

Reference List

Ensure your references will give the best description possible of the talents you have to offer a potential employer. Follow these tips to optimize your reference list and increase your chances of landing your ideal position.

View the [BUILD - Career Readiness](#) webpage for more tailored advice.

GET PERMISSION BEFORE NAMING SOMEONE AS A REFERENCE

Even if you are positive someone would consent to be a reference, it is essential to ask their permission before giving out their contact information to anyone. Make this your opportunity to learn what their preferred method of contact is: work phone, personal phone, or email address.

MAKE SURE THE REFERENCE WILL BE A POSITIVE ONE

Check to see if your potential reference seems enthusiastic about acting as your reference. Ask if they are comfortable describing your job skills to a potential employer. If they appear hesitant or reluctant to agree, it may be that they have some concerns about your job performance, or they are concerned about their own ability to adequately describe your skills.

PROVIDE INFORMATION TO YOUR REFERENCE

To allow your reference to give a glowing report, provide some information about the opportunity you are seeking. This will help provide your references direction and knowledge on what skills and abilities to place emphasis on.

THANK YOUR REFERENCE AND FOLLOW UP

Follow up with all your references on your internship/employment progress. You can do so either via email, phone call, card, or in-person. Even if you did not get the job, thanking your references shows appreciation for their efforts and allows an opportunity to request using them as a reference again in the future.

EXAMPLE REFERENCE REQUEST EMAIL

Dear [Reference's Name],

I hope you are doing well. I am excited to share I am applying for [position title] at [company name]. This position especially excites me because the posting lists an ideal candidate would possess [skills listed on the job posting AND you are strong in].

With your permission, may I please list you as a reference on my application? I believe you would serve as a relevant source due to our time [working/volunteering/coaching, etc.] together. If you are comfortable serving as a reference, I would very much appreciate the favor. The application requests a phone number and an email address for each reference listed. I'm hoping to finalize my application by [date a few days prior to your ideal application submission date]. Please let me know if you have any questions. Thanks again for your help!

Sincerely,
[Name]

You can request a contact to be a reference in person, over the phone, or via email. Avoid asking for references over social media.

