

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....pg.2

The Role of the Career Mentor.....pg.3

How to Use This Handbook.....pg.3

Building a Relationship with your Mentee.....pg.3

First Meeting with your Mentee.....pg.4

Resumes.....pg.5

A Word About Work Authorization & Gaps in Work Experience.....pg.6

Cover Letters.....pg.7

The Online Job Search.....pg.8

The Elevator Pitch.....pg.9

Networking.....pg.10

Advocating for Your Mentee.....pg.10

Informational Interviews.....pg.11

Job Interviews.....pg.13

Managing Expectations.....pg.16

Success! What Happens Next.....pg.17

HIAS Mentor Dos & Don't's.....pg.17

Sample Career Mentor Questionnaire.....pg.18

Employment Action Plan Worksheet.....pg.20

Mock Interview Script.....pg.21

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We are grateful for all our volunteers who are providing meaningful support and expertise to help build a sustainable and thriving volunteer program at HIAS in the DMV.

The Role of the Career Mentor

As a career mentor, you may be helping your mentee to identify their strengths, translate their life and work experiences into a professional resume and cover letter, help them prepare for a job interview, fill out job applications with them, or connect them to the right professional networks related to their interests and experiences, to help them gain entry into their particular field. These and many other responsibilities can bring increased independence, social mobility, and opportunity to the lives of refugees and asylum seekers.

Many refugees and asylum seekers come with extensive professional and educational backgrounds, but due to language barriers, childcare needs, or recertification requirements, they may not be able to enter their professional field immediately. For many, entry-level employment or “survival work” will be their first entry into the U.S. workforce. Others may not have extensive work or educational experience, and are need of gaining work experience to support themselves and their families in an entry-level job. HIAS career mentors help their mentee to clarify and set in motion their short and long term career goals, to ensure a realistic pathway towards economic self-sufficiency and integration.

How to Use This Handbook

The following sections are intended to help you, as a career mentor become familiar with the job search process in the U.S. Please use this guide to help you orient your mentee on the steps needed to secure employment, according to their level of English, interests, skill-level, education, and professional experience. This handbook can be shared directly with your mentee, if appropriate. You are welcome to print this handbook for your reference, but please keep in mind that there are several links embedded throughout this guide with additional resources.

Building a Relationship with Your Mentee

Building trust and understanding between you and your mentee takes time, but will help to create a productive learning environment. Remember, as a mentor, you play an important role in introducing your partner to his or her new home.

Active listening and patience is key in encouraging and facilitating English language conversation between you and your mentee. For example, you can ask your mentee about their culture or traditions. Ask them about what they find strange about U.S. culture in comparison to their home country. You can ask what is frustrating or confusing for them here in the DMV. Remember, it is important to leave any opinions, judgments or biases aside. This will allow you and your mentee to build trust and for your mentee to feel safe.

It is very important to be conscious of trauma that your mentee may have suffered. It is impossible to anticipate all the circumstances that could re-traumatize your mentee, however, you can minimize

the risk by avoiding behaviors or questions that could remind them of loss, physical displacement, or past interrogation.

For example,

- Would you, as a mentor, bring up the political climate of your mentee's home country? The answer is: No. Many refugees and asylum seekers come from nations with political violence and unrest.
- Would you, as a mentor, ask your partner what circumstances brought them to the United States? The answer again is: No. We can assume that our mentees have experienced or are experiencing at least some degree of loss, displacement, or physical trauma. Revisiting these traumatic memories with your mentee may create feelings of depression or fear, and make it difficult to establish a relationship of trust with you.

As a career mentor, you are not expected to be a cultural expert, however, we want to understand and communicate effectively and sensitively with our mentees. Be sure to avoid generalizations about his or her home country, culture, or status. Remember that within each culture, people are influenced by an urban or rural background, education, ethnicity, social group, and of course, personality.

Please keep in mind that at times, you may notice that your mentee is distracted from your discussion. Please do not take this personally. Distraction could be caused by a variety of factors: legal issues, family-related concerns, economic pressures, bureaucratic paperwork. Our clients, of course, are aware of what is happening in their home country. They may experience homesickness or loneliness. If symptoms appear severe and it is affecting your work together, be sure to speak to a HIAS Volunteer Coordinator.

First Meeting with Your Mentee

The first meeting with your mentee will be facilitated by a HIAS staff member. It could be a HIAS Volunteer Coordinator or an Employment Caseworker. This first meeting will serve as a time for you and your mentee to become acquainted with one another, and for the mentee to better understand your role as their volunteer Career Mentor. This first meeting will also be the time to discuss meeting logistics, such as the timing and location of future sessions. Here is also when you will have the first opportunity to learn about your mentee's professional and educational background, and their goals moving forward. [See HIAS' Mentee Questionnaire and Employment Action Plan Worksheet at the end of this handbook, which you may use to clarify your mentee's employment goals during your first or second meeting.](#)

If time allows and depending on the specific skill-set and circumstance of your mentee, you may choose to assign homework related to their goals. For example, you may ask your mentee to brainstorm a list of their skills and professional experiences. During the follow up session, depending on the results of this exercise, it may be helpful to have a brief discussion of their goals and the types of skills needed for these type jobs in the U.S. There are no two meetings alike, and as each individual

mentee is unique in their skill-set, experience, goals, and specific circumstance, each mentee will need their very own path to achieve their version of success. Please keep this in mind as you begin mentoring. Your patience and empathy is critical, as the lives of refugees and asylum seekers are full of complexity and uncertainty.

Resumes

A resume is a summary of your personal, educational, and experiential qualifications as they relate to the type of employment you are seeking. By describing your education and experience, you can demonstrate to potential employers how you would be an excellent fit for the position. You will submit your resume as part of most job applications and you may also share it with others while building your network or conducting informational interviews, which will be reviewed later in the handbook.

Resume Length

One page is the standard resume length in the United States. This will often require you and your mentee to distill the breadth of the mentee's education and experience to the most relevant information. There are some industries, such as education, conservation, or engineering, that may be interested in a longer, more detailed resume or CV, but this is dependent on the employer or position. Most employers prefer a one-page, single-sided resume, so this should be the default version you create with your mentee.

Resume Formatting

The resume should be visually appealing, with font sizes between 10 and 12, sufficient white space to be easily read, and no typos or grammatical errors. As a rule, there should only be 1-2 different fonts per resume, never more than 3. A standard professional font, such as Times New Roman, Arial, or Calibri, should be used; decorative fonts like Papyrus or Comic Sans are never acceptable.

Resume Content

The essential components of a resume are:

- A header with the mentee's name and contact information (phone number, email address, street address)
- The mentee's education (college and/or graduate school).
- Employment experience

Employment experience should be listed in reverse chronological order, starting with the most recent job and working backward. Each job listing should include the employer, your title, dates of employment, location, and bullet points that outline the mentee's responsibilities in the role. Avoid writing in the first person, instead try starting each bullet with an action verb e.g. instituted, collaborated, managed, developed, oversaw, facilitated, etc. Whenever possible, use numbers to illustrate your accomplishments, for example, "Managed a budget of \$500,000", "supervised 20 employees", "wrote 3-4 press releases per week".

Some people include an objective statement in their resume, such as *“Recent college graduate with a BA in English Literature and six months of international internship experience. Seeking to leverage acquired academic knowledge and work experience to effectively fill your office clerk position. A dedicated worker aiming to help achieve company goals and take on more responsibility as quickly as possible.”* This is optional, but may be helpful for mentees who are undertaking a career change or applying for jobs that are in a different field than their work experience. A detailed guide to writing a career objective statement is available [here](#).

Resume Example

Your Name

Address | Telephone | Email

Objective (optional)

Education

Degree | Date Earned | School

- Related coursework:

Skills & Abilities

- List here:

Experience

Job Title | Company | Dates From - To

- This is the place for a brief summary of your key responsibilities and accomplishments.

Job Title | Company | Dates From - To

- This is the place for a brief summary of your key responsibilities and accomplishments

A Word About Legal Work Authorization & Gaps in Work Experience

Asylum seekers are eligible to apply for work authorization 150 days after filing for asylum, and work authorized asylum seekers have an Employment Authorization Document (EAD). In Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia, job applications often ask if the job candidate is a U.S. citizen or legally authorized to work, and the answer is yes. Only if and when the employer asks to see proof of employment authorizations, does a social security # or EAD card need to be presented. Under no circumstance, is it necessary to include your mentee’s immigration status on their resume, cover letter or job application. This means, your mentee does not need to specify that they are a refugee or asylum seeker during the job application process or interview.

As refugees and asylum seekers are forced to flee their homes, there may be long gaps of time without employment or formal education on their resume. If an employer inquires about this gap in time, your mentee is under no obligation to reveal their immigration status and why they were forced to flee their home. If your mentee is uncomfortable speaking about why they left their home country, or if they do not want their employer to know of their immigration status, you can suggest they express something as simple as indicating that family related matters, medical conditions or special travels came up. In this way, you can help your mentee maintain their privacy if so desired. Many of us have experienced circumstances in our lives, intentional or unintentional which may have led to interruptions in employment or educational paths; refugees and asylum seekers are no exception.

[For more information on immigrant and employee rights, click here.](#)

Cover Letters

The cover letter is how you introduce yourself and your resume to a prospective employer. Your main reason for writing the letter is to demonstrate your interest in the position and highlight the parts of your background that make you a good candidate for the position. This is an excellent opportunity to demonstrate your writing skills and provide context for the experiences described in your resume.

Cover Letter Length

Like the resume, it is best practice to have a one-page, single-sided cover letter. You should write clearly and concisely about your interest in the position/organization and how your combination of education and experience would make you a great fit for the position.

Cover Letter Formatting

Like the resume, your cover letter should be visually appealing, with font sizes between 10 and 12, sufficient white space to be easily read, and no typos or grammatical errors. It is best to have just one font type, with the exception of your header. A standard professional font, such as Times New Roman, Arial, or Calibri, should be used; decorative fonts like Papyrus or Comic Sans are never acceptable.

Cover Letter Content

Your cover letter should include a header with your contact information; for an extra dash of professionalism, have this header match exactly the one on your resume (same fonts, same sizes, same spacing, etc). This will give your resume and cover letter a unified, professional appearance. The cover letter should be written as a letter, including a salutation, 2-3 paragraphs, and finished with your signoff or signature. Your tone should be formal, but not too stiff -- try reading your letter out loud to make sure it flows naturally in your voice. Where possible, incorporate language from the job description or organization's mission statement. For this reason, it is important to research the organization, its mission and vision before submitting a resume or cover letter.

Order of Contents

- Address the letter to the person's name (if you know who you are sending it to), otherwise address it to "To Whom It May Concern".
- In the first paragraph, begin with introducing yourself, what your current position is, and where you are located. State why you are writing the letter (e.g. the opening for the position at the organization). If the position you're applying for has an ID number, include that as well. In one or two sentences, give a brief explanation of why you are interested in the role and working for the organization.
- The next paragraph should briefly outline your work experience thus far. Highlight the positions that provided you with the skills or education most relevant to the position. You can briefly describe what you learned in each role, what your major responsibilities were, and how those experiences are connected to the position to which you are applying.
- The next paragraph can outline your education or training related to the position and/or voice your enthusiasm for the organization or position you are applying for. Explain what key skills you possess that can be applied to the role and why you would be a good fit.
- Thank them for their time and provide your contact information.
- End with your signature.

The Online Job Search

The internet has become an integral part of many people's lives and this is true for job searching and networking as well. As you search and apply for jobs and approach professional contacts, be aware that potential employers and contacts may Google you and make sure that your online presence reflects the impression you are trying to project.

Social Media

If you utilize social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc) in your personal life, you can adjust your privacy settings to make your profile visible only to your friends or connections (or self-monitor what you are posting for any content that may seem unprofessional). Depending on your field and comfort using social media, you may also choose to use your social media channels as part of your job search. More information on those social media job search strategies can be found [here](#), and [here](#).

LinkedIn

If you are not familiar with [LinkedIn](#), it is essentially a social media site made for professional networking and job searching. Creating a LinkedIn profile is an easy way to create a professional online presence, communicate your career or job search goals, network, and improve your Google search results. The language on your LinkedIn profile should mirror the language of your resume, so that you create a consistent representation of yourself. Think of your LinkedIn profile as the online version of your resume.

An excellent step-by-step guide (with pictures!) to creating a LinkedIn profile can be found [here](#).

An important note about LinkedIn privacy and visibility

Unlike most other social media sites, LinkedIn allows you to see who has viewed your profile and allows others to see that you have viewed their profile. This may be fine with you, but it is good to be aware of before you go into the profiles of potential employers or contacts. You can adjust your privacy settings to be anonymous when you view profiles (of course, if you are listed as anonymous, you will be unable to see details of who has viewed your profile). To change privacy settings, go to the home page, click on “Me” in the upper right corner and select “Settings & Privacy”. On the next page, click on “Privacy” and scroll down to “How others see your LinkedIn activity”. Click on “Profile viewing options”. You can now select what others see when you’ve viewed their profile.

Online Job Search Resources: Below are a few online job search engines for your reference.

<https://www.idealists.org>
<https://www.indeed.com/>
<https://newyork.craigslist.org/>
<http://www.devnetjobs.org/>
<https://ceoexpress.com/home>
<https://www.careerbank.com/>
<http://www.vault.com/>
<http://www.nonprofitjobmarket.org/>
<https://www.efinancialcareers.com/>
<http://www.sustainablebusiness.com/greendreamjobs/jobs/>
https://www.unionjobs.com/staffing_list.php
<https://www.simplyhired.com/>
<https://www.mediabistro.com/>

The Elevator Pitch

The elevator pitch is a brief summary of your career interests and experiences. In theory, you should be able to deliver your pitch to a potential employer or networking contact in the short span of an elevator ride. While you may never find yourself in an elevator with a potential employer, it is helpful to be able to quickly explain your interests and experience.

Your pitch should be just one or two sentences and is something you should practice and be able to deliver quickly and confidently. It is important to take the time to carefully craft your pitch so that your word choice and sentence structure effectively communicate how you would like to present yourself. This is an opportunity to summarize your career goals and make someone interested in speaking with you more. Using the following structure can help you easily formulate your career goal:

Action Verb + Program Type/Product/Service + Type of Organization + Geographic Region

For example, “I would like to manage the implementation of policy dealing with the homeless for the Department of Housing and Urban Development in Baltimore.”

You can then combine this career goal statement with additional context about your experience. For example, “I have four years of experience working in housing policy in the public sector in Nairobi. I recently moved to Baltimore and would like to manage the implementation of policy dealing with the homeless for the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Additional information about crafting a pitch and sample pitches is available [here](#).

Network Building

Networking is contacting people you know and/or don’t know in order to find information about a particular profession. It can help you obtain further contact names, information on industries, organizations, career paths, positions, etc. to build your professional network. By networking, you can gather information, advice and support. Remember that networking is a two-way relationship that helps both parties because of mutual information sharing. For more detailed information on networking practices and benefits, [click here](#).

Advocating for your Mentee

HIAS may pair you with a mentee because your professional background or education matches with the professional experience or career goals of a mentee. As a retired or active professional in your mentee’s field of interest, your expertise and relevant resources can help to orient your mentee about this sector in the U.S. Mentees who are connected to their community through HIAS’ volunteer network have increased access to resources and opportunities that may otherwise not be available to them, and are better integrated into their new home environment. Helping to facilitate relevant introductions to professional contacts in their field of interest is one critical way to help your mentee practice their networking skills and serve as a valuable gateway into a job opportunity. Please reach out to your relevant contact as appropriate.

It is also appropriate to reach out to prospective employers on behalf of your mentee. Please see the sample script below which you can use to advocate for your mentee for a particular position. Of course, be sure to share with your mentee that you plan on conducting this employer outreach.

Employer Outreach Script for Career Mentor

Mentor: Hi, my name is _____. I am a volunteer calling on behalf of HIAS, a legal service provider for asylum seekers in the DMV. I am calling to find out the best way for _____, one of HIAS’ clients to apply for the _____ position, as advertised on _____.

Share some information about the mentee’s professional background and purpose in applying for the position. Eg. _____ has extensive background in _____ and is interested in _____.

[Check out the Tent Foundation's and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services' U.S. Employer's Guide to Hiring Refugees.](#)

Informational Interviews

Informational interviews are a great way to learn more about a particular organization and practice your interview skills in a relatively low-pressure setting. They give you a chance to ask an active professional in your field of interest about any of the following:

- Job responsibilities
- Education or experience that brought them to this position
- Skills they think would be valuable in their organization or industry
- Workplace culture of their office or organization
- Additional ways to network or learn more about the industry

The answers to these questions can help you strengthen your resume or cover letter if you apply for a position with the organization OR help you discover that you are not interested in working with this organization or field.

Informational interviews are also a great opportunity to practice delivering your elevator pitch. You should be prepared to describe your education, experience, and interest in the organization/industry, just as you would for a real job interview. Using informational interviews to practice talking about yourself clearly and concisely will help you feel calmer and more confident when you are asked to do so in a real job interview.

The most important thing to keep in mind is that informational interviews are NOT job interviews. Do not expect to be offered a position after the interview. Informational interviews are strictly for you to learn more about an organization and should not be considered an automatic application or guaranteed position. Use this as an opportunity to learn more about the organization and how to make your resume or cover letter stronger if you apply for a position in the future.

You may meet an individual with whom you would like to have an informational interview through a mutual acquaintance, at a networking event, or even by contacting an organization directly. Even if you discussed the interview with someone in person, it is still good practice to email them and request an interview formally. *A sample email request is included below.*

Most informational interviews are conducted via phone, but some interviewees may prefer to meet in person (e.g. over coffee) or answer questions via email. In your interview request, indicate that you are open to any of these options. It is also helpful to give an approximate time duration for the interview (e.g. 30 minutes). You may include your resume in the interview request, if you'd like. Some

interviewees like to review the resume before the conversation, but others prefer to hear about your experience directly from you.

Be prepared to briefly describe your education, experience, and interest in entering the interviewee's field or working with the interviewee's organization. To learn more about the interviewee, field, or organization, you can ask some of the following questions:

- How did you come to be in your current position?
- What are the major tasks or responsibilities of your job on a daily basis?
- What do you enjoy the most about the job?
- What do you find challenging in your job?
- What is the culture of the workplace like?
- What skills or experience do you think would be valuable at your organization?
- Are there any additional resources I should look in to? Your interviewee may recommend reaching out to another individual at their organization, reading about a specific industry topic, or pursuing some type of skill-building.
- DO NOT ASK: Can I have a job? Remember, this is for you to learn and is not a job interview!

Throughout your informational interview, you should behave in the same way you would in a real job interview. This includes being polite, courteous, and friendly, and dressing professionally, if the interview is in-person.

Don't forget to thank your interviewee! They are taking time out of their day to speak with you; let them know that you appreciate it. A thank-you email later that day or the following day is always appreciated-- *a sample thank you email is included below.*

Sample Email Request Informational Interview

SUBJECT LINE: Informational Interview Request
Good morning/afternoon,

My name is XXXXX and I'm [a recent graduate of the XXXXX program *or* interested in working in XXXXX industry].

I spoke with [CONNECTION] and [he/she] recommended that I contact you about your experience working for [ORGANIZATION] and your current work as XXXXX. Would you be willing to speak with me on the phone for a brief informational interview or correspond via email?

For our meeting, I'd only need approximately 30 minutes, as I know your time is valuable. I am available to meet in person or by phone and am happy to be flexible around your schedule.

Thanks for your time.

Sincerely,

XXXXX

Sample Thank You Email for Informational Interview

Dear Mr./Ms XXXXX,

Thank you for taking the time to discuss career opportunities in XXXXX. Your comments were insightful and gave me a strategy for my job search. I will follow up on your suggestion to contact XXXXX to seek additional advice regarding opportunities in the field.

I will also revise my resume to include your suggestions. Again, your comments and time were much appreciated.

Sincerely,

XXXXX

Job Interviews

Preparation

If you have applied for a job and have been asked to come in for an interview, congratulations, you are one step closer to securing a job placement! This means that the employer was impressed enough by the information in your resume and cover letter. The interview is an opportunity for you to provide additional context on your education and experience and to demonstrate why you would be a good fit for the position. As you prepare for the interview, be sure to use the guidelines below:

Know Yourself: you should be able to speak comfortably and confidently on all aspects of your education and work experience. These are the easy questions! This is where practicing your elevator pitch during networking and informational interviews will really come in handy. Be able to highlight the ways in which your education and experience are of value to the prospective employer and be prepared to cite specific examples that give evidence of your personal qualities. Be able to speak about your interest in the organization and the field.

Know about the Position and Organization: understand as much as you can about the nature of the position and the qualifications needed. You can find this information from the description of the job (be sure to save this when you are applying for jobs!) or from researching the organization's website. Know as much about the organization itself as you can reasonably be expected to know from viewing their website. If you know anyone in the organization or field, you can also speak to them. If you are unable to find out a great deal about the organization before an interview, at least know enough to be able to convey why you have an interest in working for them.

Know General Interviewing Guidelines: remember that an interview is basically a conversation between two human beings. The interviewer's main goal is to get to know you, not to test or trick you. If you feel comfortable discussing your background and know something about the position and organization, you are well prepared.

Prepare for Typical Interview Questions: no two interviews are exactly alike, but you can prepare to answer certain questions that are often asked. You should practice your answers out loud to hear how they sound, but don't try to memorize them.

Sample Interview Questions

See end of handbook for a *Mock Interview Script* to practice your interviewing skills.

- How would you describe yourself? Tell me about yourself.
- What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
- How do you determine or evaluate success?
- What is a major challenge you have encountered and how did you deal with it?
- Tell me about a project that you worked on where something went wrong. What did you do?
- In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
- What two or three things are most important to you in your job?
- What qualifications do you have that make you think you will be successful in this field or position?
- Which skills and functions are you most comfortable with? If I were to assign you a project based on your experience, what would I give you?
- Which jobs/professional experiences have you most enjoyed? Why?
- What do you consider to be your greatest strengths?
- What are your weakest skills and how are you addressing them?
- In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our organization?
- What do you see yourself doing in five years from now?
- Why do you want to work here?
- What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?
- What are your long-range and short-range goals and objectives? When and why did you establish these goals and how are you preparing yourself to achieve them?
- Tell me about a time when....

[Click here to learn what questions are illegal to ask during a job interview.](#)

Interview Tips

- *Always emphasize the positive.* If it is necessary to discuss any negative aspects of your background (e.g. jobs or bosses you didn't like), try not to sound bitter or angry, do not make personal attacks, and don't make excuses. Describe how you learned and grew from those experiences.

- **Don't be afraid to be the initiator in the interview.** You know yourself and your background better than the interviewer does, so it is your responsibility to be sure that the most important aspects of your experience and skills are discussed.
- **Come prepared with questions!** Remember, the interview is a chance for the interviewer to judge whether you're someone they would like to work with, but it is also a chance for you to judge whether this is a place you would like to work in. Most interviewers will ask if you have any questions, usually at the end of the interview. If you are not invited to do so, you should take the initiative to ask questions anyway. Be sure your questions are meaningful and job-related; you don't want to ask for very general information already available on the organization's website.

Sample Questions to Ask the Interviewer

- What characteristics does a successful person have at your organization?
- What qualities are you looking for in new hires?
- Where does this position fit in the overall organization?
- How much contact or interaction is there between departments and between individuals in the organization?
- What would a typical day in this position look like?
- How would you describe your organization's culture and management style?
- What makes your organization unique or different from others in its industry?
- What is a challenge facing your organization now?
- What are your organization's plans for future growth?

Body Language Dos and Don'ts

Don't:

- Chew gum.
- Sit with your arms folded across your chest. You will appear unfriendly and disengaged.
- Cross your legs and idly shake one over the other. It is distracting and indicates discomfort
- Slouch back in your seat. This will make you appear disinterested, unprepared, and/or unprofessional

Do:

- Sit up straight and lean slightly forward in your chair. This will show that you are interested and engaged
- Show your enthusiasm by keeping an interested expression. Nod and make positive gestures (in moderation, you still don't want to look like a bobble head)
- If you have more than one person interviewing you at once, make sure you periodically make eye contact with each person.
- Limit your application of colognes and perfumes, which can sometimes arouse allergies.
- Interruptions can happen. If they do, refrain from staring at your interviewer(s) while they address their immediate business and motion your willingness to leave if they need privacy.

Follow Up

It is good practice to send your interviewers a thank-you message following your interview, either later that day or early the next day. If you were interviewed by multiple people, ask the assistant or administrative staff (whomever greeted you when you arrived for the interview) for your interviewers' names and emails in writing **before you leave**. Addressing your message to all interviewers is a nice, polite touch. (If you're unable to get the information for all interviewers, you can just address your message to those whose information you do have and say something like, "Please pass my thanks on to _____ as well!")

In your message, you should thank the interviewers for their time and say it was a pleasure meeting with them. You may also reiterate in one or two sentences why you would be a good fit for the position, but this does not always feel natural or appropriate, so use your judgment.

The thank you email is meant as a courtesy -- it is a great way to remind the interviewers what a polite, friendly, and thoughtful person you are. It is *not* meant to be a review of your resume or qualifications, so it is fine to keep it short. A sample thank you email is included below.

Sample Thank You Email for Job Interview

Dear Mr./Ms XXXXX,

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me yesterday and for the opportunity to interview. It was a pleasure meeting with you (all), and I look forward to contributing my experience and skills to your organization/team.

If you have any additional questions, please don't hesitate to reach out!

Sincerely,

XXXXX

Managing Expectations

The job search process can take time. During your first meeting with your mentee, be sure to discuss realistic expectations from the onset, as you review the short and long term goals and next steps. For many refugees and asylum seekers who come from highly skilled, professional or educational backgrounds, it is difficult to accept that they may need to enter an entry-level position, which does not match their skill-set or job interests. However, for many, gaining employment in any entry-level position is critical to gaining U.S. work experience and earning an income. The first job secured will not be the last job. It is the role of HIAS staff, along with the career mentor to communicate this information to the refugee or asylum seekers to ensure that they understand the job search process and the opportunity for career growth over time. Help your mentee to stay positive and optimistic about the job search process. Employment is one of the most challenging and critical parts of re-building a life in a new environment; remind yourself and your mentee to be patient.

Success! What Happens Next

Once your mentee has been placed in a job, your role as a Career Mentor does not end, but shifts to helping your mentee maintain the job and continuing to grow on their desired career path. As your mentee begins working, questions or concerns may come up about U.S. work culture, work place dos and don'ts, how to communicate with their supervisor and colleagues. As their Career Mentor, provide them guidance on how best to troubleshoot various situations that they may confront in their new work environment.

HIAS Mentor Dos and Don'ts

DO:

- Prepare for your meeting. Think about what you want to emphasize in terms of the needs of your mentee.
- Bring a notebook for yourself and your mentee and take notes.
- Focus conversation on the goals of the session and employment needs of your mentee.
- Maintain a positive attitude. Encourage your mentee and congratulate them on their triumphs.
- Use your natural speech pattern and volume when conversing with your mentee.
- Encourage your mentee to take an active role in the job search process.
- Be empathetic and patient. Moments of silence are an important part of the conversation and learning process.
- Review tasks/lessons from the previous session, if appropriate.
- Ask your mentee for regular feedback to ensure your mentee is getting what he or she needs.
- Diversify/adapt job search strategies, in response to outcomes.
- Respect the life experiences and knowledge of your mentee.
- Remain positive and relax -- It will come naturally.
- Encourage your mentee to talk!
- Consult with a HIAS Volunteer Coordinator about any questions or concerns.

DON'T:

- Do not over correct or interrupt your student's flow of speech. Take notes and provide some positive corrections where appropriate. You can always use your notes for the next meeting.
- Do not lecture. One effective way to communicate an idea or goal is through examples from your own life or someone else's life.
- Try not to get frustrated. Patience is a virtue here.
- Do not expect your mentee to remember everything you told them in the last session.
- Don't be afraid to say you don't know. You can always research to prepare for the next meeting.

Career Mentee Questionnaire: Employment Goals

Name of client: _____

Does anyone rely on you for financial support: Yes _____ No _____ Who? _____

Are you looking for: Full-time _____ Part-time _____ Either _____

What hours of the day can you work? _____

Experience: Entry Level _____ Some Work Experience _____ 3+ Years Experience in U.S. _____

What is your *dream* job? _____

Why? What do you like about that job? _____

Specific jobs you are interested in applying, have applied for, or have heard about:

Jobs/industries you are willing or interested in working in: _____

Are you interested in...

Custodial/Housekeeping: Yes _____ No _____

Cashier/Money Handler: Yes _____ No _____

Food Service: Yes _____ No _____

Landscaping / Outdoor: Yes _____ No _____

Retail:	Yes_____	No_____
Hospitality,	Yes_____	No_____
Customer Service:		
IT/Tech:	Yes_____	No_____
Healthcare:	Yes_____	No_____
Banking:	Yes_____	No_____
Cosmetology:	Yes_____	No_____
Sewing/Tailoring:	Yes_____	No_____
Vocational: Construction,	Yes_____	No_____
Plumbing, Carpentry,		
Electric, Exterminator		

How do you feel about...

Working with women/having a female supervisor: **Yes** _____ **No** _____

Working with men/having a male supervisor: **Yes** _____ **No** _____

Working for a supervisor who is younger than you: **Yes** _____ **No** _____

Working alone: **Yes** _____ **No** _____

Working overnight: **Yes** _____ **No** _____

Working early mornings: **Yes** _____ **No** _____ How Early: _____

Working Weekends: **Yes** _____ **No** _____

Being on your feet a lot: **Yes** _____ **No** _____

Loud noises/very noisy: **Yes** _____ **No** _____

Getting dirty: **Yes** _____ **No** _____

Wearing a uniform: **Yes** _____ **No** _____

Lifting heavy objects: **Yes** _____ **No** _____ Weight Limit: _____

Cleaning up after people: **Yes** _____ **No** _____

Working with elderly people: **Yes** _____ **No** _____

Working with computers: **Yes** _____ **No** _____

Language

What languages do you speak?: _____

Language 1 proficiency: _____

Language 2 proficiency: _____

Budgeting/Household Expenses:

How much do you spend each month on the following?

Apartment/Shelter	
Electric bill	
Gas bill	
Water bill	
Phone bill	
Food	
Personal items	
Transportation	
Child care or school for children	
Education or professional certifications	
Other	
Total expenses per month	

Does anyone else in your household make an income? If so, how much do they make per month that contributes to your expenses?

\$ _____?

If you are currently working, how much do you make per month that contributes to your expenses?

\$ _____?

Calculate: total current household income – total expenses per month:

\$ _____ left over each month.

Due to your monthly expenses, what is the minimum wage per hour you can accept:

\$ _____?

Employment Action Plan Worksheet

GOAL	ACTION	DEADLINE	DATE OF COMPLETION
Ex: Create appropriate resume for American workforce	Ex: Review and make edits to existing resume from Iraq	Ex: Thursday, August 3	Ex: August 2

Mock Interview Script

Please use the following script with your mentee to help with interview preparation.

Interviewee enters the office and shakes hand of interviewer

Interviewer: Good morning [interviewee name], My name is [interviewer name]. Thanks for coming in today. Please, have a seat.

Interviewee: Good morning, nice to meet you [name of interviewer] thank you for taking the time to meet with me.

Interviewer: Did you have any trouble finding our office?

Interviewee: It was no problem at all.

Interviewer: Great, so to begin I would like to ask you a few basic questions, first of all, tell me about yourself, are you a student? What are your interests? What do you like to do in your free time?

Interviewee: (ex: I recently finished high school where my favorite subjects were English and math, in my free time I like to read and take walks, I am passionate about politics, etc.)

Interviewer: I see, and how often would you be available to work? What days of the week and time of day?

Interviewee: (ex: I am available weekday evenings and anytime during the weekend)

Interviewer: Great, so how did you hear about us?

Interviewee: (ex: very interested in this field and searched for opportunities, saw a job listing online, heard from a family member...)

Interviewer: And why would you like to work here?

Interviewee: (to build upon previous work experiences, passion for the mission and values of the organization, learn about a new field of work, contribute important skills and perspective, etc. In general, make sure to research a bit about the job site beforehand to inform this answer)

Interviewer: Do you have any experience in this field?

Interviewee: (even if you do not have direct experience, mention skills from other experiences that could be transferable)

Interviewer: What do you think you can contribute if selected to work here?

Interviewee: I believe that I would contribute (strong communication skills, creative problem solving, organization, etc. In general, research ahead of time what skills the employer is looking for)

Interviewer: What do you think might be a challenge for you in working here?

Interviewee: (state a challenge, but also communicate your ability to address the challenge, how will you go about working through that challenge?)

Interviewer: Do you participate in any team based activities? Sports?

Interviewee: (even if not sports, talk about team-like activities, even family roles)

Interviewer: How do you work on a team? What kind of role do you often play?

Interviewee: Usually when I work on a team I am... (careful listener, leader, resolve issues between team mates, etc. Why is this important for the team as a whole, how does this make the team more effective?)

Interviewer: If you could improve anything about yourself what would it be?

Interviewee: I would like to improve my... (public speaking skills, mediation skills, etc. You may want to note that this job is a position where I could build upon these weaknesses)

Interviewer: What might your teacher (or colleague, previous boss, etc.) say about you?

Interviewee: They might say I'm (passionate, hardworking, etc.)

Interviewer: How would you describe yourself? / What are three words you would use to describe yourself?

Interviewee: I would consider myself (patient, flexible, focused, etc. Think of traits important for the job that is being applied for)

Interviewer: Can you give an example of a time you found a creative solution to a problem at work, at home, or between friends?

Interviewee: Yes, I do remember a time when... (Describe the situation, detail the action and steps you took in the situation, discuss the results and outcome of your actions. What happened, what was accomplished, what did you learn)

Interviewer: I would now like to present you with a few scenarios and you tell me how you would respond. You are in the middle of restocking a shelf when your supervisor arrives saying you must also sweep the floor. How do you respond? (how do you handle task interruption?)

Interviewee: I would (assess what the priorities are in the situation, what is the urgency of each task, what is an appropriate stopping point for the first task, remain calm, etc.)

Interviewer: You notice two of your friends having a big fight with one another, how do you respond?

Interviewee: I would (try to listen to both parties, understand the positions they are coming from...)

Interviewer: You are assigned to work on a project with a colleague who is very experienced and familiar with the job, what approach do you take in working with them?

Interviewee: I would (pay close attention to their advice, listen carefully, ask questions about the task...)

Interviewer: Ok, this will be the last scenario, a customer arrives very angry saying that the product he purchased is defective, how do you respond?

Interviewee: I would (follow company policy, listen attentively to the customer, validate them...)

Interviewer: Great, thank you. Do you have any questions for me at this point?

Interviewee: Yes, I would like to know... (make sure to have a question, about position responsibilities, dress code, etc.)

Interviewer: Good question.....anything else?

Interviewee: The last thing I wanted to know is what are the steps going forward, when can I next expect to hear from you?

Interviewer: Of course, I will review your application and interview questions with my supervisor and colleagues and will be in touch within 5-7 business days.

Interviewee: Great.

Interviewer: Well, if you don't have any more questions that will conclude our interview for today, thank you so much for coming in today, here is my card with my contact information, and we will be in touch.

Interviewee: Thanks so much for your time and it was nice meeting you. **Shake interviewer's hand**