

# ***Applications and Resumes***

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## **Federal Application Package**

The Federal application package is designed to demonstrate that a candidate is qualified for a vacant position and is among the most qualified applicants eligible to be interviewed. As the government is downsized, more people are competing for fewer positions and the application package becomes the first step in screening. To be successful, an applicant must demonstrate not only that he/she meets the minimum qualifications, but that his/her knowledge, skills, and abilities match the ranking factors listed on the vacancy announcement.

### Applying for a Specific Position

If you are applying for a specific Federal position, carefully read the vacancy announcement or the program announcement. The announcement gives a general description of duties and specifies the type and amount of experience required in order to qualify for the position. It also lists the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics (KSA's) needed to perform the job successfully.

Review the appropriate job series listed on the announcement (i.e., GS-341, 201, 560, etc.) in *Operating Manual for Qualification Standards for General Schedule Positions* available from the Government Printing Office.

A complete application package will include an **application form** plus the following:

- Supplemental qualifications statement addressing each ranking factor;
- Current personnel appraisal;
- Personnel Actions (SF-50's);
- Other requested documents; and
- A cover letter.

### **Federal Application Forms**

Before 1995, there was one Federal application form, the Standard Form 171 (SF-171). Lengthy and detailed, it provided all the information

required to apply for Federal employment. Now there are several choices: the Federal Resume (OF-510), the Optional Form (OF-612), or the SF-171. Some positions may ask for the SF-1950 which is a machine readable application. The first step in preparing a Federal application package is to read the vacancy announcement carefully to determine which forms will be accepted by the selecting office.

**Federal Resume.** The Federal Resume is not the same thing as a private sector resume. Instructions for preparing the Federal Resume are contained in the publication, *Applying for a Federal Job* (OF-510). The Federal Resume is printed on plain bond paper but must include all the information requested in the vacancy announcement.

In addition, the Federal Resume must include the following information which determines if the legal requirements for Federal employment have been met and to evaluate the applicant's qualifications.

### **Personal and Educational Information for the Applicant**

- Full name, mailing address (with ZIP code), and day and evening telephone numbers, including area code.
- Social Security number.
- Country of citizenship (most Federal jobs require U.S. citizenship).
- Veteran's preference (proof of eligibility required).
- Reinstatement eligibility.
- Highest Federal civilian grade held, including series, beginning and ending dates.
- Name, city and state of last high school attended and date of diploma or GED.
- Name, city, and state of colleges and universities attended, major fields of study, type and year of any degrees received (if no degree, show total number of credits earned and indicate whether they are in quarter or semester hours).

### **Work Experience and Other Qualifications**

The Federal Resume must contain the following information on each paid or non-paid work experience related to the job being applied for during the past 10 years:

- Job title (series and grade if Federal employment)
- Duties and accomplishments
- Employer's name and address
- Supervisor's name and telephone number
- Permission to contact supervisor
- Starting and ending dates

- Hours per week
- Salary
- Job-related training courses (title and year)
- Job-related skills (e.g. languages, typing speed, computer software/hardware, tools, machinery)
- Job-related certificates and licenses (current only)
- Job-related honors, awards, and special accomplishments (e.g. publications, memberships in professional or honor societies, leadership activities, public speaking, performance awards)

Important Note

The Federal Resume does not request references. References will be given by the job supervisors contacted.

**OF-612.** This is a scaled-down version of the SF-171 (only one page). It is deceptive, however, because an applicant must list all previous job experience on extension pages. A complete OF-612 ends up looking a lot like an SF-171.

**SF-171.** Although officially out of hard copy print, the SF-171 exists on software programs. The form's major advantage is that human resources personnel are used to it and it provides all the information necessary to determine whether an applicant is qualified.

**General  
Preparation  
of the Federal  
Application**

The preparation of a good, competitive Federal Application takes considerable thought, time, and effort on your part. The material should be organized and the writing accurate, clear, and concise. Remember that you will be evaluated on what you write, and your statements will be verified.

First, gather all the material that will be useful in preparing your application: any previous SF-171's, copies of your position descriptions, performance appraisals, notices of awards and special recognition, personnel actions (SF-50's), letters of recommendation, school transcripts, training certificates. Have available a dictionary, thesaurus, list of action verbs, and a typewriter or word processor.

### Tips for Preparing a Federal Application

1. Read the instructions on the job announcement carefully. This will assist you in avoiding costly mistakes.
2. A neat, clean, typed form communicates professionalism.
3. Be concise and well-organized. Edit your writing so that every word counts.
5. Use a strong, clear writing style. Your descriptions should be interesting and easy to read.
6. Be positive. Focus on accomplishments when describing work experience.
7. Include relevant volunteer experience.
8. Proofread carefully, then ask someone else to proofread it. Spelling and grammatical mistakes communicate negative messages to employers.
9. Emphasize the most important information: put it first, underline it, capitalize it, or bullet items. Avoid excessive emphasis.
10. Sell yourself! Don't be modest. If you organized something (even if others were involved), write "Organized ..." not "Assisted in the organization of ..."

### Describing Work Experience

The way you describe your work experience — both salaried and volunteer — on your application can make the difference between being rated **qualified** or not. It can also have a significant impact on whether you are evaluated as a **highly qualified** candidate in competition with other applicants.

Describe your most recent or present job first and work backwards. When describing experience, write about responsibilities and accomplishments — not duties. For each accomplishment, try to answer the following questions:

- What did you do?
- How did you do it (alone, as part of a team, etc.)?
- How many times/products?

- How much of your time did it take?
- For whom was it done?
- What was the end result?

If you received an award for work described, list it as an accomplishment.

#### Good Idea File

You should keep a “praise file” of everything you accomplish on a weekly basis. Not only will this help you remember your accomplishments when writing up the job, it will also provide the information needed by your supervisor to write your efficiency report.

The following definitions may help you to describe your jobs:

**Duty.** Activity which is expected of you in the day-to-day performance of your responsibilities. Be specific. Don’t copy words from your job description. Example: you type, you file, you write correspondence, etc.

**Responsibility.** Area of work in which you have the authority and the opportunity to be in charge and which requires independent thought, action, and judgment. You may have responsibilities even though you report to someone else. Example: you are responsible for making travel arrangements for your supervisor.

**Accomplishments.** Activity that contributes something out of the ordinary to the goals of the organization, department, bureau, or office. Whether an accomplishment was done independently or as part of a team, use verbs that describe your exact role. Try to emphasize this area over the others. Example: you designed a new filing system that saved time and is more efficient for the office.

**Skill.** Ability or physical competence that you demonstrate in discharging your responsibilities, performing your duties, or making your contributions. Example: skill in typing; skill in running a movie projector.

**Knowledge.** Mastery of a subject matter area. Example: knowledge of office management; knowledge of accounting.

**Ability.** Potential to use a knowledge or skill when needed. Example: ability to produce reports in final form; ability to implement new office procedures.

The following list will help you complete the work experience section.

*Do* – describe your experience so that you emphasize the knowledge and skills required by the vacant position. Use action verbs to describe what work you actually did. Be specific.

*Do* – describe your accomplishments in each job. If possible, quantify. (Example: wrote 10 articles on employment for newsletter.)

*Do* – include all experience, whether paid or voluntary, including church, community, and club work. Show actual amount of time spent on such work.

*Do* – arrange your experience in chronological order.

*Do* – account for all periods of unemployment exceeding three months. Describe any volunteer service, education, or training done during periods of unemployment.

*Do* – include and describe major experience in the military or reserves.

*Do* – indicate the number of hours you worked per week whether you worked full-time or part-time.

*Do* – estimate and indicate the approximate percentage of time spent in each type of work. If your job contains more than one type of experience (for example, personnel and budget), place the percentages in parentheses at the end of each description.

*Do* – indicate any supervisory experience, even if it was only occasionally and even if it was not in your job description. Indicate the number of employees you supervised.

*Do* – indicate if you worked with little or no supervision.

*Do* – describe your work accurately (not the work of the organization or of colleagues) without exaggerating or being humble.

### Recalling Accomplishments

- Did you solve a problem?
- Did you take charge of an emergency situation?
- Did you develop an idea?
- Did you show leadership during a challenging situation?
- Did you achieve a goal by following instructions?
- Did you discover a need and meet it?
- Did you help others reach their goals?
- Did you influence the direction, efficiency, or productivity of your immediate work group?
- What do you do better than your coworkers and why is this an advantage to your agency?

Note: These questions are often used in interviews, so it is useful to have answers to them.

Following the guidelines above, describe your environment, your title, to whom you reported, and a description of the duties and responsibilities you assumed in each job you had. Describe any specialties and special assignments, your authority and responsibility, your relationship to others, and your accomplishments.

### **Describing Your Education**

Education should be described as carefully as experience, because a college degree is considered qualifying experience for many positions. Include the names of schools, locations, dates attended, subjects studied, and number of credit hours you have accumulated toward a degree if you have not yet graduated. A college year represents 30 semester, 54 trimester, or 45 quarter hours. Most schools require 120 semester hours, 210 trimester, or 180 quarter hours for graduation. You may use these figures in your computation.

Be sure to identify major courses. These may be needed to qualify for a specific job.

### Presenting Your Experience

- Determine how your experience compares with position requirements.
- Write simple direct sentences using your own words.
- Use action verbs to describe the work you actually did.
- Draft, edit, and rewrite until you are satisfied.
- Don't abbreviate unless you have already spelled out the term and want to refer to it. For example, Foreign Service Institute (FSI).
- Use "I" sparingly.
- Mention job-related awards.
- Show your salary at the annual rate.
- If you have a great number of accomplishments in one job, break it down into more than one experience block, showing your increased responsibility.

Education received in a foreign country may be accepted, provided an organization recognized by the U.S. Office of Education or the Council on Post Secondary Accreditation has evaluated your coursework. A certification of courses accepted for advanced credit by an accredited U.S. college or university is also acceptable. If you have these evaluation certificates at the time you prepare your application, attach them. You will be asked to furnish them before your application can be considered complete. For a list of organizations that evaluate foreign credentials, see Chapter 13, **Resources and Bibliography**.

### Important Note

Federal applications require information on your high school even if you have a degree from a college or university. Provide the name of the school, the city, state, and zip code, and the date of diploma or GED.



**Describing  
Other  
Qualifications**

The important thing to remember is that Other Qualifications listed should all be **job-related**. Other qualifications include the following:

**Job-related training courses:** personal development courses (e.g., time management, skills building, supervisory training). Don't forget any training you have received from the Office of Personnel Management, the Foreign Service Institute (FSI), business or trade schools, the military, or career specialty courses.

**Job-related skills:** languages, computer skills (including software packages), accounting, public speaking, typing speed, machinery or tools knowledge;

**Job-related certificates and licenses:** certified public accountant (CPA), pilot, nurse, real estate agent, drivers license, if applicable, etc.

**Job-related honors, awards, and special accomplishments:** fellowships, letters of commendation, publications, membership in professional, scientific, or honor societies, leadership activities, public speaking, and performance awards.

**Supplemental  
Qualifications  
Statement**

The supplemental qualifications statement (SQS) can be the most important part of your application package. It may be requested in the job announcement, but even if it is not, you should submit one. The purpose of this statement is to highlight those parts of your experience that are relevant to the job announcement. A good statement makes it easy for the personnelist to qualify you for the position.

**Veteran's Preference**

If you served on active duty in the U.S. military after October 15, 1976, and received a Campaign Badge, Expeditionary Medal, or a service-connected disability, and were honorably discharged, you may receive a veteran's preference. To claim 5 point veterans' preference, attach a copy of your DD-214, *Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty* or proof of eligibility. To claim 10 point veterans' preference, attach an SF-15, *Claim for 10-Point Veterans' Preference*, plus the proof required by that form. For more information about the veterans' preferences, call the OPM Hotline at 912-757-3000. Select "Federal Employment Topics" then "Veterans."

Supplemental statements should always be written specifically for a job announcement. You should address each ranking factor and explain in detail the experience (paid or unpaid), education, or special training that relates to the qualifications listed in the announcement. Your name, Social Security number, and the job title of the position for which you are applying should appear on each page. If you are switching from one GS job series to another, you should explain in detail your qualifications for the new job series.

Good Idea File

Keeping your application and all supplemental statements written for specific jobs on a word processor makes it easy to tailor each application to the needs of the job. Just make sure that you carefully read the final product so that it doesn't sound like it has been "pasted together."

**Job  
Announcement**

**UNITED STATE DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
MERIT PROMOTION OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT  
AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER**

Announcement No.: 00-0090

Position Title: Investigations Data Administrator

Office & Location: DS/CR/PF, SA-2

Series & Grade: GS-1801-9

Promotion Potential: None

Opening Date: 03-15-2000

Closing Date: 03-29-2000

Supervisory: No

Security Clearance Required: Critical-Sensitive

Comments: Travel Required

**AREA OF CONSIDERATION:** Limited to Eligible Department of State Employees Per 3 FAM 2314

**DUTIES:** This position is located in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, Office of Investigations and Counterintelligence, Criminal Investigations Division, Passport Fraud Branch. Incumbent will: provide technical support of investigations of passport and visa fraud; review and verify arrest warrant information submitted by DS agents; ensure program integrity of warrants entered into the FBI's National Crime Information Center (NCIC) databases and compliance with NCIC regulations; assess NCIC information concerning DS cases; formulate policy and procedures

for the DS Warrant Validation Program; travel to field and resident offices to review warrant files and provide guidance and training for DS agents and administrative personnel regarding NCIC policies and requirements; coordinate requests for sensitive information relating to warrants posted in database from other agencies; and serve as technical expert on NCIC and other databases used by the Branch.

**QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:** (OPM qualification Standards for General Schedule Positions): Applicants must have the required experience or education as described below and meet any selective factors, when specified.

Applicants must possess one year of specialized experience equivalent to the GS-7 level. Examples of qualifying specialized experience will demonstrate ability to apply investigative methods in order to discern appropriate data for entry in various databases; knowledge of statutory authorities, policies and regulations pertaining to investigative activities; ability to use a variety of automated systems in order to extract or interpret information for use in compiling case histories; and ability to use automated systems to write or analyze moderately complex statistical reports.

**EDUCATION SUBSTITUTION:** Master's or equivalent graduate degree or 2 full years of progressively higher level graduate education leading to such a degree. Graduate education must demonstrate the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to do the work of the position.

**APPLICANTS MUST MEET ALL QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS, INCLUDING TIME-IN-GRADE AND TIME-AFTER-COMPETITIVE APPOINTMENT REQUIREMENTS, BY THE CLOSING DATE OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT.**

**RANKING FACTORS:** Applicants who meet the qualification requirements described above will be further evaluated by determining the extent to which their education, experience, training, awards and supervisory appraisal indicate they possess the knowledge, skills and abilities described below.

1. Ability to plan and organize work and set priorities to meet deadlines.
2. Ability to analyze and evaluate automated data..
3. Ability to interact with individuals at all levels.
4. Ability to communicate in writing.

**APPLICATIONS MUST BE POSTMARKED BY THE CLOSING DATE OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT.**

**SELECTIONS WILL BE MADE WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION AS TO POLITICAL, RELIGIOUS, UNION OR NON-UNION AFFILIATION, MARITAL STATUS, COLOR, NATIONAL ORIGIN, RACE, SEX, AGE, OR DISABILITIES WHICH ARE NOT DISQUALIFYING.**

**This agency provides reasonable accommodations to applicants with disabilities. If you need a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application and hiring process, please notify the agency. The decision on granting reasonable accommodation will be on a case-by-case basis.**

### **HOW TO APPLY**

You may apply for advertised vacancies with a resume, the Optional Application for Federal Employment (OF-612), or any other written format you choose. Although we do not specify the format in which information is presented or require the use of any particular application form, there is certain information that we must have to determine if you meet the legal requirements for Federal employment and to evaluate your qualifications for a specific vacancy. If your application package does not provide all the information requested, you will lose consideration for the job.

### **JOB INFORMATION**

In order to apply for Department of State vacancies all applicants must provide the information outlined below:

1. Announcement number
2. Title and grade(s) of the position for which you are applying.

### **PERSONAL AND EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION**

1. Full name, mailing address (with zip code) and day and evening phone numbers, including area code
2. Social Security Number
3. Country of citizenship (most federal jobs require U.S. citizenship)
4. Veterans' preference (proof of eligibility required)
5. Highest Federal civilian grade held, including series, beginning and ending dates
6. Name, city and state of last high school attended and date of diploma or GED
7. Name and state of colleges and universities attended, major fields of study, type and year of any degrees received (if no degree, show total number of credits earned and indicate whether they are in quarter

or semester hours). If requested in the vacancy announcement, please provide proof of eligibility (e.g. transcripts, Form 1170/17, List of College Courses).

Applicants with foreign education must submit an evaluation of their course work by an organization recognized for accreditation or by an accredited U.S. college or university.

### **WORK EXPERIENCE AND OTHER QUALIFICATIONS**

In addition, applicants *must* provide information on their work experience, both paid and non-paid, that is *related* to the position for which they are applying, including:

1. Job title (series and grade if Federal employment)
2. Duties and accomplishments
3. Employer's name and address
4. Supervisor's name and telephone number (Indicate if we may contact your current supervisor.)
5. Starting and ending dates of employment (month and year)
6. Hours worked per week
7. Salary
8. Any other qualification, including *job-related*: training (title and date of course); skills (e.g., languages, typing speed, tools, machinery, computer software/hardware); current licenses; or honors, awards and special accomplishments (e.g., honor societies, publications)

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

1. All current Federal employees and reinstatement eligibles *must submit their most recent performance appraisal* and a SF-50 showing proof of competitive status. (If a current performance appraisal does not exist, a form DS1812 (Applicant Appraisal) or equivalent form from another agency, signed by the current supervisor is acceptable, or if the performance appraisal of record does not fully address the ranking factors, the DS1812 may be submitted.)
2. All non-competitive eligibles *must submit proof of eligibility*.
3. All applicants claiming veterans' preference *must provide* proof of eligibility.
4. All other applicants (non-status) *must* submit information identified above.
5. All applicants *must* submit information that addresses the ranking factors.

6. All applicants should submit SF-181, Race and National Origin Form (for statistical purposes only).

**APPLICATIONS WHICH ARE INCOMPLETE OR MAILED IN POSTAGE-PAID GOVERNMENT ENVELOPES WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED. ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE POSTMARKED BY THE CLOSING DATE AND ARRIVE IN PER/CSP BY COB ON THE FIFTH WORKING DATE AFTER THE CLOSING DATE. ALL MATERIAL SUBMITTED WILL BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE.**

### **WHERE TO APPLY**

**Mail applications to:** U.S. Department of State, Office of Civil Service Personnel Management, P.O. Box 58040, Washington, DC 20037-8040.

**Department of State employees** may hand deliver applications to: PER/CSP/S, 2401 E Street N.W., Washington D.C. 20522, Suite H-1104. For additional information and copies of forms, call (202) 647-7284.

All applicants will be notified in writing of the results of the consideration given their application approximately six to eight weeks after the closing date of the announcement.

### **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

The Department of State is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Selections will be made without discrimination as to political, religious, union or non-union affiliation, marital status, color, national origin, race, sex, age, or disabilities which are not disqualifying.

### **PRIVACY ACT INFORMATION**

The Office of Personnel Management and other Federal agencies rate applicants for Federal jobs under the authority of sections 1104, 1302, 3301, 3304, 3320, 3361, 3393, and 3394 of title 5 of the United States Code. We need the information requested to evaluate your qualifications. Other laws require us to ask about citizenship, military service, etc.

#### **Other Attachments**

- If you are claiming Executive Order 12721 eligibility, attach a copy of the performance appraisal or the SF-50 verifying service requirement. Be sure that it is signed.
- If you have previous government service, attach a copy of your last performance evaluation.

- If currently working for the government, attach most recent personnel action form (SF-50).
- Only attach other items specifically requested for the job you are applying for, such as a college transcript as proof of required course or degree or to qualify for the Outstanding Scholar Program.

## **Final Notes**

Use the checklist below to check your completed application. Better yet, have a friend or colleague check it for you.

Remember your Federal application is a living document. As you change jobs, receive more training, and assume new responsibilities, incorporate this information into your application.

### **Checklist for Completed Application Package**

Use the following checklist to review your completed Federal application package for both form and content.

- \_\_\_ Typed neatly and accurately—no stray marks or smudges.
- \_\_\_ Proofread for spelling and grammatical errors.
- \_\_\_ “White space” between paragraphs used effectively.
- \_\_\_ Active verbs, proper tenses, correct punctuation used.
- \_\_\_ Written clearly and concisely. Simple, straight-forward sentences.
- \_\_\_ Acronyms explained and put in parentheses.
- \_\_\_ Jargon, generalizations, flowery adjectives, superlatives avoided.
- \_\_\_ Pages arranged in logical, sequential order.
- \_\_\_ Original or clear, clean, easily read copy.
- \_\_\_ Qualifications clearly shown. Wording carefully chosen.
- \_\_\_ Qualifications related directly to specific job evaluation factors.
- \_\_\_ Performance evaluations attached (if to be submitted).
- \_\_\_ Entire application reviewed carefully for flow, content, and form.
- \_\_\_ Application submitted before closing date.

### Summary

1. The Federal application package gets you through personnel to the ranking panel.
2. The Federal application and the supplemental statement gets you to the interview.
3. In the interview, you get yourself the job.

## **The Cover Letter**

A cover letter is a personal communication written to a specific person in an organization. The letter's purpose is to show your uniqueness and encourage the employer to look at your resume or application. The letter should always relate your appropriate skills to the specific needs of the employer.

### **Federal Application Cover Letter**

For any Federal job application, you should write an individual cover letter that includes the following information:

- Special experience or skills;
- Eligibility under executive orders, veterans preference, noncompetitive eligibility for Peace Corps, etc.;
- Security clearance status if applicable;
- Inclusion of a supplemental statement;
- Contact information.

### **Resume Cover Letters**

The cover letter that must accompany a resume should be considered a marketing tool rather than a transmittal document. The kind of cover letter you send should depend on why you are sending the resume (i.e., in response to an advertisement or job announcement, at the suggestion of someone else; as part of a thank you for a meeting or telephone call, or an unsolicited effort). In any case, the following points should be considered.

- The resume cover letter should be a formal business letter written on paper that matches the resume paper. Typing, grammar, and punctuation must be perfect. Your name and appropriate contact information should be on the letter.
- The letter should be addressed to a specific person at a specific organization. You may need to do some research to find out the spelling of the person's name and title. (If you are answering a newspaper ad with only a Post Office box number, call the Post Office to find out who has rented the box.)



The cover letter should contain about three paragraphs. The first paragraph should explain why you are writing (“In response to your ad. . .” “At the suggestion of . . .;” “Thank you for . . .;”). If possible, include the name of a mutual contact.

The second paragraph should stress your selling points: how your qualifications meet those of the job; how your association with the company will benefit both parties. If your objective is not on the resume, include it in the cover letter. If you are responding to a job announcement or advertisement, make sure you address the requirements and key phrases listed.

In the last paragraph, ask for a brief meeting (do not use the word interview). Write as though you expect the meeting to occur. Indicate that you will call to arrange a time.

#### Good Idea File

If you are answering a newspaper ad, blow it up on a copy machine until it is large enough to read easily and you can mark the key phrases.

It is a good idea to save copies of cover letters and use relevant paragraphs or bullets for future letters.

#### FAXing a Cover Letter and Resume

If you are asked to FAX your resume, do not use a FAX cover sheet instead of a cover letter. The cover letter should be considered as part of the resume and the cover or transmittal sheet should be separate. The cover sheet should include your name and FAX number, the number of pages being transmitted, and a telephone number to call if the transmission doesn't occur or is faulty. Do not use “cute” cover sheets.

It is a good idea to FAX your resume and cover letter to yourself so that you can ensure that it is readable.

## Preparing a Resume

The resume is the universally recognized job-hunting tool. The word means “a summing up or a short history,” but in the modern context, it is considered an advertisement or a selling device. Job-seekers who believe that a resume is simply a listing of work experience probably have resumes that do not do them justice.

A good resume should make the reader want to meet and interview you. The resume should be a logical, well-phrased, and concise presentation of benefits you could bring to a potential employer. It is not necessary to include non-relevant or dated experience.

Of course, it should be perfect – neat, clean, and written in readable English with no typographical or grammatical errors. It should be printed by the laser method on high quality paper in a neutral color (white, buff, or gray). See **Resume Layout** later in this chapter.

The way you structure your resume depends on your background. Brevity is important, but not at the expense of accuracy and completeness. The resume of an experienced candidate should be no more than two pages unless he/she has many relevant publications or if the resume is for a non-American reader.

### To Pay or Not to Pay. . .

Should a job-hunter pay to have his/her resume written professionally? Many experts say you should prepare your own resume. Professional resume writers usually follow a formula that may or may not be appropriate to your case. One young man who studied to be a paralegal and paid his bills by waiting on tables had a professional resume written. Instead of concentrating on his education and training, the resume highlighted his “career” as a waiter!

Writing the resume is not, as commonly thought, the first step in a job search. Self-assessment (see discussion in Chapter 2, **The Employment Action Plan**) needs to be done or repeated if your values, interests, skills, and the importance of different aspects of work have changed. Research about prospective jobs and the skills needed for them is necessary so that you can target your objective and highlight the most pertinent accomplishments. Documentation (education, training, and work records) must be updated as new skills are learned.

**Objective.** When preparing a resume, the first thing to do is to develop an objective statement. This objective statement is the “theme” that will help organize your information so that everything in your resume supports your objective. Then, for each job/functional area on the resume, describe action-oriented accomplishments that support the objective statement. Supporting data (education/training, affiliations, publications, honors and awards, special interests, etc.) should be selected specifically to support the objective and the accomplishments.

#### Example of Job Objective

An employment counseling position in a large international organization where an extraordinary record of outplacing clients, exceeding placement targets, and enthusiastic client relations would be needed.

#### Highlights of Qualifications

Summarizes the most important skills, experience, and personality traits you have to offer for a specific job. It should be comprised of three to five statements in either paragraph or bullet form. In order to determine what you should include ask yourself the following questions: Why do you think you’d be a good candidate for this job? What do you have to offer the employer? How much experience do you have and what are your credentials? If you don’t have experience or credentials, then how do you know you’d be good at this? and What does the employer need to know about you, to realize you are the right one to hire?

#### Example of Highlights of Qualifications

Broad background in public relations, marketing and journalism, including 20 years as a reporter. Twelve years devoted to business and international trade reporting on Capitol Hill. Have provided radio and television commentary on legislative action and policy. Have organized and implemented national media and public relations campaigns.

OR

More than five years as an organizational training design consultant with a track record of producing exceptional programs for more than twenty national and international non-profit organizations. A commitment to human development and community service.

## Accomplishments Statements

Whether using a chronological, functional or combination format you will need to write accomplishment statements demonstrating your skills. In a chronological format the accomplishments will follow each specific job held and in the functional format they will follow specific skill headings. Each accomplishment statement should use an action verb and be written in the active voice. Use keywords that are appropriate to the targeted job. Avoid using the personal pronoun “I” and quantify statements with specific numbers and/or percentages to demonstrate your performance on previous jobs. You can strengthen the accomplishment statements by adding quotes from previous performance evaluation. Be sure to be consistent in the way you handle each description or summary and avoid all negative references.

### Example of Accomplishment Statement

Wrote grant proposal for research on number of women in university pre-med programs. Received \$500,000 funding. Coordinated and administered research program which had major effect on university recruitment.

## Resume Contents

Regardless of format, every resume must include the following:

- **Contact information** — Your name, address (permanent and temporary if applicable), and telephone numbers must appear on the resume. Include FAX numbers and/or e-mail addresses if you have them. **Your name should appear on every page of the resume.**
- **Experience** — The main purpose of a resume is to get you a job interview. For this reason, your summary of work experience, marketable skills, accomplishments, and education should be relevant to the job and written in terms of the prospective employer’s needs. Full-time, part-time, cooperative learning positions, and significant volunteer, practicum, internship, or field experience should be included only if relevant. Job descriptions should be brief, concise, and clear. They should detail your level of responsibility and breadth of exposure. You may group related experiences together.

- Education — You should include undergraduate and graduate schools, major and minor academic areas. Include other academic information if it relates to your job objective. Scholarships and honors, special projects (research, teaching, etc.), and nonacademic activities in college can be included if relevant and supportive of objective.

What Employers Care About  
(and You Should Have in Your Resume)

Employers want to see results quantified. Accomplishment and experience statements should be written to show the following:

- How much money was handled/saved/earned?
- How much productivity was increased?
- Who was affected (and how many)?
- What was created?
- What was the scope/impact/result?

**References** should not be listed on a resume. The interview is the place to produce a list of references, carefully selected for the particular job you are seeking. Always notify your references and give them specific information about the job for which you are applying. See Chapter 10, **Interviews and Job Offers**.

### **Resume Layout**

Since the person doing an initial screening takes only a few seconds per resume, a carefully planned layout can attract the reader's attention to the most powerful parts of the resume.

- The resume should be one page (two pages maximum). Longer resumes will not be read.
- The contact information should appear at the top of the first page. **Your name should appear on every page.**
- If the resume is two pages, do not staple or paper clip the resume pages. Instead, number the pages "One of two," and "Two of two."
- Plenty of white space makes a resume more readable and less cramped-looking. Use at least one inch margins.
- Choose a readable font type and size. Avoid the gimmicky.

- Use high quality, neutral-colored paper. Use a laser printer or have resume professionally reproduced. Avoid photocopies unless FAXing the resume.
- Grammar, spelling, and punctuation must be perfect. Have someone else proofread the resume.
- Emphasize key headings, titles, or points using upper case letters, underlining, italics, indenting, or bullets. Do not overuse and be consistent. (See special rules for scannable resumes below.)
- Never print on the back of the resume.
- Put the most relevant information first. Resumes are seldom read from beginning to end. Do not include irrelevant information.
- Avoid “I” and other personal pronouns. Don’t use a narrative format.
- Make sure that your objective is neither too general (which makes you appear unfocused) nor too specific (limits the use of the resume or may eliminate you from consideration). Many career counselors suggest that the objective belongs in the cover letter.

You should choose whichever resume format puts your experience in the best light. A **chronological** resume presents work experience within the time frames spent on each job, in a reverse-time sequence. Use it when you have a strong career background in some field and want to advance in the same field. A **functional** resume clusters relevant skills and abilities into functional areas with no mention of dates or organizations. It should be used when you lack experience in a field you are interested in, you are changing careers, or you are reentering the job market after an absence. A combination resume uses the best elements of both chronological and functional resumes. It generally starts with skill areas and then lists work history. Use it when you wish to change careers but have substantial skills/work experience to use in the new occupational field, or if you have had many jobs and want to emphasize skills.

## Resume Formats

<b>General Resume Outlines</b>	
<b>Chronological</b>	<b>Functional</b>
Objective (optional)	Objective (optional)
Highlights of Qualifications	Highlights of Qualifications
<i>Work History:</i> Current/last job title, place, years	<i>Skill Areas:</i> Skill
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accomplishment</li> <li>• Accomplishment</li> <li>• Accomplishment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accomplishment</li> <li>• Accomplishment</li> <li>• Accomplishment</li> </ul>

<b>Chronological</b>	<b>Functional</b>
Previous job title, place, years • Accomplishment • Accomplishment • Accomplishment	Skill • Accomplishment • Accomplishment • Accomplishment
Previous job title, place, years • Accomplishment • Accomplishment • Accomplishment	Skill • Accomplishment • Accomplishment • Accomplishment
<i>Education</i> Highest degree, institution, place, year Degree, institution, place,	<i>Education</i> Highest degree, institution, place, year Degree, institution, place, year
Languages (if relevant) Affiliations (if relevant)	Languages (if relevant) Affiliations (if relevant)

Use a curriculum vitae when applying for a job in a non-U.S. environment (overseas or for a foreign institution) or when seeking a higher education, writing, or speaking/training job in the United States.

**Chronological Resume.** This traditional type of resume lists experience in reverse chronological order with dates and job titles. Highlight several accomplishments under each entry. For example:

*Program Manager, University of Maryland, 1988-92*

Developed and supervised all phases, including budget and personnel, of collection and computerization of national personnel database for Federal mental health contract. Wrote evaluative study of ongoing multiagency education and community services program.

**Functional Resume.** This type of resume de-emphasizes dates, positions and responsibilities and emphasizes qualifications, skills, and related accomplishments. Three to five skill areas are used as headings, then accomplishments in each area are noted. The most relevant skill should be listed first. For example,

*Research, Writing, Editing.* Prepared report of community issues and presented recommendations to the Commanding General of large military installation.

**Combination Resume.** Combination resumes use the best elements of chronological and functional resumes. It begins with the skill areas and then lists work history (title, place, dates).

**Curriculum Vitae.** A curriculum vitae is the preferred resume format in academia as well as in other parts of the world. It contains much more information and detail than the resumes described above. It usually begins like a chronological resume but has additional pages of supporting detail.

#### Functional Resume Headings

These headings might be used to describe those abilities and potential that are in line with a job target.

Accounting	Office Support
Acquisition	Operations
Administration	Operations Analysis
Advertising	Organizations
Advising	Personnel Administration
Agency/Professional Relations	Personnel Training
Budgeting	Planning
Business Management	Presentations
Career Development	Problem Solving
Communication	Product Development
Community Affairs	Production
Construction	Program Coordination
Consulting	Program Development
Counseling	Program Funding
Crisis Intervention	Programming
Culinary Arts	Project Management
Customer Service/Relations	Promotion
Data Processing	Public Relations
Design	Public Speaking
Employment	Publicity
Engineering	Purchasing
Evaluation	Recruitment
Facilities Maintenance	Research
Finance	Retailing
Fundraising	Sales
Graphic Design	Scheduling
Human Resources	Secretarial
Instruction	Social Work
Interviewing	Staffing and Directing
Investigation	Supervision
Investment	Systems and Procedures
Legal	Teaching
Market Research	Testing
Materials Handling	Training
Needs Analysis	Volunteer Management



## Chronological Resume Sample

**Jane Doe**  
123 Hopeful Avenue  
Pleasantville, KY 22222  
345-678-9876  
E-mail: jdoe@yahoo.com

Job Objective: Position as program coordinator in human services

### HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Twenty-one years professional experience in the field
- Confident and skilled at organizing start-up of new programs
- Talent for effectively balancing needs of staff and program
- Maximize multicultural team's effectiveness by monitoring work flow and communications
- Minimize problems through careful analysis of program design

### RELEVANT EXPERIENCE & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1998-1999—Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Beijing, China (PRC) Human Resources Development Specialist. Conducted large-scale analysis of human resources development projects in China among multinational organizations (UNDP, World Bank, EC) and national bilateral agencies; analyzed future trends in PRC educational policy; findings applied to future CIDA programming.

1996-1998—International Consultant, Beijing, China

- 1990 Sino-American Conference on Women's Issues. Beijing liaison between Global Interactions (U.S.) and China Women's Federation.
- AT&T China. Evaluator of management trainees for AT&T International Management Program.
- Special Olympics, Washington, D.C. Beijing liaison.
- China Disabled People's Federation. Adviser for institutions for the disabled; started Very Special Arts (VSA)/China organization; host/announcer for the Second National China Arts Festival of Disabled Performers (televised nationally).
- Beijing International Volunteers (BIV). Founded organization of international volunteers working with disabled children in Beijing. (Awarded the "Secretary's Pin" by Secretary of State.)

1982-1988—John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts, Washington, D.C. Director, Very Special Arts International. Organized VSA programs in 55 nations and regional conferences in Europe, Africa, Latin America, and Asia; organized training conferences throughout the United States; produced television programs on arts for disabled; administered grants from U.S. Department of Education, National Endowment for the Arts, and the American Federation of Teachers.

### EDUCATION

- Harvard University, M.A.
- University of California, Berkeley, Teaching Certificate
- University of Wisconsin, Madison, B.A.

## Functional Resume Sample

### Mary Doe

123 Hopeful Avenue  
Pleasantville, KY 22222  
345-678-9876  
E-mail: jdoe@yahoo.com

### Accomplishments

- Designed and secured funding for 3-year vocational education program for a rehabilitation camp for 250 orphans (Ethiopia).
- Monitored an \$8 million, 5-year primary health care project, conducted process evaluation of project, and coordinated subsequent revision of implementation plan (Philippines).
- Formal language training in French, Amharic, Tagalog, and Bicol, and cross-cultural training

### International and Domestic Experience

#### *Program Design and Development*

- Established county-wide nutrition education program for over 700 children from low-income communities.
- Created and implemented first multicounty public relations plan for 4-H (Washington metropolitan area).
- Founded and developed parent volunteer program for elementary school with student body representing 18 nations (Tunisia).

#### *Program Management*

- Managed operation, development, and evaluation of major county-wide youth program with enrollment of over 3,500 members and 300 volunteer leaders.

#### *Personnel Administration*

- Managed and supervised work of 12 program assistants; responsible for implementing youth programs in low-income communities.
- Successfully analyzed and justified upgrading 2 senior-level positions to supergrade level (of which only 20 existed worldwide) in major international organization (Tunisia).

### Work History

- Coordinator, Volunteer Programs, Dogwood Elementary School, Reston, Virginia
- Consultant, U.S. Agency for International Development, Tunisia
- Vice President, Board of Governors, American Cooperative School of Tunis
- Implementation Consultant, USAID/Philippines
- Teacher, U.S. Peace Corps, Ethiopia

### Education

M.S., Adult Continuing and Extension Education, University of Maryland  
B.S., Extension Home Economics, University of Maryland

## Combination Resume Sample

**Richard Doe**  
123 Hopeful Avenue  
Pleasantville, KY 22222  
345-678-9876  
E-mail: jdoe@yahoo.com

**OBJECTIVE:** A management position in Information Services where administrative and technical expertise, initiative and interpersonal skills will be used to increase sales and improve customer relations.

### AREAS OF EFFECTIVENESS

**SALES/  
CUSTOMER RELATIONS:** \$200,000 worth of sales increased quota by 15 %. Established new system for solving customer complaints and recruiting new clients. Instituted inventory control for product and displays.

**PLANNING/  
ORGANIZING:** Reorganized word processing center resulting in reduced labor costs (34 %) and increased efficiency. Set up new tracking and filing system for Mag cards, resulting in improved turnaround time utilizing less personnel

**TECHNICAL:** Eight years experience operating Mag card and high speed printers: IBM 6240, Mag A, I, II, IBM 6640, and Savin word processor.  
Software: Microsoft Word, Excel, Equation Editor, Access, Filemaker Pro, WordPerfect, Lotus 123.

**EMPLOYMENT:** ABC Corporation, St. Louis, MO

**EXPERIENCE:** DEF Computer Services, Jacksonville, FL  
GHI Systems Inc., Nashville, TN  
JKL Corporation, Dulles, VA

**EDUCATION:** B.A. in Communications, 1983  
University of Maryland, College Park, MD  
Courses in interpersonal communication, psychology, and public-speaking. Worked full-time earning 100% of educational and personal expenses

**PERSONAL:** Certified MSHA instructor. Member Association of Information Scientists. Interested in increasing efficiency and reducing workloads.

### Online Resumes

Online resumes can be either sent by e-mail in reply to individual job announcements or posted on a resume database. Before sending an online resume in response to a job announcement, read the instructions carefully. Some employers want the resume sent by mail or FAX, others will specify the e-mail address (which may be different than the one for other inquiries).

Online resumes should be typed in Simple Text or ASCII so that they can be read by various word processing software.

### E-Mail Resumes

A regular (or mail) resume can be converted to an e-mail format. First, save the mail resume in a “text only” file. The formatting can then be reproduced using the spacebar and characters to highlight skills. Margins will also need to be altered. Count 65 characters across the screen and end the line with a return. Plain text cannot use boldface, underlining or bullets. As substitutes, try asterisks (\*) or plus signs (+) for bullets, a series of dashes for underlining, and upper case letters or asterisks for boldface. Only highlight the headers or titles of each section.

For more information about posting resumes online, see Chapter 3, **Using the Internet in the Job Search**.

### Scannable Resumes

**Federal Government Scannable Resumes.** The Federal Government uses SF-1950 when screening a large number of applicants (such as those applying to be a Foreign Service Officer). SF-1950 is designed to be scanned electronically. The format must be completed precisely in order to meet the machine readable test.

**Private Sector Scannable Resumes.** More and more private sector companies are using computerized scanning systems to wade through large numbers of resumes for a position. When a position opens, the job requirements are determined and then a list of “key words” is developed based on the requirements. The computer scans all resumes for the key words and rank orders the resumes based on the number of key words found (called “hits”).

**Key Words Summary.** A scannable resume can be written in a chronological, functional, or combination format but should begin with a key word summary — a list of **nouns** and **noun phrases** that describe your skills and experience as they relate to the job. Separate the phrases with

periods, commas, or semi-colons. Make sure that your resume includes all the key words listed in the job announcement or advertisement.

To find out what key words are likely to be used, read the advertisement or job announcement carefully. Check trade journals and publications for appropriate terms. If possible, talk to people in the field to find out what key words they are using. When describing skills and experience, use similar words or accepted abbreviations (e.g., English as a foreign language; English as a second language; EFL/ESL) instead of repeating words.

In order to take advantage of computer scanning, you should produce two versions of your resume — one for people to read and one for computer scanning. When applying for a job, submit both types and explain in your cover letter the purpose of each.

For information on how to prepare a scannable resume, check the following web sites:

[www.resumix.com/resume/resume\\_tips.html](http://www.resumix.com/resume/resume_tips.html)

[www.chr.ucla.edu/resume/resume\\_tips.html](http://www.chr.ucla.edu/resume/resume_tips.html)

**Scannable Resume Layout.** Simplicity is the key to a computer-readable resume.

- Use basic, sans serif fonts such as Arial, Helvetica, or Geneva.
- Use only white paper and black ink; colors do not scan well.
- Do not use underlining, bold, italics, or bullets.
- If possible, do not FAX a scannable resume. FAXes do not scan well.
- Do not submit a photocopied resume; photocopies do not scan well.
- If the resume is to be e-mailed, follow the directions in the ad or announcement exactly. Usually, it is better to include the resume in the message rather than as an attachment.
- Length is not as important in a scannable resume. Use a third page if necessary to include additional experience or training that uses key words.

### Good Idea File

To check the readability of a scannable or e-mailed resume, scan it yourself into a computer or e-mail it to a friend so that you can see the results.

**Note:** The information given below is also useful in describing work experience in the Federal application (see Chapter 6, **Federal Government Employment**).

**Action Sentences.** Many job applicants fail to adequately describe their past work experiences. Using the model on the next page may enable you to describe your work duties more completely. Use most of the elements when you want to emphasize an experience. You are not expected to use every element in every sentence you develop.

Sentence development begins with the verb. (See the end of this chapter for a list of action verbs.) Qualifiers are added to tell how much or how many, descriptors of level of work, or anything else that clarifies. The last part is the results: who used it, how were people affected, what was it used for.



## Action Verbs

abstracted	attracted	communicated
accelerated	audited	compared
accepted	augmented	competed
accompanied	authorized	compiled
accomplished	avoided	completed
achieved	awarded	composed
acquainted	balanced	computed
acquired	bargained	conceived
acted	based	conceptualized
adapted	bought	concluded
added	briefed	conducted
addressed	broadcast	confirmed
adjudicated	broadened	considered
adjusted	brought	consolidated
administered	budgeted	constructed
advanced	built	consulted
advised	calculated	contacted
advocated	called	contained
affected	canceled	continued
aired	canvassed	contracted
allocated	catalogued	contributed
allotted	caused	controlled
allowed	celebrated	convened
analyzed	centralized	converted
answered	certified	conveyed
anticipated	chaired	convinced
appeared	championed	cooperated
applied	changed	coordinated
appointed	checked	corrected
appraised	chose	correlated
apprised	clarified	corroborated
approved	classified	counseled
arbitrated	closed	counted
arranged	coded	covered
asked	collaborated	crafted
assembled	collated	created
assessed	collected	credited
assigned	combined	critiqued
assisted	commemorated	crusaded
assumed	commended	curbed
assured	commented	cut
attained	commissioned	dealt
attended	committed	debated



debited	effected	filled
debugged	elected	filmed
decentralized	elevated	financed
decided	eliminated	finished
declared	emerged	fixed
decorated	employed	focused
decreased	empowered	forecast
dedicated	enabled	forged
deduced	enacted	formed
deemed	encompassed	formulated
defeated	encouraged	fostered
defended	endeavored	fought
defined	endorsed	found
delegated	enforced	founded
delineated	engaged	freelanced
delivered	engineering	fulfilled
delved	enlarged	functioned
demanded	enlisted	funded
demonstrated	enlivened	furnished
described	ensured	furthered
designated	entered	garnered
designed	equipped	gathered
detailed	established	gave
determined	estimated	generated
developed	evaluated	ghostwrote
devised	examined	governed
diagnosed	exceeded	graded
directed	excelled	graduated
disbursed	executed	granted
discharged	exercised	guaranteed
disciplined	exhibited	guided
discovered	expanded	halved
discussed	expedited	handled
dispersed	experienced	headed
displayed	experimented	helped
disseminated	explained	hired
distributed	explored	hosted
divided	expressed	identified
documented	extended	illustrated
doubled	extracted	implemented
drafted	faced	improved
drew	facilitated	improvised
earned	fashioned	incorporated
edited	featured	increased
educated	filed	indexed

indicated	maintained	phased in
influenced	managed	phased out
informed	mandated	piloted
initiated	manipulated	pioneered
innovated	manufactured	placed
insisted	mapped	planned
inspected	marketed	polled
inspired	mastered	portrayed
installed	matched	practiced
instituted	measured	prepared
instructed	mediated	presented
insured	mentioned	presided
integrated	met	prevented
intensified	mobilized	priced
interacted	modeled	printed
interpreted	moderated	prioritized
interviewed	modified	processed
introduced	molded	procured
invented	monitored	produced
inventoried	motivated	programmed
invested	moved	prohibited
investigated	named	projected
invited	negotiated	promoted
involved	nominated	prompted
issued	observed	proposed
joined	obtained	prosecuted
judged	offered	protected
justified	officiated	provided
kept	opened	publicized
knew	operated	published
launched	ordered	purchased
learned	organized	pursued
leased	originated	put
lectured	outlined	qualified
led	overcame	raised
let	oversaw	ranked
levied	packaged	rated
licensed	paid	reacted
linked	participated	reasoned
listed	passed	recast
listened	perceived	received
lobbied	perfected	recognized
located	performed	recommended
logged	persevered	reconciled
made	persuaded	recorded

recruited	set	terminated
redesigned	set up	tested
reduced	settled	testified
reevaluated	shaped	toured
referred	signed	traced
refined	simplified	tracked
reflected	sold	traded
regulated	solicited	trained
rejected	solved	transferred
related	sorted	transformed
released	sought	translated
removed	sparked	transported
renegotiated	specified	traveled
reorganized	spoke	treated
replaced	staffed	tried
replied	staged	trimmed
reported	started	tripled
represented	stimulated	turned
reproduced	streamlined	tutored
requested	strengthened	typed
required	stressed	uncovered
requisitioned	stretched	unified
researched	structured	unraveled
resolved	studied	updated
responded	styled	upgraded
restored	submitted	used
restricted	substituted	utilized
restructured	succeeded	vacated
revamped	suggested	validated
reversed	summarized	verified
reviewed	superseded	visited
revised	supervised	visualized
revitalized	supplied	volunteered
rewrote	supported	waged
risked	surpassed	widened
salvaged	surveyed	was promoted
saved	symbolized	went
scheduled	synthesized	won
screened	systematized	worked
scripted	tabulated	wrote
sealed	tackled	
secured	tailored	
selected	tapped	
served	targeted	
serviced	taught	

### **Power Nouns**

ability	contributions	potential
background	effectiveness	preference
capability	management	record
capacity	maturity	scope
competence	performance	specialist

### **Power Adjectives**

academic	experienced	qualified
administrative	imaginative	resourceful
capable	increasing	responsible
competent	knowledgeable	significant
complete	major	sound
consistent	mature	stable
creative	pertinent	substantial
demonstrated	positive	successful
effective	potential	technical
efficient	productive	thorough
enlarging	professional	versatile
evident	proficient	vigorous
executive	profitable	well-educated
expanding	proven	well-rounded

### **Power Words**

building	expanding	significantly
completely	increasing	substantially
developing	particularly	thoroughly
enlarging	repeatedly	