



YOUR GUIDE TO **EMPLOYMENT**

From Job Search to Job Success

IN THIS GUIDE:

- ✓ CAREER PLANNING
- ✓ RESUMES & COVER LETTERS
- ✓ JOB APPLICATIONS
- ✓ INTERVIEWING
- ✓ KEEPING YOUR JOB &
ADVANCING YOUR CAREER

Meeting Workforce Needs

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Introduction

You need a job or are looking for a new position. You feel that somewhere, some employer has precisely the job you want – one that fully utilizes your knowledge, skills, abilities, and accomplishments and provides challenges and opportunities for advancement.

A well-planned job search can help you find that job. You have value to add to the workforce – your knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience. You need to know how to market yourself effectively. Whether you are just starting a career or looking for a new position, the following topics contained in this guide can benefit you greatly.

- How to identify job opportunities that match your skills and interests
- How to write a resume that will land you an interview
- How to write a cover letter or letter of application that catches an employer's interest
- Where to go for information on job opportunities in your field
- How to present your qualifications effectively during a job interview
- How to plan your time and learn from your job interviews

Your job search success will depend in part on your attitude and enthusiasm. Give yourself credit for your good qualities and maintain a positive attitude during your job search. Take good care of yourself.

One of the most important decisions employers make is selecting the right person for a job. This decision impacts an employer's profitability, productivity, and customer service quality. They have considerable costs associated with hiring and training new employees. Therefore, they take their time to select the right people and not take chances on marginal applicants. Employers aim to find employees with the maximum number of skills for the wage being paid.

There are often more qualified applicants than there are job openings. This means that you do whatever you can to stand above the competition.

Turn to Job Service North Dakota for online and in-person resources available at no cost to you.

- Veterans' priority of service
- North Dakota's largest job listings database
- Knowledge about area employers
- Career planning
- Information on community resources
- Local, state, and national labor market information
- And more!

Planning Your Strategy

Since finding a job may be the hardest job you will ever have, you must make the best possible use of your time. Your job search is truly a full-time job. Check on job leads immediately – delays may hurt your chances.

The following suggestions will help you plan your time for an effective job search:

- Set goals for today, week, and month. Make a “to-do” list every day.
- Allow time for multiple interviews, tests, or other hiring procedures that may be required.
- Be on time and prepared for appointments.
- Follow up on leads immediately.
- Maintain a positive mental attitude during your job search.
- Keep a log of completed employer contacts, results and needed follow-up. This helps you stay organized and reminds you of loose ends. **Obtain a job search log at any Job Service North Dakota Workforce Center.**
- Create a master generic application and resume.
- Apply to several companies in the same area. This saves time and money.
- Keep your current job, if you are employed, until you have another job offer.
- Set goals for where you want to work two years from today.
- Identify what you want to do 10-15 years from today.

Know the Job Market

Job Service North Dakota is a reliable source of job information and employment trends both locally and nationally. You can gather information about wages, career possibilities, growing and declining occupations, and more through the Labor Market Information Center on jobsnd.com.

Sources for Job Leads and Labor Market Information

- Job Service North Dakota (www.jobsnd.com)
- Workforce Services
- Private employment agencies
- Office of Apprenticeship
- Online Resources
- North Dakota Labor Market Information (www.ndlmi.com)
- O*NET Online (www.onetonline.org)
- Networking & Community Resources
- Friends and family
- Former employers and coworkers
- Employers and human resources professionals
- Employees of companies that are hiring
- Teachers, instructors, and mentors
- Professional, civic, social, and volunteer organizations
- Religious or faith-based contacts
- Chamber of Commerce
- Labor unions

Note: Not all jobs are posted or advertised publicly. These jobs are commonly referred to as hidden jobs. Two effective methods of finding hidden jobs are networking (getting leads from people you know) and making cold contacts (applying directly to employers even if there is no advertised job opening).

Social Media Tips

Scrub social media: Remove yours and other posts that may contain foul language, and/or demonstrate poor judgement, or taste. Remove friends, videos, tags, or links that may be related to inappropriate topics.

Social vs Professional forums: Know when and where to post professional or social content. Look for networking or job-related groups or pages to like and join.

Monitor comments: When mixing social and professional social media, make sure you monitor who is commenting and what they are commenting.

Take it offline: Once communication is established between a job posting or business, take it to a private message or maybe even a phone call. Networking gives a giant net of opportunity, but everyone else on the internet will also have access to that net.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Your Job Search

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools have become increasingly common in the job search process. Job seekers can use AI to help generate ideas, improve written materials, prepare for interviews, and research employers. However, AI should be used as a tool to support your job search – not replace your own knowledge, experience, and judgment.

Tips for Job Seekers

- Use AI to brainstorm ideas, not to fabricate experience or qualifications.
- Compare AI suggestions with information from trusted sources.
- Remember that employers value authenticity, honesty, and communication skills.
- Use AI to save time, but make sure your application reflects your unique experiences and strengths.

Remember: AI can help you present your qualifications effectively, but it cannot replace your knowledge, skills, experience, and personal interactions with employers.

Job Scams

A job scam is when a scammer poses as an employer or recruiter and offers attractive employment opportunities to take advantage of the job seeker by gaining your money and personal information.

Be on the lookout for jobs that:

- Are too good to be true.
- Willing to pay a lot more than what is common for the market.
- List all the great benefits and little on what the job is.
- You must pay money to get the job.
- Offers job without interview or you never applied for the job.
- Have a lot of grammatical or spelling errors in their communication.
- Want personal/confidential information before being hired.
- Want a quick response from you or you will not get the job.
- Wants you to cash checks or send personal money.
- They say they have found your resume and want to offer you a job, but don't say where or it is a site you have never posted your resume.
- Are using an email address that does not match the company or is from a free email site.

Check the Employer

You should take time to verify employers that you are not familiar with, this will help reduce the chances of falling for an employment scam. Here are a few things that you can use to verify an employer:

- **ND Secretary of State** (<https://firststop.sos.nd.gov/search/business>) – You can check that a company is registered with the state. If it is an out-of-state company, you can check with the Secretary of State in that state.
- **Better Business Bureau** (<https://www.bbb.org/>) – Check the ratings of an employer and check current employment scams.
- **Internet Search** – Research employers to see what is online about them.
- **Company Website** – Check the company website and look through the website to see if there is anything unusual. Make sure that all the sections of the website display and you do not get a lot of error messages.
- **Contact the Employer** – Look up and check the phone number provided. If it does not match the employer call and verify the individuals that work there.
- **Workforce Safety & Insurance (WSI)** (<https://www.workforcesafety.com/wsi/wsionlineservices/EmployerSearch.aspx>) – You can check that a company is current with the WSI.
- **Job Service North Dakota** (<http://www.jobsnd.com>) – Contact to see if we have verified the company.

Traits Employers Seek in Job Candidates

Before you begin your Personal Data Record, basic application, and/or resume, visualize how your qualities compare to traits that employers seek in potential employees.

- **Ability to communicate:** If you are unable to express your thoughts simply but precisely, using proper English, you will have a hard time interviewing.
- **Leadership:** Can you guide and direct others? Will others follow your lead? Companies want people with leadership capabilities. Followers are “a dime a dozen,” but true leaders are scarce.
- **Willingness to accept responsibility:** Be willing to do new things and accept responsibility for the results.
- **Self-confidence:** You need to demonstrate a sense of self-confidence and ability to handle all kinds of situations.
- **Initiative:** Do you wait to be told to do things, or do you start new tasks without being asked? If you fall into the latter category, you will be considered a corporate asset.
- **Energy level:** If you are the type of person who will put in whatever time it takes to get the job done, you are an ideal candidate.
- **Imagination:** Can you see inventive solutions to problems? If you can, you will be an asset to any growing company that hopes to dominate its industry.
- **Flexibility:** Can you adapt and adjust to changing situations?
- **Interpersonal skills:** Can you bring out the best in others?
- **Self-knowledge:** Can you assess your skills, strengths, weaknesses, and see yourself as others see you?
- **Ability to handle conflict:** Can you handle stressful, tense situations, and make them turn out well? Can you stay out of the interoffice squabbles?
- **Intelligence:** Can you understand the work at hand, and can you function as a productive employee? Reading, writing, and math skills are important for many types of job opportunities.
- **Technology:** Do you know current technology? Can you make it through the company online application?

Points to remember when completing online job applications:

- Remember your username and passwords, this allows you to go back and check status of your applications.
- Save as you go, this will reduce chances of timing out.
- Read each question and instruction carefully.
- Fill out all fields that have an asterisk.
- Print out a copy of resume to reference while completing the application.
- After uploading resume, verify information uploaded correctly.
- Use appropriate file names when uploading documents.
- Make sure what is on your resume is the same as the applications, such as dates of employment
- Check email regularly.
- Allow time for assessments that may follow the completion of the application, some may have time limits.
- Follow the format example for the fields, such as MM/DD/YYYY means 01/01/9999.
- Check for error messages indicated and typically found at the top of page or after the question.

Employers make judgments about your attitude, stability, and motivation based on the form. In addition, it reveals communication skills, which are important in any job. The employment application represents you to the employer – make it work.

Transferable Skills

Transferable skills are skills you have gained from previous jobs, projects, volunteer work, sports, home life, hobbies and interests that are not industry-specific and can be easily taken with you from one job to another. You may want to "translate" your skills in your resume into more broadly appealing language to best demonstrate your skills for employers.

LIBRARIAN TASKS	VS.	TRANSFERABLE SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE
Code, classify, and catalog books, publications, films, and visual aids	————>	Analyze information; Prioritize tasks; Critical thinking
Interpret what the user needs	————>	Customer service; Listening to understand; Interaction; Communication
Research, review, and evaluate reference materials	————>	Conduct research; Identify and present problems and solutions
Keep records of circulations and materials	————>	Manage records; Administrative tasks
Work with teachers, parents, and communities to develop reading programs	————>	Plan and implement strategies; Plan events and activities; Coordinate programs
Develop information storage, retrieval, and database systems for users	————>	Understands/uses databases; Critical thinking; Customer service; Training
Assemble and arrange display materials	————>	Creativity; Organized; Understanding of applicability
Supervise	————>	Oversee other's work; Delegate; Counsel others; Motivate; Handle complaints
Budget	————>	Financial understanding and ability to develop and interpret a budget
Conduct fundraising activities	————>	Perform outreach; Fundraise; Persuade
Write proposals for research and grants	————>	Write grants; Influence; Communication skills
Public relations to promote the library	————>	Ability to positively influence and impact; Gain public confidence; Public speaking
Negotiate contracts for library services, materials and equipment	————>	Negotiation; Ability to develop relationships with outside suppliers; Build strong relationships
Develop policies and procedures	————>	Create and implement policies and procedures

Hard and Soft Skills

Hard skills are specific, teachable abilities gained through education, training, or experience. Include the hard skills that are most relevant to the job you are applying for. The following list of hard skills can help you identify and highlight the technical abilities that are most relevant to your education, training, and work experience.

Computer & Technology Skills

- Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook)
- Data entry
- Database management
- Social media management
- Graphic design
- Coding/programming
- Cybersecurity
- Website development

Administrative & Office Skills

- Scheduling and calendar management
- Record keeping
- Bookkeeping
- Payroll processing
- Filing and document management
- Customer relationship management (CRM) software

Skilled Trades & Manufacturing

- Welding
- Blueprint reading
- Carpentry
- Electrical work
- Plumbing
- Equipment operation
- Preventive maintenance
- Quality control

Transportation & Logistics

- Commercial Driver's License (CDL)
- Forklift operation
- Inventory management
- Shipping and receiving
- Route planning
- Warehouse operations

Healthcare

- Patient care
- Phlebotomy
- Electronic medical records (EMR)
- CPR/First Aid
- Medication administration
- Medical coding and billing

Business & Finance

- Budgeting
- Financial reporting
- Tax preparation
- Accounts payable/receivable
- Auditing
- Data analysis

Soft skills are personal qualities developed through experience and everyday interactions. Highlight the soft skills that are most relevant to the position you are seeking. The following list of soft skills can help you describe yourself in cover letters, resumes, interviews, and thank-you notes.

Accurate	Eager	Mature	Relaxed
Active	Easygoing	Meticulous	Reliable
Adaptable	Efficient	Moderate	Reserved
Adventurous	Emotional	Modest	Resourceful
Alert	Energetic	Motivated	Responsible
Ambitious	Enterprising	Natural	Self-confident
Artistic	Enthusiastic	Obliging	Self-controlled
Assertive	Firm	Open-minded	Sensible
Bold	Flexible	Opportunistic	Sensitive
Broad-minded	Formal	Organized	Serious
Business-like	Frank	Original	Sincere
Calm	Friendly	Outgoing	Stable
Capable	Generous	Patient	Steady
Careful	Good-natured	Pleasant	Strong
Cautious	Helpful	Poised	Strong-minded
Cheerful	Honest	Polite	Sympathetic
Clear-thinking	Idealistic	Positive attitude	Tactful
Competent	Imaginative	Practical	Teachable
Confident	Independent	Precise	Thorough
Conscientious	Individualistic	Preserving	Thoughtful
Conservative	Industrious	Progressive	Tolerant
Considerate	Informal	Prudent	Trusting
Cooperative	Ingenious	Punctual	Trustworthy
Creative	Intellectual	Purposeful	Unaffected
Deliberate	Inventive	Quick	Unassuming
Democratic	Kind	Quiet	Understanding
Dependable	Leadership	Rational	Verbal
Determined	Likeable	Realistic	Versatile
Dignified	Logical	Reasonable	
Discreet	Loyal	Reflective	

The Resume

A resume is the story of where you've been, what you've done, and what you've learned. The objective of a resume is not to get a job, but to obtain an interview.

Chronological Resume Example

MELISSA DOLLARS

Somewhere, ND

(701) 555-5555

melissad@myemail.com

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

Accounting professional with a proven record of implementing cost-saving initiatives:

- Resolved price discrepancies and past-due balances with up to 700 vendors, including subcontractors
- Oversaw accounts-payable functions for 10 divisions nationwide; set up and maintained new accounts for multiple divisions
- Streamlined procedures to ensure timely production of all accounting reports
- Advanced computer skills in accounting software: Peachtree, QuickBooks Pro, Quicken and proficient in Microsoft Office: Word, Excel, Outlook, Access, and PowerPoint
- Built positive relationships with management, customers, staff and financial institutions employing effective communication skills
- Recognized for leadership and problem-solving strengths, thoroughness and accuracy

WORK HISTORY

Senior Accountant

04/2020-Present

The Accounting Firm

Somewhere, ND

- Responsible for accounting and auditing for 6 subsidiary companies with \$163 million in annual revenues
- Recovered \$2.4 million in receipts not posted and saved \$460,000 by eliminating duplicate payments
- Manage multimillion-dollar cash operations for 7 companies statewide
- Consolidated bank accounts, decreasing fees 50%
- Initiated centralized purchasing, saving \$100,000
- Conduct in-depth consultations with prospective clients to assess needs and recommend appropriate financial products, i.e. college funds and retirement

Accountant

04/2017-03/2020

The Accounting Firm

Somewhere, ND

- Directed accounts payable disbursements totaling more than \$1.7 million annually, accounts receivable processing and over \$1 million in capital assets
- Verified and maintained general ledger system. Developed and implemented accounting policies/procedures
- Instituted internal control procedures including suspense account reconciliations for premium collections. reducing write-offs by \$75,000 annually
- Coordinated audits with internal/external auditors and regulatory agencies and completed internal audit reports
- Analyzed and prepared variance reports for all management business levels

Accounting Technician

07/2016-03/2017

The Accounting Firm

Somewhere, ND

- Detected fraudulent activities that enabled company to recover \$10,000
- Produced financial statements in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) for the Board of Directors and shareholders and semiannual Security and Exchange Commission (SEC) filings for 6 portfolios totaling \$1+ billion in net assets
- Compiled financial data for auditors
- Communicated with subsidiaries reducing outstanding accounts by 10%

Bookkeeper

07/2009-06/2016

P and Q Manufacturing

Somewhere, ND

- Performed full-charge bookkeeping services using QuickBooks Pro
- Received top ratings on performance evaluations consistently
- Prepared invoices, accounts payable, accounts receivable, bank reconciliations, financial statements and payroll for manufacturing company with 50 employees
- Implemented conversion from manual to computerized bookkeeping system without disrupting normal operations

Family Care and Home Management

05/2006-06/2009

Self Employed

Somewhere, ND

- Cared for two small children
- Handled day-to-day household operations and acted as general contractor for building a home addition
- Managed family finances in Quicken—established budget, paid bills, and balanced bank accounts
- Completed tax returns for three households using TurboTax

CERTIFICATIONS**Certified Public Accountant**

02/2017

EDUCATION**M.B.A. Candidate in Finance**

Anticipated 05/20XX

University of Accounting

Somewhere, ND

Bachelor of Science – Accounting (GPA 3.5)

05/2015

University of Accounting

Somewhere, ND

AFFILIATIONS**Co-Chair** – ND Society of Accountants**Treasurer** – ND Young Professionals**State Representative** – American Accounting Association

Functional Resume Example

MELISSA DOLLARS

Somewhere, ND

(701) 555-5555

melissad@myemail.com

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

Accounting professional with a proven record of implementing cost-saving initiatives:

- Resolved price discrepancies and past-due balances with up to 700 vendors, including subcontractors
- Oversaw accounts-payable functions for 10 divisions nationwide; set up and maintained new accounts for multiple divisions
- Streamlined procedures to ensure timely production of all accounting reports
- Advanced computer skills in accounting software: Peachtree, QuickBooks Pro, Quicken and proficient in Microsoft Office: Word, Excel, Outlook, Access, and PowerPoint
- Built positive relationships with management, customers, staff and financial institutions employing effective communication skills
- Recognized for leadership and problem-solving strengths, thoroughness and accuracy

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

AUDITING

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- Coordinated audits with internal/external auditors and regulatory agencies. Prepared internal audit reports
- Detected fraudulent activities that enabled company to recover \$10,000
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ACCOUNTING

- Consolidated bank accounts, decreasing fees 50%
- Initiated centralized purchasing, saving \$100,000
- Held responsible for accounting and auditing for 6 subsidiary companies with \$163 million in annual revenues
- Managed multimillion-dollar cash operations for 7 companies statewide
- Directed accounts payable disbursements totaling more than \$1.7 million annually, accounts receivable processing and over \$1 million in capital assets
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ANALYZING

- Recovered \$2.4 million in receipts not posted and saved \$460,000 by eliminating duplicate payments
- Analyzed and prepared variance reports for all management levels throughout business

COMMUNICATION

- Conducted in-depth consultations with prospective clients to assess needs and recommend appropriate financial products, i.e. college funds and retirement
- Communicated with subsidiaries reducing outstanding accounts by 10%

BOOKKEEPING

- Performed full-charge bookkeeping services using QuickBooks Pro
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WORK HISTORY

Senior Accountant	The Accounting Firm	Somewhere, ND
Accountant	The Accounting Firm	Somewhere, ND
Accounting Technician	The Accounting Firm	Somewhere, ND
Bookkeeper	P and Q Manufacturing	Somewhere, ND

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Senior Accountant The Accounting Firm	04/2020-Present Somewhere, ND
Accountant The Accounting Firm	04/2017-03/2020 Somewhere, ND
Accounting Technician The Accounting Firm	07/2016-03/2017 Somewhere, ND
Bookkeeper P and Q Manufacturing	07/2009-06/2016 Somewhere, ND

CERTIFICATIONS

Certified Public Accountant	02/2017
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EDUCATION

M.B.A. Candidate in Finance University of Accounting	Anticipated 05/20XX Somewhere, ND
Bachelor of Science – Accounting (GPA 3.5) University of Accounting	05/2015 Somewhere, ND

AFFILIATIONS

Co-Chair – ND Society of Accountants
Treasurer – ND Young Professionals
State Representative – American Accounting Association

Chronological Resume Example

JOE HANDYMAN

My Town, ND

(701) 555-1234 | handyman4u@nailmail.com

SUMMARY

- Performed all phases of construction from start to finish: carpentry, brick work, concrete finishing, electrical work, plumbing, drywall, painting, roofing, sheet metal work
- Achieved 100% accident-free work history for self and employees
- Developed excellent customer service skills by listening and meeting customer needs

WORK HISTORY

Owner/Operator

01/2020-Present

Handyman Business

Big Town, ND

- Schedule work crews of up to five general laborers for demolition, clean up and building projects including framed and roofed houses; sheet rocked interiors; and insulated walls
- Design and renovate kitchens and bathrooms and finish basements in new construction and remodels
- Repair and replace broken windows, make screens, hang doors and jambs, baseboards and moldings, hang and patched drywall, texture and paint walls, install electrical switches and outlets, rewire disconnect and breaker panels, install and repair lighting
- Operate and maintain all types of power and hand tools – saws, drills, nail guns, meters, grinders, levels, blow torches, tape measures, squares, hammers, and chisels

Maintenance Technician

12/2016-12/2021

Regional Hospital

Big Town, ND

- Mowed, watered, maintained lawn and planted and pruned trees and shrubs on 2 acres
- Performed preventive maintenance and repaired HVAC system, chillers, boilers, water softeners, ice machines, grills, ovens, refrigerators, dishwashers, washers, dryers, motors, pumps and other equipment; also troubleshoot elevators
- Operated hand and power tools – saws-all, nail guns, chop saw, drills, chain saw, snow blowers, mowers, trimmers, shampooer, and buffer
- Demolished, repaired, and restored interiors and exteriors of four-story, 125 bed facility

Concrete Laborer

04/2015-11/2011

My Town Concrete Company

My Town, ND

- Assisted in building and positioning concrete forms for building foundations, gutters, and sidewalks according to blueprints
- Poured concrete by pump, bucket, barrow and shovel
- Dug, spread and leveled dirt and gravel using, pick, shovel, and skid steer

EDUCATION

High School Diploma

My Town Public School

My Town, ND

Functional Resume Example

JOE HANDYMAN

My Town, ND

(701) 555-1234 | handyman4u@nailmail.com

SUMMARY

- Performed all phases of construction from start to finish: carpentry, brick work, concrete finishing, electrical work, plumbing, drywall, painting, roofing, sheet metal work
- Achieved 100% accident-free work history for self and employees
- Developed excellent customer service skills by listening and meeting customer needs

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

CONSTRUCTION

- Scheduled work crews of up to five general laborers for demolition, clean up and building projects including framed and roofed houses; sheet rocked interiors; and insulated walls
- Designed and renovated kitchens and bathrooms and finished basements in new construction and remodels
- Repaired and replaced broken windows, made screens, hung doors and jambs, baseboards and moldings, hung and patched drywall, textured and painted walls, installed electrical switches and outlets, rewired disconnect and breaker panels, installed and repaired lighting
- Operated and maintained all types of power and hand tools – saws, drills, nail guns, meters, grinders, levels, blow torches, tape measures, squares, hammers, and chisels

MAINTENANCE

- Mowed, watered, maintained lawns, planted and pruned trees and shrubs on two acres
- Performed preventive maintenance and repaired HVAC system, chillers, boilers, water softeners, ice machines, grills, ovens, refrigerators, dishwashers, washers, dryers, motors, pumps and other equipment; also troubleshoot elevators
- Operated hand and power tools – saws-all, nail guns, chop saw, drills, chain saw, snow blowers, mowers, trimmers, shampooer, and buffer

LABOR

- Demolished, repaired, and restored interiors and exteriors of four-story, 125 bed facility
- Assisted in building and positioning concrete forms for building foundations, gutters, and sidewalks according to blueprints
- Poured concrete by pump, bucket, barrow and shovel
- Dug, spread and leveled dirt and gravel using, pick, shovel, and skid steer

WORK HISTORY

Owner/Operator	Handyman Business	Big Town, ND
Maintenance Technician	Regional Hospital	Big Town, ND
Concrete Laborer	My Town Concrete Company	My Town, ND

EDUCATION

High School Diploma	My Town Public School	My Town, ND
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Combination Resume Example

JOE HANDYMAN

My Town, ND

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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

CONSTRUCTION

- Scheduled work crews of up to five general laborers for demolition, clean up and building projects including framed and roofed houses; sheet rocked interiors; and insulated walls
- Designed and renovated kitchens and bathrooms and finished basements in new construction and remodels
- Repaired and replaced broken windows, made screens, hung doors and jambs, baseboards and moldings, hung and patched drywall, textured and painted walls, installed electrical switches and outlets, rewired disconnect and breaker panels, installed and repaired lighting
- Operated and maintained all types of power and hand tools – saws, drills, nail guns, meters, grinders, levels, blow torches, tape measures, squares, hammers, and chisels

MAINTENANCE

- Mowed, watered, maintained lawns, planted and pruned trees and shrubs on two acres
- Performed preventive maintenance and repaired HVAC system, chillers, boilers, water softeners, ice machines, grills, ovens, refrigerators, dishwashers, washers, dryers, motors, pumps and other equipment; also troubleshoot elevators

LABOR

- Demolished, repaired, and restored interiors and exteriors of four-story, 125 bed facility
- Assisted in building and positioning concrete forms for building foundations, gutters, and sidewalks according to blueprints
- Dug, spread and leveled dirt and gravel using, pick, shovel, and skid steer

WORK HISTORY

Owner/Operator

Handyman Business

01/2020-Present

Big Town, ND

Maintenance Technician

Regional Hospital

12/2016-12/2021

Big Town, ND

Concrete Laborer

My Town Concrete Company

04/2015-11/2011

My Town, ND

EDUCATION

High School Diploma

My Town Public School

My Town, ND

Resume Example with Limited Work Experience

JAMES H. SMITH

Ourtown, ND
(701) 555-5678
jimmys@email.com

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Dedicated pet lover born and raised on the family farm. Comfortable caring for a wide range of domestic pets and farm animals. Seeking an entry level position in retail sales preferably in the Pet Department. Develops lasting ties with pets and pet owners.

SKILLS

- Fast learner
- Attention to detail
- Patient and trustworthy
- Highly dependable
- Willing to learn new things
- Always on time
- Organized
- Bathing and grooming animals

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Farm Life

Ourtown, ND

- Bred, raised, and sold Labradors; communicated with buyers and handled paperwork
- Showed various animals at 4-H Achievement Days; received Best of Show ribbons
- Fed and exercised animals each day
- Brushed, bathed and conditioned animals
- Played with, petted and brushed dogs
- Helped maintain a clean and sanitary home with having pets in house

EDUCATION

High School Diploma

Ourtown, ND

Resume Example Showing Only Classroom Experience

CARRIE I. WANTTOWORK

Ourtown, ND
(701) 555-2468
carrie@email.com

Laboratory Technician

Recent college graduate seeks to apply formal training in Biological Sciences to begin a career in a Medical Laboratory performing analysis and critical tests.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Project Management
- Research/Analysis/Problem Solving
- Customer Service
- Teamwork
- Vertebrate Histology
- Tissue Slides
- Laboratory Equipment
- Southern Transfer & Gene Detection

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science – Biological Science

North Dakota College, Ourtown, ND

RELEVANT TRAINING/ COURSEWORK

- Microbiology
- Genetics
- Human Parasitology
- Submicroscopic and Macroscopic Chemistry
- Organic Chemistry
- Quantitative Analysis
- Laboratory Medical Microbiology and Immunology

COMMUNITY SERVICE

- Participated in a variety of fundraising and community activities, including:
- Organized campus blood drives
- Participated in Relay for Life activities
- Assisted in fundraising events for cancer treatment

Resume Checklist

- ☐ **APPEARANCE:** Is your resume visually appealing and easy to read? Can an employer scan it and locate essential information? Is the font size at least 12 pt?
- ☐ **FORMAT:** Was the best format used to sell your knowledge, skills, abilities, and accomplishments?
- ☐ **SKILLS:** Does the resume focus on skills and accomplishments that directly relate to the desired position?
- ☐ **KEYWORDS:** Are keywords and phrases easy to identify based on employer's job description?
- ☐ **ACCURACY:** Are employment and education information listed accurately with dates employed, job titles, degrees and dates achieved? Does your resume contain current contact information including name, city and state, telephone, and e-mail address?
- ☐ **LENGTH:** Is your resume one to two full pages and free from lengthy paragraphs?
- ☐ **HEADINGS:** Are section headers identifiable (bolded for emphasis)? Does resume contain a proper heading on page 2 that lists your name?
- ☐ **BULLETS:** Does your resume contain bulleted phrases that begin with an action verb and are free from "I" statements?
- ☐ **PROOFREADING:** Is it free from grammar, spelling, or typing errors?

Cover Letters (Letters of Application)

While your resume is an impersonal description of your qualifications, your cover letter is a personalized and targeted introduction of yourself. Include the reason you are applying. A cover letter should accompany every resume and application that you submit.

Tips for writing cover letters:

- Write a separate individualized letter for each job application or resume.
- Limit your letter to one page and keep it focused.
- Use proper sentence structure, and correct spelling and punctuation.
- Address any employment gaps.

Cover Letter Format

First name Last name (Use the contact information format as your resume)

City, State

Telephone number

E-mail address

Date

Individual to whom you are writing

Individual's Title

Employer/Business Name

Street Address

City, State, Zip Code

Re: Position Applying For

Dear (Name of individual): (Note: If you don't know the person's name, type Sir or Madam)

FIRST PARAGRAPH: (Why you are writing) In your initial paragraph, indicate the reason for writing, the specific position or type of work for which you are applying/inquiring, and how you learned of the opening.

SECOND PARAGRAPH: (Qualifications) If you are a recent or soon-to-be graduate, explain how your academic background makes you a qualified candidate for this position. If you have some practical work experience, point out specific achievements or unique qualifications that evolved from this work. Do not copy the same information that is listed in your resume or ask the reader to refer to your resume for details. Mention why you are excited about this position and the organization. **ABOVE ALL, INDICATE WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR THE EMPLOYER.**

THIRD PARAGRAPH: (Qualifications) You may need more than one paragraph to define what you can do for the employer. Do not crowd all your qualifications into one extremely long paragraph.

FOURTH PARAGRAPH: (Wrap-up/Action) In closing, indicate your desire for an opportunity to discuss your qualifications for the position, or define an action for your inquiry. Offer assistance to help generate a speedy response if it is relevant to your action request. Indicate your interest in arranging an interview. State the best way you can be reached via telephone number or email. Thank the reader for his/her consideration of your request.

Sincerely *or* Respectfully,

Your signature

Your typed name

Enclosure (optional): (Resume, Application, References, Transcripts)

Example of Cover Letter – A

MELISSA DOLLARS
Somewhere, ND
(701) 555-5555
melissad@myemail.com

December 10, 20XX

ABC Corporation
4567 W Ave
Any City, ND 58XXX

Re: Auditor I

Please accept this as my application for the Auditor I position with ABC Corporation which I found on the Job Service North Dakota website.

I have had a successful accounting and auditing career during the past fifteen years and feel that I will be able to contribute positively to your business. With my current employer I was able to reduce expenses and increase business income by 20%. I was promoted within the company to take on additional accounting and auditing responsibilities. In addition, I have extensive experience performing audits on a state and national level, recognizing discrepancies and making recommendations that have led to millions of dollars of savings to The Accounting Firm and its subsidiaries.

I am proficient in the use of accounting databases for recording and tracking customer information and in the use of Microsoft Office Suite. During my tenure I was able to increase the client base 10 percent by establishing rapport and building long-term professional relationships through effective oral and written communication.

I believe I am an ideal candidate for the Auditor I position with your corporation and I look forward to discussing how my qualifications can meet your company's needs and goals. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Melissa Dollars

Melissa Dollars

Example of Cover Letter – B

JOE HANDYMAN

My Town, ND

(701) 555-1234 | handyman4u@nailmail.com

December 5, 20XX

Mr. Jack Hammer
XYZ Company
123 St
Any City, ND 58XXX

Dear Mr. Hammer:

I saw your ad for a general laborer in the My Town Gazette on December 4, 20XX and would like to apply for this job.

For the past ten years I have worked in construction and maintenance, and I have had a handyman business since 2015. Due to the construction slowdown nationally, my business has been affected and I am looking for steady work. I have a broad background, so I can work on different types of projects. My reputation as a hard worker who gets the job done on time or early is solid. I'm able to use power and hand tools. My safety and driving record are clean.

I would be happy to meet with you and discuss how I can be an asset to your business.

Sincerely,

Joe Handyman

Joe Handyman

Enclosure: Resume

Prospecting Letter

A prospecting cover letter is used when you are inquiring about possible position openings.

A letter of interest, also known as a prospecting letter or inquiry letter, is sent to prospective employers that may be hiring, but haven't listed a specific job opening to apply for. Your letter should contain information on why the company interests you and why your skills and experience would be an asset to the company. Also provide information on how you will follow up and where you can be reached.

Sample Prospecting Letter

Your Name

Your City, State, Zip Code

Your Phone Number

Your Email

A link to your LinkedIn Profile

Date

Contact Name

Title

Company

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear Contact Person,

I read about Company X's retail management training program in College Graduate Magazine, and I would like to inquire about the possibility of openings. I am interested in a career in retail management and am planning to relocate to the Bismarck area in the near future. I would be interested in learning more about the company and about available opportunities.

I have a Bachelor of Science degree in Management and Business, as well as retail experience as a Sales Associate and Key Holder. In addition, I completed two internships focusing on retail management.

My resume, which is enclosed, contains additional information on my experience and skills. I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss the training program with you and to provide further information on my candidacy. I can be reached anytime via my cell phone, 000-000-0000.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to speaking with you about this exciting opportunity.

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Your Typed Name

Networking Letter

The third type of cover letter is used for networking. This is used when you are requesting assistance with your job search and have been referred to someone by another professional contact.

Sample Networking Letter

Your Name

Your City, State, Zip Code

Your Phone Number

Your Email

A link to your LinkedIn Profile

Date

Contact Name

Title

Company

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear Contact Person,

I was referred to you by Diane Smith from XYZ Company in Fargo, ND. She recommended you as an excellent source of information on the communications industry.

My goal is to secure an entry-level position in communications. I would appreciate hearing your advice on career opportunities in the communications industry, on conducting an effective job search, and on how best to uncover job leads.

Thank you, in advance, for any insight and advice you would be willing to share.

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Your Typed Name

References

References are professional contacts that can speak to your character and work ethic. List 3-5 references on a separate sheet of paper and provide them when requested. Make sure that you ask permission to use individuals as a reference! After an employer asks for your references, call your individual references and let them know who may be contacting them. Share a bit about the position that you have applied for, reminding them of projects they may be able to discuss with the employer. Do not select family members or partners as references.

Sample Reference Page

JOE HANDYMAN

My Town, ND

(701) 555-1234 | handyman4u@nailmail.com

REFERENCES

Bob Hammer
Owner
Former Employer
701-XXX-XXX
bhammer@myemail.com

Tom Tool
Maintenance Supervisor
Direct Supervisor
Regional Hospital
701-XXX-XXXX ext. XXX
ttool@regionalhospital.com

Sally Smith
Homemaker
Past Customer
701-XXX-XXXX
shomemaker35@gmail.com

Job Interviews

With many applicants competing for jobs, your level of interviewing skills can make the difference between a rejection and a job offer. During the interview, an employer judges your qualifications, attitude, appearance, and general fitness for the job opening. It is your opportunity to convince the employer that you can make a real contribution. Your performance in the interview is critical to getting the job. Often employers will hire a less experienced person who interviews well, rather than a more experienced person who interviews poorly. Equally important, you are interviewing the employer. Asking questions enables you to decide if the job meets your career needs and interests and if the employer is right for you.

We recommend that you visit your local Job Service Workforce Center for further interview resources, such as mock interview practice or workshops. Additionally, the Big Interview software is available on your ND Workforce Connection account! Big Interview is an online tool that combines a proven curriculum of video lessons with AI-based virtual practice to help job seekers improve their interview skills and increase the likelihood of landing a job. Here you can prepare to answer frequently asked questions by occupation, practice virtual interviewing, and get tips for interview best practices.

Interview Types

- An **individual** interview is like an in-depth conversation between you and the company hiring authority.
- A **panel** interview is frequently used by government agencies and companies filling a professional or managerial position. Usually, a panel of three or more people asks each candidate the same questions. The process can be stressful because you must answer questions from several people. Be sure to make eye contact with everyone on the panel.
- The **phone** interview is used to make a first round of cuts to the applicant pool. If the employers are interested in you, they will then schedule face-to-face interviews. Remove all distractions. Treat it like a face-to-face interview. A smile on your face puts a smile in your voice and makes a positive first impression.
- In a **virtual** interview, employers will conduct the interview on online platforms or downloadable apps, such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams. Most of these interviews will require access to a video camera on your computer or phone. Your local Workforce Center may have space or tools available to assist you in conducting a virtual interview.

Note: Beware of virtual interview-based scams! These may ask you to click on a link or respond via text for an interview. If something doesn't seem right, contact Job Service with your concerns before giving out any information to the potential employer.

Interview Guidelines

A successful interview begins with **preparation**. Your responsibility is to know as much as possible about yourself and the company before you walk into the interview. Interviewers judge candidates within the first ninety seconds – you want this first impression to be a good one! Here are some tips to remember:

Be Prepared

- Anticipate possible questions and practice answers to each of them.
- Research the company before the interview:
 - Review the company website to learn about product lines and services.
 - Know the company mission statement and values.
 - Learn about physical business locations, number of stores, plants, etc.
 - Recall any recent business information in the news.
- Identify people who are current or past employees that you know.
- Learn if the business offers training opportunities.
- Prepare questions to ask in the interview.
- Know the name(s) of the interviewer(s) and how to pronounce them correctly.
- Prepare your clothes the day before the interview to ensure they are ready.
- Get a good night's sleep before the interview. Review your research.
- Get up in time to shower and dress carefully.
- Do a dry run going to the interview location before the day of your interview.
- Leave for the interview with plenty of time to spare. Make sure you know how to get there, where to park, and how much time to allow for traffic.
- Plan to arrive at least ten minutes early to allow yourself time to decompress and focus.
- Go alone to the interview.

Carry a portfolio containing these items:

- Copies of resume or application prepared for this job.
- Copy of job description.
- References.
- Letters of recommendation.
- Samples of your work when appropriate.
- Your questions to ask the interviewer(s).
- Pad.
- Pen.

Make a Good Impression

- Go to the interview neat and clean.
- Dress conservatively and comfortably. Rule of thumb is to dress one step above the employer's normal daily dress code.
- Use minimal perfume/cologne, no strong-smelling deodorant.
- Be mindful of any piercings or tattoos, covering if appropriate.
- Do not have gum, candy, or other objects in your mouth.
- Do not smoke or use alcohol before the interview.

- Turn off cell phone or leave it in your vehicle.
- Be polite to everyone at the business.
- Be enthusiastic and positive; friendly, but not casual.
- Remember to smile!
- Speak positively about former employers and coworkers.
- Glow yourself up – the difference between bragging and self-confidence is enthusiasm.

Be Aware of Body Language

- Offer a firm handshake if comfortable doing so.
- Sit where directed by interviewer.
- Sit straight or lean forward slightly in your chair.
- Avoid nervous behavior, such as fidgeting or tapping your foot.
- Make eye contact with each interviewer throughout the interview.

Say Thank You

- At the end of the interview, thank interviewers for their time.
- If possible, send a thank you note or e-mail to each interviewer after the interview concludes.

Answering Interview Questions

Prepare and practice your answers to common interview questions. **Each interview answer should be on average one minute long.** To help you prepare strong, structured answers with specific examples narrating your strengths and relevant experience, we recommend using the S.T.A.R. Method.

S.T.A.R. Method

- **S-Situation:** Explain the situation. Where were you working? Set the scene.
 - *I was working as a waitress in a formal dining restaurant.*
- **T-Task:** What was your role or task you were doing when the story occurred?
 - *Midway through a busy shift, I was taking care of a large table, and the kitchen was behind.*
- **A-Action:** What happened? What actions did you take to navigate the situation?
 - *A couple of people at the table were getting upset by the wait. I apologized for the inconvenience and tried to be as positive and understanding as possible. I frequently refilled their beverages and brought out extra bread for the table. After about 45 minutes, their food arrived, but two of the meals were incorrect. I returned them to the kitchen as quickly as possible, and within 5 minutes the meals were corrected.*
- **R-Results:** What resulted from your actions? What did you learn? Any key takeaways? Remember to end the story on a positive note, even if the results were negative.
 - *Overall, I was able to save the experience for the customers by providing good customer service and being understanding. They liked the food and gave me a good tip. They could tell we were busy and were mostly patient. The couple of people who were less happy during the wait left with smiles on their faces, so I feel I did a good job maintaining patience and a friendly attitude during a stressful situation.*

Possible questions this story could be used as an answer: Describe a time you demonstrated great customer service. When did you experience a stressful situation at work, and how did you handle it? Give us an example of a time you had to think on your feet to solve a problem. Tell us about a time you had to deal with an upset customer.

To best prepare for any number of questions, we recommend preparing at least five stories from your professional experience that show your ability to problem-solve, work on a team, accomplish a goal, negotiate conflict, handle stress, or show off your strengths. Run these through the S.T.A.R. method as above, and you will be well-prepared for a variety of potential interview questions!

A Note About Salary Negotiation

While the interview should be all about your skills and experience, you may be asked about your salary expectations. Try to refrain from bringing up salary until the job offer has been made. To gather information on average pay range for comparable positions, check Job Service North Dakota Labor Market Information at www.jobsnd.com, or occupational information at www.onetonline.org.

Ask Questions During the Interview

An interview is a two-way conversation in which you also ask questions to determine if the job is suitable for you. Be prepared to ask two to three questions during an interview. Take your cue from the employer as to whether you ask questions during the interview or at the end of the employer's questions. Your questions should reflect your knowledge, enthusiasm, and curiosity about joining their team. You may also ask questions you may have about the company.

Examples:

Wait for the employer to let you know next steps in the process. As you leave, ask when you may expect to hear about their decision if they don't mention it. Thank them for the interview. **Send a hand-written Thank You note if you can – courtesy goes a long way!**

Follow Up

Following up is critical. If you have not heard from the employer by the time the decision was to be made, contact the employer to check the status of the decision. Also, be polite. Do not call daily. If a decision has not been made, ask when you may call to follow up again.

If you are not offered the job, thank them for their consideration and ask the employer what you could have done differently to increase your chances of landing future employment.

Additional interview preparation resources are available at your local Workforce Center, such as interview skills workshops and mock interviews.

The Job Offer

A job offer may be made by telephone, mail, or electronic communication, so you need to check all sources on regular basis. Remember to check spam or junk mail in your e-mail account since some important messages may be found there.

You may receive an offer that has positives and negatives. Before accepting the offer, consider such potential issues such as family obligations, previously scheduled commitments, and minimum salary you will accept. Be ready to have a polite conversation with the employer about these considerations as needed. Additionally, make sure you understand the value of the benefits included in the offer (or, if benefits are not included, what it will cost to purchase them).

Whether you accept or reject the offer, communicate your decision immediately either verbally or in writing. If you need additional time to decide, ask the employer for a specific time extension for your response. If the offer was made verbally, a verbal response would be sufficient. If the offer was made in writing, a written response is required.

If you **ACCEPT THE JOB**, make sure that you understand job duties and expectations, work hours, salary, benefits, etc.

Basics for the First Day or First Few Weeks on the Job

- Asking Questions and Asking for Help
- Following Instructions
- Getting a Sense of the Big Picture
- Finding Out About the Rules – Written and Unwritten
- Asking for Feedback
- Having a Positive Attitude and Being Cheerful

Additional Characteristics of a Successful Employee

ATTENDANCE – Go to work faithfully and be on time.

OPENNESS – Speak tactfully and state what is on your mind without anger and malice.

UNDERSTANDING OF OTHERS – Try to understand what others around you feel, think, and want. Accept others for who they are.

LEADERSHIP – Make decisions when needed, help others, and think about the needs of the total operation.

PERSEVERANCE – Stay with a task, even if you are under pressure. Your co-workers are counting on you.

INITIATIVE – Accept responsibility, do more than what is expected of you and take on additional responsibility even if it seems risky.

APPEARANCE – Maintain good personal appearance.

INVOLVEMENT – Develop a feeling of commitment to your work and involvement with your work group.

COMMUNICATION – Be able to clearly convey information and understand information with your work group or customers.

Keeping (or Losing) Your Job

When you get the job, remember how hard you worked to find it. Will you want to go through this again, or do you want to keep your job? Here are some of the ways you can **lose** your job. It's up to you.

- **Be late for work.** Employers have heard a lot of excuses, so put them away. Plan carefully so you are on the job and ready to work on time.
- **Do not call when you are sick.** Always notify your supervisor if you cannot get to your job. Arrangements must be made for someone else to do your work.
- **Call in sick when you are not.** Remember that sick leave is a benefit given to you by the employer. Use it sparingly and only when you are really too sick to work.
- **Take time off without permission.** If you absolutely have to conduct personal business during working hours, always talk to your supervisor beforehand and arrange to make up the time.
- **Stretch your lunch and coffee breaks.** Always return from your breaks on time because you inconvenience others by being late. Be on time and show your employer that you are dependable.
- **Tell your boss off or fight with other workers.** Be cooperative and friendly with other workers. Even if someone is not friendly toward you, it is possible to get along during the working day.
- **Just do your assigned job and no more.** When you finish one task, ask your supervisor what else needs to be done, or offer to help someone else. Help with the grubby tasks, too.
- **Do not bother to learn more.** Be aware of advancement opportunities in your company and prepare yourself to apply for those jobs. Go to school during your time off to increase your knowledge.
- **Act as if you do not like your job.** Be energetic and willing to show that you are glad to be working. Avoid looking bored or grumpy.

Conclusion

We hope that this guide has helped you tell the story of your skills and experience so that employers are convinced that YOU are the best individual for the job. Remember, employers hire people for their benefit, not yours. No one is required to hire you. Convince the employer that by hiring you, the company benefits. You can do it!

Good luck with your job search, and don't give up. Sooner or later, you will find something – it's the waiting that's tough. When you do find a job, please let us know! And remember, **Job Service is here to help. Reach out for further support!**

References

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Society for Human Resource Management. (2024, July 2). *AI-written resumes: Use a discerning eye, hiring managers advise*.

U.S. Department of Labor. (2002). *TAP manual*.

Job Service North Dakota

www.jobsnd.com

ND Workforce Connection

www.ndworkforceconnection.com

CareerBuilder

www.careerbuilder.com

JobCluster

www.jobcluster.com/blog

Chron.

work.chron.com

Job Service North Dakota Workforce Centers

Bismarck

1601 E Century Ave
Bismarck, ND 58503
Ph: 701-328-5000
infojsbis@nd.gov
 JobServiceNDBismarck

Fargo

1350 32nd St S
Fargo, ND 58103
Ph: 701-239-7300
infojsfg@nd.gov
 JobServiceNDFargo

Minot

3416 N Broadway
Minot, ND 58703
Ph: 701-857-7500
infojsmn@nd.gov
 JobServiceNDMinot

Devils Lake

301 College Dr S
Devils Lake, ND 58301
Ph: 701-662-9300
infojsdl@nd.gov
 JobServiceNDDevilsLake

Grand Forks

1501 28th Ave S
Grand Forks, ND 58201
Ph: 701-795-3700
infojsgf@nd.gov
 JobServiceNDGrandForks

Wahpeton

524 2nd Ave N
Wahpeton, ND 58075
Ph: 701-671-1550
infojswp@nd.gov
 JobServiceNDWahpeton

Dickinson

66 Osborn Dr
Dickinson, ND 58601
Ph: 701-227-3100
infojsdk@nd.gov
 JobServiceNDDickinson

Jamestown

1307 12th Ave NE Ste 3
Jamestown, ND 58402
Ph: 701-253-6200
infojsjm@nd.gov
 JobServiceNDJamestown

Williston

422 1st Ave W
Williston, ND 58801
Ph: 701-774-7900
infojswl@nd.gov
 JobServiceNDWilliston

Unemployment Services

Go to <http://www.jobsnd.com>
Select Unemployment for Individuals
Ph: 701-328-4995

TTY Relay ND

800-366-6888
7-1-1

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WORKFORCE PROGRAMS
JOB SERVICE NORTH DAKOTA
JSND 6062 (R.9.2026)

Job Service North Dakota is an equal opportunity employer/program provider.

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. In compliance with the Stevens Amendment, Job Service North Dakota states that the Federal government has provided Title I and III monies to support labor exchange between job seekers and employers, and to provide work experience and training opportunities for WIOA eligible individuals