Writing a Federal Resume

A federal resume is used when applying for federal government jobs and differs from a standard resume, which is typically used for private sector positions. Its purpose is to highlight your qualifications for the specific roles you are applying for within the government. Some local and state government positions may also use the federal resume format.

Update: Federal agencies now require resumes to be no more than two pages in length as part of the Merit Hiring Plan. USAJOBS will only accept resumes that meet this limit, so you may need to update the resumes saved in your profile before applying.

After signing in to USAJOBS, check the Documents tab in your profile USAJOBS will let you know if any of your resumes exceed the two-page limit.
For step-by-step guidance, visit: <u>How to add a resume to your USAJOBS profile</u>.

Prep

Before you begin writing your resume, carefully review the job announcement. Key sections will help you determine whether you qualify and what information to include:

- **Duties**: Outlines the daily responsibilities and tasks of the position.
- **Requirements**: Lists required qualifications, specialized experience, and education.
- **How to Apply**: May include a link to an assessment questionnaire or additional steps.
- **How You Will Be Evaluated**: Explains how applicants are assessed, such as through writing samples or job assessments.
- Required Documents: Identifies any additional materials you must submit with your application.

Reviewing these sections first will help you tailor your resume to the position and strengthen your application.

When creating a resume for a federal position, keep the following in mind:

- Your resume must be two pages or less and clearly explain why you are qualified for the role.
- Use plain language and avoid acronyms or technical terms that may not be easily understood. Do not assume the hiring agency knows your background—spell it out.
- Ensure your work experience directly addresses the requirements and qualifications listed in the job announcement.
- Tailor your resume to highlight experience that is most relevant to each position you apply for.

Contact Information

Include important contact information at the top of your resume. Most job applications require the following:

- Full name
- Email address
- Phone number

Always read the job announcement carefully to ensure you've included all required contact details.

Relevant Work Experience
For each relevant position, be sure to include:
- Employer name
- Job title
- Start and end dates (month and year)
- Number of hours worked per week
- Brief descriptions demonstrating your ability to perform duties at the level outlined in the job announcement
- Series and grade (for federal positions only)

Example:
Program Analyst, GS-343-11
 January 2009–Present | 40 hours/week
Use accomplishment-focused statements to describe your experience, such as:
- Accomplished [X] as measured by [Y], by doing [Z].

Education, Certifications, and Licenses
If the job announcement requires specific education, certifications, or licenses, be sure to include them on your resume and submit any required documentation (such as transcripts or certification records).

Education details should include:
- Name of school or institution
- Completion date
- Degree earned
- Grade point average (GPA), if required

Including this information ensures your resume meets application requirements and clearly demonstrates your qualifications.

Optional Details
When relevant, include:
• Current Security Clearance
• Job-related training
• Language skills
• Organizations and affiliations
• Professional publications
• Eligibility for special programs (e.g., military)

Do not include:
- Classified or government-sensitive information
- Social Security Number (SSN)
- Photos of yourself
- Personal details such as age, sex, or religious affiliation
- Encrypted or digitally signed documents

File type and size:
- Maximum file size: 5 MB
- Recommended format: PDF (to preserve formatting and page count)
- Other accepted formats: GIF, JPG, JPEG, PNG, RTF, TXT, ODT, DOC, DOCX
- PDF portfolio files are not accepted
- Use standard 8.5×11-inch pages

Formatting tips:
- Recommended fonts: Lato, Calibri, Helvetica, Arial, Verdana, Open Sans, Source Sans Pro, Roboto, Noto Sans
- Font size: 14 pt for titles, 10 pt for main text
- Page margins: 0.5 inches

Use the [USAJOBS Resume Builder](#) to help you create a resume that meets these recommendations. It uses your USAJOBS profile to get started, making it easier to apply for federal jobs.

Your Name

Address, City, State
Email address | Phone number

JOB INFORMATION	**Citizenship**:
Announcement Number:	**Veterans' Preference**: Yes or No
Position Title:	**Highest GS Grade**:
Pay scale & grade:	**Security Clearance**:

EDUCATION

Name of Institution, City, State

Full name of your degree   Expected graduation: Month 20##

Minor in (name of minor if you have one—delete line if not)

GPA: 3.9 on 4.0 scale | Credits Earned: 128 | Topper Excellence Award

WORK EXPERIENCE

Position Title   Month Year – Month Year

Organization Name, City, State   Hours per week: ##

Supervisor: Supervisor Name, Supervisor phone number   Pay/Salary: $##/hr or $##,###

Permission to contact: Yes or No

Provide a general overview of your position that focuses on the relevant transferrable skills used. The more skills that you can match from the position posting, the better.

- Bullet points of your more specific responsibilities written in APR format: Action + project + result. Include numbers when you can to define your accomplishments.
- Another bullet point
- Another bullet point

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Position Title   Month Year – Month Year

Organization Name, City, State   Hours per week: ##

Supervisor: Supervisor Name, Supervisor phone number   Pay/Salary: $##/hr or $##,###

Permission to contact: Yes or No

Provide a general overview of your position that focuses on the relevant transferrable skills used. The more skills that you can match from the position posting, the better.

- Bullet points of your more specific responsibilities written in APR format: Action + project + result. Include numbers when you can to define your accomplishments.
- Another bullet point
- Another bullet point

Position Title   Month Year – Month Year
Organization Name, City, State   Hours per week: ##
Supervisor: Supervisor Name, Supervisor phone number   Pay/Salary: $##/hr or $##,###
Permission to contact: Yes or No

Provide a general overview of your position that focuses on the relevant transferrable skills used. The more skills that you can match from the position posting, the better.

- Bullet points of your more specific responsibilities written in APR format: Action + project + result. Include numbers when you can to define your accomplishments.
- Another bullet point
- Another bullet point

SKILLS

- **Technical skills**: List your most relevant technical skills (anything to do with a tool or technology) here, separating each one with a comma.

- **Professional skills**: List your most relevant transferrable skills here. View internship/job descriptions to see how companies describe these skills and use that language here.

WKU ADVISING & CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER

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