

How to Get a Work Permit and Job

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In the United States, there are two kinds of work permits. One is a youth work permit, which teens under age 18 typically must obtain before working a job. You can apply by contacting your guidance counselor or finding your state's office. Another work permit is given by the U.S. federal government to immigrants who are not yet green card holders or naturalized citizens. Canada also awards work permits to non-citizens in some situations. In Canada, you'll need to have a job offer in hand before applying for the permit.

Method 1

Method 1 of 3: Obtaining a Youth Work Permit and Job



1 Read your state's law. In the U.S., each state sets its own rules regarding youth permits. You should find your state's rules by typing "youth work permit" and then your state into a search engine. Look for a state government website.

- You might also want to talk to a guidance counselor at school. Tell them, "Hey, Mr. Jones, I'm thinking of getting a summer job. Do you know where I can find information?" They should be able to point you in the right direction.



2 Check age requirements. Before applying, make sure that you are old enough. For example, your state will have a minimum age limit. In Massachusetts, the minimum age is 14.^[1]

- Also check whether you need a permit at all. In Nevada, you don't need a work permit if you are at least 14 years of age.^[2]
- Some states might exempt you if you have already graduated high school. For example, in California, you don't need a work permit if you've already graduate or received a certificate of proficiency.^[3]



3 Understand limitations on work you can do. Most states will limit the number of hours you can work. They may also limit when you can work. You should understand these limitations before you begin working.

- For example, in Massachusetts, you are limited to working a maximum of 18 hours a week when school is in session. You can only work from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. during the school year and 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. when school is not in session.
- You'll also be limited in the kinds of work you can do. Certain jobs are considered "hazardous" and minors are prohibited from working them. There may be other restrictions for especially young workers.^[4] Check with your state's labor office.



4 Gather required documents. Your state may request certain documents before issuing the permit. You should ask ahead of time what documents you will need to submit, which will vary depending on your state. In Wisconsin, for example, you must submit the following:

- proof of age, such as your birth certificate
- your Social Security card
- consent from your parents or guardians
- letter from your employer on letterhead identify the job duties and hours worked
- permit fee



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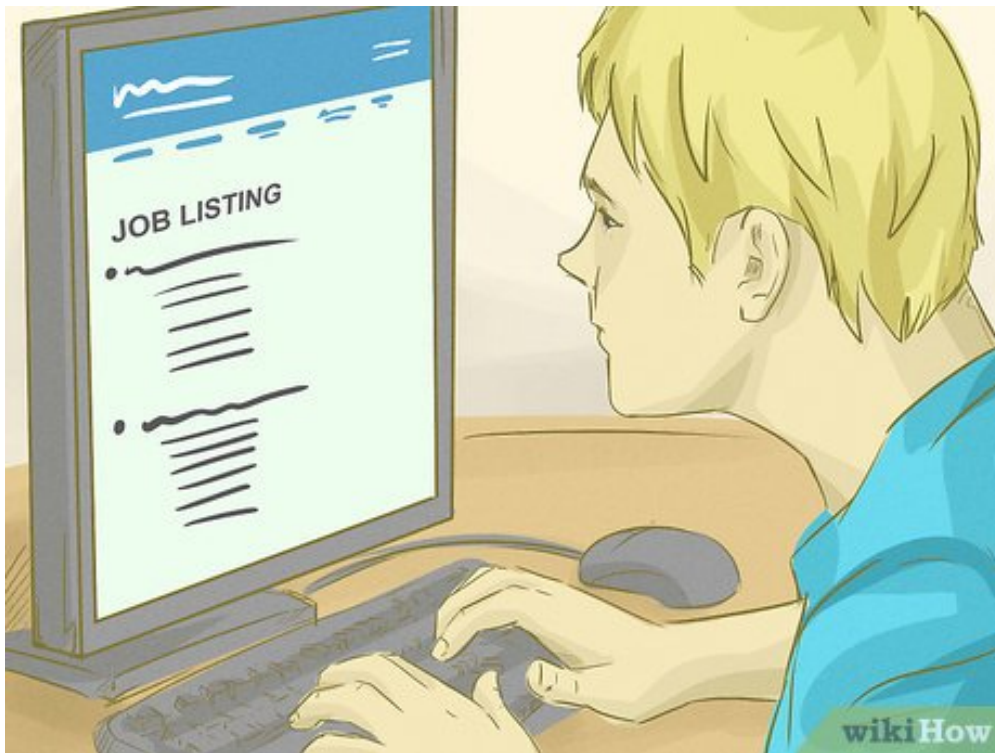
5 Ask your parents for permission. You'll need your parents to sign off on the work permit, so you should ask them if you can work. Try to have several reasons why getting a job will be beneficial. For example, consider the following:

- Explain why you want the money. You can tell your parents, "If I work, then I'll be able to buy my new school clothes and supplies. This will help me learn how to budget."^[5]
- Tell them what you hope to learn. Say, "I've never worked before, and I think this is a good way to learn how to be in a team with other people. I'll learn important people skills."
- Tell them you are bored. Explain to your parents that you'll only be sitting at home if you don't work. By working, you'll make productive use of your time.



6 Apply for the permit. There should be an application you can fill out. Check your state's website for where you can get the form. In some states, you can get one from your superintendent of schools or a guidance counselor. In other states, you must contact work permit offices.

- Complete the application neatly. If your handwriting is messy, then try to type the application.
- Keep a copy of the permit application for your records and then submit it to the required person.
- Ask how you'll receive the permit. In some states, you can print it off and then sign it. [6] In other states, you might have to pick it up in person.



7 Apply for jobs. Typical teen jobs include working in a fast food restaurant, babysitting, and working in camps and hotels.^[7] However, you should think about what interests you and, of course, what businesses are hiring where you live. Depending on your state, you might need a job offer in hand before you even apply for the work permit.^[8] Check your state's rules.

- You might think about writing a resume. Although not required for most jobs teens get, it is a way to stand out.
- Try to apply in as many places as possible. If you must apply in person, then wear neat, conservative clothes. Cut your hair and nails so that you look professional.
- If you get an interview, then take it seriously. Answer all questions honestly and mail or deliver a "thank you" note to whoever interviewed you.



8 Obtain a new permit. If you switch jobs, then you might need to get a new work permit.^[9] You should check with your state to see. Don't start working at a new job until you find out whether you need a new permit.

Method
2

**Method 2 of 3:
Getting a U.S. Work Permit as a Non-Citizen**



1 Confirm you need a work permit. Many foreign nationals living in the U.S. don't need a work permit because they can already work in the U.S. For example, the following people can work already:^[10]

- all green card holders
- naturalized citizens
- holders of work-based visas, such as H1-B visas



2 Check if you qualify. There are many classes of immigrants who qualify for a work permit and must obtain one to work. However, tourists and illegal immigrants cannot qualify. Instead, the following classes of immigrants do:[11]

- people granted asylum
- spouses of various visa holders
- K-1 fiancé visa holders
- people with a pending green card application
- others (see the instructions to USCIS Form I-765 for a complete list)



3 Obtain the correct form. You must complete Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, to apply. You can download the form from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) website here: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>. Make sure to download the instructions as well.

- You can also get a copy by calling 1-800-870-3676.^[12]



4 Gather required documents. You need to submit supporting documents along with your application. Gather them ahead of time to speed up the application process. For example, you will need the following:^[13]

- copy of your Form I-94, Arrival-Departure Record
- copy of your last work permit (if you are applying for a new one)
- two passport-style color photographs taken within 30 days of your application
- other documents depending on your circumstances (see the instructions)



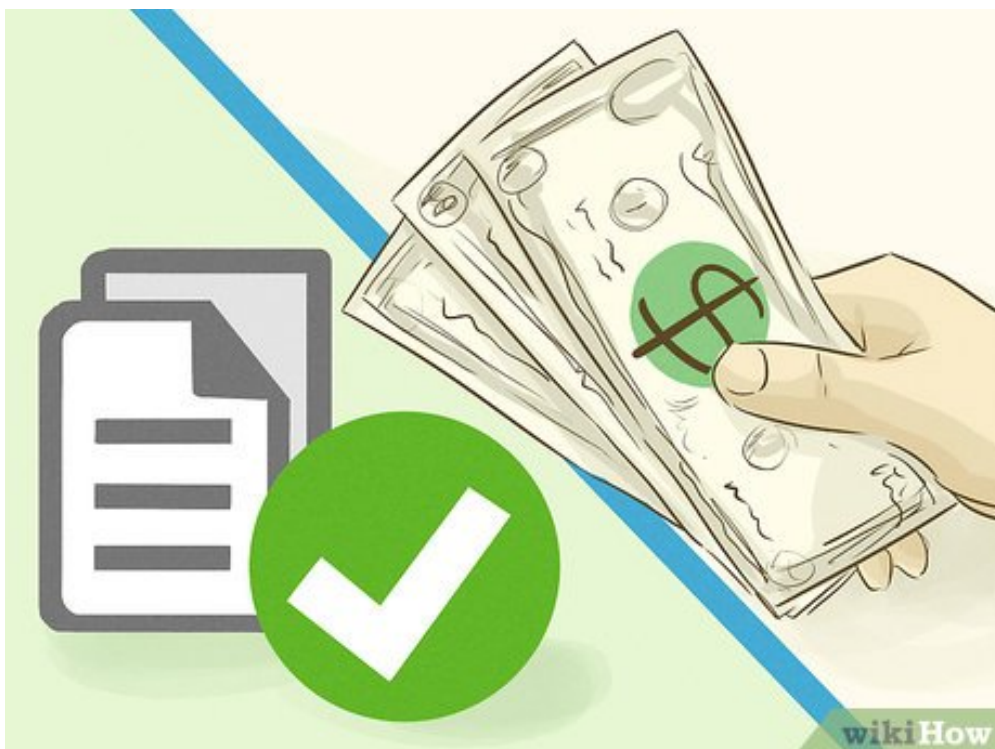
5 Consult a lawyer, if necessary. Only a qualified immigration lawyer can answer your questions. To **find an immigration lawyer**, contact the bar association in your state or city. Ask for a referral.

- You can find your nearest bar association by entering your address at this site: https://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_services/flh-home/flh-bar-directories-and-lawyer-finders/.
- If you are low income, then you might qualify for legal aid. Visit the Legal Services Corporation's website and click on "Find legal aid." Legal aid provides free and reduced-fee legal help to people in financial need.



6 Complete the application. Print neatly using black ink or, better yet, type your answers into the form so that they are easier to read. Provide all requested information. If something doesn't apply, then type "N/A" or "not applicable."

- If you need additional space, then attach a piece of paper. Make sure to include your name and Alien Registration Number (if applicable) at the top. Also indicate what part and item your answer refers to.^[14]



7 Submit your application. Make a copy of the application and all supporting documents for your records. Put everything in an envelope and secure it. You can find out where to file by calling 1-800-375-5283.^[15]

- You'll have to pay a fee of \$380. A few exceptions exist, as explained in the instructions.
- Make your check or money order payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security." Don't use any other abbreviations.



8 Provide additional information. Your application will be checked for completeness. If anything is missing, you'll be asked to provide it. Do so promptly.

- USCIS might also schedule an interview or ask that you provide biometrics (such as fingerprints and a photograph). USCIS will send you a notice if any of these are required.



9 Find a job. Your card will be mailed to you. Alternately, you might have to go to the USCIS office to pick it up.^[16] Once you have your card, you can begin your job search, which will probably depend on your education, skills, and experience. Immigrants have widely different backgrounds, so no one job search is right for everyone.

- If you want an entry-level job, then you can look at Help Wanted ads and check if any business you frequent is hiring staff.
- If you have a degree and/or experience, then you can find non-profits geared to helping immigrants re-establish careers in the U.S. Upwardly Global is one of these non-profits. They provide help with creating resumes and networking effectively. They can also refer you to community partners to help improve your English skills.

Method 3 of 3: Obtaining a Work Permit in Canada as a Non-Citizen



1 Check if you need a work permit. Many temporary jobs do not require a work permit. You can check whether you need one by visiting <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/work/apply-who-nopermit.asp#dropdowns> and checking the job you intend to perform in Canada.

- For example, you do not need a work permit to run or organize an international convention or meeting in Canada, unless you are doing hands-on work, such as decorating, setting up or taking down displays, or providing audiovisual services.^[17]
- If you intend to work as a public speaker for more than five days, then you also need a work permit.^[18]



2 Find out if you are eligible for a work permit. Canada has a list of general eligibility requirements you must satisfy. Check to see that you do before applying for a work permit:^[19]

- Prove you intend to leave Canada when your permit expires
- Show you have enough money to provide for yourself and your family during your stay in Canada
- Obey the law and have no criminal record
- Be in good health and take a medical exam if required
- Work only for eligible employers
- Avoid working for an employer that primarily offers erotic dance or massage, escort services, or striptease
- Not be a danger to Canada's security



3 Have a job offer in hand. There are two types of work permits: open work permits and employer-specific permits. An open permit allows you to work for any employer, whereas an employer-specific permit is tied to one employer.^[20]

- By far, most work permits are employer-specific, and you must have an offer in hand from a Canadian employer before applying for one.^[21]



4 Apply for the permit. Your requirements will differ depending on whether you apply for the work permit outside Canada, while inside Canada, or when entering Canada. See <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/work/apply-who-eligible.asp> for detailed information.

- If you apply when outside Canada, then determine which work permit you will need: an open work permit or employer-specific. You can apply for the permit when you apply for your visa.
- Generally, you can only apply for the work permit while in Canada if you have a valid reason for being there. Examples include having graduated from a Canadian university, having a valid study or work permit, having temporary residence. You can apply online at <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/e-services/account.asp>.
- You can apply for a work permit when you enter Canada only if you are from a visa-exempt country and you have a valid medical certificate. You may ask for either an open work permit or finish an employer-specific application that your employer has completed.



5 Wait for the results. The amount of time you must wait will depend on your circumstances. You may receive a decision within hours or up to eight weeks later. The process can also be delayed if the government needs to confirm your offer of employment.^[22]

- Remember that you can't work until you receive your work permit. However, if you obtained a business visa, then you can do any work allowable under the visa.



Community Q&A

Question

Do I have to get good grades to get a work permit?



Community Answer

No, getting a work permit does not depend on your grades.

Helpful 10 Not Helpful 1

Question

Do I need a parent's signature to get a job at 17 years old?



Community Answer

No! In most countries, you only need to apply and get the job. Keep in mind that for some jobs, there might be age restrictions. If you have a job that risks physical injury (building, etc) some workplaces might ask for guardian approval, but that is rare.

Helpful 7 Not Helpful 1

Question

What is the age requirement for becoming a golf caddy?



Community Answer

In most states you have to be 15 years old to get a work permit. You have to visit your county's department of social services to apply for one. To get a job, you have to fill out an application at the place you wish to be employed.

Helpful 6 Not Helpful 1

Question

How old do you have to be to get a permit?



Community Answer

In California, you need to be at least fourteen years of age. Other countries and states vary.

Helpful 7 Not Helpful 2

Question

Do you need a work permit for the state you will be temporarily working in or the state you live in?



Community Answer

Typically, by the state you work in. Check with that state's office.

Helpful 2 Not Helpful 0

Question

What jobs can I get as a 14-year-old girl with autism?



AbigailAbernathy
Top Answerer

Unfortunately, because of child labor laws, you are too young to get a job. The minimum age requirement for most establishments is 16.

Helpful 1 Not Helpful 4

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