

# Employment in the United States

**Employment in the United States is very important.** Finding, getting, and keeping a job is important to your family's future and well-being. It is the fastest way to self-sufficiency and is necessary for success. You should be prepared to actively look for a job as soon as you arrive in the United States.



## Finding A Job

All adults, both men and women, who are ages 18 to 64 and are able to work should make finding a job a priority. Government assistance is limited in time and amount, so it is important for you to find a job as soon as possible after you arrive in the United States.



**Employment is not guaranteed by the government.** It may take weeks or months to find a job, and you may have several job interviews. You should work with your employment specialist to find a job and learn common interview tips.

You will be expected to accept the first job that is offered to you, even if it is not highly paid or in your field, so that you can build a work history and begin to support your family. If you do not take a job that is offered, you may lose government assistance. There are often many people applying for the same job, so it is important to be willing to accept an entry-level job in a new field. To build a good work history, you should stay in the job for at least six months.

## Work Culture in the United States

The United States is known as a land of opportunity for those who work hard. To obtain a better, higher-paying job, you will need to speak, read, and write English, and you may need to learn new skills. If you worked in a specific profession in your country, you may need to attend classes and obtain a certification before you are able to work in that field in the United States. Both women and men work in the United States.

Women make up half the workforce, do the same jobs as men at all levels, and often supervise male workers.



In the United States, children around 14 years old and older may work at part-time jobs, but they may be limited in the number of hours they can work and the types of jobs they can do. Many young people in the United States work part-time after school, on the weekends, and during vacations. The United States has laws to protect youth workers.

## Employment Rights and Responsibilities

In the United States, employees have rights as well as responsibilities in the workplace. You have the right to be paid for your work, and employment laws protect workers from unsafe working conditions.

An employer cannot discriminate against you or deny you a job or a promotion because of your age, disability, marital status, ethnic or national origin, race, religion, or sex. However, some jobs, especially in government, are only open to U.S. citizens.

Workers have the right to work in an environment that is free from discrimination and harassment, including:

- Sexual harassment (unwanted behavior of a sexual nature that makes someone feel uncomfortable or unsafe)
- Racial or religious harassment
- Bullying or intimidation
- Retaliation for reporting concerns or asserting your rights

As a paid worker in the United States, it is your responsibility to pay income taxes each year to help support programs that provide for all people living in the United States (for example, education, SNAP, Medicaid, and public roads). It is your responsibility to pay taxes to both the Federal and State governments where you live. You can find local nonprofit organizations that have been certified by the Internal Revenue Service as a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance site who may be able to help you file your taxes each year.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Will I receive help in finding a job?**

Organizations may help provide employment services wherever you are resettled, but you will play a central role in finding and keeping a job.

### **What type of job will I have?**

Your first job will probably not be in the same profession or field as your job in your home country. It may be an entry-level, non-professional job and may even be temporary or part-time. Because the cost of living is high in the United States, it is common, and often necessary, for both men and women to work outside the home.

### **How will I get to my job?**

Public transportation is available in most U.S. cities. You may need to rely on public transportation to access your first job.

## About Settle In

Settle In is your trusted source for reliable, responsive, and relevant, newcomer-friendly information about the United States. Available in multiple languages, Settle In's digital platforms offer essential resources, guidance, and multi-lingual support to help newcomers navigate life in the U.S.

## About Switchboard

Switchboard is a one-stop resource hub for strengthening refugee services across the United States and offers tools, learning opportunities, and technical assistance on resettlement-related topics.

Funded by ORR, Switchboard is implemented by the IRC.

This material was developed by Switchboard and is based on a resource originally created by the Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange (CORE). The content has been adapted and updated for current use.

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