

Finding & Keeping a Job

Helpful information
and resources
for newly arrived
refugee and asylum seeking
populations in Minnesota



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MARCH 2010

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Special Thanks

A grant from the **Wells Fargo Foundation Minnesota** has made it possible for The Center for Victims of Torture to compile this information.

Your comments are welcome about how usefulness of this information has been to you in the process of your job search or in helping others to obtain a job. Please contact Evelyn Lennon, M.A., M.S.W., L.G.S.W., at e.lennon@cvt.org to provide your feedback or write to:

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The Center for Victims of Torture has compiled this information to assist people in understanding the process of finding and keeping a job in the United States. We hope this information is helpful in learning the processes and systems in your community. Please ask your social worker, employment counselor or friends if you have questions. Looking for work in a new country is always a challenge. We hope the steps outlined here will make the process easier to understand and that finding and keeping a job will be the successful outcome.

This information is not a legal guide. If you have questions about your situation, please ask for help or refer to the resource telephone numbers provided throughout this document.

Step ONE: Obtaining documents that allow you to work

Employers in the United States MUST check to make sure that all employees, regardless of citizenship or national origin, are authorized to work in the United States. An employer is required to ask you for proof of your ability to work in the United States. All employers have a list of acceptable documents that prove identity and employment eligibility. Please see the table provided to determine if you have the proper documents to present to an employer. You must show an employer only ONE of the documents listed in “LIST A” to prove both your identity and your work eligibility.

However, if you do not have any of the documents in “LIST A” you must look to “LIST B” and “LIST C” to determine if you have at least one document from EACH list in order to prove your work eligibility to an employer. For example, an employer can accept a Minnesota Driver’s License (#1 from List B) AND an unrestricted United States Social Security Card (#1 from List C). A restricted card means that the Social Security Card is stamped with the words “not valid for employment.” Please refer to the table provided for locating documents for identification and employment eligibility.

LIST A

LIST B

LIST C

OR

AND

Only One Required to Establish BOTH Identity and Employment Eligibility	Documents that Establish Identity	Documents that Establish Employment Eligibility
1. U.S. Passport (unexpired or expired) 2. Permanent resident Card or Alien Registration receipt Card (Form I-551) 3. An unexpired foreign passport with a temporary I-551 stamp 4. An unexpired Employment Authorization Document that contains a photograph (Form I0766, I-688, I-688A, I-688B)	1. Driver’s license or ID card issued by a state or outlying possession of the United States provided it contains a photograph or information such as name, date of birth, gender, height, eye color and address 2. ID card issued by federal, state or local government agencies with the same information as shown in #1 above 3. School ID card with a photograph 4. Voter’s registration card	1. United States Social Security Card issued by the Social Security Administration (other than a card stating it is not valid for employment) 2. Certification of Birth Abroad issued by the Department of State (Form FS-545 or Form DS-1350) 3. Original or certified copy of a birth certificate issued by a state, county, municipal authority or outlying possession of the United States bearing an official seal 4. Native American tribal document

<p>5. An unexpired foreign passport with an unexpired Arrival-Departure Record, Form I-94, bearing the same name as the passport and containing an endorsement of the alien's nonimmigrant status, if that status authorizes the alien to work for the employer</p>	<p>5. United States Military card or draft record</p> <p>6. Military dependent's ID card</p> <p>7. US Coast Guard Merchant Mariner Card</p> <p>8. Native American tribal document</p> <p>9. Driver's license issued by a Canadian government authority</p> <p>Person under age 18 may present school records or report card; clinic, doctor, or hospital record; or day-care or nursery school record</p>	<p>5. US Citizen ID Card (BCIS Form I-197)</p> <p>6. ID Card for use of Resident Citizen in the United States (Form I-179)</p> <p>7. Unexpired Employment Authorization Document (EAD) issued by the DHS (other than those listed under LIST A)</p> <p>Source: Handbook for Employers, Instructions for Completing Form I-9 (Employment Eligibility Verification Form) U.S. INS-Employer/Labor Relations 612-313-9052</p>
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Step TWO: Obtaining an Employment Authorization Document (EAD)

An Employment Authorization Document (EAD) issued by the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) provides a document that establishes your identity, lawful presence, and work eligibility in the United States.

1. What is an Employment Authorization Document (EAD)?

This document is issued by the United States government and proves that you are allowed to work in the United States. The Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) of the United States government issues the following kinds of EADs:

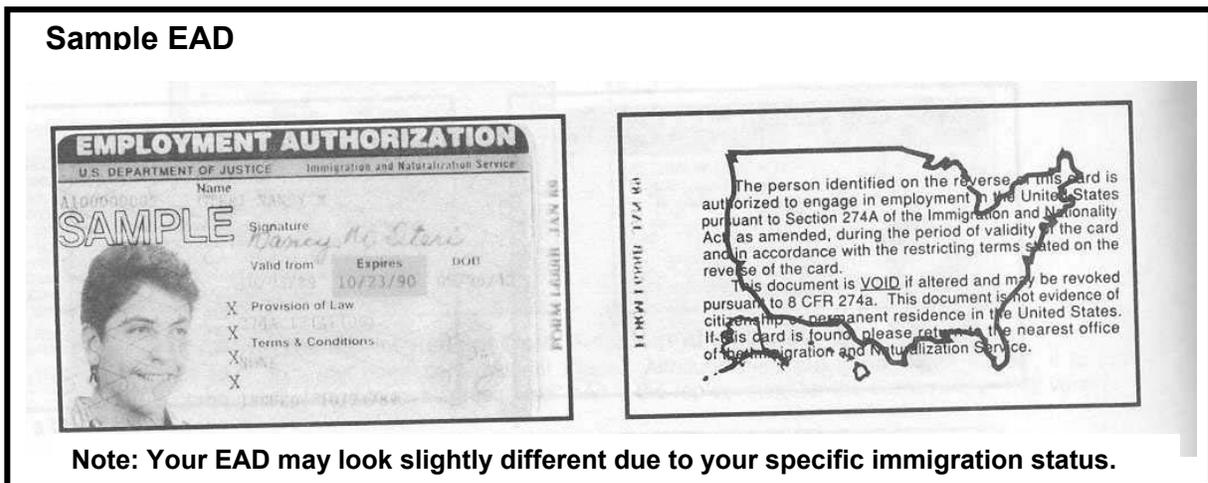
- EAD: The document that allows you to work for one year at a time (or two years upon entry for refugees). If you are a refugee or an asylum seeker, whose application has been pending for 180 days, you do not need to pay for your first EAD.
- Renewal EAD: After receiving your first EAD, you must apply each year for a RENEWAL EAD. The BCIS currently recommends that you apply for your Renewal EAD at least 90 days before the expiration date but the BCIS recommends that you begin the process **SIX MONTHS** ahead of the expiration date of your current EAD. *You cannot file for a renewal EAD more than 120 days before your original expires.* It is important to renew your EAD to ensure that you can continue working without interruption. There is a fee for each Renewal EAD.
- Replacement EAD: This document will replace a lost, stolen, or mutilated EAD. A Replacement EAD also replaces an EAD that was issued with wrong information. For example, if you received your EAD and your name was misspelled or it had the wrong date of birth, etc. If you receive an EAD that does not have the correct information, notify the BCIS immediately of the error and apply for a Replacement EAD.

- Interim EAD: If the BCIS does not approve or deny your EAD application within 90 days (**within 30 days for the first EAD of an asylum applicant**), you may request an Interim EAD document good for 240 days.

2. Who can apply for an Employment Authorization Document (EAD)?

Anyone who is described in law as employment authorized including, but not limited to, the following:

- Refugees
- Asylees (those already granted asylum)
- Asylum seekers are eligible to apply for an EAD 150 days after the date indicated on the letter you receive from the BCIS confirming that they have received your asylum application.
- People who are eligible for Temporary Protective Status (TPS) or Deferred Enforced Deportation (DED) status.



3. How do you apply for your EAD?

You will need to fill out a form issued by the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)—**USCIS Form I-765** (Application for Employment Authorization) and mail the form to the Regional Service Center designated to serve people with your immigration status. Refugees can make this application immediately upon arrival in the United States. Asylum seekers must wait 150 days from the date their asylum application has been received by the *USCIS*.

There are a number of ways that you can obtain an BCIS Form I-765 application:

- Call the BCIS telephone line that issues forms by mail: 1-800-375-5283. You will be asked for your name, address, telephone number and the specific BCIS form you are requesting (I-765). They will mail the form to your address.
- Go to the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) Regional Service Center Office and ask the Information Officer for Form I-765. The *BCIS* is located at 2901 Metro Drive, Suite 100, Bloomington, near the Mall of America. The office is open 7:30 AM - 2:30 PM; Mondays - Thursdays; the information office is open to the public on the 1st and 3rd Friday of each month. Please note that the service times may change. It is good to call to verify the current office hours.

4. Is it important to carry your EAD with you?

YES, it is important that you carry your EAD with you and present the card whenever you are applying for a job. Your EAD is an official identification and employment authorization document issued by the United States government. The employer may make a photocopy of your EAD for their records. It is a good idea to

make a photocopy of your EAD in case it gets lost or stolen. Report a missing EAD to the BCIS as soon as possible to apply for a Replacement EAD.

5. Why is it important to renew your EAD before the expiration date?

In some cases, you are not eligible to work if your EAD is expired. In other cases, the EAD expiration date does not mean employment authorization has expired. You are responsible for keeping your EAD current. Each EAD is valid for only ONE YEAR. It will take a minimum of 90 days to renew your EAD. The BCIS recommends that you begin the process of renewing your EAD **six (6) months** before the expiration date. This is to ensure that you will receive your Renewal EAD in plenty of time before the expiration date of your current EAD. Your employer CANNOT allow you to continue to work if your EAD has expired. When your renewal EAD arrives you must bring it to your employer so they can update their employee files. This provides the employer with proof that you have received your new EAD and can continue working without interruption.

7. What if your status has changed since your first EAD application?

If your immigration status has changed from the time you were issued your last EAD, you will need to apply for your RENEWAL EAD under your new **adjusted or pending status**. Be sure to review the "Eligibility Categories" listed in the instruction document of the I-765 Form to select the category that best describes your current status.

EXAMPLES OF SOME COMMON STATUS SITUATIONS:

- If you are an asylum seeker and you have waited the 150 days required by law, you are now able to apply for your first Employment Authorization Document (EAD). Because your asylum petition is still pending, you would use the eligibility category "(c)(8)" on the application form. You do not have to pay for your first EAD.
- If you had been given an EAD while you were an asylum seeker and have now received the official letter granting asylum, you will need to apply for your Renewal EAD under your new "Asylee—granted asylum (a)(5)" category. You will need to pay a fee for each Renewal EAD. The current fee is \$129.00 plus a BCIS fee. Only the first EAD is free of charge. Always check the form to be sure about the fee.
- If you are a refugee, you can apply for an EAD as soon as you arrive in the United States. Your eligibility category is "Refugee—(a)(3)." You do not have to pay for your first EAD but you will need to pay a fee for each Renewal EAD. Always check the application form to be sure about the fee.
- You may need to renew your EAD when applying to adjust your status to permanent residency ("green card"). You would use the "Adjustment Applicant—(c)(9)" category. The category means that you have already made your application for permanent residency but the BCIS has not yet granted that status. You will need to continue to renew your EAD and pay the fee until you receive your "green card."

8. Where do you send your EAD application?

It is important to follow the mailing instructions that you will find on page five in the I-765 Form under "Part 5. Where to File." Currently, Refugees, Asylees and Asylum Seekers in Minnesota send their forms to: **INS Service Center, P.O. Box 87765, Lincoln, NE 68501-7765. Check the application form to be sure.**

If you have other questions about your EAD or other immigration status and benefits questions you can contact the **INS Helpline: 1-800-375-5283** or talk with your social worker or employment counselor.

Step THREE: Obtaining a Social Security Number

Everyone who works in the United States must be employment authorized by the USCIS.

1. What is a Social Security Number?

Each individual receives a unique Social Security Number. It is against the law for anyone else to use your Social Security Number. A social security number is a nine-digit number that appears like this: 000-00-0000.

If you are a refugee, you can visit the Social Security Administration office immediately upon your arrival and apply for your Social Security Number. If you are an asylum seeker, you will first need to obtain your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) before you can apply for your Social Security Number. If you are an asylee—you can bring the official letter granting asylum and the new I-94 card from the BCIS to the Social Security Office to receive your social security number or to get your updated unrestricted social security card.

2. Why is it necessary for you to have a Social Security Number?

An employer is required to have each employee fill out what is called a “**W-2 Form**” where your social security number or a Taxpayer’s Identity Number (TIN) is required. The employer may make a copy of your Social Security Number for their records.

Every employer must report the earnings of each employee to the Social Security Administration. These earnings are subject to Social Security tax without regard to the citizenship or place of residence of either the employer or the employee. Participation in the Social Security program is mandatory with respect to the payment of Social Security taxes. Unless specifically exempt by law, everyone working in the United States is required to pay Social Security taxes on earnings from employment.

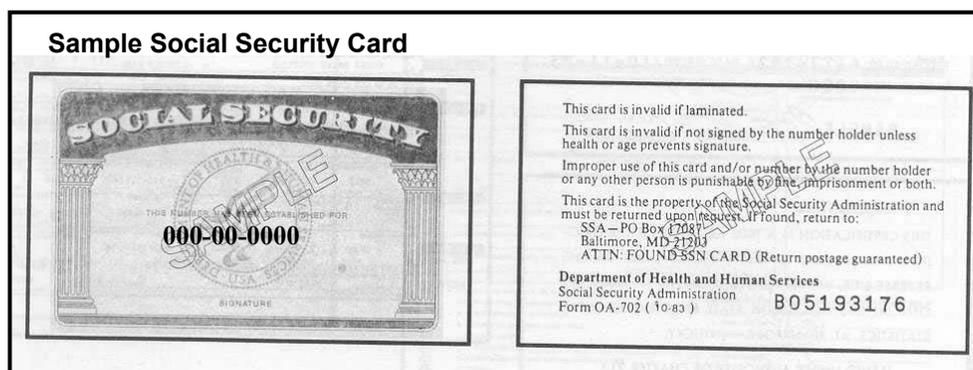
3. How do you apply for a Social Security Number?

You will need to present yourself and bring your original documents to the Social Security Administration office. You can call 1-800-325-0778 to ask for the location nearest

to you and the hours of service. Offices are closed on weekends and holidays. There are Social Security Administration offices in the following cities in Minnesota: Alexandria, Austin, Bemidji, Brainerd, Brooklyn Center, Duluth, Edina, Fairmont, *Fergus Falls*, Hibbing, Mankato, Marshall, Minneapolis, Rochester, St. Cloud, St. Paul and Winona. Please see the resources section for the addresses.

You will need to fill out “**FORM SS-5, Application for a Social Security Card.**” You can obtain this form when you go to the Social Security Administration office. You can have the form mailed to you by calling 1-800-772-1213 so you can fill out the form before you go to the Social Security Administration office. Do not mail this form with your documents. Take your application and original documents to the Social Security Administration office.

You will present your completed application **Form SS-5** along with any ONE of the following documents. (NOTE: You cannot present a photocopy; you must present the original document.)



- I-94 (Arrival-Departure Card)
- EAD (Employment Authorization Document)
- Permanent Resident Card
- NOTE: For asylees, you may present your official letter granting asylum AND the new I-94 card issued by the BCIS

You will receive your Social Security Number by mail in approximately one week from the date you presented your application and identification document to the Social Security Office. . It is a good idea to make a photocopy of your Social Security Card in case it gets lost or stolen. Be sure that you report a lost or stolen card immediately to the Social Security Administration.

For information or questions call the Social Security Administration at **1-800-772-1213**.

NOTE: An employer is required to have each employee fill out what is called an “I-9 Form” (Employment Verification Form). You will need to include your social security number, your Alien Number and the date of expiration for your Employment Authorization Document (EAD).

Section 1: To be completed by the EMPLOYEE

STEP 1
Fill in the personal information.

STEP 2
Check the box for work eligibility. Fill in other information if applicable.

STEP 3
Read, sign, and date.

STEP 4
(Preparer/Translator only)
Read, fill in information, sign, and date.

**Sample I-9 Form
(Employment Eligibility Verification)**

OMB No. 1115-0136
Employment Eligibility Verification

Please read instructions carefully before completing this form. The instructions must be available during completion of this form. **ANTI-DISCRIMINATION NOTICE.** It is illegal to discriminate against work eligible individuals. Employers **CANNOT** specify which document(s) they will accept from an employee. The refusal to hire an individual because of a future expiration date may also constitute illegal discrimination.

Section 1. Employee Information and Verification. To be completed and signed by employee at the time employment begins

Print Name: Last <i>Swenson</i>	First <i>Inga</i>	Middle Initial <i>N</i>	Maiden Name <i>N/A</i>
Address (Street Name and Number) <i>213 Cambridge</i>		Apt. #	Date of Birth (month/day/year) <i>3/12/64</i>
City <i>Potomac, Md.</i>		State <i>Md.</i>	Zip Code <i>01213</i>
Social Security # <i>211 99 7016</i>		I attest, under penalty of perjury, that I am (check one of the following):	
<input type="checkbox"/> A citizen or national of the United States <input type="checkbox"/> A Lawful Permanent Resident (Alien # A) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> An alien authorized to work until <i>9/11/98</i> <small>(Alien # or Admission # <i>80 145 02386</i>)</small>		Date (month/day/year) <i>9/11/91</i>	

I am aware that federal law provides for imprisonment and/or fines for false statements or use of false documents in connection with the completion of this form.

Employee's Signature
Inga Swenson

Preparer and/or Translator Certification. (To be completed and signed if Section 1 is prepared by a person other than the employee.) I attest, under penalty of perjury, that I have assisted in the completion of this form and that to the best of my knowledge the information is true and correct.

Preparer's/Translator's Signature _____ Print Name _____
Address (Street Name and Number, City, State, Zip Code) _____ Date (month/day/year) _____

Step FOUR: Preparing to find a job

The process of finding a job in a new country can be overwhelming and cause anxiety. Many parts of the process may be very different from your past experiences and can at times be confusing and frustrating. Don't hesitate to ask people to explain things that may not make any sense to you. Your comments and questions can help us to develop better ways to assist other newly arriving people to Minnesota understand the process of finding and keeping a job.

You can speed up your job search by doing some activities that will prepare you for finding a job. Take some time to think about the kind of job you want to find here in the United States. People don't usually find their ideal job on the first try. However, that doesn't mean you won't ever get the kind of job you want. You may need additional education, training or need to develop some work experience here in the United States before you are able to attain the job you really want. Most people start in what is called "entry level positions." As you show employers your skills, dependability, willingness and ability to learn and master new skills and tasks, you can work your way to a job with increased wages, benefits and satisfaction for you. If you take some time to think about the kinds of jobs that appeal to you, this will help you to look for jobs and employers that provide experiences and training that will provide steps to reaching your goal.

Creating a resumé

The Center for Victims of Torture: **Finding & Keeping a Job**

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1. What is a resumé?

A resumé is a document that lists your work experiences. You can list both your formal or paid work experience as well as your informal or non-paid work experience. For example, your formal work experience may have included working in a business back home where you were given a salary. Informal or unpaid work can include work you did for your family's small business or farm. You may not have received a regular salary or wage but you did perform work and develop skills that contributed to your family income. It is very helpful to think of specific skills and experiences you gained in your home country. Think of the tasks you did in order to accomplish your work. List these whether you were paid for your labor or not.

2. Why is it helpful to prepare a resumé?

Employers will require you to fill out an **application form** to be considered for the job they are offering. If you take time to prepare your resumé, you have already compiled all the information you need to fill out such application forms. You will still need to fill out the entire form but you may be able to attach your resumé to the application form. You will be asked to sign the application form. Your signature indicates that what you have written on the form is true.

3. What should be included in a resumé?

- You can make copies of the full size Resumé Worksheet that is included in this information to help you practice and develop your resumé.
- Be sure you include your full name, your address and telephone number where you can be reached.
- Take time to think about the kinds of work you did back in your home country—both formal and informal kinds of work. It might be helpful to talk with a social worker, job counselor or a friend to help you make a list of jobs or activities that you have done in the past.
- If you have had formal work experience. List these jobs starting with your most recent experience and working back in time. Write about what skills and experiences you gained by doing that work. Then include a list of other skills you have gained through your informal work experience.
- If all of your work experience has been gained through informal work experience, write about these skills and experiences. This will give the employer an idea of what kind of worker you are.

RESUME WORKSHEET	
NAME ADDRESS CITY, STATE, ZIP PHONE NUMBER	
OBJECTIVE	
QUALIFICATIONS	
WORK HISTORY	
Name of company	_____
Dates of employment	_____ to _____
Job Title	_____
Duties of job	_____
Name of company	
Dates of employment	_____ to _____
Job Title	_____
Duties of job	_____
Name of company	
Dates of employment	_____ to _____
Job Title	_____
Duties of job	_____
EDUCATION	
REFERENCES	Available upon request

Step FIVE: Searching for a job

Once you have your resumé completed, you are now ready to look for a job. There are many sources for finding a job. The following places provide some ideas of where you can begin your job search.

- Family and friends—people you know hear about a job opening and pass along this information to you. These can be very helpful sources in finding your first job.
- Newspapers—have a “CLASSIFIED” section where employment opportunities are listed. These are useful for getting an idea of the kinds of jobs that are available. The ads are arranged in alphabetical order by industry or job type. For example, “Education” will list jobs for teachers; “General Service” will list jobs for hotel housekeeping, maintenance, drivers, etc.
- Job Hotlines—some large organizations have a job hotline that provides up-to-date information on available jobs.
- Job Fairs—this is a good way to meet a number of potential employers at the same time, pick up information about organizations and agencies and to introduce yourself to them.
- Employment counselors—these are people who specialize in helping people to find jobs. If you enroll in certain kinds of training programs, the program will include someone who helps you to find a job using the skills you just developed. If you have received your asylum granted letter within the last 30 days, you may enroll in programs that help you to obtain an entry-level job.
- Work Force Centers: The State of Minnesota has set up Work Force Centers throughout the state to assist people looking for work. These centers offer a wide variety of services free of charge or at a very low cost. You would be eligible for these services when you get your EAD. The State of Minnesota Work Force Center has a special web site: <http://www.mnworkforcecenter.org/> that provides up-to-date job listings. (See the Additional Resources section for the list of Work Force Centers in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.)
- Web sites—in our new computer age there are web sites dedicated to advertising jobs. Companies and organizations that have their own web site will often list the jobs available in their company.
- Train to work programs—there are a number of employers that offer opportunities for you to get paid while you are training for the job. For example: Fairview-University Hospital offers nursing assistant training programs two to three times a year for those who pass a basic English comprehensive evaluation. Abbott-Northwestern Hospital also has a train to work program for a wide variety of jobs within the hospital.
- Temporary Agencies—these agencies hire individuals to work on a temporary basis with employers. These agencies give the employee a chance to test different jobs and at the same, time gives the employer a chance to see how an employee might fit into the job and workplace.

Applying for the job

- Select and apply for a number of job possibilities at the same time. It is considered normal job seeking for people to interview at five or more jobs and consider several job offers at the same time. Applying for a number of jobs at the same time increases your opportunities of being offered a job.
 - Even with applying for many jobs at the same time, the process can still take time. Don't get discouraged if you don't get a job right away. If you've been looking for some time already, you may

need to review your resumé to be sure that the job skills and experiences you are listing are appropriate for the jobs for which you are applying.

- Many jobs require an online application so you may need to know how to use a computer for this.

Sample Application Form

Employment			
<small>(Please give an accurate, full-time and part-time employment record. Start with your present or most recent employer.)</small>			
Employer	Telephone		
Address			
Supervisor's Name and Title			
Weekly Rate	Employment (Month/Year)		
Starting	Final	From	To
Describe the work you did (include skills that you could apply)			
Explain your reasons for leaving:			
May we contact this employer? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If not, why not?			

Education			
High School	Name and Address		
Years Completed	Did You Graduate?	Course of Study	Degree Earned
1 2 3 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
College/Vocational	Name and Address		
Years	Did You	Course of Study	Degree Earned
1 2 3 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Other	Name and Address		
Years Completed	Did You Graduate?	Course of Study	Degree Earned
1 2 3 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Have you completed any other courses or training programs that would impact your work at Caribou?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, please explain: -			

APPLICATION FORMS

Take your time when filling out the application form for the job to make your writing clear and accurate. Generally, employers will have their own job application forms. The same general information is requested but the forms may look quite different. That is why it is helpful to have your resumé prepared ahead of time so you can easily find the information that is requested and you can transfer the information from your resumé to the application form. Even when you fill out the application form you may still attach your resumé. But you must actually sign the application form that acknowledges that what you have written is true.

- **Cover Letters** are important when you are sending your resumé through the mail to apply for a job from the newspaper or another source that requests you to contact the employer by mail. A cover letter goes along with your application form or resume. It explains why you are qualified and want this particular job. It gives you an opportunity to give important information about yourself that relates to this particular job.

Being interviewed for a job

Preparation will help you to be more comfortable with the interview process. It is helpful to take some time to practice with someone (your social worker, job counselor or a friend). This will also help you to be more relaxed and enhance your chances for success. Plan your travel to arrive in plenty of time for the interview. However, you should present yourself for the interview no more than 15 minutes early unless you need to fill out an

**SAMPLE
COVER LETTER**

November 17, 2000

Mr. Harry Anderson
Vice President
ABC Company
8765 Washburn Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55432

Dear Mr. Anderson:

Please find my resume enclosed. I would like to be considered for the Mechanic position which was advertised in the Star Tribune Sunday newspaper on November 12, 2000.

I have over 8 years of mechanic experience and have developed excellent skills in the area of auto repair. In looking over the advertisement for this position, my experience and education match your requirements. In addition, I consider myself to be a hard worker, dependable and dedicated to doing an excellent job.

I would like to meet with you to further discuss my skills and qualifications. I can be reached at (612)999-9999.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Paul Rasmussen

application form. Then arrive early enough to give yourself plenty of time to fill out the form.

Begin by gathering all information and documents you may need for the interview.

- Bring extra copies of your resumé
- Bring your proof of employment (e.g., Driver's License and Social Security Card or your EAD and Social Security Number)
- Bring a typed list of references and letters of recommendation
- If you have copies of school transcripts, licenses and/or certifications that are important for the position, these are also helpful to bring with you.
- Bring a pen and pad of paper for taking notes for yourself so if an employer asks for any additional information, you will remember what will need to be sent after you leave the interview.

Take some time before the interview to think about how your past experiences and skills fit the job and your motivation to be hired by that employer. Generally, the person who will be interviewing you will ask you questions about yourself, your qualifications, your experience, your skills and your motivation and reason for wanting the job. Remember that the interview gives you an opportunity to tell an employer why you are the right person for the job.

Take your time in responding to the questions being asked. Express a positive attitude and show that you are willing to work, eager to learn, and are flexible. If you are unsure what the person is asking you, do not be afraid to ask for further explanations so the question is clear to you.

In the United States the job interviewer expects you to ask questions as a sign of interest in the job. The job interviewer also expects you to tell them why you believe you are qualified for the job. In some countries, this kind of behavior is seen as rude but in the United States this is what is expected of you.

SOME QUESTIONS THAT YOU MAY BE ASKED DURING INTERVIEWS:

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Why do you want this job? Or why does this job interest you?
- What motivates you?
- What aspect of this job interests you most?
- What aspect of this job interests you the least?
- Do you have any questions for me? (Questions you have for the person interviewing you.)

Step SIX: Keeping a Job

Being hired for a job is just the beginning. There will always be new and unique things to learn about each job. At each new job, don't hesitate to ask for clear instructions from your boss or supervisor if you are confused or need help.

Effects of Torture and War

Refugees and asylum seekers have suffered greatly because of the conflicts and wars in their homelands. Many were victims of brutal actions by police, armies, clans, and gangs. There are refugees and asylum seekers who continue to suffer because of these experiences they did not deserve. They feel pain in their bodies or act differently than they did before these horrible things that happened to them. These can make it difficult for you to have energy and attention for working and keeping a job.

If you had harmful things done to you during periods of conflict and war in your homeland, you may now have problems with sleeping or eating or with the way you feel. You may:

- Have bad dreams at night or have trouble sleeping
- Lose or gain weight

- Feel sad or angry or without hope
- Be forgetful or not be able to pay attention
- Feel as if you cannot control your thoughts and memories

These things that are happening to you are normal. They do not mean you are going “crazy” or have a permanent mental illness. Everyone has one of these problems sometime. But if you have two or three of these problems, or have even one that gives you trouble and makes it hard to get through the day, tell someone so that you may receive help. In the United States, there is help for people who are having problems because of bad things that happened to them in the past.

If you have some of these problems, you can talk to a community worker, medical worker, or friends to help you find the resources you need. There are things you can do to help yourself get better. It is important to take care of your health. It is good to have regular medical examinations, to eat regularly, and to get enough sleep. Regular physical exercise helps to relieve stress. Reduce and/or control how much alcohol you drink. Allow time for your recovery. Be patient with yourself. You have survived a lot of suffering and you deserve to have help so that you feel better.

Job Orientation

Most employers will provide a job orientation in the first days of starting your new job. The orientation will usually include instructions for how to do your job, what the employer will be expecting of you to accomplish each work day, and what benefits you are entitled to with your job. This can be a very stressful and overwhelming time because of all the new information you are trying to learn in a very short time. You may be given written materials that you can review. You may want to share these with your social worker, job counselor or a friend to help you to understand all the requirements and benefits associated with your new job.

Probationary Period

Usually jobs have a probationary period. This means that it's a period of time where both you and your employer are testing to see if you are the right person for the job. This probationary period usually ranges between 30 and 90 days. During this time, an employer can decide that you are not the right person for the job. An employer might make that decision if you are late for work a number of times or often call in sick or if you are not able to master the job for which you've been hired in that period of time. During this time period, an employer has the right to decide that you are not the right person for the job without giving you any specific reason. Sometimes, if you pass the probationary period, there may be an increase in pay associated with becoming a regular employee. This information should be given to you during the initial orientation period of your new job. If you are terminated (asked to leave) from your job after the probationary period the employer must give a truthful reason for your termination within five days of receiving **a written request from you**. You must make the request to your employer within five days of termination. Otherwise, notice of termination is not required by law, you or the employer can decide to end the employment arrangement.

Typical Employer Expectations

- Be on time for work
- Have a good attitude
- Ask questions to understand your job
 - Do your work
 - Work hard at your job
- Get along with co-workers
- Be courteous to others
- Do not disrespect others
 - Dress appropriately
 - Follow safety rules
- Make personal phone calls only during your work break
- Stay at work and keep working until it is time for break or to leave for the day

If you feel you have been treated unfairly, you may contact the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, Labor Standards Unit at 651-284-5005 or 1-800-342-5354 or use the website at <http://www.doli.state.mn.us> to get more information about minimum wages, safety standards, work related injuries, final paychecks and unused vacation, etc.

Time and punctuality

New immigrants to the United States often comment about how difficult and confusing it can be to adjust to “American time.” Especially in entry-level jobs “American time” is very strict. These are often the jobs first available to newly arrived immigrants, refugees and asylees. “American time” does not allow for being late to work and often discourages taking time for building relationships with and among co-workers during working hours. For example, if you are asked to report to work at 8:00 in the morning, your employer will expect you to be present and beginning your job exactly at 8:00 in the morning. There may be a specific number of times you are allowed to be late. If you exceed the number allowed you will lose the job.

Working Hours

Be sure to ask your employer what hours you are expected to be at work. Some positions may require you to work early morning hours, afternoon to evening hours and some work shifts require you to work overnight. If you do not want to work certain hours of the day or night, you can limit your job search for only those jobs that meet your requirements. There are also jobs that offer or even require “overtime” work. You are entitled to overtime pay (your hourly wage plus ½ of your hourly wage) if you work more than 48 hours per week. If you are interested in working extra hours to earn extra income, let your employer know of your willingness to do more work. Although Minnesota law does not require an employer to give any specific amount of time for breaks, employers are required by law to allow an employee to use the nearest restroom facility once every four hours, and sufficient time to eat a meal once every eight hours. Generally this information will be provided during the orientation to your new job.

Taking Time-Off from Work (Sick Leave and Vacation Time)

Employers will usually tell you during the initial job orientation about the process for requesting time-off from work. There are a number of common types of time-off that include the following.

Sick Leave: If you are too ill to go to work, you will need to call your workplace and inform your supervisor or the person who has been designated by your employer to receive such calls. It is important that you notify your employer that you are sick and do not intend to go to work. Your employer is depending on you and the work you provide. Your employer may need to find someone to replace you for the day to meet the demands of the workplace commitments. If you are sick for more than a couple of days, you may be required by your employer to have written documentation by your doctor stating the nature of your illness.

Vacation Time: Many jobs in the United States give a basic benefit of two weeks of vacation per year. However, there may be requirements about how many months you must work before you can take vacation time.

Emergency Leave: Some employers may also give other types of emergency leave to their employees. This might include time off for family health emergencies or a death in the family.

Other Time Off: You are also entitled to take time off for personal reasons if you have available vacation or sick leave time. Talk with your employer when you feel you need to take time off.

Wages & Benefits

By the time you start your new job, your employer should have made clear what your hourly wage or salary will be. If you are working in a wage per hour job, you are entitled to overtime benefits. If you are working in a salaried position, you are usually guaranteed a monthly salary and overtime hours will likely be uncompensated. If it is unclear to you whether you are an hourly or salaried employee, be sure that you ask your employer during the orientation period to explain your wage or salary compensation. In addition, the employer will provide you with information about the other benefits that you are entitled to through your employer. The types of benefits can vary greatly among employers. Some employers offer health and/or dental insurance and some offer retirement benefits through company and/or individual contributions. This

can be confusing to understand. Don't hesitate to ask questions of your employer, social worker or others that can provide you with more information.

Understanding Your Paycheck

Understanding your paycheck will help you to plan and budget your spending when you know that there will be standard deductions taken from your paycheck each month. When you get your first paycheck, you may not understand everything about it.

1	Employee ID	2	Employee Name	3	Date	6	Vacation	7	Sick	4	Social Sec. No.	5	Start Period	End Period
			YOUR Name		2/15/01		20.25		8		123-12-1234		2/1/01	2/15/01
8	Earnings			Taxes 9			Deductions 10			Year-to-Date 11				
	Rate	Hours	Amount											
	9.5	80	\$ 760.00							\$15,960.00				
				FICA										
				Med.			\$ 11.40				\$ 239.40			
				S.S.			\$ 49.40				\$ 1,037.40			
				Federal			\$114.00				\$ 2,394.00			
				State MN			\$ 30.40				\$ 638.40			
							Medical			\$ 55.25	\$ 1,160.25			
							Dental			\$ 11.02	\$ 231.42			
12										\$ 66.27				
	TOTAL									\$ 760.00				
											13	NET PAY	\$ 488.53	

New workers often think that they have not received the full amount that they are entitled to from the number of hours they worked. Mistakes can and do occur so look at your paycheck carefully. But more often, new workers may not understand all the deductions that are required to be taken from your paycheck. An example is provided that can help you to understand your own paycheck. Your paycheck may look different from the example but it should still have the basic information that is listed by numbers to make it easier to find. Don't hesitate to ask your social worker, employment counselor or friend to help you understand your paycheck.

- 1 **Employee ID:** Usually you will be given an employee number. Sometimes this number is also your social security number.
- 2 **Employee Name:** This ensures that this is in fact your paycheck.
- 3 **Date:** This indicates the date that the check was issued.
- 4 **Start period:** This indicates the first day of the pay period. Usually this will be the first day of the month or the 16th day of the month. Most places of employment issue pay checks at least two times per month. Some employers will issue the paychecks every two weeks.
- 5 **End period:** This indicates the last day of the pay period. Usually this will be the 15th or very last day of the month or two weeks after the "start period."
- 6 **Vacation:** In the example provided, this employee has accumulated 20.2 hours of vacation time. Depending upon the vacation policy, this employee may or may not be able to use the vacation hours that have accumulated so far.

- 7 **Sick:** In the example provided, this employee has accumulated 8 hours of sick leave time. Depending upon the sick leave policy, this employee may or may not be able to use the sick leave hours that have accumulated so far.
- 8 **Earnings:** There are a number of items under this category.
- **RATE:** The rate refers to how much you make per hour. In the example provided, the employee earns \$9.50 per hour.
 - **HOURS:** This indicates how many hours were worked during this pay period. In the example provided, the employee worked 80 hours in this pay period.
 - **AMOUNT:** The gross wage earned by this employee in the example provided is \$760.00.
- 9 **Taxes:** Your employer must take from your paycheck a number of deductions for taxes.
- **Med.:** This is the Medicare tax that every worker must pay.
 - **S.S.:** This is the Social Security tax that every worker must pay.
 - **Federal:** This is the federal income tax that every worker must pay.
 - **State MN:** This is the Minnesota State tax that every worker must pay.
 - For questions about your withholding taxes call the Minnesota Department of Revenue: 1-800-657-3594. For general questions about your Minnesota taxes call: 1-800-652-9094. For questions about your Federal taxes call the Internal Revenue Service: 1-800-829-1040.
- 10 **Deductions:** There may also be additional deductions that your employer must make from your paycheck. In the example provided, this employee has deductions taken from each paycheck for medical and dental insurance. Some employers offer medical and dental plans but usually the employee pays a portion of the premium costs.

NOTE: If you have been receiving General Assistance Medical Care (GAMC) or Medical Assistance (MA), you may become ineligible for GAMC or MA due to your level of income. Inquire with employer about the health care options that may be available to you or ask your county worker if you are eligible for another Minnesota Care plan or contact Minnesota Care at 651-297-3862 for more information.

- 11 **Year-to-Date:** This tells you how much you earned up to the present date. It also tells you the amount for each category of taxes and deductions that have accumulated up to the current date.
- 12 **TOTAL:** This area tells you the total amounts from each category listed in the example provided.
- 13 **NET PAY:** This is the amount of your take home pay for this pay period. As you can see, there is a difference between the gross pay and the net pay. Plan your monthly spending budget based on your NET PAY because this is the amount you actually receive.

Job Evaluations

You may first hear about job evaluations during orientation to your new job. Employers may have different time periods for conducting job evaluations. Some will give you an evaluation to move you from your probationary period to a regular employee. You may get another evaluation after six (6) months on the job. Other employers wait until you have been in your job for one (1) year or if you are being moved to a different position or offered a promotion. You may be entitled to an automatic wage and benefit increase after a certain period of time on the job. Or you may need to go through a job evaluation before your supervisor can recommend a wage increase for you. In either case, you may need to request that the increase take effect or request the job evaluation so your supervisor can recognize your efforts with an increase in your wages. This is often a very uncomfortable situation for people who have newly arrived to the United States. It can be helpful to practice with someone before you go to your supervisor with your request. Take some time to think about your contributions to your place of employment. These can include your reliability and willingness to take on new tasks, learning new skills and responsibilities. Be prepared to talk about these kinds of things during your job evaluation.

Conflict Resolution: Supervisors, co-workers, and grievance procedures

There may be times on the job when you have difficulties with other co-workers. If you feel you cannot resolve the issue with the co-worker directly in a respectful, peaceful manner, then talk with your supervisor about the issue. Discuss with your supervisor possible options for resolving the issue or problem and do your best to follow through on your part. If the issue or problem with your co-worker still remains a problem, talk with your supervisor about options that might transfer you to another work shift or department. If you are having difficulties with your supervisor, you may need to look back at your initial orientation materials to find out the steps for the grievance procedure at your workplace. If there is a personnel department they could provide this information. If there is a union at your workplace, the union steward would be able to give you this information. If you are still unsure about how to proceed, contact the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry Investigative Services at 651-297-5797.

Worker's Rights: Laws regarding the right to organize, and laws about discrimination, sexual harassment, and other concerns.

There are laws that ensure worker's rights in the United States. Employees have the right to organize and be represented by a union to ensure fair treatment and compensation. In addition, employers cannot discriminate against you based on your age, gender, race, nationality, religion, sexual preference or due to some disabilities. There are also laws against sexual harassment. If you feel that you are being harassed or pressured in ways that feel sexual to you, you have the right to make a complaint. If the person is other than your supervisor, go immediately to your supervisor to inform them about the situation. If the person is your supervisor, follow the grievance procedure for your workplace. If you feel you do not know how to proceed, you can call the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry for advice: 1-800-342-5354. If you feel you have been treated unfairly in any way, you may make a complaint with the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry Investigative Services: Discrimination and Sexual Harassment: 651-297-5797; Work Related Injuries: 651-284-5005; Unemployment Benefits: 651-297-2177; and Income Tax Withholding: 651-644-7515.

If you are a refugee or asylee and the employer questions the work eligibility documents you present, either you or the employer can contact the Office of Special Council at 202-616-5594.

Step SEVEN: When You Choose to Leave a Job

You will be very fortunate if the first job you get in the United States is the job that best suits you and meets your needs and goals for years to come. With each new job you will have the opportunity to learn more skills and gain greater experience in the working world of the United States. An important part of that experience is learning how to leave your current job for another job opportunity. Each employer becomes a reference source for you. Other employers will look more favorably upon your application if your previous employer or employers are happy to provide you with a positive letter of reference.

Giving your employer notice when you want to leave a job

You do not need to inform your present employer that you are currently interested in seeking another job. You have every right to pursue new work opportunities that provide you with advancement, better wages and benefits that meet your own personal goals. However, whenever possible, once you have decided to leave your current job, it is important to give your present employer advance warning of when you plan to leave your current job. It is helpful to provide this information in a written notice so there is no misunderstanding about the last day you intend to work. Keep a copy of this letter for your records.

In order to retain good faith and relations with your present employer, plan to notify your employer at least two (2) weeks before the last day you intend to report to work. Some employers state that they prefer thirty (30) days notice to give them enough time to find someone to replace you. If your current job provides vacation benefits, you may be required to give a certain number of days notice in order to receive the unused vacation leave. If you leave your current job without giving notice and just don't show up for work anymore, your employer will most likely not give you a favorable reference in the future. Giving your current

employer notice regarding the last day you intend to come to work shows respect for your employer and their needs. You may not need their good reference for the job you are moving to but in the future, their reference could be very helpful in gaining another job opportunity.

Asking for a letter of reference

Arrange a time to meet with your supervisor when you can present your written notice of termination. If you feel you have gained anything from this place of employment, take the time to thank your supervisor for the opportunities you feel you have been given. This is also a good time to ask your supervisor if he or she will write you a letter of recommendation that you can keep for future job applications.

Additional Resources

Social Security Administration Offices: Website: <http://www.ssa.gov>

1103 Broadway Alexandria, MN 56308-2529	400 First Bank Place 130 West Superior St., Suite 400 Duluth, MN 55802	507 Jewett Street Marshall, MN 56258-2076
404 2 nd Street NW Austin, MN 55912-3010	5212 Edina Industrial Blvd. Edina, MN 55439	1811 Chicago Avenue Minneapolis, MN 55404-1998
2900 Hannah Ave. NW Bemidji, MN 56601-2900	456 S. State Street Fairmont, MN 56031-4047 1023 W. Lincoln Ave. Fergus Falls, MN 56537	401 16 th Avenue NW, Suite 104 Rochester, MN 55901-1854
8331 Brandon Rd. Baxter, MN 56425	990 W 41 st Street, Suite 69 Hibbing, MN 55426-2200	3800 8 th Street N., Ste. 100 St. Cloud, MN 56301-3500
3280 Northway Dr. Brooklyn Center, MN 55429-3063	1550 Mankato Place 12 Civic Center Plaza Mankato, MN 56001-3616	190 5 th St. East, Ste. 800 St. Paul, MN 55101-1483
Social Security Administration Number: 1-800-772-1213		53 East 3 rd Street, Suite 307 Winona, MN 55987

Work Force Centers in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area

If you have already obtained your EAD and Social Security Number you can use the services at the Minnesota Work Force Centers. The State of Minnesota Work Force Center has a special web site: <http://www.mnworkforcecenter.org/> that provides up-to-date job listings and other Work Force Center locations in Minnesota.

<p><u>Ramsey County</u></p> <p>City of St. Paul <i>540 Fairview Avenue North St. Paul, 55104 Telephone: 651-642-0363</i></p> <p>North St. Paul <i>McKnight 36 Plaza 2098 11th Ave. East North St. Paul, 55109 Telephone: 651-779-5666</i></p>	<p><u>Hennepin County</u></p> <p>City of Minneapolis</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1200 Plymouth Avenue N. Minneapolis, 55411 Telephone: 612-520-3500 2. 777 East Lake Street Minneapolis, 55407 Telephone: 612-821-4000
<p><u>Hennepin County North</u></p> <p>City of Brooklyn Park 7115 Northland Terrace, Suite 100 Brooklyn Park, 55428 Telephone: 612-536-6000</p>	<p><u>Hennepin County South</u></p> <p>City of Bloomington 4220 West Old Shakopee Road Bloomington, 55437 Telephone: 612-346-4000</p>
<p><u>Anoka County</u></p> <p>City of Blaine Anoka County Human Service Building 1201 89th Avenue N.E., Blaine, 55434 Telephone: 612-783-4800</p>	<p><u>Dakota County</u></p> <p>City of West St. Paul <i>1 Mendota Road West, Ste. 170 West St. Paul, 55118 Telephone: 651-554-5955</i></p>
<p><u>Dakota County</u></p> <p>City of Burnsville <i>SouthCross Commons Center IV 2900 West County Rd. 42, Ste. 140 Burnsville 55337 Telephone: 952-895-7600</i></p> <p><u>Washington County</u></p> <p><i>2150 Radio Drive Woodbury, 55125 Telephone: 651-275-8650</i></p>	<p><u>Scott County</u></p> <p><i>752 Canterbury Road South Shakopee, 55379 Telephone: 952-445-7087</i></p> <p>For more information about the Minnesota Work Force Centers listed above as well as others located in other areas of Minnesota and the services they offer, call this toll free number: 1-888-438-5627</p>

Additional Websites that may be helpful in your job search:

Job websites: www.careerbuilder.com (career jobs); www.tempforce.com (temporary jobs)

Hospital employment opportunities: www.regionshospital.com; www.fairview.org; www.allina.com; www.hire-power.com

Transportation assistance: MetroTransit 612-341-4287 or www.metrotransit.org

Additional Sample Documents

Practice Sample Resumé Worksheet (Make copies of this sheet to practice)

Your Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

OBJECTIVE

QUALIFICATIONS

WORK HISTORY

Name of company _____

Dates of employment _____ to _____

Job Title _____

Duties of job _____

Name of company _____

Dates of employment _____ to _____

Job Title _____

Duties of job _____

Name of company _____

Dates of employment _____ to _____

Job Title _____

Duties of job _____

EDUCATION

REFERENCES: Available upon request

(Note: Prepare a list of people to provide to employers when you interview for a job.)

Additional Questions that might be asked on a job application forms (copy forms to practice)

Have you applied at (company name) before? Yes No If yes, when:

How did you hear about employment opportunities at (company name)?

Are you acquainted with anyone who is or was employed by (company name)? Yes No
If yes, who:

Is there any work you will not perform? Yes No If yes, please explain: _____

If hired at (company name) can you furnish proof that you are eligible to work in the United States?
 Yes No If no, please explain: _____

If hired at (company name) are you prepared to provide your medical history and take a physical exam,
including a drug and alcohol screening? Yes No If no, please explain: _____

Have you ever been convicted of a crime? (Do not list traffic violations)
 Yes No If yes, please explain: _____

What type of position are you applying for?

Full time (36 hours or more per week)
 Part time (less than 36 hours per week)

What date could you start? _____

When would you like to work?

Mornings Days Evenings Nights Weekends

Are you willing to travel? Yes No

Are you willing to relocate? Yes No

What unique qualifications, skills, experience or interests do you bring to (company name)?

Why would you like to work for (company name)?

Have you completed any other courses or training programs that would be helpful in your work at (company name)?

Yes No If yes, please explain the type of courses or training programs.

PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES (If not previously employed, personal references)

Name/Title _____ Telephone _____
Organization _____ Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
Association with You (How does this person know you)

Name/Title _____ Telephone _____
Organization _____ Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
Association with You (How does this person know you)

Name/Title _____ Telephone _____
Organization _____ Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
Association with You (How does this person know you)

EMPLOYMENT (Please give an accurate, full-time and part-time employment record. Start with your present or most recent employer. Make as many copies of this sheet as you need to list all your employers.)

Employer _____ Telephone _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
Supervisor's Name and Title _____

Weekly Pay Rate _____ Employment (Month/Year) _____
Starting rate _____ Final rate _____ Starting date _____ to _____

Describe the work you did (Include skills that you could apply at this company)

Explain your reasons for leaving the job:

May we contact this employer? _____ Yes _____ No

If no, why not?

Employer _____ Telephone _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
Supervisor's Name and Title _____

Weekly Pay Rate _____ Employment (Month/Year) _____
Starting rate _____ Final rate _____ Starting date _____ to _____

Describe the work you did (Include skills that you could apply at this company)

Explain your reasons for leaving the job:

May we contact this employer? _____ Yes _____ No

If no, why not?
