
How to Prepare an Effective Resume & Cover Letter

Thursday, January 20, 2022

10:00 – 11:30am



Preparing an Effective Resume: Why does it Matter?

- Because other applicants won't bother!
- To get noticed! By Recruiters and others.
- Relationship building with Recruiters. For future consideration – if this doesn't work out, you'll be remembered for the next opportunity.

Before You Start

- What type of opportunity are you seeking?
- What position? agency? where? Willingness to actually accept the job?
- What does that prospective employer want from a candidate?
- Do a self-assessment. What assets, skills, and abilities do you have to give?
- Create a list of those assets as well as accomplishments.
- Connect the dots between what they want and what you bring to the table.

Resume Do's & Don'ts

- The average length of time that someone spends reviewing your resume is between 10 and 30 seconds.
- Every resume reviewer (Recruiter or HR staff) has their own preferences.
- Start with a **long-form resume** with all of your experience and skills listed.
- Then, tailor your resume to the qualifications and experiences desired by the agency; illustrate how/where you have accomplished the requirements of the position.
- Proofread your materials. Better yet – have two other people proofread your materials.

Resume Don'ts

- Typos, spelling and grammatical errors, date errors.
- Sloppy formatting, graphics, narrow margins (less than 1”).
- DON'T include attachments or references (unless requested).
- DON'T include photos, personal information, family information, list hobbies, or special interests.
- DON'T use your current agency's email address.

Resume Don'ts

- Too much or too little? What is the right length?
- Functional resume vs. chronological resume?
- Don't "recycle" your resume; not tailored to the position/agency.
- Insufficient information - don't make someone guess about the location, size, complexity of an agency.

PEPPY LAPEW
350 Stinky Street
Penelope, CA 012345
(822) xxx-xxxx
Peppy4you@yahoo.com

Objective: To obtain a challenging position in accounting/finance field.

Education:

People's State University, Everywhere, CA - Bachelor's Degree
Certified Internal Auditor (CIA)
Certified Health care Financial Professional (CHFP)

Experience:

Senior Accounting Manager, City of Penelope, Penelope, CA

2012 to current

- Supervises, direct, coordinate, and monitor technical and clerical accounting staff, assign work activities and projects, monitor work flow, review and evaluate work products, methods, and procedures, meet with staff to identify and resolve problems. Evaluate and write staff's yearly performance evaluation.
- Complex professional and technical accounting work in the administration and implementation of the City's financial, revenue, budget, auditing, and accounting programs, including financial report development, budget monitoring, forecasting, financial analysis, reimbursement billings, and grants accounting.
- Participated in the selection of accounting staff, provide and/or coordinate staff training, work with staff to correct deficiencies.
- Overseeing and coordinate monthly and year-end general ledger closing, prepare journal entries with proper documentation, post and balance general ledger accounts; ensure compliance and accuracy in accordance with generally accepted accounting procedures and principles for government organizations utilizing a computer-based financial management system.
- Monthly accounting cycle including bank reconciliation, journal entries, prepare general ledger, balance cash accounts, run and distribute revenue/expenditure summaries.
- Performing monthly payroll reconciliation to correct the amounts on various payroll related payments compared to the amounts recorded in Munis (Our accounting system)
- Prepared and assist in the preparation and performance of the annual budget process and the preparation of the budget document and other related documents; assist in monitoring budget appropriations by fund and department.
- Maintained the general ledger chart of account's and assign project codes as required for new grants and activities.
- Prepares monthly, semi-annual, and annual reports for City Council meetings, including the City Treasurer's reports.
- Prepared federal and state tax returns and other reports as required by state and federal laws.
- Directing year-end closing of accounting records. Prepare reports and work papers for annual audit. Assist auditors in the review of the financial activity. Assist in preparation of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.
- Compiles accounting data and develop financial information as requested. Conduct fiscal analysis and studies. Develop and implement accounting systems, controls, and reporting procedures.
- Coordinating and prepare a variety of financial reports for grant programs and capital improvement projects. Ensure compliance with various granting agency requirements and restrictions.
- Maintained accounting and financial reporting systems and procedures.

Senior Financial Analyst, City of Roadrunner, Roadrunner, CA

February 2012 to June 2012

- Analyzed daily cash balance in the bank based on information from the bank statement to identify available fund for investment or transfer from other investment accounts to cover the daily transactions' needs.
- Assisted in the preparation of GASB 68 and GASB 75 years end closed journal entries.
- Assisted in revenue account reconciliations, post check audits, made online bank transfer payments for daily transactions.
- Performed the treasury function of managing banking relationship, cash flow and investments.
- Reviewed complex contracts, proposals, request for proposals, and similar documents.
- Managed assigned programs or projects, scheduled, planned, coordinated, evaluated, and reported on work progress.
- Performed complex financial analysis, including calculation of present value, return on investment, life cycle cost, and cost-benefit comparisons.
- Provided development, analysis and implementation of policies, programs, procedures and projects.

Senior Accountant, County of Sandy, Sandy, CA

2011 to 2012

- Supervised, planned, directed, reviewed and evaluated the work of fiscal office support staff on a project or day-to-day basis, and train staff in work procedures.
- Managed the financial audit process and prepared the documents/schedules requested by the external auditors.
- Developed procedures for handling account and financial activities including month end close journal entries, posting of revenues and expenditures, balance sheet reconciliation, and other activities.
- Prepared monthly balance sheet accounts reconciliation.
- Reviewed accounting documents to ensure accuracy of information and calculation and make correcting entries as needed.
- Reviewed accounting documents for conformance with state and federal regulations, and County memorandums of understanding.
- Prepared month end close journal entries and reconciliations.
- Created complex automated financial worksheets.
- Acted as liaison with other County fiscal divisions.
- Prepared and maintained control and subsidiary accounting records involving a variety of transactions and accounts.
- Prepared trial balances and coordinate and calculate periodic closings.
- Compiled and prepared general and subsidiary ledgers and supporting schedules.
- Analyzed and prepared varied financial statements and reports.
- Maintained varied departmental cost accounting records, disbursed funds to various account's and/or billing for reimbursement as required.
- Reviewed existing accounting systems and procedures and recommended modifications to those or the creation of new systems and/or procedures.
- Assisted with or coordinated the automation of manual accounting systems.
- Provided technical support to internal and outside auditors, including governmental program auditors.
- Maintained an updated list of MOUs with other County departments, ensured that all payments receivable and payable are accrued on an accurate and timely basis, followed up with departments on payables and receivables.

Financial Analyst, City of Magnificent, Magnificent, CA

December 2010 to 2011

- Organized, planned, established, and monitored fiscal control of contracts and grants administration, gifts, endowments, and privately funded projects.

- Provided pre- and post-award financial administration for business contracts in accordance with campus and agency requirements.
- Reviewed and monitored business contracts and notices from Sponsored Projects Office; responded to requests from Extramural Fund Accounting.
- Supported management with coordination to meet deadlines from the Business Contracts Office and Sponsored Projects Office with agreements, sub-agreements and benchmarks; identified follow-up activities for all assigned tasks.
- Applied professional concepts to perform basic financial resource analysis to interpret past performance and ascertained present and future performance trends, and effectiveness of resource allocations for assigned contracts and grants, identify potential savings and cost overruns.
- Verified establishment of business contracts and grant fund accounts, based on the provisions of the award document, and in conjunction with the funding entities.
- Recorded contract and grant payments, reviewed and tracked all incoming invoices for payment processing, gathered necessary approvals for payment of aforementioned expenses, ensured compliance with contract and grant guidelines.
- Routinely monitored funds and transactions to ensure appropriate spending, avoid cost overruns, and provided ledger monitoring and ledger reconciliation.
- Analyzed transactions and expenditures and identified and resolved discrepancies; ensured compliance with external agency regulations and internal policies and controls; advised project administrators and Principal Investigators on compliance regulations.
- Facilitated agreement process: maintained mailing list of contacts, forwarded and tracked agreement approvals, payment of sub-awards and status, followed up with program directors.
- Investigated and resolved general ledger discrepancies and chart string deficits in preparation for fiscal close.

Accountant, City of Magnet, Finance Department, Magnet, CA

January 2010 to July 2010

- Participated in the posting, balancing, and reconciliation of the general ledger and subsidiary accounts.
- Assisted in the preparation of the annual financial statements and State Controller's Report.
- Maintained debt service funds, monitored and reconciled paying agents' accounts.
- Participated in preparing, reviewing and editing the annual Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR).
- Issued correcting and adjusting journal entries to update the general ledger for assigned funds.
- Performed comprehensive financial activity studies as directed; provided analysis of various funds at management request.
- Monitored and maintained records on the City's capital assets; prepared and input monthly and recurring journal entries.
- Reviewed purchase orders to identify inventorial equipment purchases and proper coding of equipment, interpreted policy, prepared inventorial equipment tags.
- Assisted departmental personnel and City staff with budget activity, proper expenditure coding, document preparation, and other accounting related activities.
- Reviewed journal entries entered by staff in other departments to ensure accuracy and that all backup documents are attached to the entries.
- Provided technical guidance to lower-level accounting personnel in A/R, payable, and payroll functions.

Junior Accountant, City of Fantasy, Fantasy, CA

2005 to 2009

- Led audit engagements, reviewed and evaluated team members' work for completeness, technical accuracy, organization, content, tone, grammatical accuracy.

- Audited and investigated a wide variety of programs, functions, processes, and activities of city departments and contracts to evaluate their efficiency, effectiveness, economy, and legal compliance.
- Conducted audit surveys, including researching legal mandates and other background information, determining needs of key stakeholders, identifying potential risk areas, understanding relevant internal controls, and identifying potential sources of evidence.
- Planned, organized, and conducted audit entrance, exit conferences and periodic meetings with department management to inform them of audit results.
- Interviewed department and program management and staff to obtain information.
- Developed audit scope and objectives and preparing detailed audit programs, and milestone dates.
- Performed audit fieldwork, including collecting, analyzing, and documenting audit evidence as it relates to the audit objectives.
- Developed audit findings and recommendations that are fully supported by analysis.
- Prepared and reviewed written audit reports that effectively communicate the audit results.
- Prepared and presented audit results at public hearings and to a variety of audiences.
- Conducted audit follow-up activities.

Staff Auditor, CPA Firm, Santa Claus, CA

May 2002 to June 2005

- Performed financial audits of nonprofit organizations.
- Ensured work papers contain adequate evidence to support audit findings.
- Reported any unusual findings to management during the course of audits.
- Observed, documented understanding of internal control and write recommendations to clients.
- Conducted field work, prepared work papers, and drafted financial statements.
- Recognized relevant financial statement issues from basic analysis and identified non-compliance with standards.
- Made oral presentations to management regarding audit results, including recommendations.

Other Skills:

Computer skills/Accounting systems include PeopleSoft, Munees, TWOSolution Financial Accounting Systems Organizational Intelligence, Data Modeler, EVER Accounting Systems, Microsoft Word, Excel, Access, Power Point, ABC Tax Software, QuickBooks, MyMate, and AQQL.



Resume Do's

- Select a clean, professional font and format.
- Contact Information: Make your name stand out and follow with your email address and phone number. (No need to include mailing address).
- “Objective” or “Summary”? – debatable. Takes up space and adds little value.
- Chronological resume, starting with the most recent position. Positions held, agency, and dates (month and year).



Resume Do's

- For each position, briefly describe the location, population, #FTEs, annual budget \$, form of government, full-service or contract agency.
- To whom do you report (title only), # of staff you supervise, general responsibilities (not a job description).
- Add 3-5 **key accomplishments** that relate to what the agency is seeking (connect the dots here!) Wherever possible, include quantifiable, tangible results of your job efforts. Example: Negotiated vendor contracts totaling \$6.8 million.
- Additional Experience - include internships or other experience that is valuable to your “toolbox.”



Resume Do's

Degrees, licenses, certificates

- List college/university name/location and specific degree and major
- List any licenses and certificates – date and license #
- If you have not graduated, leave absolutely no doubt of that fact.

Professional Organizations/Affiliations

- List those in which you belong and were active, especially those in which you served a leadership role or made a contribution.

APPENDIX B:

Sample résumé

Joanne Parks

6112 Friendly Court
Sunnytown, CA 96058
(499) 555-2745 (work); (449) 555-5472 (home); (449) 555-5382 (mobile)
jparks@sunnytown.com

SUMMARY

Management professional with strategic planning and operational expertise; proven leadership qualities in the areas of human resources, budgeting, communications, project management, capital improvement planning, intergovernmental relations, and economic development.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

City Manager

September 1997–Present
City of Sunnytown, CA

A suburb of Pleasantville, Sunnytown has a diverse population of 50,000. A full-service city, the organization has 320 employees and a \$70 million budget. Issues relate to growth, economic development, transportation, and aging infrastructure. Appointed by a five-member city council, oversee day-to-day operations and serve as executive director for the Sunnytown Redevelopment Agency.

Key Accomplishments:

- Initiated first personnel department, including citywide training, employee assistance, tuition reimbursement, and pay-for-performance programs.
- Expanded the use of technology through geographic information systems, and computer technology for police, fire, and emergency vehicles.
- Negotiated with three separate bargaining units for two-year memorandums of understanding.
- Enhanced relationships with regional agencies and chamber of commerce.
- Completed construction of \$1.8 million equestrian center, generating substantial revenue annually for the general fund.

Assistant City Manager

August 1991–August 1997
City of Pleasantville, CA

With a population of over 80,000, Pleasantville employed 450 staff and had an operating budget of \$110 million. Reporting to the city manager, oversaw the general administration of human resources, information technology, budget, and finance divisions with four direct reports.

Joanne Parks

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Key Accomplishments:

- Improved customer service and promoted more accessible government by establishing citywide newsletter. Oversaw installation of voice mail, audio agenda, and Internet information systems.
- Prepared and managed four consecutive municipal budgets. Facilitated goal-setting and zero-base budget review.

Economic Development Manager

June 1988–July 1991

City of Lone Tree, NV

Lone Tree is a suburb of Las Vegas with a growing population of 12,000. Reporting to the city manager, oversaw department budget of \$1.3 million and two staff members in the attraction and retention of industrial businesses to bedroom community.

Key Accomplishments:

- Development of local legislation establishing the city's economic development policy and financial incentive program designed to assist basic industrial businesses.
- Development and implementation of economic revitalization strategies in cooperation with various city department and outside organizations.

Management Analyst I and II, Economic Development

September 1985–May 1988

City of Golden Leaves, CO

A suburb of Denver, Golden Leaves has a population of 20,000. Reporting to the economic development manager, held progressively responsible positions overseeing analysis and documentation of economic development policy and incentive programs.

EDUCATION

Master of Public Administration, May 1985

University of Denver, CO

Bachelor of Arts, Police Science, May 1983

Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

International City/County Management Association

National Council for Urban Economic Development

City Managers Department of League of California Cities



Resume Do's

Never Stop Updating Your Resume!

- Keep a file of notes about key projects, accomplishments, as well as challenges you've faced on projects. This will help in updating your resume as well as providing examples during an interview process.
- Ask a coach or Recruiter to review your resume from time to time and provide you with recommendations on revisions as well as experience gaps that you may need to consider.
- Don't forget to update your LinkedIn account to keep your profile fresh at all times.

Questions?



Cover Letter Do's & Don'ts

The first item a resume reviewer encounters is your cover letter. Grab their attention and impress them!! There are three main purposes of a cover letter:

1. Demonstrate (quickly) that you're able to "connect the dots" between what they're looking for and what you bring to the table.
2. Illustrate that your background, experiences, and accomplishments fit some or most of their needs.
3. Exhibit your sincere interest in their position, agency, community.

Cover Letter Don'ts

- DON'T address it: "To Whom It May Concern"
- DON'T use the wrong person's name, agency name, or position title!
- DON'T cut and paste or recycle a prior cover letter

Cover Letter Don'ts

- DON'T write a bland, boring cover letter.
- DON'T go over 2 pages.
- DON'T use your current agency's letterhead or work email address.
- DON'T forget to ask someone else to read it!

PEPPY LAPEW, CPA
350 Stinky Street
Penelope, CA 012345
(822) xxx-xxxx
Peppy4you@yahoo.com

To whom it may concern:

This opportunity is very appealing to me, and after reviewing the compensation and benefits, I think exploring it is worth it.

With the enclosed resume and this letter, I would like to express my strong interest in this opportunity.

As an accomplished and successful finance professional with extensive experience in various sectors, I possess a breadth of education, knowledge, wisdom, and experience that will enable me to partner with you to drive the increased success of your organization.

I don't shy away from rolling up my sleeves with day-to-day support of finance work. I am prepared to contribute immensely to the success of your organization if we feel it is a good fit.

Call me sometime.

Peppy

POOR COVER
LETTER



Cover Letter Do's

- Do your homework about the agency; illustrate your knowledge and familiarity about the job, community, and role of the position.
- Use key words and phrases (from the job announcement) that “connect the dots.”
- Exhibit your interest in joining their agency. Think of your cover letter like dating. It’s not all about you! Why should they be interested in you if you haven’t effectively communicated your interest in them?

APPENDIX C: Sample cover letter

October 3, 2005

Mayor Carver E. Richardson and Members of the City Council
City of Bellewood
419 Jackson Avenue
Bellewood, TX 76010

Dear Mayor Richardson and Council Members:

Please consider this letter and résumé as an application for the position of City Manager with the City of Bellewood. I have reviewed the position profile and have conducted research on the community and believe this to be a fit.

For the past eight years, I have served as the City Manager of Sunnyside, California, a community of approximately 50,000 residents. During this period of time, I have implemented a successful budget retrenchment program, initiated a comprehensive economic development program, and put in place the most aggressive capital improvement program in the history of the community. I understand a number of these skills are applicable to the Bellewood City Manager position.

While working for a fiscally conservative City Council, I have also had the opportunity to improve employee productivity, reduce per capita service costs, develop a staff evaluation program, and implement a performance budget. In addition, I have served in a variety of functional areas, including human resources, finance, and economic development.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to call me. I sincerely look forward to hearing from you and am most interested in this position.

Sincerely,

Joanne Parks

Questions?



<https://www.peckhamandmckenney.com>

Download the ICMA Job Hunting Handbook

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Helpful Links

We'd like to help you succeed.

Tips and Links to Help You Succeed

Tips and Links to Help You Succeed

Job Hunting Handbook for Local Government Professionals

Through our continuing efforts to contribute to the local government profession, Bobbi Peckham was appointed to an ICMA National Task Force with a mission to produce a handbook that would be useful to individuals at all levels as they chart a course for their professional career in local government. The Handbook also discusses what to expect from Executive Recruiters and lists sample interview questions, job-hunting resources, and what to do in the first 100 days on the new job. We believe this Handbook is a valuable resource to individuals at all stages of their career. It will be especially helpful to the Next Generation, as we encourage, coach and mentor them.

The Job Hunting Handbook for Local Government Professionals contains information pertaining to:

- Planning the job hunt
- Finding job vacancies
- Creating a resume and cover letter
- Preparing for interviews
- And negotiating compensation

JOB HUNTING HANDBOOK

for Local Government Professionals

DOWNLOAD HANDBOOK

Thank you!

Please visit our website to register for our next webinar:

“Tips and Considerations for Being a Successful Applicant”

Thursday, March 24, 2022, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Featuring Executive Recruiters Phil McKenney and Tony Dahlerbruch

<https://www.peckhamandmckenney.com/>

