



C.O.O.L.-Idealist Civic Engagement Curriculum

Creating a Resumé

Overview: The purpose of this activity is to give participants insight into what nonprofit employers look for in a resume. This workshop will help participants sharpen their nonprofit job applications by encouraging them to reflect on their skills and past experiences, and helping them put together a strong resume.

Level: Intermediate

Type: Training for use during retreat or regular meeting.

For the trainer: This workshop is a good supplement to another workshop, “What is the Nonprofit Sector?” which introduces participants to some important concepts related to nonprofit careers. “Creating a Resume” allows participants to reflect on their own skills and experiences and to practice crafting a resume, in a group setting. If you have time, another appropriate supplement might be “Career Paths in the Nonprofit Sector,” which is a beginner level workshop, and builds on the content in “What is the Nonprofit Sector?” If you are looking for a similar workshop, you may want to check out “Getting in the Door.”

Focus or Goals of this Guide:

- To introduce participants to features that nonprofit employers often look for in resumes
- To practice resume building skills in an interactive setting

Materials:

- Flipchart paper and markers
- Copies of *Campus Organizer Job Description* handout
- Copies of *Hiring Criteria* handout
- Copies of *What Nonprofits Look for When they Hire* handout

How to Prepare:

Review the trainer guide and become familiar with all information and activities. You may want to collect some sample resumes in advance. If additional support on facilitation is needed, review facilitation workshops in the civic engagement curriculum. Also, you will want to create a flipchart page with the relevant resume headers on it.

For the trainer: Consider customizing the game by inventing another job description that may be more locally specific or appropriate to the group at hand.

How to Do/Brief Outline:

Total suggested time for this session 40-45 minutes.

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| 1. Introduction and Icebreaker | suggested time 10 minutes |
| 2. Resume Game Instructions | suggested time 5 minutes |
| 3. Resume Writing/Hiring Committee Debrief | suggested time 10-15 minutes |
| 4. Resume Presentation | suggested time 15 minutes |
| 5. Closing | suggested time 5 minutes |

For the trainer: Pacing and timing are very important in any workshop. The “suggested time” in this workshop gives you a guideline that will help you get through all of the material and end on time. It is very important to respect the time of your workshop participants and end when you say that you will end. This shows respect and a good grasp of the material; you can always offer to answer questions afterward if there is additional interest in the workshop content!

For the trainer: When leading this workshop, keep people, content, and logistics in mind.

People: This is probably the key determining factor in making any modifications to a workshop. You should make modifications based on the experience level of participants (adjusting up or down) and your experience level as facilitator. As you gain more experience, you can prepare less and you can have a more flexible format that assesses participants’ experience with the material and responds appropriately, rather than relying on the trainer’s guide.

Content: It may help to consider a few things as you deliver and/or modify sessions:

- Review and determine the “teachable” content that you hope to convey, i.e. ideas (overarching themes), skills (concrete takeaways), approaches (methods and/or styles), facts (statistics and/or other data).
- You may want to consider the variety of ways and modes in which you can deliver content, such as lecture, simulation, interactive activities, discovery (deduction), group inquiry, group discussion, and/or analysis. (For more information on different adult learning styles, see the material at the end of the IOC Institute binder.)

Logistics: Sometimes the adaptations and “last-minute” changes you need to make will be driven by logistics, like space, time, and even supplies:

- *Time:* If you have to make alterations, you should concentrate on: focusing in on the most important “teachable” ideas or processes; leaving a few helpful “takeaways” (like key insights or good handouts); opening the door for continued conversation (email, discussion groups, etc.); and leaving participants hungry and ready to continue the process on their own.
- *Space:* Awkward seating, temperatures, or even architecture (like poles in the middle of the room) may require you to make quick changes. Be flexible, and do your best to deal with unexpected twists.
- *Supplies:* Try to have a back-up plan when supplies or other details leave you in the lurch. For example, having a PowerPoint presentation on transparencies or paper in case the AV doesn’t work is a good idea. However, don’t let problems with supplies ruin your session! A sheet of flipchart paper and markers is often more than enough to provide focus for an interactive discussion and activity that participants find truly engaging.

1 Introduction and Icebreaker

Suggested time: 10 minutes

Begin by introducing yourself, your role and your relationship to the group and/or workshop.

Explain that you want each person to spend the next minute thinking about past or present volunteer experiences, internships or placements, and to identify skills learned from these. Provide a few examples of skills gained, noting that skills can include anything from painting a wall, to learning to draft fundraising letters, to planning events, to developing management skills, to canvassing a neighborhood.

Let participants silently reflect for a few moments, jotting down notes if they so desire.

Next, instruct each participant to find a partner. The pairs should introduce themselves (including name, school, year, and possible career goals) and take turns describing the skills from their experiences or placements. Give the group **2-3 minutes** for this exercise.

If time allows (or the group is small), have a few participants share examples.

After the exercise, explain to the group:

The purpose of this session is to consider what nonprofits look for when they hire by considering the position and viewpoint of the employer. We hope this will allow you to consider your own experience, education, and skill sets in a more objective, rigorous context.

2 Resume Game Instructions

Suggested Time: 5 minutes

Divide participants into groups of 3 to 5 people.



Introduce a role play: explain that you are hiring one group to work with you on Idealist's campus programs, designed to reach out to college students with an interest in nonprofit careers (or whatever job description you decide to use). Point out that you are hiring the entire group to do the job.

For the trainer: Activities should be approached as a hands-on way to encourage workshop participants to learn. As a trainer, you must make sure to include everyone in the room during activities. If your group needs convincing to participate in the activities, be transparent – explain that often the best learning happens when there is a personal application and active engagement. Adults are likely to learn more effectively when the learning tasks are seen as relevant, meaningful, interesting, and useful. Activities help bring workshop content to life, so make the most of them!!

Choose one group to act as the hiring committee. Explain to them that they will receive their instructions while the other groups are working.

For the trainer: If campus staff, faculty, or nonprofit professionals are at the workshop, consider having them serve as the hiring committee. If not, then one of the groups of workshop participants can do the job.

Explain that within each group are people with a wide array of talents, skills, knowledge and experiences. Each group's job will be to compile the most relevant experiences and skills from each member to create a group resume to be reviewed by the hiring committee.

Next, show the flipchart paper with relevant resume headers. Point out that these are the types of things each group should consider for their resume:

- Educational Experience
- Professional Skills/Experience
- Volunteer and Leadership Experiences
- Internships
- Major Accomplishments
- Awards
- Publications
- Hobbies, talents, travel

Have each group choose a recorder to write the group resume. Do not worry about the actual format of the resume (this would be a good time to promote any resume writing workshops that may be coming up). Participants should first read over the job description, and then each person should share their individual skills and experiences as it relates to the job. As a group, they should decide which skills and experiences to list on the group resume.

They should not just list everything that each person mentions—just those that are most relevant. Explain that they will have only 10-15 minutes to complete the resume, so they need to work quickly.

Have each group select a presenter to share the resume with the entire group. Explain that this brief presentation will serve as their cover letter. Presenters will only have 45 seconds to share the group's resume with the hiring committee. (*Note:* An employer may only spend 30 seconds looking at a resume and 30 seconds reading a cover letter.)

Pass out a piece of flipchart paper, markers, and the handout *Campus Organizer Job Description* to each group.

3 Hiring Committee Debrief

Suggested time: 10-15 minutes (While the groups work on their resumes)

While the groups work on their resumes, explain to the hiring committee that their responsibility during this period is to think about the criteria with which they will evaluate the group resumes. Distribute the *Hiring Criteria* handout to the group and briefly explain each point.

Point out that each group will present its resume to the committee. Time permitting, after each 45 second presentation, they will be allowed to ask one question (*sample questions are listed on the Hiring Criteria handout.*)

Finally, explain that once each group has presented, they will have 5 minutes to deliberate privately on which group will get the job. Be sure to note that they will have to work quickly and offer concrete points to defend their decision.

4 Resume Presentations

Suggested time: 15 minutes

Reconvene all the groups in preparation for the presentations. Have each group spend about 45 seconds presenting their resume to you and the hiring committee. (*Make sure to remind the hiring committee to take notes based on the Hiring Criteria. Also allow the hiring committee to ask a question of the presenter if time permits.*) Depending on the number of groups, the presentations should take no more than 10 minutes.

Once all presentations have finished, have the hiring committee leave the workshop area and decide which group should get the job. Remind them that they should base their decision on the criteria and be ready to defend their decision. Give them 5 minutes to do so.

While the hiring committee is deciding, allow the groups to vote on who they think did the best job (do not let groups vote for themselves).

You can also conduct a brief discussion with the group based on the following questions (*also feel free to develop your own questions*):

- How did you make your decisions about what to include on the group resume?
- Did anyone in your group identify a skill during this process that they hadn't considered before?
- What do you think were the strongest areas of your group resume? The weakest?

After 5 minutes, invite the hiring committee back into the workshop. Have them announce which group gets the job and why they felt the chosen group's resume was more appropriate for the job than the others.

5 Closing

Suggested time: 5 minutes

To close the workshop, briefly discuss the following points, emphasizing what nonprofit employers value in a resume.

At the end of the workshop, pass out *What Nonprofits Look for When They Hire*.

- Experience with nonprofit organizations - not necessarily employment, but volunteering and internships
- Demonstrated commitment to an organization or an issue - quality of work and consistency is better than doing lots of scattered volunteer work
- Sometimes employers hire based more on a skill set than commitment to an issue (for example, event planners – you want someone with event planning experience, an understanding of the issue can be learned)
- Leadership experience - not about starting an organization, but whether or not the candidate can make things happen
- Speaking more than one language is often helpful, though more so in a direct service or international perspective than in the campus organizer position
- Experience working with diverse people/communities/constituencies

For the trainer: Working bullet-pointed material into your presentation is a bit tricky. As the trainer, you should be familiar enough with the principles outlined in bullet points that you can engage workshop participants in conversation about the material, rather than simply reading off the page. As you become more comfortable with the material, you should also feel free to include some of your personal experiences and ask participants to add in their own, as well.