

# FINAL FIELD PLACEMENT - WRITING A WINNING RESUME

## ELEMENTS of the 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. Try to use the same heading for your resume, cover letter, and references in order to present a uniform package.

### 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 2012."

### EXPERIENCE

**All entries in this section should highlight a capability or accomplishment.** Begin with and use action verbs in your job descriptions and make sure that verb tense (preferably past tense) is consistent throughout the resume. Capitalization, punctuation, and date formats should all be consistent for every job 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 an employer, skills used that apply to your career goals, awards or achievements, and specific benefits that you brought to the employer. Dates should be placed in the right-hand margin, so that they are easy to follow. If you have gaps in your employment, state only the year(s) during which you were employed.

**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 recent graduate, or have large gaps in your work history. The functional resume is especially when 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 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 don't fit into any other category, this is the place to put them. Some of these skills include: computer proficiency, bilingual, communication skills, team-building skills, and many others.

## **VOLUNTEER / COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Present these activities in the same format as jobs -- give a heading that 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, and you are eligible for the student rate.

## **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 necessary to include "references available upon request" on the bottom of your resume since it is understood that you will 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, sizes, lines, or boxes?
- Is the information spaced well and not crowded on the page?
- Is there too much "white space"?

### **DO**

- 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, no more than two. If you do go past 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)
- Have several different people check your resume

### **DON'T**

- Use personal data (birth date, marital status, health etc.)
- Use lengthy sentences and descriptions
- Refer to yourself as I
- 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