccallmail@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:mccallmail@labor.idaho.gov)

Mountain Home:  
1150 American Legion Blvd.  
Mountain Home, ID 83647  
Phone: 208-364-7788  
Fax: 208-587-2964  
Email: [mountainhomemail@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:mountainhomemail@labor.idaho.gov)

### Central and Eastern Idaho Offices

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Blackfoot:  
155 N. Maple  
P.O. Box 9  
Blackfoot, ID 83221-0009  
Phone: 208-236-6713  
Fax: 208-785-5036  
Email: [blackfootmail@labor.idahogov](mailto:blackfootmail@labor.idahogov)

Wood River:  
733 N. Main St. Suite C  
Bellevue, ID 83313  
Phone: 208-788-3526  
Fax: 208-788-3041  
Email: [blainecountymail@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:blainecountymail@labor.idaho.gov)

Idaho Falls:  
1515 E. Lincoln Road  
Idaho Falls, ID 83401-3653  
Phone: 208-557-2500  
Fax: 208-525-7268  
Email: [idahofallsmail@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:idahofallsmail@labor.idaho.gov)

Mini-Cassia:  
127 W. 5<sup>th</sup> St. North  
Burley, ID 83318-3457  
Phone: 208-678-5518  
Fax: 208-678-1765  
Email: [minicassiamail@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:minicassiamail@labor.idaho.gov)

Rexburg:  
1133 Stocks Ave.  
P.O. Box 158  
Rexburg, ID 83440-0158  
Phone: 208-557-2501  
Fax: 208-356-0042  
Email: [rexburgmail@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:rexburgmail@labor.idaho.gov)

Soda Springs:  
95 E. Hooper Ave. #20  
P.O. Box 576  
Soda Springs, ID 83276  
Phone: 208-236-6711  
Email: [sodaspringsmail@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:sodaspringsmail@labor.idaho.gov)

Magic Valley:  
420 Falls Ave.  
Twin Falls, ID 83301  
Phone: 208-735-2500  
Fax: 208-736-3007  
Email: [magicvalleymail@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:magicvalleymail@labor.idaho.gov)

Pocatello:  
430 N. 5<sup>th</sup> Ave  
P.O. Box 4087  
Pocatello, ID 83205-4087  
Phone: 208-236-6710  
Fax: 208-232-0865  
Email: [pocatellomail@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:pocatellomail@labor.idaho.gov)

Salmon:  
1301 Main St. Unit 1  
Salmon, ID 83467  
Phone: 208-756-2234  
Fax: 208-756-4672  
Email: [salmonmail@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:salmonmail@labor.idaho.gov)



# **Employment Advocacy Services DisAbility Rights Idaho**

DisAbility Rights Idaho helps people with disabilities protect their disability related rights. Three of our programs help people with disabilities who work or want to work. These programs are:

## **Protection and Advocacy for Social Security Beneficiaries (PABSS)**

Helps social security beneficiaries who want to work

## **Client Assistance Program (CAP)**

Helps people receive services from Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ICBVI) and Independent Living Centers (ILC)

## **Work Incentives and Benefits Planning Assistance**

Helps beneficiaries of Social Security make informed choices about work. Website: <http://www.disabilityrightsidaho.org>

## **Who Can Get Employment Advocacy Services?**

Persons with Disabilities who work or want to work.

## **Our Services**

- Information and Referral
- Suggestions for solving disability related problems
- Information about laws, rules and policies
- Record and document reviews
- Help with SSDI/SSI problems caused by work income
- PASS Plan development
- Assistance clarifying issues with agency personnel
- Representation at meetings
- Expert training on disability related issues

**DisAbility Rights Idaho can also help with other  
disability related issues.**

**Call DisAbility Rights Idaho to learn more**

**1-866-262-3462**



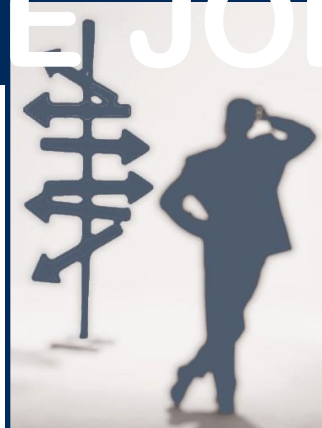
# Disclosure Decisions TO GET THE JOB

Every individual with a disability must choose whether to disclose (share) his or her disability with an employer. Primary factors to consider include whether accommodations will be needed on the job or whether a disability is visible or hidden. Other aspects related to the employer and the company may also influence your decision. Follow this disclosure decision guide to determine what will work best for you. Remember, if you choose to disclose your disability, you are protected from discrimination by federal laws.

First, identify a NEED for disclosure, such as determining accessibility, necessary accommodations, or potential job match. Consider your answers to questions in Chart 1 and decide if you have a reason to disclose.

If you decide that disclosure will help you be successful, look at the pros and cons of WHEN you disclose in Chart 2. Then, follow the general guidelines in Chart 3 to decide HOW to disclose.

Effective disclosure can establish a positive working relationship with your employer. Practicing with a close friend, family member, or career counselor can help to increase your comfort level and skills.



## Three Steps to Disclosing a Disability

### 3. Choose HOW to Disclose

### 2. Decide WHEN to Disclose

### 1. Determine NEED for Disclosure

## 2. Decide WHEN to Disclose: Consider Pros and Cons

When	Potential Gains	Potential Setbacks
In a cover letter	Advance time to prepare positive written disclosure and to tailor your abilities to duties of job description.	Employer's preconceptions may hinder opportunity for an interview. Unable to read employer's body language and mood.
In a resume or on a job application	Establishes "up front" relationship and communication.	Employer may have stereotypes about disabilities and may not offer you an interview.
When employer calls for an interview	Establishes open communication and gives an employer time to review Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 compliance information.	May not get serious consideration during interview.
Before the interview	Shows respect to employer, gives employer advance notice to secure any accommodations that may be needed during the interview, and time to research proper etiquette or refresh knowledge on ADA.	Employer has advance time to yield to his or her stereotypes about disabilities.
During the interview	Opportunity to read employer body language, to time the disclosure, and to disclose in a brief, positive manner.	Employer may feel uneasy and ill prepared to respond with appropriate and legal questions.
After the job offer	May have legal recourse if disclosing disability negatively affects the hiring decision. There is time to get accommodations in place before the job starts. Positive relationship has already been established with employer.	Employer may feel that you have been dishonest in the application process, which may erode trust.
After the job begins	Gives opportunity to establish credibility before disclosure. Gives freedom to talk with co-workers about disability related issues.	May take time to secure requested accommodations. Employer may believe you have not been honest which may negatively affect your relationship.
When performance difficulties arise	Difficulties may not arise (i.e. you may never need to disclose).	Employer may have difficulty changing his or her perceptions of your work performance, feel betrayed or wonder why you waited so long.
Never	Disability information is kept private.	Not protected from discrimination under the ADA.



# 1. Determine NEED for Disclosure: Gather all the Facts

Consider the questions below. "Yes" answers may indicate a need for or benefit of disclosure. "No" answers may indicate a need for more preparation or limited benefit of disclosure.

Area	Questions	Circle Answer
Company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do I have background information about the company?</li> <li>Does the company, senior management, or owner welcome and value diversity?</li> <li>Has the company participated in any disability related recruitment programs?</li> <li>Is there a company policy on hiring individuals with disabilities?</li> <li>Does the company offer any internship programs?</li> <li>Is pre-employment testing required? What is the medium for testing?</li> </ul>	Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No
Job Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have I requested a detailed job description for the position?</li> <li>Do I know what are the essential functions and expectations of the job?</li> <li>Can I talk with an employee who is currently in this position or in a similar one?</li> <li>Will my compensatory strategies (e.g., use of adaptive software or assistive technology) change the traditional way of getting the job done?</li> <li>Will I need accommodations for the application process, interview process, or at the worksite?</li> </ul>	Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No
Employer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the supervisor use a flexible and personal management style?</li> <li>Does the employer have experience in managing differences or diversity?</li> <li>Does the employer focus on essential, rather than marginal functions?</li> <li>Has the employer had positive experiences hiring individuals with disabilities?</li> <li>Can I provide the employer with resource information about the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and my specific accommodation needs?</li> </ul>	Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No
Myself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Am I familiar with the protections provided by the ADA?</li> <li>Am I comfortable with my disability?</li> <li>Am I aware of my strengths and functional limitations?</li> <li>Will I need potential medical assistance?</li> <li>Have I explored technology or strategies to compensate for my limitations?</li> <li>Have I previously used accommodations at a work-site?</li> <li>Have I practiced disclosure with a family member, close friend, or career professional?</li> </ul>	Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No

## Need More Information?

### About company and position:

- University career centers
- Human resource departments
- Professional associations
- Local chambers of commerce
- Company specific websites
- Informational interviews


### About potential accommodations:

- Job Accommodations Network  
[www.jan.wvu.edu](http://www.jan.wvu.edu)
- Idaho Assistive Technology Project  
<http://www.idahoat.org/Home.aspx>
- ABLEDATA -- [www.abledata.com](http://www.abledata.com)

### 3. Choose HOW to Disclose: General Guidelines

How	Examples
Stress current involvement in a positive activity that shows your ability to manage your disability.	<u>Resume</u> -- Member of the American Blind Skiing Foundation
Be optimistic; focus on your abilities and job qualifications.	<u>Cover Letter</u> -- As an individual with a life long physical and speech disability, I learned early on to focus on my intellectual abilities and to develop strengths within my limits. For example, I received my first computer when I was 5 years old and learned to operate it independently. Today I am proficient in many software applications, operating systems, and system troubleshooting.
Give the employer information on what he or she needs to do or provide regarding communication, directions, or supervision.	<u>Telephone Call Prior to the Interview</u> -- "I am calling to confirm my interview scheduled at your company in 2 days. Could you please tell me where to find your office's accessible entrance?"
Educate the employer by articulating or demonstrating how you can perform the essential functions of the job. Have resource information available for the employer.	<u>During the Interview</u> -- Have you ever heard of a screen reader? I have a learning disability and have difficulty reading in the traditional way. My screen reader, which reads electronic information aloud using a computerized voice, has enabled me to succeed at college and I know it will be useful on this job. "
Explain the benefits of your disability regarding your personal growth or perseverance.	<u>During the Interview</u> -- "Through my disability, I have learned the value of connecting with professionals. I can be resourceful and creative to get the job done."
Face employer concerns by talking about your compensatory strategies or accommodation solutions.	<u>During the Interview</u> -- "You may be wondering how I can type letters with my physical disability. I have a great software program that allows the computer to type as I speak words. It can be loaded on most computers. I would be happy to show it to you sometime."
Use general, functional terms to briefly explain the impact of your disability on the job; avoid technical, medical diagnoses.	<u>After the Job Offer</u> -- "During the interview, you explained that work was verbally assigned at a staff meeting. I find that I work best when instructions are both written and verbal. I have a disability that makes processing verbal information a challenge. Could you accommodate me in this way?"
In a private setting, remind your employer about your right to confidentiality.	<u>After the Job is Accepted</u> -- After disclosing your disability in your employer's office: "Thank you in advance for keeping this information confidential."
Frame the disclosure around how you work best.	<u>A Few Weeks on the Job</u> -- "I have noticed that I am having a difficult time completing my work assignments. I have a medical condition that requires frequent breaks in order to do my work. Would you allow me to work later to enable me to take more breaks? I always get the job done when I manage my schedule in this way."

**OPENING  
DOORS**



**Disclosure  
Decision  
Worksheet**

**YES**  
I will  
disclose

**1**

List the reasons why you  
**NEED** to disclose.

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**2**

**WHEN** will you  
disclose your  
disability?

**2**

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**2**

List the reasons for choosing  
this time.

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**3**

**HOW** will you  
disclose your  
disability?

**3**

Write a few phrases telling your  
employer about your disability.

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**3**

Practice your  
disclosure with  
another person.

**NO**  
I will not  
disclose

List the reasons why  
you choose not to

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For each new job,  
review the information in  
this brochure to  
determine whether or  
not to disclose.



# Request for Accommodations

## Example Letter to Employer

Date of Letter

Your name

Your address

Employer's name

Employer's address

Dear (e.g. Supervisor, Manager, Human Resources, Personnel):

Content to consider in body of letter:

- Identify yourself as a person with a disability

- State that you are requesting accommodations under the ADA

- Identify your specific problematic job tasks

- List your accommodation ideas

- Ask for your employer's accommodation ideas

- Refer to attached medical documentation if appropriate\*

- Ask that your employer respond to your request in a reasonable amount of time

Sincerely,

Your signature

Your printed name

Cc: to appropriate individuals (send copies to others)

\* You may want to attach medical information to your letter to help establish that you are a person with a disability and to document the need for accommodation.

