



/ Public Interest Law Resume Advice

Your resume is your first contact with a potential employer. It shows not only your experience thus far but also your accomplishments. Find out as much as you can about the types of projects in which you would be involved if hired. Based on that information, determine which skills you should highlight. You may choose to have a few resumes geared toward different types of employers and positions.

Resumes should be concise, well organized, and easy to read. The intended reader of your resume will probably spend no more than 30 seconds reviewing it.

FORMAT

Header: Addresses, telephone numbers and email. You may want to use both your law school and home address, particularly if you want to demonstrate a connection to a particular geographic area that is not easily apparent elsewhere in your materials. You can also consider listing your LinkedIn page, but make sure that it is update and consistent with your resume.

Educational Background: List schools attended in reverse chronological order, including, any law school from which you may have transferred. Under each institution, list honors, extracurricular activities. with any leadership positions. List publications on which you worked or to which you have contributed. If you received many honors around the same subject matter, you may wish to summarize.

Experience: List in reverse chronological order. You may want to call attention to previous legal experience by listing it separately from other work experience. Relevant volunteer experience should also be included. Always use action verbs and avoid beginning descriptions with “Responsibilities included...”

Specialty Sections: Use this section to highlight particular skills, languages, relevant activities and interests, professional memberships/affiliations.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How long should my resume be? Most law student resumes should be one page in length unless you have significant (and non-redundant) leadership and relevant activities to warrant a second. First-year law students typically have no need for a two-page resume unless they had significant relevant experience prior to law school. Do not use a font size smaller than a 10.



What about grades? Many public interest employers tend to be less concerned with grades compared to private sector employers. They are largely looking at prior work experience and demonstrated passion for the work. We suggest meeting with your career services office for more specific advice based on your standing and the particular employer. If you choose not to include your law school GPA, do not include your undergraduate GPA.

What if I don't have any legal experience? That's okay! Many law students don't have any legal experience, especially during their first year of law school. Think about what experiences you do have—are you currently involved in a clinic or pro bono project at the law school? With respect to the job experiences that you have had, did you develop leadership skills? Analytical ability? Speaking ability? If so, be sure your descriptions reflect that information.

Can I include things from high school? Generally speaking, do not include anything from high school. The only exception is if you have relevant volunteer or activity experience that speaks to your commitment and passion for public interest that is not otherwise demonstrated by your college and post-college experiences.

What if I have gaps in my employment? Short gaps are okay. If you have a longer gap and worked non-legal summer or short-term jobs, you may wish to use a summary line on your resume such as, "Various jobs as sales clerk, waitress and receptionist while in college." Don't overwhelm your resume with those types of jobs to the detriment of more relevant experiences in your past such as quality undergraduate internships just to avoid a gap.

References? Include your references on a separate document that contains the same headers/general formatting as your resume and cover letter. Please see our [References Guide](#) for more information. There is no need to write out that references are available upon request on your resume as that is implied.

PROOFREADING CHECK LIST

- Be consistent in your use of format, punctuation, font, font size, and color.
- Check for periods at the end of all full sentences. Make sure that there is only a single space (not two spaces) between the period ending a sentence and the new sentence. Do not use exclamation points.
- Avoid using acronyms unless you spell out the acronym prior.
- Past jobs should be written in the past tense. Current jobs should be written in the current tense.
- Read your resume slowly from the beginning to check for spelling and grammatical errors. Run a spell check on your computer and repeat this step.



- Read the resume backwards, sentence by sentence. Read aloud while you proofread.
- Have a friend or family member proofread your resume.

JOHN DOE

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New York, NY, 13210

(555)-555-9900
lawstudent@gmail.com

EDUCATION

America Law School, New York, NY

Juris Doctorate, Expected May 2020

GPA: 3.8/4.0

Honors: Dean's List, Moot Court Honor Society Member, Public Interest Network Grant Recipient, Chancellor's Scholarship, Pro Bono and Community Honors

Activities: Student Mentor to first-year students, Public Interest Network Fellowship Director, Finalist in Alternate Dispute Resolution Competition

University of the U.S.A., New York, NY

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, May 2015

Honors: Psi Chi Honors Society, Phi Eta Sigma Honors Society, Dean's List

Activities: Psychology Club; Fundraising Coordinator, Pre-Law Club; Member and President, Healthy Communities that Care Coalition; Focus Group Coordinator

EXPERIENCE

America Legal Aid Bureau, Washington, D.C.

Family Law Fellow, Summer 2019

Served as the primary case handler for matters representing low-income victims of domestic violence in divorce, visitation, child support, custody, and guardianship proceedings. Extensively interacted with and counseled clients throughout every stage of negotiations and court proceedings. Effectively drafted pleadings, motions, separation agreements, and other legal documents and engaged in professional communication with opposing counsel. Advocated for clients during courtroom hearings and one trial on grounds for divorce. Engaged in client intake interviews and participated in determining which new clients to represent.

Legal Aid of New York, New York, NY

Student Fellow, Summer 2018

Investigated how courts in New York provide access to justice, and how license suspensions and court costs particularly impact low-income criminal defendants. Represented client seeking to continue disability benefits before an Administrative Hearing Officer. Produced and filed Civil Protection Orders and observed domestic violence client intake interviews. Researched and summarized cases in education, housing, and public benefits.

CCA Career Counseling Center, New York, NY

Communications Coordinator, June 2015 – Aug. 2017

Recruited as coordinator for all communications and facilitator of all programs, classes, and training seminars at career counseling center. Professionally and effectively interacted with and assisted customers in retaining services, and was additionally responsible for research and formation of center's non-profit organization, supervision of undergraduate and high school interns, direction of multimedia and marketing initiatives, distribution and analysis of individuals' behavioral assessments, and direct support to executives.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- **Help Center**, *Legal Services Volunteer*, New York, NY, 2018 - Present
- **Safe House**, *Family Court Advocate*, New York, NY, 2017 - Present
- **Advocates for Youth Charity**, *Secretary*, New York, NY, 2016 – Present