

# CHAYA R. WILLIS

*Spanish-Speaking Foreign Service Consular Adjudicator*

708.238.5945 ■ chaya.willis@gmail.com ■ LinkedIn ■ Chicago, IL 60610

## COMMUNITY AFFAIRS & OUTREACH | RESEARCH & ANALYSIS | PROJECT PLANNING

*Committed to public service and impacting people's lives in positive ways — demonstrated by impassioned efforts at FEMA, Cambodian Association of Illinois, and Planned Parenthood*



Critical thinking, resourceful, calm under pressure, and highly flexible. Possess thirst for new challenges and offer dedication to helping populations from diverse multicultural and socio-economic backgrounds. Known for quick trust building, analytical problem solving, and time-critical project delivery during politically sensitive crisis situations. Open to relocation, international travel, and non-standard schedules.

**Broad International Experience | Multilingual:** native English; fluent in Spanish and French.

— Critical Skills —

Community Outreach ■ Project Coordination ■ Information Gathering & Data Management ■ Training & Mentorship ■ Report Writing ■ Case Management ■ Customer Satisfaction ■ Public Speaking ■ Marketing & PR ■ Social Media Networking ■ Website Administration ■ Event Planning

## RECENT HIGHLIGHTS OF VALUE OFFERED

*"Care more about your character than your reputation, because your reputation is merely what people think of you and your character is who you really are."—John Wooden.*

- **On-time Project Delivery & Public Crisis:** Following Hurricane Sandy, collaborated with FEMA Community Relations teammates to meet 72-hour challenge, promoting message for emergency aid services and overcoming uncommonly low number of aid registrants on Coney Island, New York. Comforted and guided English- and Spanish-speaking hurricane survivors through crisis and procedural complexities.
- **Research & International Travel:** Traveled abroad to apply investigative skills and take lead as primary researcher in cooperative effort to examine and document life of ancestor, key influencer in the history of Cambodian nationalism. Recently returned to U.S. to collate data and launch informational website as community resource.
- **Communications & Training:** Noted for strong presentation and training skills. Spread the word for FEMA programs by presenting to large community organizations. Co-developed training course to streamline new hire training for English-Spanish language program.

## EDUCATION & INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES

**B.S. (double major) in Spanish Language/Literature & Biochemistry** (Dec 2012) — East Central College, Naperville, IL  
*Study Abroad:* Dialogo Language School, Salvador, Brazil (2011) ■ University of Guadalajara — CUCSH (2011) ■ Latin American Literature Program (2010), Middleshire College

**Overseas Experience/Internships:** Tutored Mexican students in Guadalajara, Mexico (2013), English Conversational Club ■ Taught English as 2<sup>nd</sup> language to Vietnamese refugee family (2012), World Relief ■ Student Intern (2012), Royal Embassy of Cambodia, Washington D.C.

## RELEVANT EXPERIENCE & ACHIEVEMENTS

**Cambodian Association of Illinois (CAI)** ■ 09/12–Present ■ Chicago, IL

**WEB COMMUNICATIONS INTERN:** *Awarded 2012 Volunteer of the Year among 10 interns.* Engaged by director to improve organizational visibility and spark wider community involvement while co-strategizing direction of new information delivery/social communication system. Currently updating and expanding central database of 1,800+ contacts—integral to advertising and enriching CAI services through social media, newsletter, and email marketing vehicles.

- **Cost Savings & Membership Increase:** Saved \$2K annually by sourcing and implementing free user-friendly contact database and email marketing. Grew membership base by adding newsletter subscription link to website.
- **Process Simplification & Organizational Branding:** On track to transform bi-annual newsletter into branded quarterly/monthly information releases by co-developing CAI logo and user-friendly newsletter template.
- **Employee Training:** Enhanced staff efficiency and understanding of new technologies by facilitating all training.

**Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) ■ 09/10–Present ■ Chicago, IL**

**LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY/ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATION NEEDS (LEP/ACN) SPECIALIST (contract)**

**COMMUNITY RELATIONS (CR) SPECIALIST (contract) – *Proactively enrolled in & completed 10 professional training courses***

***Acquired disaster response and recovery experience during 4 federally declared disasters as youngest on field teams.***

Initially hired as Spanish interpreter during communitywide effort to support Chicago flood victims and extend reach of FEMA programs in hardest-hit municipalities. Gained quick understanding of programs and **earned promotion after 6 months** by evolving initial support function into autonomous, public-facing role. Assigned to Office of External Affairs Disaster Assistance Program to carry out HQ mission of educating and assisting affected citizens—particularly in non-English-speaking areas—register for federal aid during post-disaster, door-to-door outreach campaigns.

***Disaster Recovery & Community Outreach Field Projects***

- **Collaborative Team Success:** Proved instrumental to FEMA’s Individual Assistance Department as part of 2-person team that achieved aggressive 6-day target to contact and help 75 secluded senior citizens in Albany, New York, register for FEMA relief after Hurricane Irene.
- **Goal Achievement & Reputation Management:** Assisted External Affairs meet community engagement targets by spiking volume of registrants in Spanish-speaking communities. Diplomatically overcame FEMA’s negative regional reputation by dispelling myths, subduing prejudices, and serving as trusted resource to the public.
- **Strategic Partnership Building:** Strengthened bonds with diverse groups (local officials, community organizations, faith-based organizations, nonprofits, schools, libraries, farmer’s markets, and shopping centers) to enhance FEMA’s visibility in Latino neighborhoods and encourage citizens to participate in disaster recovery programs.

***Process Streamlining & Program Administration***

- **Productivity Optimization:** Freed HQ staff to focus on higher priorities as member of 5-strong team that shaped and benchmarked comprehensive new-hire training program for recently implemented LEP/ACN function.
- **Proactive Leadership & External Communications:** Expanded scope of personal accountability as LEP Specialist, taking lead to organize program involving Spanish translation of assessments/questionnaires, informational fliers, press releases, FEMA blog, and social network posts.
- **Precise Data Processing & Information Security:** Cut 50% out of managerial research time through vigilant updates to project worksheets on FEMA database while focusing on utmost data integrity and confidentiality.

**Planned Parenthood of Illinois ■ 07/11–Present ■ Chicago, IL**

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH INTERN (volunteer): *Diplomatically advanced wider organizational interests that earned exclusive invitation for full-time position.*** Aided Community Organizing Supervisor in publicizing services and programs for high-profile Chicago site. Continue to raise public awareness around reproductive health policy/legislation by taking cause to the street as ad-hoc volunteer on prolific Community Action Team.

- **Legislative Success:** Participated in statewide campaign that triumphed in passing key health education bill.
- **Volunteer Training & Organization:** Accelerated Action Team campaigns by screening, coordinating, and educating 10-15 new volunteers on: cultural sensitivity; age-appropriate communications; group presentations; door-to-door and public location canvassing; petitioning/signature collection; phone banking; and book club coordination.

**OTHER EXPERIENCE**

**LAB TECHNICIAN, American Energies Technologies Co., 04/13–11/13, Arlington Heights, IL**

**PROFESSIONAL TEST SCORER, Pearson Education, 04/12–06/12, Glenview, IL**

**STUDENT TEAM LEADER, North Central College, 06/10–05/11, Naperville, IL**

**ADDITIONAL SKILLS**

**Technical Snapshot:** Microsoft Office Suite; Adobe Acrobat, Photoshop; HTML, C++; Blackboard.

## NEW GRADUATE RESUME – PROJECT BRIEF

---

Chaya came to me with two job descriptions; one for a Foreign Service Consular Adjudicator at the U.S. State Dept. and the other for a quality assurance associate for a chemical company. She had an eclectic work history and applied her bachelor degree in biochemistry at a lab for 8 months before. She had no idea how to best position herself for the two roles but wanted to ensure she had a good resume for these positions.

After a round of client coaching and interviewing, I persuaded Chaya to target these very different jobs with 2 highly targeted resumes. This is the resume Chaya submitted for the foreign service position after I harnessed and strategically presented Chaya's eclectic work history and branded career stories. Much of her related "work" history was volunteering or internships, therefore I created a personalized title section with her top 3 strengths relating to the job target, branded headline statement, along with dedicated Critical Skills, Recent Highlights of Value Offered, and Relevant Experience & Achievements sections on the first page.

Now, another intriguing element to this project was that Chaya began encountering similar job descriptions that prioritized different skills and attributes and she wondered how she could bring certain achievements to the forefront to match these other positions. After a bit of brainstorming, I incorporated sub-headers under her FEMA roles and inserted keywords as lead-ins to cue the reader into the areas in which she personally excelled. Because the formatting for each achievement bullet within her job descriptions matched the formatting of the achievement bullets within the Highlights of Value Offered section, she can now easily swap (via cutting and pasting) certain achievement bullets from her career history directly with those she wishes to de-emphasize from the Highlights of Value Offered section.

I also incorporated splashes of color to highlight her "I'm proud of" achievements, along with a personal mantra she lives by to give the reader some insight to Chaya's values, personal operating principles, and work ethic.

I included her paid work history on the second page under Other Professional Experience to highlight the diverse range of her capabilities but summarized this section as it was not the target of this particular resume.