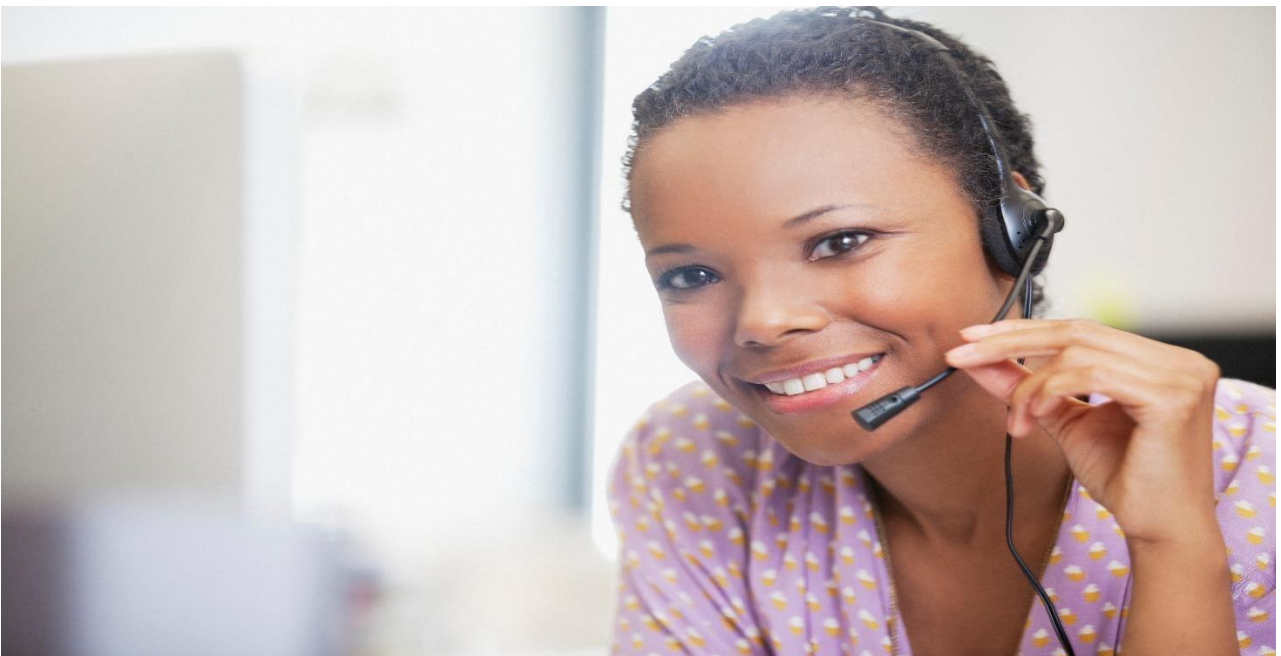


SNAP Employment and Training Program SNAP2WORK Work Readiness Training Manual

The South Carolina Department of Social Services' SNAP Employment and Training Program's (E&T) goal is to provide education and training activities for SNAP recipients to increase their opportunities to obtain sustainable employment and reduce dependency on public assistance. This is accomplished through components or activities that provide services in case management, soft skills training, vocational training, education, workfare/work experience, work readiness training and job retention services. Support services such as transportation or childcare are also available through the SNAP E&T program.

This SNAP E&T Work Readiness Training Manual was developed to provide job search tips and training resources for SNAP recipients participating in the E&T program. The purpose is to assist participants in successfully maneuvering through the job search maze with a wealth of job search knowledge.



STEP #1: Register on SCWOS

All SNAP Employment and Training Program participants must register in the South Carolina Works Online Services (SCWOS) system.

To register go to <https://jobs.scworks.org>.



STEP #2: Is Your Email Address Holding You Back?

Imagine you're a hiring manager and the following applicants email you regarding an available job:

- Budlight@email.com
- Janice66@email.com
- RandyLSmith@email.com

Which applicant would an employer most likely contact first and (more importantly) why? (*Please note that "bad email address" refers solely to suitability for a professional job search.)

Hiring managers aren't psychic. They don't know that the applicant owns stock in the Bud Light beer company. They don't know that the applicant's favorite number is 66 and that the 66 is not her age. There are many reasons that applicants get passed up for job opportunities, but your email address shouldn't be one of them. It's easy to get a free, professional email address for your job search.

There are certain letters, numbers, and characters you should try to avoid using in your professional email address. Most hiring managers will copy and paste your email address, but if they type it out you don't want to make them guess the makeup of one of your most vital pieces of contact information. Depending on the font, lowercase 'l', uppercase 'i' and '1' can look almost identical; the same is true of '0', 'o' and 'O', so avoid including these characters in your email address whenever possible.

Quick Tips:

- Do use combinations of your first and last name
- Do not use underscores
- Avoid the letters 'O', 'i', 'o' and 'L'
- Avoid the numbers '1' and '0'

If you do not already have a suitable email address, there are many free email providers out there. You may have to try several email addresses before you find one that isn't taken, but any combination of your first name and last name is generally a good one. If no reasonable combination of the two is available, then expand your address options to include your middle name or words related to the field you are pursuing.

If you've been sending lots of job-related emails and getting few responses, you may be overlooking the culprit: your email address.

Reference:

White, Amy. "Is your email address holding you back?" *Snagajob*, 7 August 2019,
www.snagajob.com/blog/post/bad-email-addresses. Accessed 6 November 2019.



STEP #3: Is Your Resume Ready?

When searching for a new job, updating your resume can seem like a big task. Between summarizing your previous experience down to a few sentences and trying to squeeze everything onto one page, there's a lot to consider. However, it's best to make sure the basics are covered:

1. Make sure it's up to date with current contact information.
2. No typos, please. Use spell-check, grammar check and find someone to proof-read it.
3. Update your resume for your career stage. If you've got experience, note an objective that speaks to what you want to do next.

Sifting through dozens of resumes is a reality for employers so when a particularly good one comes along, it's like a breath of fresh air. Below is some advice on resume best practices that'll help you stand out and land the job.

Telling Your (Job) Story

Your resume should be selling you as the perfect choice for the job at hand. It shouldn't stand as just a list of your past job descriptions but rather a narrative of your job experience relevant to the job at hand. Tell your story in a powerful way by:

- Showcasing your best, most relevant experience and accomplishments at the top of your resume. This is what the hiring manager will see first and what will keep them curious to keep on reading.
- Using action-centered language and not littering your resume with canned phrases such as detail-oriented or people-person. These statements are too vague and don't tell the employer much about you.
- Boosting your qualifications by adding a list of your skills that are relevant to the position such as specific tech skills or industry-related certifications.
- Highlighting keywords that matter to the employer you are interested in.

Formatting

- Even if your skill set perfectly matches you up for the job, it's likely the employer won't make it past your name if it doesn't look good. Formatting your resume in an attractive, digestible way is just as important as the information on it. Be sure your resume won't get skipped by:
- Using a basic, modern font like Arial or Times New Roman in a font size between 10 and

12. Readability is, of course, a must.

- Keeping each job experience to six or seven bullet points so your resume is easy to read and to pull out important information.
- Not cluttering your resume with photos or unnecessary visuals. It's distracting to the reader and likely won't add much substance.

Proofreading

- Once you think you've perfected your resume, it's important to remember it's probably far from perfect. Proofreading is a vital step before you send your resume off to potential employers.

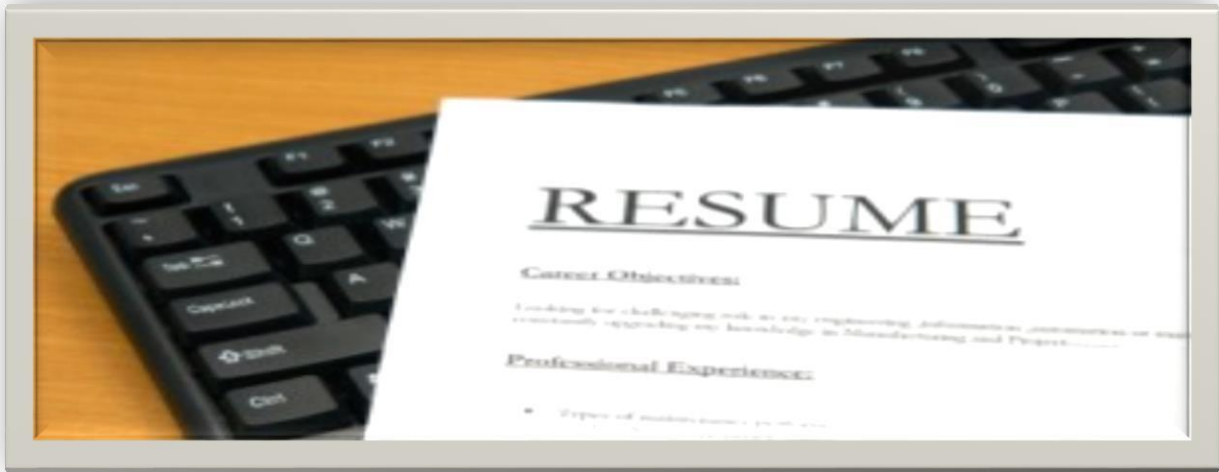
Make your resume ready to send by:

- Avoiding tunnel vision and having a second, third and fourth pair of eyes edit your resume.
- Cutting down on any long run on sentences that'll lose your reader.
- Trimming any unnecessary adjectives that don't add anything other than fluff.
- Checking for typos and spelling errors.
- Editing the bulleted lists. One of the most common punctuation errors in resumes is inconsistent use of periods.

Job hunting is stressful enough without resume mistakes bogging you down. Following these tips for updating your resume will ensure you're in good shape to land the job.

Reference:

"Resume Best Practices That Will Help You Land the Job" *Corridor Careers*, 7 December 2018,
www.corridorcareers.com/job-tips/resume-best-practices-that-will-help-you-land-the-job.
Accessed 6 November 2019.



STEP #4: Let's Apply for a Job!

When filing out a job application:

Filling out job applications can be a long process and seem never-ending when you are going through your job search. Each application may ask the same questions but it is important to tailor your answer to the job you are applying for. Remember these tips to make your online job application process go smoothly.

A. Fill out the entire job application

Don't let your application be skipped over because you chose to only fill out part of the job application. Recruiters are looking for the same information from all candidates and you will stand out if you take the time to fill out the entire application.

B. Double check information when uploading your resume

Uploading your resume is a handy feature, especially when it prepopulates your contact information and work experience onto the application. Depending on the format of your resume, some information may show up in the wrong spot. Review the information provided to confirm it is in the right field and make any edits that are needed.

C. Keep past job history and references in one document

Employers want to know about your past work experience and will ask for your references at some point. Instead of having to remember the exact dates of your past jobs or the contact information to your references, keep this information in one handy document that you can reference. This will save you time and allow you to complete your application sooner.

D. Use the “Save Draft” button

It is alright to take a break, but do not forget to use the “Save Draft” button. You put a lot of effort into filling out each step of the application and you do not want to lose that progress by not saving your work.

E. Always review application before submitting

You took the time to thoroughly fill out the job application but before you turn it in, make sure to review the information you provided one last time. Double checking your work to make sure everything is correct and you have no misspelled words will give you that extra level of confidence when hitting the submit button.

Applying for a job will take some time and effort, but these tips will help you move through the process efficiently.

Reference:

“Tips for Filling Out Online Job Applications” *Corridor Careers*, 7 December 2018, www.corridorcareers.com/job-tips/resume-best-practices-that-will-help-you-land-the-job. Accessed 6 November 2019.



STEP #5: Interviewing Tips

Think Before You Speak

A well-thought-out answer is always better than a rushed one.

Of course, you don't want to sit there in silence for five minutes as you ponder an answer, but it *is* acceptable to take several seconds to think before you speak.

Avoid the “ums” and “uhs” and buy yourself time by repeating the interviewers' questions back to them, or by using a phrase like, “That’s an interesting question!” or, “I was actually just thinking about that when I read an article on a similar topic, and...”

If you're really stumped, you can say, “What a great question. I've actually never been asked this before; let me just take a second to think about this.” Speak Clearly, Cohesively, and Calmly.

Nerves can get you talking a mile a minute, and so can the simple desire to convey as much valuable information about yourself as possible. However, talking too fast can make you look rushed, flustered or anxious. Make a conscious effort to *slow down* and speak calmly and clearly. It will help you avoid interview stress.

1. Be Confident, Not Arrogant

Although you should be willing and able to promote yourself, your experience, and your accomplishments, make sure you don't come across as arrogant, narcissistic, or self-important. No matter how good you are at your job, you're going to run into countless obstacles if you lack the emotional intelligence to work on a team and get along with managers, coworkers, or clients.

Focus on exuding a kind and balanced sense of confidence, and when you discuss your achievements, be sure to give credit where credit is due in order to show that you're a team player.

2. Actually Listen

Anyone can nod, smile, and say "Right" or "Exactly" over and over, but how many people *actually* listen?

Interviews are especially tricky because you do need to be listening to your interviewer's question while mentally preparing your answer.

However, if you don't listen well in the first place, you might miss the entire point of the question, and as a result, your answer could fall totally flat.

Stay in the moment and don't let yourself zone out, even if it feels like the interviewer is endlessly blabbing on. Preparation will help tremendously (so that you have material ready to discuss and won't have to come up with it all on the spot), but good listening skills and the ability to stay focused are key.

3. Express Optimism, Both With Your Words and Your Body Language

No company wants to hire someone with a bad attitude. No matter how difficult your situation is, don't bring any baggage into the interview room. That means don't bad-mouth your former employer or any other companies you've been associated with, and don't complain about your personal circumstances.

Be natural, expressing reasonable perspectives through a lens of optimism. For example, if you have to talk about a challenging situation, you should include a mention of how you may have helped solve it, and what you learned that made you a better employee. Remember, your body language *does* matter as much as your words. Walk in with a smile on your face, offer a firm handshake, and sit up tall at the table, leaning slightly forward to engage in the conversation.

4. Show Interest, Without Desperation

Sometimes, it can be helpful to think of an interview as a (professional) first date. An air of disinterest will likely turn off an interviewer, as will overenthusiastic desperation. No matter how

much you want or need the job, refrain from acting desperate; pleading or begging has no place in a job interview. The key is to express earnest interest in the role and in the company, and passion for the work you do. Keep in the back of your mind that you are a valuable asset as an employee.

5. Know More Than Your Elevator Pitch

Although you should be able to give an elevator pitch in which you introduce yourself, recap your experience, and promote your most valuable professional assets, make sure you're comfortable talking about yourself beyond that. Know how to discuss both your strengths and weaknesses, and emphasize your best qualities and greatest skills, while putting a positive spin on your areas of improvement.

You should also be able to exert some level of control over the conversation. For example, if an interviewer tries to trip you up with a tricky question.



STEP #6: Dress to Impress

Dressing for Interview Success

When selecting your look for the interview, “Dress to Impress” is always the best practice.

Whether you like it or not, your appearance and what you wear to an interview is a big part of the job search process. A significant part of any hiring decision is based on nonverbal elements in the interview (ex. your handshake, eye contact, body language, posture, listening skills, clothing, grooming and accessories).

The Power of a Good First Impression

People make assumptions about professional credibility and potential performance based upon your appearance. Regardless of your knowledge or expertise, it is very difficult to overcome a poor first impression. Many employers interpret your appearance in terms of what you know about the world around you and the attention you give to detail. To be successful, carefully plan the professional image you want to project. If you come to an interview dressed professionally, you will feel a sense of confidence and others will sense your self-assurance.

Fashion Basics

Whatever you wear should accent the fact that you are a professional ready to get to work at a new job. Let conservative sense be your guide, and it should be easy to avoid fashion blunders that could damage your chances of getting to the next level in the process. In this market, it is essential that you look good and you Dress to Impress. To get additional information on how to dress for an interview go to <https://www.careerthinker.com/interviewing/dress-to-get-hired/>.

Remember, communication skills are hands-down the most sought-after soft skill that bosses desire. To communicate well, you have to listen carefully, interpret the context of the conversation, express yourself clearly, persuade others of your point of view, check your body language and use an engaging presentation style that won’t intimidate or bore your audience.

Reference:

“Dress to Impress.” *1StopResume.com*, www.1stopresume.com/news-dress-for-success. Accessed 6 November 2019.

“Dress to Get Hired.” *CareerThinger.com*, www.careerthinker.com/interviewing/dress-to-get-hired. Accessed 6 November 2019.

Video Interviewing Tips

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many organizations are interviewing potential employees by utilizing video technology. You should prepare for your video interviews like you would for an in-person interview. “That means [researching the company and role](#), preparing to answer [common interview questions](#), and coming up with [questions to ask your interviewer](#) in return.” Your interviewer is still looking for someone they can see themselves working with and who is passionate and knowledgeable about the role they’re applying for.

a) Dress To Impress

When you get dressed for a video interview, you want to be [just as formal](#) as you would be for an in-person interview at the same company. (And yes, that means from head to toe.)

The urge to be less formal because you’re in your own home is understandable, but it might send the wrong message about how interested you are in the role.

You also want to make sure your outfit looks good on camera. Try it on in front of the same platform you’ll be using for the interview. For example, a slightly lower-cut top that might be completely appropriate in person could look weird if your entire shirt is outside of the video frame.

b) Test Your Tech

Cut down on technical difficulties by testing out your setup ahead of time using the same platform, internet connection, and hardware you’ll be using for your interview. Have a friend video chat with you to make sure you can hear and be heard and see and be seen. Take the time to familiarize yourself with the program and make sure you know the basics—especially how to mute and unmute your microphone.

c) Set Up Your Shot

Make sure you create a good impression with your physical shot.

Choose a quiet area and set up your computer/ tablet in front of the most neutral background. A blank wall or a room without a lot of distracting clutter or decoration would be best. Make sure the room is well lit. Your light source should be behind your tablet / computer or phone, not behind you. If you have to use a phone, prop it up rather than holding it in your hand.

d) Don’t Sit Too Far or Too Close

Just like you wouldn't sit three inches or eight feet from your interviewer in a conference room, you don't want to sit an uncomfortable distance from your computer. When you're setting up your chair, you'll want to make sure you don't end up looking too tiny or too huge. To be well proportioned, make sure there's a bit of empty space on the screen above your head and check that your shoulders and upper chest are visible.

e) Check for Glare

Before you've finalized your outfit and location, see if anything in your shot is reflecting or giving off a glare that might be distracting to your interviewer. The main culprits are usually watches, jewelry, and eyeglasses, and solving the issue might be as easy as removing one accessory.

f.) Practice Your Video Interview Skills Ahead of Time

If you're not used to video chat, you might find carrying on a conversation to be a bit awkward at first. Setting up a mock video interview with a friend or your SNAP E&T Program Coordinator can assist you. You can also record your practice. When you play the recording back you will be able to make adjustments before the actual interview.

Interview Key Takeaways

Practice Makes Perfect: Take time to practice your responses to the most frequently asked interview questions.

Prepare in Advance: Interviews are less stressful if you get ready ahead of time, and figure out what you're going to wear, and where you need to be.

Research the company and know their agency's goal.

Follow-Up is important: Always follow-up after a job interview with an email or note thanking the interviewer for the time.

Don't underestimate the importance of saying "Thank you." As soon as your interview concludes, you should thank your interviewers for their time and for the opportunity to learn more about the position. When you get home, you should always follow up with a thank-you email. Otherwise, the interviewer may take your silence as a sign that you aren't really interested in the position.

Reference:

Doyle, Alison. "Job Interview Skills to Help You Get Hired." *The Balance Careers*, 9 July 2019, www.thebalancecareers.com/job-interview-skills-to-get-hired-4138625. Accessed 6 November 2019.

Borsellino, Regina. "20 Video Interview Tips to Help You Dazzle the Hiring Manager and Get the Job." 2021, <https://www.themuse.com/advice/video-interview-tips>. Accessed 5 January 2021.