

## Tips for the SP2 Macro Job Search (For Macro MSW, Social Policy and NPL 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 field placements, internships or previous experience.
- 2) Explore and prioritize opportunities.
- 3) Build your network.
- 4) Tweak your resume and cover letter.
- 5) Attend career fairs and other recruiting events.
- 6) Compile your recommendation letters or list of references.
- 7) Prepare for Interviews.

### 1) Reflect on your field placements, internships, or previous experience

- **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/careerfields/socialwork.php>  
<http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/careerfields/nonprofit.php>  
<http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/careerfields/policyandthinktanks.php>
- Be sure to update your career interests and check job listings on [Handshake](#) as well.

**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:

- QuakerNet (Penn's Alumni Online Community): <http://www.myquakernet.com>
- Penn Alumni LinkedIn Groups: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/networking/linkedin.php>
- 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 (Wednesdays, 2:30-3:30) or via e-mail. Keep in mind that the turnaround for e-mail critiques during busy seasons can be up to one week. 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 Guide: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/gradstud/resumeguide.php>
- Resume Samples: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/sp2/resumes.php>
- Cover Letter Guide: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/gradstud/coverletterguide.php>
- Cover Letter Samples: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/gradstud/coverlettersamples.php>

**5) Attend career fairs and other recruiting events.** Events such as career fairs and meet & greets allow you to meet a number of recruiters or alumni in one place. Events with a focus on social work and related fields, such as **SP2 Employer Meet and Greets**, are generally held in the spring. SP2 students may also be interested in the larger career fairs held on campus in the fall or the spring. For example, Career Services hosts a **Policy and Government Career Fair** in the fall. Check [Handshake](#) and the following link for updates on career fairs: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/careerfairs/>

**6) Compile your recommendation letters (or list of references).** Request references or recommendation letters from supervisors and faculty who know you well and can speak to your qualities and strengths in specific ways. Typically, employers will only need contact information from recommenders for phone references. When that occurs, be sure to inquire with your potential recommenders before listing them on an application. If letters are needed, give your recommenders sufficient time to write the letters and make sure you are clear on how each employer wants to receive the letters.

**7) 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

It is also extremely useful to practice interviewing. Career Services offers mock interviews as well as other tips and resources that can be found at: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/interviewingadvice/>