



NEW ENGLAND LAW | BOSTON
Career Services Office

Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers
and Massachusetts Bar Association

Manage Your Job Search Series:
Perfect Resumes & Cover Letters

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Presented by

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Resume Tips for Job Seekers



First Impression

- Employers spend about 30-45 seconds reviewing a resume. Make a good first impression.
- Your resume is a personal marketing tool. It should help you stand out as an individual.
- Your resume does not get you the job, however it does get you to the first step in the hiring process - - the interview.

Format

- Use an easy to read, clean and concise format.
- Bullet points are preferred over long paragraphs.
- Be consistent with font style. Use a conservative font style (i.e. Times New Roman).
- Keep margins equal on the top, bottom, and sides of the page.
- Print your resume on high quality bond/resume paper when mailing it employers.
- Tip: Convert your resume to a pdf document before emailing it to employers to avoid formatting mishaps.
- Limit resume one page for recent law school graduates (less than 5 years of post-law school experience). Limit to two pages for law school graduates with 5 or more years of post-law school experience.

Content for All Resumes

- Spell check, proofread, spell check and proofread again! Ask someone proof read your resume or you.
- Make sure all information is truthful, accurate, relevant and current. Check dates. Items that are too old may need to be deleted (i.e. volunteer work or organization memberships over 5 years old that are no longer active).
- Use present tense verbs to describe the work that you are currently doing at your current job.
- Use past tense verbs to describe work that you have already done at your past jobs.
- Avoid the use of pronouns to describe work on your resume (I, we, he, she, they etc.).

Content for Legal Resumes

- Contact Information: Include name, address, phone number (where you can be reached) and professional email.
- Bar Certification/Memberships: Massachusetts State Bar, admitted Month Year
- Education:
Name of Law School, City & State
Juris Doctor, *cum laude*, Month Year
Honors: List the title of the award, year(s) received
Activities: List leadership activities, year(s) participated

Name of College, City & State
Degree, major, *magna cum laude*, Month Year
Honors: List the title of the award, year(s) received
Activities: List leadership activities, year(s) participated

Note: For law school graduates with 5+ years of experience list the Education and Bar Certification sections after the Experience section(s).
- Legal Experience: For each job listed include the name of employer, city and state of employer, title of your position and the dates of employment. Included a bullet point list describing the work that you did.
- Professional (or Work) Experience: Include all relevant non-legal work experience that may be of interest to the targeted employer.
- Skills/Languages: List specialized skills that are relevant to the position you are applying for. Include any foreign languages that you speak and the level of your ability (i.e. fluent, proficient, basic, etc.)
- Professional and Community Activities: Include professional groups that you belong to and community activities that you are involved in. Only list activities that you have participated in within the last 5 years.
- Interests: What are your interests or hobbies outside of work? This can be a good interview conversation starter.

Prepared by Mandie LeBeau
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Resume Tips for Job Seekers

Content for Alternative Legal and Non-Legal Resumes

- **Contact Information:** Include name, address, phone number (where you can be reached) and professional email.
- **Objective:** State what you want to do and where you want to do it. Be specific to the position that you are seeking.
- **Professional (or Work) Experience:** Include all relevant non-legal work experience that may be of interest to the targeted employer.
- **Additional Experience:** If you have volunteer or community experience that is related to the position, then you should mention that here.

Note: Consider clustering your additional experience by presenting the information with a specific title “Consulting Experience” or “Teaching Experience”, etc.

- **Education:** Name of Law School, City & State
Juris Doctor, *cum laude*, Month Year
Honors: List the title of the award, year(s) received
Activities: List leadership activities, year(s) participated

Name of College, City & State
Bachelor of Arts (or Science), major, *magna cum laude*, Month Year
Honors: List the title of the award, year(s) received
Activities: List leadership activities, year(s) participated
- **Skills/Languages:** List specialized skills that are relevant to the position you are applying for. Include any foreign languages that you speak and the level of your ability (i.e. fluent, proficient, working knowledge, basic, etc.)
- **Interests:** What are your interests or hobbies outside of work? This can be a conversation starter for the interviewer.

References

- Create an additional page that has the same contact/heading information as your resume.
- Ask all people listed as references in advance if they would like to serve as a reference for you.
- List a minimum of three references with their name, title, company name, address, phone number and email address.
- Include the person’s relationship to you (e.g. “Former supervising attorney” or “Judge that I clerked for in Fall 2007”).
- Do Not Use: “References Furnished Upon Request”. Be proactive and provide your references.

SAMPLE LEGAL RESUME FORMAT

NAME

Street • City, State Zip • Phone • Email

LEGAL EXPERIENCE

Name of Employer

Title

City, State

Month Year—Month Year

- Action verb . . . responsibilities, accomplishments, transferable skills
- Action verb . . . responsibilities, accomplishments, transferable skills

Name of Employer

Title

City, State

Month Year—Month Year

- Action verb . . . responsibilities, accomplishments, transferable skills
- Action verb . . . responsibilities, accomplishments, transferable skills

WORK (or PROFESSIONAL) EXPERIENCE

Name of Employer

Title

City, State

Month Year—Month Year

- Action verb . . . responsibilities, accomplishments, transferable skills
- Action verb . . . responsibilities, accomplishments, transferable skills

Name of Employer

Title

City, State

Month Year—Month Year

- Action verb . . . responsibilities, accomplishments, transferable skills
- Action verb . . . responsibilities, accomplishments, transferable skills

EDUCATION

Law School Name

Juris Doctor, cum laude

City, State

Month Year

Class Rank: __ of __ Top __%

GPA: __ (include if 3.0 or higher)

Honors: *Law Review or Journal, Title, Year—Year*

 ____ Scholarship, Year—Year

 Dean's List, Year—Year

Activities: ____ Association, Title, Year—Year

Undergraduate School

Bachelor of _____ in _____, cum laude

City, State

Month Year

GPA: __ (include if 3.0 or higher)

Honors: Dean's List, Year—Year

Activities: Sport or Club, Year—Year

Study Abroad Program

Concentration or Courses in

City, Country

Month Year

CERTIFICATION

Massachusetts State Bar, admitted Month Year

SKILLS/LANGUAGES

Include special computer skills/Language skills define as Fluent, Proficient, Conversant or Working Knowledge of . . .

PROFESSIONAL AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Organization, Title, City, State, Month Year—Month Year

Organization, Title, City, State, Month Year—Month Year

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INTERESTS

Enjoy

SAMPLE NON-LEGAL RESUME FORMAT

NAME

Street • City, State Zip • Phone • Email

OBJECTIVE

State what you want to do and where you want to do it. Be specific to the position that you are seeking.

WORK (or PROFESSIONAL) EXPERIENCE

Name of Employer

City, State

Title

Month Year—Month Year

- Action verb . . . responsibilities, accomplishments, transferable skills
- Action verb . . . responsibilities, accomplishments, transferable skills

Name of Employer

City, State

Title

Month Year—Month Year

- Action verb . . . responsibilities, accomplishments, transferable skills
- Action verb . . . responsibilities, accomplishments, transferable skills

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Name of Employer

City, State

Title

Month Year—Month Year

- Action verb . . . responsibilities, accomplishments, transferable skills
- Action verb . . . responsibilities, accomplishments, transferable skills

Name of Employer

City, State

Title

Month Year—Month Year

- Action verb . . . responsibilities, accomplishments, transferable skills
- Action verb . . . responsibilities, accomplishments, transferable skills

EDUCATION

Law School Name

City, State

Juris Doctor, cum laude

Month Year

Class Rank: __ of __ Top __%

GPA: __ (include if 3.0 or higher)

Honors: *Law Review or Journal*, Title, Year—Year

_____ Scholarship, Year—Year

Dean's List, Year—Year

Activities: _____ Association, Title, Year—Year

Undergraduate School

City, State

Bachelor of _____ in _____, cum laude

Month Year

GPA: __ (include if 3.0 or higher)

Honors: Dean's List, Year—Year

Activities: Sport or Club, Year—Year

Study Abroad Program

City, Country

Concentration or Courses in

Month Year

CERTIFICATION

Massachusetts State Bar, admitted Month Year

SKILLS/LANGUAGES

Include special computer skills/Language skills define as Fluent, Proficient, Conversant or Working Knowledge of . . .

PROFESSIONAL AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Organization, Title, City, State, Month Year—Month Year

Organization, Title, City, State, Month Year—Month Year

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INTERESTS

Enjoy



Cover Letter Tips for Job Seekers



Cover Letters 101

Paper & Font - Should be same as resume (bond paper, same font and text size as resume)

Length - Should be one page

Addressee - Identify a contact person you are applying to; where a name is not available use "Sir or Madame"

Enclosure - Include the word "Enclosure(s)" or "Attachment(s)" at the bottom indicating resume, writing sample, etc. enclosed

Email Tip - When sending your cover letter by email, attach it to the email along with your resume. Do not make the main text of the email your "cover letter".

Cover Letters - It's Really About Them, Not You

- Address the employer's needs, not your own
- Focus on what you can do for the employer, not what they can do for you
- Identify the employer's needs and meet them with your skills, experience, character, etc.
- Do not recite your resume

Basic Format

- 1st Paragraph = Introduction
- 2nd Paragraph = Describe your Interest in the Employer
- 3rd Paragraph = Describe your Key Skills
- 4th Paragraph = Closing

1st Paragraph = Introduction

- Identify yourself
- Identify the position you are applying for
- State documents enclosed such as resume, writing sample, references, and/or transcript
- Optional: State name of someone who referred you when appropriate
- Optional: State class standing and ties to location/area

2nd Paragraph = Describe your Interest in the Employer

- "I am interested in working for XYZ Law Firm, because . . ."
- Research the employer's website to figure out why you want to work for them
- Include 2 - 3 sentences of practice area interests or specific interest in the employer and the work that they do

3rd Paragraph = Describe you Key Skills

- "I believe that my combined education and work experience make me an excellent candidate for the associate position." Next, describe your skills.
- Or - try matching the skills listed in the job posting: "I understand from your job posting that you are seeking an associate who has excellent research and writing skills. I have developed my research and writing skills by . . ."
- Confidently state how your skills and experience would meet their needs
- Explain why you are the best candidate for the job

4th Paragraph = Closing

- Convey your availability for interviews
- State when you will be in the area (or a willingness to travel) if applying from out of state
- Thank the employer for considering your application

Cover Letter Don'ts

Do not include:

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| X Age | X Physical Characteristics |
| X Marital Status | X Children |
| X Sexual Orientation | X Religion |
| X Health Status | X Other Intimately Personal Information |

Name
Address
City, State Zip
(OR make your contact info the same as your resume.)
Month Date, Year

Contact Name
Contact Title
Organization Name
Address
City, State Zip

Dear Attorney Last Name:
(OR if not an attorney, use: Mr. or Ms. Last Name.)
Paragraph 1

Paragraph 2

Paragraph 3

Paragraph 4

Sincerely,

Name

Enclosure(s)/Attachment(s)

**SAMPLE
FORMAT**

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