Your resume is one of the most critical parts of any job application. Federal resumes are slightly different than the traditional resumes you are used to writing.

**Federal Resumes Require More Detail**

You may find yourself summarizing your work history into a one-page document for a typical job application; however, your federal resume should be more detailed and may be 1-3 pages longer than your current resume. A federal resume uses the same information in a traditional resume but goes into much more depth about your skills, past duties and accomplishments. There are great advantages to including as much information as possible. You can:

*Highlight your accomplishments.* Rather than limit yourself to a few bullet points, you can include any and all relevant experiences in your federal resume. This gives you the chance to highlight the skills you have developed and education you have gained.

*Assess your fit.* Creating a federal resume will give you a good idea of whether the skills and experiences you have match those needed by the agency and can be an indicator of whether you really are qualified for the job.

*Prepare for the interview.* A detailed resume is the perfect preparation for interviews by enabling you to think in-depth about what you skills and knowledge you bring to the agency.

Putting together a multi-page federal resume may seem like a daunting task, but with a few tips and some attention to detail, you will be steps ahead of other applicants.

**Two Ways to Create a Resume**

You can either build a resume or upload one through your [USAJOBS](https://my.usajobs.gov/Account/Login) account. Ultimately it makes no difference which method you choose—as long as your resume includes all of the required information.

*Resume Builder*

In your USAJOBS [account](https://my.usajobs.gov/Account/Login), you can create a resume using the Resume Builder. This feature will guide you through the resume writing process, ensuring that you do not leave out important pieces of your application. Using this feature allows you store multiple resumes, tailoring each to different position descriptions. The resume builder will also weed out any fancy formatting by automatically generating a template that looks the same for every applicant—ensuring a fair and equal process.

*Resume Uploader*

You can also upload your resume in your USAJOBS account. While this feature allows you the flexibility to maintain formatting and design of your preference, we suggest you create a standard resume using the Resume Builder and then tailor a copy of that resume to a specific job announcement.

**Elements of a Federal Resume**

REQUIRED

You *must* include the following information on your resume:

*Candidate Information*

Provide basic information, including your name, contact information, and citizenship. Most positions require applicants to be a U.S. citizen in order to apply; however, 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 [Link to audience specific content about veteran’s preference]. If you have never served on active duty in the Armed Forces, then you are not eligible for veteran’s preference.

*Work Experience*

List relevant jobs you've held including information about employers, location, and position titles. Include your start and end date (month and year), average hours worked per week, specific responsibilities and accomplishments. Each of these components is *essential* to your resume meeting the minimum qualifications. Experienced workers may choose to list only jobs held in the last 10 years.

*Education*

Be sure to include the degree(s) you hold or the level of education attained as well as the school(s) you attended.

OPTIONAL

You may want to provide any of the following additional information, if it relates to the position description.

*Work Experience*

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*

Along with the degree(s) you hold, list your grade point averages, relevant coursework taken, academic papers or projects, key presentations, honors received, and other important accomplishments. Detail your education history as much as possible, highlighting the results you achieved and the skills you acquired through each of these items.

*Job Related Training*

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

*References*

In addition to your supervisors, you may choose to provide professional or personal references who can vouch for your character, work ethic, and dependability. Individuals you have worked with closely—such as colleagues, classmates, and mentors—will add to your credibility as an applicant.

*Language Skills*

Include any language experience you may have—and be sure to include level of proficiency.

*Affiliations*

List any professional associations, societies, clubs or other organizations you are affiliated with. Highlight any leadership role and volunteer experience you may have had, insofar that it relates to the job description.

*Professional Publications*

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

*Additional Information*

You can include any other relevant pieces of your resume in this section: skills, awards, leadership activities, public speaking engagements, volunteer experience or other items that may not fit in a section above. You may choose to list your availability, the type of work environment you seek and your desired location. These items will not exclude your resume from consideration, but are simply used for recruiters to determine your interest.

It is to your advantage to provide as much relevant information as possible in any of these optional sections. A federal resume can range from one to five (or more) pages so you can expand your accomplishments and demonstrate why you are qualified for the position.

A well-written resume lets you highlight your accomplishments and display your competitive skills; which demonstrates to the employer your value and ultimately determines your pay level.

**Writing Tips**

*Be Specific*

You may be tempted to submit your standard resume to a wide variety of positions and ultimately become frustrated when you don’t advance in the hiring process. However, if you tailor your resume to a specific job description, your chances of moving to the next stage in the application process will drastically increase.

To customize your resume, carefully review the position description. Focus on the ‘duties,’ ‘qualifications’ and ‘requirements’ sections and include key words 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.

The federal resume is becoming even more important as agencies try to simplify their applications. Emphasize and re-emphasize areas where your previous experience or education overlaps with the duties and qualifications listed in the job opportunity announcement.

*Be Comprehensive*

Include the skills and achievements that go beyond your work experience and education. Think about all of your activities that might qualify you for a job, such as:

* Involvement in social or religious organizations
* Volunteer experiences
* Unique projects or interests
* Awards or certificates
* Subjects mastered

These items may set your resume above the rest, especially if they correspond to the qualifications for the position.

*Be Concise*

Provide as much detail as possible, but be concise. Wordy or irrelevant information will only confuse the reader. When tailoring your resume, delete education or experiences that do not relate to the position.

Do not assume the reader is familiar with organizations in your resume. Provide context when appropriate, and avoid acronyms. Omit unnecessary details. You should provide enough information to demonstrate your qualifications, without overwhelming the reader. Remember: the quality of the information is more important than the quantity.

**Include these sections as tables, boxes or side bar items:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Required Information** | **Optional Information** |
| *Candidate Information:*   * Name * Contact Information * Citizenship * Whether You Claim Veteran’s Preference * Federal Employee Information   *Work Experience:*   * Employer * Location * Position Title * Start and End Date * Average Hours per week * Responsibilities and Accomplishments   *Education:*   * Schools Attended * Degree(s) Obtained | *Work Experience:*   * Supervisor Contact Information * Salary   *Education:*   * Grade Point Averages * Relevant Coursework * Academic Papers, Projects or Presentations * Honors Received   *Job Related Training:*   * Seminars * Certifications * Trainings   *Affiliations:*   * Professional associations * Societies * Clubs   *References*  *Language Skills*  *Professional Publications*  *Availability*  *Desired Location* |

**Quick Tips**

* Read the job announcement carefully! Highlight key words that describe your experience.
* Tailor your resume and qualifications with each application.
* Use numbers, percentages, and data.
* Focus on outcomes to which you directly contributed.
* Explain your professional experience—don’t use acronyms.
* Beware of “certified” federal resume writers; it should cost you nothing to apply!
* Use resources on [USAJOBS](https://help.usajobs.gov/index.php/Most_Effective_Resumes) as you write your resume.

**Q&A**

Q: Do I really need to include all that info?

A: Yes, you do. If you don’t include the required information, your application won’t even pass the first round of reviews: the more relevant information that you include, the more likely you will stand out against other applicants.

Q: Why do I have to include specific dates and hours worked?

A: When assessing a candidate, the hiring managers need to validate your work experience in order to 1) ensure you qualify for the position and 2) accurately assign your pay level. The length and depth of your experience will greatly affect both of these elements.