



HELPFUL TIPS WHEN APPLYING TO FEDERAL GOVERNMENT POSITIONS

Submitting your resume for a federal government position has some important distinctions from this process in other sectors. Federal resumes are used to determine if you meet the requirements and qualifications for a job announcement, you will not have the opportunity to explain your skills and describe your experience to the hiring manager in an interview if you do not first do so on the resume. A federal resume can and should be multiple pages long and provide detailed descriptions of all relevant work experience and qualifications and tie directly back to the position for which you are applying. Below you will find a few helpful tips and resources to assist you with this process.



UNDERSTAND THE PROCESS

One of the most important things to remember when applying to a federal position is that the person reviewing your resume and determining if you are qualified is rarely a subject matter expert (SME). While SME's provide guidance, review Position Descriptions (PD), and announcement materials, the initial resume, and qualifications assessment is conducted by HR Specialists who often have hundreds of resumes to review to determine who is qualified to make the certificate. The certificate of qualified candidates is then returned to the hiring manager for interviews and selections; hiring managers can only choose from the candidates that make the certificate. To increase the chances of your resume qualifying you for the certificate, make sure you tailor it to the position you are applying for and review the following tips.

PROVIDE DETAILED CONTACT AND WORK EXPERIENCE INFORMATION:

Federal resumes should include all relevant previous work experience. All work experience on the resume should include the time served in the position described as month and year to month and year; the number of hours worked per week; names of prior supervisors; contact information; and salary. While not all federal Human Resources personnel will eliminate your resume from the competition if you do not include all required information, you are more likely to be determined to be qualified and have your name "referred" to the hiring manager (on a certificate) if you do.

CAREFULLY REVIEW THE SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE STATEMENT and ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS:

As an applicant, you should carefully review the stated required qualifications and pay particular attention to the specialized experience statement. Without the requisite "specialized experience" as defined in the announcement, it is unlikely that your application will be considered best qualified and referred to the hiring manager. Make sure to clearly spell out the experience in your resume that aligns with the specialized experience stated in the announcement requirements. The assessment questionnaire asks you to rank yourself on the qualities necessary to do the job being advertised. It must support the experiences listed in your resume. When rating yourself on the assessment questions, it is important that you are honest, but not modest. While the questions may not align exactly with your experience, as long as you can back up your answer in an interview lean towards the best answer so that you do not eliminate yourself.

MAKE SURE TO SUBMIT ALL REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

Read the vacancy announcement carefully and provide **ALL required documents**. If the position requires transcripts or you are attempting to qualify for a certain grade based on education, make sure to **include ALL relevant transcripts**. Do not expect the HR Specialist to assume you have a bachelor's degree if you have uploaded a graduate degree transcript. Federal HR Specialists are not allowed to make assumptions or draw conclusions about your experience or education—you need to be clear and specific. Always err on the side of providing more information rather than less. If you have previous federal experience, make sure to upload a copy of your SF-50 or SF-52. Likewise, if you are claiming veteran's preference, make sure to

include your DD 214. Finally, if you have certifications that are required for consideration, e.g, FAC-C, make sure all relevant documentation is included.

DON'T LIMIT YOURSELF TO A CERTAIN PAGE COUNT

It is difficult to be referred for a federal job with the 1-2-page resume that is commonly used in the private sector. **A typical federal resume is at least 4-6 pages long.** Your federal resume is your opportunity to explain to someone who may know nothing about the specifics of the job that you meet the requirements. From a federal HR perspective, if it is not on your resume, you did not do it, so make sure all relevant experience - especially the experience that ties to the specialized experience statement - is there. Again, federal HR Specialists are not allowed to make assumptions or draw conclusions about your experience—you need to be clear and specific. Include ALL your experience and accomplishments *relevant to the position*.

USE THE RESOURCES PROVIDED ON USAJOBS.GOV

There are many resources available to assist with preparing a federal resume and applying to federal positions on USAJobs.gov including a resume builder. Upload all of your transcripts, certifications, and any relevant application materials, like a recent SF-50, and store them under your profile in the USAJobs.gov system for ease of use; you can then add them to any application with an easy click. This excerpt is taken directly from the website and includes links to their resource center and tutorial.

*"Your Resume must clearly articulate how your skills and experiences align to the criteria defined in the qualifications section of the announcement and it must support your responses to the assessment questionnaire. For each position, you must describe your duties, accomplishments, related skills, and responsibilities. Your resume **must also include the day, month, and year that you began and ended as well as hours worked per week (if less than 40) for each position held. Full-time employment will be assumed unless otherwise stated on your resume. Part-time employment will be prorated in crediting experience. Not providing this information may result in the lowering of your assessment score or an ineligible rating. For resume writing guidance, please visit the [USAJobs Resource Center](#) or view their [video tutorial](#)."***

CHECK AND RECHECK YOUR APPLICATION BEFORE YOU HIT SEND

Before you submit your application, double-check to make sure you have addressed all of the areas in 2 through 5 above and look to see if there are any other specific requirements for the position that you need to address.

RESOURCES USED TO PREPARE THIS DOCUMENT

- » <https://www.usajobs.gov/Help/how-to/account/documents/resume/>
- » <https://www.hhs.gov/careers/how-apply/what-expect-when-applying-job-hhs>
- » <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/how-to-write-a-federal-resume>
- » <https://www.monster.com/career-advice/article/5-resume-writing-tips-landing-government-job-0219>