

ELEMENTS OF A WINNING RESUME

Your resume should be viewed as your personal marketing tool, the sole purpose of which is to secure the interview. A well-written resume gives you the opportunity to state your career goals and describe your skills and experience which support these goals. It should be a concise, purposeful and organized summary of the experience you have as it relates to a particular position. Remember, none of the following concepts are written in stone. The whole idea is to promote yourself as the best person for the job!

HEADING

Place your name at the top of the page: highlighted by slightly larger typesize, bolding, and/or underlining, with permanent and local address to follow. Be sure to include your Email address; it demonstrates computer skills to the reader. Try to use the same heading for your resume, cover letter and references to present a uniform package.

JOB OBJECTIVE

If you choose to have a Job Objective, it should be 1 or 2 sentences about the type of position you are applying for. It conveys a sense of direction and serious interest in the agency. You can state a particular **job title** and **setting**; for example, "Medical Social Worker in a home health care setting." Or you can **describe the area** you would like to work in and **the skills** you would like to obtain: "An entry level position in children and family services that will utilize my individual counseling and group facilitation skills."

EDUCATION

Your education should be clearly stated in reverse chronological order - with most recent degree first. Always spell out the name and type of degree, followed by your major title. If you haven't finished your degree yet, put "Anticipated "or" Expected May 2004."

EXPERIENCE

All entries in this section should highlight a capability or accomplishment. Begin with and utilize action verbs in your job descriptions and make sure that verb tense is consistent throughout the resume. Capitalization, punctuation, and date formats should all be consistent for every description. See the "Resume Formats" for more details on this section.

RESUME FORMATS

Chronological The chronological resume is organized by job titles with the most recent position listed first. For job seekers with solid experience and a logical job history, the chronological resume is the most effective. Career changers and those who lack formal on-the-job experience (like new graduates) find this resume the most difficult to write. The employment section in a chronological resume must concisely emphasize your most important duties with a company, skills used that apply to your career goals, awards or achievements, and specific benefits you brought to the company. Dates should be placed in the right-hand margin, so that they are easy to follow. If you have gaps in your employment, try using only years.

Functional The functional resume rearranges employment history into sections that highlight areas of skill and accomplishment. This type of resume might be thought of as a "problem solving" format. It gives you the opportunity to "make sense" of your work history and match up skills and accomplishments that might not be obvious to the employer. It is especially useful if you are a new college graduate, have large gaps in your work history, or especially if you are making a career change -- either changing fields (from substance abuse to children and families) or changing occupation (from Social Worker to Teacher.).

Combination The Combination resume is really a cross of the best from the Functional and Chronological resume styles. It offers the writer an opportunity to improvise in the development of the resume. The Combination resume is best used when:

- You have some relevant work experience that is of short duration.
- Your education is an important part of your overall skills presentation.
- Your overall background reflects a range of unrelated skills.
- Your work history reflects more time in other occupational areas.

Because the combination resume allows you to use the best of the Functional and Chronological style resumes, it can reflect solid career development very easily. For many people, this format generally works best. It allows you to market all of your best points of your experience and abilities in the experience section, and then back it up with your work history in chronological order.

SPECIAL SKILLS

Depending on what type of resume format you use, this section is not required. If you have special or transferable skills that you think should be highlighted and that don't fit into any other category, this is the place to put them. Some of these skills include: computer proficiency, bilingual, communication skills, teambuilding skills, etc.

VOLUNTEER / COMMUNITY SERVICE

Present these activities in the same format as jobs - give a heading which includes your title, name of organization, dates and location. If your position involved leadership, or significant responsibilities, they can be included in the Experience section of your resume.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS, LICENSES, AND CERTIFICATIONS

Always include your licenses and certifications in your resume. It is also recommended that you join NASW now, as it will be a valuable networking resource for you as a professional. NASW offers student rate memberships.

REFERENCES

Have a separate sheet of references available for employers when they ask for them. Your reference page should be neat, with the same heading as your resume. It isn't really necessary to include "references available upon request" on the bottom of your resume since it is assumed that you can provide references if asked.

FORMAT

Your resume should maintain an eye pleasing balance; in other words, the entire sheet should not be filled with words. The utilization of white space is important in creating an attractive resume. Here are some things you should look for:

- First - Hold your resume at arm's length and see how it looks.
- Is the page too busy with different type styles, font sizes, lines, or boxes?
- Is the information spaced well and not crowded on the page?
- Is there too much "white space"?

DO

- Write your resume for your future, not your past
- Emphasize your skills and accomplishments
- Be direct, well-organized, and professional
- Communicate your strongest points first
- Leave a comfortable margin on all sides (usually .5 to 1 inch)
- Always try to fit your resume onto one page and no more than two pages. If you do go over one page, make it at least a page and a half or two full pages.
- Print on one side of the sheet only, on high-quality bond – white or off-white (i.e. beige or ivory) resume paper
- Have several different people check your resume

DON'T

- Use personal data (birth date, marital status, health etc.)
- Use lengthy sentences and descriptions
- Use first person
- List salary requirements / history
- Write "Resume of Qualifications" at the top or "References Available Upon Request" at the bottom
- Write reasons for leaving a job
- List any negative information
- Don't highlight skills that you don't want to use again