

### Checklist for Asking Someone to Serve as a Reference

- Ask for permission. For example, "Would you be willing to serve as a positive reference for me as I pursue my job search?"
- Tell the person why you want him or her to be one of your references. Emphasize what the individual knows about your skills and abilities.
- Tell him or her what career path you are pursuing and what information you feel would be valuable to share with a prospective employer. Provide a copy of your résumé.
- In most cases, your references will be contacted by phone or sent a form to complete. It is usually not necessary for the reference to write a letter for you.
- If you are required to supply letters from your references, tell them when you need the reference. Give adequate time to write a letter of recommendation, preferably two weeks. It can be appropriate to ask if they would like for you to write the letter for them as to not take up additional time in their busy schedules. You may need letters of recommendation at the time you apply for a position, or they may be requested at a later time during the employment process. If you are asking the individual to mail a letter of recommendation, provide a self-addressed envelope. If it is via e-mail, provide a correct e-mail address.
- When possible, provide your references with a job description of the target job and how you feel you meet or exceed that criteria. Make sure he or she knows what you desire from the recommendation. For example, you may find it helpful that one reference give insight into your communication skills while another one would speak to your technical skills.
- Thank your references. A definite word of thanks or a written note is the correct follow-up. Keep them posted throughout your employment process. A call from a prospective employer should not be a surprise to any reference. It should be expected so they are adequately prepared to respond with facts and specific examples about your abilities. Be sure to let them know the outcome and if you continue in the job search process.
- Make sure to inform your references if and when you have a name change since your affiliation with them.