

# JOB SEARCH TOOLKIT:

## Tools & Techniques You Need for a Successful Job Hunt

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The following section is entitled: **Chapter 1: What Kind of Job Are You Looking For?**

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The full text of the Job Search Toolkit is available at: [FirstFind.org](http://FirstFind.org)>>**Look for a Job.**

## Chapter

# 1

## What Kind of Job Are You Looking For?

Finding a job is hard work. It is more than spending time in front of a computer screen or looking for signs in store windows. Sometimes looking for work can seem even harder than having a full time job! Don't give up!

If you think about a few things before starting you may have a better chance of success. Here are some things to think about:

- What kind of job are you looking for?
- What skills and experience do you have?
- Where can you find a match between your work experience, education and training and available jobs?

Follow the steps in this manual in order to make your own plan. This plan will help you reach your goal of getting a job.

### First Steps

You will need a few things:

- Pens with blue or black ink
- A notebook
- A calendar with space to make notes

There are other items you will need as you move along, but these will get you started.

### Should you try for your dream job?

Setting your sights on a dream job can be a great goal if you have the qualifications needed to get the job. Let's say you are confident that you have the skills to work as a home health aide. You are the go-to person whenever a family member or good friend is sick at home, recovering from surgery, or has become frail with age. People you have helped are always grateful and have

said they would gladly give you a great reference. It should be a snap to get a job like this.

Sorry - not so fast. Workers in these types of jobs are called *Home Health Aides*, or *Personal Care Aides*, and you will most likely need a certificate or certification as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Home Health Aide (HHA) or Personal Care Aide (PCA) to get a job. People are hired for these jobs through agencies who place these important professional care givers in homes or in a facility where people are recovering or rehabilitating after hospitalization like a nursing home. New York State, and many other states, have specific requirements to obtain a certificate necessary to apply for such a job. Other states may not have these requirements, but it makes sense that jobs will go first to people with proof of training and certification.

There are other jobs that don't require certification or a specific license but employers do expect successful candidates to have up-to-date skills. For example, a good command of current office software programs will be a requirement for pretty much any job in an office setting. If an employer is looking for experience with Microsoft Word and Excel, make sure you are comfortable with the most recent versions of those programs. Check with your library for classes and online options to get this training. Volunteer opportunities, covered in Chapter 7, can also be a good way to learn and practice.

This chart shows some common occupations and general information about certificate and/or training requirements in New York State.

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Job(s)</b>	<b>License/ Certification Requirement</b>	<b>Training Requirement</b>	<b>Other Skills/ Experience</b>
Driver	Taxi, limo driver  Truck driver, delivery person school bus driver	State driver's license  CDL (Commercial Driver License) issued by the state who regulates which licenses are required for specific jobs	No training but required to take a written test, driving test, possible physical, vision test and drug/alcohol testing	A "clean" driving record free of violations and accidents.  Good customer service skills and the ability to find locations possibly using GPS devices.
Information Technology (IT)	Computer Help Desk	May be specific software certifications such as Java.	Certifications will require classes, training or retraining.	Good customer service skills.

Healthcare	Home Health Aide	HHA, CNA or PCA certification	Certification required in NY and 34 other states.	Ability to provide excellent patient care.
	Medical Assistant	No certification or licensing required in most situations but may necessitate specific training or certification for drawing blood (phlebotomy.)	Specific skills certification may be needed.	Ability to provide excellent patient care.
	Dental Assistant	3 types in New York State; Unlicensed Dental Assistant, Dental Assistant With a Limited Permit and NY State Licensed Certified Dental Assistant	No certification for Unlicensed but limited duties permitted, training and preparing for or passing certification test for other levels.	Specific experience with dental patients and dental xrays.
	Receptionist: Medical or Dental	None necessary.	None necessary.	Excellent customer and phone skills, ability to work in a busy office making appointments and answering questions.
Office Work	Administrative Assistant	No certification requirement.	Specific types may be required by employers and industries such as Quickbooks or Outlook.	Strong, up to date skills with applicable software most likely to include Microsoft Office Suite.
	Receptionist		None necessary.	Excellent customer service and phone skills.

Security	Security Guard	Required in NY and 34 other states	NY and 21 other states require completion of training course for certification.	Attention to detail; may include report writing.
Trades/ Construction	Helper/Laborer	No certification required.	None necessary.	Experience with repairs and maintenance.
	Mechanic	Specific certifications may be necessary for jobs in HVAC and other areas.	May be necessary if it led to a certification such as welding.	Generally requires specific relevant work experience.
	Maintenance Assistant	Typically require drivers license to travel to work sites.		
Retail (Non-food)  Retail Staff employed in Food Establishments may need Food Handlers certifications as described below.	Cashier	No certification needed.	None necessary.	Attention to detail, comfort with math and money, good customer service.
	Sales Associate	No certification needed.	None necessary.	Excellent customer service along with a familiarity with and interest in the product offered by the store.

Food & Beverage/ Hospitality	Host/ Hostess (Greeter)	No certification needed for any of these positions.	None necessary.	Friendliness and the ability to interact with a variety of people.
	Food Server	New York City Food Handlers and Orleans County; Check with the Department of Health	Training to pass test for certificate	Most commonly requires previous experience.
	Bus Attendant			Ability to lift, work on feet and provide good customer service.
	Bartender		May require previous training class.	Most commonly requires previous experience.
	Hotel Front Desk		Most likely a 2 or 4 year college degree.	Strong computer skills combined with excellent communication and customer service ability.
	Dishwasher Hotel Housekeeper		None necessary  None necessary.	Ability to work quickly, detail oriented and heavy lifting.
Customer Service	Customer Service Representative	None necessary.	None required.	Excellent telephone skills, may include computer skills and sales experience or potential.

As you see, the industries or types of jobs that most commonly require no specific training or licensing include retail, hospitality, food and beverage and customer service. But most jobs do require a high school diploma. If you do not have a diploma, look into local instructional programs where you can study for a high school equivalency diploma. For New York residents, check this website: <http://www.acces.nysed.gov/what-hsetasc%E2%84%A2-test>.

## How can I find out the skills or training required for a specific job?

There are a few ways to find out specifics that employers are looking for or need. Speaking to employers is the most direct. You can call or walk into a business and ask, or you can talk to someone who has the kind of job you want. This could be a friend, someone you have seen working in a store, restaurant or medical office you go to. If you can't think of someone ask your friends and family members if they know someone who works in your targeted job and see if they can spend a few minutes sharing their experiences. These conversations are part of networking, a valuable skill you will learn more about in Chapter 2.

For occupations that require certifications, like Security Guard, you can call the State Department of Labor at 518-457-9000 or 888-469-7363. New York also maintains an online list of all occupations that require licenses or certifications in the State at <http://www.labor.ny.gov/stats/lstrain.shtm>.

## What kinds of work have you done?

This is a good time to make a list of all of the work that you have ever done. Add this to your notebook. Make a list of the jobs you've had and who you worked for. Describe what you did at each job. The list should include any work you did "off the books" or as a volunteer. You gained skills and experience in all of these places. Here is a sample list:

<i><b>Work I Have Done</b></i>		
<b><u>Receptionist ABC Office Products</u></b>	<b><u>Stock Clerk Acme Drug Store</u></b>	<b><u>Volunteer Community Center</u></b>
Answered phones	Took inventory	Set up tables for events
Took messages	Packed boxes	Served food
Greeted people	Used a computer	Cleaned up after meal
Filed papers	Unloaded trucks	
Organized area	Set up deliveries	

## Where can you find a match between your work experience, education and training and available jobs?

Your dream job may not be within reach at the moment if you don't have the certificate or training that you need. Take a look at the kind of work you have done, then think about the work you want **and** the work you are qualified to perform. A good way to see if your qualifications can apply to the job you want is to check out some online job postings. Two good places to start are the web site of your local newspaper and Craigslist.com. Look for Jobs or Careers. Don't just look at the job titles. Read the entire job posting and focus on the requirements or qualifications.

**You can look for more than one kind of job.** We'll get to that when we talk about specifics of resumes and cover letters.

### **Every job posting requires experience that I don't have. What should I do?**

Employers prefer experience because this cuts down on the time it will take to train a new employee. For example, you want to be a bartender and have experience mixing drinks at parties. You've even taken a bartending class. But you can't get an employer to talk to you without paid experience behind the bar. Think outside the box. You may need to start in a restaurant as a bus attendant, or server. When employers see how well you do your job, they are more likely to let you advance to a new role. So try for a job at the same place that does not require the same amount of training and be open to starting part time to get the experience you need. Networking may also work to get you the referral to the job that you are looking for.

Once you have identified jobs that are a potential fit for your skills, experience and training, write down the title(s) of the types of jobs you will look for. Remember - employers may use different titles for the same type of job (for example, Sales Person or Sales Associate).

### **Part time, full time, temporary or seasonal?**

Many employers in the job categories listed above hire new people for jobs that are part time or temporary, especially in retail and hospitality. If you are flexible about your willingness to work different shifts, which may be shorter or longer, you will increase your chance of getting hired. Once you get your foot in the door most employers promote the best part time workers to available full time roles.

Seasonal hiring needs are another way to get started with a company. Businesses always hire extra staff for the Christmas season. Seasonal jobs can also come with warm weather for outdoor recreation, camps and summer resorts. If you live near a ski area you know when the snow flies, people get jobs. Not everyone stays employed after the rush but the getting a seasonal job will help you grow your skills, references and network contacts – and earn money!

### **How do I get a government job?**

There are many types of government jobs, often called **civil service jobs**. These include jobs working for the federal government, states and local cities and towns. While some of the job titles and jobs may be similar there are going to be a range of jobs based on the needs of each community. For example:

*Local government jobs* include police and corrections officers, sanitation workers, and teacher aides

*State government jobs* include Department of Motor Vehicles agents, highway construction workers

*Federal government jobs* include post office workers and airport security officers

If you are interested in a government job, you will need to check the requirements for the specific job you want. Some jobs require a particular level of education or that you live in the town where the jobs is located. Often you will need to take and pass a civil service exam.

To learn more about available jobs look at these websites:

**USA Jobs** ([www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov)) for jobs in the federal government

**State Jobs NY** ([www.statejobsny.com](http://www.statejobsny.com)). Use the *Search* box to find jobs for a specific agency (for example the Department of Motor Vehicles)

For jobs in a town or city government, contact the local human resources department, usually located in city hall. Your local library will also have resources for public sector employment information, including practice tests for civil service exams.

### **Are there places and people to help me measure what I am good at?**

There are all kinds of tests to measure your skills and interests. You can even find some for free on the Internet. One good one is *Dream It. Do It* at <http://www.dreamit-doit.com/>. There are also places that you can go to take the test in person and meet with a counselor to talk about the results. One place to take a test like this is your local One Stop Career Center. Go to the section on Job Training for more information.

Now that you know what kind of jobs you want to find, you are ready for the next steps to help you find a job.

*The full text of the Job Search Toolkit is available at: [FirstFind.org](http://FirstFind.org)>>Look for a Job.*