Federal Resume:
What You Need to Know

Federal Resume:
What You Need to Know

Whether you're a current federal employee or a new applicant, your federal resume is the first step in advancing your career. This is your opportunity to highlight your abilities and demonstrate that you possess the necessary qualifications for the position.

The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH) recommends you build a "standard" resume, which includes all of your qualifying information as a starting point. Once you've identified a role or position you're interested in applying for, adjust and tailor your standard resume to the job description.

When you're writing your resume, it's best to break it out into major sections. We recommend including sections detailing your personal information, your education, your experience, and other qualifying information relevant to the job description. This will ensure your resume is aligned with the required information for applying to any federal position.

It's important to show how your skills and experiences meet the qualifications and other requirements listed in the job announcement. Include relevant work experience and accomplishments that prove you can perform the duties of the position. Quantify your accomplishments with numbers, percentages, and other figures.

Personal Information

- Full name
- Mailing address
- Email address
- Phone number
- Citizenship
- Military status, if applicable

Education

- School name, country, city/state, and ZIP code
- Degree attained/pursuing and major, if applicable
- Completion date or expected completion date
- GPA, if applicable
- Total credits*
- Honors*
- Job-related coursework*

Work Experience

- Employer name, city, and state
- Employment dates (MM/DD/YYYY–MM/DD/YYYY)
- Number of hours worked per week
- Job title (grade, if federal; rank, if military)
- Supervisor name and phone number
- Duties and accomplishments
- General Schedule (GS) level*
- Salary*

Other Qualifying Information

- Selective Service registration status (males)
- Eligibility for derived veterans' preference
- Federal employee status
- Eligible hiring paths

Skills/Certifications

Include any skills and/or professional certifications that are relevant to the position you are seeking. This information may be required for specific job opportunities.

Volunteer Work

If you have relevant volunteer or unpaid experience, include this as a separate section from your other work experience. Make sure you include the same required information as outlined for your regular/paid work experience.

*This information is optional but may be requested in some job announcements.

OASH | Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health

Tips for Success

- **Make your resume easy to read and understand.** Use plain language and avoid using any jargon. If you use acronyms, make sure you spell them out completely the first time you mention them with the acronym in parentheses, and then use the acronym only for any further mentions. For example, use "Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH)" on the first mention and "OASH" on ensuing mentions.

- **Tailor your resume to the position you're applying for.** Read the job description carefully and customize your resume to the requirements for each job. Use specific keywords based on the job announcement. Give specific examples of how you have applied certain skill sets in your job.

- **Be descriptive and thorough.** When writing your resume, be specific in the descriptions of your work and results. Include your specific duties and/or tasks, the tools and software you used, and the metrics used to report results and outcomes.

- **Be yourself.** Write your resume from your perspective, using words that describe your unique experiences and why they make you a valuable addition to OASH.

- **Your primary focus should be your resume.** Some HR specialists only forward required documents to hiring managers. Any documents that are required to be submitted will be outlined in the job description. Please be sure to read this section carefully.

Work Experience	Translated Experience
Use fiscal methods and techniques to prepare analyses and estimates of resource needs and usage.	As a department leader, I leaned on my knowledge of financial analyses and professional experience to estimate resource needs for the calendar year. Part of this work included managing a department budget and making the case for as-needed increases.
Knowledge of oral communication techniques to present findings and deliver briefings, help others in understanding and accepting findings and recommendations, and negotiate solutions todisputed recommendations.	As a lead analyst, I compiled detailed biweekly reports of project progress, including recommended optimizations and learnings. I presented these to departmental leadership and participated in a quarterly update to the executive team.
Knowledge of written communication techniques to prepare responses to inquiries, project papers, reports, proposals, policies, and other substantive program material.	In my work as a research scientist, I have written grant proposals, policy analyses, and reports on my progress and findings. My work has been published in two scientific journals.
Knowledge of interpersonal relationship practices to meet and deal with persons of diverse backgrounds.	As a team supervisor, I have led a diverse team of professionals for over 3 years. In this role, I have conducted performance reviews, supported my team's professional development, and fostered a culture that increased collaboration and minimized turnover.

OASH | Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health

Translating Military Experience

If you are including military experience in your resume, it's important to explain your military job in plain language—including your job title. Whether you collected and analyzed data for reconnaissance or supervised troops in a squad, these unique translate well into plain language for civilians who may not know the terminology. Below, we have outlined some examples that may help you as you're writing your resume.

Military Experience	Translated Experience
Job Title: Senior Supply Sergeant **Job Description:** Led an infantry platoon in combat operations, providing tactical and technical guidance to subordinates and professional support to both officers and subordinates. Led, supervised, and trained subordinate personnel in areas of logistics, defense, and maintenance of military equipment.	**Job Title: Logistics Manager** **Job Description:** Supervised and trained 150 personnel in the areas of weapons, military vehicles operations, and maintenance. Provided guidance to ensure their safety and survival while in combat situations. Advised upper management on matters related to overall company operations, which included supply levels and status, human resources, and budget matters. Evaluated and counseled staff on performance and conduct matters. Oversaw inventory of over 2,000-line items and materials assets, valued at over $50 million.
Job Title: Training Officer **Job Description:** Coordinated a comprehensive squadron training program and de-conflicted training requirements during Planning Board for Training. Trained and supervised all department/division training coordinators. Actively liaised with off-ship training providers, coordinated training orders and student clearances. Managed training budget.	**Job Title: HR/Training Specialist** **Job Description:** Managed the professional development of over 200 personnel, including the coordination and planning of training programs. Liaised with leadership to schedule department training as needed and ensured that all staff had proper training and clearances for upcoming projects. Managed the team's project management budget and coordinated with external vendors to ensure training programs were available.

For additional tips for writing a federal resume, please visit: Federal resume tips | Veteran and Military Transition Center | CareerOneStop. Check out the resources at your local installation for additional help building your resume. Or, for a fee, you can hire a professional.

Resume Formatting

We encourage you to build your resume using the USAJOBS Resume Builder tool. However, we recognize that one size does not fit all. If you prefer to write your own resume, OASH recommends using one of the following resume styles to highlight your experience:

- **Chronological:** This type of resume lists your experiences, awards, and recognitions in reverse chronological order—starting with your current job first and your oldest job last.
- **Functional:** This format places the focus on your skills, abilities, accomplishments, and competencies instead of your job titles.

A well-formatted and organized resume helps the hiring managers at OASH clearly understand your job history, skills, and accomplishments when considering you for an open position. When formatting your resume, make sure the margins, font type and size, and color are appropriate and legible.

- **Margins:** To avoid having the look of a "crowded" resume, make sure your margins are between 0.5 inches and 1 inch all around.
- **Font:** When choosing a font, select one that is easy to read like Arial, Verdana, or Times New Roman. Remember to use it consistently throughout the entire resume. OASH recommends keeping font sizes between 10–12 points, with headings that are larger than body copy.
- **Color:** Use color sparingly to help emphasize key pieces in your resume. OASH recommends using only one other color in addition to black.
- **Page Numbers:** Resumes that are longer than one page should be numbered appropriately. Consider including page numbers (e.g., 1 of X) so that hiring managers can quickly place the resume in order when reviewing.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I apply for a job at OASH?
- To find available positions at OASH, visit [OASH Careers Page] or visit us on LinkedIn. OASH uses USAJOBS.gov to process all job applications.

How long should my resume be?
- Federal resumes for OASH should be at least 2 pages but no longer than 10 pages. Ensure that the information you provide in your resume is relevant to the job you are applying for.

What is the occupational questionnaire/assessment?
- This questionnaire is a list of self-assessment questions designed to help inform OASH about how well your knowledge and skills match the experience required for the job. Respond to all questions honestly, giving yourself the credit you deserve without inflating your experience.

I'm a student or recent graduate with limited job experience. What information can I add to my resume to show my qualifications?
- Information like volunteer experience and relevant coursework can help show the hiring manager your skills and knowledge. Make sure the information you include on your resume is relevant to the job position that you are applying for. For more information about opportunities for current students and recent graduates, please visit: How to apply to HHS as a student | HHS Careers

Additional Resources for Federal Resumes

- USAJOBS Federal Resume Builder
- Resume Building Guide (va.gov)
- Check out USAJOBS Events Page for resume builder workshops and more
- *Federal Resume Guidebook* by Kathryn Troutman

Name
Address
Phone
Email
Veteran's Preference Status
Clearance (If Any)
Citizenship

QUALIFICATIONS: Put a few bullets here stating anything you want an employer to know **right away**—languages you speak, training this is required for the job, special skills you have, systems you are familiar with, etc. Use only things that are related to the position you are applying for.

For example:
- Experience with training for groups of 30 and above on technical topics including firewall installation and information security protocols.
- Fluent in Spanish (speak, read, write)

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY: This is where you list your jobs, starting with the most recent first. It's easiest to do in bullets or paragraph format—USAJOBS recommends paragraphs due to formatting if you use their resume builder, but you can upload resumes built in Word, too. For your hard copy, keep the header format, and then list tasks and accomplishments in each job. Always use a lot of detail—how many people did you assist? How long were you there? How big was the organization? Were you responsible for a large grant portfolio? And remember—spell out acronyms. Once you have your hard copy set, you can upload it or can cut and paste it into various employment websites.

DATES (most recent first, month and year to month and year)

TITLE, EMPLOYER

LOCATION

SALARY, HOURS PER WEEK (FULL OR PART TIME)

SUPERVISOR NAME, PHONE NUMBER (optional, but consider if you want this person contacted as a reference)
- Do not just copy your position description or performance plan but show how you added value while doing those tasks.
- I conceptualized and implemented a streamlined employee onboarding process which saved my organization $100,000 per year in administrative costs.
- Include details.

DATES (most recent first, month and year to month and year)

TITLE, EMPLOYER

LOCATION

SALARY, HOURS PER WEEK

SUPERVISOR NAME, PHONE NUMBER
- This is what I learned/improved/participated in while I had this job
- This is why the job I was doing was important and what impact it has
- I did a lot of work but not only that, I went above and beyond—here are some more examples.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING: List schools you went to with degrees conferred (state that they were or if you just took courses), specialized training you took, certificates you earned. Start with the most recent or the most significant.

PUBLICATIONS: This is important to research/scientific positions. List in order of authorship.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION: List any citations, medals, ribbons, awards, letters, etc.