**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**ActedAssessedBudgetedBuiltCalculatedChartedCollectedCoordinatedCompiledConservedContractedControlledCopiedCorrelatedCorrespondedCreatedCritiquedDefinedDelegatedDeliveredDemonstratedDesignatedDetectedDevisedDocumentedEnforced EnlistedEnsuredEstablishedEstimatedEvaluatedFinancedFixedFollowedFormulatedHeadedHelpedIdentifiedIllustratedImaginedImplementedImprovedImprovisedInauguratedIncreasedIndexedIndicatedInfluencedInformedInitiatedInspectedInspiredManaged MarketedMasteredMaximizedOrderedOrganizedOriginatedOvercameOversawPlannedPreparedPrescribedPresentedPrioritizedProcessedProducedProgrammedProjectedPromotedRationalizedReasonedReceivedRecommendedReconciledRecorded RecruitedReducedReferredRegulatedRelated RemovedReorganizedRepairedReviewedSolicitedStudiedSummarizedSupervisedSurveyedTrainedWrote | **Advocacy**AccommodatedAchievedAcquaintedAcquiredAddressedAdvocatedArbitratedArranged AscertainedAssembledAssessedAssistedAssumedAttainedChargedCharteredCheckedClarifiedClassifiedCollaboratedCollectedCombinedCommunicatedComparedCompiledCompletedComposedCultivatedDealtDebatedDecidedDemonstratedDevelopedEncouragedFosteredFoundedGainedGatheredGaveImplementedInstitutedInstructedIntegratedMediatedMemorizedMentoredMinimizedModeledModernizedMotivatedNarratedNegotiatedObservedObtainedOfferedOperatedOrganizedParticipatedProposedProtectedProvidedPublicizedPublishedPurchasedQueriedQuestionedRaisedRanStrategizedStreamlinedStrengthenedStressedStudiedSubstantiatedSucceededSuggestedSummarizedSupplementedSymbolizedUtilizedWrote | **Counseling**AchievedAdvisedAidedAllocatedAnalyzedAnsweredAnticipatedAppliedAppraisedApprovedAssessedAssistedCoachedCo-facilitatedCollaboratedComfortedComparedComposedCounseledCreatedDesignedDeterminedDevelopedDirectedDiscoveredDispatchedDispensedDisplayedDiscussedEducatedEmpoweredEnabledExplainedFacilitatedFieldedFosteredFundedInstructedInvestigatedIntervenedLinkedLocatedManagedMetModifiedMonitoredOrganizedPlannedPreparedProvidedPublishedReducedReferredRegulatedRespondedReviewedServedShowedSupplementedSuppliedSupportedSustainedTaughtTendedTrainedTreatedWrote | **Assessment**AdministeredAttendedAssessedAuditedAugmentedAuthorizedBalancedBolsteredBriefedBroughtConductedDefinedDetectedDevelopedDiagnosedEstablishedEvaluatedExaminedExceededExecutedExpandedExpeditedExperimentedExplainedExploredExpressedFundedGatheredGeneratedGovernedGuidedHandledIdentifiedInterviewedModifiedMonitoredNegotiatedProbedPublishedReportedRepresentedResearchedResolvedRestored RevampedReviewedScannedScheduledScreenedSynthesizedSystematizedTabulatedUtilizedValidatedVerifiedVisualizedWeighedWonWrote | **Research**AbstractedAllocatedAnalyzedCollectedComputedConceivedConceptualizedConductedConferredConservedConsolidatedConstructedConsultedContractedContributedControlledConvertedCooperatedCoordinatedDesignedDevelopedDissectedDistributedDivertedDocumentedDraftedDroveEditedEducatedEliminatedEmphasizedExtractedFacilitatedFashionedInterviewedIntroducedInventedInventoriedInvestigatedInterpretedJudgedLaunchedLearnedLecturedLedLiftedListedLocatedLoggedMadeMaintainedManagedManipulatedMappedPresentedPublishedRankedResearchedSelectedSeparatedServedSetShapedSharedSimplifiedSolicitedSolvedSortedSpearheadedSpecializedSponsoredStimulatedTestedTheorizedTranslatedTraveledTreatedTutoredUndertookUnifiedUnitedUpdatedUpgradedWrote |