

9 Steps to Start or Restart Your Career

1 Determine Your Dream Job Based On Your Skills, Values, And Interests

What do you love to do? What is your prior experience? What qualities do you bring to the table? Remember, the possibilities are limitless! Expand your thinking beyond your “dream job” and think about what you love to do. Use these lessons for career planning, applying for jobs, supporting work-life balance, and getting the training you need to succeed in today’s workplace: www.edu.gcfglobal.org/en/subjects/work/ You can find out more about your work interests by trying the free ONET Interest Profiler at: www.mynextmove.org.

2 Who is doing your dream job?

Knowledge is power and it IS about “who you know.” Get to know someone who has your dream job by identifying professional organizations in the industry, contacting the local chamber of commerce, talking to local employers who hire for those types of positions. Conduct informational interviews or job shadow to find mentors. [View a list of informational interview questions here.](#)

3 Establish a Career Portfolio

Develop a professional resume. It can include work history, volunteer experience, vocational skills and abilities, and/or your academic history. A resume is an opportunity for a prospective employer to see what sets you apart from others. [View some resume building tips here.](#)

Make a list of all possible employment contacts (friends and relatives included). Identify people to be a reference and prepare them with information about your skills, qualifications, and reasons why you would be a good employee. Share information about the job(s) for which you are applying. Make sure you have their current telephone number and email address. Ask them to follow up if they get a phone call or email from a potential employer. [View tips on developing references here.](#) Use [LinkedIn](#) or other social media professional networks.

Ensure your email and voice mail accounts are available for prospective employers to leave a message. Prospective employers may also review social media accounts, so keep that in mind when posting and sharing information. Do not say anything negative about former employers on social media or in an interview.

Whether in person or virtual, select interview appropriate attire. Ask others in the industry or working in that job about acceptable attire that matches the industry standard.

4 Do Your Research

Learn about online job market websites, professional organizations, unions, Chambers of Commerce, and job fairs. Talk to friends and family about the hidden job market and to learn about company expansions or job openings due to seasonal or industry changes or community growth. [View the ONET Labor Market here.](#)

5 Ask Questions

Which employers are the best? Which ones are most inclusive, follow universal design principles, and accommodate? Visit websites to look for inclusive language and workplaces that may be a good fit.

6 Complete Applications for all viable Job Opportunities

When in doubt, apply, apply, apply! Use sites like www.careerbuilder.com, wwwIndeed.com, and www.monster.com to find and apply for jobs. Follow-up. Persistence pays off! Use key words on your resume and application that are used in the job posting and description.

7 Interview for all Viable Job Opportunities

The interview is an opportunity to tell prospective employers about the skills and qualities that you can bring to the job and organization. [View some interview prep questions here.](#)

8 Disclosure Is A Personal Choice—Let's Consider Your Options

Ask for a copy of the job description and essential functions to make an informed decision about performing the job with or without an accommodation(s). The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission provides [a list of essential function definitions here.](#)

9 Got an offer? Let's talk negotiation.

Think about how you will negotiate your salary and benefits, start date, leaving your current employer on good terms, accommodations for your new job, and on-the-job trainings or support to get you started. If applicable, will this new job affect disability benefits? Visit www.askJAN.org to learn about workplace accommodations.

This product was funded by a grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor. The product was created by the grantee and does not necessarily reflect the official position of the U.S. Department of Labor. The U.S. Department of Labor makes no guarantees, warranties, or assurances of any kind, express or implied, with respect to such information, including any information on linked sites and including, but not limited to, accuracy of the information or its completeness, timeliness, usefulness, adequacy, continued availability, or ownership. This product is copyrighted by the institution that created it.