



# ***Federal Résumé Guide for People with Disabilities***

What You Should Know When Applying for a  
Federal Career

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## **The WHY of this guide**

The process used by Federal agencies to recruit employees into Federal employment can be vastly different from the process used by private sector employers. This guide discusses some of these differences and delves into the differences between a public and private sector résumé.

It also provides a step-by-step process on how to write an effective résumé when applying for Federal job vacancies and highlights the importance of developing an effective résumé that addresses job vacancy qualifications.

Remember that although the Federal hiring process may take more time than applying for a position within the private or nonprofit sectors, public service can be a greatly rewarding experience.

# Writing a Winning Résumé

Writing a winning résumé is a valuable skill to have in today's job market. Your résumé is the first impression you give to a potential employer—it is *your* marketing piece. A well-written résumé can help you land an interview or may lead to new job opportunities. If you are actively seeking a job at a Federal agency, this guide will assist you in making your résumé, and therefore help you, stand out from the crowd.

## Getting Started

Before you begin writing your résumé, you'll need to know where to find Federal career opportunities. Federal agencies advertise most vacancies on USAJOBS.gov, a Federal website. USAJOBS enables job seekers to search for positions by location, job category, or by agency. Most, but not all, full-time, part-time and permanent Federal jobs are posted on USAJOBS. If you are interested in a specific agency, and you aren't able to locate vacancies for that agency on USAJOBS, you should visit the agency's website for vacancy announcements.

*Special Note: While this Guide will touch briefly on some of the features of USAJOBS, you can locate more in-depth information on the features of the website by visiting the fourth tab along the top of the USAJOBS Homepage labeled "Resource Center." If you click on this title it will take you to a page which contains "Tutorials" on the USAJOBS website as well as "Tips" and other useful information to make it easier to use USAJOBS and all of its functions. Familiarizing yourself with the features of USAJOBS should make locating appropriate positions much easier.*

## Federal Résumés Are Different

Federal résumés are indeed different than private sector résumés. The purpose of the résumé in the private sector is to land an interview at which point you have the opportunity to further discuss the qualifications you can bring to a position.

In the Federal government, the purpose of the résumé is to show your qualifications for a position so that you can be "certified" as eligible for an interview by the Human Resources (HR) office of the agency at which the job vacancy has been posted. This process is required to ensure that the hiring procedure adheres to regulatory requirements that ensure fairness and afford preference to veterans, where applicable. This process creates a unique situation. Unlike the private sector, where a hiring manager knows the exact skills required to be successful in a position, Federal HR specialists don't always know which skills are the most important for each position, or which skills are the most transferable for the positions they are required to fill. So clearly matching your skills on your résumé directly with what is being asked in the job vacancy qualifications and requirements may help your application to move to the next step.

While you may design your own format, you must include certain information so that your qualifications may be properly evaluated to determine if you meet legal requirements for Federal employment. If your résumé does not provide all the information requested on the application, or if the information requested on any forms needed to be submitted with your application are not supplied, you may not be considered for the job (see next page for these requirements).

The need to provide all of the detailed information that the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) requires means that your Federal résumé will likely be longer than a typical private-sector résumé. You should create a format that allows the reader to easily identify all your strengths and add as much detailed information as necessary about your relevant work

experience applicable for the job vacancy for which you are applying. For example, use the same words listed in the job vacancy requirements that match your experiences whenever possible. Remember, you want both the HR specialist and the hiring manager to know why you are the best person for the job.

*Special Note: A résumé is not a biography. Be selective, not exhaustive. Focus on experience that is relevant to the job for which you are applying. Arrange the descriptions of your accomplishments in a way that will focus the reader on how well your job experiences match the vacancy requirements.*

## Résumé Contents

To ensure that your qualifications can be properly evaluated, you should confirm that your Federal résumé contains all of the following information (in addition to specific information requested in the job vacancy announcement):

### Job Information:

- Announcement number, title, and grade(s) of the job for which you are applying.

### Personal Information (where applicable):

- Full name, mailing address (with ZIP Code) and day and evening phone numbers (with area code)
- Social Security Number (If you are uncomfortable with providing your full Social Security Number, the last 4 digits are acceptable)
- Country of citizenship (Most Federal jobs require United States citizenship)
- Veterans' preference
- [Schedule A documentation \(as an attachment\)](#)
- Federal Reinstatement eligibility (If requested, attach your SF-50 as proof of your career or career-conditional status.) If you cannot find your SF-50, you can contact the last agency you worked for and request this form from the agency's HR office.
- Highest Federal civilian grade held (Also, give job series and dates job held)

### Education:

- High School Name(s), City(ies) and State(s) (ZIP code(s) if known) Date of Diploma or GED
- Colleges or Universities with the Name(s), City(ies) and State(s) (ZIP code(s) if known) Majors Types and year(s) any degree(s) were conferred and GPAs (If no degree was earned, show total credits earned and indicate whether semester or quarter hours.)
- A copy of your college transcript (only if the job vacancy announcement requests it.)(as an attachment).

### Work Experience:

Give the following information for your paid and non-paid work experience related to the job for which you are applying. (Do not send job descriptions.)

- Job title (include series and grade if Federal job.)
- Duties, responsibilities and career accomplishments
- Employers' name(s) and address(es)

- Supervisors' name(s) and phone number(s) (Indicate if potential employer is allowed to contact your current supervisor.)
- Starting and ending dates (month and year)
- Hours per week and salary(ies) of each position

### **Other Qualifications:**

- Job-related training courses (titles and years)
- Job-related skills, for example, other languages, computer software/hardware, tools, machinery, typing speed
- Job-related certificates and licenses (current only)
- Job-related honors, awards, and special accomplishments, for example, publications, memberships in professional or honor societies, leadership activities, public speaking, and performance awards (Give dates, but do not send documents unless requested.)
- At least three (3) professional references, using past and current supervisors if possible.

### **Current or Former Federal Employees:**

- If you are a current or former Federal employee, you should also have your:
  - Last SF-50
  - Most recent performance appraisal

*Special Note: Your résumé should provide enough information for an employer to immediately know:*

*Who you are,*

*Where you can be reached,*

*What kind of work you've done,*

*Why you're qualified for the position,*

*Whether you meet the [legal requirements of Federal employment](#)*

## **Résumé Styles**

Content is more important than order. Consequently, you should put yourself in a potential employer's position and ask yourself this question: Will the information on your résumé help convince the employer, or the HR specialist at the appropriate agency, that you are a worthwhile candidate for the position they are trying to fill?

While you are encouraged to use the USAJOBS Résumé Builder tool when applying to a Federal vacancy, some other options are available to you. When writing your résumé, you should pick a style that shows why you are the best person for the job. Several options for résumé styles include:

### **Chronological (Recommended for most applicants)**

This type of résumé lists your work experience, education, volunteer and community service activity, and awards and recognitions in reverse chronological order. Your most recent work experience should be first.

### **Functional (Best for those with employment gaps)**

A functional résumé focuses on skills, abilities, accomplishments, job traits, and personal characteristics (competencies) that employers expect future employees to match.



## **Combination**

The combination résumé includes elements of both the chronological and functional styles of résumés by identifying your relevant skills and accomplishments and then describes your employment and education in chronological order.

## **Targeted**

The targeted résumé may be any of the three styles listed above with one exception; the résumé is tailored for a specific agency or position. This type of résumé is typically used when you know positions may exist at a particular agency, but are not applying to an advertised vacancy.

## **USAJOBS**

The USAJOBS résumé is automatically formatted for you using the information you provide in the USAJOBSs Résumé Builder. You are encouraged to use the USAJOBS Résumé Builder tool when applying to a Federal vacancy.

# **Formatting Your Résumé**

A well-formatted, well-organized résumé helps you stand out from other applicants. It enables a hiring manager or HR specialist to learn key information about you, such as technical proficiencies, your work history, or the awards and promotions you've earned. Highlight your strengths and accomplishments by using effective font and point size, standardizing margins, and making the best use of color and symbols.

*Special Note: The USAJOBS Résumé Builder does not provide formatting options. Any résumé created in USAJOBS will be in a standard format and will not have the following option available to modify.*

## **Margins**

Margins should be set at 1" all around. Even if you're concerned about space, the margins of your résumé should not go below 1/2" because doing so could create a visually "crowded" résumé. For readability, you should use left-aligned margins over block-justified text.

*Special Note: Block-justified text is a feature available on most text programs. This feature makes all the words and lines in a block of text, such as paragraphs, spaced-out such that the first word aligns with the left margin and last word with the right margin.*

## **Font Type**

The font you choose for your résumé should be aesthetically pleasing and easy to read to attract a potential employer's interest. Font types such as Arial, Verdana, and Times New Roman work well. Keep in mind that once you select a font, you should maintain its consistency throughout your résumé.

## **Font Point Size**

Font size, typically measured in points, has a lot to do with the font type you choose. The most commonly used font sizes are 10-12 points. However, some fonts at 12 points appear too large, while other fonts at 12 points appear too small. To better identify yourself and the sections within your résumé, the font size for your name and headings should be larger than the font size of the body of your résumé.

## Color

Color in your résumé can be a powerful marketing tool as long as it is used to enhance your résumé and not weaken it. When used properly and sparingly (e.g., no more than one additional color besides black), color can create visual appeal and emphasize important information.

## Formatting

Some of the best résumés use paragraphs and bullets to describe work history and accomplishments—the combination is aesthetically pleasing and easier to read.

When using paragraphs to describe job duties, be sure to use short, concise phrases starting with action verbs (see attachment 1). When using bullets, do so sparingly to draw the reader's eyes to especially important points on your résumé and be consistent. Bullets help the reader understand what you are highlighting from one section of your résumé to the next. Bold and italics should also be used sparingly in résumés. Only use them to emphasize words or section headings to help guide the reader's eye to notice your qualifications. A good tip is to try reading it without any bold or italics to determine if they need to be emphasized or not.

*Special Note: Always print your résumé prior to sending to an employer. Do this even if you're submitting your résumé online because the employer may want a print copy at an interview. Just because the fonts and formatting look good on your computer screen doesn't mean they will look the same when printed.*

## Common Questions

### How do I read the job announcement?

Federal vacancy announcements can be confusing if you aren't familiar with the format. Federal vacancy announcements use a common five-tab format (highlighted in the following example) to provide information about the position. It is important to read each section carefully to ensure you fully understand the position, can meet the required qualifications, and that you are aware of how your application will be evaluated.

**Tab 1 - Overview** – briefly describes the job and provides basic information regarding salary, who may apply, duty location (physical location of job), open period for acceptance of applications with the deadline date, and job summary. You can also scroll down through this overview section to view the information contained in the tabs below without needing to visit each tab.

**Tab 2 - Duties** – cites the major duties and responsibilities of the job.

**Tab 3 - Qualifications and Evaluations** – lists the type of education, experience, and skills/competencies you need to be eligible for the position and how your experience will be evaluated.

**Tab 4 - Benefits & Other Information** – highlights some of the benefits available to you as an employee.

**Tab 5 - How to Apply** – lists the required application materials and provides instructions on how to submit your application package.

## Should I apply to this position?

Customizing résumés or online applications can take up a lot of time. Before you start an application, you should carefully read the entire vacancy announcement to make sure your experience and/or education meets the basic qualification requirements and evaluation factors.

These qualification and evaluation factors will be spelled out in terms of the amount/ type of experience required to meet the minimum qualification requirements of the position, and the critical competencies that distinguish the best candidates. By reviewing your résumé to see if it matches the stated qualifications and evaluation factors, you can focus your efforts on the positions for which you are most likely to qualify. To make the best use of your time, focus your efforts on positions where your skills and experience are the best match for the stated qualification factors.

## What's the difference between qualifications and evaluation factors?

Minimum Qualifications are minimum standards set by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to help ensure that Federal employees are, indeed, qualified for employment. You must meet these minimum qualifications to be considered for employment. The job announcement describes the minimum qualifications required for the position. Minimum qualifications are stated in terms of general or specialized experience.

- **General experience-** A type of work experience that is not necessarily directly related to the position, but demonstrates the ability to acquire the particular competencies/knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform the work of the position.
- **Specialized experience-** A type of work experience directly related to the work to be performed in a position.

For some jobs, you can qualify based solely on education instead of experience. For other jobs, both education *and* experience are required to qualify; and for yet other jobs, you can qualify based on a *combination* of your experience and education. These requirements will be described in the job announcement.

If you are relying on your education to qualify for a job, you *must* submit a copy of your academic transcript with your application. If you are selected for the position, you may be required to submit an *official* transcript before a final job offer will be made.

Evaluation Factors are criteria that are used to evaluate the relative qualifications of applicants who meet the minimum qualification requirements. These criteria are derived from job-related competencies that are important in distinguishing the best candidates for the position, who will then be eligible for further consideration. The job announcement will explain what evaluation factors, if any, will be used to further evaluate all minimally-qualified applicants.

## Which should go first on my résumé, education or experience?

The answer depends on whether your education or your experience is your best selling point and/or meets the qualifications of the position for which you are applying. Generally, new graduates list education first, while job-seekers with a few years' or more of work history list experience first. However, when using the USAJOBS Résumé Builder, experience is always listed first.

## **Should I include ALL my previous positions? How far back should I go?**

The most important thing is to include your most relevant experience first. Your work history should go as far back as you need to make your experience applicable. In other words, make sure you highlight those accomplishments of previous jobs that are most relevant to the position you are seeking.

If you find that this experience listing results in the appearance of gaps in your employment history, you can either list those positions under an “Additional Information” section or list the position in order with a brief sentence describing the work you performed.

As a rule of thumb, it is recommended that you do not include any experience older than 10 years that does not pertain to the position for which you are applying.

## **How do I address gaps in my work history?**

Sometimes you may have significant periods of unemployment or gaps in your work history. Sometimes these gaps can be a “red flag” to employers and lead them to reach uninformed conclusions about an applicant’s ability to meet the job’s qualifications, maintain employment or to work hard.

How to handle this situation is up to you. You can give an explanation for this gap in the cover letter prior to the interview or in your résumé, or you can wait until the interview to give an explanation.

- Addressing these gaps in your cover letter or résumé means the employer will be cognizant of the situation before the interview which should remove the impact it could have during the interview. However, revealing unemployment at such an early stage may also damage your opportunity to get an interview.
- Addressing the gaps in employment during the interview may benefit you in that you can explain the situation in person, and answer any concerns the employer might have.

One way that you may be able to avoid this situation altogether is to create a functional résumé (discussed on page 7) that highlights the skills rather than the work experience résumé. There are also creative methods to soften gaps in work history:

- use only years, not months, for work dates
- include volunteer activities
- don’t distinguish between paid and unpaid work
- include temporary work assignments, short-term job tryouts, internships, etc.
- briefly summarize (in positive terms) what you did when you weren’t working.

Ultimately, the most important strategy is to emphasize current activities and to demonstrate that you have the knowledge, skills and abilities to be successful in the job.

Job seekers vary significantly in their comfort level providing information on work history gaps. However, even in cases where you decide to be fairly open, you should only provide the information that is truly necessary. There is no reason to provide extensive details; in fact, giving too much information could even make the employer uncomfortable.

*Special Note: The purpose of a résumé is to be a marketing tool. It should not tell a person’s life story. Think of a résumé as an “advertisement” for a person intended to get the employer’s attention and move the job search forward.*

*Special Note: Remember to customize your written response that addresses the minimum qualifications and explains how you possess the experience to perform this work successfully. **Qualifying experience can either be paid or unpaid (i.e., volunteering, fellowships and internships → Can be listed as Job title).***

### **What's the best way to show my potential for the position I am applying for?**

The best way to showcase your abilities for a particular job is to ensure that your résumé reflects your knowledge, experience, and/or education required of the position for which you are applying. Review the "Qualifications & Evaluations" tab carefully to ensure that you fully understand how your application will be evaluated.

*Example 1: You're interested in applying for a Management/Program Analyst position at an agency that requires applicants to have a demonstrated ability to research, analyze, and present findings to high-level management officials in various formats such as comprehensive reports, recommendations, and program policies and procedures.*

*You may write: Utilized a high degree of qualitative and quantitative analytical skills to analyze, evaluate, and improve the efficiency of internal administrative operations, organizations and management including participation on task forces and surveys, studies and other areas of management operations to determine the adequacy of existing program policies and procedures.*

*Example 2: You are interested in applying for a position that requires knowledge in processing large volumes of records. To draw the reader's eye to your experience with this type of work, don't hesitate to use numbers to showcase your qualifications.*

*You may write: Appraised, arranged, described, preserved, and provided access to 700 collections of various types. Collections encompassed 10,000 linear shelf feet, including 4,000 artifacts cataloged online.*

*Special Note: Human Resources specialists use your résumé to verify that you possess the required experience/competencies of the vacant position as well as to verify your responses to the self-assessment questionnaire. If your résumé does not **specifically** and **clearly** show that you possess the required experience/competencies, then credit cannot be given for your experience. This lack of information may result in your application no longer being considered.*

### **How long should my résumé be?**

The general rule of thumb is that your résumé should be one to three pages depending upon your level of experience. However, if you are building your résumé in USAJOBS, the average length is four to five pages. Résumés longer than one page should be numbered accordingly (e.g., 1 of 4) so an employer can easily identify if pages are missing or to ensure they are in the correct order.

*Special Note: The length of your Federal résumé is a personal choice. Regardless of length, your résumé should best match your qualifications with to the position description for which you are applying.*

### **What about references?**

You should supply three references of individuals who can verify your work ethic, character, and performance.

## **Do I Need a Cover Letter?**

Your cover letter is your opportunity to make a good first impression with the Federal hiring manager. It provides you with the chance to convince the hiring manager to read your résumé and it lets you highlight your experiences and skills. However, your cover letter will not be considered in evaluating your qualifications and eligibility for referral for further consideration. Accordingly, you must ensure that all of your substantive relevant experience is included in your résumé and accurately described in your responses to the vacancy questionnaire.

**Make sure that you have carefully read the description of duties outlined in the job announcement** - Highlight your qualifications and work experience in the cover letter.

**Research the agency to which you are applying-** Your cover letter is your first chance to express how your interests and experiences can further the mission and goals of an agency.

**Use clear and professional formats-** Use a simple, clean font. Ensure that your cover letter is professional and matches your Federal Government résumé's format (font, size, header etc.).

**Be specific rather than vague-** Tell exactly what experiences you have had that make you a great candidate for the position, not merely that you have experience.

**Be brief-** Your cover letter should be less than a page in length. Always be concise and clear.

**Proofread your letter-** Grammatical and spelling errors should be avoided at all costs. Delete colloquialisms and contractions.

### **Write the content to include:**

- A first introductory paragraph that identifies the position for which you are applying. It should grab the hiring manager's attention and make it clear that you are a great candidate for the job. Draw attention to your résumé and what makes you an excellent candidate for the job.
- A main paragraph that focuses on matching your qualifications to the needs of the position. Discuss aspects of the agency, such as the agency's mission, and how it is related to the position for which you are applying. This reference to the agency will not only emphasize that you are serious about the job and not sending out a form letter, but it will also make it easier for you to show how you can help the organization reach its goals.
- The last paragraph should direct the reader to your enclosed résumé. End this paragraph with your availability for an interview.

For a sample cover letter see Attachment 3

## **What other documents do I need to submit?**

Read the vacancy announcement carefully and follow all instructions. Remember to look through all of the tabs on the USAJOBS website as each tab contains different information related to the posting. At a minimum, many agencies require applicants to submit a résumé and an online self-assessment questionnaire. In many instances, additional documentation (e.g., Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty (Form DD-214), most recent performance appraisal, transcripts, etc.) will be required.



If you are a person who has a disability and are interested in being hired under the Schedule A Hiring Authority, attach your Schedule A letter to your application through the USAJOBS.gov attachment area (if you are applying to a posted position), or send it directly to the [Selective Placement Program Coordinator](#) (if they are actively seeking to fill a position – either posted or unposted).

For more information on the Schedule A Hiring Authority or a [sample Schedule A letter](#), see Attachment 2. Failure to submit all required documents will result in your application being rejected for consideration.

*Special Note: Do not add attachments to your application unless they are specifically requested. You may refer to letters of recommendation and quote from them where appropriate in your cover letter and in your résumé where appropriate.*

### **What is the occupational questionnaire or assessment?**

The questionnaire is a self-assessment tool. The questionnaire is a list of questions designed to solicit information about how well your competencies match the experience required for the job. Generally, you can preview questions by clicking on the “How to Apply” section/tab within the job announcement and scrolling down to the “How You Will Be Evaluated” section. Many agencies offer a “View Occupational Questionnaire,” or something similar, link to view the questions in advance of applying.

You should respond honestly to all questions. You should also give yourself credit when deserved. While you should be careful not to inflate your experiences, you want to take credit for your accomplishments.

Once you complete the questionnaire, the HR specialist may or may not rate your application, depending on the applicable procedures as explained in the job announcement. This rating will be compared to the ratings of other minimally qualified applicants to determine whether or not your application moves on for further consideration in the selection process. If you are eligible for a hiring preference such as [veteran's preference](#) or the Schedule A Hiring Authority, then you may be placed ahead of other non-preference candidates on the referral certificate.

Note that some agencies may also require you to identify where in your résumé (what position) you utilized the skills/knowledge to support your rating. In addition, most agencies state that your score may be adjusted and/or you may not be further considered for the position, if your résumé and supporting documentation do not support your self-rating.

### **What kinds of questions are typical on the questionnaire/assessment?**

Generally, questionnaires are custom-developed to match the job requirements; however, most occupational questionnaires require you to provide responses to questions that will evaluate whether you meet the minimum qualification requirements of the position, as well as to other competency-based, job-specific assessment questions.

Examples of types of questions asked on the self-assessment questionnaire are provided below.

**Example 1 (Minimum Qualifications):** Which of the following statements best describes your experience?

*A. I have at least one year of specialized experience equivalent to at least the GS-12 level in the Federal government that included evaluating current and emerging formats of electronic records; defining system requirements; and electronic information system development documents.*

*B. I do not possess the experience described above; therefore, I am not eligible for this position.*

**Example 2:**

INSTRUCTIONS: For each of the task statements, choose the one response from the list below that best describes your experience.

1. Developing policies, methods, and/or strategies for the long-term management and access of electronic records or other digital content based on an understanding of archival and records management principles as well as available IT solutions.

2. Using format migration as a preservation or access strategy.

3. Presenting reports, proposals or recommendations based on justified findings for internal management.

A - I have no experience in performing this work behavior.

B - I have limited experience in performing this work behavior. I have had exposure to this work behavior, but would require additional guidance, instruction, or experience to perform it at a proficient level.

C - I have experience performing this work behavior across routine or predictable situations with minimal supervision or guidance.

D - I have performed this work behavior independently across a wide range of situations. I have assisted others in carrying out this work behavior. I seek guidance in carrying out this work behavior only in unusually complex situations.

E - I am considered an expert in carrying out this work behavior. I advise and instruct others in carrying out this work behavior on a regular basis. I am consulted by my colleagues and/or superiors to carry out this work behavior in unusually complex situations.

**Example 3:**

1. Which of the following best describes your experience determining the needs of either internal or external customers (i.e., someone who receives your services or products)?

A. I have never or rarely worked with customers.

B. I have asked basic questions to understand customers' basic needs.

C. I have had in-depth conversations with customers to help understand more complex needs.

D. I have had formal, in-depth meetings or consultations with customers to actively stimulate discussions and gain complete understanding of their complex needs, wants, and expectations.

E. I have initiated and cultivated relationships with customers and partnered with them to jointly define their service goals and priorities.

**What does "time-in-grade" mean?**

Time-in-grade is a requirement that applies to the promotion, transfer, or reinstatement of current or former Federal employees to a higher grade level than previously held. Generally, Federal competitive service employees must serve at least one year in a position at the next lower grade level in order to be eligible for promotion, transfer, or reinstatement to the next-higher grade level. Time-in-Grade does not apply to applicants who have no Federal work experience.



## What's the last thing to do before submitting my application?

As a final step before submitting your application package, take a moment to review these basic, yet very important guidelines when applying for a Federal career.

### Do

- ✓ Quantify whenever possible—use numbers and data points to illustrate success.
- ✓ Check your application package for misspellings and typographical errors.
- ✓ Use active verbs to describe actual work performed. Be specific.
- ✓ Use your own words when writing a résumé. Be concise.
- ✓ Edit your résumé to reduce fluff and make every word count. Set your résumé aside for a few days and then come back to it again with a fresh perspective.
- ✓ Review your application package to ensure that it contains all of the required information listed under the "How to Apply" section of the vacancy announcement.
- ✓ Submit your application in a timely manner—meeting the deadline for receipt of applications.

### Don't

- ✓ Make things up or inflate your accomplishments, level of responsibility, or skills
- ✓ Use personal pronouns (I, my, me) in a résumé.
- ✓ Don't use acronyms, unless you are certain everyone knows what that acronym is.
- ✓ Use job description expressions like "duties included" or "responsibilities": Instead use accomplishment-oriented phrases that sell you.
- ✓ Include personal information on your résumé, other than contact information (examples: height, weight, age, date of birth, place of birth, marital status, ethnicity, health, reason for leaving previous jobs, etc.)
- ✓ Use the same résumé for every job. Take the time to tailor your résumé for each position.

## What's next?

As previously mentioned, once you submit your application, a Human Resources (HR) Specialist will review your package, ensure you meet the basic qualification requirements, verify your self-assessment ratings against the information you provided in your résumé, and forward the list of "best qualified" applicants to the hiring manager for consideration.

The hiring manager will select applicants from the "best qualified" list, schedule interviews, and conduct the interviews. Once interviews have been completed, an HR specialist will extend a tentative job offer. Pending the outcome of a background investigation, a final job offer may or may not be made.

To determine the status of your application, activate the notification option from your USAJOBS profile and you will receive automatic alerts when the status of the job vacancy changes.

*\*Special Note: Some jobs are posted as both competitive and non-competitive positions. Such postings mean that one posting is written to specifically recruit those eligible for Schedule A, but the agency is also accepting standard résumés for the same position. Agencies follow this procedure to ensure that they have the best chance to find the perfect candidate. It is recommended that Schedule A eligible applicants apply to the non-competitive posting. However, to increase your chances of being noticed for this position, it is suggested that you apply to the competitive posting as well.*

### **Attachment 1 - Action Verbs**

accomplished	led	expedited
achieved	licensed	explained
acquired	maintained	financed
adjusted	programmed	forecast
administered	prohibited	formulated
advised	projected	gathered
analyzed	promoted	graded
applied	purchased	guided
appraised	qualified	handled
arranged	rated	managed
assessed	recommended	modified
assisted	related	monitored
assured	reported	named
bought	researched	negotiated
briefed	reviewed	observed
coordinated	revised	ordered
corrected	selected	organized
counseled	set	participated
critiqued	brought	perceived
dealt	budgeted	performed
decided	cataloged	persuaded
defined	changed	planned
delegated	chaired	prepared
delivered	classified	presented
demonstrated	closed	processed
designed	communicated	solved
determined	compared	sought
developed	completed	specified
devised	conceived	spoke
directed	concluded	studied
implemented	conducted	suggested
improved	continued	summarized
initiated	contracted	supervised
inspected	controlled	targeted
instructed	drafted	taught
insured	edited	tested
interpreted	enlisted	trained
interviewed	ensured	translated
introduced	established	treated
investigated	estimated	updated
joined	evaluated	wrote
kept	expanded	

*Special Note: You need not limit yourself to the verbs on this list. The vacancy announcement may help you identify verbs to use.*

## **Attachment 2 - Learning About Schedule A**

Many different paths are available to Federal employment. For individuals with disabilities, one of those paths is the Schedule A Hiring Authority.

*Special Note: Several regulations are generically referred to as "Schedule A." These regulations cover more than just persons with disabilities. When contacting a federal HR professional concerning possible employment opportunities, explain that you are referring to Schedule A for persons with disabilities.*

### **What is the Schedule A Hiring Authority?**

Schedule A is a hiring authority that Federal agencies use to tap into a diverse and vibrant talent pool of people with disabilities, without going through the often lengthy traditional hiring process. Schedule A allows individuals to apply for a Federal appointment through a noncompetitive hiring process. This application process means that if you meet the eligibility status of the appointment and the minimum qualifications for a position, you may be hired for the position without competing with the general public. Schedule A can be used to hire people in all professions from clerical staff to attorneys.

*Special Note: Schedule A is also of great benefit to Federal agencies because by using Schedule A the Agency is not required to place a posting on USAJOBS or to undertake the standard lengthy hiring process.*

### **Who can use Schedule A?**

This excepted authority is used to appoint persons with severe physical disabilities, psychiatric disabilities, and intellectual disabilities. Severe physical disabilities include but are not limited to blindness, deafness, paralysis, missing limbs, epilepsy, dwarfism, and more. If you have documentation to show your disability status, you may choose to apply for Federal appointments through Schedule A. People with disabilities may apply for Federal appointments either using Schedule A or the traditional competitive hiring process. You are encouraged to apply for the same job using both methods as it has the potential to increase your chances of being hired. Such individuals may qualify for conversion to permanent status after two years of satisfactory service.

### **Who is considered to be an individual with a disability status?**

Have you received Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits? Were you ever identified as needing services through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)? Did you receive services in elementary or high school through an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a 504 plan in school? Have you ever received vocational rehabilitation services? **Most Importantly:** Do you meet the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act ([ADAAA](#)) definition of an individual with a disability, which also applies to the Rehabilitation Act?

If you answered yes to any of these questions you may be eligible to use Schedule A.

## **Am I required to disclose my disability?**

To be considered for a Schedule A appointment, you will be required to submit proof that you have a disability, but not necessarily what type of disability you have. Disclosure of your disability to obtain a job is not typical, but will be required for a Schedule A appointment. Although the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) and the Rehabilitation Act both provide persons with disabilities protections against being compelled to disclose the existence of a disability, because Schedule A is a non-competitive hiring authority, individuals have to prove they have a disability to be eligible.

## **Is this a permanent appointment?**

The major difference between a typical competitive appointment and a Schedule A appointment is that, under the Schedule A appointing authority, appointees are required to complete a two-year probationary period. During probation, Schedule A employees are held to the same performance standards as all other employees, but may be subject to termination without adverse action procedures. Adverse action procedures are personnel actions considered unfavorable to an employee, and can include; removal, suspension, furlough, or reduction in grade or pay. Learn more about this topic at [OPMs Employee Relations Page](#).

*Special Note: Schedule A can be a fast track way for Federal agencies to hire talented individuals with disabilities. When properly implemented, it's a win-win situation for both you and the hiring Federal agency!*

## **How do I document that I am Schedule A eligible?**

To demonstrate Schedule A eligibility you need to provide documentation to confirm **your disability status**. Ask your doctor; a licensed medical professional; a licensed rehabilitation professional; or any Federal, state, District of Columbia, or U.S. territory agency that issues or provides disability benefits for a letter stating that you have a disability.. The letter does NOT need to give details of your medical history. The simpler the facts are presented, the better.

## **Who can help you get considered for a job at Federal agencies?**

You can find the appropriate person or office to contact for assistance by either using the HR contact information included in the vacancy announcement itself (all announcements include a phone number and/or e-mail address to be used for questions), or by searching the directory of the [Disability Program Managers \(DPM\)](#) and [Selective Placement Program Coordinators \(SPPC\)](#) maintained by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). The directory can be found at [http://apps.opm.gov/sppc\\_directory/](http://apps.opm.gov/sppc_directory/), but please note that this list is not always accurate and current. In addition, not all agencies have a DPM or SPPC, so you may need to speak with a HR professional within the agency for help. The HR professional in the job posting is probably the best person to direct you to their agency's Schedule A specialist, though..

If you are a veteran, you may want to contact a [Veterans Affairs Certified Counselor](#).

You may also want to reach out to various Federal disability affinity groups. These groups can have knowledge about open positions that agencies are specifically looking to fill utilizing the Schedule A hiring authority that have not yet been posted to USAJOBS.

### **Attachment 3 – Sample Cover Letter**

Name, Last Name

Address 1

Address 2

City, State Zip Code

Mobile: (XXX) XXX-XXXX

Evening Phone: (XXX) XXX-XXX

Email: email-address@yahoo.com

[Date]

[Name, Agency and Address of Federal Manager]

Dear [Hiring Manager Name];

As a human resource professional with an extensive background in the recruitment and hiring of top talent, I would like to apply for the job of human resources specialist (vacancy identification number: VW383446). I believe that I can support this agency's mission to hire the best and most productive staff currently available in the job market.

Throughout my career, I have been recognized as an expert in many areas. Some of them include: making recommendations concerning the interpretation of federal policy and its impact on an agency's hiring practices, exercising good judgment regarding sensitive and confidential information on human resource issues for a designated major functional unit, and ensuring that all adverse actions taken against employees comport with federal guidance.

I have processed over 190 performance evaluations and more than 150 additional officer action reports with 100 percent accuracy and completeness. I have overseen the Personnel Management Division consisting of up to 3,000 senior and junior personnel, provided recommendations to solve problems pertaining to issues such as retention and motivation, and reviewed department personnel forms for completeness, accuracy, timing, and conformity to budget and policy guidelines.

It is with great excitement that I submit my resume for consideration to become a member of your team. If you wish to meet me in person I am available for an interview anytime in the afternoon. Feel free to contact me at 555-555-5555 or via any of the methods listed above. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Name, Last Name

Enclosure

## Attachment 4 - Sample Résumé

### First and Last Name

Address

City, State and Zip code

Email address

Phone Number

Social Security Number (last four digits)

**Citizenship:** *(Yes or No, Work Visa)*

**Special Hiring Authority:** *(Veteran preference or Person with Disability - Schedule A)*

**Federal Experience:** *(Yes or No and Indicate Military, Federal or State Gov)*

**Clearance:** *(Indicate what level and if it's still active)*

**OBJECTIVE:** To obtain a full time position in public service with *(Indicate the Federal Agency and sub Agency)* as a *(Indicate the position including announcement Number if there is one)*

**SKILLS SUMMARY:** *(Has 3 elements: An introductory paragraph, list of skills directly related to the position, and your skills you have acquired throughout your career, that you want to highlight)*

*(1<sup>st</sup> Element: The introductory paragraph - Must be specific and highly detailed for each job series and position to which you're applying. You need to outline all the specific skills you have that are directly related to the position you are seeking including Key Words identified in the position description.)*

Focused and highly motivated management professional, with 12+ years of extensive experience in Strategic Workforce Planning, Equal Employment Office, Office of Human Resources, and Diversity Management. Utilizing my background in Disability, Accommodations, Business Operations, Project Management, and Statistical Analysis to develop comprehensive programs based on the employment needs and mission of the agency. Deploying metric-based solutions and maximizing our ROI.

*(2<sup>nd</sup> Element: List of skills directly related to the position and the Key Words you identified - Back up your skill summary with specific examples from your career or education. Identify specific accomplishments, length of time, highlight numerical results and awards derived from those duties and skills. This element is the most critical area of the résumé. You are relating an activity in your career to that of the position you are applying and showcasing your accomplishments.)*

### Good Example

Develop and create Strategic Workforce Planning programs to ensure that managers accurately utilize all available resources.

### Better Example

Expert in Diversity Management and Employee Relations assisting managers and staff in identifying and solving EEO policy questions on accommodations for the past nine years.

#### **Best Example**

Trained a staff of 100+ internal and external personnel on diversity rules and regulations. This led to a 70 percent reduction in violations and improved the overall employee satisfaction rating from 73% to 89% at ABC Co.

*(3rd Element: Acquired skills - These are skills you want every employer to know you possess and feel they are what define you as a model employee. Remember you MUST quantify and qualify every statement you make.)*

#### **Good Example**

Analyzed, developed, tested, and incorporated IT business solutions to enhance business process control and tracking.

#### **Better Example**

Supervised, motivated, and mentored multiple teams and team members during 12 years as a Department Manager at ABC Co. Exhibited good judgment, a strong work ethic, and integrity.

#### **Best Example**

Developed and implemented a supply inventory program, which tracked our use of production and office materials. This provided detailed reports of available inventory at all times and facilitated more informed purchasing decisions. As a result, ABC Co. saved \$500,000 per year.

### **EMPLOYMENT HISTORY**

**Name of Employer**

**Employer's Address**

**Position & Title**

**GS level or Salary and Dates of Service**

*(This section should be identical to skill summary. Write up a brief description of duties, and identify your major roles and responsibilities. Describe in detail each position you held for at least the last 10 years and quantify and qualify each statement).*

***TIP: Describe each duty as if you are teaching it to someone for the first time. Hiring Managers are not allowed to assume you can or can't do anything.***

***Example: Human Resource Professional: A Human Resource Professional can perform numerous duties, if you only list Human Resource Professional the person reviewing the application can only interpret that as someone that worked in a Human Resource Office. Ensure that you also describe the actual duties you performed or the skills that you have. Instead of just stating that you were an Human Resource Professional add that you;***



Analyzed, developed, and managed programs and projects to successfully deploy our department's initiatives. Ensured an inclusive work environment free from discrimination and in compliance with all Federal and state regulations. Accomplished this by collecting and analyzing human capital data and statistics from appropriate sources to get an accurate analysis of employee programs and the work environment.

### **Good Example**

Performed labor market statistical analysis and employment projections locally and nationally to determine if the recruitment strategy being utilized was recruiting from a diverse population.

### **Better Example**

Coordinated with the Office of Human Resources and the Equal Employment Office managers to develop programs to improve the companies diversity in the workplace. Performed detailed analysis of the current workforce, and developed a strategy to ensure targeting of a broader workforce. This analysis had an immediate impact on community relations and resulted in a 20 percent increase in local sales.

### **Best Example**

Diversity manager for the past seven years. Responsible for a staff of 20 employees. Coordinated with Office of Human Resources to develop and measure our recruiting efficiency to determine cost per employee hired and accurate ROI. Identified key elements related to recruiting and performed a statistical analysis to reduce cost per hire, leading to a yearly savings of 15 percent or (insert amount) on recruiting expenses.

## **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

*(This is where you can identify any areas of your career you feel will give an employer a better understanding of who you are and your additional activities, including honors received by organizations, exceeding specific goals on projects, etc)*

2011 - Supervised and developed the Specialty Hiring Program Non-Competitive Direct Hiring program at Health and Human Services.

2008 - Liaised with union and management on contract negotiations and labor-dispute settlements with global manufacturer. Avoided the loss of 200+ jobs and saving the company \$1.3 million dollars.

2006 - The Minority Entrepreneur Network - Assisted five minority startup companies in researching, forecasting, and drafting their business plans and applications for Small Business Loans and Angel investing.

2005 - Restructured vendor contracts for a gross savings resulting in \$375,000 per quarter.

## **COMPUTER SOFTWARE**

*(List all software and applications you are experienced in and at what level. Please indicate all formal training and where you received that training)*

*Example: HTML, Certified Level Four, New Expectations Center for Excellence, 08/2015*



## **ADDITIONAL TRAINING**

*(List any formal or informal training including accreditations and amount of hours in the specific field)*

### **Good Example**

I have attended various seminars on EEO compliance and diversity.

### **Better Example**

Extensive EEO Compliance Training: Laws & Discrimination, Diversity in the Workplace, Workplace Relationships, EEO Complaints and Resolutions: (80+ hrs of training)

### **Best Example**

Extensive Project Management Training specializing in large-scale projects and developing the project plans and schedule. All training was done at PMI Institute 2002 through 2011 (120 hrs).

## **EDUCATION**

**MBA** - Business Management, xxxxxxxxx University, city, state: year graduated and (GPA 3.93)

**BA** - Business Management, xxxxxxxxx University, city, state: year graduated and (GPA 3.87)

\*Graduated Cum laude \*Dean's List: (5 times)

**High School** – School Name, city, state: year graduated

## **HONORS AND AWARDS**

*(Any formal awards you would like to share)*

## **VOLUNTEER WORK & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

*(Depending on the type of work, volunteering can count the same as formal on-the-job experience if related to the position)*

(2010 - current) I hold Diversity workshops at the ABC community center in Washington, D.C., six times each month. I provide employers with information on developing an inclusive and diverse workforce.

## **PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

**AAPD** - American Association of People with Disabilities

**HAVA** - Honored American Veterans Afield

**NRA** - National Rehabilitation Association

**PMI** - Project Management Institute

**Wounded Warriors Project** - Warriors to Work

**REFERENCES:** *(List at least 3 reference including their contact information)*



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