

# Finding Work... ...in the Northwest Territories



# ...in the Northwest Territories

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## Introduction

The NWT is filled with many job opportunities, ranging from entry level to professional positions. Getting work can be simple if you take the time to develop your job-hunting skills and know where to begin your search.

This booklet is intended to help you find work. It offers basic information on the work search process, tips to help you find unadvertised jobs, and steps to improve your resume, cover letter, application forms and interview style. It also includes specific tips for finding work in the NWT and a planner to help you organize your work search.

Searching for a job requires patience, detective work and your full attention. With this booklet and your determination you will be able to take advantage of the many work opportunities in the NWT.

## Getting Started

There are a few steps to take before you actually begin looking for work. First you must know yourself and the available work opportunities that are best for you. Local labour market information and employment references from past employers can also help you in your work search.

**Tip: Write down your skills, interests and values in the back of this Worksearch Planner!**



## Skills, Interests and Values

It is important to know your skills, interests and values. Skills are the things that you have learned to do, such as writing, sewing and welding. Interests are the things that you like to do, such as gardening, fishing and travelling. Values are the things that are important to you. Values are very personal, and may include things like being secure, being healthy and making the world a better place. By identifying your values you can narrow your work search to jobs that you are qualified for and that interest you. You will be happier and stay in a job longer if it is one that you enjoy.

## Labour Market Information

Labour market information, also known as LMI, is any information that relates to the world of work. This information can include:

- The types of work available
- Which businesses are hiring
- What skills, education and training you need
- Salaries and expected working conditions
- How to get training and work experience
- Economic trends

LMI is important because it lets you know what to expect when looking for a job. Is there plenty of opportunity? Or are jobs hard to find right now? It also tells you what is expected of you. Do you have the skills, education and training needed?

LMI can be found in many places such as businesses, newspapers, career centres, and government departments. Job advertisements are one source of LMI, but newspapers also have articles about the types of work being done, future projects and new businesses that are forming. Employers put LMI in advertisements and posters. Career centres, band and hamlet offices and government offices have information on the labour market in your area. Your friends, family and neighbours can also be a source of LMI by letting you know of job opportunities or events that are happening where they work.

## Employment References

References from previous employers and volunteer experiences can provide you with a good sense of your skills and abilities. They can help you decide which jobs are best suited for you. You will be asked for references when you are applying on new jobs.

Letters of reference are typically one page and describe the type of work you have done and how well you perform in your job. Your letter of reference should briefly describe your unique qualities that would make an employer want to hire you.

If you are applying on your first job and have no previous work references, ask a trusted adult such as a principal, teacher or elder. If you have previous volunteer experience you can use that experience as a reference of your skills. Always ask the person you want to use as a reference beforehand.

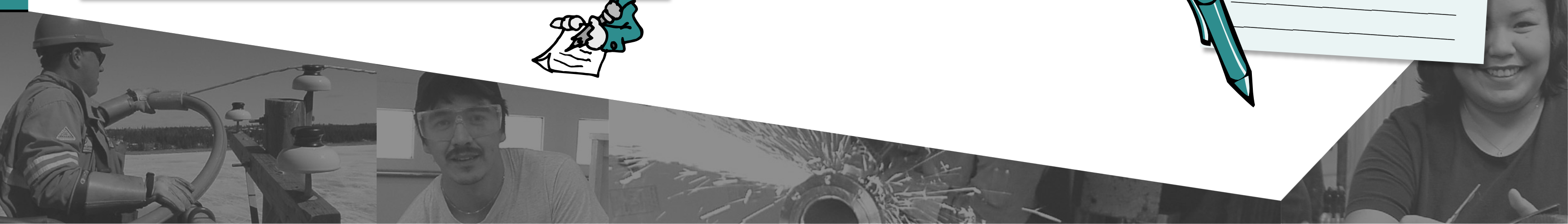
## Finding Work Opportunities

Once you have narrowed down the types of work you are looking for, you have to find where the work is. There are many places to look. Remember, not all jobs are advertised and you may have to use some detective work. You may also have to consider moving to another community where work is available.

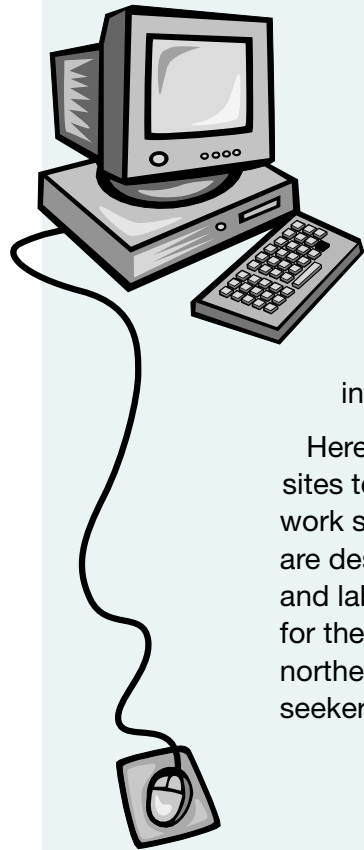
## Classified Ads

- Some employers advertise in newspapers. Check the classified ads in the various NWT newspapers to see who is hiring. Northern newspapers include: News North, the Yellowknifer, the Hay River Hub, the Slave River Journal, Deh Cho Drum and the Inuvik Drum.
- Help Wanted ads are often posted on bulletin boards in many places in your community. Check stores, community centres, businesses and government offices.
- Once you have chosen an ad, you will have to contact the employer to get a job description or more details about the job. You will then have to fill out an application form or send in a resume and cover letter.

## My References:



# Finding Work...



### Internet

There are many ways that the Internet can help you in your job search. Some web sites allow you to apply for jobs online and some help you to create a resume or identify your skills, interests and values.

Here are a few northern web sites to help you with your work search. These web sites are designed to provide career and labour market information for the NWT and to bring northern employees and job seekers together.

jobsnorth.ca – [www.jobsnorth.ca](http://www.jobsnorth.ca)

A northern labour exchange designed for both employers and job seekers.

An easy to follow user guide has been developed for this site and can be found online at [www.jobsnorth.ca](http://www.jobsnorth.ca) in the “New to jobsnorth.ca” section.

NorthWIN – [www.northwin.ca](http://www.northwin.ca)

This site provides career and labour market information for the NWT. It has links to volunteer opportunities, occupational information and career planning.

NorthWise – [www.northwise.ca](http://www.northwise.ca)

This site is for students who are looking for summer employment. Online applications, resume tips and an employer search are available.

Northern News Services –

[www.nnsl.com/jobs/jobs.html](http://www.nnsl.com/jobs/jobs.html)

Many of the classified ads from northern newspapers are also available online.

### Networking

A network is all of the people you know who can be sources of information and support. Your network can include your family, friends, neighbours, as well as people you meet through volunteering, club memberships and sports teams. Networking is about asking for job leads and putting the word out that you are looking for work.

Employers don't want to spend time or money on advertising if they can find good employees by word of mouth. When they need to hire someone, they often ask their employees, “Do you know anyone who can do this job?” It is important that your network knows that you are looking for work.

### My Network:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# ...in the Northwest Territories

### Business Listings

Business listings are helpful when you are looking for work. Listings provide contact information for all the employers in your area. They can help you find the jobs that aren't advertised.

You can find NWT business listings at your local Chamber of Commerce, in the Yellow Pages in the phone book and on the Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development (RWED) web site at [www.rwed.gov.nt.ca](http://www.rwed.gov.nt.ca).

### Telephone Contact

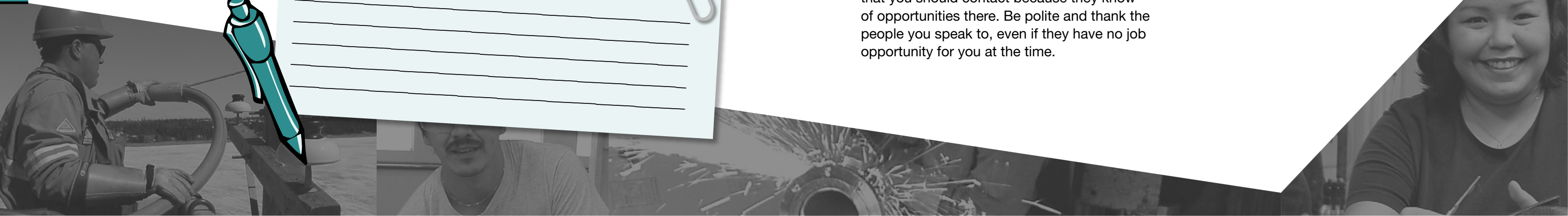
Cold calling is when you call a business you are interested in working for and ask about possible employment opportunities. These calls can be a very effective way to search for a job because it allows you to access unadvertised jobs. Use business listings or the phone book to develop a list of companies or organizations where you would like to work.

It can be intimidating calling a business and talking to a stranger. However, cold calling is a common practice and it shows that you are taking initiative in your work search. It is normal to be nervous before cold calling, so practice what you wish to say ahead of time. Write a short statement that takes less than one minute to say and sounds positive and upbeat. State your name; describe your background and the type of job you are looking for with the company.

Try to arrange a meeting or an appointment to talk further about employment opportunities. Some companies will suggest other businesses that you should contact because they know of opportunities there. Be polite and thank the people you speak to, even if they have no job opportunity for you at the time.

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am phoning to inquire about possible job opportunities with your company. I am looking to be a \_\_\_\_\_ and I am interested in working for your company. Do you have any positions available?

I would like to speak with you further about possible opportunities. Is it possible that we can arrange a meeting? Thank you very much for taking the time to speak with me.



## Work Search Documents

Once you have chosen a few jobs, you need to apply on them. This can involve filling in an application form, submitting a resume, or both.

### Application Forms

Some jobs may require that you to fill out an application form. If you do have to fill one out, here are some tips:

- Make sure to have a copy of your resume and references so you can copy the information onto the application form.
- Ask for two copies of the form in case you make a mistake.
- Bring your own good quality pens and read the instructions carefully when filling out the forms.

- When listing previous employers, list your most recent employer first and then work backwards.
- Attach a copy of your resume.

### Resumes

A resume provides an employer with information about you. By reading your resume the employer can tell if you have the skills for the job. The employer can decide whether or not to interview you.

Your resume should be short (one to two pages), easy to read, and look neat. It should tell the employer what work you have done in the past. It should also tell the employer about the skills you have.

### Remember to:

- Keep your resume simple.
- Be positive!
- Sell yourself. Write down your skills and talents.
- Do not start every sentence with the word "I".
- Be honest. Do not say you did something when you did not.
- Do not sign or date your resume.
- Get a friend or family member to read your resume.
- Make sure it is typed and on good white paper.

Contact your Career Centre or search the Internet for other examples of resumes and cover letters.



## Rebecca Nazar

123 First Street  
Fort Smith, NT X0E 0P0  
Phone: (867) 123-1234

### Computer Skills:

- Word
- Excel
- Internet and e-mail

### Customer Service Skills:

- Praised by Assistant Manager at the Arctic Grocery Store for assisting customers in a friendly and helpful manner.
- Promoted the Arctic Grocery Store at the Fort Smith Trade Show.

### Organizational Skills:

- Coordinated and organized the "Polar Winter Carnival", increased ticket sales for the raffle by 25% over the previous year.
- Performed cash-out procedures for approximately \$1000 in revenue per shift at the Arctic Grocery Store in an efficient and effective manner.
- Worked ten hours per week and maintained excellent attendance at school.
- Volunteered for the Student's Union and maintained a B+ average in school during the 2001/2002 school year.

### Experience:

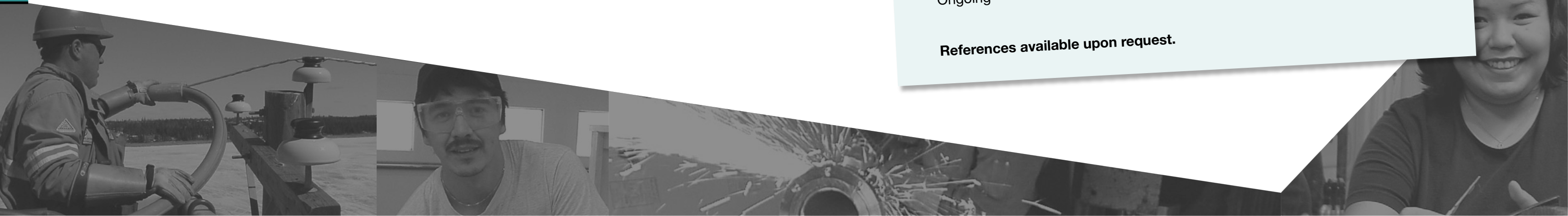
Sales Associate  
Arctic Grocery Store (Part-time)  
Fort Smith, NT  
June 2001 – Present

Polar High School Student's Union (Volunteer)  
September 1999 – Present

### Education:

Grade 11  
Polar High School, Fort Smith, NT  
Ongoing

References available upon request.



**Alan Choudhury**  
 123 100th Street  
 Yellowknife, NT X1A 2A1  
 Phone: 867-123-1234

**Career Objective:** To obtain an entry-level position in the oil and gas industry, in field research or administration, where my background in geology would be an asset.

**Education:**

- B.Sc. (Geology) University of Alberta, 2000

**Work Experience:**

Summer 1999

Research Assistant for Professor Bob Smith on the study of the Canadian Shield in the Northwest Territories.

Summer 1998

Head of tree-planting crew for Planters Inc. in northern Alberta.

- Hired, trained, and supervised crew of eight planters.
- Organized delivery of equipment and food supplies.
- Managed budget and kept accounts.

Summers 1996-97

Member of tree-planting crew for Planters Inc.

- Earned enough to pay my way through college.

**Specialized Skills and Experience:**

- Good computer skills. Knowledge of Windows XP and DOS. Familiar with HTML and JavaScript.
- Strong background in field research. Took several advanced courses in field research and was able to use these skills in my position as Research Assistant.

**Interests and Achievements:**

- Captain of University of Alberta hockey team 1998-1999
- Big Brother (Edmonton Chapter) since September 1997

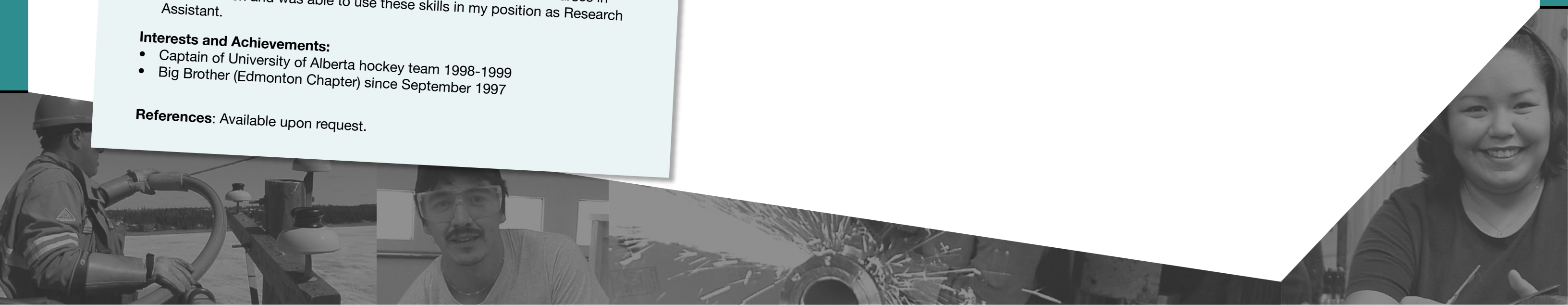
**References:** Available upon request.

**Cover Letters**

A one page, typed cover letter should go with each resume that you submit. Your cover letter is the first thing an employer reads and it introduces you to them. Your cover letter should be polite, positive and appealing. It should make the employer want to know more about you so that they will go on and read your resume carefully.

**Remember to:**

- Make sure your letter complements your resume instead of repeating it.
- Create a new cover letter for every job for which you apply.
- Tell the employer how you found out about the job.
- Briefly tell the employer some things you know about the company.
- Tell the employer how you will help them. Describe your skills and let the employer know why you are the best person for the job.
- Be available for an interview. Give the employer a phone number where messages can be left.
- Make sure your cover letter is typed and on the same paper as your resume.
- Check the letter carefully. The reader may view your letter as an example of your writing skills.



## General Outline of a Cover Letter

Date

Contact Name

Title

Company Name

Complete Mailing Address, including street address

City/Town, Territory

Postal Code

Position Applying for \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Opening Paragraph: State why you are writing, name of the position/type of work you are interested in and how you learned of the opportunity.

Middle Paragraph(s): Tell them why you are interested and why you are an appropriate candidate for this position. Highlight any relevant work experience or related education that you may have. Emphasize your skills and abilities that relate to the position for which you are applying.

Closing Paragraph: Have an appropriate closing. Indicate that you are available for an interview or show motivation by telling the employer that you will be in contact with them.

Sincerely,  
(Sign your name)

Your full name typed  
Street address  
City/Town, Territory  
Postal Code  
Telephone Number(s)

Enclosure(s)  
(Your resume)

## Example of a Cover Letter

June 30, 2003

Ms. Holly Peters  
Manager  
Shop Here Clothing Store  
1234 Main Street  
Inuvik, NT  
X0E 0T0

Re: APPLICATION FOR SALESPERSON

Dear Ms. Peters:

I am interested in applying for the position of salesperson at the Shop Here Clothing Store, which was advertised in the June 10 edition of News North.

As a high school student, I have developed organizational and communication skills through my involvement in school sports and by coaching junior volleyball.

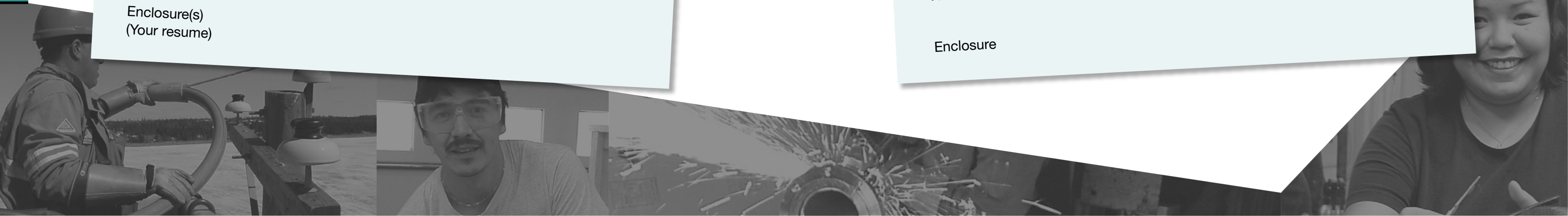
I also understand how business operates through my economics and accounting classes. I have enclosed my resume with further details.

I would enjoy being a part of your company and am available for an interview at your convenience. You can contact me at 123-1234 or leave a message at 123-1111. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,  
*Jane Dale*

Jane Dale  
12-A Pine Street  
Inuvik, NT  
X0E 0T0

Enclosure



## Portfolios

In the past, graphic artists, photographers and journalists showcased their work through portfolios. Portfolios are now becoming a popular way for anyone to demonstrate job skills and accomplishments to potential employers. Your portfolio goes beyond your resume and cover letter, creating a more complete picture of who you are. Be sure to indicate in your cover letter that you have a portfolio and remember to bring it with you to your interviews.

Portfolios are a good way to:

- Boost your self-confidence – just looking at your accomplishments makes you feel good!
- Demonstrate your skills and accomplishments – they provide physical evidence of your awards.
- Create a lasting impression in an interview.

Portfolios can be created in a three-ring binder that should be divided up into sections.

Some sections to include are:

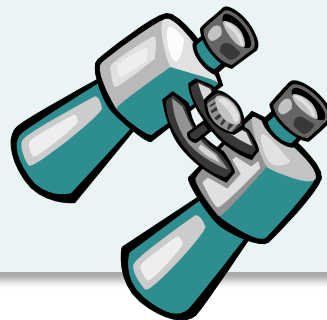
- Skills and abilities
- Current resume and cover letter
- Career summary and goals
- Samples of your work (writing, projects, photos)
- Letters of recommendation
- Awards and honours
- Conferences and workshops you have attended
- Transcripts, degrees, licenses and certificates
- References – usually three to five people

## Employment Proposals

Employment proposals are a way to approach an employer directly and offer a service that you think they need. This is an opportunity to create your own job based on your skills and a company's need.

Pay attention to other businesses and companies when you are out looking for work. If you note that a business has few employees, or that the employees are doing many jobs at once, contact the employer (as you would in cold calling) and tell them why your skills would benefit their workplace.

**Tip: Employment proposals are a creative way to look for work. By paying attention to your surroundings you may find a great job!**



## Job Interviews

Good interview skills are just as important as a good resume. A resume gets your foot in the door with a potential employer; a good interview will get you the job.

Here are some tips:

- Be sure to look your best. Wear clean clothes and shoes.
- Be sure to bring a copy of your resume and references to the interview.
- Know the exact address of where the interview will be held and how long it takes to get there so that you will be on time.
- Pay attention to your body language and facial expressions. Try not to fidget with anything during the interview, even if you are nervous. Smile and have a pleasant expression on your face.
- Relax. Be positive and show interest in the job.

## Answering Interview Questions

Ask a friend, family member, or Career Development Officer to practice an interview with you. By practicing you will be better prepared and less nervous for the real interview.

Interviewers want to know how you would handle different situations that might come up on the job. You may be asked to describe a time when:

- You handled a difficult situation at work.
- You have met a deadline.
- You have made a mistake and how you corrected it.
- You worked as part of a team.
- You provided excellent customer service.
- You handled an angry or rude customer or co-worker.

Also be prepared to describe any machines you can use (cash register, power tools, heavy duty equipment), what your strengths and skills are and what your weaknesses are. Talking about your weaknesses is difficult. Try to stay positive and don't put yourself down. Always show that you are working on your weaknesses and trying to improve. For example, you may say that one of your weaknesses is not being able to read well. You also need to say that you are working to improve your reading.

Here are a few more questions to practice and tips to answer them:

### • Why do you want this job?

Possible answer: *"I would like this job to be able to increase my skills, to grow with your company and to work in a positive work environment."*

### • Why should we hire you?

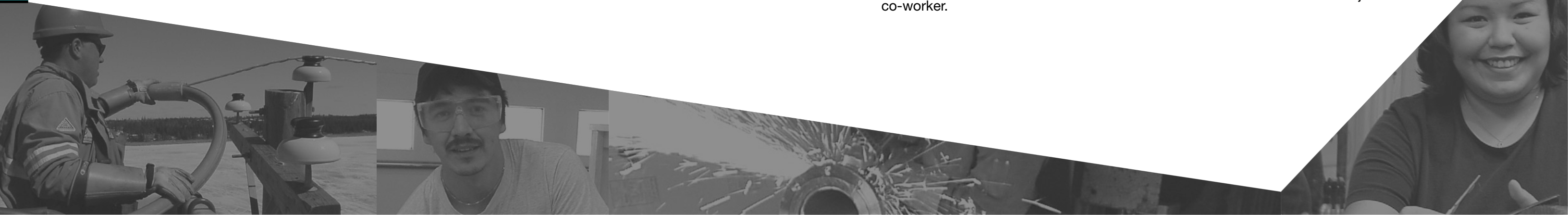
Possible answer: *"Your company should hire me because I am a positive, dedicated and responsible employee who takes pride in my work."*

(Before your interview determine how your skills relate to the job).

### • Why did you leave your last job?

Possible answer: *"I left my last job because I felt that my career goals were not being met."* (Do not speak poorly about your past employers. Even if it was a negative place to work, try to say one thing positive about the job and move on).

There are no right answers to these questions. Remember to be honest and positive. Demonstrate to the interviewer how your skills, knowledge and abilities make you an excellent candidate for the job.



## Questions You Can Ask

The interviewer will usually ask you if you have any questions for them. It is good to ask one or two questions. It shows you are interested in the job and the company.

Here are a few questions you can ask:

- When will you expect to make the hiring decision?
- Is there any orientation or training for new employees?
- What are the hours of work?
- When will the job start?
- How many people will I be working with?
- Who will I report to?

Remember to thank the interviewer at the end of the interview.

## Follow Up

Some people write a thank you card and drop it off the day after an interview. Other people phone to say thank you for the interview. After about a week, if you have not heard from the company, it is acceptable to call and ask if they have made their hiring choice.

Remember:

- Alert your references that they may be getting a phone call from the employer.
- Don't stop job hunting and networking even if you feel confident about an interview. Continue to explore other opportunities.
- Don't place too much importance on one job or interview; there will be other opportunities for you.

## Getting Hired in the NWT

### GNWT Hiring Policies

The affirmative action hiring policy outlines that aboriginal peoples and northern residents are to be given priority over non-residents from the south.

For more information on hiring procedures, log on to the GNWT web site at [www.gov.nt.ca](http://www.gov.nt.ca). Click on "Information for Employees" at the bottom of the screen and then scroll down to the "Government of the NWT Policies".

### Other Businesses

Many businesses prefer to hire northern workers because it is less expensive than it would be to move someone to the North. Businesses and companies often specifically hire northern residents so that money remains in the North and supports northern families. Check with different companies about their hiring policies, as they are not all the same.

### Seasonal Work

Many industries in the NWT such as construction, exploration, winter road construction, and aviation, work seasonally so job opportunities may increase during these times. Contact various employers and ask them when they do most of their hiring.

Employers may hire people in the summer for work that starts in the winter, or they will hire people in the winter to begin work in the summer. This allows employers to properly train their employees and prepare them for their jobs.

## Summer Employment

There are many employment opportunities for summer jobs in the NWT. Check out the following for opportunities:

### • Government of the NWT

The GNWT hires summer students. Contact Corporate Human Resource Services office in the community nearest you.

### • Summer Student Employment Program

Telephone: (867) 920-3312  
 Fax: (867) 873-0235  
 E-mail: [info@northwise.ca](mailto:info@northwise.ca)  
 Web: [www.northwise.ca](http://www.northwise.ca)

- **Youth Employment Program (YEP)** is a program sponsored by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE). Check with your local Career Centre of for more information.

### • HRDC Youth Employment Programs

#### • Hire a Student Program

Every year there is a Hire A Student office in Yellowknife, however, other offices are sometimes set up in other NWT communities. Check with the Yellowknife office if there is an office in or near your community.

Yellowknife Hire A Student Office  
 Box 1170 Station Main  
 Yellowknife, NT X1A 2N8  
 Telephone: (867) 766-4575  
 Fax: (867) 873-3621

- **Summer Career Placements (SCP)** is a program sponsored by HRDC and is designed to help students prepare for their entry into the labour market. You must submit an application to participate in this program. Check with your local Human Resource Centre of Canada for application forms and deadlines.

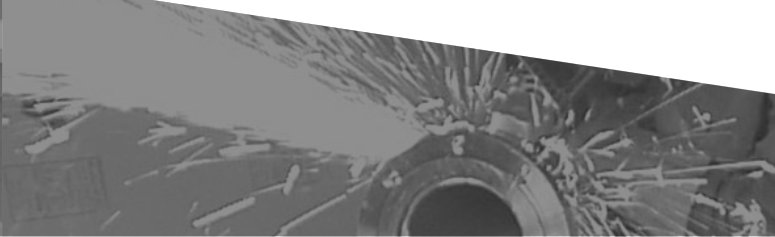
### • Starting Your Own Business

If you are interested in starting your own business in the NWT contact:

#### • Canada/NWT Business Service Centre

Scotia Centre 8th Floor  
 PO Box 1320  
 Yellowknife, NT X1A 2L9  
 Telephone: (867) 873-7958  
 Toll Free: 1-800-661-0599  
 Fax: (867) 873-0101  
 E-mail: [yel@cbssc.ic.gc.ca](mailto:yel@cbssc.ic.gc.ca)  
 Web: [www.cbssc.org/nwt](http://www.cbssc.org/nwt)

- **Jobsnorth.ca** also has some summer employment opportunities: [www.jobsnorth.ca](http://www.jobsnorth.ca)





# Finding Work...

## Improving Your Chances

### Training

Sometimes you may be interested in a certain type of work but do not have enough experience or the right qualifications. You may have to take some additional training to get the job that you want. Look into training on the job, apprenticeship or internship opportunities. There are short-term and specific training courses at Aurora College and the Academy of Learning that may help you prepare for a job.

Keep your ears open for training courses in your community. Let your network of people know that you are interested in training in case they know of an upcoming opportunity.

### Volunteering

Volunteering is a great way to gain valuable experience and explore different career paths. It allows you to try out a job to see if you will enjoy it. Look in the newspaper for volunteer ads. If there is a specific organization you would like to volunteer with, talk to someone who volunteers or works there and ask about how you can become involved.

Volunteer activities on your resume show that you take initiative and that you care about the well being of others in your community. It requires the same commitment as paid work and is often accepted as qualifications on job and education applications.

Volunteering also allows you to gain a deeper sense of your values and interests by working with other people. Everyone benefits from volunteering!

**Volunteer Ideas:**

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# ...in the Northwest Territories

## NWT Career Centres

There are six Career Centres in the NWT to help you plan your career. Career counsellors can help you identify your skills, interests and values. They offer individual and group sessions and have various resources and tools to help you get to know yourself better.

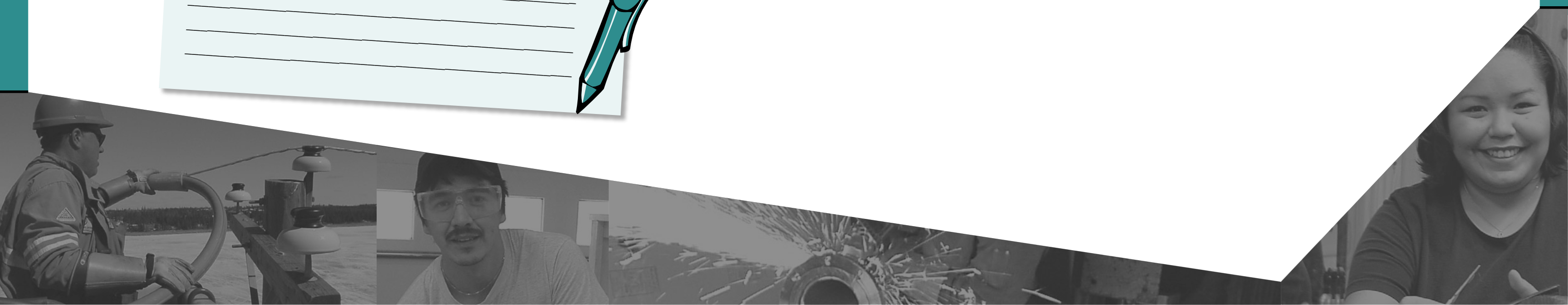
Career Centres offer workshops on resume writing, searching for work, interview skills and portfolio development. They also have resource libraries filled with labour market information.

You are able to access computers at the Career Centres for resume writing and searching for a job over the Internet. There are telephones available for you to contact employers and job ads posted for you to look at.



**The six Career Centres are located in:**

<b>Fort Smith</b> – Sweetgrass Building .....	(867) 872-7217
<b>Hay River</b> – Courthouse Building .....	(867) 874-9200
<b>Fort Simpson</b> – Deh Cho Hall .....	(867) 695-7335
<b>Yellowknife</b> – Joe Tobie Building.....	(867) 766-5100
<b>Inuvik</b> – Perry Building .....	(867) 777-7323
<b>Norman Wells</b> – Shihta Regional Council .....	(867) 587-2566





# Finding Work...

## Work Search Planner

Use the following pages to record your work search activities. Write down the employers you have visited or spoken to, their address, phone and/or fax number, the date(s) you have visited or spoken to them and the job(s) you are applying for (or would like to apply for).

### My Skills, Interests and Values:

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### My Education:

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### My Experience:

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### My Network/References:

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### Possible Occupations/Jobs:

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# ...in the Northwest Territories

### Employer Visited:

### Date Visited:

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Job applied for: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

### Employer Visited:

### Date Visited:

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

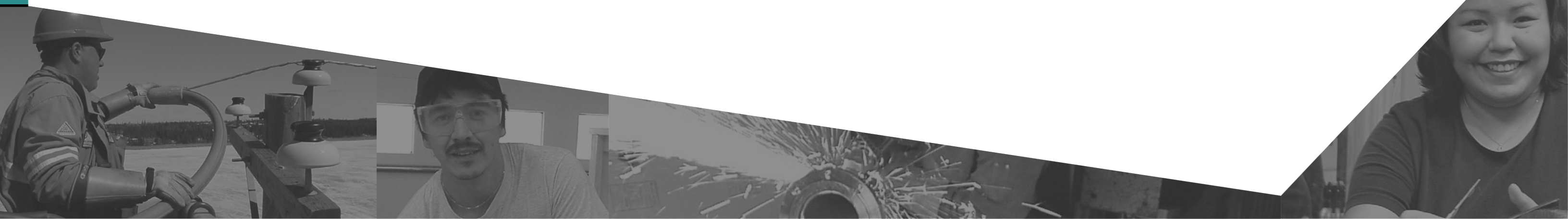
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Job applied for: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_





# Finding Work...

**Employer Visited:**

**Date Visited:**

Address:

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Phone:

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Fax:

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E-mail:

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Job applied for:

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Comments:

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**Employer Visited:**

**Date Visited:**

Address:

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Phone:

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Fax:

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E-mail:

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Job applied for:

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Comments:

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