

GET THE JOB

Job Hunting With Career Gaps

How to Address Time Off and Refocus Your Search

Career gaps happen — for caregiving, education, health reasons or layoffs — and they're more common than ever. While some job seekers worry that time away from the workforce will hurt their chances, hiring managers today are increasingly open to candidates with non-traditional paths. The key is to handle gaps honestly and confidently while keeping your focus on the future.

BE HONEST, BUT KEEP IT BRIEF

You don't need to explain every gap in detail, but don't try to hide it either. If your résumé includes months or years without work, use your cover letter or interview to offer a brief, factual explanation. A simple sentence such as "I took time off to care for a family member" is often enough.

Focus on how you're ready to return and what you bring to the table. Emphasize your skills, experience and enthusiasm for the role. Keep the attention on your qualifications and how they align with the job, rather than the gap itself.

If you stayed active during your time away — by volunteering, taking courses or gaining certifications — highlight those



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efforts. They demonstrate initiative and help bridge the employment gap.

REFOCUS AND REFRAME THE CONVERSATION

When applying for jobs,

look for companies that value skills and potential over rigid career timelines. Many employers recognize that life happens and that valuable talent comes from diverse paths.

Reframe your gap as part of

your growth. What did you learn during your time away? How has it shaped your goals or strengthened your resilience? Showing self-awareness can actually make your application stand out.

A gap doesn't define your career — it's just one chapter. By being honest, staying confident and focusing on what you offer now, you can move past the pause and land the right opportunity.