

SOCIAL SERVICE **PROFESSIONALS** Guide to....

Writing for Results - Creating a Great Resume *Standing Out from the Crowd*

“Pick Me! Pick Me! Pick Me!”

That’s the message your resume needs to say to a reader. As someone who reviews over 1000 resumes each year submitted by people hoping to snag an interview and ultimately a job, I offer these tips to help yours stand out from the crowd.

First, your resume is a written way to sell yourself, your accomplishments and professional goals to someone who doesn’t know you.

Be succinct but thorough. Include relevant pieces of information about your career up to this point. Review my job posting carefully and tailor your resume to match the skills I’m looking for. **Never lie**. If you don’t have the skills I need, you’re wasting your time and mine.

Correct spelling and proper grammar are important!

Templates abound on the internet. A good resume should include these sections:

Your name I prefer to see it centered, with a bold font and sized a little larger than the rest of your resume. Your first name can be your given name or your nickname - I don’t know the difference. If I choose to contact you, what name should I call you? If you list both, put your nickname in quotation marks. If your first name is difficult to pronounce, add a phonetic spelling in small type below your name.

If your resume is more than 1 page, include your name on all pages. Resumes can get shuffled around on my desk; pages can get separated.

Contact information Include all the ways I can contact you - home phone, cell phone, email, physical address. Make sure there is a voice mailbox for each phone number you give me. Make sure your voice mailbox isn’t full so I can leave a message.

Your email address should sound professional. “hotmama@gmail.com” may not appeal to a potential employer. Have a dedicated, professional sounding email address for job seeking and check the inbox frequently for my response.

List your address. If you are reluctant to list your physical address, at least include the city/state. If you are applying for an out-of-state position, be sure to include in a cover letter or in your objective that you are willing to re-locate. If you do not, I’ll assume that you did not read the requirements of my job and move on to the next resume.

Photo Do not include a photo. The law prohibits me from discriminating against certain characteristics when making a hiring decision. A photo tells me your gender, age and nationality - all things I shouldn’t consider when reviewing your resume.

Objective *All* applicants want a “fulfilling or challenging position where I can make a difference”. Those words mean nothing to me. Instead, write something personal about your career - “I have a passion for working with survivors of domestic violence, helping them re-build their lives”. Just make sure your objective aligns with the position I’m advertising. For example, if I’m looking for a hospital discharge planner, the above statement isn’t compelling.

Work Experience Begin with your most recent work experience. Keep this section up-to-date. Most employers will concentrate on your last 2 to 5 years of experience.

Re-entering the workforce? Acknowledge it and briefly explain why. Caring for children or an elderly spouse is perfectly acceptable. I’m likely to pass over a resume with an unexplained gap in work experience during the last 5 years.

Just starting your career? List your clinical internships. Keep your work experience relevant to the job you’re applying for. Working your way through school as a barista is probably not relevant to me. However, you can describe the relevant soft skills you learned, like time management, providing excellent customer service, developing rapport with clients - all useful skills as a social worker.

Education Besides listing your formal education, include continuing education courses or certificates you’ve earned.

Other List any published articles, professional awards or achievements.

Final Thoughts - Sending your resume as an email attachment

1. Before you send me your resume, email it to yourself. Critique the way it looks. Sometimes formatting gets changed when you save a document. You want to make sure the layout of your resume presents you in a professional way.
2. Name your document in a professional manner. Instead of naming it “momsresume.docx” or “myfinalversion.pdf” (both of which I have seen), use your name and professional title.

Now that your resume is polished, why not submit it to swjobs@swjobs.net?
Get ready to explore exciting new career options!