

Life after AmeriCorps and VISTA: Translating your experience into job speak

General competencies – life and work skills

There are many competencies that apply to ALL jobs. These are the competencies that you've been developing through your whole life. You take those skills with you to any job. Sometimes people get "hired for their technical skills... but fired for their general work skills".

To translate your experience into a language that an employer can understand, it is very important to:

- **Name the competency or skill**
- **Give an example of a time when you used or learned the skill**
- **Identify ways the skill applies to the job you want and to clearly tell the potential employer how you think your skills match with the job requirements. It's up to you to help them connect the dots for them.**

Exercise:

1. On the competency list, select your top 15 skills. Mark the first ones that jump out at you. Go over the list again to see if you've missed any.
2. Go over the list again and **put a star or two by the Top 5 skills** – the ones you think are *the strongest or becoming stronger*. Pick skills you are proud of and want to *strengthen* even if you're not fabulous *yet*. By focusing on them, you soon will be fabulous!
3. Begin writing the list of "technical skills", those specific skills that apply to your job. It doesn't mean just computer skills.
Examples are: Teaching children to prepare for earthquakes; Using knowledge of how to apply for college to mentor high school kids; Teaching reading to children who don't speak English.
4. Write down an example for each of the Top Skills of a time when you used the skill. Write about what you did, what you learned and the impact it had on you and the situation.
5. For each of your skills or competencies, develop at least one example of a specific time when you used the skill. For example, "there was a time last fall when I helped two students resolve a conflict. I did this by...."
6. For every job you want, review the list of competencies and imagine which competencies are required for that job. Think of a time when you displayed that competency. Describe the examples in interviews or in your cover letter.

Good luck!

Competencies

Thinking Skills

1. _____ Analyze and Solve Problems
2. _____ Make Sound Decisions
3. _____ Make Sound Recommendations
4. _____ Innovate-create new solutions

Administration

5. _____ Write Project Plans
6. _____ Work Efficiently
7. _____ Manage Programs
8. _____ Manage Projects
9. _____ Manage Volunteers
10. _____ Recruit Volunteers

Leadership

11. _____ Lead a team
12. _____ Demonstrate Leadership as a member
13. _____ Motivate and inspire others
14. _____ Coach Others
15. _____ Adapt to Change
16. _____ Lead Change

Interpersonal Skills

17. _____ Build Relationships
18. _____ Manage Disagreements and conflict
19. _____ Be a strong team member

Technical Competencies that apply to your specific work. For example, Teach children about safety; disaster relief etc.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

20. _____ Create partnerships
21. _____ Engage diverse groups to participate
22. _____ Lead Meetings Effectively

Communication

23. _____ Speak Effectively
24. _____ Listen openly
25. _____ Prepare Written Communication
26. _____ Make presentations

Motivation

27. _____ Demonstrate Drive and Commitment

Personal Management

28. _____ Act with Integrity. Take responsibility for personal actions
29. _____ Demonstrate Flexibility
30. _____ Develop Yourself-learn new things
31. _____ Strong sense of self-worth and capabilities
32. _____ Commit to Quality-strive to meet a standard of excellence
33. _____ Anticipate, Recognize and Meet Customer Needs
34. _____ Overcome difficult challenges
35. _____ Manage crises
36. _____ Maintain a positive attitude in the midst of chaos

6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

ASSIGNMENT: Select your top 15 competencies –your best skills. Then put stars ** by the Top 5