

RESEARCH ADVOCACY: Preparing Your Research Advocate Resume

This PIP Digest will help you create a resume that you can use to promote your cancer research advocacy experience and skills.

Key Concept

- Showcasing your skills

Related PIP Digest

- Research Advocacy: Attending a Scientific Conference

“There are many types of cancer advocacy. Research advocacy is a specific type of advocacy that focuses on how advocates can be involved in cancer research. Research advocacy means different things to different people. Although the activities of research advocates may vary, the purpose is similar: To actively participate in all aspects of research – from basic bench science through to the implementation of practice changing interventions that benefit patients.”¹

There are many ways to structure your research advocate resume. In this PIP Digest, we are highlighting one example – a skills-based resume.

The components include:

- Summary statement: This should demonstrate your lived experience and summarize your advocacy interests.
- Bullet list of most applicable skills: This can be the most challenging section to write, so take some time to build an inventory of skill sets and then tailor according to the position or opportunity.
- Experience summary: Use either a chronological summary or functional summary (e.g. advocacy, education, support or research). It is helpful to maintain a master list of experience and update it annually. This will make it easy to tailor your resume for each position.

¹From https://cisncancer.org/advocacy/research_advocacy.html

Skills

Just like a resume that you would prepare for a job in your professional life, your cancer research advocate resume needs to showcase your skills. Although lived experience is beneficial, many applicants will also have lived experience. Lived experience provides you with knowledge, not skills.

To tailor your resume, consider the position for which you are applying and reflect on what you've done in the past that may relate. What are you good at doing in your work life or home life?

A resume introduces you to the researcher or the charity, healthcare, or government organization that you want to work with. It should highlight your unique blend of talents and experience.

It is important to demonstrate that you understand and are interested in the research that the researcher's lab is engaged, or the mandate and role of the organization/charity. You want to make it evident why you are the perfect match. Showing that you already feel passionate about the tasks you will be doing or role you will be filling is a major plus.

Experience

Experiences and qualifications related to the key requirements of the position or research project should be clearly stated and stand out boldly.

List how your experience applies to the advocate position. Include personal accomplishments, perhaps framing them in new ways to showcase them.

Participating in CCRA's Patient Involvement in Cancer Research Program (PIP) or other related programs are helpful to highlight.

Formatting Tips

- Be concise. Use bullet lists where appropriate. Keep your resume to one page if possible; two pages maximum.
- Keep it simple. Use easy-to-read fonts like Arial, Verdana, Calibri, and Times New Roman. Font size should be between 10 and 12 to allow for readability.
- Be consistent. All headers should be the same.
- Don't get flashy. Keep font styles to a minimum (one or two). Use one or two colours. It may be printed in black and white or grayscale so avoid using light colours.

Below is an excerpt from the Author's research advocate resume illustrates the concepts described in this PIP Digest.

PATIENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM PARTICIPANT, 2017

CANADIAN CANCER RESEARCH CONFERENCE VANCOUVER 2017

- The goal of the Patient Involvement Program is to strengthen the capacity of patients to act as advisors to cancer research projects, researchers, and research funders or as advocates for patient involvement in research.
- Attended the conference as one of 14 patient representatives. Gained knowledge of the scientific research process and ongoing advances in cancer research.
- Co-chaired the session on "Mechanisms of Metastasis". Began the session with a storytelling presentation explaining how research has helped me with my treatment regimes and treatment decisions.
- Shared the patient perspective with researchers at the poster session, question and answer periods of the facilitated sessions and at networking events.
- Made connections with individual researchers who have labs with multiple research projects for metastatic breast cancer.