CRACKING THE CODE

to Writing An Effective Federal Resume

wit on

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MANIFEST CAREERS

(Formerly Federal job results)
established 2007

Wendy Thompson ~

★ Senior Career & Professional Development Coach

★ Over 20 years of experience providing personal and career counseling and coaching to individuals and groups.

★ Experience across multiple professional sectors including higher education, corporate, federal government, healthcare, social services, customer service, and small business start-up and management.

★Former Director of the Work/Life & Career Center at the National Institutes of Health.

★ Devoted to helping individuals from all backgrounds and experience levels achieve their goals.

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TODAY

COURSE PORTAL: https://federaljobresults.com/federal-resume-boot-camp/

- ✔ Grocery store approach
- ✔ Take notes... jot down phrases you hear, nuggets, responses to exercises
- ✔ Breaks will be frequent

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TODAY

COURSE PORTAL: https://federaljobresults.com/federal-resume-boot-camp/

- ✔ Understand the **FEDERAL PROCESS**
- ✔ Know which federal jobs you **QUALIFY** for
- ✔ Evaluate the **JOB ANNOUNCEMENT**
- ✔ Craft your federal resume using powerful **ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS**
- ✔ **TAILOR** your federal resume for each job
- ✔ Be Proactive about your **CAREER GROWTH**

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EXERCISE

What’s something you do now that would have intimidated you earlier in your career?

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FEDERAL JOB ROADMAP

Apply → HR Rates & Ranks Application → Top Applicants Referred → Panel Interview → Job Offer

Resume Key Words

Assessment Questionnaire and/or Hiring Assessments

Read & Rate

Best Qualified

Minimally Qualified

Not Qualified

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QUALIFYING FOR FEDERAL JOBS

- 23 Occupational Groups
- Identify your target

OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS / FAMILIES	
0000	MISCELLANEOUS OCCUPATIONS GROUP
0100	SOCIAL SCIENCE, PSYCHOLOGY, AND WELFARE GROUP
0200	HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT GROUP
0300	**GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE, CLERICAL, AND OFFICE SERVICES GROUP**
0400	NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES GROUP
0500	ACCOUNTING AND BUDGET GROUP
0600	MEDICAL, HOSPITAL, DENTAL, AND PUBLIC HEALTH GROUP
0700	VETERINARY MEDICAL SCIENCE GROUP
0800	ENGINEERING AND ARCHITECTURE GROUP
0900	LEGAL AND KINDRED GROUP
1000	INFORMATION AND ARTS GROUP
1100	BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY GROUP
1200	COPYRIGHT, PATENT, AND TRADEMARK GROUP
1300	PHYSICAL SCIENCES GROUP
1400	LIBRARY SCIENCES GROUP
1500	MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES GROUP
1600	EQUIPMENT, FACILITIES, AND SERVICES GROUP
1700	EDUCATION GROUP
1800	INSPECTION, INVESTIGATION, ENFORCEMENT, AND COMPLIANCE GROUP
1900	QUALITY ASSURANCE, INSPECTION, AND GRADING GROUP
2000	SUPPLY GROUP
2100	TRANSPORTATION GROUP
2200	INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY GROUP

QUALIFYING FOR FEDERAL JOBS

JOB SERIES NUMBER

- Over 400 across the government
- Most individuals will qualify for 1-3

- 0201 Human Resource Specialist
- 0301 Protocol Specialist
- 0301 Program Specialist
- 0303 Administrative Technician
- 0341 Administrative Officer
- 0343 Program Analyst
- 0401 Biologist
- 0511 Auditor
- 0640 Health Technician
- 0644 Scientist
- 1082 Writer/Editor
- 1109 Grants Management

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UNDERSTANDING THE JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

- Read through entirely
- Challenge: which sections are important?
- Crucial to know essential parts:
  - Will you qualify?
  - How to demonstrate on your resume?

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Emergency Management Specialist

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
National Institutes of Health
Division of Emergency Management (DEM), Office of Emergency Planning, Protection, and Response

Apply

Print Share Save

Summary | This job is open to | Duties | Requirements | How you will be evaluated | Required documents | How to apply

Summary

If you are an exceptionally talented, knowledgeable and motivated individual with experience in managing emergency preparedness activities and developing strategic emergency preparedness plans, and want to play a significant role in a dynamic organization, then consider joining the Division of Emergency Management (DEM) team. For more information, visit http://www.ors.od.nih.gov/Pages/home.aspx.

Learn more about this agency

Overview

Help

Accepting applications

Open & closing dates
04/30/2026 to 05/06/2026

Salary
$70,623 - $133,142 per year

Pay scale & grade
GS 9 - 12

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EVALUATING THE JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

DUTIES

- 80% match
- Weighted
- Listed in descending order

Duties

Help

If selected for this position as a GS-0089-9/11/12 Emergency Management Specialist your duties may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Develops emergency plans for all NIH facilities.
- Develops plans for the recovery of NIH Mission Essential Functions within the scope of the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) Program.
- Provides operational coordination to ensure all COOP centers, relocation sites, communication sites and equipment are continually operational.
- Serves as an emergency planning resource for the NIH and is responsible for coordinating NIH resources essential to planning and preparedness functions.
- Represents the NIH at meetings, conferences, and working groups with local, state, Federal organizations and coordinates NIH activities required by these groups.
- Collaborates with senior managers in the Office of Research Services and program managers of other relevant NIH components, in formulating emergency response and recovery plans relative to or involving their program objectives and developing response and recovery plans and exercises to test their adequacy and readiness.
- Serves as planner and observer for readiness exercises sponsored by NIH.
- Participates in the development of policies, objectives, standards, and procedures concerning local, state and federal emergency planning and response to improve effectiveness, meet information needs of managers or to address other emergency management improvement concerns.
- Leads the NIH in readiness exercises conducted or sponsored by local, State, and/or Federal Public Health Service (PHS), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Department of Defense (DoD), etc.) agencies. Prepares responses based on the type of incident (e.g., radiation, chemical, biological, environmental, etc.).
- Maintains a continuous communications watch for receipt of emergency notifications, alerting instructions, or other vital messages. Remains alert for communications pertaining to any emergency which may be of vital interest to NIH components.
- Evaluates such information and decides whether senior NIH management should be advised on actions to be taken to ensure safety of personnel, property, research animals and projects (e.g., severe weather, local or regional disasters, National crises, etc.).

EVALUATING THE JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

QUALIFICATIONS

- 100% match
- 12 months of experience
- Resume must prove you meet qualifications
- Paid and unpaid experience works

Qualifications

In order to qualify for an Emergency Management Specialist, GS-0089 position at the GS-09 level, you must meet one of the following requirements:

Completed a master's degree or equivalent graduate degree, or 2 full hears of progressively higher-level graduate education leading to such a degree or an LL. B or J.D.

OR

One year of specialized experience equivalent to at least the GS-07 level in the Federal service obtained in either the private or public sector, performing the following types of tasks: assisting in the administration and coordination of emergency management programs, plans, and activities; advising on emergency management program operations and procedures; and participating in emergency management readiness exercises.

OR

A combination of post baccalaureate education related to the position and experience that meets 100% of the qualification requirements for this position.

In order to qualify for an Emergency Management Specialist, GS-0089 position at the GS-11 level, you must meet one of the following requirements:

Completed a Ph.D. or equivalent graduate degree, or 3 full hears of progressively higher-level graduate education leading to such a degree or an LL.M., if related.

OR

One year of specialized experience equivalent to at least the GS-09 level in the Federal service obtained in either the private or public sector, performing the following types of tasks: administering emergency management programs, plans, and activities; advising on emergency management program operations and procedures; developing hazard plans, risk assessments, vulnerability assessments; collaborating with other emergency management staff to assist in emergency response planning; and participating in emergency management readiness exercises.

OR

A combination of post baccalaureate education related to the position and experience that meets 100% of the qualification requirements for this position.

In order to qualify for an Emergency Management Specialist, GS-0089 position at the GS-12 level, you must have:

One year of specialized experience equivalent to at least the GS-11 level in the Federal service obtained in either the private or public sector, performing the following types of tasks: coordinating emergency management programs, plans, and operations; developing guidance and procedures for emergency management programs; collaborating with other emergency management organizations to meet emergency response program objectives; and planning emergency management readiness exercises.

EVALUATING THE JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

HOW YOU WILL BE EVALUATED

- 100% match
- Resume must demonstrate what they are asking for to the extent possible

You will be evaluated based on how well you meet the qualifications listed in this vacancy announcement. Your qualifications will be evaluated based on your application materials (e.g., resume, supporting documents), your responses on the application questionnaire, and your responses to all assessments required for this position. You will be assessed on the following competencies:

Attention to Detail

Customer Service

Flexibility

Integrity/Honesty

Interpersonal Skills

Learning

Reading Comprehension

Self-Management

Stress Tolerance

Teamwork

Overstating your qualifications and/or experience in your application materials or application questionnaire may result in your removal from consideration.

ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

(**THIS MAY OR MAY NOT BE IN THE JOB ANNOUNCEMENT)

- Read the questions carefully. Are you comfortable answering **all of the questions at the highest level.**
- Give yourself full credit for all of your experience when answering these. *Paid, unpaid, social, civic experiences.*
- Do not be dishonest - but if you can make a case to support the qualification, then do so.
- **Make sure your resume corroborates your responses** .
-

Assessment Questionnaire

Work closely with top management to identify and resolve problems.

- I have not had education, training or experience in performing this task.
- I have had education or training in performing this task but have not yet performed it on the job.
- I have performed this task on the job, with close supervision from supervisor or senior employee.
- I have performed this task as a regular part of the job, independently and usually without review by supervisor or senior employee.
- This task has been a central or major part of my work. I have performed it myself routinely, and I have trained others in performance of this task and/or others have consulted me as an expert for assistance in performing this task.

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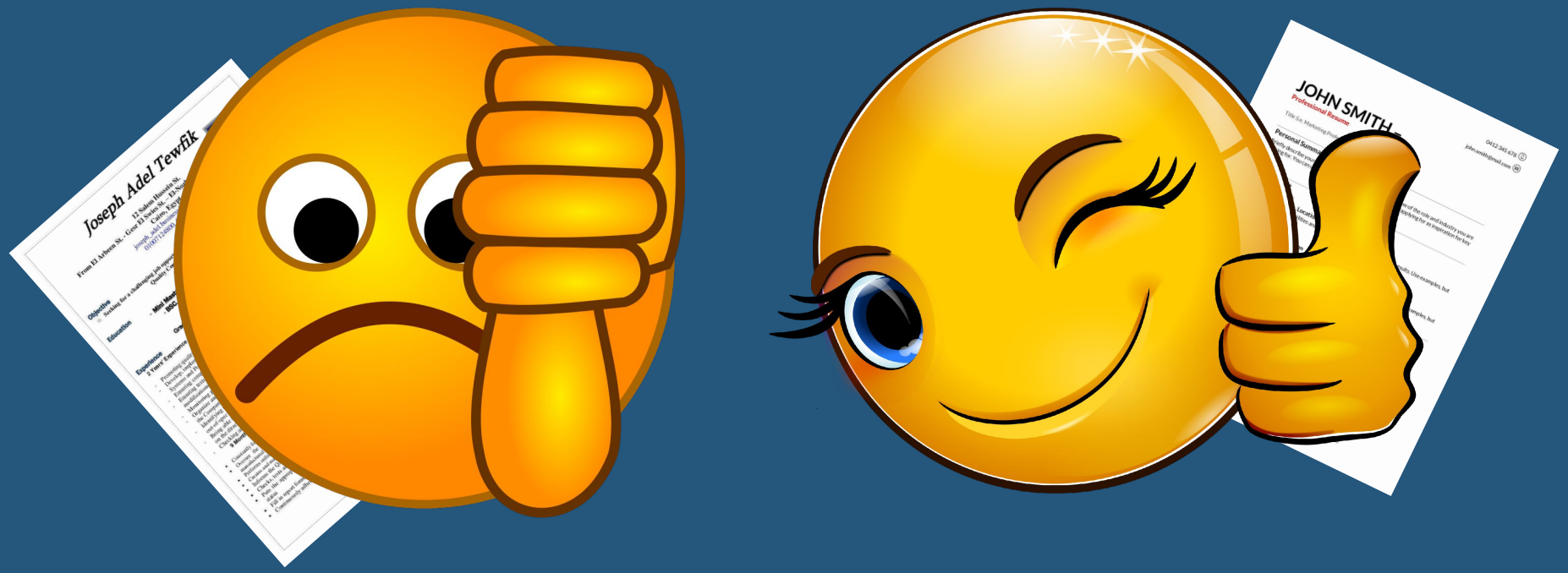

WRITING YOUR 2-PAGE FEDERAL RESUME

EXERCISE

What do people come to you for?

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CHALLENGE

The biggest challenge with the updated guidelines for the federal resume is demonstrating your value within the 2-page limit.

Tips from USAJobs:
(https://help.usajobs.gov/faq/application/documents/resume/what-to-include#what-file-type-should-i-use)

"Your resume must be 5 MB or less. We recommend saving and uploading your resume as a PDF to maintain formatting and number of pages. We also accept GIF, JPG, JPEG, PNG, RTF, TXT, ODT or Word (DOC or DOCX). We do not accept PDF portfolio files. Use a standard 8.5x11-inch size for your document.

We recommend using a sans-serif font size like Lato, if available. Other recommended options are Calibri, Helvetica, Arial, Verdana, Open Sans, Source Sans Pro, Roboto or Noto Sans. Make your page margins 0.5 inches. Consider using 14 point size font for titles and 10 point for the

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FEDERAL RESUME

1. **2 pages**. New as of 2025.

2. **Simple Format**. Make it very easy for the reader.
   - No graphics, text boxes, etc.
   - Create in MS Word (not the resume builder). Do not use pre-formatted templates.

3. **Universal Font**. See USA Jobs suggestions.

4. **10-point Font or higher**. Use 10, 11, or 12 point font for text. Larger text for headings.

5. **No personal information**. Do not include family status, photos, social security number, etc.

6. **Grammar**. Use present tense for current job; past tense for previous jobs.

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FEDERAL RESUME

7. **Use bullets**. Ideally, 3 accomplishment statements for each job.

8. **Heading**. Lead each accomplishment statement with a bolded heading, which can easily be changed based on your target position.

9. **Dates**. List employment in months and years going backward from today: MM/YYYY – MM/YYYY. Read announcement if they want MM/DD/YYYY.

10. **Chronological (Reverse Chronological).** Go backwards from today through 2016.

11. **Qualifications**. Address every required qualification in the job announcement. For example, if the qualifications section says you need experience with MS Project, you need to use “MS Project” in your resume.

FEDERAL RESUME BASIC SECTIONS

- Personal Information
  - Name, Email, Phone
- Job Title Section
- Core Skills / Technical Skills / Certifications
- Professional (Work) Experience
  - 2-3 line summary of Job (include scope, areas of responsibility, staff oversight, budget oversight, etc.)
  - Optional Responsibilities with Category Headings
  - Accomplishment Statements (3+ per job)

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FEDERAL RESUME ADD-ONS

- Security Clearance
- Prior Work Experience
- Honors & Awards

DO NOT INCLUDE:

- Training (Unless very relevant to the job)
- References

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EXERCISE

What is one problem you are known for fixing?

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Let’s look at a sample….

MARIAH JACKSON
Ashburn, VA 20147 | 703-509-8677 | MJ@gmail.com| **U.S. Citizen. Clearance:** Secret

EXPERT AUDITOR | FINANCIAL COMPLIANCE PROFESSIONAL

Core Competencies

Audit Program Planning & Management | Risk Assessment & Compliance | Internal Controls | Financial Analysis
Stakeholder Engagement & Communication | Team Leadership & Mentoring | Executive Communication

Professional Experience

03/27/2023 – Present | ***AUDITOR-IN-CHARGE*** | **Agency** | Washington, DC 20024 | **0511-EL-12** | **FT:** 40/week

Lead and conduct performance, compliance, and systems audits of Agency programs, supervising teams of ## auditors, analyzing portfolios valued at $XXM across ## beneficiaries, and providing senior leadership with technical guidance and risk-based recommendations to ensure compliance, operational efficiency, and effective risk mitigation.

Audit Leadership & Risk Management: Lead audit teams to plan and execute audits, applying GAAP and GAGAS to assess internal controls and operational compliance and identify deficiencies and recommend improvements.

Executive Communication & Influencing: Deliver high-impact briefings to senior executives, translating complex audit issues into actionable decisions that improve oversight of programs serving ## beneficiaries.

Quality Assurance & Technical Compliance: Review and edit workpapers and audit deliverables to ensure 100% compliance with GAGAS quality standards.

Data Analytics & Evidence Development: Perform data analysis on financial records and transactions, producing evidence-based findings to increase reporting accuracy.

Internal Controls & Evaluation: Identify and document internal control weaknesses to reduce operational risk exposure.

Key Accomplishments

- **Cross-Agency Collaboration & Issue Resolution:** Collaborated with ## cross-functional stakeholders, accelerating resolution of audit issues by ## days/weeks.
- **Audit Planning & Technical Expertise:** Developed and modified audit plans, adjusting areas of emphasis and timelines to address high-risk program areas, resulting in ##% more effective issue identification.
- **Policy & Regulatory Interpretation:** Reviewed agency policies, regulations, and procedures, identifying gaps and recommending corrective actions, reducing repeat compliance findings by ##%.
- **Program Evaluation:** Conducted detailed financial and risk analysis of legislation, financial statements, and program data, improving risk assessment accuracy and mitigating potential financial exposure by ##%.

EXERCISE

Before I touched it…

After I touched it…

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ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS

- Key to stand out from the competition
- List as bullets under the job summary
- Minimum of 3
- Demonstrate how you **added value** to the organization

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ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS

- ✔ An **ACTION VERB** describing what you did rather than your responsibilities.
- ✔ The **SCOPE of your activities** (size of unit managed, size of budget managed, or a number of personnel affected). Quantitative data is a plus, but qualitative evidence is great as well.
- ✔ Highlight **KEY SKILLS** you used in the pursuit of the accomplishment.
- ✔ The **RESULTS** of your activities—quantifiable-cost savings, time reduced, knowledge transferred, deadlines met (internal or external), value-added for customers, awards or commendations.

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EXERCISE

Jot down any numbers connected to your work--budgets, people, customers, timelines, volume, frequency.

No explanations.

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ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS
Questions to Ask Yourself

- What did you do that was above and beyond your normal job duties?
- How did you stand out among other employees?
- Were you ever recognized by a supervisor for a job well done? When and why?
- Did you win any awards or accolades?
- What new processes did you implement to improve things?
- What problems did you solve?
- Did you ever consistently meet or exceed goals or quotas?
- Did you save the company/organization/agency money?
- What made you great at your job?
- How were your previous employers better off because you worked there?
- What are you most proud of in your previous jobs?
- What did your performance evaluations say?
- What specific actions did you take to address a particular challenge?
- What did others come to you for help with?
- What was the action, duration, population, and results?

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EXERCISE

If I left my job tomorrow…

what would slow down,

disappear,

or be noticeably missed?

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‘STAR’ STORY

Interview

Networking

Resume

S ituation
T ask
A ction
R esult

S T A R STORY

SITUATION: In my role as Training Specialist, I was responsible for identifying the best process for training regional office employees.

TASK: I was tasked with determining the best method for training regional employees, based on budgetary constraints.

ACTION: I gathered data relative to organizational goals and objectives, budget projections, travel expenses, training delivery evaluations and other associated issues. I analyzed the data and developed viable options for training regional employees. I developed and prioritized several recommendations for senior level management in the form of a written report and flow chart that mapped out the pros and cons of the various options.

RESULT: Although the timeline was tight, the training was released to the regions using my recommended method and was deemed to be widely successful.

ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENT

Training Program Revamp: Analyzed training delivery costs, travel logistics, and program effectiveness for a geographically-dispersed workforce, developing prioritized recommendations that reduced projected training expenses by approximately 25–35% while maintaining training quality and meeting aggressive implementation deadlines.

Senior Leadership Briefings: Developed executive-level briefing materials, including comparative cost-benefit analyses and process flow diagrams, to support senior leadership decision-making on workforce training investments.

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EXERCISE

Write your #1 STAR story

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EXERCISE

Shorten your STAR story into a 1-2 sentence (2-4 lines) **accomplishment statement**

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EXERCISE

Create the summary for your current job.

- 2-3 lines
- include scope, areas of responsibility, staff oversight, budget oversight, etc.

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TAILOR YOUR FEDERAL RESUME

Go back to the sections within the job announcement:

#1 **Qualifications**

Must clearly demonstrate that you possess this ***Specialized Experience.***

#2 **How You Will Be Evaluated**

Must clearly show that you possess these ***competencies.***

#3 **Assessment Questionnaire **IF PRESENT****

Your resume ***must support*** *your answers.*

#4 **Duties**

Extract ***key phrases, words, or terms*** *from the announcement.*

****

- Incorporate these elements throughout your resume **UNDER THE POSITIONS WHERE YOU HAVE DONE THEM.**
- They can go within your **skills paragraphs** or within your **accomplishment statements.**

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FEDERAL RESUME

- ✔ Your goal is to make it **easy** for the human resources specialist to clearly see that you have the qualifications to match the job requirements.
- ✔ Know which occupational group and job series numbers are for you.
- ✔ Read the job announcement carefully and make sure you have the required qualifications and experience.
- ✔ Craft a federal resume that contains all of the required information.
- ✔ Tailor your resume each time you apply.

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CAREER GROWTH

Think about how you will move up ~

- Will I target <u>similar</u> positions in the same organization?
- Will I target <u>different</u> positions in the same organization?
- Will I target <u>similar</u> positions in a different organization/field?
- Will I target <u>different</u> positions in a different organization/field?

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CAREER GROWTH

- Networking
- Informational interviews
- Join professional groups or associations
- Research
- Increase your skills
- Find a Mentor (or 2!)
- Ask for increased responsibilities
- Volunteer
- Find a shadow assignment
- Develop an Individual Development Plan (IDP)
- Find a detail
- Take a change to lower grade
- Look for multi-graded career ladder positions

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