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Homelessness in America: Heading Home Homeless Agency

Submitted by

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In partial fulfillment for the requirement of the degree

MASTER OF EDUCATION

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Approved by Dr. Carol Ann Sharicz, Faculty

Carol Sharicz

HOMELESSNESS IN AMERICA: HEADING HOME HOMELESS AGENCY

2

Abstract

Homelessness in America is not unique. In fact, homelessness in America has been part of the

American fabric for centuries. According to Wikipedia, homelessness surfaced as a national

issue in the 1870's; thousands of homeless people suffered in urban cities across the country.

(Stanford, 2018).

There was an extreme increase in homelessness in the United States after the Great Depression,

which generated nearly two million people migrating across the United States. In the 1980's

homelessness increased in America due to extreme budget cuts in social service programs and in

the year 2009, data showed 1.5 million children in the United States would be homeless. In 2013

the number of homelessness grew to 2.5 million (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Retrieved

from: https://www.history.com/topics/great-depression). Further data revealed an estimated

57,849 of those homeless in the United States were veterans with 8% female and nearly 85%

men. Homelessness affected youth under the age of 18 of nearly 58% of the population. This

paper will address effective training programs for homelessness in Boston, MA.

Keywords: Homelessness, Programs, Transitional Housing, Funding

Homelessness in America: Heading Home Homeless Agency

Table of Contents

Analysis Plan	4
Analysis Report	10
Learning/Performance Objectives	14
Instructional Strategy	15
Instructional Materials	15
Implementation	16
Evaluation Plan	16
References	17
Appendix A	19-24

Analysis Plan:

For my needs assessment, I researched three nonprofit agencies in Boston that are committed to end homelessness. Those agencies include, Heading Home, Pine Street Inn, and Boston Rescue Mission. Each of these agencies target the homeless population and have a shared goal to transform the lives of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. I conducted interviews with program managers from Boston Rescue Mission and Pine Street Inn. Through the phone interviews, I discovered each agency does offer supportive job training including transitional job training in food services and housekeeping. Pine Street Inn offers a food services training program that prepared men and women for employment in the food services industry (Retrieved from: http://www.pinestreetinn.org/our_programs/job_training). Boston Rescue Mission offers a program for veterans that includes motivational interviewing to prepare veterans for employment and time management (Retrieved from:

https://www.brm.org/veterans-programs).

Each agency receives funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and other sources. Heading Home, another non-profit agency committed to end homelessness in Boston, was established in 1971. In working with the program manager of the Economic Mobility Center, it was discovered that Heading Home offered a different approach to its target audience. In addition to offering transitional and permanent housing, Heading Home encourages economic mobility using a multi-layered service approach. Through the economic mobility center, individuals can take part of services that include, housing, job training and placement, GED/Higher Education, life skills, financial literacy and asset development. Heading Home clients take part of employment education workshops that include motivational interviewing, financial planning, resume building workshops and coaching--all of which impact long-term success. Although obtaining shelter and housing is the first and foremost important aspect in serving the homeless, it is essential to provide training programs and services to help support their long-term success to ensure long-term and overall success.

An article published by Sage in 2014 highlight the positive and long-term impact job coaching could have on the homeless in achieving and sustaining employment. Through the program, Ready for Work, homeless individuals, or those at risk to become homeless are integrated in to the labor market through learning essential employable skills aimed at gaining and sustaining employment. Below is an excerpt of their findings highlighting 579 clients maintaining steady employment for three months and 400 clients sustaining employment for up to 12 months through their **Ready for Work** Program for the homeless:

Overall 4,402 clients participated in this program during the time period described previously. In this study, we included 2,480 clients with full data for analyzing the first research question. Seven hundred and forty-four of these clients successfully started employment and could therefore be included in the analysis of the second research question—the association between job coach support and the probability of sustaining employment. Five hundred and seventy-nine clients managed to sustain in employment for at least 3 months, 400 clients for at least 6 months and 210 for at least 12 months. (*Retrieved from:* https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5019281/)

Homelessness in America is not unique. In fact, homelessness in America has been part of the American fabric for centuries. According to Wikipedia, homelessness surfaced as a national issue in the 1870's; thousands of homeless people suffered in urban cities across the country (Retrieved from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homelessness in the United States).

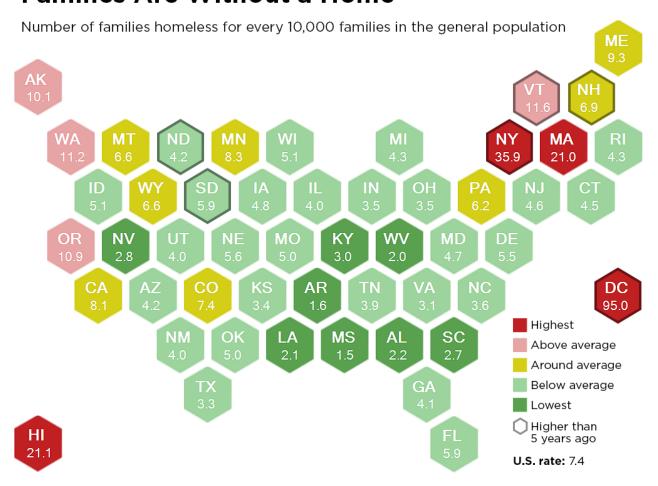
There was an extreme increase in homelessness in the United States after the Great Depression, which generated nearly two million people migrating across the United States. In the 1980's homelessness increased in America due to extreme budget cuts in social service programs and in the year 2009, data showed 1.5 million children in the United States would be homeless. In 2013 the number of homelessness grew to 2.5 million (Retrieved from: https://www.history.com/topics/great-depression). Further data revealed an estimated 57,849 of those homeless in the United States were veterans with 8% female and nearly 85% men. Homelessness affected youth under the age of 18 of nearly 58% of the population.

Known as the worst economic decline in history, the Great Depression severely affected industrialized industries across the world which lasted from 1929 to 1939. This period had huge impact on the crash of the stock market in 1929 and by 1933 the Great Depression hit bottom where approximately 15 million Americans were unemployed and financial institutions were wiped out (Retrieved from: https://www.history.com/topics/great-depression). The impact of

the Great Depression forced many Americans to purchase items on credit, which in turn produced debt, foreclosures and homelessness.

The National Alliance to End Homeless, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization who is committed to preventing and ending homeless in the United States produced the following snapshot which shows the states in the United States highly affected by homelessness.

On Any Given Night in the US, Nearly 60,000 Families Are Without a Home



Source: Homelessness data are from the *2017 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress, Part 1.* Population data are from the American Community Survey 2016 1-year estimates, available on American FactFinder.



The National Alliance to End Homelessness Report states homelessness is not experienced equally across all states; the snapshot reveals the three states and the District of

Columbia have rates far higher than the national average (District of Columbia: 95.0; New York: 35.9; Hawaii: 21.1; Massachusetts: 21.0). Five states and the District of Columbia have rates of family homelessness that are higher than they were five years ago (2012).

(Retrieved from: https://endhomelessness.org/resource/family-homelessness-in-the-united-states-state-by-state-snapshot/)

Further, the January 2017 National Alliance to End Homelessness report revealed there are approximately 553,742 homeless people currently in the United States (Retrieved from: https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/homelessness-statistics/state-of-homelessness-report/). The conditions that lead to homelessness are many; however, the causes of homelessness are consistent from state-to-state. Conditions such as low-income, affordable housing, health, domestic violence, employable skills, attainting and sustainable livable wages are considered common circumstances that lead to homelessness.

The National Alliance to End Homelessness practices a coordinated systems approach in offering program services and housing. Those services include gathering data about the needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness and connecting that data in community-wide strategic plans. The approach involved replacing local programs and services with national coordinated data-driven response. The aim of the data approach was to collect and analyze information to uncover the needs of the homeless and to use that data to help inform how to allocate resources, services, and programs nationally.

The National Alliance to End Homelessness engages its target audience with pathways to employment through investments in subsidized employment and programs that are funded under the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act, which is made available through the Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Education (*Retrieved from:*

https://www.doleta.gov/wioa/). The WIOA exists to improve the nation's public workforce system and help move Americans through significant barriers around employment. The WIOA Resource Page provides information and resources for states, local areas, non-profits and other grantees, and other stakeholders to assist with implementation of the Act. This page is updated to reflect newly developed materials, including responses to frequently asked questions. The programs do not specifically address a standard economic mobility model that provide a strategic

process that ensures homeless families gain the skills, training and development needed that will help families transition from homelessness to sustained economic mobility.

Funding is an enormous part to ensure states are able to provide much needed services and programs to tackle the homeless epidemic in the United States. See Table 1 below. In January 2018, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development released information listing awards of \$2billion to thousands of local homeless assistance programs in the U.S. The report outlined support of more than 7,300 local homeless assistance programs (Retrieved from: https://www.hud.gov/press/press_releases_media_advisories/hud_no_18_001).

Table 1: States and Funded Allotted

State	Number of Local Programs Funded	Total Awarded
Alabama	59	\$17,752,162
Alaska	23	\$3,731,246
Arizona	96	\$38,526,473
Arkansas	26	\$4,268,229
California	900	\$382,566,777
Colorado	68	\$30,590,720
Connecticut	147	\$45,869,536
Delaware	31	\$7,952,480
District of Columbia	50	\$22,090,633
Florida	327	\$83,226,614
Georgia	185	\$41,017,540
Guam	7	\$1,095,776
Hawaii	35	\$11,762,496
Idaho	28	\$3,717,376

Illinois	418	\$109,110,715
Indiana	95	\$19,300,787
Iowa	52	\$9,108,676
Kansas	48	\$7,835,720
Kentucky	105	\$19,389,282
Louisiana	151	\$46,623,544
Maine	39	\$12,932,975
Maryland	185	\$50,221,552
Massachusetts	<mark>275</mark>	\$73,552,552
Michigan	296	\$70,250,446
Minnesota	217	\$33,094,266
Mississippi	27	\$5,026,382
Missouri	145	\$35,698,886
Montana	17	\$2,500,597
Nebraska	50	\$9,050,905
Nevada	49	\$15,864,846
New Hampshire	63	\$7,253,904
New Jersey	248	\$45,902,844
New Mexico	59	\$10,728,359
New York	579	\$200,807,611
North Carolina	157	\$25,573,629
North Dakota	18	\$1,802,967
Ohio	316	\$95,840,276
Oklahoma	67	\$8,123,906
Oregon	128	\$36,277,567
Pennsylvania	519	\$102,583,484

Rhode Island	38	\$5,796,184
South Carolina	59	\$9,954,311
South Dakota	10	\$1,294,469
Tennessee	128	\$20,733,768
Texas	205	\$88,239,025
Utah	55	\$10,381,345
Vermont	22	\$4,632,864
Virginia	152	\$29,765,050
Washington	191	\$59,556,796
West Virginia	63	\$8,327,359
Wisconsin	95	\$23,750,589
Wyoming	5	\$292,329
Total	7328	\$2,011,348,825

Funding is an essential element to help end and prevent homelessness. Funding also plays a critical role in creating innovative program and services to help its target audience gain the independence and economic mobility. In order for agencies who are committed to end homelessness and provide sustainable programs that help move families and individuals to a place of economic mobility and independence, it is essential they continue to receive the support and funding to make ending homeless a reality.

Analysis Report

Heading Home is a non-profit organization that provides emergency, transitional, and permanent housing and support services to low-income homeless families and individuals in the communities of Boston, Cambridge, Somerville, Medford, Malden, Everett, Quincy, Chelsea, and Revere. Heading Home was founded in 1974 and established its first program. The program was established in Cambridge, MA, and serves as its longest-running program serving 21 adults. Regarded as Greater Boston's go-to solution for homeless families, Heading Home has over 40

years hands-on experience in successfully bringing solutions to the homeless. Having created more than 350 units of housing since 2006, Heading Home operates an innovative economic mobility center that helps parents gain essential life and employment skills.

Heading Home has a multi-layered service program encompassing a coaching and training tool that help families achieve economic mobility. Components of their program roll out in this order: housing, job training, GED/Higher Education, life skills, financial literacy, and asset development. According to their statistics, 95%+ of homeless families are headed by a single mother with minimal education which could lead to low-wage employment and inability to pay rent and utilities. Most families are headed by a single mother in their 20's. A gap in their program involves instructional guides for trainers.

Most of the clients served live in Roxbury and Dorchester. The center offers conference space for group learning, private meeting rooms for one-on-one coaching, free child care and computers. The current instructional guides do not meet the goals of adequately preparing instructors to teach content, specifically, creating a resume and explaining the components of a standard cover letter. The homeless clients that participate in the workshops are left uncertain how to list their past employment accomplishments on a resume, and the instructors are unsure how to explain why important sections are required on a resume. This creates the opportunity to update the instructional guides for the instructors at Heading Home. With an updated instructional guide on the fundamentals of creating a resume and cover letter, instructors will be able to provide its target audience essential information and samples in a way that supports a person that has been away from the workforce and in transition. Further, the updated instructional guide would include basic instructional design methodologies that would help ensure instructors are providing context in a consistent manner that is easy to understand and apply. The instruction guide will include resume and cover letter sample and include footnotes that cover basic concepts.

Research consisted of observing past trainings that were recorded and taking note of the question and answer segment of the training. Observations included Heading Home clients asking questions about material previously covered as well as uncertainty in having the

knowledge to produce a basic resume and cover letter. Additionally, an examination of the Heading Home current instructional guide displayed unorganized material with outdated resume and cover letter concepts as well as inconsistency in explanation and process. Unlike the current instructional guide, an updated guide would include basic resume writing and cover letter concepts that are unique to people transitioning back to work.

According to Heading Home's 2015 annual report, the number of homeless individuals experiencing homelessness has more than doubled since 1990 and more than 50% of homeless mothers lack a high school diploma. A large percentage of Heading Home's clients suffer traumatic, chronic homelessness and physical disabilities that could easily limit their ability to visit the economic mobility center. A thorough interview with Heading Home's program manager and training manager revealed important characteristics about the target audience, such as experiencing unemployment for over 10 years and lack of self-confidence. Additional meetings and interviews determined the desired design of the instructional guide. Further assessment involved collecting information about the target audience past work history, mental health condition, current resources available, career aspirations, setbacks, and life skills.

Heading Home's goal is to end homelessness in Greater Boston by providing a supported pathway to self-sufficiency, case management and innovative programs such as life skills, financial literacy, and job training. Through its 40+years of expertise in ending homelessness, having served 1,600 people annually including 700+ families, a 90+ client retention rate in their permanent housing programs for 11 consecutive years and creating 350+ new units of housing since 2006, Heading Home is positioned for growth and continue to progress in serving homeless families. Through close collaboration with its training partners, donors, community partners, and case management tools, Heading Home plans to continue to offer comprehensive services that will lead families to economic mobility and independence. The organization also plans to extend their services by collaborating with outside counseling, medical and mental health providers, and child care services.

An updated instructional guide was designed, developed, and implemented for trainers at Heading Home. The guide is blended and includes instructional design concepts with context in the basics of resume writing and cover letters. Given samples, instruction, and materials, trainers at Heading Home will be able to provide goal-oriented training for creating a basic resume and cover letter, which are essential marketing tools to obtain employment. The project was completed by April 2018. Project deliverables will included creating an updated instructional guide utilizing PowerPoint, samples and supported material, such as action verb list, and accomplishment sample list. The course includes PowerPoint presentations, voice threads, media such as YouTube video and handouts. Content includes samples of resumes and cover letters. Analyzing the current design of the Heading Home instructional guide, the designer produced an updated guide that utilizes instructional design principles, driven outcomes and assessment.

One aspect of anticipated training intervention will involve exploring the frequency of current career development training offered at the economic mobility center. Client attendance for trainings were also explored. Other interventions involved obtaining evaluations from the program manager to determine if training in resume writing and cover letters adequately prepares Heading Home clients to obtain fulfilling employment and increase their confidence. Further intervention revealed clients' comfort in producing a resume and cover letter based on their past employment experience.

Evaluation strategy assesses a client's overall engagement and enjoyment and whether material and content presented was understood and appropriate for needs. Using a summative evaluation process, Heading Home clients will have the opportunity to provide input regarding what worked and which aspects of the guide they would modify. The summative evaluation will also provide the instructional designer critical feedback on goals and objectives achieved, overall success and areas of improvement. A comparison of time spent to create a basic resume and cover letter and learning achieved throughout a training will be evaluated. Evaluation for trainers will include questions about the design, use of guide, engagement, and interactivity with other clients.

The project was planned in stages and operates in conjunction with the capstone timeline. The designer provided Heading Home's program manager and/or leadership with a project plan including agreed upon goals and objectives. The plan served as an agreement for the designer and Heading Home and defined the project, expectations and scope, assumptions and constraints and project timeline. The project approach included the following objectives:

- Phase 1: Undertake needs assessment and interviews with program manager of economic mobility center and executive director
- Phase 2: Develop a project plan with agreed goals and objectives, deliverables, timeline, and installation of course
- Phase 3: Design draft course outline and discuss with Heading Home program manager, modify as needed
- Phase 4: Develop course and materials, test course with program manager, modify as needed
- Phase 5: Implement course
- Phase 6: Produce summative evaluation

Learning/Performance Objectives:

Trainers at Heading Home will be expected to perform the following:

- 1. Supplying basic resume and cover letter concepts and sample, trainers will be able to explain essential sections of a resume and cover letter.
- 2. Utilizing samples, trainers will be able to demonstrate the difference between a chronological, functional and combination resume.
- 3. Trainers will be able to evaluate knowledge acquired by clients through presentation of basic resume and cover letter.

Instructional Strategy:

The goal to help the trainers at Heading Home's Economic Mobility Center included providing a presentation of the updated instruction guide. The presentation was conducted using PowerPoint and handouts of the instruction guide.

Each trainer at Heading Home presented from the updated guide and shared the context to other trainers. Trainers in the audience acted as clients and asked questions and provided feedback on key concepts shared. Trainers presenting conducted a brief exercise where classroom trainers gave a verbal description of how they could apply learning goals in a training session with Heading Home clients. Lessons in the instructional strategy included an overview of key concepts for basic resume and cover letters, essential information required in the heading, profile, and areas of expertise sections. We utilized absorb, do and connect framework (Horton, (2011).

Learning/Performance Objectives

- Trainers will absorb the context by watching a presentation and reading the updated instructional guide.
- Trainers will conduct a 10-minute presentation and practice answering questions from the class.
- Trainers will be given basic resumes and cover letters and connect the concepts they
 have learned to the material.

Instructional Materials/Develop:

The designer created PowerPoint slides. The slides consisted of concepts for three resume types, chronological, functional and combination. Slides comprised basic concepts of creating a basic cover letter. Samples of types of cover letters and resumes were provided on the slides. Materials were created based on the current instruction guide provided by Heading Home and new concepts in basic resume and cover letters were included. A variety of position samples were included for each resume type. The PowerPoint slides included the Heading Home company logo, font, color and mission statement. The material was taught through a lecture approach and the assessment was

conducted by learner's demonstration through presentation. The estimated time for the designer to present the new material was 90 minutes.

Implementation:

The designer conducted a meeting with the program managers and trainers of Heading Home and presented a draft instructional binder. Input from trainers was gathered and has been incorporated in the final project.

Evaluation Plan:

The evaluation process consisted of two parts. The first part involved the trainers at Heading Home demonstrating their knowledge in resume and cover letter concepts and their ability to communicate the material to the clients. The second part included the clients of Heading Home applying the concepts and producing a basic resume and cover letter based on their past employment experience.

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Appendix A: Resume Series Workshop Presentation for Heading Home



Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives

By the end of the workshop learners will be able to:

- 1. Describe the purpose of a resume and its main components.
- 2. Write a basic resume using a template and drawing on work experience.
- 3. Demonstrate knowledge of work experience through mock-interview with classmate.



Questions Asked to Class Participants During Presentation

A Well Written Resume

Answers Three Questions

1. Who are you?

Clearly state the position you seek to fill at the top.

2. What have you done?

Highlight the skills, expertise and value you provided to an employer.

3. What Can you do for the Employer?

Describe how your unique skills and experience support the position.



Resume Guidelines

Resume Guidelines

- 1. Start with the section that is simplest.
- 2. Your resume should be clear and concise.
- 3. Use Action-Verbs.
- 4. Sell don't Tell what you have done.
- 5. Margins (be mindful).
- 6. Make employment dates easy to find on resume.
- 7. Avoid jargon that impairs understanding.



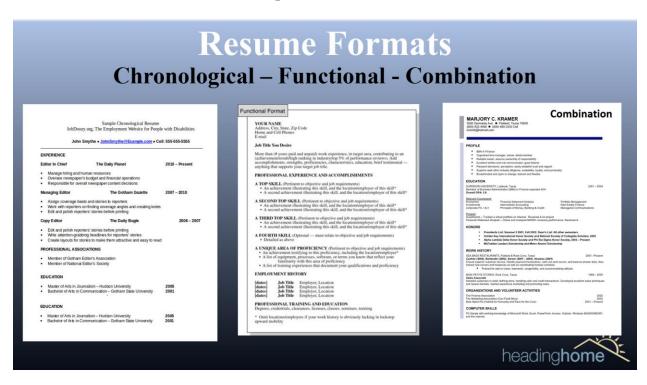
Resume Heading Outline

Common Elements of a Resume

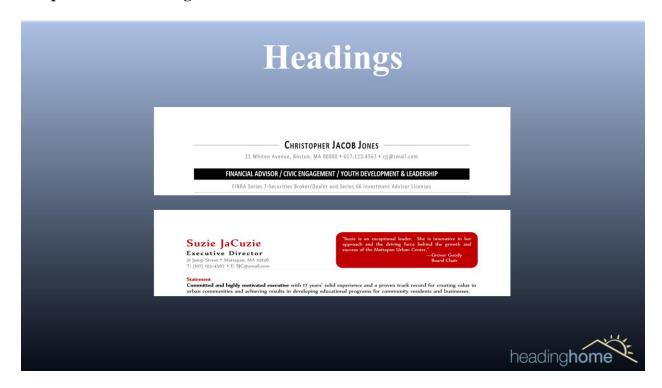
- 1. HEADING (Full Name, Address, Telephone Number, Email Address and if possible, professional LinkedIn profile)
- 2. TARGET POSITION
- 3. PROFILE
- 4. AREAS OF EXPERTISE
- 5. EXPERIENCE (Typically, CV's list education first. New graduates list education first)
- 6. EDUCATION AND AFFILIATIONS



Resume Formats Covered in Workshop



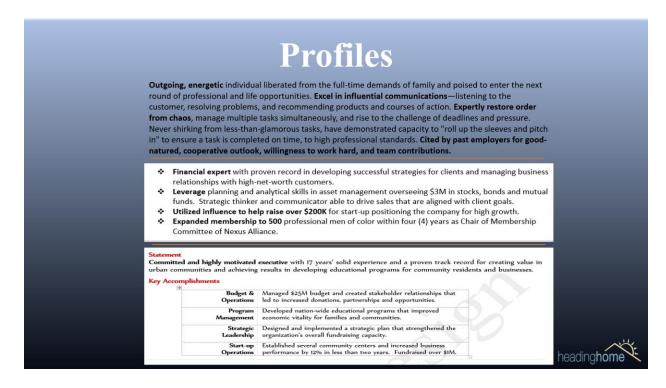
Sample Resume Headings



Sample Resume Target Positions



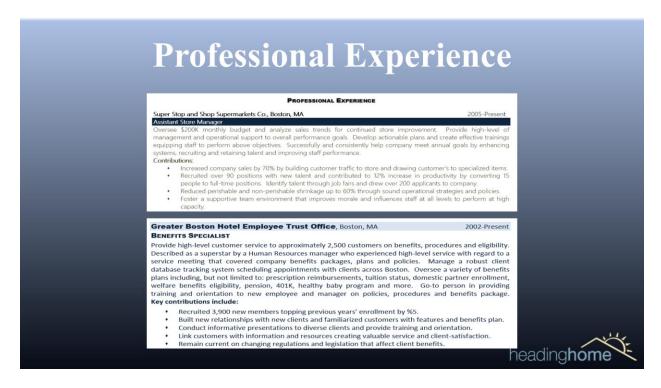
Sample Resume Profiles



Sample Resume Areas of Expertise



Sample Resume Professional Experience



Sample Resume Education & Professional Affiliate

