



Tips for Writing a Federal Resume

A resume for employment in the federal government is significantly different from a resume you would use for most other fields. Below are some quick tips for writing a federal resume.

- Do not submit the same resume for federal employment that you use for other fields. If you do, your resume will likely be judged as insufficient, and you might be bypassed for employment, even if you have strong qualifications.
- Visit www.USAJobs.gov for assistance. USAJobs is the job posting site for federal employment, and they have many resources to coach you on the resume writing process. Particularly useful are the free “Virtual Training Sessions” on all aspects of the job search, including a training session that is specifically about resume writing.
- Before you write your resume, watch the video, Writing Your Federal Resume, created by the federal government: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8YX7o1PBoFk>
- Use the Resume Builder tool at USAJobs.gov.
- Whereas it is a good idea to keep a typical resume to one or two pages, there are no such guidelines for a federal resume. Instead, it is important to be as thorough as possible in a federal resume. For experienced candidates, a resume of 5+ pages is not unheard of.
- Review the Job Opportunity Announcement (JOA), which is the position description provided on USAJobs.gov, prior to writing your resume. Pay attention to the qualifications provided in the JOA.
- As you would with a resume for other fields, include your education, work experience (including internship experience), volunteer work, student activities, honors and awards, foreign language abilities, and technical skills.
- Use the exact vocabulary provided on the JOA when describing your accomplishments and job duties. It will help you match your qualifications to their requirements.
- Include all college-level formal education, including schools you attended but did not earn a degree.
- Indicate whether you are a veteran, currently serving in the Armed Forces, or never served. A simple “Veterans’ Preference: Yes (or No)” will suffice. If you are a veteran or currently enlisted, make sure to describe your experience in the Work Experience section.
- Be specific about dates of employment and number of hours worked per week. This information will help the recruiting agency determine if you have the minimum amount of experience required.
- Do not use a skills-based resume. Instead, stay with the usual, reverse-chronological resume that lists your most recent position first and goes backward through your work history.
- When writing about volunteer work, student activities, and other unpaid experiences, be as thorough about these experiences, including number of hours worked, as you are with paid positions.
- As with any position, tailor your resume to the job you are applying for. USAJobs allows you to save up to five resumes on their system. Take advantage of this option.
- Unlike a typical resume, include names and contact information of references on the resume.
- Consider purchasing [Ten Steps to a Federal Job: Jobseeker’s Guide](#) by Kathryn Troutman.

References:

Writing Your Federal Resume, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8YX7o1PBoFk>

Create Your Federal Resume,

http://gogovernment.org/how_to_apply/write_your_federal_resume/create_your_resume.php