National Association of Social Workers-Michigan Chapter

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Mission

The mission of National Association of Social Workers-Michigan (NASW-Michigan) is to: 1) Promote, develop and protect the practice of social workers; and 2) Seek to enhance the effective functioning and well-being of individuals, families and communities through its work and advocacy.

Vision

NASW Michigan shall be the recognized voice for social workers in Michigan. It shall be an organization that ensures excellence in local and national social work standards, practice, education, licensing, and shall be a be a powerful voice in the political process.

Introduction

According to the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), social work is the fastest growing careers in the United States. The profession is expected to grow by 19% between 2012 and 2022. Professional social workers are found in every facet of community life—in schools, hospitals, mental health clinics, senior centers, elected office, private practices, prisons, military, corporations, and in numerous public and private agencies that serve individuals and families in need. Many also serve as social and community service directors.

This guide aims to help social workers navigate an ever-changing workplace and equip them with the professional tools they may need to secure employment.

Get additional facts about the social work profession from the NASW Center for Workforce Studies at http://workforce.socialworkers.org.

“Social workers weave together the threads of society’s social safety net,” says NASW Executive Director Elizabeth J. Clark, PhD, ACSW, MPH. “As the profession of hope, we help people overcome poverty, inequality, insecurity, fear, violence, trauma, loss and pain. What social workers do and how they do it does matter to our country’s success.”
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Marketing Yourself

Getting the Most Out of Your Social Work Program to Land Your First Job

As the Fall season rolls into full gear, students get lost in the maze of class projects, research papers, and field work. What I want you all, as students in BSW and MSW programs, to remember is to not lose sight of your goal to find employment at the end of your program. Learning how to position yourself for the job you want to obtain is the best way to land your dream position. Learning how to strategically market yourself – communicate your worth and skill set to employers is key to landing that first great job. Finding the right fit for you may seem daunting this early in the semester or in your academic career; however, there are many steps that you can take now to position yourself to land the best job for you. Below are some simple suggestions to guide you in the right direction toward success!

First, take time to develop a specific goal about your career direction. Ask yourself these simple questions: What type of job do you want to obtain after completion of your program? How do you want to make a difference in the field of social work? What are you passionate about? Taking time to think about what your goals are gives you a direction and baseline for developing a plan of action.

After you have a career goal in mind, the next step is to research how you will get there. Taking time to investigate the market will give you some insight into the job itself and the skills needed to be successful in that job. One highly effective way to research the market is to conduct informational interviews with key social work professionals doing the job you wish to obtain. Informational interviewing is the act of interviewing professionals about their pathway to obtaining their job and what skills they use every day. This can be done by phone, in person, or via Skype.

Be prepared with about five questions to ask during the interview. Take time to interview several people. The best ways to connect with social work professionals are through your school’s alumni association and career services office, social media sites such as LinkedIn, developing connections at your field placement, or through faculty, and by attending workshops and conferences held by professional organizations such as the National Association of Social Workers.

Once you have an idea about what career you want to have and the skills needed to be successful in that area, make an inventory of your current skills and experiences. Then list those that you have discovered you need to obtain. Many of you already have some skills and experiences that are transferable and useful for your future career. This exercise also gives insight into what skills and experiences you need to build upon and learn in your program.

There are many ways that you can gain the skills and experiences needed for your dream job. Take time to discuss your career goals with your faculty advisor and field instructors. Your advisor may be able to suggest specific courses, special studies or ways to become involved in the school community that will help you along the way. Your field placement is a great opportunity to incorporate activities that will
develop your skill set. Just ask! Do not forget that experiences can also be learned through volunteer and part-time work. Keep track of your accomplishments and learning as they relate to your goals and development as a professional. This makes it easier to re-assess and reflect upon your growth in skills and experiences as you progress through your program.

Now that you have spent time recording what skills you have obtained, you not only have an idea regarding your competency, you know what experiences led to your growth in those areas. You are now in a better position to communicate your strengths (skills and experiences) to prospective employers through your resume and cover letters and at interviews.

Knowing what career path you wish to take in the field of social work, how to get there, and what skills are needed to be successful in that position, is the best strategic way to land the job you want. It’s also a great way to navigate and get the most out of your social work program. With some careful planning, research, and assessment, you will be able to make the most out of your academic career and not lose sight of your goal – a great job in the field of social work!

Michelle Woods, LMSW – Macro, Director of Career Services, University of Michigan School of Social Work. This article was originally published in the September 2012 issue of The Bridge.

“\[quote\]
I am possibly the best job candidate you will ever have the privilege to interview. Need I go on?\[/quote\]
Create Value in Yourself

Invest in training programs
Use your time to participate in training programs to develop your skills and utilize your time earning continuing education units (CEU) to expand your knowledge.

Take advantage of the contingent workforce to build up your skills and experience
Use your free time wisely. Everyone in your class is graduating with a degree and at least one or two field placements. Start asking yourself: “why should an agency hire me over anyone else?” The way to build your skills and experience is to build your networks through informational interviews and through volunteering your time at an agency. You can also build your skills through your field placement. Look for ways to go to coalition meetings or ways to build your network during your field placements.

Recognize that value is in the eye of the beholder
Research what is of value to the organization you are applying to and format your résumé to reflect those values. You can research by looking at their website and the job description and by reviewing their industry publications. Take note of their terminology and key words and implement them into your résumé.

Recognize value is not about you but what the job seekers are looking for
You can create value by showing how you can deliver in a competitive environment.

Quantify and qualify job experiences on your résumé
It will add value to your résumé, particularly by using their key words in your résumé.

Format your purpose statement or objective to answer these questions:
Does this statement illustrate specific value I have created? Is the value I have created useful to my prospective employer? How? If you cannot make your purpose statement answer these questions then do not put it on the résumé. It will be a waste of space.

Content mostly taken from the book, Cracking the New Job Market: The 7 Rules for Getting Hired in Any Economy” by William Holland
Networking Techniques and Strategies

Why network?

Networking is an important part of the job search process because most jobs are discovered through personal communication rather than traditional postings. It may seem overwhelming to think about networking, especially when life is busy, but building your network does not necessarily mean you have to attend large social functions or continuously meet with potential employers.

In fact, many people do not even realize that they network on a daily basis. Are you in contact with professionals in your field of interest at your job, at your internship, or during social events on the weekends? Do you keep in touch with faculty, employers, or peers from your undergraduate or previous professional career? Most likely, yes. These contacts may be helpful as you enter the job market. It is important to be aware of your growing network and utilize this important resource.

Networking tips for busy people:

- Identify networking opportunities in your daily life: intra-agency meetings, guest speaker presentations, training events and conferences, family, work, or school social events
- Tell your contacts when you are in the job market: your own network may have connections to job openings that you may otherwise not have known about
- Carry business cards with your professional contact information at all times. The U-M Alumni Association will make 30 free business cards for students: [http://alumni.umich.edu/networking-tools/business-cards-for-students](http://alumni.umich.edu/networking-tools/business-cards-for-students)
- Utilize social networking websites such as LinkedIn, Facebook, or inCircle, which may be useful to build and maintain connections with co-workers, classmates, and employers
- Join professional organizations and associations relevant to your field for access to job search databases, employment bulletins, and professional contacts
- Obtain a copy of the U-M School of Social Work Alumni Directory for MSW graduate information - this is especially helpful for out-of-state job searches, as the directory is divided by geographical location
- Conduct informational interviews with contacts directly related to your field of interest

Social Network with NASW Michigan

- Facebook  
  - facebook.com/NASWMichigan
- Twitter  
  - twitter.com/NASWMI
- LinkedIn  
  - [https://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=e&gid=2900480&trk=anet_ug_hm](https://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=e&gid=2900480&trk=anet_ug_hm)
- Youtube  
  - [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCl4mETr6hSImiG-plsdQSTbA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCl4mETr6hSImiG-plsdQSTbA)
- Blog –  
What is informational interviewing?

Informational interviewing is a form of interviewing that is initiated by the job-seeker. The desired result is not to obtain a job but rather to gather as much knowledge as possible about the market in which you are entering. Therefore the job-seeker will ask questions to find out more about a particular job, the necessary credentials or skills for such a position, and other information that will provide additional insight during the job search. Interviews are brief, lasting about 10 to 15 minutes.

Be sure to send a thank-you note immediately after the interview, as the employers/social workers you speak with are generously taking time out of their busy days for you. Informational interviewing is an excellent form of networking because the people you interview will often connect you with additional contacts or provide you with job leads.

Informational interviewing sample questions:

- What is it like to work for this company?
- What is the management philosophy?
- Could you describe the training involved in your position?
- What are the necessary qualifications to be hired for this position?
- What are the work conditions like?
- What type of supervision is involved with this job?
- What type of person fits in best here?
- Do you suggest I speak with anyone else to learn more about this field?

Content taken from the University of Michigan School of Social Work Career Center (http://ssw.umich.edu/offices/career-services)
Cover Letters

What Makes a Cover Letter Stand Out from the Rest?

Anything being sent to a decision-maker should sell you, and not just state facts. When conducting a job search, your cover letter and résumé are in a pile for the decision-maker to review, one by one, along with a vast number of other documents submitted by other hopeful individuals. The odds that YOUR document is the very first one on the pile are about a zillion to one! This means the decision-maker has probably read X number of cover letters (and résumés) before reaching your set of documents. With that in mind, it’s not recommended that you start the cover letter with the sentence used in so many other letters:

"Pursuant to your recent advertisement in the New York Times for the position of Staff Accountant, I am enclosing my résumé for your review."

B-O-R-I-N-G! Plus, the decision-maker probably just read this same (or very similar) sentence about five dozen times. Remember, you want to GRAB the decision-maker’s attention and SELL yourself to them.

Since the cover letter is designed to market you to potential employers, do not state the obvious. If the cover letter does not create a sense of excitement and entice the reader, it is a waste of your time for writing it and a waste of time for the reader reading it.

Keep track of how many times you use the words "I" and/or "my." After you write the letter, take a pen and circle all the “I’s” and “my’s” in the letter: more than five? Then it is time to re-write some of the sentences.

Here is an illustration of how to do that: Instead of writing "I am looking for an opportunity for advancement with a new employer. My background is in retail management, and I feel well-qualified for the Store Manager position with your company", you can write, "A background in retail management and proven record of obtaining results as a Store Manager are key elements in qualifying me for consideration as part of your team."

Remember the PURPOSE of the cover letter: to highlight your background in the right light, sell your skills and show the potential employer you are worthy of an interview. Explaining what you WANT throughout the letter does not tell the reader the BENEFIT of what you can offer, which is imperative for you to be successful.

One of the techniques to use in cover letters is to pull out the top four or five achievements and mention them in bullet form with the letter. It serves as a wonderful focus point for readers' eyes and draws their attention immediately to your strengths. Here’s a brief highlight in what would naturally be a longer cover letter:
...Recognized as a top-performer and dedicated professional, my record of achievements include:
- Generating a 58 percent increase in new business during tenure as Regional Advertising Manager
- Boosting client media coverage to 50 and developing partnerships with previously unsecured media contacts

There are many ways to say things but, as you can see, some words have a stronger impact on readers than others. In cover letters, e-résumés and traditional résumés, you can change the reader's perception in a heartbeat by substituting various words or phrases for more traditional (and outdated) verbiage.

See the outline below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NON-AGGRESSIVE LANGUAGE</th>
<th>AGGRESSIVE LANGUAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Set up entire department from scratch</td>
<td>Established department from inception through successful operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked closely with department heads</td>
<td>Fostered relationships with department heads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped produce $3 million in sales</td>
<td>Instrumental in generating $3 million in sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped new employees</td>
<td>Aided new employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-depth knowledge of capital markets and corporate finance</td>
<td>Expertise in capital markets and corporate finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisted marketing department in strategies and bids</td>
<td>Actively participated in formulating marketing strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced expenses by 10%</td>
<td>Slashed (or cut) expenses by 10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In short, aggressive writing makes you SIZZLE, while passive writing tells your "story." Remember your goal is to effectively market yourself, not to author your employment biography.

Content taken directly from National NASW:
http://careers.socialworkers.org/findajob/articles/employerslookingfor.asp

Tips for Writing a Cover Letter

- Keep it to one page unless you have quality experience to share.
- Be original, but also get to the point (writing that you wanted to be a social worker since age 6 or saying you want to help people is not original).
- Your cover letter should create a sense of excitement and entice the reader. Express personality.
- Write a different cover letter for each job; tailor it to that specific job
- Talk about the work you have done and how those experiences directly relate to the job to which you are applying. Read that agency’s strategic plan and talk about how you can help them reach their goals.
- Use wordage that resembles their mission statement, website or job description.
- Reiterate strengths and abilities that connect to outcomes.
- Do not use passive language. Change “Assisted department with” to “Actively participated in.”
Date

Dear Ms. Glenn,

Susan Street, director of the Family Center, suggested that I contact you regarding your opening for a social worker at the Day Treatment Center. In May, I will be returning to Dallas and I have started searching for opportunities to work with at-risk children and families. I am eager to learn more about the social worker position at the Day Treatment Center.

In addition to having earned my MSW, I have training and experience in day treatment, pediatric social work and women’s and children’s services. At the day treatment program for the Children’s Center in City, I handled assessments, participated in the treatment team and provided therapy for at-risk youth and their families. This experience expanded my skills in working with emotionally disturbed youth in a culturally diverse setting. Prior to my graduate work, I was the coordinator for an effective volunteer service and children’s program for the Women’s Shelter in City. In all these settings, staff members have complimented me for my work with families and children in crisis.

Susan Street highly recommended the Day Treatment Center. It is my understanding that your staff has initiated several programs that are considered models for working with culturally diverse populations.

Thank you for considering my application; my résumé is enclosed. You can reach me at home in the evenings at 111-222-3333 or at work on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 111-222-3333. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Name and Credentials
Résumés

What do Employers Look for in a Résumé?

Essentially, employers look for what you can do for them. That is what they want to know. Your résumé should to be reader-friendly—easy for the reader to find the names of companies, titles held and dates employed. He or she will pass over your résumé if time has to be spent hunting for this information. You cannot expect the employer to do ANY work; it all has to be accessible and right there.

On average, the employer will only spend 15-20 seconds reviewing the document. This will not sound flattering to the job seeker, but candidly, you are a product that you are selling and marketing to the reader. Just like in any other sales situation, you sell the sizzle, not the steak. Obviously, you will need the details to substantiate the claim, so have all the factual information available. What will create the sense of urgency is if you can demonstrate that YOU are the better product. This is especially important in soft markets.

The mindset is not to inform, but to sell, market, showcase your skills and results, highlight what you’ve done for former employers and emphasize what you can do for a new company. This is where most people miss the mark tremendously. To get ‘on the mark’, understand the employer’s perspective: “I’m the company, and I’m spending ‘X’ on you. What is my return on investment? How can you make my life better? How can you make the company more profitable?” That is what your résumé should scream to the reader. Why me and not one of the other 185 people whose résumés are sitting on the employer’s desk.

Content provided by NASW

Common Nonverbal Mistakes Made at a Job Interview. http://vitamintalent.com
Résumé Tips

Where to Start

It is a good idea to start by assessing your strengths/skills, experiences, and professional goal(s), in relation to the desired qualifications of the position that you are seeking. Moreover, consider your audience as you build your résumé.

Be sure to create a specialized résumé for each job. It can be useful to prepare a résumé for your own use that includes all of your experiences; this can then be used to create your specialized résumés. Please refer to our "Helpful Résumé Building Materials" to help you evaluate and package your skill set.

Also, be mindful that the job search does not end or begin with the résumé but:

- It should be polished - absolutely no grammatical/spelling errors.
- Think of it as a "snap-shot" of your experiences - it does not have to include everything you've done.
- Résumés should highlight outcomes rather than tasks. It is much more than a list of job duties.
- Make sure to use terminology that is pertinent to your field of interest.

Résumé and Curricula Vitae

A curricula vitae is used by those seeking positions in academia. It is typically quite long, as it emphasizes one's experiences in teaching, research, grant awards, publications and presentations.

Accepted Formats

There are three formats to select from: chronological, functional, and combination. Each should have one-inch margins, 11 or 12-point font size, and an easy to read font type. It should be no more than 1-2 pages in length. Include at the top of the page your name, address, phone number, and email address. Think of this part as your own professional letterhead. Enlarge your name and add a bar across the page to separate your heading from the rest of the résumé. To keep the pages of your résumé together, on the upper right corner of page 2, place your last name and the page number.

Another option you have is to use your header on page 2, to make it your own professional letterhead. If your pages become separated, it may be possible that the employer would think page 2 is page 1 of your résumé, however, and think you left off information. Use your header on your cover letter, as well.

Chronological Format

A chronological format is the traditional format that most people think of when they imagine what a résumé looks like. It is designed in reverse chronological order, meaning you start with your most recent experiences and work your way back. For instance, you begin with your most recent job and end with your oldest job.

Typical headings include: Objective, Education, Professional Experience, Volunteer Experience, Research Experience, Professional Development, Professional Affiliations, and Awards and Honors. You do not need to use every heading; instead, fit the headings to your experiences. Under each heading, highlight
your outcomes and accomplishments rather than listing your job description or duties. Please refer to our "Helpful Résumé Building Materials" for examples.

**Combination Format**

A combination format is the blending of the chronological and functional formats. It is optional to begin with an objective and it always follows or begins with a "Professional Summary" which highlights in 1-2 sentences your skills/experiences in a broad sense. Then, like in a Functional résumé, you include skills headings. After that, you include a reverse chronological listing of your work history. This time, unlike the Functional résumé, you emphasize your accomplishments and main job functions, as you would in a chronological résumé. Please refer to our "Helpful Résumé Building Materials" for examples.

**Choosing Your Résumé Format**

The chronological format is usually best to use when you can demonstrate consistent employment in the social work profession. This shows the strengths of your social work experience. If you do not have official employment experience, you can use your internship experience(s) in the employment section. So, the chronological format is still an option available to you because your internship experience is just as significant as your work experience. Instead of titling it "Job Experience", you can either use "Profession Experience" or "Social Work Experience".

As a new graduate or someone who has changed to the social work profession, you may want to consider using the functional format instead. However, always have a chronological format prepared because the employer may ask for this format. The functional format is used to demonstrate specific skills, to de-emphasize a lack of employment in social work, extended periods of unemployment, or beginning the social work profession. Be mindful, though, that employers are aware that people use functional formats for these reasons. Prepare yourself to answer questions that the employer may ask about your qualifications or extended periods of unemployment.

On the other hand, people with a great deal of experience may also prefer to use the functional format because it can highlight the breadth and mastery of one's skills. The combination format is useful if you have strengths in both areas when you can demonstrate consistent social work employment and sought-after skills. It shows that you understand the qualifications for the position, as well as have the experience to back it up.

**Should I use a template?**

Typically, it is not useful to use a template because:

1. It does not allow you flexibility with your headings and content (e.g. highlighting your diverse set of social work skills, which differ from traditional experiences and strengths)
2. It usually wastes too much space on the page with large margins and line spacing.

*Content taken from the University of Michigan School of Social Work Career Center (http://ssw.umich.edu/offices/career-services)*
Questions to Help Write a Winning Résumé

To make it sell, answer the following:

- What are your two top job choices in order of preference?
- What skills do you enjoy using the most and want to highlight?
- What have you done on the job that distinguishes you from others in your field?
- What projects or teams did you lead, or innovative concepts did you introduce, that had the most positive results on the company?
- What recommendations or contributions have you made that have been accepted or implemented?
- Have you quantified accomplishments in detail versus just listing them briefly? Are they tangible, bottom-line benefits from the employer’s perspective?
- How will your unique work style benefit a potential employer? How has your style fueled your accomplishments with previous employers?
- Have you used a personal e-mail address and not your employer’s? (e.g., Yahoo, AOL, Hotmail versus your at-work account)
- Is your résumé easy to read, with all contact information and employment history basics readily visible? (e.g. name of company, title, dates of employment)
- Does the document include up-to-date language and the buzzwords hiring decision-makers are looking for?
- Have you proofread your résumé at least twice and had another person review it for spelling errors, typing mistakes, incorrect dates, etc.?
- Does the résumé read like a marketing document that SELLS you, rather than a narrative of your work history?
Knowledge/Skill Areas for Social Work Resumes

- Advising
- Advance human rights and social and economic justice
- Advocacy (Negotiated, mediated, and advocated for clients)
- Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation
- Assessment
- Arts-Related Skills
- Benchmarking
- Board of Directors
- Budgeting
- Career-Long Learning
- Case Management
- Certifications
- Child Welfare
- Collaboration (collaborated with colleagues and clients for effective policy action)
- Committee Involvement
- Communication Skills (ex. demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities and colleagues)
- Community Organizing
- Computers and software
- Conflict Resolution Skills
- Consultation
- Critical Thinking (distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge)
- Curriculum Development
- Creative Writing
- Creativity
- Critically analyze, monitor and evaluate interventions
- Data Collection
- Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication
- Design (materials, web, etc)
- Discharge Planning
- Editing
- Education
- Engagement (ex. career-long learning, practices that advance social and economic justice)
- Ethical Practice
- Evaluation
- Event Organizing
- Facilitation (facilitated transitions and endings)
- Fiscal Management
- Fundraising
- Global Engagement
- Graphic Design
- Grant Writing
- Group and Team Work
- Initiative
- Intercultural Skills
- Intervention
- Interviews
- Language Proficiencies
- Leadership
- Learning from Diversity
- Legislative Engagement
- Lesson Planning
- Lobbying
- Management
- Marketing
- Motivational Interviewing
- Networking
- Partnerships
- Patient Care
- Photography/Photovoice
- Policy Work
- Program Development
- Professional
- Psychotherapy (individual, group, family, etc)
- Development
- Program Management
- Program Development
- Record Keeping
- Referrals
- Research
- Resolved Ethical Conflicts
- Self-Assessment
- Service Delivery
- Social Change
- Social Identities
- Social Networking
- Strategy and Planning
- Supervision
- Support Groups
- Teaching/Training
- Team Work
- Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination
- Volunteer
- Writing and Publications

List created by NASW – Michigan
Sample BSW Resume
(Chronological Format for a BSW Student)

JAMES TEAL

Present Address (until June 15, 2012) Permanent Address
Address Address
City, State Zip City, State Zip
Telephone Telephone and e-mail address

EDUCATION
Bachelor of Social Work, 2012, State College, Phoenix, Arizona
Dean’s List, GPA 3.2/4.0, Major GPA 3.3

EXPERIENCE
Community Hospital, City, State
Social Work Intern, January 2011-present
Work directly with chronically mentally ill individuals. Assist clients with daily living skills, social and recreational skills, and employment needs. Conduct home visits. Co-facilitate a support group; led two sessions independently. Observe supervisor in individual client sessions. Developed a broad understanding of social policies, public and private service delivery, advocacy efforts, individual needs, and medical terminology related to this population. Complimented for efforts to integrate classroom knowledge and practice.

Stevens Foundation, Inc., City, State
Trainer (paid position), September 2010-present
Teach independent-living skills and provide support to people with developmental disabilities. As part of a team provide assessments and evaluations. Serve as liaison with local employers. Assist in preparing new trainers. Served on a committee that successfully expanded employment sites. Familiar with issues facing families, agencies, and employers.

Camp Frost, City, State
Lead Counselor (paid position), summer 2010
Supervised a staff of four counselors serving 40 children in a residential camp. Planned and monitored activities, safety, supplies and maintenance. Hired and trained two new counselors.


LEADERSHIP and VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE
Freshman Orientation Leader, State College, January-May 2010, August 2010
One of four students out of 20 applicants selected for the freshman orientation committee. Planned a weeklong series of events for 500 incoming students. Led a team of five volunteers, gave presentations to students and parents, and coordinated peer advising sessions.

Other volunteer work includes tutoring and organizing activities for a children’s program.

Affiliations National Association of Social Workers
Beta Sigma Phi
Skills American Sign Language (minimal)
Sample MSW Resume 1
Functional Format for a MSW Student

LISA DENTON
Address
City, State Zip
Telephone & e-mail address

OBJECTIVE  Seeking a clinical social work position in a pediatric health or mental health care setting working with children, adolescents, and families.

SKILLS
Direct Services
- Provided medical services on the neonatal and pediatric intensive care units.
- Handled back-up services for all hospital units, including the emergency room.
- Completed assessments, dealt with crises; provided emotional support to families.
- Led weekly parent support group in a hospital setting.
- Provided individual, group, and family therapy in a day treatment center.
- Trained to handle crises and make appropriate referrals.

Program and Project Implementation
- Recruited, trained, and supervised eight volunteers for a women’s shelter.
- Designed and implemented a children’s program staffed by volunteers.
- Co-chaired a committee that held a successful orientation event for 130 students.
- Collected data for a study through interviews; used the SPSS computer package.

EDUCATION
Masters of Social Work, University, City, State

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, 2009, The College, Town, State
Dean’s List. Admitted to two honorary societies.

EXPERIENCE
Children’s Hospital, City, State, Medical Social Work Intern, September 1996- present.
My University School of Social Work, Teaching Assistant for family therapy course, 1996.
Family Center for Autism, City, State, Respite Provider, may 1996-August 1996.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Certificate in Play Therapy, The Institute, City, State, 1994
Sample MSW Resume 2
(Combination Format for a MSW Graduate with Policy and International Interests)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MADALINE MATTHEWS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>until July 15, 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Address, City, State Zip</td>
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<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
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<tr>
<td>E-mail address</td>
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</tbody>
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**EDUCATION**
Masters of Social Welfare, University, Town, State, May 1997
Bachelor of Arts, Community Studies/Latin American Studies, University, 1994
Honors/Societies: (Name of those specific to her interests)

**PROGRAM SKILLS**
Languages: English and Spanish
Computer: Excel, Microsoft Word, Geographic Information Systems
Program: Development, implementation, evaluation
Writing: Grant proposals, evaluation reports

**AREAS OF POLICY STUDY/INTEREST**
Policy Areas: immigration, international development, foreign policy, housing, HIV/AIDS
Interest: implications of policy for low-income persons at the local community level
Experience Abroad: Dominican Republic, Mexico, El Salvador, Panama, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua

**CIVIC AND COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE**
**International Projects**, City, State
Latin American Program Intern, January 1997-May 1997
- Anticipated functions include evaluation of sustainable microenterprise projects in Guatemala, project development in Nicaragua, coordination of annual meeting for affiliated organizations in Central America, facilitation of relationships between City area public schools and development projects in Central America.

The Garden Project, City, State
Graduate Research Intern, community development/garden agency, July 1996-December 1996
- Evaluated survey results of urban gardening program aimed at stabilizing low-income neighborhoods. Coded and analyzed data.
- Wrote final report on survey results.
- Used computerized census data from Geographic Information Systems to create informational maps.

**Affiliations**
National Association of Social Workers
Phi Alpha

**Skills**
Spanish (Written and Spoken)
Pathways, City, State  
Direct Service/Fund-raising Intern, January 1996-July 1996  
- Applied Housing and Urban Development (HUD) low-income housing policies to HIV/AIDS client issues.  
- Worked with various groups: tenants, neighborhood associations, and government agencies (HUD).  
- Conducted client intakes and assessments for a low-income housing program.

Amigos, City, State  
Tutoring Chairperson and Board Member, October 1995-June 1996  
- Organized volunteer bilingual tutoring program involving 25 volunteers and 90 students from three local elementary schools.  
- Collaborated with other board members on fund-raising events.

Refugee Committee, City, State  
Project Coordinator, April 1995-April 1996  
- Assisted refugees with applications for temporary protected status.  
- Planned, fund-raised, and led committees for material-aid projects.  
- Prepared and co-led a delegation to El Salvador.  
- Organized City area speaking tour of Salvadoran psychologists.

County Immigration Project, City, State  
Immigration Law/Rights Intern, March 1994-June 1995  
- Translated client documents.  
- Assisted lawyer in explaining rights to immigrants.

WORK EXPERIENCE  
Senior Customer Service Representative, Sports, Inc., City, State, July 1995-July 1996

Assistant Manager, Mexican Food Restaurant, City, State, November 1994-May 1995  
Supervised up to ten staff, communicated in Spanish

Bilingual Substitute Teacher for two school districts in State, September 1994-May 1995

Affiliations  
National Association of Social Workers (U-Link Advocate), June 2012-Present  
Phi Alpha (Vice President), September 2013-Present

Skills  
American Sign Language (minimal), Photography
The Interview

Get to Know the Company BEFORE the Interview

Being prepared to win is critical to your job-search success, just as it is with most of life’s challenges.

I know of a business owner who prefers to do all of his company’s interviewing. He likes to ask prospective employees what they have done to prepare for the interview. His questions go something like this:

- Did you talk to anyone who works here to learn something about our company?
- Did you check with your school’s placement office to see whether there were any graduates working here you could meet?
- Did you find any newspaper articles on us at the library or on the internet?

If the majority of the answer is “no,” this employer feels that the individual will be an employment risk. His attitude is if you do not prepare to win at the interview, how well will you prepare to win on the job?

Then the employer expects a thank-you letter, within 24 hours of the interview, telling him that the individual wants the job.

He expects the job candidate to be prepared for the interview and assertive enough to follow through and make the sale.

Michael Jordan is a world-class athlete with extraordinary talent. He was the first to arrive at practice and the last to leave. He knew that winning takes preparation.

He also scored on barely half of his field goal attempts, but his preparation gave him more opportunity than most players, and his follow-through put points on the board.

That same effort applies to your job search. If you want the job, you have to prepare to win it.

It takes no longer to prepare well for one interview than it does to blow five or six – and your scoring ratio will be many times greater.

By Marvin Walberg at Scripps Howard News Services
25 Tips for Acing a Remote Interview

The combination of a scarcity of jobs and the emergence of new technologies has made it more common than ever for job applicants to take part in remote interviews. Remote interviews provide a way for companies to screen potential employees and to save applicants time and money for travel, making them attractive choices for both parties. While remote interviews, whether by phone or over the computer, are more common than ever, that doesn’t make them any less intimidating. Whether it’s your first remote interview or your hundredth, here are some tips that can help make the process a less stressful, more successful experience no matter what kind of job you’re interviewing for.

1. **Get the right equipment.** If you’re going to be giving an interview over a teleconferencing site like Skype, then make sure you have equipment that is going to make it easy for interviewers to hear and see you. If you can’t afford to buy the right tech, see if you can borrow microphones or webcams from friends that will suit your needs for the interview.

2. **Know how to use your technology.** Not only do you need to make sure that you have the right tools for the job, but you also need to know how to use them. Spend some time in the days prior to the interview learning how to use the tech you’ll need, both the hardware and the software. You’ll also want to make sure that you have a reliable Internet connection and that your devices are powerful enough to maintain a lengthy online interview. All of this testing will save you big headaches later on, so it’s worth the time and investment.

3. **Give your profile a makeover.** You might usually use your Skype account for personal matters, but if you’re going to be using it in an interview then you need to make sure it’s professionally appropriate. If it’s not, give it a makeover or create a new account that’s purely for business use.

4. **Look your best.** Just because you’re not going into the office doesn’t mean you shouldn’t look businesslike and professional. When doing a remote interview, even from your own home after work hours, you still need to dress just as you would if you were interviewing in person.

5. **Know your stuff.** Before your interview, do a little research on the company and the person or people who will be interviewing you. Print out some of the information you find most interesting so that you’ll have it on hand to reference during the interview, and use it to generate some questions for your interviewers to answer about their company as well.

6. **Find a good place to talk.** Prior to the day of the interview, scout good places in your home or nearby that will be quiet and that have good Internet connections. Finding a place where you can concentrate and won’t be disturbed is critical to ensuring that your interview goes smoothly, but you’ll also want to pay attention to the backdrop you’re creating. For example, a cluttered kitchen or a messy desk isn’t the image you really want to project to employers, so clean up the scenery before you start.

7. **Have everything you need at hand.** You don’t want to have to rummage around or get up mid-interview to retrieve things that you need. Put everything you’ll need, from a glass of water to a copy of your resume, right on a table or other surface near you so you can grab it without hassle if necessary.

8. **Relax.** If you’ve never done a remote interview before (or even if you have), the experience can be a bit stressful. Yet that stress and anxiety isn’t going to help you interview well. Remind yourself to relax, slow down, and think about your answers and demeanor. If you’re the nervous type, put a sticky note on your laptop that reminds you to relax.

9. **Pay attention to lighting.** You want your interview space to be well lit so that your interviewer will be able to see your face and not just a grainy, blurry image of where it should be. Make sure that the lighting in your space is sufficient to give a clear image, but not so bright that it washes everything out.
10. **Follow up.** Just like with a face-to-face interview, you’ll want to follow up with your interviewer 24 to 48 hours later. Send an email or give them a call to see how things went and figure out when your next interview will be, or when they’ll make a decision on the position.

11. **Ask friends for feedback.** If you have time, do a trial run of your remote interview with your friends. They can help point out any things that you’re doing that seem weird or off-putting (you may have more odd tics than you realize) and can help you work through any technical issues you may be having.

12. **Have a backup plan.** There is great wisdom in the line “the best laid plans of mice and men often go awry,” especially when modern technology is involved. Even if you’re careful to try everything out in advance, there are no guarantees that things won’t happen to disrupt your interview. Make sure you have a backup plan in place so that no matter what happens you’ll be prepared and ready to give your interview.

13. **Remove distractions.** When doing your remote interview, you don’t want any distractions taking your attention away from the process. That means that pets need to be shut out or occupied, cell phones turned off, and web browsing needs to stop. Make sure anyone your share your household with also knows that you’re not to be disturbed.

14. **Be ready early.** If you can help it, don’t wait until the last minute to get ready for your interview. Get yourself looking good, set up your materials, and power up your computer 15-20 minutes in advance. You never know; an interviewer might decide to call early and it’s always good to be prepared.

15. **Speak clearly and at a good volume.** Pay close attention to how you’re speaking in the interview. Ensure that you’re speaking clearly and at a volume that your interviewers can hear. Otherwise, they may mishear or not hear you at all.

16. **Get the body language right.** Even though you’re not speaking to your interviewer in person, body language still matters. Make eye contact, remain natural, smile, and keep hand and body movements to a minimum.

17. **Don’t rush.** While technology has made it possible to enjoy rapid, almost instantaneous conversations over the web, there can still be delays. Allow a pause between sentences to ensure that your interviewers will hear you and be ready for the next issue at hand. Not rushing also helps you to pace yourself, avoid stress, and allows you more time to think, so it’s a smart strategy to use.

18. **Listen carefully for cues.** If you’re doing your remote interview the old-fashioned way, over the phone, then in addition to many of these other tips you’ll need to focus on improving your listening skills. Pay close attention to vocal cues that will tell you when to speak or what interviewers might be feeling.

19. **Keep your answers short and to the point.** While you never want to ramble on in any kind of interview, attention spans can often be shorter in remote interviews than in person. Ensure that you get to the point quickly and don’t spend too much time answering any one question, unless the interviewer asks for more clarification.

20. **Make it a conversation.** Interviews are not designed to be a one-way street. You are allowed, and perhaps even advised, to ask questions of your own if you have them. You want to make sure that the company you’re interviewing with is a good fit for you too, so don’t be afraid to speak up.

21. **Focus only on the interview.** While it might be tempting to check your email while interviewing, resist the urge. You’d be surprised how easy it is to tell if someone isn’t focused, even if you’re just talking on the phone.

22. **Make the most of tech tools.** Interviewing remotely does offer some advantages, at least in terms of easy access to technology. Programs like Skype and Google Hangouts allow you to
easily share examples of your work with your interviewers, making it simple to show off your skills and give examples of what you’ve done in the past.

23. **Remember to look into the camera.** When having an online conversation it can be tempting to look at the screen rather than at the camera. While that might be fine when the interviewer is talking, if you want to look professional you need to look at the camera, not the screen, when you’re talking.

24. **Be honest.** If it’s your first time using certain programs or even doing a remote interview, just be honest. It might be the first time for the interviewer too, and the common ground and honesty can set a good stage for your interview.

25. **Treat a remote interview like an in-person one.** The best tip for acing a remote interview? Treat it like any other interview. All the same rules apply to online and phone interviews as face-to-face interviews. Remember that and you’ve already set yourself up for success.
Pre-Interview Checklist

☐ I have reviewed the directions to the interview and am familiar with where I am going.
☐ I have planned when I need to leave so I arrive 15 minutes early.
☐ I have practiced my interview answers and questions out loud as well as how to “boast” about my personal accomplishments.
☐ I have prepared a personal statement, a list of 10 questions to ask, and five success stories to share (“Tell me about the time when...” or “Give me an example of a time...”).
☐ I have researched salary information and estimated my monetary value. I know what my salary needs are based on my living expenses.
☐ I have been in contact with my references and asked permission to give their name and number to my potential employer.
☐ I have thought about what I will wear, ironed it, and laid it out for quick dressing.
☐ I have polished my shoes and they are in good shape.
☐ I have researched the company thoroughly and I am prepared to share what I know.
☐ I have packed the following items
  ☐ Three or more copies of my résumé and references
  ☐ My research of the company
  ☐ Two professional-looking, (non-clicky) pens and a generic pad of paper
  ☐ The exact address and directions to the interview
  ☐ Full name of the interviewer and their contact information

Post-Interview Checklist

☐ I mailed a thank-you note right after the interview to everyone I made contact with.
☐ I have ensured my answering machine message is professional.
☐ I put two pens and a pad of paper near the phone or accessible to grab.
☐ I have notified my references of the status of the job interview.
☐ I have marked my calendar to follow up with the interviewer if I don’t hear from them.
☐ I have made an effort to diligently check my email account listed on my résumé
Do You Have Any Questions?

Surprisingly, the most common answer to this question is “no.” Not only is this the wrong answer, but it is also a missed opportunity to discover information about the company. It is important for you to ask questions – not just any questions, but those relating to the job, the company and the industry.

Be Prepared

What information do you need to decide whether to work at this company? Make a list of at least 10 questions to take with you to the interview. Depending on who is interviewing you, your questions should vary.

If you are interviewing with the hiring manager, ask questions about the job, the desired qualities and the challenges.

If you are interviewing with the human resources manager, ask about the company, the department.

If you are interviewing with management, ask about the industry and future projections. This is your chance to demonstrate your industry knowledge.

Timing is Important

You will have to use your judgment about the number of questions you ask and when to ask them. Think of this as a conversation. There will be an appropriate time to ask certain types of questions, like those about benefits and vacation. To be on the safe side, it is best to concentrate on the questions about the job’s responsibilities and how you fit the position until you get the actual offer. When you begin to think of the interview as a two-way process, you will see it is important for you to find out as much as possible about the company. Questions will give you the opportunity to find out if this is a good place for you to work before you say “YES.”

Possible Questions to Ask

- Can you tell me what a typical day is like for someone in this position?
- What type of training is given to new employees?
- Who will be my manager and how much contact will I have with him/her?
- What are the best aspects of the job? The worst?
- What is the company culture?
- Exactly what type of person are you looking for to fill this position?
- How soon do you plan to fill the position?
- What type of work/clients are you currently working on?

From Jeffrey Ory. Scoring a Perfect 10 on Your Interview. Deveney Communication
What to Say to “Tell Me about Yourself”

It’s finally happened! There you are, facing the interviewer at Company X, the company you are sure is perfect for you. You are off to a great start. Then the smiling interviewer hits you with the worrisome phrase: “Tell me about yourself.”

If you are like most people, this is an uncomfortable moment. Your mind races as you struggle to maintain that “in control” look.

What do you say? Where do you start? Even more important, when do you shut up?

The main message here is: don’t let your mouth flood the interview. More opportunities have been squandered than opportunities created by reverberations from that dangers weapon – the automatic mouth.

So how should you handle the “tell me about yourself” request? First, and most obviously, you need to come prepared to answer this. Be brief! Use no more than three minutes. Some experts even talk in terms of a 30-second sound bite.

To be that brief you must have a very concise summary of three major areas: your historical background, present experience and contributions you can make to whatever company.

How to decide whether to use 30-seconds or three minutes? Your best guide here is the personality of the interviewer. If he’s been moving the interview along at a rapid clip, use the 30-second version. If he seems to prefer elaboration, take the full three minutes.

If you need to go the distance, the following is a simple, time-tested approach to organize your information.

- **Step one** is background. Summarize your work history and education. Emphasize strengths and successes. Relate them in chronological order, and you will appear well organized. Refer frequently to your résumé for specifics to support the information.
- If you decide to include personal information, link it to the job you are seeking. For example, a description of volunteer work in a service club could help define you as a team player.
- **Step two** is your present and most recent position. Mention a couple of responsibilities you are interested in taking on in the job under discussion. If you are not working, talk about the energy you are putting into your job search.
- **Step three** is contributions you can make to this company. Recount the high points of information already provided as supporting evidence of your abilities.
- Point out that your contributions can help lift the company’s department to the next level. Don’t get too detailed. Give them a few tips of the icebergs instead. Let them ask you to reveal more – they will ask you to talk most about which areas interest them most.

And don’t try to figure out what they want to hear.
Preparation

Practice
Practice makes perfect! Take the time to answer the questions you anticipate as well as ask the question you have prepared. This might be the most important preparation step, even if it makes you feel ridiculous.

Dress
Avoid crazy colors or loud outfits. You can express yourself through your personality. Puffy hair, unnatural hair colors, crazy ties, excess makeup, and large jewelry can turn a potential employer away. Always dress modestly and conservatively! Remember, first impression is key. After you are hired, slowly you can start to express yourself again through your appearances.

Notes
Take notes! It shows you are interested in them! Remember you are interviewing them too!

Homework
Never walk into an interview without doing your homework! It’s not very difficult to do! Look up their website, search articles about the organization, or even seek out someone who is employed there.

Do’s and Don’ts

Eye Contact
By maintaining eye contact with your interviewer you are telling them you are interested. Even when you take notes, make a point to make eye contact!

Speech
It is important to speak confidently and clearly. Speaking too quickly is a sign of nervousness and lack of preparation. Speaking too slowly accentuates the seriousness of the situation.

Distraction
Refrain from playing with your hair, cross and uncrossing your legs, flicking or tapping your pen, etc. You want them to focus on what you are saying, not what you’re doing.

Body Language
Body language can tell a future employer a great deal about you. They can sense if you handle stress or communicate well. Slouching, fidgeting, etc. gives off the wrong message. Use your body language to your advantage by nodding your head or leaning forward to show your interest. The interviewer is sacrificing their valuable time to meet with you, so make it worth their effort.

Sell Yourself
Prepare three main points that you want them to know about you and integrate them into the interview. If you never see the opportunity to fit these in, bring it up as you “recap” your main points at the end of the interview or integrate it into your thank you letter afterwards.

Gendered Speech
From a very young age, men and women are taught to speak differently about themselves. For women, “talking about your own accomplishments in a way that calls attention to yourself is not acceptable”
(Talking from 9 to 5, by Deborah Tannen, PH.D., p. 38). “Many boys learn to state their opinions in the strongest possible terms and find out if they’re wrong by seeing if others challenge them. These ways of talking translate into an impression of confidence” (Tannen, p.40). This makes it very difficult for women to perform well in an interview, as they are not accustomed to “boast” about their accomplishments. Making the time to practice “boasting or speaking positively about yourself is vital!

Ask Questions
Prepare a few questions to ask towards the end of your interview. This shows that you want to know more about them. You can ask more about the position, organization, workload/caseload, etc. Most interviewers ask at the end of the interview if you have any questions. You should never say no. One question you can always rely on is when the employer expects to make a decision regarding the job or the next interview. Another safe question to ask is what a typical day looks like and who will you be working closely with?

Follow-Up
Thank You Note
Make an effort to write each person who interviewed you or who you interacted with a thank you note. This may include human resource representatives and secretaries. They will be impressed by your thoughtful note and will most likely mention the note to your interviewer but be sure to make each note different. Each time you can get your name in front of your interviewer the more likely you are to get the job.

Answering Machine/Messages
Check your answering machine and listen to it as if you were a potential employer. Does it sound professional? Is it appropriate for all people? If not maybe you need to make a few changes. Also, make sure to be diligent to check your messages. They could be trying to contact you to invite you in for an interview or even offer you a job!

Business References
Your references are your cheerleaders. Be sure they know you have given their name and numbers out too and who may be contacting them. Even if they don’t call it is good to keep in contact with your references and maintain that relationship.

As mentioned before, ask your interviewer when they are planning on making the decision or expect the next round of interviews to occur. Following up with a phone call to inquire the status of the open position is acceptable. It shows initiative and interest, but use your common sense and don’t overdo it. Take cues from the person you are contacting and keep in mind that they are busy with their own work schedules.
The Power of a Simple Thank-You Note

The thank-you note is a necessary tool for any job-hunting strategy. But should you send it by email or snail mail, handwritten or typed?

Email Thank-You Notes
How did the company initially contact you? If you have always corresponded with them via email for setting up the interview and answering questions, then by all means send an email thank-you note as soon as you return from an interview. However, make sure to follow it with a typed note to show that you are not Mr. or Ms. Casual. Email thank-you notes have one clear advantage over their snail mail counterpart: they can put your name in front of the interviewer on the same day – sometimes within hours – of your interview.

Snail Mail
If the company you interviewed with is formal and tradition, use snail mail to send your thank-you note. Should it be handwritten or typed? Typed is standard. Handwritten notes are appropriate if you would like to extend your thanks to others in the office who helped you out. For example, if a receptionist, assistant, office manager or other person involved with the interviewing process was especially helpful – say they took you to lunch or guided you from office to office – then a handwritten noted is a nice gesture to show your appreciation.

What to Say
More important is what you say and how you say it. A standard thank-you note should accomplish several things:

- Thank the person for the opportunity to interview with the company.
- Recap some of the conversational highlights.
- Clarify any information you needed to check on from the interviewer.
- And most importantly, plug your skills. Use the last paragraph as the chance to state, “The job is a good fit for me because of XYZ, and my past experience in XYZ.”

Interviewers have short memories. A thank-you note is your final chance to stand apart from all of the others who want the same position.

Length
How long should your thank-you letter be? Of course, as with anything else in a job search, there is no definitive answer. One or two pages is the norm, depending on the amount of information you want to communicate. Letters certainly do not have to be only one page.

Remind yourself that you already have the company’s interest or you would not have been interviewing, and use your thank-you letter as a tool to communicate valuable information. The entire job search process is marketing and merchandising your product – you. There is no reason why writing thank-you letters should be any different than any other of your job search activities.

By Jeffrey Ory. Scoring a Perfect 10 on Your Interview. Deveney Communication
NASW Resources

NASW Michigan Chapter staff is happy to help NASW student members with résumés. If you are a student member and you would like a professional critique of your résumé, please send the request with your contact information and résumé to dbreijak@nasw-michigan.org. We will get back to you within 30 days to discuss your résumé and job search. NASW wants to help you succeed in your career!

Practice Perspectives
www.socialworkers.org
NASW regularly publishes Practice Perspectives on a wide range of topics. It is an easy way to stay up-to-date on your area of practice.

Legal Defense Fund
www.socialworkers.org
NASW also releases Legal Issue of the Month articles such as Health Insurance, HIPAA and Client Privacy.

Social Work Journal
www.socialworkers.org
NASW members have access to the latest in social work research, including Social Work Journal.

Leadership Ladders
NASW publishes regular Leadership Ladders, a resource designed to help you successfully navigate your career. A recent article discusses Documenting for Medicare.

Professional Development
Members can get all required CEUs for the cost of membership! Each month the Michigan Chapter & national NASW offers free CEU workshops.

NASW CEs: www.socialworkers.org
Michigan Events: nasw-michigan.org/events

Career Development
Members have access to both state and national online JobBanks. Search openings, explore salary guidelines and more. nasw-michigan.org/networking & www.socialworkers.org

CAREERS.socialworkers.org
The Social Work Career Center