The Federal Job Search

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Know your audience...

• Veteran?
• Specific major in the biological sciences?
• Year in school?
• Goals for the presentation?
• We will discuss immigration status...

My Goals

• Provide the background, knowledge and tools to find a suitable job announcement for you to apply to
• Provide several application tips to improve your chances of qualifying for a federal position
• Answer as many of your questions as possible


• An individual, except the President, elected or appointed to an office of honor or profit in the civil service or uniformed services, shall take the following oath:
  • “I, AB, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God.”
• This section does not affect other oaths required by law.
• (Pub. L. 89–554, Sept. 6, 1966, 80 Stat. 424.)
Nearly 7 in 10 Americans Take Prescription Drugs, Mayo Clinic, Olmsted Medical Center Find

Safety and Effectiveness

Important Links
- www.usajobs.gov
- go.government.org
  - Application tips – significant alignment with this talk
- www.opm.gov
- bestplacetowork.org/BPTW/rankings
- www.govexec.com

Limit the scope

Commonality - Federal Salary

Commonality - Federal Benefits
- Health Insurance
  - more than 100 available health plans available
- Dental & Vision
  - seven dental plans and three vision plans to choose from
- Flexible Spending Accounts
  - Health Care FSA (HCFSA)
  - Limited Expense Health Care FSA (LEX HCFSA)
  - Dependent Care FSA (DCFSA)
- Life Insurance
  - Standard, Additional, Family
**Commonality - Federal Benefits**

- Long Term Care Insurance
  - Long term care insurance for Federal employees and their parents, parents-in-law, stepparents, spouses, and adult children
- Leave
  - Annual leave (4, 6, 8 hours/pay period)
  - Sick Leave (4 hours/pay period)
  - 10 (11) Federal Holidays
- Retirement Program
  - Social Security Benefits, Basic Benefit Plan, Thrift Savings Plan
- Designations of Beneficiary
  - Life Insurance (FEGLI), Unpaid Salary, Thrift Savings Plan funds, Retirement funds (Lump Sum payment of salary deductions when a survivor annuity is not paid)

**How to apply for a Federal Job through USAJobs**

- Create an account and profile
- Edit your profile
- Search jobs
- Save your searches
- Apply jobs
  - Create and upload multiple versions of your tailored resume
  - Create and upload your application materials (transcripts)
  - Track the status of your applications

- [http://usa.gov/](http://usa.gov/)

**Other places to find federal job announcements**

- Agency Websites
  - Jobs or Careers tab
- Career Fairs
- Social Media
- Your Personal Network

**Job Announcements**

- Salary Range – Location Dependent – see next slide
- Open Period – Absolute
- Occupational Series and Grade – see following slides
- Position Information
  - Work Schedule (Full time v. Part Time)
  - Appointment Term (Permanent v. Term)
  - Promotion Potential
  - Duty Location
  - Who may be considered
    - Status v. US Citizen (General Public)

**Grade and Salary – Location Dependent**

EXERCISE TIME (2)

“Begin with the end in mind” – Stephen Covey
Occupational Series

• 0000 – Miscellaneous Occupations Group
• 0100 – Social Science, Psychology, and Welfare Group
• 0200 – Human Resources Management Group
• 0300 – General Administrative, Clerical, and Office Services Group
• 0400 – Natural Resources Management and Biological Sciences Group
• 0500 – Accounting and Budget Group
• 0600 – Medical, Hospital, Dental, and Public Health Group
• 0700 – Veterinary Medical Science Group
• 0800 – Engineering and Architecture Group
• 0900 – Legal and Kindred Group
• 1000 – Information and Arts Group

• 1100 – Business and Industry Group
• 1200 – Copyright, Patent, and Trademark Group
• 1300 – Physical Sciences Group
• 1400 – Library and Archives Group
• 1500 – Mathematics and Statistics Group
• 1600 – Equipment, Facilities, and Services Group
• 1700 – Education Group
• 1800 – Inspection, Investigation, Enforcement, and Compliance Group
• 1900 – Quality Assurance, Inspection, and Grading Group
• 2000 – Supply Group
• 2100 – Transportation Group
• 2200 – Information Technology Group

0400 – Natural Resources Management & Biological Sciences Group

• 0401, General Natural Resources Management and Biological Sciences
• 0403, Microbiology
• 0405, Pharmacology
• 0406, Zoology
• 0410, Zoology
• 0413, Physiology
• 0414, Entomology
• 0415, Toxicology
• 0430, Botany
• 0434, Plant Pathology
• 0435, Plant Physiology
• 0437, Horticulture
• 0440, Genetics
• 0454, Rangeland Management
• 0457, Soil Conservation
• 0460, Forestry
• 0470, Soil Science
• 0471, Agronomy
• 0480, Fish and Wildlife Administration
• 0482, Fish Biology
• 0485, Wildlife Refuge Management
• 0486, Wildlife Biology
• 0487, Animal Science

Occupation Series

• 1100 – Business and Industry Group
• 1200 – Copyright, Patent, and Trademark Group
• 1300 – Physical Sciences Group
• 1400 – Library and Archives Group
• 1500 – Mathematics and Statistics Group
• 1600 – Equipment, Facilities, and Services Group
• 1700 – Education Group
• 1800 – Inspection, Investigation, Enforcement, and Compliance Group
• 1900 – Quality Assurance, Inspection, and Grading Group
• 2000 – Supply Group
• 2100 – Transportation Group
• 2200 – Information Technology Group

As of 10/30/2015

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Series</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agronomy</td>
<td>0471</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Science Student Trainee</td>
<td>0499</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Science Technician</td>
<td>0404</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botany</td>
<td>0430</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ecology</td>
<td>0408</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entomology</td>
<td>0414</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish Biology</td>
<td>0482</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry</td>
<td>0460</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forestry Technician</td>
<td>0462</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Natural Resources Management And Biological Sciences</td>
<td>0401</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genetics</td>
<td>0440</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horticulture</td>
<td>0437</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Duties

• Basic responsibilities
• More detail here than the overview section
• TITLE OF POSITION MAY NOT ACCURATELY REFLECT THE DUTIES OF THE JOB.
• Research Chemist – Physics Laboratory
• Regulatory Health Project Manager
• General Health Scientist / Special Assistant
Qualifications (KSAs)

- Basic Experience Requirement
  - Successful completion of a full 4-year course of study in an accredited college or university leading to a bachelor’s or higher degree that included a major field of study or specific course requirements
  - Appropriate combination of education and experience core of educational credit, plus additional education and/or experience.

The quality of the combination of education and experience must be sufficient to demonstrate that the applicant possesses the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform work in the occupation, and is comparable to that normally acquired through the successful completion of a full 4-year course of study with a major in the appropriate field. In addition to courses in the major and related fields, a typical college degree would have included courses that involved analysis, writing, critical thinking, research, etc. These courses would have provided an applicant with skills and abilities sufficient to perform progressively more responsible work in the occupation. Therefore, credible experience should have demonstrated similarly appropriate skills or abilities needed to perform the work of the occupation.

- Specialized Experience Requirement

Experience and education requirements for GS-7 and above

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade/Positions</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Specialized Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GS-7</td>
<td>1 year of graduate-level education or superior academic achievement</td>
<td>1 year equivalent to at least GS-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS-9</td>
<td>2 years of progressively higher level graduate education leading to a master’s degree or master’s or equivalent graduate degree</td>
<td>1 year equivalent to at least GS-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS-11</td>
<td>3 years of progressively higher level graduate education leading to a Ph.D. degree or Ph.D. or equivalent doctoral degree</td>
<td>1 year equivalent to at least GS-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS-12 and above</td>
<td>1 year equivalent to at least next lower grade level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conditions of Employment

- Security and Background Requirements
- Fingerprinting
- Financial Disclosure
- One year probationary period
- Three years
- Travel, transportation and relocation expenses
- Bargaining Unit
- Drug Screening
- Recruitment/retention incentives
- Student Loan Repayment

How you will be evaluated

- Best Qualified – you want to be here
- Well Qualified
- Qualified

- Required competencies
  - Specific
  - General
    - Written Communication
    - Oral Communication

How to apply

Search jobs
- US Citizens v. Federal Employees
- Keywords
- Salary
- Pay Grade
- Occupational Series
- Location
- Department and Agency
- Work Schedule
- Work Type
- Posting Date
- Exclude These

Vocabulary of fit

- Who (Agency)
- What (Job Category)
- Where (Location)
- When (Work Schedule and type)
- How
- Why (Grade and Salary)

EXERCISE TIME (1)

What have you heard about resumes?
Compare the example federal resume to yours...
Application tips

What to include in your federal resume

- Candidate information
  - Required: Name, contact information, citizenship, whether you claim veteran’s preference, federal employee information

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

- Education
  - Required: Schools attended, degrees obtained
  - Optional: Grade point averages, relevant coursework taken, academic papers or projects, key presentations, honors received, other important accomplishments

Optional information to include

- Job related training
  - Include any classes, seminars, coursework, certifications, or trainings you have completed that relates to your professional development and the position description.

- Language skills
  - Include any language experience you may have and level of proficiency.

- Professional publications
  - Include any publications you have contributed to, along with the publication name and date.

Optional information to include

- Additional information
  - Skills, awards, leadership activities, public speaking engagements, volunteer experience

Federal resume writing tips

- Tailor your resume to the job announcement
  - Carefully review the position description.
  - Focus on the ‘dues,’ ‘qualifications’ and ‘requirements’ sections and include keywords and phrases in your tailored resume.
  - Make sure that you demonstrate how you have developed the specific skills required by the agency.
  - Your final resume should be tailored so that it mirrors the language used to describe the position.
  - Emphasize and re-emphasize areas where your previous experience or education overlaps with the duties and qualifications listed in the job opportunity announcement.

- Numbers impress hiring managers
  - Use the duties and accomplishments section of your federal resume to highlight your performance metrics. Percentages, numbers and data can be a great way to describe the specific impact you had in a particular job.

- Sell yourself and your achievements
  - Involvement in social or religious organizations, volunteer experiences, unique projects or interests, awards or certificates and subjects mastered.
  - Set you and your resume above the rest
**Application essays**

- Applicants are generally not required to submit short essays when they initially apply for a position. However, it is important that you know what agencies are looking for in application essays, as they may be required in later stages of the application process.

- Each job announcement will list specific qualifications or knowledge, skills and abilities the agency wants to see in an applicant. When asked to write short essays, you need to describe in writing how your experiences match the desired qualifications. If required to write these short essays, how far you get in the application process will likely be determined by your ability to convincingly address these qualifications.

- As you write, be sure to include as much information as you can that responds to each qualification, even if that information is already included on your federal resume. Address key words and phrases mentioned in the position description, although make sure you don’t repeat these words verbatim. When recounting your experiences, tell a story by explaining the challenge(s) you faced, the action(s) you took and the result(s) from your actions. Writing application essays is a great opportunity to use real-life examples to describe the experiences, education and activities listed on your resume.

**Federal resume writing tips**

- Check your spelling and grammar
- Keep a copy of your private-sector resume
- Be concise
  - OMIT NEEDLESS WORDS
  - TAILOR YOUR RESUME TO THE POSITION
    - See Most Important Slide Number 1
  - Delete education and experience that does not relate to the position
  - ASSUME THE READER IS NOT FAMILIAR WITH YOUR BACKGROUND

**Historic in the job announcement**

- Required Documents
  - Your Resume or CV
  - Responses to the Assessment Questionnaire
  - College Transcripts
  - Cover letter?
  - Veterans Preference?
  - SF-50?
  - Evaluations?
  - CTAP/JCTAP

**How to answer application questionnaires**

- Most agencies use application questionnaires to screen candidates. Questionnaires vary in length, but may contain up to 50 or even 100 multiple-choice questions. Question formats may include yes/no, true/false, short-essay or standard multiple-choice questions. Some positions allow you to preview the questionnaire in the job posting, but generally you will complete the questionnaire when you submit your application.

- To best answer these questions, take the time to consider your skills. Your questionnaire responses should mirror your resume. Some questionnaires include statements that ask you to summarize your experience in performing certain tasks with a range from “no experience” to “expert”. If you claim to be an expert on every question answered but your resume doesn’t validate that claim, the agency may think you are being dishonest. You should be able to back up your response through your resume or in an interview setting. If you find yourself ranking low on several of these questions, it may be a signal to you that you are not qualified for that particular position.

**Tips for submitting your federal job application**

- Submit your application on time
- Follow the instructions
- Take note of key application details
- Save a copy of your application
- Be consistent
What happens after you apply?

• After the application period closes
  • human resources office will evaluate each application
  • choose applicants to interview from the list of highly-qualified candidates
  • Goal: 80 days ← let me tell you a story...
• How to track your application
  • When your application is received
  • If you meet basic qualifications
  • When your application is referred to the selecting official
  • If you are offered the position
• Call with a purpose
• Reference the announcement number

Additional Resources

• http://www.careers.umd.edu/home.cfm