

Ten Steps to Completing a Successful Application Form

1. Be prepared and look professional.

When you go out to pick up the application forms, look your best. Bring along a notebook or pad of paper, plus a pen. You should keep track of every employer you visit and every employee you speak with. It'll help you remember if you don't hear back for a few weeks.

2. Smile and Be Polite

When you go into a place where you want to apply, ask if you can speak to a manager. Be very polite and speak clearly. If the manager doesn't want to be disturbed, then just direct your questions to the person you are already speaking with.

3. Ask for two application forms.

Again, be very polite and ask if you can have two application forms. You can say something like: "I'm interested in applying for a job here. Is there an application form?" If there is an application form, then say: "I'd like two copies if possible, please." If you can't get two copies, then photocopy the form before you begin to fill it out. That way you'll have one to practice on first.

4. Get as much information as possible.

Finding out more about the workplace will help you decide if this is the right job for you. If the person you're talking to seems friendly and isn't too busy, ask them about the position. You could ask if they know when they will be scheduling interviews, or how many hours they expect people to work. If they are busy, it is best to keep it short. Just make sure to get the name of the manager in charge of hiring.

5. Take the application form home and fill it out.

Do a thorough, very neat job. Make sure to get help from a friend or parent when filling out parts of the form.

6. Attach a resume and cover letter.

Even if the employer doesn't ask for a resume and cover letter, do them anyway. It will make you look more organized. Try to include in your cover letter any information you collected when you picked up the application.

7. Return the application directly to the person doing the hiring.

Before you return your application, call first. If you weren't able to find out the person's name that is doing the hiring, when you picked up your application, this is also a good time to find out. Handing in your application directly to the person doing the hiring will improve your chances of being chosen for an interview.

8. Remember the name of the person who took your application.

If the person in charge of hiring is not available, don't worry. Write down the name of the person who takes your application. Call back later or the next day to speak to the person doing the hiring and say: "I brought in my application yesterday and gave it to _____.
I just wanted to make sure you received."

9. Don't try too hard or annoy the manager.

If you're calling just to see whether or not they got your resume, try not to ask for any other information. Hopefully you already know when they're doing the hiring. If not, that should be the only other thing you ask at this point. Don't ask for details about the job. You don't want to bother them and hurt your chances.

10. Call back to check on your application a few days before they said they'd be interviewing.

It's okay to call the person you know is in charge of hiring just to say, "I just wanted to check on my application." It will be clear that you are interested and that you're organized enough to have kept track. This will give a great impression at the critical time when they are deciding who to interview.

Warning: If you are told "Don't call us, we'll call you if you are chosen for an interview," or something similar, don't call. Always follow the employer's instructions.

What questions should I ask when I'm handing in the application form?

Here are some good things to ask and say when you're handing in your application. When you first drop it off, you might say:

- "Hi, I'm _____. I'm dropping off my application for the _____ position that is available. Can I please speak to the person doing the hiring?"

If you manage to get introduced to the person doing the hiring, try asking some questions:

- "Can you tell me a little bit more about the position?"
- "Do you have any idea when you will be scheduling interviews?"

If you have an opportunity, tell them you are interested in the position:

- "As you'll be able to see from my application, I'm really interested in the position. This looks like a great place to work."

Always remember to dress nicely, smile, shake the manager's hand firmly, and confidently thank them:

- "I appreciate your taking a few moments to speak with me. I hope to hear from you soon."

What if they ask a question that I think is private or personal?

In Canada, there are laws that govern the relationship between you and your employer, and they take effect and begin to protect you even before you are hired, when you are applying for jobs. Although the laws differ from province to province, you always are guaranteed certain rights.

If you think an employer has asked you an unfair question on an application, call or visit the website of your province's ministry of labour and find out. You can find the phone number in the "blue pages" of your phone book or by doing a search on the internet. Know your rights!

Some applications just ask weird questions. If you come across a question that you think is irrelevant or strange, all you can do is try your best to answer it.

Do's and Don'ts of Application Forms

- ✓ Do take the form home and fill it in neatly in blue or black ink, with no spelling errors.
- ✓ Do have someone you trust look it over for you.
- ✓ Do attach a cover letter and resume.
- ✓ Do try to speak to the person doing the hiring whenever you can.
- ✓ Do dress well when you are handing in your application form.
- ✓ Do keep track of the places where you've applied.

- ✓ Don't ever lie on your application form.
- ✓ Don't leave any parts blank or questions unanswered.
- ✓ Don't write, "See attached resume." Always fill in the form in full.

