



The Application

A Cochise County Workforce Development Career Center Workshop

Special recognition goes to Maricopa Workforce Development
for the creation of this workshop

Cochise County Workforce Development locations

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Hours are from 8am – 5 pm Monday through Friday

THE APPLICATION: YOUR CALLING CARD TO EMPLOYMENT

LEARN MORE ABOUT...

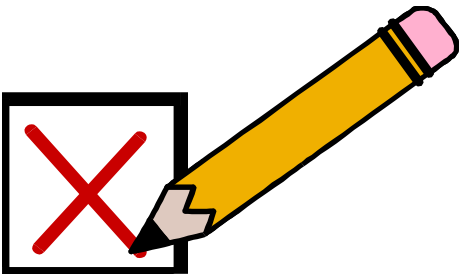
- ✓ APPLICATION BASICS
- ✓ GETTING PREPARED
- ✓ MAKING A GOOD IMPRESSION
- ✓ FILLING OUT THE APPLICATION
- ✓ MAKING THE APPLICATION WORK FOR YOU



APPLICATION BASICS

WHAT IS AN APPLICATION?

- An opportunity to sell your qualifications.
- The employer's first impression of you and your abilities.
- Your calling card (please look at me).



ROLE OF THE APPLICATION:

1. Screens you out or screens you in.
2. Sets interview agenda.
3. Standardizes information from applicants.

TYPES OF APPLICATIONS:

Regular Paper Applications:

You can download these applications on the Internet or pick them up at an employer's place of business. Be prepared for all types of job applications from simple one-page to multi-page to clean and crisp to photo-copied.

Computer-Prompted Applications:

These applications are filled out on a computer at the employer's office or on the Internet. While these promise immediate delivery, some questions may have a limited selection of answers from which you must choose in order to continue filling out the application. Unlike regular applications, you can't put a dash or N/A on a computer-prompted application. Instead, you must fill in an answer to move to the next field and to submit your application. Remember that these computer-prompted applications may be timed to see how long it takes you to fill out the form. **Even though it may seem complicated, don't let a computer-prompted application scare you. Fill it out in the same way you would fill out a paper application.**

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN APPLICATION AND RESUME:

APPLICATION	RESUME
Legal, binding document	Creative tool to sell yourself
What the employer wants to know about you	What you want the employer to know about you
A form with information structured exactly the way the <u>employer</u> wants it	A form with information structured exactly the way <u>you</u> want it

GETTING PREPARED

BEFORE YOU FILL OUT THE APPLICATION:

- ✓ **COMPILE AN “APPLICATIONS FOLDER” WITH ALL OF YOUR RELEVANT INFORMATION.**
- ✓ **STUDY THE JOB ANNOUNCEMENT OR ADVERTISEMENT.**
- ✓ **MAKE SURE THAT YOU MEET THE MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS BEFORE APPLYING FOR THE POSITION.**
- ✓ **DECIDE HOW TO TAILOR YOUR APPLICATION TO MEET THE EMPLOYER’S SPECIFIC NEEDS.**
- ✓ **BRING YOUR “APPLICATIONS FOLDER” WITH YOU WHEN YOU PICK UP AN APPLICATION, JUST IN CASE YOU’RE ASKED TO FILL OUT THE APPLICATION ON-SITE.**
- ✓ **ASK IF YOU CAN TAKE 2 COPIES OF THE APPLICATION WHEN PICKING IT UP FROM THE EMPLOYER.**
- ✓ **OBTAIN THE CONTACT PERSON’S NAME AND COMPANY FAX NUMBER. FIND OUT IF YOU CAN FAX THE COMPLETED APPLICATION.**



APPLICATION DATA INFORMATION

What it is:

A personal data sheet is a convenient way of organizing all the information that will be required to fully complete an application form. Instead of trying to keep track of a number of documents (record of work history, references, address book, etc.), it is helpful to keep this important information all together on a few stapled pages. Everyone will need a personal data sheet.

How to use it:

Use the personal data sheet as a resource for filling out application forms. Not all applications ask for the same information - some may ask for an emergency contact; most ask for three personal references but some ask for four; some want mailing addresses for elementary, junior high and high schools. You can be caught short when filling out applications at the personnel office if you try to rely strictly on your memory or your resume.

What to include:

1. **Personal Information**
 - Driver's license number and state of issue
 - Home addresses for the past 10 years
 - Date you're available for work
 - Write the date that you know you can start to work. If you can start immediately, write "ASAP."
 - If you're currently employed, give your employer two weeks of notice in advance. Write, "Two weeks from date of offer."
 - Whether or not you are authorized to work in the country.
 - If you have a work visa or were not a citizen at birth, bring relevant paperwork.
2. **Professional organization memberships**
 - Names of organizations
 - Dates of membership
 - Addresses and phone numbers
3. **Criminal Offenses** – whether or not you've been convicted by civil/military courts
 - If the offense was a minor traffic offense, write "MINOR TRAFFIC OFFENSE."
 - Otherwise, write "WILL EXPLAIN AT INTERVIEW."
4. **Military service** – Include your discharge papers in case they ask to see them.
 - Entry and discharge dates and type of discharge
 - Branch and occupational specialization
 - Special training received and dates
 - Last rank
5. **Information related to the position:**
 - Position desired (first and second choices) / Geographic preference (first and second choices)
 - Salary desired
 - How you heard about the job – if an employee referred you, include his/her contact information on the application if required. Some companies offer incentives to employees for referrals.

6. Work history

- Names of employers including current employer
- Mailing and street addresses (if different) and phone numbers
-Provide this information for the offices where the Human Resources (HR) departments or your work records are located.
- Start and end dates. If you are still working for your current employer, write "present."
- Reasons for leaving. Be careful with this one – never criticize a former employer. Be positive and neutral.
- Supervisor's names, titles and business contact information
- Your job titles and the type of work you did
- Reasons for gaps of 90 days or more in your work history, other than education.

7. Whether or not you've previously applied for work or worked at the same company. If so:

- Dates of application or employment
- Divisions, units and departments for which you worked
- Names of bosses
- You should include this information in "Work History"

8. Education and training

- Start and end dates
- School names and addresses
- Professional licenses/certifications
- Majors and minors if degree has been achieved
- Degrees earned and dates thereof
- Grade point average (usually required for academia)
- Titles of Master's and Ph.D. Theses, and advisors' names

9. Additional skills - Typically, you don't need to worry too much about these unless applicable for the job. For example, lots of workers type on computers these days, but words per minute (WPM) usually applies only to clerical jobs.

- Typing WPM / Steno WPM / 10-Key KSPH
- Language fluency
- Software knowledge and/or equipment knowledge
- Technical skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Personal/Transferable skills applicable to job

10. References

- Ask your references for their permission before using them as a reference. Provide them with your resume to update them on your roles and responsibilities at recent jobs.
- Find out what information they will release (work or home addresses/phone numbers) for you to give you the prospective employer.
- Occupations and relationship to you
- You are usually asked to provide a minimum of three references

MAKING A GOOD IMPRESSION

APPEARANCES MATTER!!!

The way you look and the way your application looks can make or break your chances of getting a job. Your application is the **FIRST IMPRESSION** that an employer will get of you and the quality of your work. In essence, it's the first sample of your work. **Never underestimate the importance of creating a good first impression.** Frequently, your job application will be your introduction to a potential employer; therefore, take the time to prepare an application which will make a positive impression.

The following guidelines may be helpful:

- ⇒ **Be neat.** Type or print your application. Use black, erasable pen.
- ⇒ **Be complete.** Don't leave anything blank.
- ⇒ **Be positive.** Remember, nothing negative!
- ⇒ **Proofread, proofread, proofread!** An error-free application may not get you an interview, but an application with typos, grammar mistakes and spelling blunders will definitely keep you from getting an interview! Ask someone else with good grammatical knowledge to proofread.
- ⇒ **Include additions.** Enclosing a resume is an excellent way to offer additional information about yourself and set your application apart. Attach letters of recommendation or ask one of your references to mail a letter to prospective employers. The employer is reminded of you and your interest in the job each time you attach a recommendation.

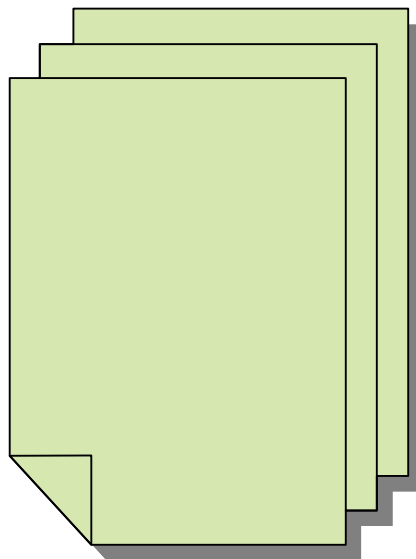
FOCUS ON THE NEEDS OF THE EMPLOYER.

Remember, employers are concerned about how you will help the company achieve its goals. Here are the Top 10 qualities or "Must-Haves" in the mind of the decision maker:

Ability to do the job
Initiative
Job Growth
Self-Confidence
Leadership
Compatibility
Attitude
Social Skills/Interests/Involvement
Integrity
Communication Skills

FILLING OUT THE APPLICATION

Do's	Don'ts
- follow directions, read the instructions and entire application before filling it out	- leave anything blank; use N/A or a dash (-)
- tailor your application to the job posting	- lie
- use action verbs to describe your job duties and responsibilities	- use "red flag" words – anything that may have a negative connotation
- enclose your resume as a supplement to the application	- substitute your resume in place of filling out the "Work History" section
- use positive and neutral reasons for leaving (page 15)	- mention health, school, mental, marital, legal or financial problems
- be flexible about salary requirements (page 14)	- list your driver's license as a license (unless the employer specifically asks for it)
- be flexible about geographic preference and hours available for work	- let employers contact your current employer unless he/she knows you're job hunting
- account for gaps in your work history	- use abbreviations (except for N/A)
- be honest, but not too open	- include anything negative on the application
- use correction fluid (sparingly)	- try to explain past convictions/terminations on the application – leave it for the interview



MAKING APPLICATIONS WORK FOR YOU

APPLICATIONS SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDE

Referred by: Write the name of the person who referred you. If there was no referral, use a dash (-) or write "N/A."

Permanent Address: Use your present address or write "Same as above" if you have filled in a present address.

Phone Number: If you don't have a phone, use a friend's or relative's phone number (as long as they will answer it professionally and take a message for you). Be sure to write: "Message Phone." Remember to have professional voicemail.

Do you Have Any Illness?: Do not list any illness or disabilities that would not affect your work. You may wish to write, "Will discuss at interview." In cases such as this, an applicant can say in the interview "I didn't put the fact that I'm blind on the application because I wanted the chance to discuss my capabilities with you in person." Never include information about your family, even if it's requested. Remember, all information regarding mental illness, including your own, is confidential. If you do have a problem which could affect you on the job, describe it in operational terms: "I walk a little more slowly than most people." Do not use medical terms.

If Yes, Explain: Indicate what you can do physically, or what you have done to compensate for the problem. Remember, stress the positive.

Social Security Number: Due to the prevalence of identity theft, write "will provide at interview."

Have You Ever Been Convicted of a Crime? If you have been convicted of a felony, misdemeanor or have pleaded "no contest", you have options. Our preference is to write "Yes. Will explain at interview" (and do be prepared to explain it at an interview). If you have speeding tickets, you must find out if you have been charged with a civil infraction (a traffic offense that carries only a fine and the possibility of "points" on your driving record) or a traffic misdemeanor (criminal offense). A traffic misdemeanor will result in your having a criminal record. If you are charged with a traffic misdemeanor, you may choose to consult a lawyer before deciding how to proceed. Often it is possible to plea bargain a traffic misdemeanor down to a civil infraction.

High School: If you did not attend a traditional high school, list the name and city of any continuation, extension or vocational school you have attended.

Year Graduated From High School: If you are a recent graduate, answer the question. If providing the year could hurt you (i.e., give away your age), be creative. Other options could be "4 years," "Yes," or "12th grade."

Degree: If you have no higher education, “High School Diploma” is fine. If you have neither a diploma nor a GED, write in “Equivalent experience.” If you are under 23 and have not worked or finished high school, write in “Planning to continue my education.”

College, Business/Trade School, Correspondence School, Distance Learning Education: List any full or part-time attendance. This section need not be limited to degrees. Include any courses that could enhance your potential for the position for which you are applying. An additional option might be: “Will enroll in courses as needed to improve my job skills”

Name of Employer: Start with most recent. A training program or volunteer work can be substituted for a job.

Your Position: Write your full job title as it would be listed with your Human Resource Department.

Immediate Supervisor: Write your immediate supervisor’s full name.

Description of Duties: Make descriptions brief but accurate. When possible, use key words from the job posting or job description. Always use past tense verbs (“performed,” “handled,” “cut,” “shaped,” “typed,” etc.) to describe previous jobs. Remember to focus on your accomplishments and the benefits the company will gain by hiring you. When possible, quantify your accomplishments and discuss ways that you saved the company time or money. If necessary, use an additional sheet. NEVER write “Refer to Resume” anywhere on your application.

Started...Left: Provide the month and year of your start and end dates. Be sure these are accurate.



LEGAL AND ILLEGAL PRE-EMPLOYMENT QUESTIONS

SUBJECT	LAWFUL	UNLAWFUL
AGE	Are you between the ages of 18 and 65?	How old are you? What is your date of birth?
RACE OR COLOR	NONE	Complexion or color of skin, eyes, hair, etc., or other questions directly or indirectly indicating race or color.
RELIGION OR CREED	NONE	Inquiry into candidate's religious denomination, religious affiliations, parish, or church, religious holidays observed. Candidate may not be told "This is a (Catholic, Protestant or Jewish) organization."
SEX	NONE	Inquiry as to gender. Any inquiry which would indicate that being a person of a particular sex is a requirement for the job or a factor in determining whether or not the person will be satisfied in a particular job. Inquires related to pregnancy; inquires indicating women in general may be less physically able to perform manual aspects. Any question regarding the applicant's sexual orientation.
CITIZENSHIP	Are you legally authorized to work in United States? (Note: All applicants are advised on the Employment Application that to comply with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, employees hired will be required to provide proof of work eligibility at the time an employment offer is extended.)	Of what country are you a citizen? Whether a candidate is naturalized or native-born citizen; the date when the candidate acquired citizenship. Requirement that candidate produce naturalization papers or first papers.
DISABILITY	Will you require reasonable accommodation to perform any of the essential functions of this job? If so, what is the necessary accommodation?	Do you have a disability? Have you ever been treated for any of the following diseases....? Do you have now, or have you ever had, a drug or alcohol problem? Inquiries as to the nature or severity of any apparent disability?

THE APPLICATION

LEGAL HISTORY	Have you ever been convicted of a crime?	Have you ever been arrested?
EDUCATION	Inquiry into candidate's academic, vocational or professional education and public and private schools attended.	Inquiry asking specifically the nationality, racial composition, or religion of a school.
FAMILY STATUS	Whether candidate can meet specified work schedules or has activities, commitments, or responsibilities that may hinder the meeting of work attendance requirements.	Number of children and age of children. Questions concerning pregnancy/ child care arrangements. Are you married? Single? Divorced? Separated?
LANGUAGE	Inquiry into languages candidate speaks or writes fluently.	What is your native language? Inquiry into how candidate acquired ability to read, write or speak a foreign language.
NAME	Have you ever worked for this company under a different name? Is additional information relative to change of name, use of an assumed name or nickname necessary to enable a check on your work record? If yes, explain.	Original name of a candidate whose name has been changed by court order or otherwise. Maiden name of a married women. If you have ever worked under another name, state name, and dates.
NOTICE IN CASE OF EMERGENCY	This inquiry may be asked after a person has been actually hired.	Name and address of person to be notified in case of an accident or emergency before hired.
ORGANIZATIONS	Inquiry into candidate's membership in organizations which the candidate considers relevant to his or her ability to perform the job.	List all clubs, societies and lodges to which you belong.
TRANSPORTATION	Do you have dependable transportation?	"Do you own a car?" (Unless the position required the use of a personal vehicle.)
WORKERS COMPENSATION	NONE	Inquires as to receipt of Worker's Compensation.

MORE INFORMATION ON ILLEGAL QUESTIONS

Why Do Employers Use Illegal Questions?

HR personnel are usually aware of what is legal and illegal. However, others involved in the hiring process may not have the same awareness. **It is your right to withhold information unrelated to the job, but research shows that refusing to answer questions may hurt your employment prospects.** Think through possible illegal questions and prepare a suitable answer. A suitable answer will allow you to maintain your privacy without offending the employer.

Should You Answer Illegal Questions?

Read the application first so you can decide how to answer. **If the question does not bother you, answer it. If it does bother you, you may want to use N/A or a dash (-). Another option is sidestepping the question with a creative answer.**

If you are filling out an application with a lot of illegal questions, ask yourself if you even want to work for an employer who asks so many illegal questions.

Taking Action

If you see numerous illegal questions on an application, you may choose to notify the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). All filings are confidential, so it won't hurt your chances of getting a job with a company.

EEOC Phone: 1-800-559-4000

EEOC Website: www.eeoc.gov

Department of Labor – Employment and Training Website: www.doleta.gov

DEALING WITH EMPLOYMENT GAPS

Should you include short periods of employment on the application?

Remember that many applications say, "Any omission can result in termination." EEOC counsel recommends that employment of any length of time should be listed on the application. Whether or not you want to include short-term employment of a month or two, or even less, is your choice. Full scrutiny of your background will probably occur if you are seeking employment with any "protected assets" or "protected populations", or require a security clearance of any kind. In cases such as these, full disclosure is your sole option.

DEALING WITH THE SALARY ISSUE

If The Employer Asks For Desired Salary:

- ✓ Respond with “negotiable.” This response gives you “wiggle” room.
- ✓ Provide a salary range using information from www.salary.com website.
- ✓ Research labor market information for more resources on negotiating your salary.
- ✓ **Be careful!** If you put a dollar amount in this blank, employers will screen you out if your number is too high or too low.

If The Employer Requests Salary History:

- ✓ Provide your salary from past positions as required on the application. Try to make your salary look comparable to the position’s salary, if possible, by the inclusion or exclusion of commissions, bonuses, incentives, tips, etc.
- ✓ If your salary was considerably higher, you may want to provide your salary weekly, hourly or quarterly rather than yearly.
- ✓ If your salary was considerably higher and you are willing to work for less, convince the employer that you are interested in the position regardless of the cut in pay. You can discuss this in a cover letter. Show that you’re committed to the employer and that you don’t plan on leaving when a higher paying job comes along. You should also explain why you are willing to work for less in the first paragraph of your cover letter.

AFTER COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

- Dress appropriately when turning in the application.
- Attempt to hand-deliver your application to the Hiring Manager.
- Update and maintain a Job Search Log.
- Organize yourself with a Job Search Action Plan.

POSSIBLE REASONS FOR LEAVING

If you resigned:

Seeking advancement
 Career change
 Relocation
 Seasonal employment
 Temporary employment
 Education

If you were laid off:

Reduction in force
 Corporate merger
 Lack of work
 Company closed
 Company downsized
 Plant/company closed
 Contract ended

If you were fired:

Taking career in new direction
 Seeking new opportunity
 Seeking advancement
 Employment ended

Always be **positive and neutral** about your reason for leaving. If you are worried about what past employers are going to say, you may want to have a friend call and ask for a reference. Another option is to call your past employer and find out what he/she is saying in response to the reference check. Reintroduce yourself and explain that you're looking for a new job, and that a positive reference would be most helpful.

RED FLAGS VS. GREEN FLAGS

Many questions are tricky and even illegal. Your goal is to have a completed application with **no red flags**. For example, a company may ask you when you graduated from high school (illegal question). . **Remember – When it comes to illegal questions, a red flag for one person may not be a red flag for another person.** This is not a red flag if you graduated 5 years ago. It is a red flag if you graduated 30 years ago because it will give away your age

Red Flag Words

Fired/Terminated
 Quit
 Personality conflict
 Dissatisfied
 Arrested

Did not work out
 Lied to me
 Fight with co-worker
 Fight with supervisor
 Could not do the work

Did not like the work
 Could not work the hours
 No transportation
 Personal problems

Green Flag Words

- See "Reasons for Leaving" (above)
- "Will explain at interview"
- Positive statements about:
 - the company
 - your supervisors and co-workers
 - your traits, skills and accomplishments

Electronic Online Applications

Your job applications (electronic/paper) will be successful using the following method:

- **Research** covers information about the job and the company; your work history/training/education/skills and abilities; former employer's address and phone number; and your references.
- **Target** means focus your electronic application and resume to meet the job specifications.
- **Prepare** involves reviewing your resume or your application; getting ready for the interview.
- **Communicate** to the new employer that you meet/exceed their requirements within your resume, application, and in the interview.

Tips for Online applications:

- Focus on the computer prompted application in the same way as a paper application.
- Download the electronic job application and complete it before you start your online application. Another suggestion is to write a draft copy in Word first so you can copy and paste in your information online (sometimes this is not possible with some online applications).
- If you are copying and pasting answers into application forms from Word, make sure you proofread it. Your application must be error free.
- Read through the application(s) and prepare for additional information.
- Follow the instructions and tips provided by the job website to complete the application correctly.
- When you apply online avoid being vague and sloppy.
- Take your time: it is too easy to be tempted to send your application before you've focused and checked it.
- Fill in the appropriate sections and answer all the questions.
- Take note that some electronic applications include a test (aptitude, customer service, and/or situational questions) and the application is finally submitted after taking the tests.

Don't be tempted to apply for lots of jobs online – apply for jobs in which you are interested and that meet your qualifications and experience.

● **A NOTE FROM A HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER¹**

Dear Applicant,

Please remember that your application is your calling card – it will screen you in or screen you out. This is the first sample of your work and it must be flawless.

If the receptionist tells me that it took you an hour to fill out a simple one page application, I will think you might be too slow for the job I'm trying to fill. Bring a personal data sheet, resume and other relevant materials. You'll look like someone who thinks ahead.

Smudges, creases and coffee stains on the application suggest you are not clean! Wash your hands before you fill out the application. If you can't print neatly, ask if you can take the application home and return it the next day. Then type it or print neatly.

If you can't spell, don't punctuate correctly or use incorrect grammar, I will think you are either unprofessional or careless. Bring an accurate, proofed application and copy the information carefully and correctly.

If there are unexplained gaps in your work history, I may label you with a "job hopper" image or think that you're hiding something. Even if you've been fired or left a job because of personality conflicts with the boss, don't leave the position out. Be positive and neutral about your reason for leaving. Then, if necessary, carefully prepare an explanation for the interview about why you left the job.

If you lie on your application and I find out about it after you've been hired, you can expect to be fired. Providing false information or omitting important facts is legal grounds for immediate dismissal.

If your references are surprised by my phone call, I will think you are irresponsible, inconsiderate and not the kind of person who will make a good team player. Always get permission from your references before using them.

Remember, fifty people have probably applied for the same job and **I'm looking for reasons NOT to hire you.** Make sure that you "sell yourself" and show me that YOU are the best person for the job.

Sincerely,

A.. Hiring Manager

¹ Adapted from information obtained from the Career Services Department at Cowley College.