**Social Work – Resume Advice**

1. Be **as precise as possible** to indicate to the employer in your specific field or job you want that you understand what they are looking for and have the skills needed. You can draft a more general resume at first but eventually want to showcase your experience in a way that will interest employers. How have your skills been applied? Show evidence of successes, not just skill sets which many others may also possess.
2. **No need to list an objective** on your resume. Instead use your cover letter to explicitly state what you want in a job. An employer may think that this job is not your first choice if your objective is too general (e.g., does your resume sound like it may have been emailed in an identical format to 20 agencies?), or even whether you understand what is needed for the specific position. Connect the dots directly between job requirements and your experience/skills/interests.
3. Plan to develop (and have reviewed by others) a **couple of different resumes** for related jobs but which highlight different transferrable skills you possess.
4. **General headings**  in your resume can include the usual education (honors), research, skills, interests. It is best to use **specific headings for your work experience** so you are making a direct connection for the employer between your experience and the advertised position. Remember to highlight transferrable skills. Examples:

* Health or Mental Health Experience
* Grantwriting or Fundraising Experience
* Administrative Experience
* Policy Experience
* Social Services Experience
* Community Organizing Experience
* Program Planning Experience
* Child Welfare Experience
* Advocacy Experience
* Experience with Children and Families
* Experience in Gerontology
* Chemical Dependency Treatment Experience, etc.

**Additional Categories**:

If you have been published, conducted research, attended in-depth trainings or taught workshops, you can create an additional heading for these activities. Generically, these additional skills can simply be listed as “Related Work Experience,” or even “Other Work Experience.”

**Your experience is considered the most important part of the resume by employers.** All skills acquired during volunteer, internship and paid experiences should be highlighted. List the agency name before your title. You can group paid and unpaid relevant experience under the same heading (e.g., working with children or program planning). Clearly connect the dots between your experience and requirements of the advertised position for the employer.

**Education heading:** Recent graduates should list their highest degree attained first on their resume. If an MSW or BASW and if you feel good about your gpa, you can list it here.

Don’t forget to list your concentration, degree and graduation date. Include certificate program if completed and applicable, as well as courses completed relevant to the advertised position (see sample resumes in separate link).

**Work Experience which may not be relevant**. Do talk with a resume professional at the Career Center and SSW faculty/alumni about including **work experience that is not relevant to your current career goals**. Mature students, having many years of work experience, sometimes mistakenly offer too much information which is not relevant to their current job goal. This may work against consideration for an interview if it is misinterpreted. You do not need to account for your entire work history of 20-30 years in a single resume. Sometimes there are transferrable skills from past work which are relevant, but other times, it may be best to offer less information to an employer focused on finding the best candidate for the job at hand. This older information may take too much attention from your recent accomplishments. Please talk with a career specialist to find the balance which may include your past experience but emphasize your current – and relevant - training/skills.

1. **Length of resume**. A social service professional can submit a **two-page resume** if the experience included is relevant and important to the position applied for or overall social work career experience.
2. **References**. You will need to cultivate at least three references whom you know will speak confidently about your work quality and career potential. References can be a field supervisor, professor and previous employer. References from recent work/field experience will be the most relevant. You will want to let the reference persons know that they will be contacted and it is then you can discuss your interests in the job and what skills you bring to the work. This prepares your reference for the phone call from a future employer. You may also want to request a general letter of recommendation from a reference. This allows you to know what the reference may say to a future employer, and in the event, the reference is not available at a specific time, you can present the letter to the future employer until the reference is available for a phone call. Always thank the reference after they have been contacted by an employer. These connections are very important to maintain as you pursue your career path.

**INCLUDE THIS:**

* Provide brief overview, but convey a picture of the populations with whom you’ve worked; the social, psychological and/or social issues involved; the social work skills you have built and strengthened
* Use phrases starting with an action verb (at end of this document). Verbs have been loosely categorized but obviously many apply to several categories; peruse the entire list to make your selections. Use in present tense if you are currently using the skill.
* Include transferrable skills and issueswhich would be valuable to almost any setting (e.g., grantwriting, supervision of staff, program planning, safety training, etc.) Be specific – use amounts, dollar values (e.g., secured $10,000 grant), quantities, numbers of people (if you were supervising), etc.
* Use professional terminology as it is appropriate
* Enlist others to review for typos and formatting errors. Have your resume reviewed by UW Career Center or another professional for consistency in verb tense as well as use of boldface, underlining, capitalization and italics (i.e., general formatting concerns)
* Send a cover letter with your resume (Reminder: Your cover letter connects your job goal with the job they have listed as available.)

***DON’T INCLUDE THIS:***

* *Include personal data (gender, age, race, etc.)*
* *Use personal pronouns (I or we). (Instead, use the action verbs listed below for bulleted points.)*
* *Include a photograph*
* *Have grammatical errors or typos (These types of errors tend to indicate to an employer that you are inattentive to details or simply don’t know proper grammar or professional presentation so be sure to have your resume reviewed by several professionals.)*

ACTION VERBS (USE IN PRESENT TENSE IF CURRENTLY USING SKILLS) FOR SOCIAL WORKERS

(Suggested categories for illustration – most verbs will be appropriate for various specialties)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Administrative**  Acted  Assessed  Budgeted  Built  Calculated  Charted  Collected  Coordinated  Compiled  Conserved  Contracted  Controlled  Copied  Correlated  Corresponded  Created  Critiqued  Defined  Delegated  Delivered  Demonstrated  Designated  Detected  Devised  Documented  Enforced  Enlisted  Ensured  Established  Estimated  Evaluated  Financed  Fixed  Followed  Formulated  Headed  Helped  Identified  Illustrated  Imagined  Implemented  Improved  Improvised  Inaugurated  Increased  Indexed  Indicated  Influenced  Informed  Initiated  Inspected  Inspired  Managed  Marketed  Mastered  Maximized  Ordered  Organized  Originated  Overcame  Oversaw  Planned  Prepared  Prescribed  Presented  Prioritized  Processed  Produced  Programmed  Projected  Promoted  Rationalized  Reasoned  Received  Recommended  Reconciled  Recorded Recruited  Reduced  Referred  Regulated  Related  Removed  Reorganized  Repaired  Reviewed  Solicited  Studied  Summarized  Supervised  Surveyed  Trained  Wrote | **Advocacy**  Accommodated  Achieved  Acquainted  Acquired  Addressed  Advocated  Arbitrated  Arranged  Ascertained  Assembled  Assessed  Assisted  Assumed  Attained  Charged  Chartered  Checked  Clarified  Classified  Collaborated  Collected  Combined  Communicated  Compared  Compiled  Completed  Composed  Cultivated  Dealt  Debated  Decided  Demonstrated  Developed  Encouraged  Fostered  Founded  Gained  Gathered  Gave  Implemented  Instituted  Instructed  Integrated  Mediated  Memorized  Mentored  Minimized  Modeled  Modernized  Motivated  Narrated  Negotiated  Observed  Obtained  Offered  Operated  Organized  Participated  Proposed  Protected  Provided  Publicized  Published  Purchased  Queried  Questioned  Raised  Ran  Strategized  Streamlined  Strengthened  Stressed  Studied  Substantiated  Succeeded  Suggested  Summarized  Supplemented  Symbolized  Utilized  Wrote | **Counseling**  Achieved  Advised  Aided  Allocated  Analyzed  Answered  Anticipated  Applied  Appraised  Approved  Assessed  Assisted  Coached  Co-facilitated  Collaborated  Comforted  Compared  Composed  Counseled  Created  Designed  Determined  Developed  Directed  Discovered  Dispatched  Dispensed  Displayed  Discussed  Educated  Empowered  Enabled  Explained  Facilitated  Fielded  Fostered  Funded  Instructed  Investigated  Intervened  Linked  Located  Managed  Met  Modified  Monitored  Organized  Planned  Prepared  Provided  Published  Reduced  Referred  Regulated  Responded  Reviewed  Served  Showed  Supplemented  Supplied  Supported  Sustained  Taught  Tended  Trained  Treated  Wrote | **Assessment**  Administered  Attended  Assessed  Audited  Augmented  Authorized  Balanced  Bolstered  Briefed  Brought  Conducted  Defined  Detected  Developed  Diagnosed  Established  Evaluated  Examined  Exceeded  Executed  Expanded  Expedited  Experimented  Explained  Explored  Expressed  Funded  Gathered  Generated  Governed  Guided  Handled  Identified  Interviewed  Modified  Monitored  Negotiated  Probed  Published  Reported  Represented  Researched  Resolved  Restored  Revamped  Reviewed  Scanned  Scheduled  Screened  Synthesized  Systematized  Tabulated  Utilized  Validated  Verified  Visualized  Weighed  Won  Wrote | **Research**  Abstracted  Allocated  Analyzed  Collected  Computed  Conceived  Conceptualized  Conducted  Conferred  Conserved  Consolidated  Constructed  Consulted  Contracted  Contributed  Controlled  Converted  Cooperated  Coordinated  Designed  Developed  Dissected  Distributed  Diverted  Documented  Drafted  Drove  Edited  Educated  Eliminated  Emphasized  Extracted  Facilitated  Fashioned  Interviewed  Introduced  Invented  Inventoried  Investigated  Interpreted  Judged  Launched  Learned  Lectured  Led  Lifted  Listed  Located  Logged  Made  Maintained  Managed  Manipulated  Mapped  Presented  Published  Ranked  Researched  Selected  Separated  Served  Set  Shaped  Shared  Simplified  Solicited  Solved  Sorted  Spearheaded  Specialized  Sponsored  Stimulated  Tested  Theorized  Translated  Traveled  Treated  Tutored  Undertook  Unified  United  Updated  Upgraded  Wrote |