REFERENCES and
LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

The ideal reference:

- Has a high opinion of you
- Knows you in more than one area of your life
- Can make favorable comparisons between you and your peers
- Has good communication skills
- Is familiar with the organization to which you are applying
- Is familiar with the responsibilities of the job to which you are applying

Have at least three references available.

For new graduates, faculty recommendations will be important. References should also be sought from job supervisors. Don’t use anyone whose opinion of you is less than clear.

Be selective!

Don’t choose anyone who might say, “She’s good at __, but __.” One bad reference can lead to your elimination. Work references are preferable to character references. The best choice is someone who would say, “He worked for me and I’d hire him back.”

The Steps

1) Approach the person to ask if they’d be willing to serve as a reference.
2) Familiarize them with your job aspirations. Provide them your resume, the job description, information about how to address the letter, the date the letter is needed, whether you want a copy, and any specifics about you that will help them to construct a good letter.
3) Keep them informed of any new position you are applying for and always secure permission to use their name as a reference.