

The purpose of your résumé is to present yourself in such a way that a search committee gains a clear picture of who you are and what you have to offer. A good résumé should lead a search committee to want to meet and get to know you better. Strongly communicating all facets of who you are and what you bring to ministry can be daunting, but time and careful thought spent here are well invested.

## General Information

Your ministry résumé should be about three or four pages. A one-page résumé is too condensed. A ministry résumé is different from a business résumé. A business résumé tells an employer what you do. A ministry résumé tells a search committee what you do and who you are.

### Your Introduction:

Make sure your name, address, and contact information appear at the beginning of your résumé. Include your name and page number on subsequent pages, as pages can be separated in the search committee process. Keep your contact information current. This is easily overlooked.

Include a current picture of yourself or your family (if married) on the first page. Your picture should accurately reflect who you are. Whether formal or more casual, strive for a neat appearance. Avoid busy patterns and very bright colors. Coordinate clothing in the same color range. Be conscious of what's in the background and any subtle messages, good or bad, it may convey. Ideally, the background should be plain or out of focus.

### Ask Yourself:

- Eye-catching? Be creative. Use high quality paper. Use a consistent layout throughout. Would it attract and keep a search committee's attention all the way through to the end?
- User-friendly? Is the size and type of font easy to read? Is it readable if printed in both color and black/white? Light colors don't show up well in black/white.
- Unclear assumptions? Don't assume your readers have been to seminary or that they hold your same exact doctrinal views. Keep it simple and clear.
- Purposeful? Does my heart and vision for ministry show through?
- Genuine? Have someone who knows you well review your résumé and ask them, "Does this résumé truly represent who I am?"

### Editing guidelines:

Edit. Edit! EDIT! Check spelling and grammar carefully. Have someone else proofread it. Be merciless in cutting out non-essential material. Don't bury your strengths in irrelevant details or verbiage.

- Be specific, not vague (*taught a weekly adult Bible study* vs. two years teaching experience)
- Use strong and descriptive action verbs, not weak and to be verbs (*participated in* vs. was a part of)
- Be active and direct, not passive and wordy (*completed* vs. was in charge of the completion of)
- Emphasize positives, not negatives (*learned to work with various personalities* vs. worked with a difficult board)
- Focus on achievements, not time and activities (*developed youth program, recruited and trained leadership* vs. worked for three years directing youth program)
- Use one space after a period.
- Spell out numbers under 100.
- Don't overuse capitalization or quotation marks.

- Be consistent in case and style for bullet point items.
- Be consistent with use of em and en dashes, state abbreviations, and text format.
- The en dash is the dash used between numbers and dates (e.g. 45–50, 2008–2009). The em dash is used for sentence and line breaks (e.g. “Let us go then—you and I—as the evening spreads against the sky.”) The hyphen is used for phone numbers and hyphenated words (e.g. 214-###-####, Christ-exalting).

## **Specific Information**

### **Ministry perspective/philosophy/passion**

This paragraph is your initial handshake, and can strongly affect a search committee’s impression of who you are, and if you are someone they want to pursue as a possible fit for their ministry. Be concise, using three to four sentences. Include your passion, focus, what you value and how that carries out in your ministry. This section should be borne out in the remainder of your résumé. Avoid overusing the word “I.”

### **Personal information**

- Marital status, and whether you have children
- Conversion experience
- Call to ministry
- Ordination
- Hobbies and interests

### **Education**

- List all college, graduate, and post-graduate training (listing GPA is not necessary).
- List highest level of training first.
- Include degree, school, location, date, major and any honors or awards.

### **Ministry and employment experience**

- Make it easy for a search committee to read. Break into columns or other easy-to-read format.
- Begin with most recent ministry first.
- Include position, ministry, location, dates, and responsibilities.
- Separate ministry from secular experience.
- Include all ministry experience, both paid and volunteer, but be selective in giving details. Give prominence to the three or four positions that best qualify you.

### **Additional involvements and memberships**

- List continuing education conferences, seminars, and workshops attended. Include dates, topic, and location.
- List mission experiences including location, dates, and type of ministry.
- List community involvement and volunteer activities.
- List associations and professional memberships.

### **Publications and speaking engagements**

- Include books, magazine, and newspaper articles, and radio or media ministries.
- Include workshops, retreats, or conferences you have led.

## References

- List your top three to four references rather than saying “references available upon request.”
- If there are more than four references, list the four strongest and add “Additional references available upon request.”
- Include several types of references, from a professor, employer, fellow minister, friend.
- State their relationship to you.
- Don't include relatives.
- Always ask individuals before using them, and ask what contact information to list.
- Give your references a copy of your current résumé and keep them informed of your placement progress so they are not caught off guard when they are contacted.