

**OFFICE OF CAREER SERVICES AND LEADERSHIP MANAGEMENT****Resume Checklist****Overall Appearance, Format, and Content**

- Tailor the resume to the specific position and organization, making an explicit connection between the position requirements and your experience
- Incorporate keywords and phrases throughout
- Highlight transferable knowledge and skills from leadership and extracurricular activities, volunteer work, relevant trainings, and professional affiliations, especially if you are early in your career or changing careers
- Present the most recent, relevant, and pertinent information earlier in the resume
- Use brief statements versus narrative statements
- Be specific about the populations you worked with, issues you addressed, and interventions you implemented
- Use structure and formatting that is consistent and easy to read and follow
- Keep it within two pages, ideally one for early career professionals
- Ensure the document is free of typos and other structural and grammatical errors

**Header / Contact Information**

- Format your name slightly larger and bolder than the rest
- Indicate the city and state in which you are located<sup>1</sup>
- List an email and phone number that you check regularly, as well as your LinkedIn profile link (if available)

**Summary (Optional and/or in place of “Skills”)<sup>2</sup>**

- Provide a concise overview of your professional identity and expertise as they relate to the position and organization
- Focus on what you offer, not what you seek
- Make sure your career focus and identity are clear, and reframe as needed

---

<sup>1</sup> For security reasons, including your full mailing address on your resume is optional. If you're looking to relocate, you can leave out your location and highlight your target city and state in your cover letter, along with an expected move date.

<sup>2</sup> Can be useful for career changers and those whose backgrounds do not paint a clear connection or trajectory toward the target job.

## Education

- List your “Master of Science in Social Work” (or “MSW”) degree with “Columbia School of Social Work” first, and include the city, state, and expected or actual graduation month and year
- List your undergraduate degree below, along with the city, state, and graduation month and year

## Experience

- List your experience in reverse chronological order<sup>3</sup>
- Include your job title, the name of the organization and location (city and state or city and country for international), and the dates you worked for each experience
- In bulleted form, showcase your accomplishments in order of priority
- Use action and results-oriented language to demonstrate what you did (action), why you did it (goal or purpose), and what you achieved (results or outcome), and/or how it made a difference (impact)
- Start with strong action verbs that clearly highlight the specific skills you used
- Quantify the range, frequency, and/or scale of your impact, as appropriate
- Spell out lesser known acronyms and/or replace job or organization-specific titles of programs or initiatives with commonly understood terms

## Skills

- Include any foreign language skills and your proficiency level (e.g. fluent, conversational fluency, basic knowledge)
  - Exclude “English” unless you’re applying to international opportunities
- If applicable, include any technical skills and your proficiency level (e.g. advanced, proficient, working knowledge of) for relevant software and platforms, such as:
  - Electronic medical record / EMR system (e.g. EPIC)
  - Data management / statistical analysis (e.g. Excel, SPSS, SAS, STATA, R)
  - Customer relationship management / CRM system (e.g. Salesforce)
  - Content management / CMS system (e.g. WordPress, Mailchimp, HootSuite)
  - (Professional) Social media management (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)

---

<sup>3</sup> You can have more than one “Experience” heading to highlight your most relevant experience more prominently and/or earlier, especially if you are a career changer (e.g. “Relevant Experience” or other specific “Experience” - Social Work, Clinical, School-Based, Programming, Policy, Research, Nonprofit Management, etc. and “Additional Experience”). Keep in reverse chronological order within.

**Do not include**

- ✗ Photos, graphics, tables, or overly colorful formatting
- ✗ Personal information (e.g. marital status, date of birth, citizenship status)
- ✗ Unnecessary language such as “Phone” or “Email”, or articles, pronouns, and possessives (e.g. a, an, the, I, s/he, they, her, his, theirs)
- ✗ Entire work history, especially from pre-undergrad, or “shadowing” experiences
- ✗ List of daily tasks and responsibilities, language that starts with “Responsible for” or “Responsibilities included”, or minor functions of the job (e.g. filed, copied)
- ✗ Subjective descriptors (e.g. “excellent communicator”) -- show versus tell
- ✗ Names and contact information of supervisors, or reference list (keep separate)
- ✗ Hours worked<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> While traditional resumes do not require hours worked, federal resumes do. Go to Go Government for more resume guidelines: <https://gogovernment.org/writing-your-federal-resume/>