

# How to Overcome Challenges to Employment



*There are very few perfect candidates for any job. You may have some challenges to deal with in your job search or for a particular job that you desire. Some of the challenges come from your prior behaviors and some may come from the fact that you have little or no experience in the occupational area. This Guide will discuss some of the more common challenges that may impact your job search.*

## You were fired

Being fired can happen to anyone who has a job. What is most important is for you to understand exactly why you got fired and decide if you can correct the cause. Some common reasons why people get fired are:

- **Poor Attendance Record** – Determine if it is your transportation, personal schedule such as family obligations, or you are not taking the job seriously enough.
- **Difficult Attitude** – Ask yourself if you cooperated with your boss or co-workers, or did you feel that others did not like you or you did not "fit in?"
- **Not Following Policies or Orders** – Did you have a hard time doing what your supervisor required because of what was asked of you, or because you just didn't care for your supervisor's personality?



When applying for a new job, you will have to deal with the fact that you were fired from a job. Do not lie on an application or during the interview. On the application section, *reason for leaving*, leave it blank or put *dismissed*. In an interview, be prepared to have a short explanation such as "*I had problems with transportation, but I have solved that now.*"

It will help if you can find someone, like a co-worker at the prior workplace, who can describe your strengths at the old job, and use them as a reference.

Review the **JobSearch Guide *I Was Fired From Last Job. Now What?***

## Not enough experience

You will face this challenge every time you try to get a job that is new to you. You want a job to get the experience, but you do not qualify for the job because previous experience is required. This can be frustrating!

**What you lack in experience can be exchanged for:**

- Your eagerness to learn.
- Your willingness to work non-traditional hours like weekends, evening shifts and even split shifts.
- Your acceptance of an entry level wage with the understanding that as you learn the job, you will get appropriate wage increases.
- Your commitment to take classes and training to learn the skills needed for the job.



## Transferable skills

In order to convince a potential employer that you can do the job, you need to show that the skills that you have can be used on the new job. These skills are called *transferable skills*. Transferable skills are skills that are used in a variety of jobs. A small sample of such skills are:

- Speaking and/or reading a foreign language
- Computer skills, including knowledge of software applications
- Organizational ability
- Interpersonal skills and the ability to relate to a variety of people
- Both written and oral communication skills
- Creative problem solving abilities



For a more comprehensive list of skills, review the **JobSearch Guides: *SCANS Competencies*** and *How to Determine Your Skills*.

On your résumé include skills that you possess that are used in the new job. Review the **JobSearch Guide *How to Write a Résumé***.

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## Job hopping

If you have had more than four jobs in four years, you will probably be considered by employers to be a **job hopper**. Employers do not like *job hoppers* because they believe:

- they will lose their training investment in you, and
- you have not demonstrated that you are serious about working.



Here are some ways to defuse your job hopping:

- Explain that in each position you have held, you have gained more skills and training. This varied experience can be used on your new job.
- Tell the employer this time will be different because you have learned how to make a commitment to a job. You have become more mature in your goals.
- Emphasize the relationship between the tasks you performed in your previous jobs and the skills needed in the new job.
- If you have left a job or jobs for "good" reasons, such as to care for a family member or you were laid off, then state those reasons on your application and in the interview.

Review the **JobSearch Guide** *I Quit My Job! What Do I Do Now?*.

## Lack of transportation

Many employers say that dependability is the most important trait in an employee. You cannot be dependable if you don't have a way to get to work every day. Before you apply for any job, make sure you can get there. If you cannot afford to buy and operate a car, you must figure out how to get to work. The easiest way is to find work within a reasonable walking distance from your home. The next easiest method is to use the public transportation system in your area. Find the routes for the bus or subway and then make sure the times for the stop locations fit your schedule for work. Finally, if you are going to rely on someone else, such as a friend or family member to drive you, then make sure you have a second or backup person for emergencies when the first person cannot give you a ride.



## Dropped out of high school and do not have a GED



Employers want educated employees who have achieved an educational level that matches the requirements for the job. A high school diploma or GED will give you many more opportunities for employment. Your wages will also be significantly higher than a non-high school graduate. If you have dropped out of high school, then get your GED as soon as possible. You can find out about getting a GED from your former high school or at your local One-Stop Career Center.

Even without your high school diploma or GED you will still be able to find jobs. They will be entry level jobs and will be primarily physical or menial labor. You will probably become frustrated with your lack of advancement and low pay. When filling out applications or during interviews, state that you are trying to get your GED. Then do it!

Review the **JobSearch Guides**: *I Just Graduated. What Do I Do Now?* and *Where to Get Job Training*.

## Other challenges that some job seekers face

There are specific **JobSearch Guides** that address other challenges that some job seekers face. These include:

- *I Want to Change Careers at Mid-Life*
- *Job Search Tips for Experienced Workers*
- *Job Search Tips for Post-Military Job Seekers*
- *Job Search Tips for Ex-Offenders*
- *Job Search Tips for People With Disabilities*
- *Job Search Issues For Women and Minorities*

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## Internet resources



[www.resumepower.com/no-experience-resume.html](http://www.resumepower.com/no-experience-resume.html) -- Suggestions for how to respond on your résumé.  
[www.quintcareers.com/getting\\_fired.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/getting_fired.html) -- Tips on how to deal with being fired when it comes to the job search.  
[www2.acenet.edu/resources/ged/center\\_locator.cfm](http://www2.acenet.edu/resources/ged/center_locator.cfm) -- Find GED testing locations and other advanced literacy programs in your area.