

Introduction

LinkedIn is a valuable tool in your networking and professional life. If you haven't started yet, your year of service is a perfect time to build your first profile. Reflect on what you are interested in after City Year and use that to build your LinkedIn profile.

In this document, you will find:

- Initial tips on creating your basic LinkedIn profile
- LinkedIn vs. Résumé – what's the difference?
- Representing Your City Year experience on your LinkedIn profile
- Recommendations from your past/current supervisors, peers, etc.
- Networking and joining groups
- City Year Alumni connections and sending LinkedIn messages
- Tips on using LinkedIn search capabilities to find alums you want to connect with

1. Initial tips on creating your basic LinkedIn profile

www.linkedin.com – It's that easy!

Begin like any draft – just try to get your words and thoughts on the page. Thinking chronologically can be helpful during the build, but always highlight the important portions by placing them higher in the page/section. LinkedIn will guide you through various steps tied to the percentage “complete” your profile is becoming. Try to check each box, but don't worry if you don't have any “formal publications” or items to complete other sections yet. Choose a headshot picture or the closest thing you have to it. The summary section is your elevator pitch; be confident and concise. As you move on to your experiences, be detailed and, just like a résumé, focus on action, skills and results. Quantify the results you've seen and use action words you know your next adventure values. Once you're confident in this representation of your professional life and have edited the page for any mistakes at least a thousand times, begin making connections, giving your peers endorsements, connecting with or following companies/associations and considering who you would like for LinkedIn recommendations.

Want more advice for creating an awesome profile? There are thousands of articles at your fingertips with a quick search - here are recent resources:

1. [LinkedIn: How do I create a good LinkedIn profile?](#)
2. [Forbes: 17 LinkedIn profile writing tips to make you stand out](#)
3. [Forbes: Three reasons why you need a powerful LinkedIn profile](#)



2. LinkedIn vs. Résumé – What’s the difference?

Although your résumé is a great start, a LinkedIn profile is not an online résumé. Use LinkedIn capabilities of images, links, videos and more to reinforce your experiences and thoughts – a feature that a brief paper résumé can’t provide. Did you write an especially creative and engaging lesson plan? Upload it to LinkedIn and take a screen shot of the planning process. Engage your audience. A LinkedIn profile is also interactive, unlike a résumé. Use it to build your network, post professional articles you read, include it in your email signature and share it with new contacts.

3. Representing your City Year experience on your LinkedIn profile

Just as you grapple with how to present City Year on your résumé, a lot of the same questions apply to how to present City Year on your LinkedIn profile. First and foremost, your year of service is challenging and very valuable – don’t sell yourself short! Step out of your day-to-day life, think slightly bigger picture and appreciate the work. Leave that humility on the back burner. On LinkedIn, your year is a professional experience and not a volunteer experience. Whenever possible, present results even if they are not readily quantifiable. You had a 97% attendance rate for your focus list of students by the end of the year. You provided an engaging and safe environment for afterschool programming. Results! Promote your AmeriCorps affiliation, as more people will recognize AmeriCorps as a brand. Spell out all the acronyms you use and have someone that has never been so lucky to rock the yellow/red jacket read it over to make sure it’s understandable outside of the classroom. Finally, relate your City Year experience to your next adventure. Draw parallels like communicating and working in a diverse team setting. Excelling with the limited resources you have by problem solving. Being committed to a cause through long hours and loud lunchrooms. What will your future employer value most?

Here is a great example from a City Year alum:

- [Syeda Hamdani](#) (Sacramento '20)
Notice Syeda highlights not only the larger AmeriCorps member role but also separately promotes other roles within the site and school community.

4. Recommendations from your past/current supervisor, peers, etc.

Get at least one recommendation for each experience, if possible. Don’t ask for a recommendation if you don’t think the recommender can truly speak to your work. If you’re asking your Impact Manager, be kind and give plenty of advance notice. It’s always helpful for a recommender to know what you are interested in and what parts of City Year you’re trying to highlight. A recommendation only needs to be several sentences to be effective. Learn more about the [process of requesting a recommendation on LinkedIn](#).

Note: You should ask for and get a written or verbal agreement from the person you are seeking a recommendation from before queuing the request to them via LinkedIn, so they know the request is coming.



5. Networking and joining groups

Start connecting with your team, past employers and email contacts. LinkedIn will start suggesting connections and you should connect with those you have a real professional relationship with. You can follow role models or influencers, as well as news and companies you're interested in. Join groups that connect you to alums, including your high school or college alumni association. Be sure to join these two:

- [City Year Alumni Association](#) (6,000+ members)
- [AmeriCorps Alums](#) (26,000+ members)

This is your service network – start building connections!

6. City Year Alumni connections and sending LinkedIn messages

With over 40,000 City Year alums out there, you might want to reach out to connect with a few. Being in the same group is the first step and being active is the second. When you're ready, you can reach out with a message or request to connect on LinkedIn.

Note about sending LinkedIn messages:

- First, see if the alum published their email on their profile – some people will share directly how others can reach out. Contact the alum at the email provided by identifying your affiliation with City Year, that you saw on their LinkedIn profile that they also served with City Year, that you have an interest in learning more about their career/education path and requesting if the person has time to connect in the coming weeks.
- If there are alums you want to connect with who are not also members of the City Year Alumni Association group, you can send an unlimited number of invites to “connect” to people you are not connected to, which provides an opportunity to write a very short personal note (300 characters) about why you are making the invite.
 - *Example:* As a currently serving City Year AmeriCorps member who is interested in pursuing **(ADD career path or education path)**, I would love to have a brief chat on how you made the transition between your service year and current role. Would you have time to connect? Sincerely, **YOUR NAME**
- If they accept your LinkedIn request but do not send a follow-up message, take the sign that they accepted your LinkedIn request as an invitation to send a follow-up message. Remember, now that you are first-level connections, you can send a longer direct message.
- If you don't hear back, don't be discouraged. Not everyone checks their LinkedIn messages regularly. Some alternative strategies for reaching out to the alum:
 - If they accepted your LinkedIn invitation but did not send a follow-up message back, just look up their email on their profile. Once you are first-level connections, you have access to



basic contact information. Visit the person's profile, look on the right bar and find the "personal and contact info" section, collapse the dropdown and note if they listed their email. Send a follow-up message to their email address.

- If they did not accept your LinkedIn invitation or you did not hear back after sending a follow-up message, connect with your site's Career Development or Alumni Point to request being put in touch with the alum through an introduction email.

7. Tips on using LinkedIn search capabilities to find City Year alums you want to connect with

LinkedIn's basic free account provides users with great search capacities to identify alums and other people who you may want to connect with for career perspective, insights on schools you want to apply to, companies you want to work for, etc.

The power of your connection's connections (also known as second-level LinkedIn connections).

If you are thinking to yourself – "Oh no, I just joined LinkedIn and only have three connections. How do I take advantage of second-level connections with a small network?" Send LinkedIn requests to City Year staff you know and your fellow AmeriCorps members. Once they accept your LinkedIn requests, you can search their connections and utilize filters to help you narrow your search, such as the city where you live (or want to live), industries and organizations you are interested in, affiliated colleges or graduate schools you are applying to and other search criteria.

You will generate more and more results for City Year alums who fit your criteria as you make additional LinkedIn connections—including joining the City Year Alumni Association group and adding other City Year staff and Returning AmeriCorps members—since your network of first-level connections will grow, which makes each person's first-level connections show up as your second-level connections in any search.