

Federal Resume Guide

A Federal Resume is your employment biography. A well-written resume allows you to highlight your accomplishments and display your competitive skills, which demonstrates to the employer your value and ultimately determines your pay level.

Whereas a private sector resume may be 1-2 pages, a Federal resume is regularly 3-5 pages, if not more. Be thorough! Use more detail than you think you need. List how much, how many employees, how big of an organization, the size of the budget, the percentage of your time spent doing the task, the number of people who reported to you, the impact of what you did, etc.

Read the job announcement carefully and PAY ATTENTION to the wording. Though it is not advisable to cut and paste directly from the announcement (managers can spot that a mile away), it is important to respond to the needs of the position. For example, if an HR Specialist job announcement says “Able to provide advice and guidance to managers and the walk-ins” you want to show experience giving great customer service to both higher level supervisors and the general public. The phrase “advice and guidance” is one you can steal for your resume, but the experience should be all yours! Also, each Agency has different requirements for submitting a resume. If you fail to follow the directions, you will not be considered among the applicants.

Don't waste time by not following instructions. LOOK CLOSELY at the “Who May Apply” section. If you do not meet one of those categories, you will not be considered.

To write your federal resume, we strongly suggest using the Resume Builder available on USAJOBS.gov. It will guide you through the resume writing process, ensuring that you do not leave out important pieces of your application. It also allows you to store multiple resumes, so that you can tailor each one to a different position. The Resume Builder will also eliminate decorative formatting by generating a template that looks the same for every applicant, ensuring a fair and equal process.

Provide basic information, including your name, contact information, and citizenship. Most positions require applicants to be a U.S. citizen in order to apply, but there may be 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 veteran's preference. If you have never served on active duty in the Armed Forces, then you are not eligible for veteran's preference.

Required: Name, contact information, citizenship, whether you claim veteran's preference, federal employee information.

WORK EXPERIENCE

List the required elements for any relevant jobs you've held. Each component is essential to your resume meeting the minimum qualifications. Experienced workers may choose to list only 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 want to include your supervisor(s) as a reference. Including your salary is also optional and will not exclude your resume from consideration.*

EDUCATION

Include basic information about all schools attended and coursework completed. Only list degrees from accredited schools or programs that meet the Office of Personnel Management's standards. If you wish to substitute education for experience to qualify for a job, you must include the information about coursework in your resume. To ensure that you receive appropriate credit for your academic credentials, you should provide as much information as possible.

Required: Schools attended, degrees obtained

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