



Transition Age Youth Resource: Getting and Keeping a Job

There are benefits to getting a job while in high school, college, or other career training, including earning spending money, building your skills, and exploring different careers and industries. Jobs can be paid or unpaid like volunteer internships. Building the skills and documents to get a job and getting a job may be part of your Transitional Independent Living Plan or TILP. You create your first plan with your social worker when you are 14 to 15 years old, and you and your social worker update it every six months. Goals can include skills building or other achievements like obtaining a part-time job and investing savings from your job. Ask members of your CFT, your attorney, mentors, CASA, teachers, coaches, school counselors, etc. for help in achieving your goals.

If you've never had a job, you'll need to identify what type of work you'd like to do, gather the necessary documents, and practice completing job applications and job interviews as you begin the process.

Each step in the process will help you find that first job.

Step 1: Identify the Type of Job You Want

Ask yourself:

- What am I good at? (for example, talking to people, organizing, working with your hands, being creative)
- What jobs make use of those skills?

- What do I enjoy doing?
- What careers or industries interest me?
- Do I want a part-time or full-time job? What hours am I available to work?
- Am I looking for something temporary or seasonal or long-term?

Examples of first jobs:

- Retail (store clerk, cashier)
- Food service (fast food, barista, server)
- Customer service (call center, greeter)
- Entry-level office jobs
- Babysitting, dog walking, lawn care, or freelancing
- Recreation assistant
- Internships

Step 2: Get Ready to Apply

Create a professional email if you don't have one:

- Use something like FirstName.LastName@gmail.com

Gather any documents you might need:

- California Driver's License/California State Identification card, Passport, Social Security Card, Work Permit

California Driver's License/Identification Card, Social Security Card and Other Required Documents

You'll generally need to provide documents to verify your identity, employment authorization, and qualifications. These typically include identification (like a California Driver's License, California Identification card or Passport), Social Security card, and potentially a birth certificate or other documents proving you meet requirements to work. If you are not a U.S. citizen or a lawful permanent resident of the U.S., you may apply for a US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) - Issued Employment Authorization Document (EAD). You can apply for an EAD by filing Form I-765 or by mail with the USCIS Regional Service Center. For more info, call 800-870-3676.

You'll also need to complete new hire paperwork, including forms like W-4 and I-9, and may need to provide bank account details for your employer to direct deposit your pay to your bank account.

Work Permits for High School Students

In California, high school students can get jobs, but they generally need a work permit from their school. The legal working age in California is 14, but anyone under 18 needs a work permit. These permits, often called the B1-1 form or "Statement of Intent to Employ a Minor and Request for a Work Permit," are usually issued by the school. Work permits indicate the duties and location where the work will be done as well as the number of hours a minor may work. In most cases it is a two-step process, the minor along with the parent/guardian and employer fill out the B1-1 form and submit it to the school local to the minor's address. The school district reviews the B1-1 form and issues the B1-4 (Work Permit).

- **Who needs a work permit?** All minors (under 18) working in California, with some exceptions like newspaper carriers or babysitters need a work permit.
- **Where to get it?** From your school counselor, school district office, or work experience coordinator.
- **What's the process?** Obtain the "Statement of Intent to Employ a Minor and Request for a Work Permit" form from the school, have the employer complete their part, and return it to the school for processing.
- **When to get it?** Before starting work.

Bank Accounts

Banks may not open accounts for youth under 18 without a joint account holder. Youth in foster care in Los Angeles County as young as 13 can open their own checking and savings accounts – without an adult co-owner – through the **Youth Access Banking Program available in LA County – COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**. For more information on the program, call (888) 445-1234 or email afriend@auditor.lacounty.gov. To apply for a bank account through the Youth Access Banking Program, visit scefcu.org/youthaccessapp/.

To open a bank account, you will need to provide certain documentation. Common requirements include:

- **Identification:** Your government-issued IDs such as a passport or birth certificate, and a government-issued ID for the parent or guardian, if you are under 18 and opening a joint account
- **Social Security Number:** Your Social Security number (or equivalent identification number).
- **Proof of Address:** Banks will require proof of your current address. Acceptable documents may include a utility bill, lease agreement, or official mail addressed to you or those documents showing the address of the parent or guardian, if opening a joint account.

Step 3: Prepare a Simple Resume

Even if you've never worked before, you can still create a strong resume. You may find free resume templates online or contact your school counselor or work experience coordinator.

Include:

- Your contact info (name, phone number, email)
- A brief summary ("Hardworking and reliable student eager to learn and grow professionally.")
- Education (high school or college name, graduation date or expected graduation date)
- Volunteer work, school projects, or clubs (any experience showing responsibility)
- Skills (for example, teamwork, time management, communication, computer skills)

Step 4: Complete a Sample Application

To assist in completing job applications, prepare a sample application that will help you complete applications. You may find free resume templates online or contact your school counselor or work experience coordinator.

Include:

- Your contact info (name, phone number, email)
- A brief summary ("Hardworking and reliable student eager to learn and grow professionally.")
- Education (high school or college name, graduation date or expected graduation date)
- Volunteer work, school projects, or clubs (any experience showing responsibility)
- Skills (for example, teamwork, time management, communication, computer skills)

Step 5: Prepare for Interviews

Ask members of your CFT, CASA or other supportive adult to practice job interviews with you to help you prepare. You may also record yourself responding to practice questions. Online resources like Chat GPT may help you draft responses.

Write down your responses or record yourself responding to basic interview questions like the following to prepare:

- "Tell me about yourself."
- "Why do you want this job?"
- "What are your strengths and weaknesses?"
- "How do you think your skills could benefit this company/organization?"

Step 6: Start Looking for Job Openings

Places to check:

- School job boards or career centers
- Online job boards like Indeed, Snagajob, Glassdoor
- Job fairs
- Local businesses (walk in and ask if they are hiring)
- Social media (Facebook job groups, local community pages)
- Ask members of your CFT, family, friends, teachers, or other supportive adults if they know of anyone hiring

Step 7: Apply for Jobs

Tips:

- Apply to many jobs, not just one or two.
- Customize your resume for each job (use their job description as a guide).
- If you apply in person, dress neatly and bring a copy of your resume and sample job application and pen to help you complete a job application.
- Be polite and ask to speak with a manager, when possible.

Step 8: Prepare for Interviews

If you get a call or email, respond promptly and politely.

Preparing for the Interview:

- Dress neatly and appropriately (business casual is usually safe).
- Practice common interview questions by recording yourself, in the mirror or by asking someone to help you practice.
- Arrive 10 minutes early and greet the receptionist/front desk person politely and let them know your name and say "I have an interview with [name of the person you're interviewing with]."
- Bring a copy of your resume.
- Thank the receptionist/front desk person when you leave.

During the Interview:

- Make eye contact. If there is more than one interviewer, make sure to speak to all present regardless of who asked the question.
- Smile.
- Speak clearly and confidently.
- Show enthusiasm and willingness to learn.

Step 9: Follow Up

If you haven't heard back in a week or so:

- Send a short, polite message or email: "Hi, I wanted to follow up on my application for [job title]. I'm still very interested and would love the opportunity to work with you. Thank you!"

Step 10: Accept the Offer and Get Started

Once you're offered a job:

- Ask any questions you have about your pay, schedule, uniform, etc.
- Get a work permit, if needed.
- Be honest about your availability.
- Be on time and reliable.

Helpful Tips for Getting and Keeping a Job

- **Ask for help** — members of your CFT, your attorney, mentors, CASA, teachers, coaches, school counselors, etc. can help you draft a resume and sample application, practice your interview skills, network to find available jobs and achieve your goals.
- **Say thank you** — always be polite to people helping you.
- **Keep a positive attitude** — rejection is part of the process and learning new skills can be intimidating.
- **Keep learning** — ask for feedback if you don't get hired.
- **Build skills** — every job teaches valuable skills.
- **Conduct yourself professionally** — behaving professionally means being on time to start work and coming back from breaks, dressing appropriately, working well with others, completing your tasks, being flexible and being productive.
- **Be a team player** — getting along well with everyone and offer to help colleagues.
- **Keep social media and work separate** — even if you don't like your job, keep it to yourself or your trustworthy family and friends.

How to Ask for Help Getting and Keeping a Job

If one of your TILP goals is getting a job, ask your social worker, probation officer or other supportive adults (members of your CFT, your attorney, mentors, CASA, teachers, coaches, school counselors, etc.) what they can do assist you in achieving your goals:

- Assistance obtaining employment
 - Searching for internships and employment opportunities including job fairs
 - Completing applications and writing resumes and cover letters
 - Interviewing tips and practice
 - Finding work-appropriate clothing or required uniforms

- Keeping a job
 - Resolving conflicts with work colleagues
 - Managing school and work schedules
 - Learning new skills
-

Resources

- **Employment Services for Youth** and **Toolbox for Job Seekers** – California Employment Development Department (EDD) resources.
- **CalJOBS**: An online resource to help employers and job seekers connect.
- **Youth Rules!**: Learn about labor laws for teenagers, workplace safety, and restrictions.
- **Job Corps**: A free education and job training program for youth and young adults ages 16–24.
- **AmeriCorps**: A full-time program for young adults ages 18–24 years old that focuses on community service and leadership.
- **Apprenticeship**: There are many apprenticeship programs that serve youth and young adults ages 16–24. These programs last one to six years and combine technical classroom instruction with hands-on paid work experience.