FLO
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
GLOBAL EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE

The Federal Hiring Process & Creating a Federal Resume

When applying for a federal job, the most important thing is to **read the entire job announcement as posted on** USAJOBS.gov before applying. Understanding the five steps to the federal hiring process will help you apply for federal jobs and learn how to create a federal resume tailored to the position to which you are applying.

The Steps in the Federal Hiring Process

Step 1: Eligible - you meet the requirements in the "Who May Apply" and "Qualification" sections of the job announcement.

Step 2: *Qualified* - you meet the minimum requirements/ranking factors listed in the section "How You Will Be Evaluated."

Step 3: Highly Qualified - you demonstrate outstanding performance in the use or application of all the ranking factors listed in the section "How You Will Be Evaluated."

Step 4: Referred to Hiring Official – The applicants that have been deemed "Highly Qualified" from all the hiring candidate lists, called certificates or certs, are referred to the hiring manager.

Step 5: Interview – The hiring manager decides how many people to interview from the "Highly Qualified" list.

Understanding Each Step

How to Be Considered Eligible: You are eligible if the analysis of the self-assessment questionnaire shows you meet the requirements. Read the questions in the questionnaire. Be sure to document your answers in your federal application or resume. Mirror the language and the sequence you see in the job announcement. There may also be additional required selection factors, mandatory education requirements, or security and background requirements to document in your resume.

How to Be Considered Qualified: You are qualified once the reviewer deems that you meet the minimum requirements listed in the section "How You Will Be Evaluated." Being deemed qualified does not mean you will move on to the next step. This is where you (and other qualified applicants) will get an email stating that you are qualified and referred on. At this point, you are not yet deemed highly qualified and there is no guarantee of an interview.

How to Be Considered Highly Qualified: To be deemed highly qualified, you must prove to the reviewer that you have demonstrated outstanding performance in the use or application of all the ranking factors listed in the section "How You Will Be Evaluated." You will need well-written accomplishment statements to prove excellence in the ranking factors; simply describing your job duties will not be sufficient.

Who Is Referred on to the Hiring Official: If you are deemed highly qualified, you are put on a list that is sent to the hiring manager. Referral to the hiring manager does not guarantee an interview. Applicants who are not subject to competitive rating and ranking procedures (such as those who have acquired Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE) under a specific special hiring authority) may be referred on from a different qualification category. Individuals with NCE will compete with others from one or more lists of eligibility. To learn more about NCE refer to FLO's NCE webpage.

The Interview: The hiring manager receives the list of applicants deemed "Highly Qualified." At this point, the hiring manager can select how many people from this list he/she would like to interview.

The Federal Resume

The resume builder on USAJOBS.gov will assist you in creating a resume that you can use for various federal employment vacancy announcements. When applying for a job on USAJOBS.gov it is best to use the resume builder to ensure you have included all required information. Candidates can be rejected if there is missing information. You must use the "Qualification" and "How You Will Be Evaluated" sections of the job announcement to modify your resume for each position to which you apply.

Sections of the Federal Resume

Professional Summary & Key Skills

As with any good resume, you should begin with an introduction that clearly defines your professional background. The *Professional Summary* should include your key skills as related to the position, your skills that you bring to any job, how you work with people, and your years of experience.

After the *Professional Summary*, you should list your *Key Skills*. This includes skills that are most relevant to the position and technical skills you possess from your targeted career field.

Federal resumes typically do not allow room for your *Professional Summary* and *Key Skills*. On a federal form, it is best to weave the information from your *Professional Summary* and *Key Skills* into the *Work Experience* section.

Example

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Human Resources: *Project Management, Training and Development*

Dedicated HR professional with strong grasp of employment laws, compliance issues, training and development and proven customer service. More than 15 years of proven ability to manage multiple projects simultaneously in human resources, sales, and marketing occupations. Vast experience in administrative, planning and program functions in support of the HR development division.

TOP SECRET (TS) SECURITY CLEARANCE • NCE CANDIDATE

KEY SKILLS

- Training, presentations, public speaking
- Bring creative and innovative flair to training and development programs
- Research, data collection and large data analysis
- Proficient in MS Office Suite, SharePoint and eCC
- Experience working in highly-regulated work environments
- Excellent interpersonal skills, expressing tact, diplomacy, and strong negotiation skills
- State Department HR regulations including EEO and Foreign Affairs Manuals (FAM)
- Outstanding customer service skills (see awards section)

Work Experience

The *Work Experience* section of each job entry should be in a specific format. See the sample work experience below. The top section is the basic biographical information about your time with the organization. This information is required on your federal resume in order to be deemed eligible.

The second section lists your duties and responsibilities. This is where the Human Resources (HR) specialist and the hiring manager will review your experience, skills, and accomplishments. Human Resources specialists prefer the outline format for presenting your experience and it should be tailored each time to be in line with the vacancy announcement.

Putting your Experience in Outline Format

Step 1: *Keyword Headers* - Read the entire job announcement. From the "Duties and Qualifications" section identify four to five keywords that are similar to key skills that you have. These will be your keyword headers. Each keyword header needs to be in all capitals (KEYWORD HEADERS). The keywords will grab the interest of the HR specialist reviewing your resume, enabling him/her to quickly find your experience with a particular knowledge, skill, or ability from the announcement.

Step 2: *Description* - The paragraph following the keyword header should make the case on how much experience you have with the topic. Do not just list duties; write for someone who does not know your line of business and provide plenty of supporting details.

Step 3: Accomplishments - This is your opportunity to describe one or two significant accomplishments. This helps the HR specialist to visualize your level of success in the position. It is best to present this short narrative in the CCAR format (Context, Challenge, Actions and Results). Provide one or two sentences that describe the Context of the situation. Then write one sentence that describes the Challenge. In two or three sentences, describe your Actions. Conclude the paragraph with one or two sentences on the Results.

FLO has produced a tutorial on the Federal Hiring Process. This is a great resource for using USAJOBS.gov and for learning how to correctly demonstrate NCE when applying for a federal job.

Name of Company or Organization, *full street address, City, State* **or** *City, Country* ***Position Title*** *(numerical)* ***Month/Year – Month/Year*** **Supervisor:** **Tel.** *(or email if overseas)* **Hours per week**: **Okay to contact this supervisor:** Yes / No **Series:** if known **Pay Plan:** like FP, FS, GS **Grade:** **Step:**
KEYWORD HEADER: Two to three sentences that provide the readers with information on how you used this skill in this position. KEYWORD HEADER: Two to three sentences on how you used this skill in your position. KEYWORD HEADER: Two to three sentences on how you used this skill in your position. ACCOMPLISHMENT: Provide a short narrative of a key accomplishment in this position. It can be a time you were given an award, you were able to save the organization money or improved a process.

Sample Job Entry for a Federal Resume

U.S. Department of State, FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE, *4000 Arlington Blvd, Arlington, VA, 22204*
FSN Training Coordinator ***09/2005 – 08/2009***
Supervisor: Jane Doe, **Tel.** *(or email if overseas)* **Hours per week**: 40+
Approval to contact this supervisor: Yes **Series:** 1712 **Pay Plan:** GS Grade**:** 12 **Step:** 04
Professional Profile

Managed five international education courses and 18 English writing distance-learning courses per year for Foreign Service National/Locally and Employed staff working for the Public Affairs Section at U.S. Missions overseas. Classroom courses consisted of 14-day training and professional development events in Washington, D.C. and two other U.S. locations.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT: Ensured curriculum, course design, and training methodologies reflected and utilized state-of-the-art educational and training concepts and tools, while accounting for cross-cultural differences between instructor and students.
TRAINING OUTREACH: Identified and worked with local organizations to develop curriculum and course modules for the out-of-Washington portion of the class, ensuring alignment with course goals.
TRAINING ASSESSMENTS: Evaluated training effectiveness, conducting needs assessments to establish goals and objectives for existing courses and modules; determined additional course needs.
COURSE FACILITATION: Facilitated class discussions, meeting and training group activities.
COURSE ADMINISTRATION: Managed administrative and logistics of the program, from selection of students to post-course follow up.
TEAM COLLABORATION: Actively collaborated and contributed to the effective teamwork of the three-person FSN Training team, bringing over 100 FSNs per year to Washington, DC for training.
PROGRAM COORDINATION: For the global Public Diplomacy Grants training program.

Key Accomplishments:

CORE COST REDUCTION: Reduced cost of core training courses, releasing funding to add an additional class, and increasing the number of students a year from 100 to 120. Initiated an evaluation of travel and per diem costs and the needs of students against the Department of State's strategic goals. Determined cost efficient travel itineraries, streamlined course content, and reduced training from 3 to 2 weeks, thereby freeing resources for an additional fully-funded course each year.
REDUCED ON LINE COURSE ADMINISTRATION TIME: Streamlined the administrative process for the Online Writing Lab (OWL) program. As the sole person with oversight of this program, developed tools and processes that significantly reduced administrative burden, improving student progress and completion statistics tracking.
REGIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE: Coordinated the development of a regional training initiative to conduct training overseas for use by regional Public Diplomacy offices. Worked directly with regional offices to determine training needs, develop course content, negotiate funding arrangements, and create a yearly schedule of regional training offerings. The result established approximately 30 new courses for Public Diplomacy LE/FSN staff worldwide for more accessible and cost effective training.