

living the life you dream

what's next: a sample statement:

A recent graduate emailed our office to ask for help with her job search. Below is a portion of her email. Writing a statement like this could be used to ask for help with a job search, it will aid you in writing a resume/cover letter, and it can help you clarify what you want.

My plan is to pursue a masters degree in urban planning in 2007, so over the next year I'd like to spend some time pursuing new opportunities and experiences I can carry with me to this next stage in life.

If you know me at all, you know that I have high expectations for myself and the people I surround myself with. So it should come as no surprise that I'm being quite picky in my job hunt. This is to say, it's very important that I work with people who are open-minded, challenge themselves, have a global worldview, and are passionate about their work's mission. A satisfying work environment is paramount to all other criteria including salary, field of work, number of hours, etc. The only caveat is that I am 99.9% determined to find a job where my primary responsibilities would not include fundraising (in any non-profit I have to assume some level of fundraising will be required, but I definitely want to steer clear of development-related positions).

So you may be asking yourself, "just what is it that you want to do?" good question, friend o' mine! The short answer is: anything! The I'm-too-young-to-have-a-career-and-I'm-looking-for-that-diamond-in-the-ruff-job answer is:

General Criteria:

- I'm partial to libraries, museums, parks, and schools, institutions intended to be the pillars of communities and that ideally provide free and open access to its resources.
- I'd love to work in Asian American/South Asian American communities, but any organization working toward ideals of social justice especially in communities of color is fine.
- Any organizations focusing on girls/women would be great.
- Any position where I'd be making nebulous ideas concrete realities. That's fun for me.
- Public or non-profit only. I will not work for a for-profit company. Small organizations are great, medium good, large okay. Full or part-time are okay. I'm not too interested in positions that are solely administrative. I would love to have a job where I can combine the big picture organizational stuff with direct service/programming.
- I'm open to crazy quirky creative stuff too. Stuff that when you see the posting you think to yourself, that sounds like fun!, but you already have a job so it doesn't really cross your mind again. It has to be a job where the minimum commitment is no more than 1.5 years.
- It has to be in NYC.

Continued on reverse...



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Specifically related to urban planning:

-I'm most interested in community development and social planning, particularly strategies that integrate communities in the planning process. I'm interested in the ways resources are allocated and denied, the roles local politicians play in decision-making processes, how communities are planned to welcome/keep out immigrant and low-income populations, and how information on community decision-making processes is communicated through various levels to empower those most affected by changes. I could go on. I'm interested in other aspects of planning such as how spaces are designed to create specific feelings of safety or home, and how transportation, housing, and comm. dev. folks work collaboratively to make change.

Specifically related to schools:

-I'm interested in the parent coordinator position, recently instituted in NYC public school. But it would have to be at the right school. Any leads on schools looking to hire for Sept. 06, with supportive and competent principals, let me know.

I could probably go on and on, but I think you get the picture. I should be so lucky to find something that fits even half of the criteria above, but what I'm hoping by sending this around is that you can help me extend my eyes and ears and expand my 'network' as it were. I've done all the traditional things you're supposed to do when looking for a job. I thought I'd put myself out there in this way just on the off chance one of you comes across a resource that might be helpful to me. So, to summarize, here are the ways you might be able to help me out:

1) If you happen to hear of a job or volunteer opportunity you think I could be interested in, please do pass it on to me.

2) If you know of anyone working in any aspect of urban planning who would a) be willing to sit down with me for a half hour to talk about the work they do and their niche in the field of urban planning and/or b) hook me up with an opportunity to gain some practical experience whether it be through volunteering or an internship, do let me know how I can get in contact with them.

Embracing the unknown,

*searching suzzie

