



Policy & Advocacy Resume Checklist

An excellent policy/advocacy resume is **easy to read, tailored to the opportunity, compelling, and flawless**. Use this checklist to ensure that your resume effectively conveys your fit for a policy or advocacy role.

Easy to Read

A hiring manager needs to be able to locate information on your resume quickly and understand it the first time they read it. They don't have time to hunt for information or follow up with clarifying questions when they may have hundreds of candidates from which to choose. To produce a clear, concise, and consistently formatted resume:

- Limit your resume to one page. If you have 7+ years of professional experience, you may go on to a second page.
- Consider listing experiences in each section in reverse chronological order, starting with your most recent experience. Alternatively, if you wish to emphasize a particular skill set rather than your work history, you can use a [non-chronological, skills-based format](#).
- Give more recent and relevant experiences more space than less recent and relevant experiences.
- Aim for 3 to 5 bullet points per experience. You can vary the amount of bullet points you use in each section, but strive to use no fewer than 3, and no more than 5.
- Use present tense for current, ongoing work and past tense for completed work.
- Avoid jargon and acronyms (e.g., IEP).
- Avoid personal pronouns and articles (the, a, an, me, my).
- Use margins that are at least ½ inch wide.
- Use 11- or 12-point font and an easy-to-read, traditional font (e.g., Times New Roman, Arial).
- Ensure that spacing, justification, alignment, and other formatting decisions are consistent.
- Link to relevant work that you've gotten published, when possible.

Compelling

An excellent resume is not only easy to read, but also engaging. To craft a compelling resume:

- Begin each bullet point with [strong action verbs](#) to describe your achievements.
- Highlight a variety of skill sets that are relevant to the role and avoid reiterating the same skill multiple times.
- Describe the impact and results you have achieved, not just the responsibilities you have fulfilled.
- Quantify your achievements, using metrics to describe the scope and impact of your work. However, filling your resume with too many metrics can be overwhelming to the reader so pick a few that are most compelling.

- ❑ Strive to make each of your achievement statements answer these questions:
 - What did you do?
 - What impact did you have?
 - How do you know it had that impact?

Tailored to the Policy/Advocacy Opportunity

A hiring manager can tell the difference between a generic resume and one that is thoughtfully tailored to the position at hand. To communicate to the hiring manager that you are an excellent fit for this particular role, keep these tips in mind:

- ❑ Tailor your resume according to the description of the role for which you are applying. Use keywords similar to those in the job posting -- without borrowing full phrases -- to hit on the required/preferred skills.
- ❑ Include only the highlights – the education, skills, experiences, and honors that align with the role for which you are applying. Your resume should not be exhaustive.
- ❑ Highlight experiences, skills, and accomplishments that are particularly valued in the policy and advocacy field. At LEE, we call the skills essential to policy and advocacy leadership the 4 Cs:
 - Curiosity
 - Creative Problem Solving
 - Communication
 - Collaboration
- ❑ If you have recently earned a policy-related advanced degree (e.g., JD, MPP, MPA, MSW), put your education credentials at the top. Otherwise, place your education section below your professional experiences.
- ❑ When transitioning to policy/advocacy from teaching or another sector, consider creating a Policy and Advocacy Experience section to showcase previous policy/advocacy fellowships/internships, campaign work, policy/advocacy-related activities in undergraduate or graduate school, etc.

Flawless

Ensure that your resume is free of grammatical, spelling, and typographical errors. One minor mistake could take you out of the running for a selective opportunity. Be sure to:

- ❑ Proofread your resume several times.
- ❑ Share your resume with others (friends, a [LEE Policy/Advocacy Career Coach](#), etc.) and ask them to scan it for errors.