

RESUMES and JOB SEARCH LETTERS



TRAINING • CONNECTING • DEVELOPING ILLINOIS' WORKFORCE

1 North Genesee St. Waukegan, IL 60085 847-377-3450	800 Lancer Ln. Grayslake, IL 60030 847-543-7400
www.lakecountyjobcenter.com www.illinoisworknet.com	
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Revised-December 2009

**Some Places in Lake County where you can get
free résumé-writing assistance**

Appointments required in most cases. Please call!

**Job Center of Lake County
(Waukegan)**
1 North Genesee St.
Waukegan, IL 60085
847-377-3450

**Job Center of Lake County
(Grayslake)**
800 Lancer Ln.
Grayslake, IL 60030
847-543-7400 or 847-543-2059

RESUME TIPS

- 1) Make it easy for an employer to reach you!** *Including more than one phone number and an email address is a great idea! Be sure that your email name sounds professional!*
- 2) Be positive**—*identify your strengths and accomplishments.*
- 3) Be specific**—*for example, list **specific** ways that you have used a computer rather than merely stating that you have computer skills.*
- 4) Include only the most relevant information**—*use concise sentences and keep your résumé brief (no longer than two pages).*
- 5) Feature the most important information about you at the TOP!**

ELECTRONIC RESUMES

A paper copy of your résumé is not enough! Many employers will ask you to email your résumé or to copy and paste your résumé into an online application. When preparing your résumé for this type of electronic use, you should do the following:

- 1) Keep the format simple.** *A document that contains fancy formatting (columns, graphics, etc.) will not copy & paste well. Certain types of formatting (bold, italics, etc) will be lost when you copy & paste a document.*
- 2) Include key words.** *When sorting through a group of electronic résumés, employers will typically search the résumé database using key-words.*
- 3) Save, save, save.** *Save your résumé onto a floppy disk or USB drive so that you can email it whenever an employer requests it! Email a copy of the résumé to your own email address as a backup!!*

FORMATTING TIPS

- 1) **Print on plain, quality paper.** *Never* *handwrite* comments or *cross out* words.
- 2) **Use a simple font** (such as Times New Roman or Arial).
- 3) **The font size should be appropriate** (11 or 12 point is average).
- 4) **Proofread, proofread, proofread.** This is the first impression many employers will have of you, so it should be **error free**.

Common Résumé questions:

Do I need an *objective* on my résumé? An objective is not required and, in fact, a **vague objective is a waste of space**. If you do include an objective, specifically describe the type of work you want and why you would be good at that type of job.

How many years *work history* should I list on the résumé?

Employers are most interested in what you have done most recently. You typically only need to list your work history for the **past 5 to 15 years**. If you have worked for many years, you do not need to describe every job you ever held. Focus on the present.



How much *education* should I list on the résumé?

List your highest level of education as well as any additional relevant education or training. Don't list graduation dates if you graduated more than 10 years ago.

Can I include *additional information* besides my work history on the résumé?

Yes!! Many people gain valuable experience through non-work-related events. Your résumé could include any **relevant** examples of:

- volunteer experience
- work at home
- military history
- certifications & licensing
- membership in relevant associations
- computer, technical, and people skills

*Personal information such as social security number, race, age, marital status etc. should **not** be included on a résumé.*

Where do I include *references* on a résumé?

Actually, the names and addresses of your references belong on a **separate sheet of paper** and should only be given to the employer when requested. You may end your résumé with the phrase "*references available upon request*", but it isn't required. Why not use that space to further sell your skills?

Are there different types of résumés?

Yes, a **chronological résumé** describes your work and educational history in chronological order—from most recent to least recent.

A **functional résumé** focuses on the functions or skills you have used in the past. Your actual work history is listed at the bottom and is brief.

Some people choose to combine the best features of the two types of résumés.



Which type of résumé is best for me?

Chronological Résumés

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Easy to organize.▪ Most familiar to employers and recruiters.▪ Shows progress in your field.▪ Can highlight stability if you've worked for one company for many years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Can highlight instability if you've frequently changed jobs.▪ Gaps in employment stand out.▪ May raise questions about your goals if you've changed professions.▪ Accomplishments may be "buried."

Functional/ Skills Résumés

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Immediately highlights your strengths.▪ Extremely flexible—you can adapt it to the job you are applying for.▪ Permits you to describe yourself in better marketing terms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Challenging to prepare.▪ Must be changed to match each job objective.▪ You must be careful that you are communicating precisely—make sure your specialty and skills are highlighted.

This is a standard **chronological** resume. Francine lists each job she held, starting with her most recent job. She describes her key accomplishments at each job using action verbs.

Francine Finance

222 Money Lane
Lincolnshire, Illinois 60000
333-444-5555
francine.finance@someemail.com

SUMMARY

Accomplished **business professional** with experience in finance and office operations. All previous positions required regular online investigations and accurate processing of confidential information. Selected to train and mentor new staff members.

EXPERIENCE

Walmart Lincolnshire, IL
Payroll Administrator 2006 to 2008

- Oversaw payroll administration, benefits and human resource updates for a nationwide company, continually seeking to improve communication and employee satisfaction.
- Completed daily wage verifications. Prepared credit/ debit summaries and reconciled accounts. Ran labor reports and reprints of W2's on weekly basis.
- Set up weekly, monthly, quarterly and yearly calendars of when jobs were to run and what controls would be needed.
- Stayed current with tax and reporting requirements at the federal, state, and local levels.

Bank One Calumet City, IL
Credit Analyst/ Underwriter 1996 to 2006

- As a team member of the Home Loan Division, investigated potentially fraudulent activities.
- Compiled reports for management that detailed repeat offenders of fraud.
- Prepared materials for court cases. Acted as liaison with corporate attorneys.
- Interacted regularly with investors and other mortgage insurance companies.
- Collaborated with supervisors on organizational management, problem resolution and customer service.
- Evaluated denied loans for applicants, ensuring fair treatment of all customers.
- Reviewed early payment default loans and issued written narratives as needed.
- Trained and mentored other staff members.

EDUCATION

30 college credit hours completed, Calumet City College

COMPUTER

Proficient with Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Access, Outlook) and Quickbooks.
Also used proprietary payroll software in previous positions.
Type 40 wpm with 100% accuracy

Since she recently completed training in a new field, Tina lists the training before work experience in this **chronological** résumé.

Tina Transition

111 Viking St.
Grundy, IL 0000
111-222-3333

tina.transition@someemail.com

SUMMARY

More than 10 years experience in a position requiring **exceptional communication** and **organization** in a **fast-paced environment**. Highly efficient and dedicated team leader.

Positive attitude and ability to motivate others.

Bilingual: fluent in English and Spanish.

TRAINING

COMPUTER TRAINING INSTITUTE, Grundy, IL

4/ 2008 to 10/ 2008

Earned Microsoft Office Professional Certificate

Completed 180 hours of training in Microsoft Office 2007 including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access and Outlook. Additional training in business communication and telephone etiquette.

WORK EXPERIENCE

DMS CORPORATION, Grundy, IL

1995 to 2007

Receiving Team Lead

- Worked directly with corporate customers, such as Wal-Mart and Blockbuster, to schedule product delivery.
- Coordinated with 2nd and 3rd shift team leaders to handle unloading of materials.
- Designated as interpreter (Spanish / English) for meetings. Also translated written materials.
- Filed all freight bills for department. Copied and faxed documents as needed.
- Encouraged staff involvement by soliciting and implementing suggestions for improvements.
- Successfully completed internal training certification and assumed responsibilities as a Process Coach to train new employees on the proper process for returns department

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Created and implemented a cross-training rotation schedule for employees. Rotated lead role for each task to provide employees with a sense of ownership.
- Improved proficiency by implementing a standardized process for scheduling and receiving.
- Updated PC labeling to new bar coding system and trained staff.
- Perfect attendance for 11 years.

EDUCATION

High School Diploma, Grundy High School, Grundy, IL

Charlie Custodian

123 Basic Court
Smithers, IL 22222
222-333-4444

charlie.custodian@someemail.com

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

5 years of janitorial and maintenance experience in a variety of business and medical settings.

- Provided total floor care; buffed, waxed, stripped and mopped floors.
- Cleaned and sanitized bathrooms; fixed minor plumbing problems.
- Landscaped around buildings; mowed grass and shoveled snow.
- Involved in building restoration including installing drywall, plastering, painting walls.
- Extensive electrical experience including rewiring, installing fixtures and outlets.
- Experience with brick work and tiling.
- Accurately read blueprints and follow building regulations.

Accomplishments

- Facilitated rehabilitation of a 100 year-old church building; oversaw activities of contractors responsible for shoring up building, updating electrical work and plumbing in building. Approved all jobs before contractors were paid.
- Received “Customer Satisfaction Award” at hospital for providing courteous, housekeeping service to patients.

WORK EXPERIENCE

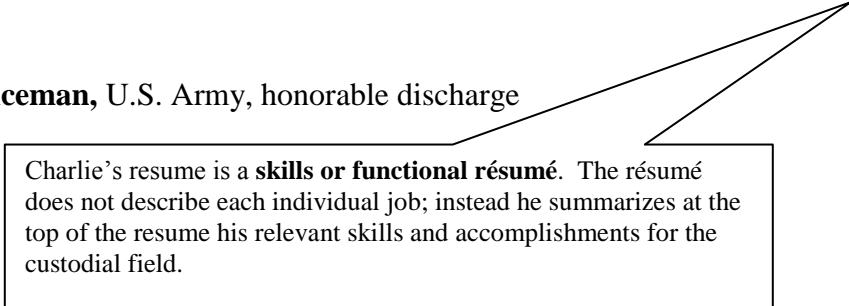
Production Worker , Manpower/ Motorola, Libertyville, IL	Jan. 2008 to present
Maintenance Worker , Fresh Grocery, Smithers, IL	Nov. 2007 to Jan. 2008
Laborer/Plumbing & Electrical Asst. , J & J Plumbing, DeKalb, IL	June 2006 to Oct. 2007
Maintenance Worker , First Baptist Church, Elgin, IL	Jan. 2004 to May 2006
Housekeeper , Veteran’s Assistant Hospital, Chicago, IL	Feb. 2000 to July 2004

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Data Processing Certificate (MS Word and keyboarding), Smithers College, Smithers, IL

MILITARY

Military Policeman, U.S. Army, honorable discharge



Charlie’s resume is a **skills or functional résumé**. The résumé does not describe each individual job; instead he summarizes at the top of the resume his relevant skills and accomplishments for the custodial field.

Andrew Ansley

1000 Green Rd.
Racine, WI 53142
222-222-2222

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

More than 10 years experience in sales.

Demonstrated strong commitment to customers as well as product knowledge.
Received multiple awards as Salesman of the Month.

- Experience with sales and leasing of high-priced items. Specialized knowledge of new and used automobiles/ trucks. Regularly exceeded monthly quota of \$500K.
- Successfully up-sold additional service and warranty packages.
- Demonstrated merchandise, emphasizing strengths of each item.
- Expanded new customer base through targeted letters and telephone calls.
- Contributed to marketing strategy during quarterly departmental meetings.
- Regularly communicated with finance department about financing options.
- Facilitated repairs for previous customers; ensured customers were satisfied with service and quality of merchandise.

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- Proficient with Microsoft Word and customized sales software.
- Type 50 wpm; entered customer and product data into computer.

WORK HISTORY

Shop Assistant: Joe's Barbershop, New Berlin, WI	2008 to 2009
Salesman (New & Used), Viking General Motors: Milwaukee, WI	2006 to 2007
Salesman , Greenburg Motors: New Berlin, WI	2005 to 2006
Assistant Used Car Manager , Sweeding Chrysler: Janesville, WI	2003 to 2005
Assistant Used Car Manager , Classic Chevrolet: Janesville, WI	2000 to 2003

VOLUNTEER

House Coordinator, Goodwill Foundation, New Berlin, WI: 2008

EDUCATION

GED: Janesville, MI

Win-Win Sales Negotiations and 5-Star Sales Training

Andrew wants a position in sales after a few years in another field. However, he does not want another position in automotive sales. **A skills or functional style resume** may help Andrew get back into general sales. This style allows him to emphasize his transferable sales skills without typecasting him exclusively in the automotive industry or drawing too much attention to his most recent unrelated experience at a barber shop. Andrew held a number of similar positions, so this style of resume also helps him to avoid repeating job descriptions.

JOB SEARCH LETTERS

Sometimes people spend days or weeks writing the perfect résumé. However, when it comes to composing an effective letter to an employer, most people omit this step or create a single generic letter. The average employer receives hundreds of letters and email messages daily. You want your message to **STAND OUT**. **All your correspondence with employers should be customized, professional, and interesting!**

Job Search Letter Format

- 1) **Start your letter off with a strong sentence** that informs the reader what position you are applying for; don't expect that the employer will analyze you to figure out where you will fit in at his/her company.
- 2) **Use the body of the letter to briefly highlight relevant background, training or skills you have** that might be interesting to the reader.
- 3) **In the conclusion**, indicate how you will follow up with the employer. Typically, you should call or email the employer within five to seven business days. This demonstrates your serious interest.



Additional Letter Tips

- 1) **Address each letter to the recipient by name.** Whenever possible, find out who is in charge of the department or division of interest, and send your letter to that person. Don't hesitate to call the company directly to find out the name (including correct spelling) and title of the person in charge.
- 2) Research the company online and make some subtle comments to show what you know about their products or services.

Additional Letter Tips, continued

- 3) **Do not use a letter that looks like it could have been sent to anyone.** Make each letter unique to that particular employer.
- 4) **Avoid sounding self-serving.**
- 5) **Do NOT discuss what you want** (*i.e. “I want stability and growth opportunities*). Focus instead on what you can do for the company.
- 6) **Keep your letter short** (typically one page).
- 7) **Quantify your experiences and achievements.** Some examples might include:
 - *Selected to train ten new employees.*
 - *Recommended and implemented a change in shipping vendors that saved company \$50K annually.*
 - *Promoted to a lead position after only 6 months with company.*
- 8) **Make your letter look graphically pleasing.** The heading, font and style should match your résumé.



- 9) **Make it perfect:** no typos, no misspellings, no factual errors. After spell checking on your word processor, proof read your cover letter carefully. Leave enough white space – 1” or 1½” margins on all sides.
- 10) **Keep a copy of every letter you send out.** When you make follow-up phone calls, it is always helpful to have a copy of your letter in front of you so that you will know exactly what you wrote to this person!

Stephanie Tusston

111 S. Lake St.
Garthville, IL 00000
(111) 111-1234
stusston@someemail.com

January 2, 2009

Dr. Polack
Polack Care Clinic
123 West St.
Garthville, IL 00000

Dear Dr. Polack:

In response to your recent advertisement in the *Garthville Gazelle*, please accept this letter in application for the Billing Clerk position currently available within your office. I am seeking to transition back into the medical field after spending the past 5 years as a stay-at-home mom. My husband is now the full-time childcare provider for our family, so I am eagerly seeking to advance my career.

As you can see from my enclosed résumé, I was employed as a Lead Cashier at a local hospital for almost 1 year. My supervisor was so impressed with my communication style with insurance companies that he promoted me to Medical Claims Processor. I have up-to-date training in billing and coding and am proficient with a variety of software.

I will call your office next week to follow up on this letter and to answer any questions you may have. In the meantime, feel free to contact me at the phone number listed above. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully yours,

Stephanie Tusston

Ted S. Thompson

111 Walter Payton Blvd. Chicago, IL 60011

312- 211-1111

tthompson@emailmessage.com

February 4, 2009

Toni Smith
Hiring Manager
Computer Technology Institute
1151 S. Greenbay Rd.
Chicago, IL 60011

Dear Toni Smith:

In response to your advertisement which appeared in the *Chicago News Sun*, I am submitting my résumé for the position of **Account Representative** at Computer Technology Institute.

With 2 years experience in a variety of accounting departments and recent college coursework in mathematics and business principles, I believe I can readily fill your needs. In my previous positions, I always capitalized on my ability to undertake a varied array of projects. I learn quickly and enjoy finding effective solutions to problems.

You requested salary information; I am looking for an initial salary between \$25K and \$30K. However, my salary requirements are negotiable based on the responsibilities of the position.

I will contact you next Wednesday to see if there is a time we can meet in person and to answer any questions you might have. In the meantime, feel free to contact me at (312) 211-1111.

Sincerely,

Ted S. Thompson

OTHER JOB SEARCH LETTERS

The cover letter is only one type of correspondence you may use while seeking a job. Here are some others:

Email note

An email note is basically like a cover letter, but it should not include a header or date (since the message will be automatically dated).

Remember, spelling is still important. Spellcheck your letter before sending it out. Do remember to attach your résumé! (It is preferable to attach a résumé rather than to copy and paste it—since attachments retain their original formatting.) Type the title of the position or job order number in the “subject” line of the email. It is also a good idea to indicate where you found the job and the date you saw it.

NOTE: You MUST have a professional email address. Do NOT send messages to employers from a “silly” address like hotlips@email.com!

Example email letter

SUBJECT: Assistant Account Clerk, Job ID# 1234a

I saw on your company website that Smythe Inc. has an opening for an Assistant Account Clerk. The job seems to be an excellent match for my experience and interests.

As you will see on my attached resume, I have 5 years office experience and just recently completed an Accounting class at Crofton Community College. I really enjoyed this chance to polish my Microsoft Excel and finance skills.

Feel free to contact me at this email address or at 222-333-4444. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jill Thompson

Letter to request an informational interview

In this letter, you will introduce yourself to someone who has a career that interests you. You will request to interview this person about his/her job.

Follow most of the rules of cover letters with the following exceptions:

- Ask for a 15-30 minute meeting. People are much more likely to agree to a shorter meeting.
- Explain why you are requesting the meeting (i.e. *I am interested in studying to become a Marine Biologist and would like to interview you about how you got into the field.*)

Thank you Letter following an interview or meeting

A thank you letter is a wonderful opportunity to remind the busy employer about your key strengths while politely extending your thanks. Promptness is critical! Deliver a thank you letter or send an email within 24 hours of the interview or meeting!

- Keep it very brief. Two paragraphs should be enough.
- Send it out as soon after your interview as possible. If you have new information to add, you want the employer to have this information before making a decision on you.
- Reiterate your interest in the position.



Example thank you letter

Robert Riddles
111 Smith St.
Zion, IL 60099
222-333-4444

Ms. Sally Smith
Barker Magazine
2020 Madison Avenue
New York, NY

Dear Ms. Smith:

I'm very glad that I met you at the job fair at the College of Lake County on Thursday! I'd like to thank you for the time you spent talking with me about the marketing-research analyst position you have open at *Barker* magazine. After reviewing the Barker website, I am impressed by the polished image that it projects compared to other dog journals.

As I mentioned at the job fair, I have a passion both for marketing and for animals. My two dogs, Cody and Butch, have tested the "marketability" of dog treats, beds and toys for many years. I know that I can easily connect with your target audience!

For your convenience, I am enclosing another copy of my resume. I look forward to hearing from you soon about the position, and I again thank you for speaking with me.

Sincerely,

Robert Riddles

For more information

Check out these helpful books and websites:

Example Résumés

Gallery of Best Résumés for People Without a Four-Year Degree,
3rd edition by David F. Noble, 2007

Gallery of Best Résumés, 4th edition by David F. Noble, 2007

Resume Magic, 3rd edition by Susan Britton Whitcomb, 2006

www.tbrnet.com

www.jobsmart.org

Using an Electronic Résumé Database or Distribution Service

<http://jobstar.org/internet/res-main.php>

<http://www.rileyguide.com/resdb.html>

Cover Letters

Cover Letter Magic, 3rd edition by Wendy S. Enelow, 2006

Gallery of Best Cover Letters, 3rd edition by David F. Noble, 2007

http://www.quintcareers.com/cover_letter_samples.html

Informational Interviews

http://www.quintcareers.com/informational_interviewing.html