

Writing Strong Resume Bullet Points: Human and Social Services Industries

Turn experiences into impact using the SAR method

What do employers look for in these industries?

Effective resumes in these industries highlight measurable results, such as improved client well-being, increased access to services, stronger partnerships, or positive program outcomes. Overall, this handout will help you write strong accomplishment statements for roles in human and social services.

Tip: Remember to [customize your resume](#) by incorporating keywords from the job description. For additional guidance on formatting and structure, review our [Resume/CV templates](#).

SAR Method: Core Framework

- ✓ Your resume must contain concise bullet points to describe your experiences
- ✓ SAR statements effectively outline your accomplishments in a simple, informative way

What is SAR?

S = Situation: What was the context? (e.g., problems you encountered or tasks you took on)

A = Action: What did you specifically do? (e.g., use a strong past-tense [action verb](#))

R = Result: What changed because of your actions? (e.g., improvements or outcomes)

Note: When formatting a resume bullet point, the sequence should be Action + Situation + Result. Also, try to incorporate numbers, percentages, or dollar amounts to further demonstrate your impact.

A weak example for a summer internship could be:

- Helped clients at a community organization

A strong example for a summer internship using the SAR method could be:

- Supported newcomer clients through intake assessments, eligibility guidance, and referrals, improving access to community resources for 15 clients weekly

How the SAR Method was implemented:

ACTION: Supported

SITUATION: newcomer clients through intake assessments, eligibility guidance, and referrals,

RESULT: improving access to community resources for 15 clients weekly

Note: This statement includes industry-specific context and skills, clearly communicates the result or intent of the action, and incorporates numbers to strengthen its impact.

Tip: For current students, review the [Carleton Career Competencies](#) to identify the knowledge, skills, and attributes developed through your academic journey. These reflections can help articulate your employability and write stronger SAR statements.



Impact Levels: Early Experience vs Advanced Experience

This section will help you brainstorm the context of your work (Situation) and the impact of your contributions (Result), with sample examples tailored to your level of experience.

Early Experience (e.g., co-ops, placements, internships, projects, clubs, and entry-level roles)

Considerations for the Situation	Questions to Help Frame the Result
• Carleton Career Competencies (e.g., Communication, Diversity & Intercultural Awareness, or Community Engagement) • Needs or client populations (e.g., mental health, housing, newcomers, youth) • Settings or legislation (e.g., shelters, clinics, job agencies, OHRC, AODA, CYFSA)	• What services or supports did you provide? (e.g., # of client intakes, referrals, resources, appointments, workshops, events) • How did your work help clients? (e.g., better resource navigation, life skills, access) • What skills did you strengthen? (e.g., crisis intervention, case noting, advocacy)

Class Project: Interviewed 10 older adults during a community centre needs assessment, contributing to the identification of accessibility barriers and 5 AODA-based recommendations

Peer Support Volunteer: Facilitated weekly peer-support drop-ins that assisted 30 students per month in accessing campus well-being and academic support services

Advanced Experience (e.g., professional experience and leadership roles)

Considerations for the Situation	Questions to Help Frame the Result
• Program challenges being addressed (e.g., service delivery gaps, employment barriers, affordable housing access) • Evidence informing decisions (e.g., trends in intakes, demographics, surveys) • Partners or resources coordinated (e.g., healthcare teams, employers, government agencies, funding, charitable donations)	• What program improvements resulted? (e.g., reduced waitlists, fewer crisis interventions, revised intake criteria) • What practices did your work shape? (e.g., staff training, program standards) • What organizational results were achieved? (e.g., grants secured, targets surpassed, referral network expanded)

Program Coordinator: Developed an outreach proposal for ODSP recipients based on intake data, securing \$50,000 in funding and connecting 200 participants annually to employment supports

Case Manager: Implemented a coordinated housing navigation strategy across community partners, expanding the service network and exceeding annual housing targets by 25% in Q3

Other ways to show impact if you do not know exact numbers

- **Scope** (e.g., approximate # of intakes, workshops): Facilitated monthly life-skills workshops for 75-100 youth, strengthening financial literacy among participants
- **Scale** (e.g., approximate size of caseload): Coordinated care across 6 partner agencies within an addiction service network serving 200+ patients, reducing service duplication
- **Quality Improvements** (e.g., continuity of care, client navigation): Redesigned client resources by simplifying service pathways, improving navigation of community supports

Tip: Begin [tracking data](#) to incorporate stronger metrics into future SAR statements.

