

HANDOUT: THE APPLICATION

Businesses use application forms to screen people seeking jobs. This form is provided by the employer and asks questions about your past experiences. The application provides a summary of your work history and skills. Employers often receive many applications. They select people to interview based on the application forms.

To make sure you look your best on the application, follow these steps:

- Be prepared. This is where you can use your resume to help you fill out an application form. If you do not have a resume, have an information sheet of dates, names, addresses of previous employers, schools attended, references, and so on.
- Read and follow directions carefully.
- Have your Social Security card or number handy.
- If possible, make a copy of the application form and use pencil to fill out a rough draft.
- Use a black or blue ink pen. Bring your own pen.
- Print all information neatly. Make sure it is easy to read.
- Only your signature should be written.
- Give your complete address.
- Answer questions honestly.
- Spell words correctly on the application. This is where a resume or an information sheet will help you.
- Fill in all blanks. If a question does not apply to you, write “NA” (not applicable) in the blank or put a dash (—).
- Give yourself credit for all jobs you have had, including part-time jobs. Include jobs for wages as well as unpaid or volunteer work. Examples of unpaid work include yard work, household management, child care, home repairs, and cooking. Use words and terms to help show you are qualified for the job.
- You may have talents or skills that you have not used in a job. Give yourself credit for all the skills you have and then sell your skills on the application.
- You may be asked questions about how much you were paid for your previous job or about your present wages. You will probably be asked what hourly wage or salary you desire. You should have an idea of what the current wages are for similar jobs. You should write “negotiable” or “willing to discuss” when asked about wages. Be careful not to limit yourself with an answer that is too high or too low. Too often workers do not ask for enough wages and need to be more assertive. You must also be willing to start with lower wages until you have had a lot of experience or training for a job.

- You should be able to answer the question of why you left your previous job (or plan to leave). If you are self-employed or left a business because of personal reasons, you need to be as positive as possible, yet still tell the truth.
- Negative things about your life should not show up on your application. Potential employers avoid hiring people in crisis. Remember to tell the truth when asked. However, do not provide any more information about your personal life or past work problems than necessary. You can be honest yet discreet (careful).
- Your appearance is important when applying for a job and turning in an application form. Show your interest in the position by presenting yourself as neatly and as well groomed as possible.

SCREENING TESTS

Many places of business will give you a test before you get to the interview stage. This is part of the screening process. The potential employer wants to know more about your skills. The test may take you an hour to fill out. Do not hurry. Do the best you can to answer all the questions. Take plenty of time to read directions and test questions.

There are several types of tests you may be asked to complete at the time you turn in an application form. Some businesses may give you more than one test. Some tests are given at random to applicants. You may not be asked to take a test, but you should be prepared.

- Aptitude test (general knowledge)
- Personality test
- Mathematical test (basic addition, subtraction, division)
- Computer Skills
- True/false tests about ethics (proper things to do)
- Situations (how would you handle a certain situation?)
- Drug screenings or tests

For more information, please contact your local extension office:

For other information on Extension Family and Consumer Sciences programs visit www.ksre.ksu.edu
Resource Information: K-State Research and Extension Publication, "Job Search Education: The Resume," 1989