



Nonprofit Leadership and Philanthropy Certificate

Career Guide

This guide is designed to assist you in preparing for a career in the nonprofit sector. As a student enrolled in the Nonprofit Leadership and Philanthropy Certificate, you have been trained to begin your career within a wide array of professional positions. Please set aside time to review all of these resources. If you need further assistance you can always reach out to your NLP certificate advisor.

Step 1: Spend some time reading through this guide and touring the pages that are linked throughout.

Step 2: Visit the Pomerantz Career Center [career communities page](#) to select an advisor that best aligns with your career interests (each community page lists the career advisors that are available and a link to schedule an appointment). This affords you more options about who can be helpful if you want to plan a career that aligns with both a nonprofit organization and your interest in a specific area. If you're not sure which career community to choose, select [Helping & Counseling](#) and you will get great assistance with your career planning.

Pomerantz Career Center

The Pomerantz Career Center is a great resource for all of your career questions. **Their [website](#) is full of resources and information.** The following pages on the Pomerantz website are useful for students pursuing a job.

[Career Coaching](#)

The Pomerantz Career Center has designated Career Advisors to help you with your career planning. Career advisors help you explore interests, skills, strengths and values to discover what you may want to do after graduation and develop a plan to help you get there. Starting early is important! Don't wait until your senior year to pay them a visit.

[My Career Path](#)

Students can now access Pomerantz Career Center expertise and advice 24/7! *My Career Path* recommends career development activities and tracks progress toward career milestones.

[Resume](#)

Resumes are usually required when applying for any kind of job. They capture all of your relevant experiences, so you want your resume to be the best representation of you on paper! Your resume is always a work in progress! And once you create one resume, it's easy to tailor it to each specific job you apply for.

Some tips for creating a great resume include creating your own format, keeping it to one page, using bullet points, and double checking all grammar and punctuation.

How to Create a Nonprofit Resume

It's important to craft a detailed resume highlighting your interest in the nonprofit industry. A nonprofit resume helps highlight your education, skills and overall qualifications in the nonprofit sector. It showcases your experiences working for nonprofits and provides employers with insight into the relevant skills you have in the industry. Resumes often feature important keywords from the job description. For example, they might highlight your experience engaging in community outreach, research, grant writing, volunteer work or other activities relevant to the field.

Cover Letter

Cover Letters often accompany your resume when applying for any kind of job. If you think of your resume as offering a quick snapshot of who you are, your cover letter provides the opportunity to expand upon your experiences and connect your specific skills and knowledge to the position. As you detail your most related experiences, don't simply repeat the bullet points on your resume. Instead, focus on the takeaway of your experiences - as a result of a particular experience, what new skills did you develop and what new knowledge did you gain? How does this connect to what the position is calling for? Like your resume, once you write one cover letter, it's easy to tailor it to each specific job you apply for.

Writing a cover letter when you lack direct experience in the duties and responsibilities listed in a job description requires a strategic approach. While you may not have specific experience in those areas, you can highlight your transferable skills, accomplishments, and your ability to quickly learn and adapt. Here's a step-by-step guide to help you craft an effective cover letter:

- *Express enthusiasm:* Convey your genuine interest in the position and the organization. Explain why you are excited about the opportunity and how it aligns with your long-term career goals. Highlight any relevant knowledge or passion you have for the mission.
- *Transferable skills:* Focus on your transferable skills that are relevant to the job. These are skills you've acquired in previous roles or experiences that can be applied to the position you're applying for. For example, if the job requires strong communication and problem-solving skills, mention how you've effectively communicated and solved problems in other situations.
- *Highlight achievements:* Share specific accomplishments that demonstrate your abilities and achievements in related areas. Emphasize your achievements that showcase your adaptability, quick learning, or ability to succeed in unfamiliar situations. This can be from previous jobs, courses, internships, volunteer work, or even personal projects.

- *Relevance to the role:* Connect your transferable skills and achievements to the specific requirements of the job. Analyze the job description carefully, identify the core competencies sought, and explain how your skills and achievements make you well-suited for the role. Use examples to illustrate your points.
- *Learning ability:* Acknowledge that you may lack direct experience but emphasize your willingness and ability to learn quickly. Mention your track record of quickly grasping new concepts and technologies. Demonstrate your commitment to ongoing learning and professional development.
- *Cultural fit:* Highlight your alignment with the organization's values and culture. Research the organization's mission, values, and culture, and explain how your own values and work ethic align with theirs. This shows your potential to integrate well into their team.
- *Conclusion:* Summarize your interest in the position and express your eagerness to discuss your potential contributions further. Thank the reader for considering your application and provide your contact information.
- *Proofread and edit:* Before submitting your cover letter, thoroughly proofread it to ensure there are no errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation. Make sure it is concise, clear, and well-structured.

Remember, a cover letter is your opportunity to showcase your skills, enthusiasm, and potential value to the employer. While lacking direct experience may seem like a disadvantage, focusing on your transferable skills, achievements, and learning ability can still make you a strong candidate.

[Mock Interviews](#)

Practice is always recommended when it comes to interviewing. After practicing several times, you will become more confident before the job interview.

The Pomerantz Career Center offers mock interview opportunities, so we highly recommend looking into those opportunities and signing up.

[Networking](#)

Making connections with people and developing mutually beneficial relationships can be beneficial to you throughout your career. It's a great way to gather and exchange information with your network and even ask for help and advice without feeling like you're imposing. Networking is important because it increases your visibility and can even provide future career opportunities.

To prepare, think of people you already know who could help. Participate in any opportunities that will introduce you to good connections for your network. Attend conferences, participate

in career fairs, and keep in touch with people you interview with. Professors and previous bosses can also be good resources.

And be sure you come up with an elevator pitch! Elevator pitches are a quick way to sell yourself when making introductions to strangers. An elevator pitch sets the stage for why someone would be interested in learning more about you. It can be used in a variety of settings including conferences, career fairs, grad school visits, social visits, and more.

Searching for Opportunities

There are many resources out there to help you find your next step, whether that's a job, graduate school, or a gap year.

Job Search

There are a variety of job boards you can access when searching for a job in the nonprofit sector. Visit the NLP website to view over 20 [Job Boards for Nonprofit Professionals](#) listed about halfway down the page. Also, check out this guy on LinkedIn - [Nick Martin](#). He talks about nonprofits, job seeking, global health, social impact, and international development.

Graduate School

The NLP website has a [list of related graduate programs](#) throughout the country for your convenience. Be sure to check out the [Master of Public Affairs](#) right here at the University of Iowa! The program offers a [Public and Nonprofit Management Concentration](#) including the [Undergraduate-to-Graduate \(U2G\)](#) option allowing students to earn a graduate degree in public affairs and an undergraduate degree in less time than would be required to obtain the two degrees independently. Here's [link](#) that will take you to a list of best Public Affairs programs.

The Pomerantz Career Center can help you [Plan For Graduate and Professional School](#) with many resources. Be sure to do your research, figure out what you want to study, and learn about schools with programs in your interest area. Applying for graduate or professional school may require an admission test, a statement of purpose, and letters of recommendation. The prime time for planning and applying is during your senior year of undergrad, but there is no wrong time and no such thing as "too late"!

Gap Year

Is a gap year right for you? Maybe you want to take some time off before deciding your next step. The Pomerantz Career Center has a list of [Gap Year Opportunities](#), including service programs, experiences abroad, fellowships, and more.