



United States Department of Agriculture



# Tips for Writing a Federal Resume

**A career with the Forest Service is a job working for nature, managing and caring for more than 193 million acres of our nation's most magnificent lands. Working for the Forest Service means protecting the fresh water millions of Americans drink, managing the country's renewable resources, and sustaining the beauty of America's landscapes. Work for the Forest Service and leave your legacy on nature for future generations!**

The Forest Service accepts all job applications on [www.USAJOBS.gov](http://www.USAJOBS.gov). USAJOBS connects job seekers with federal employment opportunities across the United States and around the world. When applying for a federal job, it is important to clearly describe how your skills and work experiences align to the selection criteria defined by the job announcement. You should customize your resume to the job announcement to which you are applying. Below are some tips to help you develop an effective federal resume:

**Resume Length** - A federal resume requires more information than a non-federal resume, therefore, there is typically no limit to the number of pages. Some of the things that should be included are education and work experience. This includes job titles, salary, employment dates, duties and accomplishments. Relate your work experience to the knowledge, skills and abilities in the job announcement.

**Experience** - Federal jobs often require that you have experience in a particular type of work for a certain period of time, so be sure to include the month and year that you began and ended each job. For example, volunteer work and roles in community organizations may have provided valuable experiences that demonstrate your ability to do the job. Make sure to include the following for each work experience:

- Start and end dates for each job, include month, day and year
- Number of hours per week
- Level of experience
- Examples of experience and accomplishments

**Be Focused** - The most effective resumes are clearly focused on a specific job title and address the employer's stated requirements for the position. The more you know about the duties and skills required for the job—and organize your resume around these points—the more effective the resume.

**Draft 2019**

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.



Forest Service

#WorkForNature  
[fs.fed.us/fsjobs](http://fs.fed.us/fsjobs)





**Pay Attention to Keywords** – Be sure to review the job announcement for keywords. A single keyword communicates multiple skills and qualifications. When a hiring manager reads the keyword "analyst," that person might assume you have experience in collecting data, evaluating effectiveness, and researching and developing new processes.

**Don't be Vague** - Emphasize nouns and verbs and provide concrete statements of your accomplishments in the correct tense for past or present positions. For example, rather than writing, "communicates orally and in writing," it is better to use, "Directs work through written workplans and delivers accomplishments to upper management through reports and brief presentations".

**Use Plain English** - Describe skills and experience in universally accepted terms common to your occupation and profession that could be readily understood in both the public and private sectors. Minimize the use of acronyms. If used, spell them out at least once and explain what they represent.

**Emphasize Achievements and Accomplishments** – Your resume should emphasize your strengths. You should include everything you've done that relates to the job you are seeking, and leave out experience that is not relevant. Where it makes sense, present your achievements and accomplishments with numbers, percentages or dollars. For example:

- Wrote news releases.
- Wrote 25 news releases in a three-week period under daily deadlines.

**Format** - A reverse chronological resume will help agencies evaluate your experience. Reverse chronological order is a way of listing experience in which you provide your most recent experience first and work your way back. Provide greater detail for experience that is relevant to the job for which you are applying.

**Think Money and Time** – Illustrate how you have saved, earned or managed money and/or time in your jobs and extracurricular activities.

**Final Checklist** - When you are finished writing your resume, go through this checklist to help measure the effectiveness:

- A person who is not familiar with my occupational background will be able to understand the kind of work I do.
- I have included unique but relevant special experience or skills I possess that might distinguish me from other candidates if my resume reaches the desk of a selecting official.
- I have adequately described the major characteristics of my occupation or background and skills that are most common to my occupation.
- I have described my accomplishments in a clear and descriptive manner.

**Draft 2019**

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.



Forest Service

#WorkForNature  
fs.fed.us/fsjobs

