



## Finding your First Job

Landing your first entry-level job can be tricky. You're young. You're inexperienced, but you want a job. How do you gain experience if an employer won't hire you due to lack of experience? Should you settle for a low-paying job just to get your foot in the door? How high should you set your expectations for a first-time job?

### Know what you're getting into

Whether you're looking for high school jobs or college jobs, it's important to have realistic expectations about your first job. After all, you are just entering the job market and you're competing against people who have years of experience. Don't get discouraged, but know what to expect. Talk with a school guidance counselor, your parents or others who have been there. They can provide valuable insight into the reality of the working world. Be prepared with a list of questions so you get the kind of information you need to find your first job.

### Be prepared

Before looking for a job, learn everything you can about the job search process. Your [local Job Center](#) can help with information about job hunting, job interviews and labor laws for teenagers. You can often get a feel for companies by visiting their website; the more you know about a company's culture and brand, the better your chances of impressing an interviewer.

### Spread the word

Many jobs come through referrals from people you know, so it's important to let everyone know you're looking for a job. This is where your parents and their friends, teachers, coaches and other adults can be a great resource. Be sure to mention the kind of work you'd like to do, but don't turn down an opportunity just because it's not the perfect job. It might lead to the job you really want.

### Work for the experience

Sometimes a job might not be exactly what you're looking for, but it puts you in contact with people or organizations that might help you in the future. Working as an office clerk might not be the most exciting first job, but it might enable you to shadow someone in a job that interests you. Also, don't be too quick to turn down a volunteer position. Sometimes the best compensation is experience - and future employers love to see volunteer experience on your resume.

### Consider your options

Don't limit yourself to your dream job or to the first job that comes along. Broaden your thinking to include as many options as possible. Start with your interests and consider all the possibilities. If you like working with animals, your ideal job might be working at an animal shelter or a veterinarian's office. But what about providing a dog-walking service or taking care of pets while their owners are on vacation?

### Stick with it

Don't give up if you can't find a job right away. A job search takes persistence and patience. It's important to keep trying, because a potential employer will notice if you have the determination and the drive to find a job.

Here are more tips on finding your first job:

[How to Find your First Job](#)

[Ideas for First Jobs](#)



For additional information about Missouri Division of Workforce Development services, contact a Missouri Job Center near you. Locations and additional information are available at [jobs.mo.gov](#) or 1-888-728-JOBS (5627).



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