

Getting a Job

A GUIDE FOR TEENS AND ADULTS ON THE SPECTRUM

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A collaboration between
Faithful Career Moves and
Navigating the Spectrum



Getting a Job, A Guide for Teens and Adults on the Spectrum.

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Getting Started

The first thing to do is take a personal inventory to come up with a list of your skills. We want to know what you're good at or enjoy doing. Then we will use that list to write a resume, talk about ways to find jobs, and discuss some of the interview questions you may be asked.



"Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase."

— Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Step 1: Take a Personal Inventory

In the next pages, you'll find six groups of questions. Answers to these questions will help you come up with a list of things you need to put on your resume. They can also help you get a clear understanding of the types of jobs you'd like to do.

For each group of questions:

1. Plan to spend no more than 5 minutes on each question or 15 minutes total.
2. Take breaks as often as you need.
3. Ask for input or suggestions from a parent, teacher, or trusted friend.

1. Education

Formal Education

List the high school you attended and the date you graduated. If you have not graduated yet, list where you are currently going to school and when you will graduate.

Achievements in the Classroom

Think more about school. Did you have a high GPA or did you do well in particular classes? Did you participate in any extra-curricular activities? List those things here.

Certifications and Awards

Have you gotten certified in anything? Did you take a life saving class, receive a mathematics award, or obtain any other type of certification? List those here.

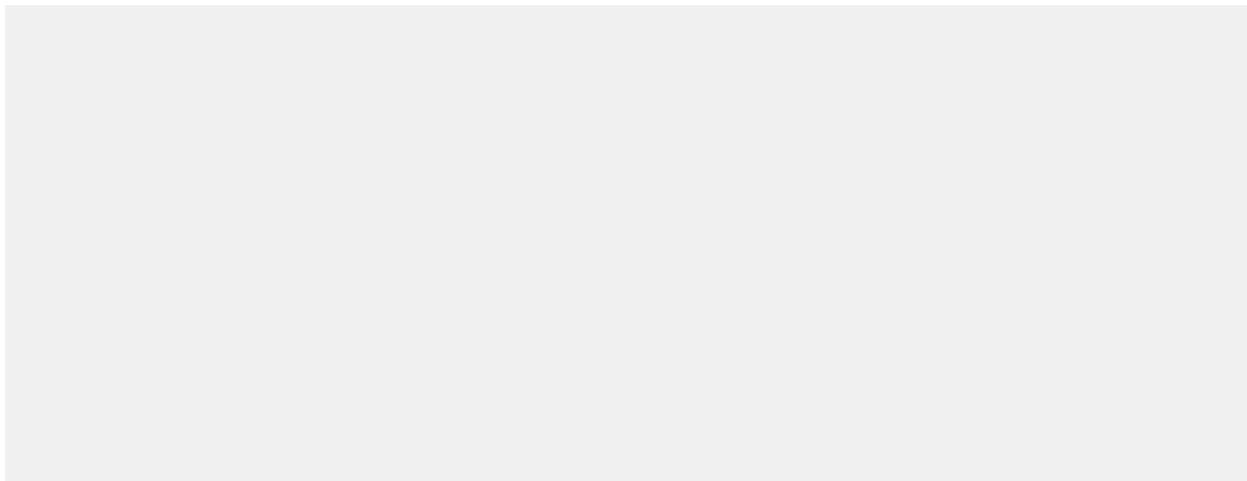
2. Other Skills

Talents and Abilities

What are you good at? What comes easy to you?

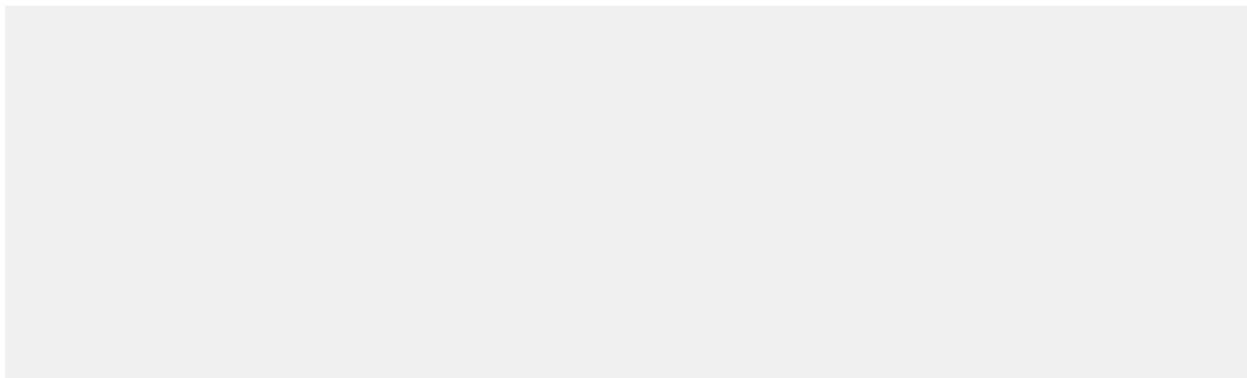
For example, you might list math, piano, swimming, gardening, and other hobbies. Maybe you like to cook? Maybe you love fashion? Maybe you're great at public speaking?

Brainstorm a list of talents and other skills you have.



Super Powers

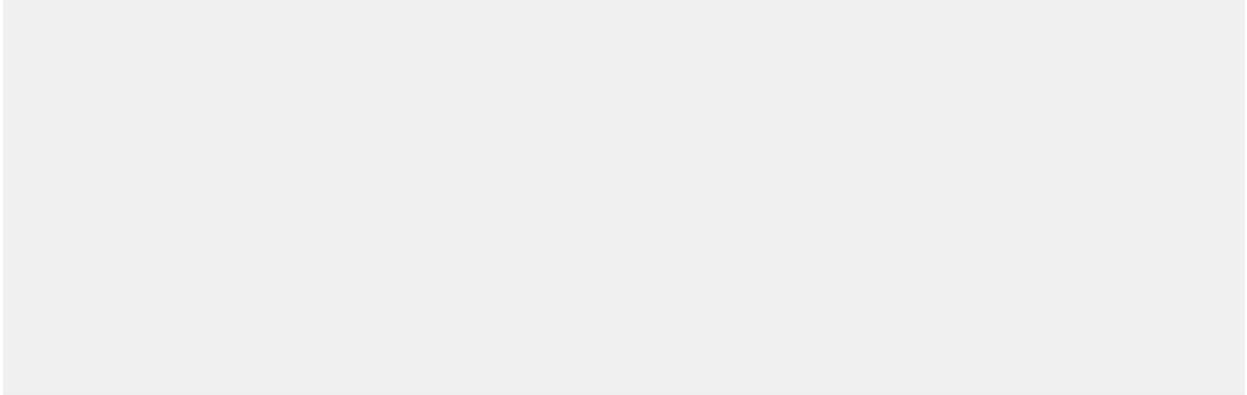
Think about the compliments you receive. Are you great at finding a deal at the store? Does everybody tell you that you're a good listener? What do people praise you for?



3. Work and Volunteer Experience

Positions Held

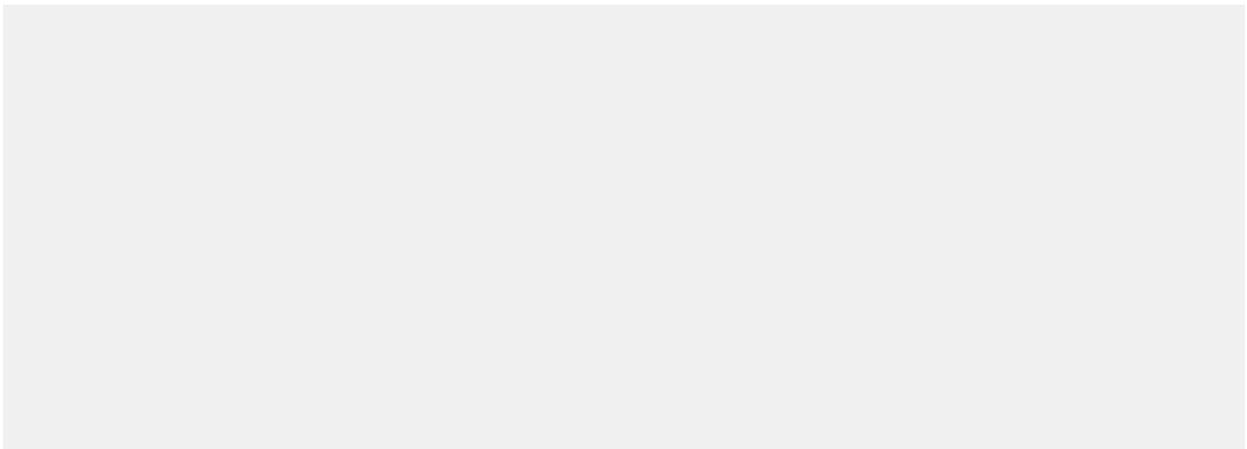
Have you had a job before? Where and when did you work? Don't forget to list jobs at school (e.g. teacher's assistant), jobs at church, or assignments at other volunteer organizations.



Significant Contributions

Think back through each of the jobs you listed and write down ways in which you excelled at each. Here are some examples to get you brainstorming:

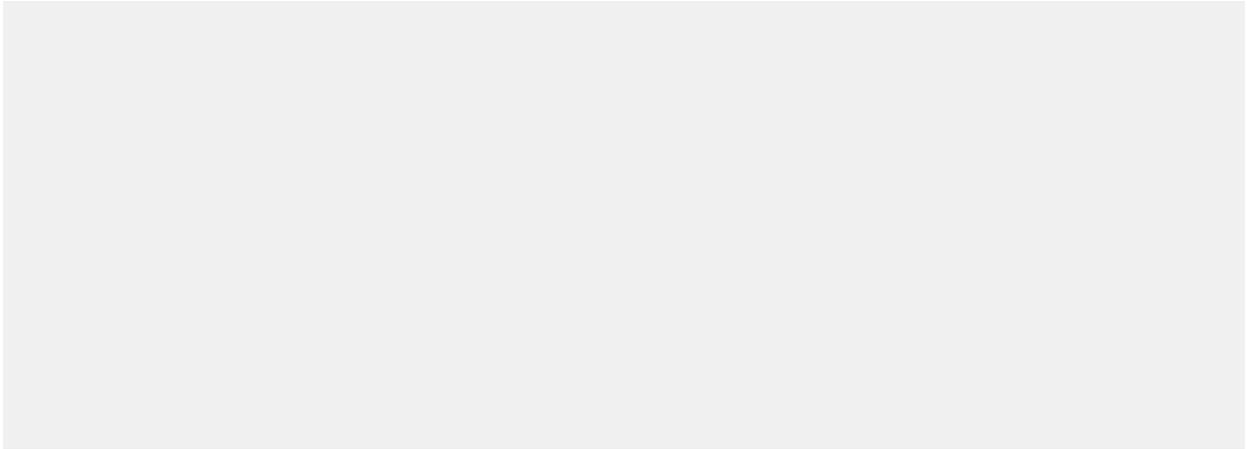
- Had perfect attendance at work
- Greeted each visitor with a smile throughout the day
- Thought of a new way to check-in guests at school events
- Got 5-star customer reviews for cleanliness
- Independently kept workspace organized and never had to be reminded



4. Life Experience

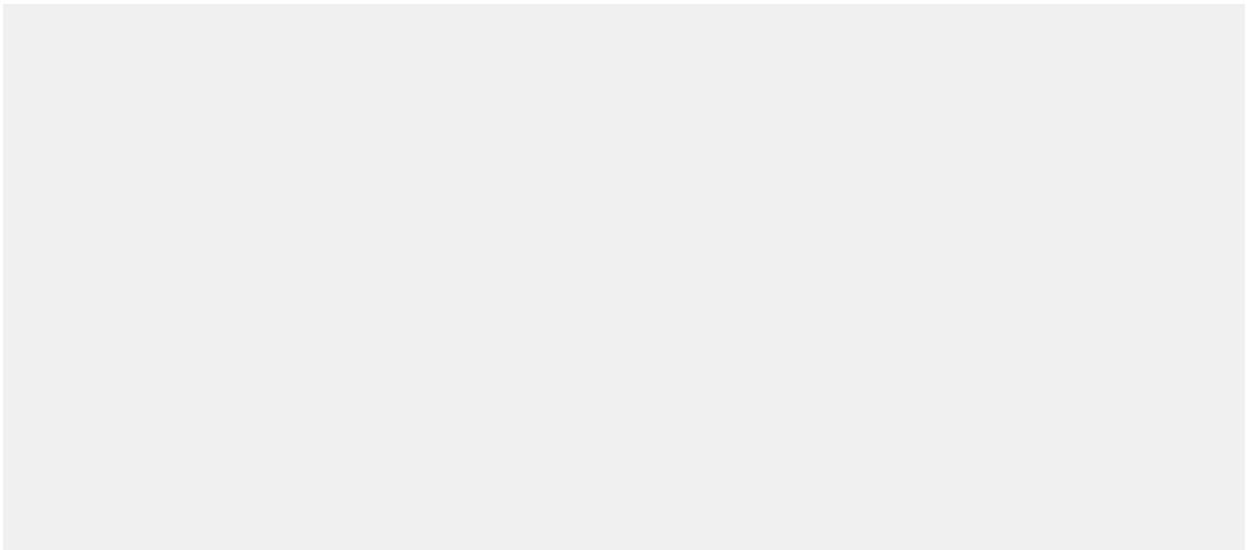
Special Circumstances

Through difficult situations, we often learn things we never would have studied on our own. What do you have special expertise in thanks to your life?



Your True Calling

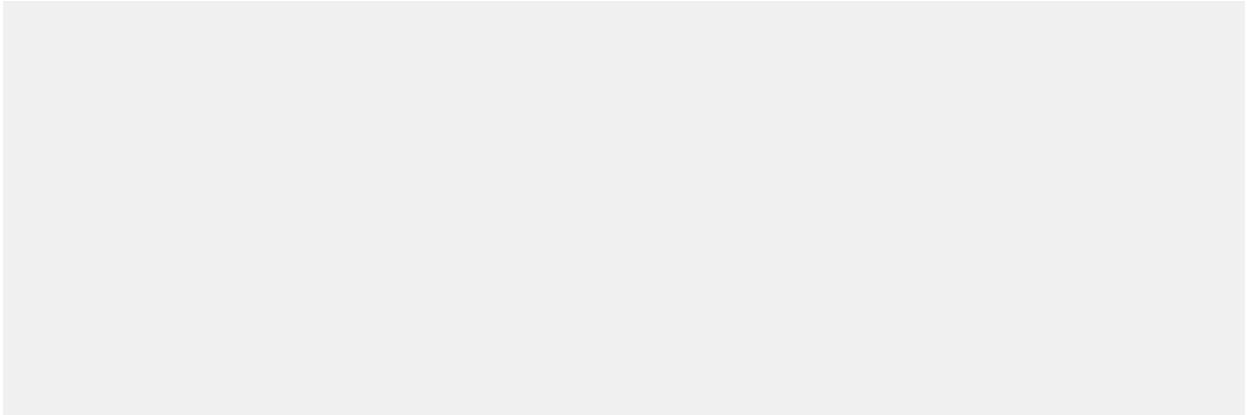
Is there something you feel called to do? Is there a job you secretly hope to get one day?



5. Workplace

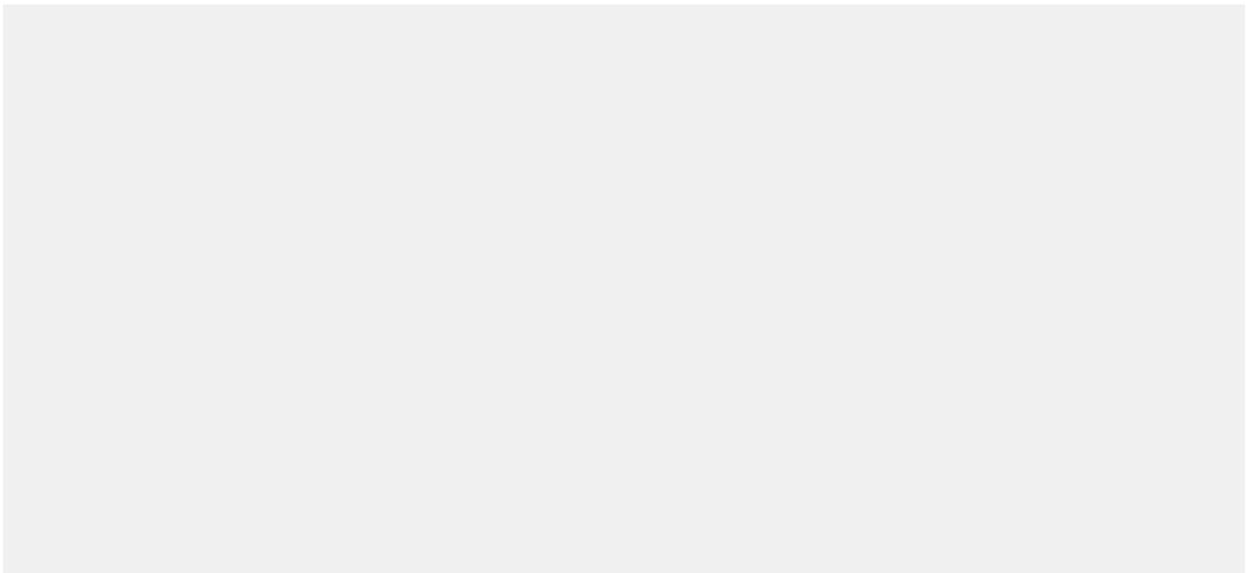
Work Environment

How much autonomy do you need? Do you like working with people or do you prefer task work? What is your ideal work environment?



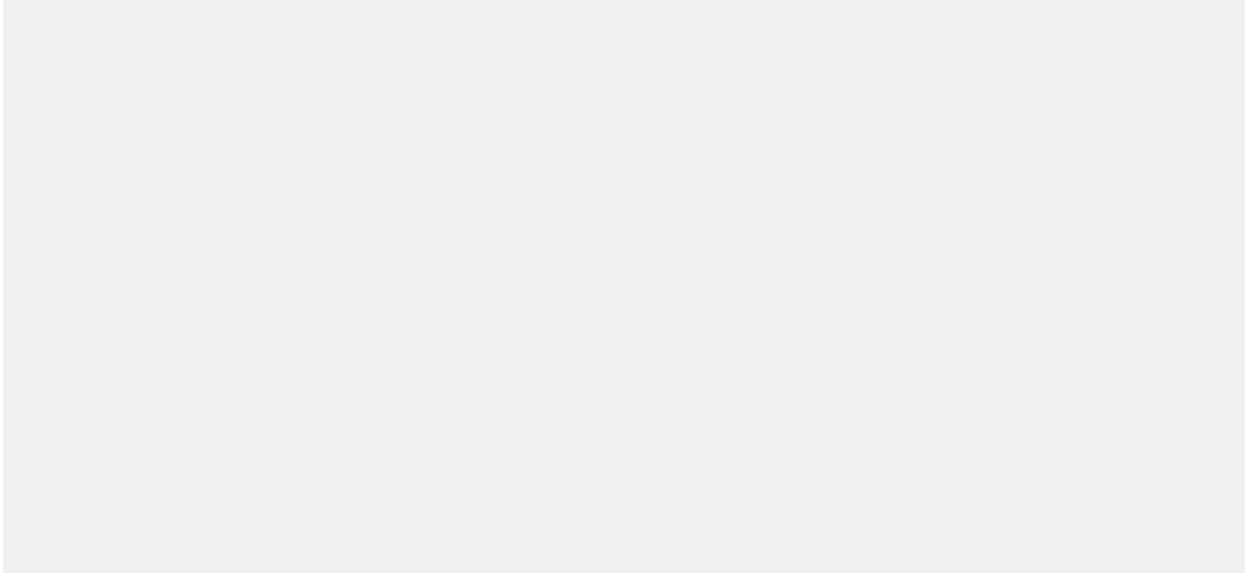
Availability

Are you looking for full-time work or part-time work? Although you do not list available hours on your resume, you should know when you are free to work. What is your desired work schedule?

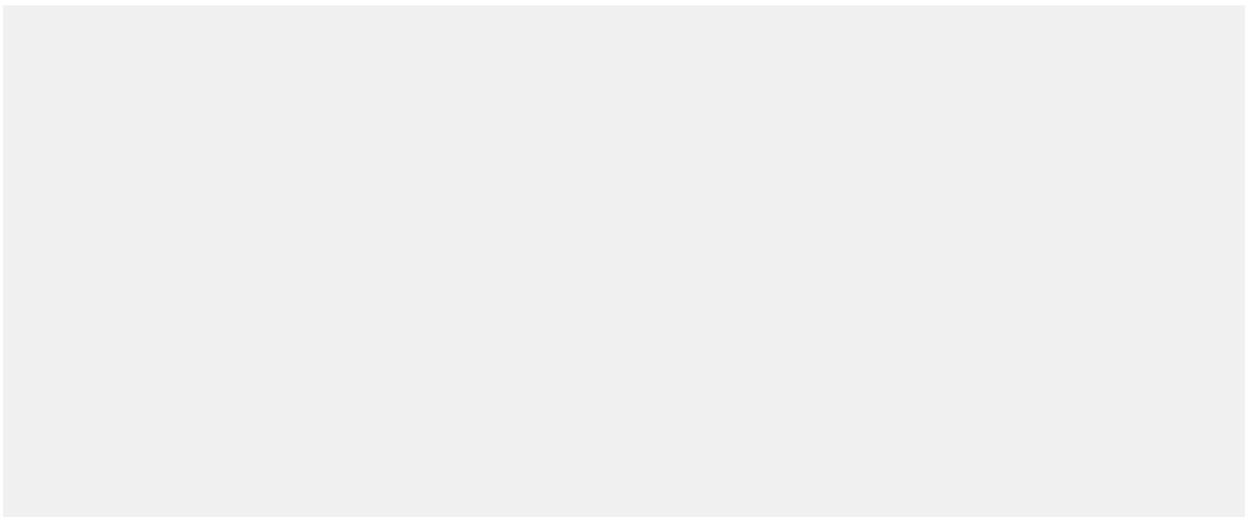


6. Your Ideal Job

Now go back and look through your answers above. Ask a mentor to review your answers with you. Do you see some of the same skills and interests repeating in multiple areas of your life? Write down what you find:



Are there some jobs that might be a fit for what you have to offer? Write down the types of jobs you want to look for.



Step 2: Create a Resume



"I have learned that success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has had to overcome while trying to succeed."

— Booker T. Washington

There are two types of resumes: time-based and skills-based. Most people are familiar with time-based resumes that list previous work experience such as when you worked a job and for how long. This is a great style if you have had a job before. A skills-based resume lists things you do well rather than past jobs.

Below you will find links to two templates—one for each resume style.

[**Time-based Resume**](#) (Choose if you have paid or volunteer work experience)

[**Skills-based Resume**](#) (Choose if this is your first job)

Click the resume template that works for your situation. Follow the instructions on the first page of the template to create a copy that you can edit.

Resume Tips

As you write your resume, here are a some tips:

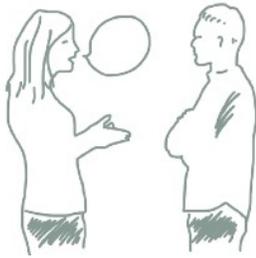
1. **Be Specific.** Don't assume someone reading your resume will understand what you do. Explain job duties and other experience in detail.
2. **Tailor Resume For Each Job.** Look at the job description for the job you are applying for, and update your resume to match it. For example, if a job requires you to type 50 words per minute (wpm), list your typing speed on your resume. If a job involves working with plants, mention that you tend your grandma's garden every summer.

Step 3: Look for Jobs

Now it's time to start looking for work. But where do you start?

Talk to People

You start by telling friends, family members, and other acquaintances that you are looking for work. Although it's tempting to just fill out job applications because you don't have to talk to anybody, the better jobs are often found through people you already know.



"There needs to be a lot more emphasis on what a child CAN do, instead of what he cannot do."

— Temple Grandin

What to Say

The most effective way to tell people that you need help is to be clear on what you're looking for. You should be able to explain:

1. What type of job you want
2. What you're good at
3. How they can help you

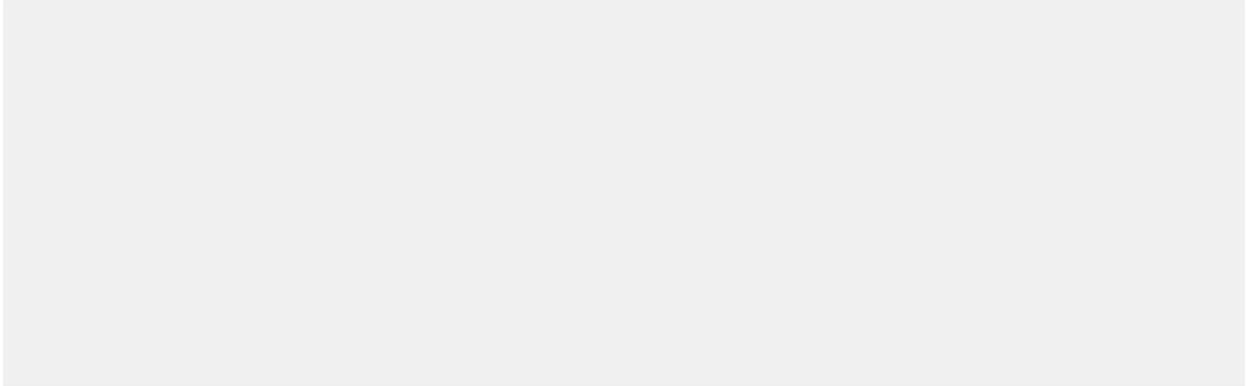
Here are some examples:

"I'm looking for part-time work and I'm really good with electronics. Do you know anybody who might be looking for this type of help?"

"I want to get a job. I'm excellent at math, and prefer to do repetitive tasks that require concentration. Do you know any companies that are hiring for this type of work?"

"I am looking for work. I prefer jobs that are outside and I'm prepared for physical labor. I'm available every day after school. Would you be willing to tell your neighbors?"

Write down what you will say:



Whom To Contact

Now make a list of everyone you will talk to. Your list should including the following:

- Friends
- Family members
- Church congregation members
- Teachers
- People you volunteer with
- Neighbors
- Friends on social media

Below you will find a link to a worksheet that you can use to make a list of people to talk to and keep track of your progress:

[Tracking Sheet](#) (Click to create an online tracking sheet)

Follow the instructions on the first page of the template to create a copy that you can edit.

Here's a Tip! If you really want to get a job, then treat "getting a job," like it is a job. Set goals such as talking to at least 5 people a day or applying for at least 5 jobs per week.

How to Make Contact

You can contact people in whatever way you are most comfortable. For example, you might send your teacher an email, send a direct message to a friend on social media, or make a phone call to your grandma. Your goal is to let people know that you are looking for work and could use their support and suggestions.

Below are some examples to get you started.

Sample Email

Hi Mr. Hampton,

I am looking for part-time work and wondered if you know anyone I should talk to. I'm really good at keeping things organized, I like to work with my hands, and I'm especially good at fixing electronics. Do you know anybody who could use my help?

Thanks for any ideas you have and for your consideration.

Shelley

Sample Text

Hi Jane! I'm looking for work and wanted to know if you know anybody who is hiring. I am hoping for a job that involves working independently on a specific task.

Sample Phone Call

Hi Grandma. I am looking for a part-time job. I have a resume and am ready to fill out job applications. Have you seen any "Help Wanted" signs in the neighborhood?

Would you mind asking your friends at church for me?

Sample Response to "How are you doing?"

I'm glad you asked. I am doing well, but I'm looking for work. I'm really good at deep cleaning and I like greeting people. Do you know anybody who is hiring?

Check Job Search Websites

There are many job search websites. Some of the most popular ones are listed below:

[Indeed](#)

[Monster](#)

[FlexJobs](#) (great for remote jobs)

[Snagajob](#) (great for hourly and part-time positions)

Pick one website that you are comfortable using and do the following:

1. Create an account
2. Upload your resume
3. Review your profile to make sure your resume got upload correctly
4. If possible, sign up for alerts so new job postings will be sent to your email

Check your email regularly for new job postings and interested employers.

Research Company Websites

If you want to work for a particular business, then go to the company's website and look for a job openings. You can also visit the store or restaurant and ask the manager if they are hiring..

Review Companies that Hire for Special Needs

On the "Navigating the Spectrum" website, you will find a list of companies who are known to hire people on the spectrum. You can find that list [here](#):

You can also search online for similar lists.

Remember to Track Your Progress! Using the worksheet link above or your own list, keep track of all of the people you talk to about a job and all of the jobs you are interested in applying for. Remember to set goals for yourself and to update the tracking sheet regularly.

Step 4: Apply for Jobs

Now you're ready to apply for jobs. You will likely have to apply for many jobs—everybody does. But persistence pays off. Keep “working” at getting work.



"When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us."

— Helen Keller

Fill Out Application

If you find a job that you are interested in, do the following:

1. Read the job posting carefully to see if your skills are a match
2. Update your resume to match the words used in the job description. For example, if the job posting says “dining services” and your resume says “waiter,” change your resume to say “dining services.”
3. Apply for the job online or in person, however, the employer prefers
4. Add the job you applied for to your tracking sheet.

Follow-Up

If you haven't heard from the company after a week, send a follow-up email or visit the store or restaurant. Ask to speak to the manager. Say something like this:

“I applied for the dining services position online, but haven't heard back yet. I wanted to find out if the job is still available and if I can leave you a copy of my resume.”

You still might not get the job, but managers do notice extra effort.

Step 5: Prepare for the Interview

You may not believe this, but you can't mess up an interview. Many people get hired after poor interviews and others don't get hired after saying everything right. Be yourself and trust that the right job will be made available to you at the right time—if you do the work to get it.



"Everyone has inside them a piece of good news. The good news is you don't know how great you can be! How much you can love! What you can accomplish! And what your potential is."

— Anne Frank

Here are five things you should do to prepare for an interview:

1. **Do your homework.** Review the job description and the company's website to remind yourself what the company is looking for and practice explaining why you would be a good fit for the job.
2. **Be prepared to explain any special needs.** If you need a certain type of work environment to be successful, let prospective employers know. If they can't accommodate your needs, look for another position that is a better fit. (See ADA Guidelines below for additional information.)
3. **Provide examples.** When asked about your experience, be prepared to give detailed answers with examples. For instance, if you are asked if you like to talk to people, explain that you are part of the welcoming committee at school, that you often stay after church to chat with friends, or that you recently volunteered to work a "Back to School" night.

4. **Ask your own questions.** Always ask your own questions in an interview. Doing so gives you a chance to address your concerns and shows enthusiasm for the job.
5. **Practice your answers.** As you think about the types of questions that will be asked, practice saying your answers out loud--to the mirror or to a trusted friend.

Practice Questions

Here are some questions that may be asked in an interview:

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why do you want to work here?
- Why should we hire you?
- When are you available to work each day?
- If we offer you the job, when can you start?
- Do you prefer to work on your own or as a team? Why?
- This is a physical job. Are you able to stand for long periods of time and lift heavy boxes?
- What is something you enjoyed doing in your last job (or at school)?
- What is something you didn't like doing at your last job?
- How do you get along with others?
- Tell me about a mistake you've made and how you handled it.

Remember, to answer these questions with examples of your strengths. For example, "I like to work independently. I'm good at following directions, so I can be very efficient once I understand the requirements of the job."

ADA Guidelines

The [U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#) website has information on The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) which can be used to clarify what prospective employers are allowed to ask in a job interview. In general, disability-related questions are prohibited, but an employer may invite applicants to voluntarily share information.

A Note of Encouragement

Finally, we want to wish you luck. Getting a job is a big step toward independence. Though it may take time to find a job you love, doing so will be worth the effort. You can do this!



"The next time you doubt your self-worth or feel that you are lacking as you compare yourself to others, remember that you are a child of God. You are His creation. And you are perfect in who you are meant to be.."

— Denise Stephens, BYU Professor

From Shelley at Faithful Career Moves:

Every person comes to this earth with a unique set of skills and abilities. Some are more obvious than others, but we all have them. My goal is to help you figure out what yours are so you can apply for jobs suited to your capabilities, be confident in interviews, and ultimately be successful at work.

For a faith-based approach to the job search process, visit www.FaithfulCareerMoves.com.

From Michele at Navigating the Spectrum:

The purpose of this resume experience is to help you pinpoint your strengths which can allow you to focus on what types of jobs are a good fit for you. It is okay to stretch your abilities, but make sure you also know your personal limitations. Take the time to ask questions about specific job opportunities. Do your research. Knowledge builds confidence. And don't forget to reach out to those close to you for help and guidance.

For help with various aspects of autism spectrum disorder, visit www.MichelePortlock.com.