

Which Type of Résumé Is Right for You?

Before you send off another résumé, take a look at the format you're using. Have you organized your job experience and skill sets to show your best possible self? For help with all aspects of your job search, take advantage of the many resources AARP offers at www.aarp.org/WorkResources.

You can choose from three basic résumé types, depending on your work history and skills:

- » **Chronological**—This format works well if you have a long and steady work history and want to remain in your chosen field.
- » **Functional**—This format puts more focus on your skills or accomplishments than on your work history. It's useful if you are looking to make a career change or if you have gaps in employment.
- » **Combination**—You can use elements of both chronological and functional formats, too.

Read on to learn how to create and use these formats.

Chronological Résumé

This is probably the most common format for résumés. Make yours shine with action words to describe your accomplishments.

- » List your work experience in reverse order, starting with your most recent job. Try to keep it to the past 15 years.
- » List job titles, employers and dates of employment (in years only). Your history should demonstrate an increasing scope of work and accomplishments.

- » Under each job, state your key accomplishments as bullet points. Be sure to use action verbs to briefly describe what you did. Then give the results or the impact of your actions, including data points when possible.

Show the *challenges* you faced, the *actions* you took, and the *results*. For example:

Planned and supervised five community events that raised over \$75,000 for the Springfield Homeless Shelter, helping the center stay open despite funding cuts.

Functional Résumé

A functional résumé focuses on transferable skills that carry over from one field to another.

Before you start, write down all your major skills, even if you won't include them all on every résumé. These include skills gained in non-work settings, such as volunteering, hobbies or caregiving.

- » Be flexible: When applying for jobs in different fields, choose skill areas that are the best match for each particular opportunity. List your most relevant skills first.
- » Include transferable skills that cross over from one field to another. This is important if you are switching jobs or industries.

For example, if you were a teacher and now want to be a corporate trainer, you might include things like facilitating, training needs assessment, curriculum development and public speaking among your skill areas.



- » In the list of your skill areas, include bullet points of related accomplishments.
- » Following the list of skill areas and accomplishments, include a brief job history, listing employer name, position held and years worked at each.

For example, if you are applying for an outreach job with a senior center, you could include “community organizing” as one of your skill areas. An accomplishment might be:

Community Organizing

- Initiated a neighborhood watch program covering a seven-block area. Recruited over 50 volunteers, scheduled shifts and publicized the effort. Crime dropped more than 20 percent in the first six months after the program was instituted.

Combination Résumé

In a combination résumé, you organize your résumé by skills, just as you would in a functional résumé, but augment those skills with a chronological list of key positions. You could also list past jobs chronologically, and then include main skill areas as you would in a functional résumé.

For example:

Neighborhood Advocacy Associates, Senior Director of Outreach, 2011-Present

Community Organizing

- Recruited over 50 volunteers, scheduled shifts for neighborhood watch program. Crime dropped more than 20 percent in the first six months.

Fundraising

- Planned and supervised five community events that raised over \$75,000 for the Springfield Homeless Shelter, helping the center stay open despite funding cuts.

Take Action!

- Visit www.aarp.org/WorkResources to explore the industries, employers and positions that make sense for you. You can also download AARP’s Résumé Kit to view examples of the three basic types of résumés.
- Tailor your résumé for each job.
- Speak the employer’s language by using relevant keywords from the job posting to show that your skills are a good match.
- Always cite dates of employment.
- Stress your actual accomplishments, not job duties or character traits.
- When sending an online résumé, pay attention to requirements. For example, some sites may accept only a chronological format.



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