

Tips for the SP2 Macro Job Search (For Macro MSW, Social Policy and NPL/NGO students)

Please make note of the following steps and resources for moving along in your search for a position in macro social work, social policy or non-profit management.

- 1) Reflect on your previous experience and its relevance to your career goals going forward.
- 2) Explore and prioritize opportunities.
- 3) Build your network.
- 4) Tweak your resume and cover letter.
- 5) Attend Career Fairs.
- 6) Prepare for Interviews.

1) Reflect on your previous experience and its relevance to your career goals going forward.

- **Are you making a transition from a direct service role such as a case manager or counselor?** If so, you can show how this hands-on experience with the people that are ultimately affected by policy and programs can allow you to bring insight and credibility to the position.
- **Did your previous career involve an analytical or managerial role in another field?** If so, you can point to what motivates your interest in social issues and note how your skills can transfer.
- **What have you learned about yourself and your field from your practicum or internship experience?** Reflecting on this in an intentional way can help you develop as a professional, elicit helpful feedback from your supervisors, and prepare more thoroughly for interviews and career fairs.

2) Explore and prioritize opportunities.

- Identify specific social issues that you would like to address, such as:
 - Education
 - Health
 - Children/Youth Development
 - Economic Development
 - Employment
 - Human Rights
- Consider where you see yourself participating regarding a given societal issue or initiative.
 - **Advocacy / Communications:** Are you interested in advocating for, facilitating or communicating about an issue or any policy affecting it?
 - **Analysis:** Do you want to use your analytical skills to conduct research that would inform policy making or evaluate existing programs?
 - **Implementation:** Would you be interested in designing, implementing and/or managing programs that emerge from social issues and needs?
- Consider the many possible contexts in which you could work, including:
 - Government (Federal, State or City)
 - Higher Education
 - Research/Consulting Firm
 - Think Tank/Advocacy Organization
 - Program-based Organization
 - Foundation
- Many resources for exploration are available in the SP2 section of the Career Services website at: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/sp2/>

3) Build your network. Connecting with others in your profession can provide insight into what it's like to work at a particular organization as well as how to market yourself effectively in the job search. Informational interviewing is a great way to gather advice and build your network, though it's important to remember that the purpose of this type of meeting is to gather information and advice, not ask for a job or job interview. Here are some resources to get started:

- PACNet (Penn Alumni Career Network): <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/pacnet/>
- Penn Alumni LinkedIn Groups: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/socialmedialinked.html>
- Professional Associations are also a good resource for networking.

4) Tweak your resume and cover letter. Career Services can provide critiques during appointments (call 215-898-4381 on weekdays between 9am-5pm to schedule), SP2 walk-ins (Thursdays, 2:30-3:30) or via e-mail. Keep in mind that the turnaround for e-mail critiques during this busy season is 3-5 business days on average. Therefore, it is best to use the following online resources to tweak your resume format as much as possible before a critique with a counselor.

- Resume Checklist: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/sp2/ResumeChklist.pdf>
- Resume Samples:
 - <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/sp2/SP2resumes.pdf>
 - <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/sp2/SP2resumes2.pdf>
- Cover Letter Tips/Samples: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/sp2/letters.html>
- Cover Letter Checklist: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/sp2/CovltrChklist.pdf>

5) Attend Career Fairs. Career fairs allow you to meet a number of recruiters in one place so that you are able to offer resumes to and obtain contact information from employers of interest. For those interested in policy-related careers, Career Services hosts a **Policy and Government Career Fair** in the fall. Other career fairs relevant to social work or non-profit careers, including Career Services' **Education and Social Services Career Day**, are typically held in the spring. Check the following links for updates on career fairs:

Career Services fairs: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/employers/careerfairs.html>

Other fairs: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/careerfairslinks.html>.

6) Prepare for Interviews. The key to successful interviewing is thorough and thoughtful presentation. It is crucial that you reflect on your previous experience as you prepare answers that reflect concrete examples of your skills and qualities.

- desire to work at a given organization and knowledge of its mission, values and services.
- desire to address a particular social issue along with an understanding of that issue.
- approach to problem solving and analysis
- approach to managing projects and/or processes
- highlights/challenges from collaborating with or managing others.
- strengths/weaknesses
- best practices

General tips are available at: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/sp2/interviewtips.html> It is also extremely useful to practice interviewing. Career Services offers mock interviews as a service. Recognizing the time constraints of SP2 students with practicum requirements, Career Services now offers **InterviewStream**, which allows you to use a webcam to record yourself answering practice questions. You can observe your interview and send the file to a mentor or Career Services counselor for feedback. InterviewStream can be accessed by logging in to Pennlink at: http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/pennlink_jobseekers.html