

A CLEAR Guide to LGBTQ Resumes

A resume is your first impression to an employer as a job-seeker, and is a vital document you should keep updated throughout your working life.

Because of the connection between your career and your financial well-being, CLEAR has created this free resume guide as a tool to help you on your personal journey of economic empowerment!

Resume Basics

Resumes generally follow a similar format, and we encourage a simple template that keeps the focus on your work experience, not on flashy fonts or colors. Choose a readable font (like Calibri, Helvetica, or Georgia) between 10pt and 12pt, use basic formatting like bold and italics to separate sections, and keep all of your content on one to two pages using a half-inch to one-inch margin. The **Sample Resume** included at the end of this guide illustrates these guidelines.

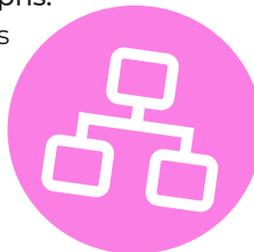
The majority of individuals will have a few broad sections: work experience, volunteer experience, education, and skills summary.

Some industries emphasize content in one section more than others, such as an emphasis on skills in STEM fields, and an emphasis on details of your work or volunteer experience in the nonprofit sector. Talk to your mentors and to professional connections in your industry to learn about how you should tailor your resume to your career interests.

Regardless of how you organize your resume, it is important to provide detailed descriptions of the tasks, responsibilities, and accomplishments from your work history and other experience, such as volunteering or leadership in student clubs during college.

We suggest highlighting your past experience with bullet points instead of paragraphs.

Using detailed bullet statements strengthens your resume, and makes it more likely you will move forward to an interview because the employer has a better sense of your skills and abilities. In a competitive market, this helps you stand out and rise above other candidates.



LGBTQ Resume Questions

As an LGBTQ job-seeker, you may have specific questions about your resume. To be out or not be out? Should you list your membership in your college Gay-Straight Alliance? What if you recently changed your name, or want to make sure an interviewer knows you use they/them pronouns? There are no one-size-fits-all answers to these questions, but we have a few ideas to help you choose the best options for you in writing your resume.

LGBTQ workers have to make difficult choices about when and where to be out about their identity, especially if they are in an unsafe work environment. Some LGBTQ people prefer to not be out at work. In deciding whether or not to come out at work, we support you in choosing what is best for you.

Coming out on your resume to an employer as LGBTQ is most likely by including your name and pronouns, or listing your LGBTQ community involvement—the rest of this guide focuses on those topics.

Effective Bullet Statements:

Use a structure that includes the following information:

- **[The skill you used] + [how you used it, with whom, & where] + [& why you used the skill]**
(quantify your experience wherever possible)

Consider the difference between these two resume statements:

- Responsible for providing good customer service.
- Managed front end of the store by operating cash register, serving an average of 20 customers per hour, and keeping store tidy throughout the day, resulting in positive customer experiences.



Names and Pronouns

For the majority of job seekers, the resume should be viewed as a marketing document, not a legal form. What this means is that if you have a different legal name than the name you use in daily life, you should not feel pressured to include your legal name on your resume or cover letter in the majority of circumstances. In some sectors and organizations, such as governmental organizations, you may be required to include your legal name. However, this does not mean you are unable to also include the name that you use in your daily life. For example, if your name is Alex Doe, and your legal name is Mary Doe, you could list your name as “Mary (Alex) Doe” if you are required to use your legal name.



It is becoming common to list your pronouns on resumes, especially in nonprofit or education. Typically pronouns are included after your name, or on the same line as your contact information directly below your name. Some job-seekers choose to include pronouns on their resume to normalize the idea that a person’s pronouns cannot be assumed based on gender identity or gender expression. Some job seekers include pronouns to make their pronouns known so others can avoid misgendering them—particularly if they use pronouns that are usually not assumed by others, such as “they/them/theirs” or “ze/hir/hirs.”

Including the name you use in daily life or your pronouns on your resume is not a guarantee they will be respected by employers. Sometimes, disclosing one’s trans or nonbinary identity by including one’s name or pronouns can open oneself up to discriminatory treatment. We encourage you to assess for yourself the pros and cons of including your name and pronouns on your resume. If you are in a financial position where you need any job, you may not want to come out to all potential employers. It is always okay to choose to leave your pronouns off a particular resume and use the name that feels like the safest and best option for you.

After you have decided how to list your name and pronouns on your resume and job application, make sure to let your references know which name and pronouns to use if they receive a call for a reference check. If you feel uncomfortable or unsafe

with making this request of a previous employer, you can let the hiring manager know that when they call your reference(s), they may refer to you by a previous name or with different pronouns.

Listing Your LGBTQ Community Involvement

Many LGBTQ people are involved with their communities: from volunteering with local LGBTQ community centers, to campaigning for LGBTQ causes, to joining LGBTQ sports leagues or hobby groups. Community involvement is a valuable area of experience when it comes to building your resume, and not only because of the accomplishments you may achieve or skills you may gain through involvement. Community engagement and volunteerism are valued attributes by many employers.

For these reasons, we highly encourage all job seekers take some time to inventory their community involvement and draft a version of their resume that includes all of it. It’s highly likely that if you do this, you’ll see additional value to your resume from including these activities.

LGBTQ Resumes & Discrimination

Including a name that is different from your legal name, pronouns that do not match others’ assumptions of your identity, or your involvement in LGBTQ community groups, college clubs, and volunteering on your resume can reveal your LGBTQ identity



to an employer. Being out on your resume can be a benefit if you know you want to be out at your workplace. But studies have also found LGBTQ job seekers can get up to 40% fewer callbacks for interviews when listing LGBTQ organizations or experiences on their resumes.¹ If you are concerned about being out at work, or if you are in a position where you need any job, you may want to consider this discriminatory challenge when deciding whether or not to come out on your resume to future employers.

Notes:

1. See Teresa Rainey & Elliot E. Imse, “Qualified and Transgender,” Office of Human Rights (2015) available at https://ohr.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ohr/publication/attachments/QualifiedAndTransgender_FullReport_1.pdf; Emma Mishel, “Discrimination against Queer Women in the U.S. Workforce: A Résumé Audit Study,” *Socius* (January 8, 2016), Andras Tilcsik, “Pride and Prejudice: Employment Discrimination against Openly Gay Men in the United States,” *11:2 Am. J. of Soc.* 586 (September 2011) available at <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/23780231115621316>; available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/661653>

Sample Resume

The sample resume below illustrates a simple and clean format, pronoun inclusion, and strong bullet point descriptions. We encourage using this sample as inspiration rather than as a template, as everyone has a unique background best highlighted by developing an individual resume using simple formatting principles tailored to one's work history.

Alex Doe

they/them | (123) 456-7890 | alex.doe@email.com

Skills Summary

- 10+ years of community organizing and nonprofit experience
- Advanced proficiency with Salesforce and Salsa CRM
- Bilingual fluency in Spanish and English, intermediate American Sign Language

Professional Experience

Director of Development, Metropolitan LGBTQ Center (City, State)

10/2013 – Current

- Manage operations to successfully raise over \$3 million annually.
- Collaborate with communications team to develop targeted fundraising messages.
- Supervise 2 development associates and 1 development intern.

Development Associate, Metro Area Food Bank (City, State)

06/2012 – 09/2013

- Managed a portfolio of 15 corporate partners and all small gift annual giving.
- Organized quarterly events for community fundraising with 1,000+ attendees.

Communications Manager, Suburban Youth Center (City, State)

06/2009 – 05/2012

- Composed weekly email updates for youth members, volunteers, and donors.
- Designed all marketing materials, including online advertising, quarter program catalogs, and twice-yearly mailers sent to over 200,000 households.
- Supervised 1 communications intern and 3 volunteers responsible for social media.

Volunteer Experience

- **Scholarship Application Reader**, LGBTQ Scholarship Fund (03/2015 – Current)
- **Social Media Coordinator**, Metro Area LGBTQ Hikers (04/2017 – Current)
- **Campaign Volunteer**, Yes on 1 (2020) and Re-Elect Rep. Roe (2020)
- **Office Volunteer**, Neighborhood Animal Rescue Organization (07/2013 – 03/2020)
- **Campaign Volunteer**, State LGBTQ Nonprofit (2016)
- **President**, University of State Gay-Straight Alliance (06/2008 – 06/2009)

Education

- **Certificate in Nonprofit Management**, State University College – June 2012
- **B.A. in History**, University of State – June 2009