

# The VanKirk Career Center

Pitt School of Social Work

"It's your career. Make it happen"

## Now is the time

Are you graduating this term? If so, now is the time to get organized and develop your job search strategy. Yes, a strategy!

### Update your resume and have a basic cover letter ready to go.

- Create a list of agencies to which you have an interest in applying
- Use an excel spread sheet or create tables in MS Word
- Use job search sites ( Monster, Indeed, ZipRecruiter, CareerBuilder, Linkup)
- Consider creating job alerts from various job sites
- Visit NASW Career websites
- Update or Setup your LinkedIn account
- Apply directly on the agency's website
- Ask if an agency is hiring via phone call or email (cold contacting)
- Utilize your social and professional networking
- Think quality over quantity in your job search
- Let your professional references know that you have started your job search

Review all job descriptions carefully and answer this question " Do I have the skills that the agency requires?" If half of your skills match what the agency is seeking and you meet other qualifications, you should apply for that job.



## Spotlighting the: Cover Letter

First of all, a cover letter should always accompany your resume. Cover letters must receive the same deference as the resume. There should be no errors. While it's not a lengthy document (typically one page), it is a writing sample. Writing cover letters can be challenging. A cover letter aims to align your skills and experiences with what the employer is seeking in a candidate. You are also aligning with the agency by acknowledging shared values.

One of the critical parts of the cover letter is the first paragraph, more specifically, the first sentence. If you want the reader to keep reading your cover letter, rethink your opening line and engage the reader. Move away from the generic cover letter opening lines. The opening lines should tell the employer that your cover letter is written for their agency. An example, " When I became aware of your community organizer position, I knew it was the job for me." From there, you should continue to tell the employer more about you. Briefly mention how you learned of this opportunity and state what you know about the agency intrigues you.

The second paragraph tells the agency why your skills match what they are looking for in a candidate. You are not rewriting your resume but instead aligning your skills to the job description. It's always a good idea to have the job description available while crafting a cover letter. Be sure to use relevant keywords from the job description.



**Behavioral interview questions ask how the candidate has handled similar situations in the past. The best way to answer is by using the STAR Method. "Tell me about a time when you had to solve a difficult problem?"**

Tell a story!

**You would give the:**

**Situation**

**Task**

**Action**

**Results**

**How to prepare for those traditional interview questions?**

**Tell me about yourself.**

**Where do you see yourself in 5 years?**

**What are your strengths?**

**What are your weaknesses ?**

**The answer is: Practice, Practice, Practice!**



## Announcements

1. The VanKirk Career Center is hosting a virtual “Meet & Greet” for the **Holy Family Institute**. Dawn Morgenstern will give an overview of the agency and the many job opportunities available: Friday, March 12, 2021, 12:00 - 1:30 pm.  
Register in advance for this virtual **Meet & Greet**:  
<https://pitt.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJAlc-GrqTorE9ZVMBIUNMWDDhu2neyvS8BY>  
After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.
2. Pitt Social Work Mentoring Week: Just one hour to expand your network and invest in your post-graduation success!  
Week of March 15. Register for the event at [https://pitt.col.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_2oxN7PiWPdtY0gm](https://pitt.col.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2oxN7PiWPdtY0gm)
3. Pitt Social Work Alumni Speaker Series: The “Importance of Staying Connected: How your professors will be your colleagues.”  
Tuesday, March 23, Noon - 1:00 PM  
Jody Bechtold, LCSW, CEO - The Better Institute  
Robert Bumbaco, LCSW, COO - The Better Institute  
RSVP link is <http://bit.ly/2NQXpeC>
4. Update Your Resume Now. **Pitt SSW is hosting a Virtual Job Fair**  
When: Mar 25, 2021, 11:30 AM - 3:00 PM  
Register in advance for this Virtual Job Fair:  
[https://pitt.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJcrf-mqz8rGteH6\\_63OIRTGBMA0M\\_SPCmd](https://pitt.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJcrf-mqz8rGteH6_63OIRTGBMA0M_SPCmd)  
After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.  
You will also receive additional information about the format prior to the start of the job fair.
5. UPMC has several MSW openings at the Presbyterian and Shadyside campuses. You can apply at [UPMC.com](http://UPMC.com) or for additional information, please contact Mary Veiheffer, MSW, LCSW, Sr. Manager Social Work, Collaborative Care at [veihdefferme@upmc.edu](mailto:veihdefferme@upmc.edu)
6. The Baker Fellowship Program  
**Eligibility:**  
Student must be second year or advanced standing, full-time, in direct practice, and completing a specialization field placement during the 2021 - 2022 academic year.  
GPA of 3.5 (preferred)  
U.S. citizen, as mandated by HRSA guidelines.  
Fellows receive a \$10,000 stipend  
**Application Deadline: March 15, 2021 - Website: [CLICK HERE TO APPLY](#)**  
**Or contact the Baker Fellowship Program Manager, Sinika Calloway, MSW, LSW, at: [ssc43@pitt.edu](mailto:ssc43@pitt.edu)**
7. The application process for the **UPMC 2021 AMDUR Social Work Fellowship in Palliative Care** is open.  
The deadline is April 1 for this summer fellowship. There is a \$500 stipend. The fellowship application is on the VanKirk Career Center Canvas site in the fellowship module section. You have to accept the invitation from Canvas for access to the VanKirk Career Center’s site.

**If you have any questions or would like to schedule an appointment, please email me at: [bobby@pitt.edu](mailto:bobby@pitt.edu)**

**Bobby Simmons, LSW**  
**Director of Career Services**  
**VanKirk Career Center**  
**Pitt School of Social Work**