

Resume Building Tips for Forest Service Jobs...



Here's a list of the top 10 resume building tips for Forest Service Jobs. Please remember, these are not hard and fast rules, but tips you should consider when applying for a Forest Service job.

Start early: To apply for any federal job, including Forest Service jobs, you must apply through www.usajobs.gov or USAjobs. To do so, you will need to create an account and this can take some time to set up. Your best bet is to do this ahead of when you think you'll be applying for a job so you'll have plenty of time to set up your profile and get your resume and other attachments ready/uploaded.

Create a resume using the resume builder in USAjobs: The advantage of the resume builder, rather than attaching your own, is you get a standardized Federal resume and it is searchable, meaning USDA Forest Service Human Resource Specialists can do keyword searches, an option that may not be available with uploaded resumes. Creating a resume in USAjobs resume builder also ensures you include all the required information needed for you to be considered for a federal job. And lastly, the resume builder creates resumes hiring managers are used to seeing which makes it easier for them to read and understand.

Include dates & salary of your current & past employment: This is something many applicants forget to include or don't know to include in their resume if they don't use resume builder in USAjobs, but is essential or your application may not be considered. You need to include dates (month & year) of previous employment, salary of previous employment, average hours per week, and name of your previous supervisors. You also need to do this for your current position as well. This level of detail is necessary when your application is being evaluated to determine whether or not you meet the minimum qualifications. When a Human Resource Specialist is evaluating your application and trying to determine if you are qualified for a job, the months & years of work experience (and particularly, relevant work experience) is used. Your salary also tells us more about this work experience and what grade level this compares to in the federal structure. See [GS Qualification Standards](#) for more info.

Example: To qualify for a forestry technician (fire, recreation, trails, etc.) 462 job series at a grade level of a GS-4; you need 6 months of general work experience, 6 months of relevant work experience, and/or 2 years above high school with courses related to the occupation.

Do include a list of college course work in your resume if you are using your credits to meet the qualifications for the job: If you have a degree and/or currently working on your degree, listing this coursework in your

resume may not be necessary and takes up precious space. However, if you using specific courses to become qualified for a job, please list those in your resume. For example, if you have a Forestry degree but are applying for a position as a botanist, you will want to show that you qualify as a botanist given the number of credits/courses taken. HR will make the final determination, but it's helpful if they know which courses you believe qualify you for the job.

If you completed any college coursework whether you have completed a degree or not, you should definitely attach your most recent transcript(s) to your application in USAjobs. Many applicants don't include their most recent transcript, so don't make this mistake. Be sure to get an updated transcript as soon as you can upon completion of a semester or degree.

Page limit or rule of thumb for federal resumes on USAjobs: For a recent college graduate, it is much easier to keep your resume to one page. However, if you've been in the workforce for 10-20 years it is almost impossible. Generally speaking, the Forest Service is more accepting of multiple page resumes for persons with a longer job history. And, you most certainly do not want to cheat yourself out of including all your relevant work experience as well as knowledge, skills, and abilities by being too brief. A three to four page resume is quite acceptable to most hiring managers if you have the professional work experience to justify the length.

Example: You have been in the workforce for 15 years and are now looking for a job in budget/finance and wonder if you should include your work experience from college when you worked for a burger joint. The answer is no, as this likely isn't work experience that is going to help you qualify for the job. However, if you are a 20 year old looking to land a job fighting fire you will need to include this work experience because you have such limited work experience and you need to show you have been successful in the workforce.

Tailor your resume specific to the job you are applying to: Another positive feature of the resume builder in USAjobs is the ability to duplicate a resume. USAJobs allows the user to have 5 resumes uploaded or created using the USAJobs resume builder. This allows the user to have a master resume with all of his or her qualifications and experience listed. They can then duplicate this resume and easily add or remove items to tailor the resume to the specific position they are applying for. Your resume should include specifics that you add or cut depending on the applicability to the position being applied for.

Find the Position Description and "crosswalk" it with your resume: The best way to tailor your resume specific to the job you are applying to is to get a copy of the position description (PD) for the job. The best way to do this is to get this PD from the [outreach database](#) before the job is advertised. If for some reason, the PD is not included in the [outreach database](#) you should call the hiring manager and request it. If you missed the job being in the [outreach database](#) and its now being advertised on USAjobs, each job advertisement includes the job duties. Use either the PD or the job duties and use each item listed and determine if you have job experience, knowledge, skills, and abilities to show in your resume in your work experience.

Example: If "constructs and/or maintains recreational trails" is listed as a job duty for a GS-3 Recreation Aid position, it would be wise for you to include any experience you have using hand tools such as a shovel, axe, saw, or Pulaski clearing debris, trees, etc. If you have experience using a chain saw, this would be good to include as well.

References: Many hiring managers never call your references you have listed in your resume. The reason for this is hiring managers are not interested in hearing from people you pick that we know are going to say good things about you. Hiring managers typically want to hear from your current and past supervisors, peers you have worked with, and subordinates (if you were/are a supervisor). These people will be contacted rather than your references and enough calls will be made to ensure a good cross section of people are contacted to learn what is needed about you. Given this, it is fine to list references you have hand-picked to include on a resume – however, if your resume is lengthy this might be an option for you to skip.

Other items to include: Even in the USAjobs resume builder there is a place to list other items that may help you qualify for the job or be more competitive for the job. It is a good idea to list the titles and completion dates of training courses relevant to the position you are seeking. Hiring managers like to see job-related honors, awards, leadership activities, skills that are also relevant. This is not a place to include all the extra-curricular activities you did in high school or college, but to focus on those items not listed in your work experience that are relevant to the job you are applying to. The key here is to list those items that will help you stand out and be as competitive as you can for the position.

Cover letters: Cover letters are not required by the Forest Service. Some hiring managers like to see them. It doesn't hurt to include a cover letter and it can be a great way to accomplish a few things. First, you can reference the phone call you had with the hiring manager reminding them of who you are and your conversation. Second, it allows you a simple way to mention why you want this specific job and/or what it means to you. And lastly, it also allows you a simple way to mention something personal about yourself and/or family. Keeping the cover letter brief is a great idea and most definitely limited to one page.

The goal in your resume is to ensure you have demonstrated you meet the minimum qualifications for the job and these are always listed for each job in the job advertisement in USAjobs. It's up to you to make sure you have clearly included this in your resume.

It is one thing to meet the minimum qualifications, but it is another to be competitive for the job. This is the other goal hiring managers want you to demonstrate in your resume. For some jobs, we have hundreds of applicants and the competition is great. Use these tips to ensure you are giving yourself the best advantage you can with your work experience, education, training, knowledge, skills and abilities to land the job you really want.

For more information or questions, please contact:



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<https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/r1/jobs>