Resume Guidelines and Checklist

Getting started

- A resume is a marketing tool. You use it to market yourself to a company or agency. It shows off achievements, strengths, and a culmination of expertise. The primary purpose of the resume is to obtain an interview.
- Collect relevant information: Education, certifications and licenses, internships, work experiences, volunteer experiences, projects, presentations, research experiences, professional development, and special skills.
- Questions to consider to help identify your accomplishments:
    - Did you engage in extra training or continuing education? What skills did you learn and apply in practice?
    - Were you involved in a pilot project or program development? What role did you play? What were the results?
    - Describe a time when you went beyond the typical scope of your role. What was the outcome?
    - Have you developed or implemented training material? In what settings/areas of focus? How many participants?
    - Do you have supervisory experience? In what settings? How many supervisees?

Layout and appearance

- Font should be easy to read. No smaller than 10 pt. and no bigger than 12 pt. (except for your name on the first page and section headers). Times New Roman and Arial are the suggested fonts to choose for readability.
- Use the default margins for resumes. If you need to adjust the margins, keep the margins within reason – no less than ½ inch on either side. Adjusting default margins is not recommended. Doing so can create problems when sending your resume electronically and with automatic applicant tracking systems.
- Templates are not recommended. They can be difficult to edit and tailor to your own experiences. If you decide to use a template, customize it so that it reflects your individual style and needs, allowing for specific information relevant to the position you are applying for.
- Be consistent. There are a variety of formatting options. The key is to be consistent with use of resume style (chronological, functional, or combination), larger font, bold font, italicized font, spacing, and punctuation.

Content

- Don't assume potential employers are going to read the whole resume. Key points need to be seen readily to draw the reader in. In larger agencies or companies, the average employer will spend just 12-15 seconds looking at your resume. It needs to be attractive and easy to read.
    - Be concise. Those with a Master's degree or Doctoral degree can be up to 2 pages long. Put your name and page number on each page as pages can get separated.

- Place key words and key phrases from the job announcement strategically in your resume if you want the job! Copy from and use the key words you find written in the job description for the job you are applying for. That is the best way for you to show you can "walk their walk" and that you have very relevant experience.
- Be strategic. Remember, you're writing your resume for the job you want, not the job/s you've had.
    - Your resume should reflect your career goals as well as the needs of the potential employer.
    - List your accomplishments in an intentional order, with the most relevant accomplishments, to the potential employer, appearing first in the list.
- Focus on accomplishments, not tasks and use action verbs.
    - Task: Completed documentation according to agency standards
    - Accomplishment: Reviewed and updated agency documentation forms to improve staff efficiency and productivity
    - Quantify when possible: Reviewed and updated 10 agency documentation forms, which improved timely submission of documentation by over 15%.
- List references separately. Maintain a separate and up-to-date list of references for potential employers upon request. There is no need to include "references available upon request" at the bottom of your resume.

Finalizing your resume

- Proofread. Don't count on spell check to catch everything. Thoroughly proofread it at least once and review spacing and formatting as well. Remember, your resume is a reflection of you!
- Create a PDF. When uploading your resume to a website or into the body of an email, create a PDF version first, and upload that. This assures your formatting and spacing doesn't change or become distorted.

Checklist

- ☐ Font size is easy to read, 10 pt.-12 pt. Times New Roman, Arial, or similar font
- ☐ Margins are set to default. Or, if adjusted, no less than ½ inch on either side
- ☐ Formatting is consistent throughout resume, including use of headers, font size, bold font, italicized font, spacing, and punctuation
- ☐ Finished resume is no longer than 2 pages
- ☐ Each page includes your name and a page number
- ☐ Key words from job announcement are included in accomplishment descriptions, headers, and/or other text
- ☐ Accomplishments (and headers, if applicable) are listed in an intentional and logical order
- ☐ Accomplishments are quantified when possible
- ☐ References are up-to-date and listed separately
- ☐ Resume has been reviewed and proofread closely. Schedule a resume review session with GSSWSR Career Services!
- ☐ Save a version of your resume as a PDF