

Writing Your Federal Resume

When applying for a federal job, the rules are different than traditional resumes. For private sector jobs, you typically summarize your work history in a one-page document. A federal resume, even for an entry-level job needs to be more detailed and may run anywhere from two to five+ pages since you need to go into greater depth about your skills and your previous responsibilities and accomplishments.

Key components of your federal resume

To create your federal resume, we *strongly* suggest you use the [Resume Builder](#) on USAJobs to guide you through the resume writing process to ensure you do not leave out anything important. You are permitted to create several resumes and tailor them to fit different positions. You may also create a searchable, master resume that enables HR specialists to contact you about an opportunity that might be a great fit for your skills and experience.

USAJOBS

Building your federal resume

● Candidate Information



You will first be asked to provide your name, contact information, citizenship status and other basic information. Most positions require applicants to be a U.S. citizen to apply, but there may be some exceptions for hard-to-fill jobs. You also need to identify whether you have ever worked for the federal government and whether you qualify for [veterans' preference](#).

Note: You are eligible for veterans' preference if you have served on active duty in the Armed Forces.

● Work Experience



In reverse chronological order, list the required information fields for all relevant jobs you've held. Each part of the resume is essential to your resume meeting the minimum qualifications. Experienced workers may choose to only list jobs held in the last 10 years.

Required: Employer, location, position title, start and end date, average hours worked per week, responsibilities and accomplishments.

Optional: You may include your supervisor(s) as a reference. Including your salary is also optional and will not exclude your resume from consideration.

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● Education

Include information on all the schools you have attended and relevant coursework you completed. Only list degrees from accredited schools or programs that meet the [Office of Personnel Management's standards](#).

Required: Schools attended, degrees obtained.

Optional: Grade point average, relevant coursework taken, academic papers or projects, key presentations, honors received, other important accomplishments.

Optional information to include

It is to your advantage to provide as much pertinent information as possible in the following optional sections.

- **Job related training:** Include any classes, seminars, coursework, certifications, or training you have completed that relate to skills and experience the position requires.
- **References:** In addition to providing the names of your supervisors, you may want to list professional who can vouch for your character, work ethic and dependability.
- **Language skills:** Include any foreign language experience you have and your level of proficiency.
- **Affiliations:** List any professional associations, societies, clubs or other organizations you are affiliated with. Highlight your leadership roles and volunteer experience as it relates to the job announcement.
- **Professional publications:** Include any publications you have contributed to, along with the names and dates of those publications.
- **Additional information:** In this section, include any other relevant information: awards, leadership activities, public speaking engagements, volunteer experience or other items. This is similar to a skills section on a traditional resume. Recruiters use these items to determine your interests and will not exclude your resume from consideration.



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Professional tips: Federal resume writing

- 1 Build a Master Resume**

Use the [resume builder](#) to create a master resume. Including your skills, experience and education in one place makes it easier to tailor your resume to a specific Job Opportunity Announcement (JOA).
- 2 Make Your Resume Searchable**

You may be applying for one position but if you want to be considered for other positions make your resume searchable to HR specialists and hiring managers.
- 3 Tailor Your Resume to the Job Announcement**

Tailoring your resume to a specific JOA will significantly increase your chances of moving to the next stage in the application process.

When tailoring your resume, focus on the requirement section of the JOA and list your knowledge, skills, abilities (KSA's) that match. Mirror the language in this section by including keywords and phrases that describe the position.
- 4 Consider Your Audience**

Do not assume the people reading your resume are familiar with the organizations you include in your resume. Provide context when appropriate and avoid acronyms. You should provide enough information to demonstrate your qualifications without overwhelming readers. Remember: The quality of the information is more important than the quantity.
- 5 Sell Yourself and Your Achievements**

Don't sell yourself short. Highlight your KSA's so the agency has a reason to make you a top candidate.

Include skills and achievements that go beyond your work experience and education. Consider the activities that might qualify you for a job, such as your involvement in student organizations; volunteer experiences; unique projects or interests; awards or certificates; and subjects mastered.

These items enable your resume to rise above the rest, particularly when they correspond to the job qualifications.
- 6 Demonstrate Your Impact**

In the duties and accomplishments section, use percentages, numbers and data to demonstrate your impact in previous positions. Make sure the information you include is accurate, and verifiable in an interview.
- 7 Customizing Your Resume**

Preview the assessment questions found in the "How You Will Be Evaluated" section of the JOA. Verify that you have the required experience and/or education before you apply.
- 8 Check Your Spelling and Grammar**

One of the biggest complaints from federal agencies is that too often, applicants' resumes include spelling and grammar errors. Use spellcheck or ask a peer or professional to check your resume, so you aren't rejected for spelling or grammar.

* Taken from [USAJobs.gov](https://www.usajobs.gov)