

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT
A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	PAGE 2
THE CUSSW MISSION	PAGE 2
OFFICE OF CAREER & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT	PAGE 3
◆ ABOUT THE OFFICE	
◆ CONTACT INFORMATION	
HOW TO USE THE CAREER PLANNING CHART	PAGE 4
CUSSW eRECRUITING: ONLINE CAREER WEBSITE	PAGE 4
◆ METHOD & FIELD JOB OUTLINE	PAGE 5-13
LET'S GET STARTED: THE 5 STEPS TO CAREER PLANNING	PAGE 14-29
◆ IDENTIFYING YOUR CAREER GOALS: THE VIPS	
◆ DEVELOP SOLID MARKETING TOOLS	
▪ WRITING A WINNING RESUME	
▪ WRITING A STRONG COVER LETTER	
▪ PRESENTING YOUR REFERENCES	
▪ NETWORKING: USING THE ELEVATOR SPEECH	
◆ RESEARCH THE SOCIAL WORK SECTOR	
◆ IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES AND EXECUTE THE JOB SEARCH	
▪ CAREER FAIRS	
▪ INTERVIEWING	
▪ SEALING THE DEAL	
◆ LICENSING IN NYS	PAGE 30-33
◆ OTHER HELPFUL "TIP SHEETS" AND POWERPOINTS	PAGE 34
◆ PERSONAL CAREER PLANNING WORKSHEET	PAGE 35-37
◆ SAMPLE RESUMES & COVER LETTERS	PAGE 38-45
◆ NOTES	PAGE 46-47
◆ BIBLIOGRAPHY	PAGE 48
◆ CAREER PLANNING CHART	PAGE 49-50

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

Welcome to the Columbia University School of Social Work. For over 100 years, CUSSW has been educating leaders in the field of social work and helping to shape the profession. Upon graduation, you join a network of more than 16,000 alumni worldwide. As a social worker educated at CUSSW, you will have the knowledge and skills to work in a wide range of areas including schools, NGOs, government agencies, philanthropic foundations, social service agencies, private practice, hospitals, think tanks, courts and business corporations. Comprehensive study within your practice method and field of practice will allow you to find meaningful work that is aligned with your interests and goals. As a CUSSW student, you will learn an array of transferable skills and competencies that will make you an asset to any organization.

This guide is a resource to help direct you through the career planning process. In order to do this in an efficient and effective way, the *Guide* has been organized into 5 steps. In conjunction with individual career counseling, through the Office of Career & Leadership Development, these steps will help you assess, identify, execute and manage your career planning over the course of your time at CUSSW. Additionally, the Guide includes a practice method and field of practice job outline, job search steps, tip sheets and sample documents and is also available online at <http://www.socialwork.columbia.edu/careers/>.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK MISSION STATEMENT

Columbia University School of Social Work derives its mission from the University's goal to advance knowledge and learning at the highest level and to use that knowledge for human betterment and societal advancement. To that end, the School aims to prepare graduate students for advanced social work practice and professional leadership within a diverse learning environment, to advance knowledge for effective social work practice and education, to enhance the welfare of the citizens and communities of New York City, the nation, and around the world, and to further the goals of the university and the social work profession.

More specifically, the School's educational and research programs draw on the profession's body of knowledge, values and skills in seeking to: strengthen practices, programs, and policies that support and enhance the opportunities, resources, and capacities of people to achieve their full potential; prevent and alleviate personal, interpersonal and societal problems; redress conditions that limit human development and quality of life; and, promote human rights, social justice and respect for human diversity. Further, the School's faculty, students and graduates seek to enhance the well-being of local, national and international communities and to advance the University and the profession through collaboration, consultation, and public service.

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

ABOUT THE OFFICE OF CAREER & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The Office of Career & Leadership Development offers guidance as you cultivate and refine your interests, experiences and goals, and provides information and tools to help you plan your career. The goal of the Office is to offer students reliable support and impart them with the knowledge and resources so that they can plan their careers and find work that is meaningful. The Office collaborates with other administrative offices and faculty within CUSSW to ensure that you are supported from the time that you apply to CUSSW, throughout your educational course until years after you graduate.

Throughout the academic year, the Office of Career Development offers individual career counseling to students both by appointment and during weekly drop in hours. Individual counseling gives you the option to focus on your particular career issues. The Office also supports students through career focused programming and events including workshops, alumni panels, networking opportunities and career fairs. Workshops are offered during the Fall and Spring semesters and provide tips on many areas including writing resumes and cover letters, interviewing, networking and licensing. Because CUSSW students come from around the world, we also offer workshops tailored to the needs of international students. Additionally, we co-host the Not-For-Profit and Public Service Career Fair and the Master's Level Social Work Job Fair.

OFFICE OF CAREER AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CONTACT INFORMATION

Location: Room 525

Address: 1255 Amsterdam Avenue, Room 525, Mail Code 4600 NY, NY 10027

Telephone: (212) 851-2320 ~ Fax: (212) 932-7817

Email: swcareer@columbia.edu

Website: <http://www.socialwork.columbia.edu/careers/>

To make an individual appointment: <http://www.rich35.com/columbia/>

Director: Kim Barberich

Telephone: 212-851-2321

Email: kcb2105@columbia.edu

For a list Career Development workshop and events go to:

<http://www.socialwork.columbia.edu/careers/all/calendar.html>

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

HOW TO USE THE CAREER PLANNING CHART

The Career Planning Chart located on page 49-50 (and online at <http://www.socialwork.columbia.edu/careers/>) allows you to plan, track and benchmark your career development goals. The Chart maps the essential career planning tasks across the progression of four semesters. The chart lists the order of these tasks and indicates the period, during your first or second year, that they should be completed. It also allows you to record the status of each task along with any roadblocks you run into. For Advanced Standing, Extended and Reduced Residency students, the tasks can be merged across the progression of two semesters or adapted during a counseling appointment to align with your time schedule. You should bring your Career Planning Chart when you come to any workshops or career counseling appointments. The management of your career planning process will allow you to realize your professional goals.

CUSSW ERECRUITING WEBSITE

CUSSW has its own web-based recruiting site called *eRecruiting*. This site allows employers to post jobs and summer internships exclusively for CUSSW master-level students. Each student is provided with a unique password, and can peruse the site to do career research, post career related documents and apply for jobs and summer opportunities.

To log on to eRecruiting:

1. Go to the Career & Leadership Development page on the CUSSW Website <http://www.socialwork.columbia.edu/careers/>.
2. Under Students click on online job listings.
3. Congratulations! You are now on the eRecruiting Network at the Columbia University School of Social Work.
4. Forgot your password? No problem, just click on *Forgot your password?* on the upper right of the page and it will be emailed to you.
5. Once you have your password log in and begin.

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

METHOD & FIELD JOB OUTLINE

CUSSW has an exceptional curriculum that is aimed at preparing exemplary professional social workers. In the first and second semesters, you will build the foundation for a successful social work career by focusing on practice, policy, research, and ethics. During the third and fourth semesters, in-depth study of a chosen practice method and field of practice will prepare you for work in a particular professional domain. The following information offers career direction as it relates to the four practice methods and seven fields of practice. Because social work is such a broad and diverse profession, there is overlap of the four practice methods and such also of the corresponding professional areas outlined below. Following the method/field job outline, you will also find an additional list of transferable skills and competencies that you will acquire as a student at CUSSW. These skills and competencies will help you market yourself as a well rounded and knowledgeable professional.

◆ Practice Method Concentrations

Advanced Clinical Social Work Practice

Advanced Clinical Social Work Practice emphasizes assessment, intervention, monitoring and evaluation, and uses individual, family, group, and case management strategies. Skills learned include:

- Solid understanding of client engagement and assessment
- Understanding of differential diagnosis
- Clinical application of risk and resiliency theories
- Knowledge of clinical issues with specific client populations
- Evidence based social work thinking and practice
- Interdisciplinary collaboration & awareness of experts in field

Professional Areas:

- **Health Care:** Social workers help patients handle the personal and social factors that come with illness by provide direct service: assessing a patient's needs, managing the patient's services, planning for care after recovery, educating patients and their families, and helping patients cope with illness related personal and psychological issues.
Employers include: hospitals, VA hospitals, HMOs, nursing homes, hospice and palliative care facilities, senior centers, and community health clinics.
- **Substance Abuse Treatment:** Social workers trained in alcohol and drug treatment help individuals, families and communities recover from substance abuse by providing case management, group and individual therapy, family counseling, advocacy for jobs and housing, community resource development and policy making initiatives. Note: employers often request additional qualifications for this work including a certification as a Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor (CASAC).
Employers include: inpatient and outpatient treatment facilities, methadone maintenance clinics, community development agencies, family

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

service agencies, schools, college/university counseling services, victim services agencies, VA Hospitals and correctional facilities.

- **Mental Health Care:** Social workers practice in both urban and rural settings and provide direct service to individuals, families and groups. Clients can be dealing with a wide range of issues including relationship discord, grief, depression, anxiety, schizophrenia and personality disorders.
Employers include: community mental health centers, psychiatric hospitals, VA hospitals, inpatient treatment facilities, victim services programs, college/university counseling services, family service agencies, correctional facilities and private practice.

- **School Social Work:** Social workers practice within schools and provide a link between the student's school, home and community. They provide direct service to students and focus on issues that interfere with a student's success in school including truancy, suicide risk, violence, drug and alcohol abuse, school dropout, teen pregnancy, homelessness and relationship discord. Social workers also often work to address the needs of students in special education classes. Social workers utilize their skills and knowledge for counseling, conflict resolution, outreach to the community, consultation with school staff, information and referral to students and families, and evaluation of services provided by the school.
Employers include: elementary and secondary public, private and charter schools, special education placement offices and Head Start centers.

Advanced Generalist Practice and Programming (AGPP)

AGPP students learn to apply an interactive, integrated perspective to Social Work practice & programming. AGPP emphasizes direct and community practice, movement from case to cause, and development of innovative and responsive social programs and program resources, including staffing and funding. Skills learned include:

- Micro level: direct practice, counseling, interviewing, assessment, referral
- Mezzo level: needs assessment, program evaluation, program design & development, proposal writing, planning, advocacy, coalition building
- Macro level: administration, policy, education

Professional Areas:

- **Community Organizing:** Social workers practice building consensus around community issues. This work can involve raising the public consciousness about a matter of concern, gathering people together to work for a common goal or to receive specialized services. Social workers gather information, create strategic plans, educate the public, raise funds, manage conflict, train new leaders, and develop resources and networks.

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

Employers include: community development agencies, community coalitions, social justice organizations, human rights organizations, advocacy, minority and religious representation groups.

- **Social Service Administration & Management:** Social workers take on various roles within both public and private organizations (i.e. Executive Director, Director, Program Director, Program Officer, Program Analyst). They plan and evaluate services, projects and programs, formulate policy, develop budgets, manage operations, raise funds, allocate resources, oversee public relations, and train and supervise employees. Social workers often focus on public welfare by providing support to vulnerable populations including children, older adults, and people with chronic or debilitating conditions. Some social workers focus specifically on children by aiding struggling families to prevent problems that could result in neglect or abuse. Social workers also work to eliminate social conditions that negatively affect children including inadequate housing, poverty, substance abuse, domestic violence and lack of access to health care.
Employers include: family service agencies, public & private child welfare agencies, agencies on aging, state mental health departments, employee assistance programs, probation departments, hospitals, public welfare agencies, adoption agencies, day care centers and foster care agencies.

- **Development/Foundation:** Social workers have the knowledge and skills to work as Program Associates/Officers where they assess grant proposals and develop, maintain and evaluate grant making initiatives or as Development Officers where they write grants and conduct fundraising endeavors.
Employers include: private or charitable foundations (i.e. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Habitat for Humanity) are non-profit organizations established by an individual, a family or a group for philanthropic purposes. A foundation can either donate funds to individuals or organizations that are aligned with the issues that it supports or provide the main source of funding for their own charitable endeavors.

Policy Practice

Policy Practice is the work of establishing or changing social policy. This method is focused on policy analysis and advocacy, including the knowledge, values, and skills to define policy issues from a social work perspective.

Skills learned include:

- Policymaking process: identify issue, develop options, enact policy, implement policy and evaluate outcomes
- Ability to conduct research, collect and analyze policy data
- Preparation of testimony
- Knowledge of theoretical frameworks of policymaking
- Use of quantitative and qualitative data

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

- Understanding of intersect btw. micro (client) and macro (policy) level

Professional Areas:

- **Policy & Planning:** Social workers are in a unique position to work in any organization that examines policy to meet human needs. Social workers identify social problems from homelessness to racism to mental illness, study the needs and issues of affected individuals and communities, conduct research, propose legislation and suggest different approaches or new programs. Responsibilities include compiling data, analyzing legislation, drafting policy briefs, testifying at public hearings, working with the media, talking with policymakers, lobbying elected officials and writing grants.

Employers include: social service agencies, community organizations, public interest groups, local, state and federal government, voluntary health and welfare councils, advocacy organizations, development corporations, think tanks, trade associations, non-profit organizations, professional associations and INGOs.

- **Research:** Social workers work as a Researchers, Assistants, Associates, Analysts or Managers within various types of research driven organizations. Social Workers provide the framework for evidence based practice by helping to develop and define concepts and determine whether a program is effective in affecting social change. Responsibilities as a researcher include: analyzing data, drafting documents, developing research plans, creating funding proposals, and publishing and presenting findings to various outlets. Note: senior positions within research based organizations often require a PhD.

Employers include: schools of social work, government agencies, think tanks, institutes, consulting firms and foundations.

- **Politics (state, local, national):** Social workers find that by holding an elected office they are able to advocate for a social cause on a different level. Others find that their skills work best in support of a candidate who has the ability to make the social change they support.

Employers include: political campaigns, political parties, schools boards, advocacy groups and associations.

Social Enterprise Administration (SEA)

SEA builds knowledge, skills, and values in administering and managing social service programs and organizations. Skills learned include:

- Program planning & evaluation
- Organizational and community development
- Human resource management
- Financial management
- Staff development and training
- Management of information systems

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

- Managing for social responsibility and social justice

Professional areas:

- Administration & Management: Social workers practice in both the public and private sector as administrators and managers who plan and evaluate services & programs, formulate policy, develop budgets, manage operations, raise funds, allocate resources, oversee public relations and direct, train, supervise and evaluate employees.
Employers include: not-for profits, social enterprise businesses, social service agencies, community organizations and hospitals.
- Human Resources: Social workers can utilize their skills and knowledge in many areas within a human resources department. These areas include: employee assistance/relations, recruitment & hiring, program training, development and evaluation, organizational development, wellness programs and generalist practices.
Employers include: corporations, mid-level sized businesses, not-for-profits, schools and government agencies.
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP): Social workers working for an EAP help employees and their families with problems related to job performance and satisfaction including emotional distress, health concerns, financial challenges, family issues (children or aging parents), eating disorders, substance abuse, safe working environments and work relationship issues. Social workers do assessments, counseling and referral services.
Employers include: EAPs can be independent or employed by corporations, businesses, labor unions and organizational consulting firms.

Corporate Social Responsibility and Philanthropy: Social workers can impact the departments within a corporation that accomplish work with a social component. Social Responsibility examines the impact of their organization's actions and outcomes on the environment, customers, employees, shareholders, communities and other stakeholders. Philanthropy voluntarily donates the corporation's funds, products or employee volunteerism to charitable organizations. Corporate philanthropy is an important function of a corporation's broader social responsibility.

Employers include: multinational and national corporations

Product Development: Social workers interested in social welfare with a design edge can work as analysts or managers for organizations that design and development low-cost products and services to meet the needs of the world's poor.

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

Employers include: multinational and national corporations and businesses, and social enterprise businesses.

- **Social Marketing:** Social workers can provide their knowledge and experience within an organization focused on marketing products, service or idea to achieve a social good.
Employers include: marketing agencies, advertising agencies, public relations firms, and marketing depts. within businesses or corporations.

◆ **Fields of Practice**

Aging

The role, status, and social problems of the elderly; sociology of the family; age stratification; policies providing financial support, health, and social care for the elderly; and social service provisions for the aged.

Employers include: hospitals, insurance companies, nursing homes, retirement communities, senior centers, agencies on aging, senior volunteer programs, senior housing facilities, mental health centers, adult day care centers, home health care, rehabilitation centers and social service agencies.

Contemporary Social Issues (CSI)

Emerging social problems, their etiology, epidemiology, and interconnections; relevant policies, programs, and practices; and coordination or lack thereof among service systems that seek to address these problems. Contemporary social issues, via advocacy and a forensic approach, addresses the impact of issues and problems in the criminal justice system, homelessness, domestic violence/violence, and substance abuse and their impact on individuals, groups, couples, families, communities, and society.

Employers include: criminal justice system (courts, police departments, DA's office), detention centers, correctional facilities, family treatment centers, social welfare agencies and crime victims services.

Family, Youth, and Children's Services

The economic and social status and service needs of families, youth, and children; laws, funding, and service organizations; family support and child care services; preventive and protective services; school-related and/or school-based services; adolescent issues.

Employers include: adoption agencies, day care centers, foster care agencies, public & private child welfare agencies, family service agencies and youth development programs.

Health, Mental Health, and Disabilities

Identification of health factors and social stressors that affect clients; program development and evaluation; fiscal, legal, and organizational sanctions and influences, including managed care; assessment of system entry points for client care and advocacy.

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

Employers include: hospitals, HMOs, nursing homes, hospice and palliative care facilities, home health care, senior centers, community health clinics, community mental health centers, psychiatric hospitals, inpatient and outpatients treatment centers, family service centers, private practice, schools, employment services, HIV/AIDS services, rehabilitation centers and government agencies.

International Social Welfare and Services to Immigrants and Refugees

Global social problems; international trends in social policies and programs, including response to disasters; needs of immigrants and refugees; community development; and activities of major international organizations and voluntary agencies working internationally.

Employers include: NGOs, INGOs, domestic and international relief organizations, human rights organizations, refugee relief organizations, international adoption agencies, inter-governmental organizations, employment services, public & private child welfare agencies and family service agencies.

School-Based and School-Linked Services

Practice issues in public education; problems of school failure; design, administration, financing, delivery, and evaluation of school-based or school-linked child and family services; interdisciplinary collaboration.

Employers include: elementary and secondary public, private and charter schools, special education placement offices and head start centers.

World of Work

The composition, status, and needs of the labor force; conditions interfering with work roles; services for clients as workers and for their dependents; collective bargaining; discrimination, and unequal opportunity; interdisciplinary initiatives; and legislation related to work and social welfare.

Employers include: corporations, non-profits, EAPs, hospitals, unions and social service agencies.

◆ Transferable Skills

Critical Thinking/Problem Solving/Research

Understand the Steps Involved in Critical Thinking:

- Define the problem and identify possible causes
- Anticipate problems before they occur
- Recognize if a problem needs to be addressed
- Formulate questions to clarify problems, topics or issues

Deploy Tools for Effective Problem-Solving:

- Develop plans to implement solutions
- Multi-tasking: ability to handle more than one problem at a time
- Identify range of solutions and select most appropriate ones
- Facilitate groups in identifying and evaluating possible solutions

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

Develop Methods for Conducting Successful Research:

- Identify appropriate information sources for problem solving
- Use a variety of sources of information
- Apply a variety of methods to test the validity of data
- Conceptualize future needs and find solutions to meet those needs

Verbal and Written Communication

Present Ideas Cogently, Creatively and Effectively:

- Present ideas in a concise, logical and persuasive format that can speak to both targeted and broader audiences
- Communicate in a range of media: articles, presentations, etc.
- Participate effectively in group discussions
- Discern and respond to verbal and non-verbal messages
- Respond appropriately to both positive and negative feedback
- Discuss important and controversial issues with tact, sensitivity, and insight within multiple industries.

Decision Making/Teamwork

Identify the Practices and Dynamics of Successful Teamwork/Team Building:

- Identify, prioritize and delegate tasks to be accomplished
- Motivate others to work towards a common goal
- Facilitate group participation in the decision-making/planning process
- Coordinate tasks and progress of group members
- Use management/mentoring skills with peers and/or subordinates
- Recognize members' strengths and weaknesses to build an effective and cohesive team
- Give constructive feedback and praise for accomplishments

Enterprise Leadership

Understand the Practices of Effective Leadership:

- Evaluate all options and make effective decisions even when under time pressure
- Take responsibility for decisions
- Evaluate the effects and effectiveness of a decision
- Explain unpopular decisions to others in a clear but sensitive manner
- Use creativity and initiative to stimulate ideas and develop solutions
- Deal effectively with resistance and setbacks
- Develop self-awareness, self-confidence and independence

Diversity/Global Perspectives

Appreciate People's Diverse Backgrounds, Interests, and Opinions:

- Able to work with people from different backgrounds and perspectives
- Read and speak a foreign language
- Are flexible, open to change and willing to compromise
- Help people make the most of diverse opinions and interests
- Appreciate different viewpoints and cultural perspectives

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

- Recognize contributions from different areas of the world in the arts, literature, science and social science
- Able to respond appropriately to continually changing circumstances

Socially-Responsible Orientation/Educators

Driven to Make a Difference through Academia, Research, Gov't & NFPs

- Able to work effectively with a broad range of people including clients, elected officials, volunteers, donors and local civic leaders
- Possess demonstrable personal integrity and business ethic
- Committed to promoting change and new ideas
- Possess strong interpersonal and networking skills
- Able to make decisions that increase both the individual and the common good
- Self-motivated to tackle demanding tasks and offer to get involved
- Possess the stamina and tenacity to see a project through to end

Demonstrate Effective Teaching/Training Skills and Techniques:

- Able to explain and demonstrate complex and abstract ideas
- Are patient, persistent and motivated to bring out the best in others
- Can evaluate and appraise others' work and skills objectively
- Able to cope with stress and remain calm under pressure

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

LET'S GET STARTED: THE 5 STEPS TO CAREER PLANNING

As you consider your career plans it is important that you understand yourself, develop your marketing tools, conduct career related research, and identify various career opportunities so that you can make informed, appropriate career decisions. There are 5 steps to the job search process. Following these steps will help you plan and conduct an efficient and successful job search.

Step 1	Self Assessment
Step 2	Develop Marketing Tools
Step 3	Career Research
Step 4	Identify & Execute
Step 5	Prepare for Interview

STEP 1: SELF ASSESSMENT

The first step is to view yourself from a professional perspective and clarify your VIPS.

- *Values & Lifestyle:* these are a set of standards that determine attitudes and choices and can help lay important groundwork for making good work/life decisions.
 - Do you value: wealth? time with family? creativity?
 - What kind of work culture or environment do you want?
 - Where do you want to live?
- *Interests/Objectives:* these are things that appeal and excite you. Think about your Method of Concentration and Field of Practice. What function(s) do you want to carry out: assessment, direct practice, analysis, evaluation, programming, management, advocacy, research, community development, etc.
 - What issues are you passionate about: domestic violence, mental health, HIV/AIDS, housing, etc.
 - What sector do you want to work in: NFP, public, government
 - What kind of organization or institution do you want to work in: hospital, school, community center, mental health clinic, foundation, think tank government agency, international welfare organization, etc.
 - What populations are you interested in: homeless, veterans, refugees, immigrants, women, children, etc.

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

- *Personality*: each individual has distinctive qualities and character traits. Defining who you are can help project where you want your career to take you.
- *Skills & Knowledge*: these include your abilities, talents, aptitudes and strengths. Consider the areas you have focused on through your education, training, reading and experience. It is important to define your skills and to ascertain which ones you would like to use in a job and ones that you would not.

STEP 2: DEVELOP A MARKETING STRATEGY

Once you have determined your VIPs, it is time to refine your marketing tools. These tools include your resume, cover letter, references and elevator speech or networking introduction.

◆ **WRITING A WINNING RESUME**

What is a résumé?

An American resume is a marketing tool (it is not an autobiographical summary). You are marketing yourself to a potential employer, showcasing those skills, achievements, and qualifications that relate *directly* to the type of position(s) you are pursuing. It should be written with care and consideration, and always targeted toward the specific employer to whom you are applying. Make sure to include all of your experiences including both paid & unpaid, volunteer, leadership, internship, international, presentations, etc. Your resume should include specific descriptions that give the reader a solid picture of your accomplishments and capabilities.

When writing your resume ask yourself: Have I effectively presented my skills, qualifications, and achievements? Have I done enough research on the employer and the job to know what is needed in that position so I can match my skills to their needs?

What are the standards for formatting and length?

The required length of a resume depends on the sector to which you are applying. For social service and education-type positions, a two page resume is acceptable, as long as the content warrants it. For corporate positions, a one page resume is essential.

The difference between a resume and curriculum vitae?

A curriculum vitae (CV) concentrates on academic pursuits and de-emphasizes materials not directly related to educational background and achievement. Unlike a resume, a CV is a more comprehensive document that includes all relevant content. The content determines the length of the CV, since it includes publications, presentations, grants, etc. A CV is appropriate for masters and doctoral graduates seeking teaching or research positions. Colleges, universities, and research institutions generally require a CV whereas others employers prefer a resume.

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

What should be included?

- Lead with your strengths! Select and order the major content categories so that the most relevant information is visible first.
- Use action verbs to describe your achievements, depicting yourself as someone who *produces, develops, analyzes* or *introduces*, as opposed to one who *participated in* or *was responsible for*. Pick up the *Power Verbs* tip sheet online or in Career Development.
- Vary the verbs used, and always use the present tense for current jobs and past tense for previous jobs.
- Emphasize skills and experience related to your field of interest and/or positions desired.
- Include occupation or industry specific-key words.
- Be achievement and results-oriented in your position descriptions. Communicate your skills, capabilities, and accomplishments. Quantify achievements by citing numbers, dollars, percentages or time if possible
- Be consistent in your formatting- watch how you list states, dates, etc.
- Proofread carefully!!!! Errors are unacceptable.
- If your resume is 2 pages include your name and page # on 2nd page.
- Do not include personal information such as age, health, marital status, height, weight, and religion.
- Do not use the first person singular case (do not use "I").
- Make an appointment or stop by during drop in hours to review your resume with Career Development.

What goes on a résumé?

- **Identification information**
Include your name, address, telephone number, and Columbia e-mail address. If you have to use another email address make certain it is "appropriate" for employers. For example, it would not be acceptable to use partygirl@gmail.com or studman@yahoo.com.
- **Objective, Summery or Professional Profile**
Generally used by professionals with 4+ years of experience, this section consists of 2-3 sentences outlining a specific career goal or listing specific skills, accomplishments, and strengths that directly relate to your field of interest.
- **Education**
In reverse chronological order (beginning with CUSSW); specify each college/university attended, its location (city and state), degree received, graduation date (month and year), and major.
- **Experience**
List all positions in reverse chronological order. This section can include both paid and unpaid positions, or it can be divided into different categories (e.g., Professional Experience, Related Experience, Research Experience, Clinical Experience, Program Development Experience, International Experience, Volunteer Experience) in order

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

to prioritize your experience. For every position, include the following: employer, city, state, job title, dates of employment, and a description of your accomplishments. Focus on accomplishments that relate to the type of position you are seeking. Be sure to use power verbs that communicate relevant transferable skills.

- **Honors/Awards**

Honors may be listed as a separate category or included in other sections such as Education. List scholarships, assistantships, academic honors, community achievements, and/or professional awards.

- **Activities**

Include involvement in community and campus activities organizations. Highlight significant achievements such as committee work and leadership positions.

- **Skills (Computer, Languages, etc.)**

These can be listed as separate categories or grouped together under one general heading. All computer and language skills should be included on your resume.

- **Professional Affiliations**

List the names of professional organizations (i.e. NASW) to which you belong, indicating leadership positions and committee work where appropriate. Be sure to include the corresponding years of membership.

- **Papers/Publications/Presentations**

List published works and presentations when appropriate.

- **Interests/Additional Information**

Be specific and list interests/activities to which you devote considerable time or which you excel. List achievements that do not fit under other categories.

* See sample resumes on page 38-41

◆ WRITING A STRONG COVER LETTER

Why do you have to write cover letters?

Cover letters serve several purposes. They are NOT simply paragraph version of your resume. In your cover letter you are matching your background, skills, and abilities to the needs of the employer and conveying your interest in working for them. This portrays your knowledge of their needs and how you can address them. Form cover letters do not accomplish this goal, so take the time to tailor it to your specific audience. Secondly, the cover letter serves as a sample of your writing ability. So, being well-written and free of typographical and grammatical errors is essential.

When do I send one?

Your cover letter should accompany your resume whenever you do not. If you are attending a career fair, a cover letter is not necessary.

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A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

Is there a set length?

With the exception of faculty positions, cover letters should never exceed one page. Cover letters for faculty positions can exceed that limitation if it includes your research areas and teaching interests.

What is the typical format?

A cover letter is a business correspondence, so it should be formatted like a business letter. It should lead with your address (or your header), the date, recipient name and address. Your salutation should be followed with a colon rather than a comma. Standard business letter format also includes the word Enclosure (if mailing) or Attachment (if emailing) at the bottom of the letter to indicate that your resume is included.

Who do I make the letter out to?

Do your homework. If no contact person is included in the job listing, do research online to determine who the position reports to or telephone the main line of the employer and ask who you should direct the letter to. (Do not call the employer if they state no phone calls!) If you are unable to find a specific person's name, address your letter to a relevant title (i.e. Dear Human Resources Manager or Dear Search Committee or Dear Clinical Director). If you can not find the relevant title a simple To whom it may concern or Dear Sir/Madam will suffice.

What if I'm asked about my required salary or salary history?

Employers often ask an applicant to indicate salary requirements in his/her cover letter or include a salary history document as an attachment. Salary requirements can be incorporated as a sentence in the first paragraph of your cover letter (i.e. *I am looking for a full time position in medical social work with an annual salary of \$50,000*). A salary history document should be formatted exactly like your resume with your name and contact information on the top. List past employers with employment dates chronologically and indicate your past salaries accordingly. Finally, be honest as previous salary information can be verified.

What's the best way to submit my resume and cover letter?

Follow the employer's instructions! If the employer provides several options (i.e. email, hard mail, fax, etc.), select the one that is best for you. Keep in mind email and faxes arrive immediately, so these are the best modalities if under a tight deadline. If emailing, place your cover letter in the body of the email and include your resume as word attachment. If an employer requests no attachments and you want to email your materials, copy your resume into the body of your email after your cover letter.

◆ **See sample cover letters on page 42-45**

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

◆ **PRESENTING REFERENCES**

References are individuals who can speak about you, your work ethic, academic performance, skills and abilities to prospective employers. There is no rule regarding the amount of time you should know someone before listing her/him as a reference. As long as a reference can speak to your professional skills and abilities you can include her/him. You should have three to five references which can include former employers, field placement supervisors, internship supervisors, volunteer supervisors or professors. Always ask permission before listing someone as a reference. Do not ask friends or family members to be references for you unless you have worked for them as an employee.

A list of references is a supplemental document to your resume and should be provided only when asked either during or after an interview. When an interviewer asks if she can contact a former employer you can provide her with your reference document. If you are asked to complete an application that asks for references, you can include the same names on the application that are listed on your reference document. The reference document should be formatted exactly like your resume with your name and contact information on the top. Include the following information for each of your references:

- Name
- Organization/Company
- Phone Number
- Title
- Street Address
- E-mail (optional)

As note, written recommendations are typically appropriate for graduate school or teaching positions. Phone recommendations are the preferred method for obtaining information by prospective employers.

◆ **NETWORKING: USING THE ELEVATOR SPEECH**

Summarize your career experiences, skills & goals into an enthusiastic 1-2 minute elevator speech that includes who you are, what you do and what you are looking for. Think about what you want people to know about you, the specifics about the kind of job you are looking for, your desired position, ideal job responsibilities & preferred geographic location. The ability to verbalize your background and career goals is essential to networking and landing a job. Once you have your speech ready, practice!

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

“Hello, my name is Melinda Stevens. I am a second year graduate student at the Columbia University School of Social Work. My concentration is in Policy Practice with a focus on immigrants and refugees. My field placement is at the Global Youth Action Network, a youth led global network of youth organizations. I understand that you're working at the United Nations. I'd like to know how you got where you are today, and what advice you'd have for an upcoming graduate interested in working at the UN.”

Networking, or relationship building, is another way to increase your chances of learning about job opportunities, and expand your connections in your chosen career field. It can be the single most effective tool in your effort to find a job. Studies repeatedly show that over 50% of job seekers find positions through networking. Networking is your chance to speak with people who are already in your field to learn more about their careers and how to develop your own. This tool is powerful because it can give you honest information that you can't find anywhere else, from job opportunities that are not listed to people's perspectives on future trends and what they find satisfying and/or dissatisfying about what they do. This information can then be used to help you find a job or to clarify your decisions about what type of job you might be interested in.

To begin networking you must first overcome your negative perceptions and/or fears. The more networking you do the easier it becomes. Just spread the word that you're looking for a job and ask if anyone has a contact that might be able to offer advice. Your network can include:

- Personal Contacts: family and friends
- Professional Contacts: classmates, colleagues, alumni, faculty, field placement supervisors, former employers, etc.
- Organizational Contacts: social clubs, religious affiliations, gym members, NASW, etc.

In addition, take full advantage of CUSSW workshops and events. In collaboration with Alumni Relations, the Student Union and various student caucuses, the Office of Career Development co-hosts alumni networking events and panels including the *CUSSW Alumni of Color Networking Event; Wine, Cheese & Networking; Social Work Careers in... ;* and *What to Expect After you Graduate.*

Questions to ask alumni and others in your network:

- What has been your career path to date?
- How did you get your current position?
- What do you like best about your work? Job? Organization?
- What professional organizations and journals are important to you?

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

- What skills do you think successful people in your area of work/social work possess?
- What was the best advice you received from someone in social work when you were just starting?
- What is the most effective strategy for conducting a job search in this field?
- Can you think of any other individuals who might provide additional information about your organization or the field of social work?

Once you begin networking make sure to maintain the contacts you have worked hard to make by keeping track of them with a contact list, informing them of your job search progress and expressing your appreciation to anyone that helps you by sending thank you notes or emails.

STEP 3: RESEARCH

Schedule 1 hour each week solely for career research. Gather information on social work field(s), relevant organizations and available opportunities. Conduct research on your professional area(s) of interest and figure out where you fit in best. Your research should include:

- Reviewing the websites of relevant organizations
- Searching CUSSW eRecruiting and other online job sites
- Joining professional social work organizations to receive valuable information (NASW, CSWE, CSWF, etc.)
- Assessing online or printed directories (Child Welfare League of America, United Way, etc.)
- Reading publications (The New Social Worker, Journal of Social Work, Chronicle of Philanthropy, NEED Magazine, Good Magazine)
- Conducting informational interviews – the *Informational Interview* tip sheet is available online or in the office
- Arranging for site visits / shadowing opportunities
- Collecting salary data (Helpful websites: www.salary.com, www.salaryexpert.com, www.wetfeet.com, www.wageweb.com)

Your goal for researching is to answer the following questions:

- Which organizations do the kind of work I am interested in doing?
- Do these organizations hire employees with my skills and experience?
- What is the salary range for the work I want to do?

As you begin to compile a *Potential Employer List*, keep track of the following pertinent information in a notebook or word document:

- Organization name and website address
- Contact name, title, phone #, email & address
- Mission or purpose of organization
- Employment opportunities

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

STEP 4: EXECUTE THE JOB SEARCH: IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES & APPLY

You will need to pursue several strategies to identify job opportunities. Job search strategies can be divided into two categories: traditional and targeted. The traditional approach includes applying for job postings on an organization's website, using CUSSW's eRecruiting website, via general job websites (i.e. www.careerbuilder.com), through field specific websites (www.socialservice.com) and by responding to classifieds on/in newspapers. When hunting for positions online don't just use *social worker* as a title search. Be creative – search using other job titles and key words including counselor, gerontology, manager, human resources, substance abuse, mental health, social welfare policy, etc.

A targeted approach to identifying job opportunities is more proactive. It entails reviewing your self-assessment (STEP 1), utilizing your marketing tools (STEP 2) and applying your research (STEP 3). Begin by sending a cover letter and resume to each organization on your *Potential Employer List*. Your cover letters should clearly state why your professional interests are aligned with the goals or mission of each organization. Because you are the one reaching out, this approach also requires that you follow up with the organization, via email or phone, 7-10 days after sending your resume.

◆ **CAREER FAIRS**

Career or job fairs are another great way to find out about full-time and summer opportunities, develop professional contacts and gather information to help you make career decisions. Each year in partnership with the Columbia Center of Career Education (CCE) and the consortium of New York Graduate Schools of Social Work, we co-host the Not-For-Profit and Public Service Career Fair and the Master's Level Social Work Job Fair respectively. CUSSW students are also welcome to attend the Teachers College PreK-12 Education Career Fair and the CCE For-Profit Career Fair (dates for fairs are available on the Career Development website). In addition to the career fairs affiliated with CUSSW you should attend other career fairs that reflect your professional interests. Below are some tips on preparing and making the most of a career/job fair.

Before:

- Visit the Office of Career & Leadership Development or other website to see which organizations are attending. Decide which ones you will approach.
- Make sure that your resume is up-to-date and that you have enough copies to give one to each potential employer. You do not need to provide employers with a cover letter.
- Prepare and practice your elevator speech.

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

- Do some basic online research for each organization and prepare 2 informational questions to ask each of them. Since you may not have a lot of time to talk, save lengthy questions for an interview or a follow up e-mail.
- Dress professionally. A neutral color suit is preferable, but a nice dress shirt, a tie and pants are also fine for men, and a blouse and knee-length skirt or pants are acceptable for women. No jeans, sweats and sneakers even if you are coming straight from class.
- Carry a portfolio or clean folder with your resumes, a pad and a pen. Try to minimize the amount of extra “stuff” (bags, coat, etc.) you have with you.

During:

- Learn the layout of the fair and determine the locations of organizations of interest. Most career fairs will provide you with a map of the room and booklet listing each organization.
- Visit each of your targeted tables and speak with at least one of the organization’s representatives. Be sure to smile, shake hands, introduce yourself and offer them your resume. Ask each representative that you talk to for a business card and collect the company literature before you go to the next organizations.
- If possible, jot down some quick notes about your conversations before your next stop. This will help you remember which organizations you were especially interested in later on. It will also help you personalize the thank you notes you write afterwards.

After:

- Send thank you letters/e-mails to the organizations you are interested in. Personalize all correspondence!

STEP 5: INTERVIEWING

When you are asked to interview with an organization, you know that your resume and cover letter have done their job! Keep in mind, successful interviewing is a skill that can be learned. The key is to adequately prepare. The more prepared you are going into an interview the better your chances are for getting a second interview or job offer. Among many skills and qualities, employers typically look for candidates that demonstrate creativity, flexibility, honesty and initiative as well as possess strong written and verbal communication, interpersonal, and leadership skills.

Prior to the interview, find out from the employer what type of interview you will be having and prepare for that type of interview (in-person, phone, panel, group). Develop 3-4 questions that you want to ask the employer. Practice by scheduling a mock interview with the Office of Career & Leadership Development. Finally, wear a suit or professional attire, bring 4-5 copies of your resume and a list of references to the interview. Don’t forget

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

to send the employer a thank you email or handwritten note the day after the interview. [FYI: both notes and emails are acceptable however emails tend to reach the interviewer quicker and don't get lost in the mail). Below are some steps to help you prepare for the interviewing process.

Research

- *The organization/department:*
Take the time to learn as much as possible about the employer. Go to their website and review the values and mission of the organization. Review the different departments and how they work together to accomplish the organization's goal. Look at the programs and/or services offered by the area you are interviewing for. Review the staff makeup and profiles if possible.
- *The position:*
Closely examine the job description. Identify the key qualities they are looking for and specific responsibilities the position entails.
- *The interviewer:*
If you know who will be interviewing you, take the time to research her/him/them as well. Understand their roles in the organization and their respective backgrounds. Take a minute to "Google" them to see what they are involved in professionally (keep the focus on their professional involvement- not on their personal lives).
- *Yourself:*
Review the cover letter and resume you submitted thoroughly. Note the experiences you have had that are most relevant for the position. Analyze your own background. What are your skills (content, functional, adaptive) that relate to the desired role? What types of work cultures do you prefer? This prepares you to think on your feet! Identify examples from your past experience in which you demonstrated those skills. How can you "tell a story" about your particular skills or knowledge? Set your internal agenda for the interview by conducting a strengths exercise. Quickly brainstorm 50 strengths you possess. After compiling the list, go back through and identify the top five that best pertain to this position and this employer. Use this list to guide you through the interview process as your internal agenda. Your goal during the interview is to successfully convey these qualities and your related experiences. Give some thought to the areas you would like to improve. Be prepared to talk about mistakes, when things didn't go as planned, self understanding and exploration, things you might have done differently.

Prepare questions for the employer

Asking the employer questions reflects your motivation, interests, priorities, and energy. This is also your opportunity to set the agenda for the interview and to determine if this opportunity is right for you. Good questions for the employer are related to the job to which you are applying and demonstrate

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

your knowledge of their organization. Ask about job duties, the department, supervision, and growth opportunities. Avoid questions about benefits, salary, etc. Here are some suggested questions to ask the employer:

- What are you looking for in your ideal candidate for this position?
- What do you perceive to be the most difficult part of the job?
What types of challenges would I face in this position/department?
- How would you describe the working environment?
- How would you describe the management style of the area?
- What professional development opportunities are available to me in this department?
- What is your timeframe for making a hiring decision? (ask this last-it lets you know what to expect)

Questions NOT to ask the employer:

- How many sick days can I claim as a new employee?
- Do I have to dress up in the office?
- How much will I be paid? (Salary questions should be asked after the job offer)

Keep in mind body language, mannerisms and appearance can help portray a professional image.

- Be enthusiastic and positive – smile, sit up straight, and exude confidence.
- Let the employer know that you are interested in the job.
- Keep your answers as concise as possible and stick to the point.
- Dress professionally! Wear business attire (even if the organization is business casual).
- Bring a copy of your resume and references.
- Arrive 10 minutes early.

Be prepared for the HARDEST question - "Tell me about yourself."

This is a difficult question to address since it is so open ended. Give some thought to what you want to share up front. Do not start from the beginning of your life (i.e. "I was born in Cincinnati..."). Keep in mind that all information should be connected to "why they should hire you." Your response should not exceed 2 minutes. Practice this question as it is often asked at the beginning when you are most nervous.

Review common interview questions

It is impossible to prepare for every potential question. But reviewing common questions and verbally responding to them can help you focus and increase your confidence level. Remember, every question is asking you the same thing, "Why should we hire you? Why are you the best candidate for this position?" Use that knowledge to help guide your responses.

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

General questions include:

- Why are you interested in this position?
- Why are you interested in a career in XYZ field/industry?
- What do you know about XYZ agency/organization?
- What makes you stand out from your peers?
- What would your classmates/professors/colleagues say about you if I asked them about your leadership style?
- What are your top 2-3 strengths and your top 2 areas in need of improvement?
- Where do you see yourself in 2-3 years?...in 5 years?

Education based questions:

- Why did you pursue your graduate degree in social work?
- Why did you choose Columbia?
- What skills did you develop through your education? How will these help you in a job?
- What was the most important thing you have learned in your graduate program?

Career focused questions:

- Describe a previous work experience you really enjoyed & explain what you liked about it.
- Describe a previous work experience you really disliked and explain why you disliked it.
- In past jobs, what achievements were recognized by your supervisor?
- Can you recall a time when your work was criticized? Describe the situation and your response.
- Describe your ideal work environment.
- In previous work positions (part-time, volunteer or summer), did you initiate any new procedures, systems, programs, or activities?

Prepare yourself for Behavioral Questions

Behavioral questions are increasingly popular. You can recognize them by the wording- "tell me about a time when you... or give me an example of an instance where you..." Behavioral questions are based on the rationale that past behavior can serve as a predictor of future behavior. You cannot prepare for every hypothetical behavioral question, but common themes of questions are included below:

Difficult situations:

- Tell me about a difficult problem you had to solve.
- Describe a time when you had to handle a difficult client.

Adaptability:

- Can you provide me with an example of a time when you had to deal with a big change?

Analytical Skills:

- Tell me about a strategic plan you helped develop.

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

Oral & Written Communication Skills:

- Give me an example of a time when you had to speak up in order to get a point across that was important to you.

Decision Making Skills:

- What was the most difficult decision you had to make in the last six months?

Flexibility:

- Describe a situation when you had to work with someone.

Initiative:

- Give me an example of a project/task that you started on your own.

Organizational Skills:

- Give me an example of where planning paid off.

Persuasiveness:

- Can you think of a time when you had to persuade someone to change her/his mind?

Teamwork:

- Describe a time when a team member strongly disagreed with your ideas or actions. How did you handle the situation?

◆ **SEALING THE DEAL: ACCEPTING, DECLINING & NEGOTIATING OFFERS**

Congratulations - you have survived the interview process and received a job offer. Remember, once an offer is presented an employer will give you time to consider the offer and make a decision. The time an employer provides varies greatly and can range from 24 hours to 2 weeks. Accepting a job offer is a significant decision so make sure you consider the following:

Research Salary Prior to Negotiation:

- Know Your Market Value – what you can expect for the type of position you seek in comparison with your experience, education and the industry wage standards in the city/state that you reside in.
- Be realistic - your compensation level should be based on your professional worth, *not* your financial needs.
- Review job listings which indicate salaries for related positions.
- Talk to fellow students, alumni, friends and networking contacts.
- Review business and trade periodicals.
- Check out on-line salary and cost of living calculators (www.salary.com).
- Review the collection of salary survey info. on NASW.

Determine your Needs:

It is essential to figure out the minimum salary you would need to make ends meet. You should consider: credit card debt, cost of living, entertainment, rent/mortgage, student loans, car payment and insurance payments. This should not be presented as part of a salary negotiation but important for you to know as you consider any job offer.

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

Is the Salary Negotiable?

- The degree to which a salary is negotiable depends on the position, the organization, and your perceived value.
- Some positions have set salaries with limited negotiation room. If the position is part of a labor union the salary may be set.
- If the same figure is offered after asking for more, it probably is the last offer. In that case, you can ask for a salary review in six months to evaluate your performance and value, or you can turn the job down, asking that they keep you in mind for future openings.
- General rule: *The higher the position, the more qualified you are, the greater the level for negotiation.*

Factors to Consider:

- Take time to outline the most important components of your ideal job.
- Assess the job offer in terms of your needs, benefits, and long-term career and life goals, and make a list of the pros and cons of the job.
- What is the potential lifestyle value and impact of the salary offered?
- Does the organization have a reputation for career advancement.
- Will working for the organization increase your long-term value.
- If your goal is to get your LCSW, make sure the position offers appropriate supervision.
- Also consider the employee benefit plan when evaluating an offer. Typical full-time employee benefits include: medical insurance (dental, and vision optional), retirement plans – 401k, 403b, pensions, life and disability insurance, paid vacation, sick time, and holidays.

Accepting an Offer:

- When you reach an agreement, verbally confirm your acceptance of the offer and request the agreement in writing.
- Follow up with written confirmation letter or email which reiterates salary, start date, and position title.
- Accepting a job offer ethically obligates you to cease job search efforts and to notify other prospective employers that you must withdraw your name from their consideration.

Declining an Offer:

- Let the interviewer know that if there is another opportunity that can meet your salary requirements you would be interested.
- Find out if there are, or might be, other openings they could suggest or other persons you could contact.

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

When You Don't Get an Offer:

- Thank the employer for their time and interest. Reemphasize the fact that if future openings occur, you would be interested.
- Often the person selected ends up turning the job down. Keep the communication line open, positive, and professional. This keeps your name in their mind for the next opening or future opportunities.
- Learn from the experience.
- Keep trying!! Stay in control of your job search.

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

◆ **LMSW & LCSW INFORMATION**

Importance of Licensing

- Licensing is a matter of LAW
- The law defines the practice of Licensed Master Social Work as the “professional application of social work theory, principles, and methods to address mental, social, emotional, behavioral, developmental and addictive disorders, conditions and disabilities and psychosocial aspects of illness and injury.”
- Licensing confers privileges and carries with it responsibilities:
 - Consumer Protection: Licensing enhances the quality of services to consumers by requiring specific education and supervised experience.
 - Legal Definition: There is now in State law a legal definition of what professional social work is.
 - Almost all states have licensure: NYS is the 49th state to license social work. Each state has its own licensure with its own requirements.
 - Private Practice Restriction: Only those with qualifying education, experience, and supervision can do private practice without oversight supervision.
 - Provides greater clarity: It is now defined in state law what are the practices of Licensed Master Social Work and Licensed Clinical Social Work.

LMSW Scope of Practice

- LMSWs work with: Individuals. Couples, Families, Groups, Communities Organizations and Society.
- LMSWs provide all forms of supervision except for the supervision of the practice of Licensed Clinical Social Work.
- LMSWs may practice Licensed Clinical Social Work under the supervision of an LCSW, a licensed psychologist, or a psychiatrist.

LCSW Scope of Practice

- The LCSW is not a better license than the LMSW, it is a *different* license.
- Only LCSWs can provide, without supervision: psychotherapy, assessment-based treatment planning, diagnoses
- LMSWs can provide the above, as long as they are under supervision of an LCSW, licensed psychologist or psychiatrist.
- LCSW is needed for: private practice, supervising LMSWs towards their LCSW, reimbursement at mental health clinics or fee-for-service clinics.

License Reciprocity in NYS

- New York State has no reciprocity. Social workers from other states must apply for licensure in New York State.
- You may not have to take an exam if you previously passed one in another state given by the ASWB.

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

Steps to Obtaining the LMSW in NY State

STEP 1: Be or Have:

- MSW
- 21 Years of Age
- Good Moral Character
- Completed Approved Child Abuse ID and Reporting Course

STEP 2: Send to New York State Education Department (NYSED)

* All forms are available at: <http://www.op.nysed.gov/lmswforms.htm>

- The LMSW application form (Form 1)
- Proof of Child Abuse Training
- The fee of \$280 (includes \$125 for license plus \$155 for first 3 year registration)
- CUSSW must verify your receipt of the Master of Science in Social Work. Bring Certification of Professional Education Form 2 with your information filled out to Betty Gee in Room 531. She will send to NYSED.

STEP 3: NYSED notifies the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) and the applicant via a letter when he/she is eligible to register for the LMSW test.

- It takes 2-3 weeks for applicant to receive this letter.
- Letter includes toll-free number and code for next step.
- NOTE: You must take the exam within one year of receiving this letter or you will have to reapply (and pay again!)

STEP 4: Register/Take LMSW Exam

- Register to take exam with ASWB, www.aswb.com
 - Toll-free number 1-888-5SW-EXAM
 - Pay \$175.00 exam fee
- Wait for ASWB to send you an authorization by email or regular mail (depending on registration method) which you will have to bring to the exam site.
- Exams are administered by appointment at [ACT test centers](#) throughout the U.S. There are no fixed administration dates; instead, registered candidates schedule a time to take the test at www.act.org.
- Take exam

Steps to Obtaining the LCSW in NY State

STEP 1: Education, Experience & Supervision Requirements

- Must have taken 12 credits of clinical coursework.
- Experience: Must have 3 years of full-time (20 client contact hours/week) or part-time – up to 6 years – of part time (not less than 10 client contact hours/week) providing diagnosis, assessment-based treatment planning, and psychotherapy with appropriate supervision.

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

- Supervisor must be an LCSW, a licensed psychologist, or a psychiatrist. Make sure to keep your supervisors' contact information current! Qualifying supervision: Must have one hour of face-to-face supervision weekly or two hours biweekly on diagnosis, assessment-based treatment planning, and psychotherapy. At least 2 hours/month must be individual supervision; the rest can be group.

The Exam

- The exam is given nationally.
- Currently, there about 8 different versions in use.
- Candidates can retake the exam after 90 days if he/she does not pass.
- There is no limit on the number of times you can retake exam however you must pay \$175.00 each time.
- You must take exam within 1 year of ASWB eligibility or reapply.
- Candidates have 4 hours to complete the test, which is administered electronically on a touch-screen.
- There are no "formal" breaks - once you start exam the clock keeps ticking.
- Each examination contains 170 four-option multiple choice questions designed to measure minimum competencies at four categories of practice. Only 150 of the 170 items are scored. The remaining 20 questions are "pretest" items included to measure their effectiveness as items on future examinations. These pretest items are scattered randomly throughout the examination.
- In NYS a passing score is 75. This is a scaled, not an absolute, score.
- There is no penalty for guessing so don't skip questions.
- There are two important aspects to passing the exam: Knowing content for questions & practicing exam taking skills.
- Special accommodations are available for candidates with disabilities.

Exam Preparation Resources

- The Office of Career & Leadership Development has *Comprehensive Study Guides* that students can borrow for a maximum of 5 days.
- NASW
<http://www.naswnys.org/swprep.htm>
http://www.naswnys.org/licensurre_faqs.htm
- JBFCS offers a fairly comprehensive course:
http://www.seliginstitute.org/course_swelss.html
- LEAP: Licensing Exam Preparation Services
www.licensingprep.com
- Social Work Examination Services
www.swes.net

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

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Limited Permits

NYSED may approve a Limited Permit application if all the requirements are satisfied except the exam. If you have met the education requirement for licensure as an LMSW but are waiting to pass the examination, you must apply for a limited permit (Form 5) and pay the fee (\$70), in addition to the application and fee for licensure, in order to practice licensed master social work prior to passing the examination. This permits a candidate to perform the tasks of an "LMSW" or "LCSW" at an agency if all but the exam is missing, as long as appropriately supervised.

Note:

- The limited permit is valid for one year and may not be renewed.
- You can only apply for a limited permit one time in your career.
- The limited permit is specific to the site you are working at.
- You must complete the two-hour Department approved course in the identification and reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect or file an exemption using Form 1CE (available on the web) before a permit or license will be issued.
- You must be under the general supervision of an LMSW or LCSW, who is in the same facility and accessible to you.
- You can take the ASWB examination every 90 days if you do not pass the first time. If you are at risk of losing your job, the ASWB will waive the 90-day waiting period upon written request.
- If you have not passed the exam when the limited permit expires you may not practice as a licensed master social worker unless you work in an exempt setting.

Important Contact Information

National Association of Social Workers - New York City Chapter

- www.naswnyc.org
- www.socialworkers.org
- Lu Lasson, LCSW-R, Licensing Specialist: (212) 668-0050 ext. 221, lasson@naswnyc.org

Association of Social Work Boards - Information about requirements for licensure in other states can be found through links on the ASWB Web site at <http://www.aswb.org>.

New York State Office of the Professions - Information and answers to frequent questions about applying for Social Work Licensure in New York State can be found at: <http://www.op.nysed.gov/>.

CUSSW GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

◆ **OTHER HELPFUL “TIP SHEETS” AND POWERPOINTS**

Available in the Office of Career Development

- Applying to a Doctoral Program
- Career Options for Social Workers
- Deciding on a Doctoral Program
- Helpful Job Websites
- Informational Interviews
- Interview Questions
- Interviewing for International Students
- Introduction: The Office of Career & Leadership Development
- Japanese Resumes
- Licensing in New Jersey
- Licensing in California
- Long Distance Job Search
- Power Verbs
- Programs in the Government: Presidential Management Fellowship & Emerging Leaders Program
- Resume Writing for International Students
- Social Work Opportunities in Washington DC
- Using *eRecruiting*: CUSSW Online Career Site
- Social Work Careers in Washington DC
- Writing a CV

◆ **CAREER DEVELOPMENT LIBRARY**

The Office of Career & Leadership Development has a small library of career books in Room 525 that cover a range of career related topics including Networking, International Careers, Resumes, etc. These books can be signed out on loan for a maximum of 3 days.

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A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

◆ **PERSONAL CAREER PLANNING WORKSHEET**

SELF ASSESSMENT

View yourself from a professional perspective and clarify your VIPS.

1. What are your values and lifestyle preferences? _____

2. What are your interests or objectives/goals? _____

2. What are your personal qualities, strengths, weaknesses, traits? _____

4. What are your skills & knowledge to date? _____

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A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

DEVELOP MARKETING TOOLS

Build your networking plan.

1. Create your elevator speech (*Summarize your experiences and goals into a 1-2 minutes introduction*).

2. List of contacts to network with (*start with five*):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

3. List of professional associations/organizations:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

4. List of events or career/job fairs:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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RESEARCH

Research the social work domain.

1. List industries you are interested in:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

2. List demographics you are interested in:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

3. List organizations you are interested in:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

4. List jobs with skills/functions you are interested in:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

5. Salary range required: _____

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Sample Resumes - #1

Paper – resume should be printed on white or off white bond paper

Font - should be a classic font like Times New Roman or Arial and font size should be between 10 & 12 pt

MARY DIAZ
880 West 100th Street, #3C
New York, NY 10025
mobile: (212) 280-8090
mc100@columbia.edu

Margins - should be between .5- 1” all around

EDUCATION

Columbia University School of Social Work, New York, NY

Master of Science in Social Work, expected May 2010

Concentration: Advanced Generalist Program & Planning; Health, Mental Health & Disabilities

Barnard College, New York, NY

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, May 2005

Graduated cum laude, Dean’s List (2002-2004)

Spacing – double space between categories & listings

LANGUAGE: Bilingual English and Spanish

Verbs– descriptive verbs for past jobs should be conjugated in the past tense

EXPERIENCE

PATHWAYS, Bronx, NY

Program Manager, December 2006-August 2008

A community agency that provides resources and services to areas residents.

- Evaluated five of the agency’s programs, wrote outline of findings and presented to Executive Director and management staff
- Independently developed two new programs focused on mental health services for clients
- Managed and maintained database for tracking client information and services
- Provided informal counseling, support and crisis intervention to clients
- Prepared monthly report for Executive Director to track and monitor all programs
- Interfaced with community organizations, early childhood programs and schools to enhance the flow of information and resources

Bold – important information that you want to highlight including employer names

THE HELP PROJECT, MENTAL HEALTH HOTLINE, Brooklyn, NY

Volunteer Coordinator, July 2005-December 2006

- Recruited, trained and supervised ten volunteers providing support for hotline clients
- Designed and implemented an adolescent suicide hotline program staffed by volunteers
- Provided support for clients in crisis
- Conducted outreach in community to market services of The Help Project

HUNTER PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT, New York, NY

Research Assistant for Professor Susan Casper, September 2003-May 2005

- Conducted literature review
- Collected data and entered data using SPSS
- Analyzed data for study on child abuse

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A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

MARY DIAZ, pg. 2

Include name and page #
on second page

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

OAKS NURSING HOME, Brooklyn, NY, 2004-present

Volunteer

- Develop and facilitate activities for residents
- Maintain database on outside resources for social activities

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Barnard College, New York, NY, 2002-2005

Latino Student Group

Barnard College New York, NY, 2004-2005

Conference on Children & Mental Health, Co-Facilitator

Skills: Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel, SPSS

References Available upon Request

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A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

◆ Sample Resumes - #2

MARY DIAZ

880 West 100th Street, #3C
New York, NY 10025
(212) 280-8090 ~ mc100@columbia.edu

EDUCATION

Columbia University School of Social Work, New York, NY

Master of Science in Social Work, expected May 2009

Concentration: Policy Practice; Health, Mental Health & Disabilities

Courses completed: Social Welfare Policy, The Child, the Family, and the State,
Seminar on Policy Practice, The Politics of Social Welfare Policy

Town College, New York, NY

Bachelor of Arts in Biology, May 2001

Graduated cum laude, Dean's List (2002-2004), Community Service Award 2005

Trinity College, Oxford University, Oxford, England

Study abroad program, September-June 2004

EXPERIENCE

Children Agency, Bronx, New York

Social Work Intern, September 2007-May 2008

- Evaluated agency programs for pregnant teens
- Researched and analyze child welfare policy data
- Developed report on research findings and presented to Executive Team
- Drafted policy briefs for Executive Director

American Health Society, Philadelphia, PA

Assistant Director of Advocacy, June 2004-July 2007

- Developed and guided *Good Health Program* from inception to completion
- Managed thirty health education programs in the local community on an annual basis
- Partnered with all levels of local government and community leaders
- Collaborated with Director and Executive Director on all advocacy initiatives
- Trained and supervised twenty volunteers
- Managed \$1M budget

Teach for American, Philadelphia, PA

Eighth grade teacher, June 2002-May 2004

- Participated in intensive summer teacher training program
- Taught eighth grade biology at Park Middle School
- Managed after school program focused on health

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A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

Mary Diaz, page 2

Clark & Miller Law Firm, White Plains, NY

Assistant, June 2001-June 2002

- Responsible for filing legal documents
- Organized files for preliminary trial motions
- Provided administrative assistance including greeting clients and answering phones

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Planned Parenthood, Brooklyn, NY, 2007-present

Volunteer

- Develop and facilitate programs on teen pregnancy
- Manage volunteer database

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Town College, New York, NY, 2000-2001

Biology Student Group

Skills: Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel, SPSS

Interests: Women's Health, Skiing, Classical Music & Travel

References Available upon Request

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A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

◆ SAMPLE-COVER LETTER

Your Name
Your Address
City, State, Zip Code
Date

Name (Dr., Mr., Mrs., Ms.)
Title
Organization
Street Address or PO Box #
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms _____:

First Paragraph: State specifically why you are writing by identifying the position, field or general area of your inquiry. Tell how you heard of the opening or organization and the central reason why you would like to work for that organization (e.g. its mission or philosophy) and/or why you are well suited for this opportunity.

Body of letter (typically one or two paragraphs): Elaborate on why you are particularly suited for THIS organization and THIS job by reviewing the job description, conducting online research, and specifically connecting the qualifications needed with your skills. Highlight your particularly relevant achievements. Elaborate on key points from your resume without repeating your resume word-for-word. This is not a paragraph version of your resume. Communicate clearly to the employer that you understand what is required of the position and the ways in which you have developed the skills the employer seeks.

Final Paragraph: Refer the employer to an enclosed resume and/or application form. Reiterate your interest in the specific position and restate the name of the organization. Request to meet with them to discuss this opportunity and your qualifications. Indicate how you can be contacted. If the position requires any level of “sales” skills (development, etc.) state that you will follow up (this demonstrates your comfort in doing this type of marketing outreach). But, if you state you will contact them, be sure to do so in the time you indicated! This is also the place that you include information that may be important but that you haven’t included elsewhere- for example if applying for a position out of town and you will be in the area at a certain time, if you will be out of the country and inaccessible for a period of time, etc. This is also where you include salary requirements, only if they request them.

Sincerely,

(insert signature)

} 3 spaces

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A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

555 W. 55th Street, #4D
New York, NY 10023
March 10, 2007

Ms. Kris Stackman
Executive Director
Forum at the Crossing
555 Woodside
Chicago, IL 60666

Dear Ms. Stackman:

Susan Alcott, Superintendent of the League for the Protection of Immigrants and a resident of the Forum, recommended I submit my resume in regards to the Development Director position with the Forum at the Crossing. With my graduate education from the Columbia University School of Social Work, proven abilities to motivate staff, and extensive fundraising experience, I am confident in my abilities to excel as Director of Development.

My five-year community service background includes program development experience in providing health, education, and psychological services for immigrants and women entering the work force at an organization called Immigrants First. In addition to providing these vital social services, I supervised junior staff, interns, and volunteers, and successfully designed and implemented several projects which increased funding by 45% over a two-year period. I also have several years of experience speech writing and fundraising.

Given my skills and our areas of mutual interest, I believe I could be of enormous assistance to you in the growth and expansion of the Forum. The details of my background appear in the enclosed resume. I will contact you next week for an appointment to further discuss ways I can contribute to your development initiatives. I can also be contacted at your convenience at 212-555-5555. I look forward to meeting with you soon. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mary Clark

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A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

Mary Clark

111 Broadway, New York, NY 10022
212-555-5555 ▪ abc1111@columbia.edu

March 10, 2007

Human Resources Manager
Visiting Nurse Services of New York
111 W 110th Street
New York, NY 10011

Dear Human Resources Manager:

I have enclosed my resume in regarding to the Recruiter position posted on Idealist.org. In May of this year, I will be graduating from Columbia University School of Social Work with a Master of Science degree with a concentration in Social Enterprise Administration. As a Social Enterprise Administration student, I have taken courses in Human Resource Management, Supervision and Staff Development. This knowledge coupled with my professional recruiting experience would enable me to excel as part of your recruiting team.

Throughout my graduate studies and professional career, I have advertised, marketed and recruited for social services programs. In previous positions, I collaborated with school administration and assigned liaison(s) to recruit participation and marketed an employment program to develop jobs for youth in both public agencies and non-profit organizations for New York City. I have also developed marketing materials and presented the Addiction Prevention Initiative to education, healthcare, housing, legal institutions and community residents in order to both recruit clients and foster/develop resources for the program. More recently, during my leadership of a healthy living committee, I recruited workshop facilitators and developed marketing materials to promote Healthy Living Week to over 300 consumers. I am committed to improving the healthcare services available to families and believe that accomplishing this goal depends on developing a strong and compassionate healthcare workforce.

I am eager to contribute to your mission of connecting top quality providers to clients in need and am confident in my abilities to identify and recruit strong candidates for your nursing staff. I look forward to meeting with you in person. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mary Clark

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A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

555 W. 55th Street, #4D
New York, NY 10023
March 10, 2007

Mr. Robert Burns
Director
Brooklyn Community Healthcare
37 West 14th Street
2nd Floor
New York, NY 10014

Dear Mr. Burns:

I would like to express my interest in applying my relevant experience to a position at Brooklyn Community Healthcare. I am a second year graduate student completing my Master of Social Work at the Columbia University School of Social Work. My concentration is in Advanced Clinical Social Work with a focus on Family, Youth and Children's Services. I am graduating in May and currently in the job search process. I believe that my skills and experience in the mental healthcare field make me an excellent candidate for a position in your organization.

My education, internships and past work experiences have provided me with the necessary skills to be successful in a community healthcare organization. As an intern at the Northeast Counseling Center, I conducted psychosocial assessments and treatment of children, adolescents, adults and families. I referred clients to community resources as needed. I also worked collaboratively with a team of psychologists, nurses and clinical social workers to set the Center's overall strategy and goals. As a social work intern at the Sisters Institute, I provided diagnostic evaluation and offered feedback to staff. I also developed and facilitated outreach to the surrounding community. Additionally, I have experience working as a crisis counselor on a suicide hotline where I provided help to adult and adolescent callers.

Attached please find my resume which includes specifics about my experiences. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to further discuss the potential opportunities within your organization. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mary Clark

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A CAREER PLANNING RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

◆ **NOTES**

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◆ **NOTES**

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Choices: Careers in Social Work. Washington, DC: NASW Press.

Columbia University School of Social Work: first and finest. Admissions catalog. 2006.

Core SEA Skill & Knowledge Set. Columbia University School of Social Work, New York: 2008.

Doelling, C. N. (1997). Social Work Career Development: A handbook for job hunting and career planning. Washington, DC: NASW Press.

Philanthropy. Wikipedia. July 2008.
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philanthropy>

TCCS Career Development Guide. Columbia University Teachers College Career Services. 2006.