

# The Effective Resume

## The Easy Way

To Revise Your Resume

An online tutorial

Human Resources Department  
Training and Development Unit

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## INTRODUCTION

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This online tutorial is designed to help Miami-Dade County employees, who are seeking advancement, refresh and revise their resumes. After completing this tutorial, you should feel ready to revise your resume and know that you've learned some current trends in resume writing. You should feel ready to apply for jobs by using Miami-Dade County's online application as a resume builder.

The traditional paper resume is still an important part of the job search. Like most prospective employers, Miami-Dade County used to accept paper applications and paper resumes. Many prospective employers are now using online application systems. Miami-Dade County has also moved to an online system. That online system has merged the application and resume. Think of it as an online resume builder and job application all-in-one.

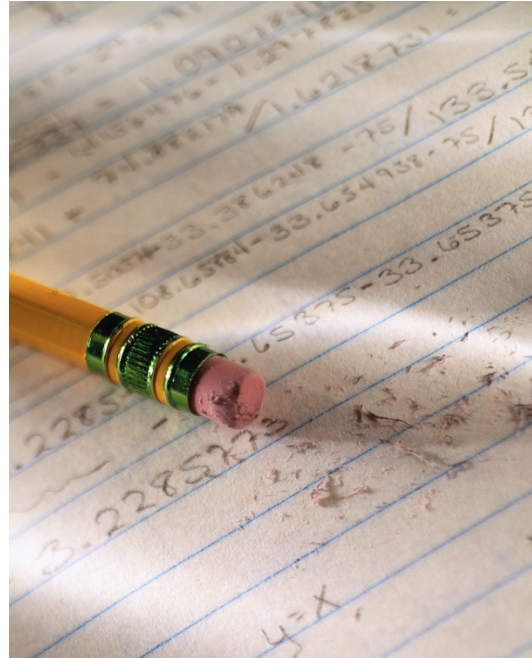
If Miami-Dade County doesn't accept paper resumes, why do you still need a resume? You must have well-written material to post to the online application questions, and you'll use your resume for that material. You will simply copy and paste from your unformatted resume to the County's online application and resume builder. You'll also want a traditional, formatted paper resume to take to your job interviews. Many departments are requesting those paper resumes for panelists to review during your departmental interview visit.

In this online tutorial you will explore different types of resumes and how to choose the right format for you. You'll also find some tips for revisions and resources to make it easier to use the County's online application and resume builder. This brief tutorial includes answers to some of the most common questions posed by County employees. There is a brief quiz at the end of the tutorial. This quiz will allow you to test your knowledge.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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The learning objectives include the most common resume writing concepts that organizations expect today. Ideally, you should understand the three common resume formats: the chronological resume, the functional resume, and the hybrid/combination resume. You'll also learn the extraordinary value of keywords, reasons for working keywords into your resume, and ways to include keywords. You'll learn about current trends and be able to incorporate those concepts into your old resume. At the end of this online tutorial, you should feel prepared to go online and enter your resume into the County's online application and resume builder system.



## RESUME SURGERY VS. RESUME CLINIC

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As you go through this tutorial, you might find that you need more of an overhaul than an online tutorial provides. Perhaps your resume needs surgery rather than a walk-in clinic. Maybe it's just too outdated or too unfocused. You might need to start fresh. The good news is that you can learn to perform your own resume surgery by using a resume writing guidebook. Visit the Miami-Dade County Public Library web site for a listing of these resume guidebooks.

## WHAT'S THE PURPOSE OF THE RESUME?

The purpose of a resume is to act as a personal sales tool. The resume is a summary of your work and professional life. You use that summary as a sales tool. Think of the resume as a printed advertisement. Some powerful print advertisements are effective because the advertiser makes good use of graphics and photos. Since graphics and photos are usually not acceptable in a resume, you have to sell using only the printed word. You are selling yourself as the right employee. As a resume writer, you are trying to show the potential employer that you are the perfect match to the job.

Using the job advertisement or the job description, align your skills and experience with the needs of the potential employer. You can find County job descriptions through the Miami-Dade County Pay Plan. <http://www.miamidade.gov/humanresources/>

You must go through some traditional steps to complete the sale to the potential employer. You don't go directly from an applicant with a resume to new employee.

**The first step** in the sales process is to secure the interview. The resume's primary purpose is to help you to secure that interview. You want your resume to position you as one of the best candidates. When you look like the best candidate, you have a better likelihood of being called for an interview. As the first step, your resume must entice the reader to call you for an interview.

**The second step** is to use the interview to display and expand on your resume by fully explaining your knowledge, skills, and abilities. During the interview, you can use your paper resume to position your achievements and remind the panel that you are the best candidate. With a well-positioned resume, your performance in the interview can then help you to land the job. By presenting that paper resume in the interview, you have a chance to position your knowledge, skills, and abilities in a way that is beneficial to you and aligned to the employer's needs. Soon we'll discuss the different types of resumes and how to position your work history and information.

## **HOW WILL I USE MY REVISED RESUME?**

You'll use your revised resume for the online application and the interview. After you've revised your resume, you'll use the resume's content to fill out the online application. Miami-Dade County, as well as many employers, uses a computer program that acts as both a job application and a resume builder. Before you apply online, you'll want to revise your resume using a word processing program or an online template. By writing your resume in a word processing program, you'll save time because you can quickly copy and paste information rather than writing under pressure while the job application is open and running.

This process also has an advantage that you can have several people proof, edit, and comment on your resume. Remember, as the writer, you tend to overlook your own errors. Having friends, colleagues, and family look at your resume is an important part of the editing process.

Once you've completed your resume revisions, you can go online to copy and paste your text into the County's online application form. Be sure to write your resume without formatting, graphics, bullets, and indentations. Your unformatted resume will transfer more easily into the computer system.

After you've completed the Miami-Dade County online application, you can add formatting to your resume. That's when you add graphics, bullets, and indentations to make your paper resume easy to read and visually appealing. You should take a formatted copy of your resume to your job interview. Many departments ask that job candidates bring paper copies of their resumes to interviews. This is your opportunity to display your knowledge, skills, and abilities in the best light.

### **Most Important Basic Resume Tips:**

#### **Always Follow These Basic Standards...**

- Don't overcrowd your resume. Allow for plenty of white space.
- Keep your resume to one page whenever possible.
- Keep the number of fonts you use to a minimum -- two at the most.
- Use a font that is easy to read. "Arial" works well.
- Do not justify the lines of type on your resume. Allow the right side of the page to "rag."
- Do not overuse capitalization, italics, underlines, or other emphasizing features.
- Make sure your name, current address, phone number, and email address appear on your resume and all correspondence, preferably at the top of the page.
- Print your resume on white or cream paper using a good-quality printer.
- Second- and third-generation photocopies must be avoided.
- Print on one side of the paper only.



## WRITING AN EFFECTIVE RESUME

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An effective resume helps to get you in the door, to sell yourself and get the job. An effective resume presents you, your knowledge, skills, and abilities in the best light.

Traditionally, paper resumes have been broken into sections. Those sections usually appear as headers. On a paper resume, you have the option of adding formatting. The formatting will help the eye to be drawn to those sections. From a distance, those formatted sections will stand out making your resume easier to read.

Let's explore some of these traditional sections, how they've changed, and what recruiters and hiring managers are expecting to see in your resume.

### WHAT INFORMATION SHOULD I INCLUDE IN MY RESUME?

Both your online resume/application and your paper resume should be divided into similar areas. Some areas are vital and you should include those areas. Those are sections like experience, education, and computer skills. Usually those sections have a formatted header like this, **EXPERIENCE**, **EDUCATION**, and **COMPUTER SKILLS**. For the County's online application and resume builder, the computer program will prompt you to input that vital information. Many people fail to scroll all the way down the computer page and miss adding some of this vital information. Sometimes applicants submit only the current job. Be sure to write a full work history. This full work history will help the recruiter or hiring manager to see what you've done and how it can benefit them.

It's vital that you:

- provide your current phone number, physical address, and e-mail address.
- include a listing of educational degrees, certifications, and relevant training seminars.
- describe your current **and** past work experience.
- outline relevant volunteer experience.
- describe memberships in professional associations.



Remember to create this as unformatted areas or sections. After you've applied for a County job, you'll add formatted headers like, **EDUCATION**, **EXPERIENCE**, and **COMPUTER SKILLS**.

The optional sections are secondary. You might have skills that fit into one of these areas. You can use these areas to expand on your knowledge, skills, and abilities. Some of these areas, however, are difficult to transfer from the paper or electronic resume to an online resume. The objective, summary, and reference statement do not easily transfer to the County's online application and resume builder. Those areas simply do not exist on the County's application. You could include them in your paper resume if those areas help you to promote yourself and your skills and experience.

Optional Sections:

- ❖ an objective showing the kind of work you're seeking
- ❖ special skills and abilities
- ❖ a reference statement similar to "References available upon request."
- ❖ a narrative summary of your experience and skills
- ❖ activities
- ❖ awards

## BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE RESUME

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Your resume should focus on job skills. Think about your accomplishments and what skills you learned or used within your job. Show your prospective employer those skills by using strong verbs or action words.

Start your bullets, phrases, or sentences with action words or strong verbs. You can search the internet for these action words to find lists by profession or type of work. Add those verbs to show the reader exactly what you have done in your job. Remember, you know yourself and your work, but it's all new to your reader. Strong verbs help your reader to understand. It's like painting a picture for your reader.

Make your resume easy to read by reducing jargon and increasing your use of commonly understood words. Jargon is the language of a profession or organization. Don't assume that your reader understands that jargon. You'll likely reach a larger audience if you use commonly understood words. You show how smart you are not by stretching your vocabulary and that of your reader. You show how smart you are by being readily understood. Remember to keep it simple.

Continue to paint the picture by quantifying your results. Think back on your accomplishments and add numbers to those accomplishments. We frequently track results in each County department, so think about the things that you do that are tracked. Think about the number of customers you serve each day, the number of inspections you perform, or the number of permits issued. Always quantify your results by using numbers to show your accomplishments.

Example: Processed 200 Homestead Exemption applications each week using departmental database.

Your resume must always be truthful and accurate. Be sure to verify the information that you include in your resume. You may need to call former supervisors and check personnel documents. See your Departmental Personnel Representative to check your personnel file to verify dates of employment, certificates, and performance appraisals.

## RESUME BLUNDERS

After you've revised your resume, be sure to use your computer's spell checker and have several people proof your resume. As writers, we tend to overlook our mistakes simply because we're more familiar with the topic. Ask friends, family, and co-workers to proof and edit your resume. Ask them to look for typos and grammatical errors. Provide those proofers and editors a printed copy of your resume. Editing a paper copy rather than a computer screen tends to be more effective because we catch more errors on the printed page. Ask your readers if your resume makes sense. Ask your readers if someone who's not in your job can understand what your job is and what you do.



## CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME

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The chronological resume is perhaps the most common and most accepted resume form. The chronological resume shows information arranged in reverse order of time. In your experience section, list your current position, describe your duties, and then list the position immediately preceding your current position. Similarly, in your education section, list your most recent educational experience. This is frequently your highest level of education. Work your way backward to the degree, certification, or educational experience that immediately preceded it.

***Example*** if you are currently working toward your bachelor's degree, and you've earned your associate's degree:

*2008-present, working toward a BA in Sociology, Florida International University*

*2006-2008, AA, Business Administration, Miami Dade College*

Of the three common types of resumes, the chronological is the easiest to transfer into Miami-Dade County's online application and resume builder. The chronological style is similar to the formatting of the questions posed on the County's online application and resume builder.

Example of a chronological resume:

## **CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME**

### **Bernice Cognin**

1922 Saddern Road  
Forest Hills, NY 11218  
[bcognin@yahoorama.com](mailto:bcognin@yahoorama.com)  
212-555-5555

#### Career Objective

A position in which knowledge of graphic arts, photography, printing production and purchasing would enhance job performance.

#### EXPERIENCE

May 2003 – Present

#### **BALLARD PRINTING COMPANY**

625 Madison Avenue  
New York, NY 19002

#### ESTIMATOR, New York Sales Office

Report to Sales Manager. Direct activities of assistant estimator. Responsible for all estimates, contracts, quotes, and commission for six salesmen in busy New York Sales office processing over 12 million dollars in printing sales per year.

July 2000 – April 2003

#### **ALLIED REPRODUCTION CORPORATION**

84 Varick Street  
New York, NY 10088

#### PURCHASING AGENT

Reported directly to Director of Purchasing. Shared department function in purchasing of paper, stock, engravings, ink, and other necessary materials.

#### EDUCATION

June 2000

New York University  
New York, NY  
BA, Business Administration

## **FUNCTIONAL RESUME**

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The functional resume is usually written as a narrative of career experience and skills. This narrative de-emphasizes dates or completely eliminates dates of employment. It is, therefore, more difficult to transfer information into the County's online application and resume builder. The functional resume usually lists positions held and de-emphasizes importance of specific jobs. It also downplays dates of jobs. The functional resume might be the right one for you if you're trying to change careers because the reader is less focused on jobs and becomes more focused on transferrable skills.

**Example** of a functional resume:

## **FUNCTIONAL RESUME**

**MARY B. REYNOLDS**

966 Rosewood Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 95616

**Telephone: (916) 555-5555**

### **MEDICAL RECORDS ADMINISTRATOR**

#### **POSITION OBJECTIVE:**

A challenging position in the medical information or medical records field where extensive experience and education may be utilized.

#### **SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS:**

Diversified practical experience in the following disciplines. Research and compilation of science/medical data. Abstracting and indexing medical and scientific documents. Maintaining and updating storage and retrieval systems. Clinical laboratory techniques. Quality control methods and procedures.

Demonstrated ability to accept increasing responsibility... Capable of initiating and implementing major decisions.

#### **EMPLOYMENT RECORDS:**

October 2006 to present LANGSTON Pharmaceutical Corp.  
Los Angeles, California

*Assistant Medical Librarian*

Responsibilities include abstracting and indexing articles from medical journals. Research and compile literature for various company divisions, such as, legal and marketing. Set up and maintain proper storage and retrieval systems.

## HYBRID OR CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME

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The hybrid or combination resume combines chronological and functional styles. This resume has traditional chronological resume features. For example, you can choose to include a chronological feature like positioning your educational information in reverse chronological order. The hybrid/combination also allows features from the functional resume. Usually the functional features narrative text that allows you to describe an experience or skill that just doesn't fit into the chronological format, for example, extensive job-related volunteer experience with many organizations. This narrative text is not easily worked into the County's online application and resume builder, but it might be a good addition to your paper resume.





**Example** of a hybrid/combination resume:

## **HYBRID/COMBINATION RESUME**

Susan R. Snow  
Route 2, Box 180  
Dodgeville, Wisconsin 53533



Residence: (608) 935-4425

Cell Phone: (608) 395-4421

### **SKILLS AND CAPABILITIES**

- Keyboard 70 wpm with accuracy
- Take symbol shorthand at 90 wpm with accurate transcription
- Skilled in the production of legal documents and correspondence
- Competent in producing copy from machine transcription software: Word, Lotus, and Excel

### **EXPERIENCE**

**Word Processing Operator 1**, Limited-term employee, University of Wisconsin-Madison, May 2002 to present

- Transcribed confidential letters, memos, reports, and other documents from machine dictation to using Word Me
- Proofread documents from other operators, marking grammar and content errors

#### **Student Assistant**

Southwest Wisconsin Technical College, Fennimore, WI, June 2001 to August 2001

- Typed memos and input financial aid data on terminal to mainframe; printed and verified monthly report totals for \$70,000 budget
- Helped financial aid applicants understand and complete five page form
- Screened incoming telephone calls for supervisor and three counselors

#### **Part-Time Cook and Cashier**

Super Subs, Fennimore, WI, May 2000 to May 2001

- Prepared menu items, accepted customer payments, and balanced cash drawer

### **EDUCATION**

Southwest Wisconsin Technical College, Fennimore, WI  
Major: Office Assistant and word processing specialist programs  
A.A. degree expected May 2010. GPA in major: 3.6.

### **AWARDS**

- Received the Fennimore Times Southwest Award from Southwest Wisconsin Technical Foundation for academic excellence and contribution to campus life.

## HOW DO I CHOOSE AMONG THE THREE COMMON FORMATS?

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Now that you know the three most common formats, you must choose the one that's right for you. Here's a quick test to see if you should clearly use either a chronological or a functional resume.

If you answer **YES** to any one of these questions, you should consider using the chronological resume.

1. Are you a recent graduate with experience related to the job for which you're applying?
2. Are you changing departments, but performing a similar function?
3. Are you seeking a promotional opportunity within the same job series?

If you answer **YES** to any one of these questions, you should consider using the functional resume format.

1. Are you changing careers?
2. Do you have a lot of volunteer experience related to your chosen field?
3. Do you have an unconventional work history? Maybe you've moved or have gaps in employment.

If neither the chronological nor the functional seems like perfect fit, consider the hybrid or combination resume. Remember, you can blend your resume style to help position your knowledge, skills, and abilities in the best light.

## KEYWORDS

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Now that you've chosen the right format, it's time to revise your resume using keywords. Keywords are words that are specific to the job, and keywords are simply part of the computerized search to match applicants to jobs. Hiring managers and recruiters set computer systems to search for certain words in your resume and online application. When a match is made, your resume and application is set aside for further positive review. Applicants, who include keywords in their resumes, have a greater likelihood of being selected for interviews. You want to make a successful match by including keywords in your resume and online application.

## WHERE DO I FIND THE KEYWORDS?

Keywords change from job to job, but they're things that hiring managers have identified as a key to success in the job. Frequently, you can find those keywords in the **job description**, **advertisement**, or **announcement**. As you revise your resume, refer back to these documents and try to include specific keywords. The County Pay Plan outlines job descriptions. Look to the Pay Plan through this link. <http://www.miamidade.gov/humanresources/>

## BUILD AN ONLINE RESUME

Once you've made revisions to your resume, you're ready to begin. To begin the application process, go to <http://www.miamidade.gov/jobs/home.asp>

This site allows you to copy and paste your resume from a word processing program into the County's online application and resume builder.

If you would like to see directions that show step-by-step instructions, go to [http://www.miamidade.gov/jobs/library/instru\\_how-to-regiser-and-log-in.pdf](http://www.miamidade.gov/jobs/library/instru_how-to-regiser-and-log-in.pdf)

## RESOURCES

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Visit the Miami-Dade County Public Library web site for a listing of resume guidebooks.

Find County job descriptions through the Miami-Dade County Pay Plan.

<http://www.miamidade.gov/humanresources/>

To complete the Miami-Dade County employment application, go to

<http://www.miamidade.gov/jobs/home.asp>

For step-by-step instructions on how to complete a Miami-Dade County employment application, go to

[http://www.miamidade.gov/jobs/library/instru\\_how-to-regiser-and-log-in.pdf](http://www.miamidade.gov/jobs/library/instru_how-to-regiser-and-log-in.pdf)

If you're seeking access to the internet, you can visit a Miami-Dade County Library or the Miami-Dade County Human Resources Computer Kiosk on the 21<sup>st</sup> Floor of the Stephen P. Clark Center at 111 N.W. First Street, Miami. To find a Miami-Dade County Library branch closest to you, go to: <http://mdpls.org/>

Miami-Dade County Human Resources wishes you good luck in your job search!