

Topic: Federal Employment Trainee Handout



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Topic Objectives

At the end of this topic, with the aid of your handouts, you will be able to:

1. Describe how to perform a job search.
2. Recall what kind of information each job advertisement contains.
3. Create and sign into your USAJOBS account.
4. Build or edit your federal resume.
5. Practice filling out required forms for Federal Employment.
6. Recognize the differences between occupational questionnaires and KSAs.

Most Effective Resumes

From USAJOBS Help

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The most effective résumés when applying for federal jobs are those that clearly articulate how an applicant's skills and experiences align to the selection criteria defined by the job opportunity announcement (JOA). Applicants should always tailor their résumé to the job opportunity to which they are applying. Consider these additional tips in ensuring you've created and are using the most effective résumé.

Pay Attention to Keywords

Whether you're writing your first résumé or updating an existing one, stop and think about which keywords you need to add based on the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities required for the position. You could be the most qualified person for the position, but you could be lost in a sea of applicants without the right keywords.

A Single Keyword Communicates Multiple Skills and Qualifications

When a recruiter reads the keyword "analyst," he or she might assume you have experience in collecting data, evaluating effectiveness, and researching and developing new processes. Just one keyword can have tremendous power and deliver a huge message.

Study Job Opportunity Announcements (JOAs)

This is the best way to determine important keywords. Review several JOAs, similar to your ideal position – even those in other geographic areas. You're looking to find skills, experience, education and other credentials important in that occupation. Focus on the "requirements," "skills" or "qualifications" sections of job ads, and look for "buzzwords" and desirable credentials for your ideal job.

Be Concise

Recruiters often receive dozens or even hundreds of applications for certain positions. The first step involves quickly skimming through submissions and eliminating candidates who clearly are not qualified. Look at your résumé and ask:

- Can a hiring manager see my main credentials within 10 to 15 seconds?
- Does critical information jump off the page?
- Do I effectively sell myself on the top quarter of the first page?

The Sales Pitch

It is crucial that your résumé effectively sells your credentials. Key selling points need to be prominently displayed at the top of the first page of the résumé and directly address each question asked in the KSA section. For example, if an advanced degree is an important qualification, it shouldn't be buried at the end of a résumé.

Use an Editor's Eye

A résumé doesn't have to contain every detail of your work experience. So be judicious. If your college days are far behind you, does it really matter that you pledged a fraternity or delivered pizza? The editing step will be difficult if you are holding on to your past for emotional reasons.

Use Numbers to Highlight Your Accomplishments

If you were a recruiter looking at a résumé, which of the following entries would impress you more?

- Wrote news releases.
- Wrote 25 news releases in a three-week period under daily deadlines.

Clearly the second statement carries more weight, because it uses numbers to quantify the writer's accomplishment. It provides context that helps the reader understand the degree of difficulty involved in the task. Numbers are powerful résumé tools that will help your accomplishments draw the attention they deserve from prospective employers. With just a little thought, you can find effective ways to quantify your successes on your résumé.

Think Money

All organizations are concerned about money. So think about and articulate ways you've saved money, earned money, or managed money in your internships, part-time jobs and extracurricular activities. A few possibilities may include:

- Identified, researched and recommended a new Internet Service Provider, cutting the company's online costs by 15 percent.
- Wrote prospect letter that has brought in more than \$25,000 in donations to date.
- Managed a student organization budget of more than \$7,000.

Think Time

"Time is money." Organizations are constantly looking for ways to save time, perform work more efficiently, and meet internal and external deadlines. So, whatever you can do on your résumé to show that you can save time, make time or manage time will grab the recruiter's immediate attention. Here are some time-oriented examples:

- Assisted with twice-monthly payroll activities, ensuring employees were paid as expected and on time.
- Attended high school basketball games, interviewed players and coaches afterward, and composed 750-word articles by an 11 p.m. deadline.
- Suggested procedures that decreased average order-processing time from 10 minutes to five minutes.

10 Tips for Letting a Federal Employer Know Your Worth

From USAJOBS Help

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So, you found the job you want. And it's with the Federal Government. Congratulations! You're embarking on an exciting journey with dynamic opportunities that Federal jobs provide. You're also competing with some of the best candidates around. How do you know you've shown future employers' your worth?

First, read the job announcement carefully and acquaint yourself with what the Federal agency is looking for.

Then, check your resume to ensure it's complete and includes all the required information for the job you want. Next, capture how your experience matches the qualifications for that job. Remember: Federal agencies base their decisions on merit so, follow these 10 tips carefully when describing you experience and skills.

1. Use words wisely.

Today, the key to a good application is getting the right information to the agency representative in a fast, readable style. How do you do this? By using minimum words to provide substantive information. Just look at this example: *In this position, it was my responsibility to assist the program director on evaluating health care programs. Due to the fact that most of these centers were in rural areas, it was important that I traveled at least 3 days a week.*

Phrases such as due to the fact, it is important, and it was my responsibility that block your point. Cut them out for a stronger, easy-to-access message: *In this position, I assisted the program director on evaluating health care programs. Because most of these centers were in rural areas, I traveled at least 3 days a week.*

Repeats can slow your message, too. Look at this line: *I worked with new law enforcement officers who were just entering the force and needed to learn techniques for identifying and interrogating suspects who they suspected of illegal activity. In my capacity, I trained them on these techniques.*

Notice that *new law enforcement officers and who were just entering the force say the same thing. So does suspects and suspected of illegal activity. Less obvious is the repeated work with and trained.* The revision would read: *I trained new law enforcement officers on techniques for identifying and interrogating suspects.*

2. Keep sentences short and clear.

Short, direct sentences help the agency get your point. But remember, don't duplicate your resume. Rather, you're elaborating on significant points in full sentences. This line is so long: *My 12 years as a customer service representative have given me the opportunity to become comfortable speaking to virtually anyone and to answering questions calmly and professionally even when the person I am speaking to is upset.*

It practically leaves the reader out-of-breath. By breaking up sentences, your point is more flowing:

My customer service representative experience provided opportunities to sharpen my skills. For example, I am comfortable speaking to virtually anyone. I can answer questions calmly and professionally, even when the person I am speaking to is upset.

3. Make your message stand out.

Keep your paragraphs brief, usually between 5 and 10 lines depending on content. Put important points first - where they're most visible. Here are some possibilities:

Short paragraph – *While an associate editor for Agricultural Magazine, I selected each month's special features on scientific findings and agricultural economics; hired five diverse new writers, all with scientific backgrounds; and reviewed all copy to ensure a style accessible to readers ranging from rural farmers to university researchers.*

Subheaders – *While an associate editor for Agricultural Magazine, I was responsible for:*

Critical content decisions – *I selected each month's special features on the relationship between scientific findings and agricultural economics, among other articles.*

Quality of articles – *I reviewed all copy to ensure the style was accessible to readers ranging from rural farmers to university researchers.*

4. Focus on outcome.

What is the most important aspect of your work experience? The answer is—the outcome. You may be surprised by how many people forget to mention this critical aspect of their experience altogether. When discussing outcome, be sure to discuss the *whats, the hows, and the breadth and scope of your experiences*:

- a. **What occurred.** Did you improve the workplace? Perhaps you refined technology tools, created programs, or organized procedures. Regardless, let the agency know *what* occurred. Use brief examples to best illustrate your point whenever possible.
- b. **How much and how many.** Did you start new projects? How many? Did you save your previous office money? Time? How much? Don't forget percentages, numbers, and degrees that apply.

Notice how this example falls flat because it ignores the outcome: *As a supervisor at Early Start, I oversaw the development of grant proposals. While in this position, I put systems in place to ensure that my employees provided the government with the exact information it needed.*

While this revision is more demonstrative of outcomes and more competitive: *As a supervisor at Early Start, I oversaw a team of 10 employees who developed grant proposals. While in this position, I developed a template-based system to help my coworkers anticipate requirements. This helped us meet all deadlines a week in advance and create proposals that won us two grants more than the previous year.*

5. Showcase your role.

Did you work on your own? As part of a team? In a supervisory capacity? As a team leader? Let the agency know your role in the projects. For example, this response: *I helped put together conferences. Among my responsibilities were sending invitations, calling potential guests, and preparing the conference materials.*

It would be stronger if worded this way: *As part of a team of five employees, I helped put together conferences. My responsibilities included sending invitations, calling potential guests, and preparing the conference materials.*

Were you promoted while working on a project? If so, mention that too. Note, for example, this response doesn't mention a promotion: *In my last position, I spent 2 to 3 months at a time in the field collecting samples for the study. The following year, I spent most of time in the lab, only going to the field occasionally.*

This revision includes the promotion: *In my position as Project Manager, I spent 2 to 3 months at a time in the field, overseeing 5 specialists who assisted me in collecting samples for the study. The following year, I was promoted to Senior Project Manager*

which required that I spent more time in the lab. As a result, I only went to the field occasionally.

6. Remember - timeframes count.

Timeframes count so be sure to address these questions: What were the dates or length of time you worked on a project or job? Did you work full-time or part-time? If part-time, what percentage of your time did you do that work? For example, this candidate could have worked in his position for a few months as a part-time employee: *I served as a contractor for the agency. I regularly produced educational videos and IVT training sessions.*

This response is better worded this way: *From 7/1999 -10/2002, I served as a full-time contractor for the agency. I spent at least 30 percent of my time producing educational videos and IVT training sessions.*

If you didn't spend substantial time in a particular position, include the dates anyway. Other information such as the outcome of your experience or the scope and depth of your work will underscore its value.

7. Value your experience.

Many experiences illuminate your significance as a candidate. For example, you may have published relevant articles in your college newspaper or a local publication. Or you may have gained valuable experience through:

- *Leadership positions.* Were you president of your sorority or fraternity? Did you lead a team either as part of your classroom experience or a volunteer group? Mention these positions and the outcome of your efforts.
- *Extracurricular activities.* Perhaps you volunteered or belonged to a club that gave you valuable experience. Let the agency know specifics including projects, dates, and how your experience applies to the field.
- *Internships.* Never underestimate the importance of hands-on education, especially internships, whether during the summer or over an entire semester.

Regardless, mention them!

8. Show and tell.

Telling about your experience is great but be sure to use examples, too. See how this candidate's job sounds pretty blasé: *As a maintenance mechanic, I often worked in settings that required I maintain control of every move in the operation.*

Look at the difference a few specifics can make: *As a maintenance mechanic, I often worked in settings that required I maintain control of every move in the operation. For example, for 16 months I worked on renovation projects in the Smithsonian Institution where I had to move priceless museum exhibits using forklifts, cranes, skids, and rollers.*

9. Resist additions.

You may be tempted, but *please* resist sending an additional package with copies of awards, publications, training certificates, letters of recommendation, lengthy job descriptions, writing samples, or a photo unless the agency *specifically requests* it. Instead, keep important information where it belongs - in your application or resume.

10. Illuminate your resume - don't repeat it.

When writing about your experience to describe how it matches the competencies or KSA's required by a job, don't simply repeat your resume but illuminate important facts or give examples to shed new light on the breadth and scope of your experience. Notice how this resume sample provides an overview of the candidate's experience – in this case as a trainer for law enforcement officers: *Scheduled and conducted training and maintained training records of all law enforcement personnel.*

When writing about her experience, however, the candidate added these details: While a supervisor in the training department I conducted sessions in anti-terrorism techniques, security and protection procedures, and suspect interviewing strategies. I also trained react teams and counter-terrorism units, operated weapons ranges, and conducted fitness tests.

This gave the agency fresh information about the experience she could bring to the job. Whatever your education and experience, it deserves to be highlighted in your resume. Follow these tips for guidance in presenting your strengths to potential Federal employers.

Key Words

A

accomplished
achieved
acquired
acted
adapted
added
adjusted
administered
advanced
allocated
allotted
allowed
analyzed
anticipated
applied
appointed
appraised
arbitrated
arranged
assessed
assigned
assisted
assured
attained
audited
authorized
awarded

B

based
bought
briefed
budgeted
built

C

catalogued
calculated
caused
centralized
certified
chaired
changed
clarified
classified
closed
collaborated
collected
combined
commended
communicated

compared
competed
completed
composed
computed
conceived
conceptualized
concluded
conducted
conferred
confirmed
considered
consolidated
constructed
consulted
continued
contracted
controlled
convened
converted
conveyed
convinced
cooperated
coordinated
corrected
correlated
counseled
created
critiqued
cultivated

D

dealt
debated
decided
defended
defined
delegated
delivered
demonstrated
described
designated
designed
developed
devised
diagnosed
directed
discovered
disseminated
distributed
documented
drafted

duplicated

E

earned
edited
educated
eliminated
employed
enabled
encouraged
endorsed
enforced
engineered
enlarged
enlisted
ensured
equipped
established
estimated
evaluated
exercised
experimented
explained

F

facilitated
filed
financed
finished
focused
forecasted
formed
formulated
fostered
founded
fulfilled

G

gathered
generated
graded
granted
guided

H

handled
helped
hired
hosted

I

identified

illustrated
implemented
improved
incorporated
indexed
indicated
informed
influenced
initiated
innovated
inspected
installed
instructed
insured
integrated
interacted
interpreted
interviewed
introduced
invested
investigated
involved
issued

J

judged
justified

K

L

launched
lead
lectured
linked
located
logged

M

maintained
managed
mandated
marketed
measured
mediated
minimized
modified
monitored
motivated

N

negotiated
notified
nullified

O

observed
obtained
opened
operated
ordered
originated
organized
outlined
oversaw

P

participated
performed
persuaded
pioneered
planned
prepared
predicted
presented
prevented
priced
printed
processed
procured
produced
programmed
projected

promoted
proposed
protected
provided
publicized
published
purchased
pursued

Q

qualified
quantified
questioned

R

ranked
rated
recognized
recommended
reconciled
recruited
reduced
redacted
referred
regulated
rejected
released
reorganized
replaced
replied
reported
represented

requested
required
researched
resolved
responded
reevaluated
reviewed
revised
rewarded

S

scheduled
screened
selected
separated
serviced
set up
settled
simplified
simulated
solicited
solved
sorted
specified
staffed

T

tabulated
targeted
taught
tested
testified

trained
transcribed
transferred
translated
transmitted
triggered
turned

U

updated
upgraded
utilized

V

validated
volunteered

W

weighed
wrote

X

Y

Z

Required Documents for Federal Employment



Don't Disqualify Yourself!

Did you know that when applying for a job on **USA Jobs**, failure to submit all of the required documents may result in a determination that you are ineligible for a position that you may very well qualify for?

Don't let it happen to you!

Below is a list of documents that are essential to your application process.

Read on to find out which ones you need to submit with your application!

- ✓ **Resume** – This is required for **ALL** applications. It shows us exactly where you've been and what makes you qualified for this position.
- ✓ **Online Assessment Questionnaire** – This is used to measure your qualifications to perform the job.
- ✓ **Declaration for Federal Employment (OF-306)** - The information collected on this form is used to determine your acceptability for Federal employment.
- ✓ **Transcript** – If the position has an education requirement, a transcript must be provided.
- ✓ **DD-214** – Veterans must provide copies of DD-214s to verify dates of service and character of service.
- ✓ **SF-15** – The Application for 10 Point Veterans Preference is needed for disabled Veterans and other Veterans eligible for 10-point preference.

- ✓ **SF-50** – This form is required for **ALL** applicants. Please remember to provide a copy of your last or most recent SF-50. Provide a SF-50 that includes your title, series, and grade.
- ✓ **Current Federal employee?** – We need your most recent performance appraisal.
- ✓ **Position requiring a license or certificate?** – Be sure to include the required license or certificate in your application.
- ✓ **ICTAP/CTAP Eligible?** – Please clearly state in your application package that you are applying as a CTAP or ICTAP eligible. Among the other required documents, be sure to include a copy of the agency notice stating that you are on the ICTAP/CTAP list.
- ✓ **Special appointing authority?** – You will need to provide proof that you are eligible under a special appointing authority.



Remember! When applying for your next opportunity on USA Jobs, stop to make sure you've submitted everything needed to ensure a complete application package! Failure to do so may result in a **MISSED** opportunity.

GOOD LUCK!!