



Writing Legal Resumes

OFFICE OF CAREER PLANNING

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Introduction

Your resume is your personal marketing tool. It is your introduction to an employer and it should present your relevant education and experience in a concise, well-organized format. An employer will likely scan your resume for less than a minute so it needs to be easy to read and error free!

Your resume should demonstrate your commitment to or aptitude for the type of legal work you are seeking. You can do this by highlighting prior jobs (law-related or otherwise), internships, volunteer experiences, academic achievements, involvement with student organizations, and anything else that shows your enthusiasm.



For more guidance, listen to our most recent [Resume and Cover Letter Workshop](#), then make an appointment to have your resume reviewed by an OCP counselor.

Formatting Your Resume

Basics

- **Keep it to one page!** Your resume should be no longer than one page unless you have significant (10+ years) work experience prior to law school.
- **Make it easy to read.** Use a standard font. That means reasonably-sized (11 or 12-point), black (no, not even a “tasteful” navy), and no “script.” Make sure the text isn’t crammed and that your margins are at least ½ inch.
- **The information should be easily located.** A “creative” new format is *not* the way to stand out from the crowd. It’s true that most employers spend less than a minute reading a resume, but that’s because they know what they are looking for and where it should be located. If you are trying to stand out based on your credentials, don’t make them difficult to find!
- **Format consistently** (e.g., bullets, spacing, punctuation, capitalization, and font). For example, if you italicize your title for one job, italicize all job titles. Inconsistencies are distracting and cause employers to question your attention to detail.
- **PROOFREAD! It must be free of errors!** A resume containing a spelling or grammatical error might as well get sent directly to the Los Angeles Municipal Landfill. Be sure to proofread your resume several times, line-by-line. Then enlist the help of OCP, friends, and family.

Use a text box for your name and move it anywhere in the heading.
In MS Word, click on the "Insert" tab at the top of the page, then on "Text Box." After drawing your text box, right click on it, scroll over "Wrap Text" in the menu and select "Behind Text" or "In Front of Text" from the options.

Rose Nylund

1600 Washtenaw Avenue, Apt. #139, Ann Arbor, MI 48109
(734) 764-0546 • rnylund@umich.edu

EDUCATION

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LAW SCHOOL

Juris Doctor

Asylum and Refugee Project, Newsletter Coordinator
Family Law Project, Student Attorney


Ann Arbor, MI
Expected May 2019

Some variation in typeface is great for emphasis, but avoid using completely different fonts. It looks careless.

ST. OLAF COLLEGE

Bachelor of Arts, *cum laude*, Political Science and Public Policy
Intern, Minnesota House of Representatives, Office of the Senate Majority
Captain, St. Olaf College Mock Trial Team

Northfield, MN
June 2016

Want to insert a line under a heading? Highlight the heading text, then select the border icon  found in your top toolbar.

UNIVERSIDAD DE MADRID

Intensive study of Spanish language, culture, and history

Madrid, Spain
Fall 2014-Spring 2015

EXPERIENCE

U.S. DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN, HON. PATRICIA E. KING

Intern

- Observed court proceedings including trials, motions, and settlement conferences
- Updated library materials

Detroit, MI
Summer 2017

Use bullets to make your resume easier to read. Paragraph form tends to look a little cluttered.

TWIN CITIES COMMUNITY SERVICES

Public Policy and Legislative Specialist

- Researched emerging policy issues for Twin Cities health and human service organizations
- Produced weekly newsletter
- Coordinated annual legislative

Minneapolis, MN
Summer 2016

Just use tabs and spaces to align text along the right-hand margin. No fancy tricks needed! Turning on the "gridlines" in the "View" tab can help with alignment.

for member organizations

IMMIGRANT ASSISTANCE, Inc.

Public Policy Intern

- Researched and drafted memoranda regarding social and health policy issues affecting immigrant women
- Provided research assistance to domestic violence advocates
- Compiled briefing files for attorneys advocating for pending domestic violence legislation in Congress

Washington, D.C.
Summer 2015

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Writing your headings in a slightly larger font size makes them stand out.

- Organized and taught financial planning classes at Detroit area women's shelter
- Mentored local sixth and seventh grade girls through Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metropolitan Detroit

Writing Your Resume

Heading

Your heading should always include your name, address, phone number and email address. If you have a permanent address in or near the market in which you are applying, consider including that in addition to or in lieu of your current address.

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Education

For the first few years of your career, your education section should be first. List your educational credentials in reverse chronological order by the date your degree was awarded, being sure to include the name and the date of each degree. Under each institution, list your relevant awards, honors, activities, and leadership positions. If you have a lot of “extras,” divide them into categories (e.g., Honors, Activities). You are not required to list your GPA, but may choose to do so if it is exceptional (except on resumes submitted for [on-campus interviewing](#)). If you choose to leave off your law school GPA, it is usually prudent to leave off GPAs from other institutions as well. (However, you may keep other indicators of academic success such as Phi Beta Kappa or Latin honors).

Important Tips

- When listing your law degree, you may write out **Juris Doctor** or abbreviate it as **J.D.** or **JD.** But remember, your degree is **not** a “Juris Doctorate”!
- Typically, there is no reason to list high school on your legal resume; if you are including it to establish ties to a region, consider mentioning that information in your cover letter instead.

Education

The University of Michigan Law School, Ann Arbor, MI
J.D., Expected May 2019

Honors: Dean’s Public Service Fellow
 Merit Scholarship Recipient

Activities: Journal of Race and Law, Editorial Board Member
 Asylum and Refugee Project, Newsletter Coordinator
 Family Law Project, Student Attorney

Experience

Deciding What to List

We suggest calling this section “experience” rather than “employment” to give you a little leeway when deciding what to include. List your paid jobs, internships, externships, law school clinics, and volunteer positions (legal or otherwise related). If you are still short on experience, you may list undergraduate research assistant positions or leadership roles in student organizations as well! (This is especially helpful for 1Ls coming straight from college.)

Writing Your Descriptions

Use short phrases led by action verbs (see Appendix A for a list) and be precise and illuminative. For example, “Assisted attorneys with pleadings” is weak because it lacks detail and precision—never let an interviewer guess how you “assisted” with a project! “Researched and drafted motions to suppress statements and to dismiss for lack of probable cause” is much stronger.

Important Tips

- We recommend using bullet points (rather than paragraphs) to reduce clutter.
- Avoid using jargon or maddening words like “liaised” or “plethora” in your descriptions.
- Be careful not to overstate (or understate!) your achievements or experiences.

Experience

Twin Cities Community Services, Minneapolis, MN

Public Policy and Legislative Specialist

Summer 2016

- Researched emerging policy issues for Twin Cities health and human service organizations
- Produced weekly newsletters for member organizations
- Coordinated annual legislative conference and organized monthly forums for member organizations

Optional Sections

Volunteer Activity/Community Involvement

While some volunteer experience, such as your work with the Michigan Unemployment Insurance Project, may be directly relevant to legal employment, your work as a volunteer soccer coach may not. However, there may still be great reasons to include some of those projects under a separate section (e.g., they are important to you, they show your ties to the community, or they reflect some of your interests).

Community Involvement

Mentored local sixth and seventh grade girls through Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metropolitan Detroit

Languages

Fluency or proficiency in another language can be a huge asset when applying for many legal jobs. If you have language skills, create a separate category to list them. Be sure to note your level of mastery (e.g., proficient, fluent, native).

Languages

French (fluent), Spanish (proficient)

Publications

Most law students don't have a publications section. If you have one significant publication, you can include it under the relevant school or employer. However, if you have multiple relevant publications, you may list them in a separate section. When listing your publications, adhere to standard Bluebook format.

Advanced Computer Skills

Do not list basic computer skills on your resume—all law students are expected to have a working knowledge of Microsoft Office, Westlaw, and Lexis. If you have advanced technical skills, you may list them, but only if they are relevant to the position.

Interests

Interests on your resume can catch an employer's attention and be a great conversation starter in an interview. If you have the space, include an interests section, but make sure your interests are interesting! Generic interests like "reading" or "sports" don't do much to pique someone's curiosity so don't be afraid to be specific and unique!

Interests

Long-distance running, creative writing, cooking traditional Mexican food

Bar Admission

If you have graduated from law school and passed a bar examination, include this information under its own heading at the bottom of your resume.

Bar Admissions

Passed California State Bar Examination, February 2014. To be sworn-in April 2014.

New York State Bar (2013).

Sections *Not* to Include

- A "Career Summary" or "Job Objective"
- Phrases such as "References or Writing Sample Available upon Request," because ... *obviously*.

Other Resume Tips

Tailoring Your Resume

Customize your resume for particular job opportunities. For example, the bullet about your volunteer work at Ecology Center might be superfluous when you're applying to the ACLU, but you'll want to keep it in there when applying to the Alliance for the Great Lakes. Try keeping a "master list" of *everything* you've ever done to help you to remember those jobs and activities that don't fit on every version of your resume.

Updating Your Resume

Your resume should be a fluid document that gets updated frequently as you complete internships, get into a clinic, join a journal, get elected to the executive board of your student organization, are awarded fellowships, etc. As you add to your resume, deleting will become a necessary (and sometimes painful) process. But don't say goodbye forever! Add your deleted entries to your "master list" as mentioned above.

Sending Your Resume

If you are emailing your resume, send it, along with any other requested materials, as one aptly-named .pdf file (e.g., "S. Sugarbaker – Michigan Law 1L Internship Application").

Appendix A. List of Resume Action Verbs

Use this list to assist you in actively describing your experiences!

accelerated	constructed	explained	measured	reproduced
accomplished	contacted	explored	mediated	researched
achieved	continued	facilitated	modeled	resolved
acquired	contracted	figured	modified	responded
activated	convened	financed	molded	restored
adapted	conveyed	focused	monitored	retained
adjusted	coordinated	forecasted	motivated	retrieved
administered	corresponded	formed	named	reviewed
advised	counseled	formulated	negotiated	revised
allocated	created	fostered	observed	rewrote
analyzed	critiqued	founded	obtained	routed
annotated	decided	functioned	operated	scheduled
anticipated	defined	generated	ordered	searched
applied	delegated	governed	organized	selected
appraised	delivered	grouped	originated	served
arranged	demonstrated	guided	outlined	shaped
articulated	derived	helped	oversaw	shared
assembled	designed	identified	perceived	showed
assessed	detected	illustrated	performed	simplified
assigned	determined	immunized	persuaded	solicited
authored	developed	implemented	planned	solved
balanced	devised	improved	planted	specified
briefed	directed	increased	presented	spoke
budgeted	distributed	informed	presided	stimulated
built	drafted	initiated	printed	structured
catalogued	edited	instituted	produced	studied
categorized	educated	instructed	protected	supervised
chaired	effected	interpreted	provided	supported
clarified	elicited	interviewed	publicized	synthesized
cleared	encouraged	introduced	questioned	targeted
coded	established	invented	raised	taught
collaborated	evaluated	investigated	recommended	tested
compared	examined	judged	recorded	trained
compiled	executed	led	recruited	translated
completed	exhibited	listened	reduced	tutored
composed	expanded	maintained	rendered	updated
computed	expedited	managed	repaired	utilized
conducted	experienced	marketed	reported	verified
consolidated	experimented	mastered	represented	wrote

Appendix B. Sample Resumes

Rose Nylund

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June 2016

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Captain, St. Olaf College Mock Trial Team

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Madrid, Spain

Intensive study of Spanish language, culture, and history

Fall 2015-Spring 2016

EXPERIENCE

U.S. DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN, HON. PATRICIA E. KING

Detroit, MI

Intern

Summer 2017

- Observed court proceedings including trials, motions, and settlement conferences
- Updated library materials

TWIN CITIES COMMUNITY SERVICES

Minneapolis, MN

Public Policy and Legislative Specialist

Summer 2016

- Researched emerging policy issues for Twin Cities health and human service organizations
- Produced weekly newsletters for member organizations
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IMMIGRANT ASSISTANCE, Inc.

Washington, D.C

Public Policy Intern

Summer 2015

- Researched and drafted memoranda regarding social and health policy issues affecting immigrant women
- Provided research assistance to domestic violence advocates
- Compiled briefing files for attorneys advocating for pending domestic violence legislation in Congress

ADDITIONAL

- Fluent in Spanish, conversant in Norwegian
- Organized and taught financial planning classes at Detroit area women's shelter
- Mentored local sixth and seventh grade girls through Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metropolitan Detroit
- Interests include: Spinning, chocolate chip cookies, storytelling

Daniel Humphrey

22 Green Street ▪ Ann Arbor, MI 48109 ▪ (734) 555-5555 ▪ tips@gossipgirl.net

EDUCATION

The University of Michigan School of Law, Ann Arbor, MI Expected, May 2019

Juris Doctor

Honors: Recipient, Merit Scholarship (three years).

Activities: Secretary, Organization of Public Interest Students (2012-2013); Member, Environmental Law Society; Volunteer, Family Law Project.

Columbia University, New York, NY May 2014

Bachelor of Arts in English

Honors: Dean's List; Colby Prize (presented annually to one senior for excellence in Government).

Activities: Student Senate, Senior Class Representative; Volunteer, Student Coalition Against Hunger and Homelessness; Orchestra Band, 1st Chair Clarinet.

EXPERIENCE

Lawyers for Children, Inc., New York, NY May – August 2017

Legal Intern

- Appeared, pursuant to the student practice rule, on behalf of children in Manhattan Family Court.
- Researched and drafted motions to dismiss a petition for termination of parental rights, to request paternity testing, and to quash a subpoena.
- Interviewed clients and visited foster care homes and treatment facilities.

Washtenaw County Office of the Public Defender, Ann Arbor, MI October 2016 – May 2017

Legal Intern

- Researched and drafted motions to suppress statements and to dismiss for lack of probable cause.
- Edited an amicus brief submitted to the Supreme Judicial Court.
- Interviewed clients and conducted case investigations.

Horizons Center, Madison, WI August 2014 – April 2016

Legal Advocate

- Filed restraining orders on behalf of survivors of domestic violence and provided support to clients during criminal and family law proceedings.
- Developed and facilitated peer support groups for teens at Horizons High School.

INTERESTS

Creative writing (exposes published in Vanity Fair), blogging

Serena van der Woodsen

994 Fifth Avenue, PHB
New York, NY 10028
(212) 555-5555
svdw@umich.edu

Education

University of Michigan Law School, Ann Arbor, MI
J.D., expected May 2020

Columbia University, New York, NY
BA in Theology, graduated *summa cum laude*, May 2017
Honors: Maintained 4.0 average for all semesters
Dean's Scholarship for Outstanding Academics

Experience

Kaplan & Chen LLP, New York, NY
Summer Associate, 2017

- Researched and analyzed tax law relating to corporate transactions, including M&A, partnership structures, and real estate investment trusts.
- Researched and prepared interoffice memos analyzing bankruptcy case law, including adequate notice, procedural requirements for amending confirmation orders, and standard of review.
- Observed court proceedings and attended Creditors Committee conferences.
- Co-authored article on the IRS treatment of horse farm tax shelters.

Hon. Judge Cyrus Rose, S.D.N.Y., New York, NY
Intern, Summer 2016

- Researched and analyzed case law and statutes, including copyright infringement, defamation by email, and breach of a surgeon's duty of care.
- Drafted preliminary court opinions and findings of fact, including reports and recommendations, and summary judgments.
- Observed court proceedings and attended settlement conferences.

United States Congressman Tripp Vanderbilt, New York, NY
Intern, Summer 2015

- Determined campaign strategy in 12th precinct.
- Determined press strategy; communicated with media outlets and wrote press releases.
- Worked very closely with the Congressman during and following the campaign, often spending late nights and weekends on confidential assignments.

Additional

- World traveler, fashion model
- Fluent in Dutch, German and French

MOLLY WILLIAMS

27 Easy Street, Brighton, MI 48116
(818) 929-3939 • mpwilliams@umich.edu

Education

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LAW SCHOOL, Ann Arbor, MI

J.D., expected May 2020

Activities: Membership Chair, Law School Republican Students Society
 Member, Food Stamp Advocacy Project

Honors: Dean's Scholarship

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, Pomona, CA

B.A. in History, *magna cum laude*, Minor in International Relations, May 2017

Activities: Volunteer, Partners in Education
 Member, Cal Poly Lacrosse Club
 Participant, Paris Semester (Fall 2006)

Honors: Dean's List (6 semesters), Presidential Scholar Award

Experience

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, Washington, DC

Bureau of Foreign Affairs Intern, Summer 2017

- Composed memos, cables, and briefing notes on drought-stricken areas in Africa
- Gathered and compiled data on peacekeeping missions
- Analyzed strategic planning documents for U.S. missions on Mars

LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, Los Angeles, CA

Office Assistant, Summers 2015-2016

- Scheduled appointments for the Chief of Health, interacted with the public, and answered phones
- Gathered and verified birth certificate information

POMONA COUNTY HISTORY CENTER, Pomona, CA

Museum Department Intern, Summer 2014

- Researched history of artifacts to be displayed in museum's permanent collection and wrote explanatory notes and captions to be displayed with artifacts
- Led tours for school children

Interests

Ultimate Frisbee, writing science fiction, and classical music

YOLANDA HEGELDORN

551 South State Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48109

734-777-0307 • yolanda@umich.edu

EDUCATION

University of Michigan Law School, Ann Arbor, MI

Juris Doctor, Expected May 2020

Recipient, Provost's Scholarship (merit based)

University of Michigan Ford School of Public Policy, Ann Arbor, MI

Master of Public Policy, Expected May 2020

Vice President, International Policy Students Association

Member, Ford Case Collective

Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN

Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages with Honors, May 2017

Soloist, Vanderbilt University Light Opera (2009-2011)

EXPERIENCE

University of Michigan Law School International Transactions Clinic, Ann Arbor, MI

Student Attorney, September 2017-December 2017

- Drafted shareholders agreement for Kazakh biotechnology firm.
- Negotiated favorable contractual terms for Haitian clients with Mexican vendors.
- Researched cross-border lending for East African technology start-up.

Alzheimer & Gray, Budapest, Hungary

Summer Associate, May 2017 – July 2017

- Prepared for and participated in an arbitration between American and Hungarian corporations.
- Drafted loan documents, purchase contracts, and a letter of intent for a Hungarian company.
- Researched and wrote memoranda on topics including international arbitration procedures, applicability of Hungarian law to purchase agreement, and proposed changes to the European Union Commercial Code.

European Convention on Human Rights Centre, London, England

Legal Intern, May 2016 – August 2016

- Researched and drafted pleadings for cases under the European Convention on Human Rights.
- Advised attorneys on examining expert witnesses before the European Court of Human Rights.
- Communicated with partner organizations to secure funding for field trips and tournaments.

ADDITIONAL

Fluent in German and Hungarian; conversant in French.

Interests include traveling in all European Union countries; competitive table tennis.

Appendix C. Resume Checklist

Utilize this checklist prior to scheduling a resume review or submitting your resume to an employer for consideration. For more in-depth information, see the OCP Resume Guide or [make an appointment](#) with a counselor for individual assistance.

Header	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Include phone number and e-mail address <input type="checkbox"/> No unnecessary commas or spaces <input type="checkbox"/> Include permanent address if it shows a geographic tie to your target market
Education Section	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Your degree is a <i>Juris Doctor</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Include expected graduation month and year (e.g., Juris Doctor, expected May 2016) <input type="checkbox"/> GPA is <u>not</u> allowed in the law school portion of your resume for OCI <input type="checkbox"/> If you are including GPA for non-OCI positions, you should represent X.XXX/4.300 to reflect the law school's grading scale <input type="checkbox"/> Include student leadership roles <input type="checkbox"/> Include school activities relevant to the resume reader <input type="checkbox"/> Include examples of high academic performance including scholarships/honors
Experience Section	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Experiences should be in reverse chronological order <input type="checkbox"/> Account for all years after graduation from college <input type="checkbox"/> Time should be represented in month, year format rather than simply by years <input type="checkbox"/> Make sure each job in the resume has a location listed <input type="checkbox"/> Use bullets, rather than paragraphs, to describe your experiences <input type="checkbox"/> Bullets within experience should be ordered according to significance and relevance to target position <input type="checkbox"/> Allocate more space and bullets to the more relevant (and recent) roles <input type="checkbox"/> Use active verbs to begin bullets to convey relevant skills <input type="checkbox"/> All bullets should include results and/or impact where possible <input type="checkbox"/> Use terminology understandable by potential readers who may be outside the industry of your prior experience
Interests/Additional Section	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Should use one to four lines of space for this section <input type="checkbox"/> Include interests, hobbies, volunteer activities, etc. Be specific in describing interests <input type="checkbox"/> Include relevant professional certifications
General	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Try to completely fill the page without exceeding one page in length <input type="checkbox"/> Resume should seem aesthetically pleasing <input type="checkbox"/> Use standard font, no less than 11 pt. <input type="checkbox"/> Formatting should be consistent (i.e., italics for all job titles, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> PROOFREAD! Use correct spelling and grammar <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid use of pronouns (I, me, my, our, we, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant experience and key skills should be evident even with a quick read