

career  
development manitoba



A PRACTITIONER'S  
GUIDE TO  
**COMPLETING  
APPLICATIONS**

YOUR FUTURE YOUR WAY

Manitoba 



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# Introduction

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The client resource, **A Guide to Completing Applications**, contains information and worksheets to support clients in completing paper and online applications. The detailed information found within the client resource is not repeated here. Instead, the focus of this guide will be to provide facilitators with additional information, tips and strategies for conducting a “Completing Applications” workshop or working with individual clients.

Information provided in this guide covers the core concepts related to completing applications. Practitioners are encouraged to adapt materials to their personal style and needs of their clients.

## Guiding Frameworks

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Many skills can be developed through completing applications. In the following sections, relevant skills/competencies are identified from three frameworks: Blueprint for Life/Work Designs, Essential Skills and Employability Skills 2000+.

### Blueprint for Life/Work Designs

Completing applications will help develop the following Blueprint competencies:

- Completing applications falls within the following Blueprint competencies:
- Competency 7 – secure/create and maintain work
  - Level 2 – develop abilities to seek and obtain/create work
- Competency 8 – make life/work enhancing decisions
  - Level 3 – engage in life/work decision making

### Essential Skills

Completing applications will enhance the following Essential Skills:

- reading text
- document use
- numeracy
- writing
- thinking skills
- computer use (if completing online applications or researching online)
- working with others (if in a workshop)

## Employability Skills 2000+

Conducting an effective job search will focus on the following skills within the Employability Skills 2000+ system:

- Fundamental Skills
  - o communicate
  - o manage information
  - o use numbers
- Personal Management Skills
  - o demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviours
  - o be responsible
  - o be adaptable
- Teamwork Skills (if working with clients in groups)

## Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners

Supporting individuals to complete applications is an important role for career development practitioners. To do this well, practitioners would need all of the core competencies outlined in the Standards and Guidelines: Professional/Ethical Behaviour, Interpersonal Competence, Career Development Knowledge and Needs Assessment and Referral Expertise.

In addition, supporting individuals to complete applications overlaps with several of the Areas of Specialization in the Standards and Guidelines, including:

- Facilitated and Individual Group Learning
- Career Counselling
- Information and Resource Management
- Work Development

# Preparing for Your Workshop or Individual Session

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You'll need to review and gather the following items as you prepare to deliver the workshop or work individually with a client. Some practitioners like to use photocopied handouts of the charts and activities in the guide. This leaves the client guide fresh and clean for individual use after the session. Others prefer to have clients write directly on the guide, ensuring that all of the topical information stays in one place. Feel free to tailor your workshop to your personal style and participants' needs. Your personal preference will impact the resources you need to gather as you prepare for your workshop or individual session.

## Required:

- **A Guide to Completing Applications** (one copy per participant)
- pens, pencils
- for workshops:
  - computer, LCD projector and screen
  - flip chart paper and markers

## Optional:

- PowerPoint slides, printed three or six slides per page; one set per client
- Handouts from the end of this facilitator's guide (one of each per client)
  - Spot the Problems: A Summary Activity
  - Spot the Problems: Activity Answer Key

# PowerPoint Slides

The following presentation contains 17 slides. Reviewing the slide content, engaging in discussions with participants, and completing the activities should result in a three hour workshop (times listed are estimates and may depend on factors including number of participants). Discussions and activities can be expanded or contracted depending on the time you have available to conduct the workshop. Where applicable, the facilitator notes will mention how to make adjustments for time constraints. Note: the content within the following slides may be challenging to read due to size; see the PowerPoint document to review the complete content.

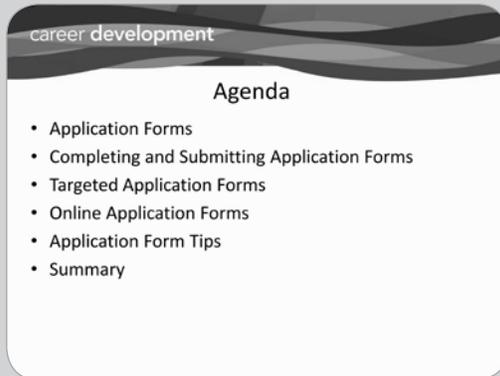


Welcome participants to workshop  
Introductions

- Have participants introduce themselves.
- An icebreaker activity can be incorporated; see Icebreakers/Energizers section for more information.

Time:

- Expect introductions to take three-to-five minutes per participant. Icebreakers may take longer. Workshop time will need to be adjusted accordingly.



Briefly review agenda to provide participants with an overview of the workshop.

Time:

- three-to-five minutes

### Application Forms

- A standard form given to all job applicants
- Usually asks for
  - Contact information
  - Employment history
  - Education
  - Qualifications
  - Availability

It may be worthwhile exploring if there are any participants that have never completed an application form

- some jobs may not require them
- new immigrants may not have filled out Canadian forms
- first time job seekers

Time:

- 10 - 12 minutes

### Why Applications Are Necessary

- Used by employers to
  - Collect specific information
  - Ensure information is standardized across applicants
  - Evaluate applicants using the same criteria
  - Create an efficient review process

Remind participants that most, if not all, of the information collected on an application form will be in their resume. Application forms provide the standardized information employers need to quickly and efficiently compare applicants.

Time:

- 10 minutes

### Completing Application Forms

- Ask for two copies or photocopy the original
- Read instructions carefully
- Print clearly
- Try not to leave blank spaces
- Proofread your application
- Attach requested documents

Remind participants that how an application is completed can be just as important as the information in the application – messy writing, spelling mistakes, and coffee stains don't make a good impression.

Time:

- five-to-seven minutes

### Master Application Forms

- Identify and record standard information
  - Basic contact information
  - Education
  - Work history
  - Salary
  - References
- Allows you to easily complete any application form

The client guide has space to complete a master application form. Participants can complete each section of the application as it is covered in the workshop.

Time:

- five-to-seven minutes

### Basic Contact Information

- If you don't have a permanent address or phone number
  - Make arrangements with someone who will get messages to you quickly
- Ensure anyone answering your phone
  - Will be polite and professional
  - Can take a complete message
- Update answering machine / voice mail message
  - Avoid "family" or abrupt/rude messages
- Create a professional email address
  - lastname@email.com

Remind participants that employers will likely contact them by phone, ensure:

- Anyone answering the phone can take a complete message.
- Your answering machine/voice mail message is appropriate.

Ask participants what kind of inappropriate phone messages they've heard, some examples are below:

- Young children's cute greeting
- "I listen to \_\_\_\_" radio station contest entry
- Abrupt "At the tone, you know what to do!"

Email can be a similar problem. Many participants may have email address that wouldn't be appropriate to give to an employer (ex: **toughguy@email.com**). With the availability of free email accounts, encourage participants to have a separate work-related email and to check it often!

Refer participants to the **Master Application Form** in Appendix A of the client guide. Have them complete the contact information section.

Time:

- 15 minutes

### Education

- List all relevant education and training
- Formal education
  - High school
  - General Education Development (Grade 12 GED)
  - College and/or university
- Informal education
  - Training courses
  - Workshops

Have participants complete the table in the Education and Work History section of the client guide.

Refer participants to the **Master Application Form** in Appendix A of the client guide. Have them complete the education section.

Be prepared to coach clients on how to handle incomplete education (ex.: “in progress” if this is true or “30 credits earned”).

Time:

- 15 minutes

### Work History

- In master application, include
  - Any position you worked at (even if only for a short time)
  - Unpaid and volunteer experiences
  - Self-employment
  - Hobbies (if relevant to a job you may apply for)
- Handle gaps in work history by
  - Enrolling in a program if need to develop a skill
  - Including life experiences

Review the kinds of gaps in employment history and brainstorm ways to fill these gaps on an application form. An example is provided in the guide:

- Sarah Jones in the **Education and Work History** section of the client guide.

Have participants complete the table in the **Education and Work History** section of the client guide.

Refer participants to the **Master Application Form** in Appendix A of the client guide. Have them complete the work history section.

Time:

- 15 minutes

### Salary History and Expectations

- Salary history
  - Be as honest and accurate as you can
  - Keep a record of your salary history
  - Remember – employers may investigate
- Salary expectations
  - Research salary ranges in advertised jobs
  - Consider your PREVIOUS years of experience and relevant education
  - Provide a salary range

Remind participants that application forms may ask for previous salary (history), per job and/or they may ask about expectations.

The low end of the salary range is what you think the employer wants to pay and the high end is what you'd like to be offered. Make sure the lower end you put on the application is realistic and you are able to live on this salary.

Refer participants to the **Master Application Form** in Appendix A of the client guide. Have them complete the salary section.

Time:

- 15 minutes

### References

- On master application form, include all potential references
  - Identify references who will comment fairly and positively
  - Ask for permission to use them as a reference
  - Ask what they'd say about you
  - Ask for preferred contact information and the best time to connect
- Inform references immediately after using them
  - Send job ad/posting or information
  - Provide current copy of your resume

Have a discussion about:

- What should you do if you are required to write down a past supervisor that you don't think will give you a favourable reference?
- What are some ways to balance negative or neutral references?

Refer participants to the **Master Application Form** in Appendix A of the client guide. Have them complete the references section

Time:

- 15 - 20 minutes

### Highlighting Your Skills

- Mention skills not related to your education or work experience
  - Awards, licenses, permits
- List special skills or attributes
  - Excellent written communication, first aid ticket, flexible schedule
- Use positive action words
  - Achieved, conducted, coordinated, involved

Remind clients that some application forms won't have a "skills" section. If possible, try to find a way to mention special skills, attributes, certifications that are relevant to the position.

Refer participants to the **Master Application Form** in Appendix A of the client guide. Have them complete the special skills section.

Time:

- 15 minutes

### Targeted Application Forms

- Each application form will be slightly different
- Carefully follow any instructions
- Ensure information is specific to the job
- Some information may be optional
  - Birth date, gender, Aboriginal status
- Do not provide
  - Social Insurance Number, Passport number

Discuss why an employer may want to know “optional” information (ex: Aboriginal status or gender may be important for equity targets) and the pros/cons to including or not including the information.

Caution participants regarding their SIN and passport numbers. This is highly sensitive information and shouldn't be included on their application forms. There is some risk of not responding fully (a form not fully completed may get passed over) so coach clients for an alternative “will provide SIN after you're hired”.

If possible, obtain application forms from local businesses and have participants practice.

Time:

- 10 minutes

### Online Application Forms

- Can save time, postage, and paper
- Do not copy and paste information into online forms
- Proofread your application carefully
- Pay attention to
  - All instructions
  - Time limits or other warnings
  - Space limits
  - Required fields

Discuss the importance of being careful of scams. Remind and explain to participants why they should not provide information such as credit card numbers, banking information, or names of family members.

Copying info into online forms (from Word) can result in coding and extra symbols. Carefully typing in the information is best but must be done carefully to ensure no mistakes.

If possible, copy and paste all your information into a word document before submitting it.  
– this helps to ensure there are no obvious spelling or grammar mistakes (assuming these features are “turned on” in Word).

Time:

- 10 - 15 minutes

### Tips for Completing Applications

- Use master application as a guide
- Read questions and directions carefully
- Keep form neat and presentable
- Provide all requested information
- Write "N/A" if not applicable
- List most recent work experience
- Be clear and proofread
- Be honest
- Sign declaration *after* reviewing the application

### Complete the **Spot the Problems Activity**

- Participants are to review the application form and circle any errors or potential problems that you notice. When they finish, participants are to compare their responses to those provided in the answer key.

Time:

- 15 - 20 minutes

### Summary

- Create master application form; carry it with you
- Read instructions fully
- Print neatly; use black or blue ink
- Provide complete and accurate contact information
- Put positive spin on gaps in work history
- Link your skills and qualifications to job requirements
- Respond to salary questions honestly; do your homework
- Identify references who will comment fairly and positively

Summarize the topics discussed. Try to weave in stories from the discussions that occurred.

Time:

- 10 minutes



Thank participants for their time. Advise them where they can go to get further assistance.

If desired, have participants complete a workshop evaluation form (see appendix A).

Time:

- two-to-three minutes; more if an evaluation is being completed

# Additional Tips and Strategies

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If an Internet connection is available, demonstrate how to research salary information:

- Go to Manitoba Job Futures Manitoba Job Futures  
[http://mb.jobfutures.org/profiles/profile\\_alpha.cfm?lang=en&site=graphic](http://mb.jobfutures.org/profiles/profile_alpha.cfm?lang=en&site=graphic)
- Select an occupation (ex: Aircraft Mechanics and Aircraft Inspectors) and click on the number beside the job title (ex: 7315)
- From the categories on the left of the screen, click on "Earnings"

# For More Information on Completing Applications

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**A Job Seeker's Guide to Successfully Completing Job Applications**

[www.quintcareers.com/job\\_applications.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/job_applications.html)

A brief article with tips, links and a sample job application form.

**Tips on Completing Employment Applications**

[www.provenresumes.com/fqa/comapp.html](http://www.provenresumes.com/fqa/comapp.html)

Answers to frequently asked questions about completing employment applications.

# Spot the Problems: A Summary Activity

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Review the following application form and circle any errors or potential problems that you notice. When you've finished, compare your responses to those provided in the Answer Key.

## Amy's Boutique Application Form

### Applicant Information:

Last Name: Jones First Name: Sarah  
Email Address: sweetbabeforlife@hotmail.com

What position are you applying for (please check all that apply):

- District Manager  Visual Director  
 Store Manager  Payroll Administrator  
 Assistant Manager  Customer Service Representative  
 Other (please specify): Payroll Clerk

### Contact Information:

Home Phone: (204) 123-4567 Cell Phone: (204) 234-4567  
Preferred Call-back Time (please check all that apply):

- Morning (8am-11am)  Afternoon (12pm-4pm)  Evening (5pm-9pm)

Address:

Apartment Number: Don't have one Address: 1234 53rd Ave  
City: Win. Postal Code: R2W 3S4

### Tell Us About Yourself:

Have you worked at an Amy's Boutique location before?  Yes  No

If so, what location did you work at and when:

Why would you like to work for Amy's Boutique?

Because I like clothes.

Are you bondable:  Yes  No

Additional Skills and Qualifications: Ex: Licences, Skills, Training, Awards, Special Abilities:

Class 5 driver's licence, Volunteer at Sunnysdale Elementary School for the last six years,

First Aid certified, current and clear criminal record check

**Availability:**

Monday	12:00 noon-9:00 p.m.
Tuesday	1:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.
Wednesday	9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
Thursday	Same
Friday	Same
Saturday	8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.
Sunday	N/A

**Education Background:**

Name and City of School, Degree/Diploma, Graduation Date:

Grant Park High School Winnipeg, Manitoba	Completion of grades 1-7	June 1993
Grant Park High School Winnipeg, Manitoba	High school diploma	June 1998

**Previous Work Experience:**Present or Last Position: VolunteerEmployer: Sunnydale Elementary SchoolAddress: 1098 Fraser Way Winnipeg, MBSupervisor: Parvinder BainsPhone: (204) 123-4567 From: September 20XX To: presentResponsibilities: Work with students one-on-one to support reading and math activities, assist with fundraising events, prepare for student-teacher interviews, attend field trips and monitor children, coach indoor co-ed soccer for primary gradesSalary: Volunteer workReason for Leaving: I continue to volunteer but the politics are making me crazy

May We Contact the Above Supervisor?

Yes  No Previous Position: Sales RepresentativeEmployer: Manitoba BooksAddress: 456 Reading Road. Brandon, MBSupervisor: Andrea ScholtzPhone: (204) 123-4567 From: January 1998 To: October 2000Responsibilities: Served 50+ customers daily, helped customers locate specialty items in the store, operated cash register, responsible for \$3,500 in cash per shift, co-ordinated customer satisfaction program with managerSalary: \$6.75 per hourReason for Leaving: Maternity

May We Contact the Above Supervisor?

Yes  No

Previous Position: Customer Service Representative  
Employer: ABC Pet Store  
Address: 123 Mall Avenue Winnipeg, MB  
Supervisor: Nelson Perez  
Phone: (204) 123-4567 From: July 1997 To: March 1998  
Responsibilities: Stocked shelves, provided customer service, operated cash register,  
responsible for \$500 in cash per shift  
Salary: \$6.00 per hour  
Reason for Leaving: Moved to Brandon  
May We Contact the Above Supervisor?  
Yes  No

**References:**

Name, Relationship and Phone Number:

1. Andrea Scholtz, Former Manager (204) 123-4567
2. Parvinder Bains, Principal (204) 123-4567
3. Nelson Perez, Former Manager (204) 123-4567

I certify that information contained in this application is true and complete. I understand that false information may be grounds for not hiring me or for immediate termination of employment at any point in the future if I am hired. I authorize the verification of any or all information listed above.

Signature: Sarah Jones Date: March 16, 20XX

# Spot the Problems Activity Answer Key

## Amy's Boutique Application Form

### Applicant Information:

Last Name: Jones First Name: Sarah  
Email Address: sweetbabeforlife@hotmail.com

Inappropriate email address.

What position are you applying for (please check all that apply):

- District Manager  Visual Director  
 Store Manager  Payroll Administrator  
 Assistant Manager  Customer Service Representative  
 Other (please specify): Payroll Clerk

This box is not selected.

Ensure that any position you include in the "Other" section is a position you are certain is available at their location; be sure to do your homework.

### Contact Information:

Home Phone: (204) 123-4567 Cell Phone: (204) 234-4567  
Preferred Call-back Time (please check all that apply):  
 Morning (8am-11am)  Afternoon (12pm-4pm)  Evening (5pm-9pm)

Address:

Apartment Number: Don't have one Address: 1234 53rd Ave  
City: Win. Postal Code: R2W 3S4

The instructions specifically indicate to "check all that apply", this is a simple way for employers to evaluate your attention to detail.

### Tell Us About Yourself:

Have you worked in retail before?  Yes  No  
If so, what location before? \_\_\_\_\_ when: \_\_\_\_\_

Avoid using abbreviations—writing out words entirely is more professional.

Not necessary; leave blank if it does not apply.

Why would you like to work for Amy's Boutique?  
Because I like clothes.

Are you bondable:  Yes  No

This is not a professional answer. Refer to sample application form for a more appropriate response.

Additional Skills and Qualifications: Ex: Licen \_\_\_\_\_ Special Abilities:  
Class 5 driver's licence, Volunteer at Sunnysdale Elementary School for the last six years, First Aid certified, current and clear criminal record check

**Availability:**

Monday 12:00 noon-9:00 p.m.  
 Tuesday 1:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.  
 Wednesday 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.  
 Thursday Same  
 Friday Same  
 Saturday 8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.  
 Sunday N/A

This is unclear as written; 12 noon would be clearer.

Writing "same" in one form or another makes Sarah appear lazy. Write out the times repeatedly as needed; this also makes it clearer.

**Education Background:**

Name and City of School, Degree/Diploma, Graduation Date:

Grant Park High School Winnipeg, Manitoba	Completion of grades 1-7	June 1993
Grant Park High School Winnipeg, Manitoba	High school diploma	

This information is unnecessary. If you are a recent high school graduate there is no need to include previous educational history just to fill space.

**Previous Work Experience:**

Present or Last Position: Volunteer

Employer: Sunnydale Elementary School

Address: 1098 Fraser Way Winnipeg, MB

Supervisor: Parvinder Bains

Phone: (204) 123-4567 From: September 20XX To: present

Responsibilities: Work with students one-on-one to support reading and math activities, assist with fundraising events, prepare for student-teacher interviews, attend field trips and monitor children, coach indoor co-ed soccer for primary grades

Salary: Volunteer work

Reason for Leaving: I continue to volunteer but the politics are making me crazy

May We Contact the Above Supervisor?

Yes  No

This is not a professional answer. Refer to sample application form for a more appropriate response.

Previous Position: Sales Representative

Employer: Manitoba Books

Address: 456 Reading Road. Brandon, MB

Supervisor: Andrea Scholtz

Phone: (204) 123-4567 From: January 1998 To: October 2000

Responsibilities: Served 50+ customers daily, helped customers locate specialty items in the store, operated cash register, responsible for \$3,500 in cash per shift, co-ordinated customer satisfaction program with manager

Salary: \$6.75 per hour

Reason for Leaving: Maternity

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Yes  No

**References:**

Name, Relationship and Phone Number:

1. Andrea Scholtz, Former Manager (204) 123-4567
2. Parvinder Bains, Principal (204) 123-4567
3. Nelson Perez, Former Manager (204) 123-4567

Include details about where Parvinder works (ex: Sunnydale Elementary School).

Include details about where Nelson and Andrea managed Sarah (ex: Former Manager, ABC Store). This will give the employer more context when calling references so appropriate questions can be asked.

I certify that information contained in this application is true and correct. If the information may be grounds for not hiring me or for immediate termination at any point in the future if I am hired. I authorize the verification of

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ny

Signature: Sarah Jones Date: March 16, 20XX