

## CAREER PORTFOLIOS – DO I NEED ONE?

One tool that can be useful during an interview is a career portfolio. The portfolio can be used to reference education, employers, letters and certificates of accomplishment received from employers and volunteer groups and any other types of employment-related documentation you may wish to include.

Preparing a career portfolio for use during interviews is an efficient and helpful way to keep your information current and easily accessible. To prepare a portfolio, all you need is some kind of a binder or folder and a little time! You can also use page protectors to insert your documents in to keep them protected and your portfolio professional in appearance. The information you keep is a story of your professional experience and growth, as well as your volunteer and educational accomplishments. You can go through the portfolio pages almost like a picture album, explaining each document or item and talking about its significance relating to the workplace.

Here are some examples of items you may wish to include in your career portfolio.

- Educational transcripts, certificates and degrees.
- Copies of evaluations from previous employers.
- Any military history, ranks held, years active and job duties and experiences.
- Letters of accommodation; thank you notes and/or letters from customers, co-workers or supervisors; special recognition certificates or letters that you've earned for areas such as safety in the workplace, low sick leave usage, volunteer activities, etc.
- A current professional resume.
- Any other documentation that you'd like to share with a prospective employer. Maybe like a newspaper article where the little league baseball team you coached won a championship!!

A career portfolio is a great tool to have as long as you keep it updated and professional.

*Jennifer Meek, Canton Repository, March 6, 2005*

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