



U.S. FOREST SERVICE

Tips on Preparing Your Application

Getting Started

Like many of us, you may find it difficult to prepare a job application or resume. Yet, an employer reviews your application to determine if you meet basic requirements and to determine whether you're one of the best candidates to interview. So, your resume serves as a critical checkpoint in the hiring process.

A clear understanding of the job requirements and screening process is your first step in preparing a resume that will stand up to the competition. Employers increasingly rely on technology to optimize access to quality candidates. However, on-line applications significantly increase the number of applicants for each opening.

Avue's system, in particular, offers employers automated questionnaires and other electronic assessment tools to screen large numbers of applicants and help them determine which ones to contact for interviews. Consider the following to increase your opportunity for an interview.

Understanding BOTH the Eligibility and the Qualification Requirements

It is important that you review the job advertisement or vacancy announcement for eligibility and qualification requirements. Although there may be some slight variations in the way agencies design their vacancy announcements, you are likely to find these requirements under the following topics on the vacancy announcement:

- Area of Consideration
- Basic Qualifications
- Conditions of Employment
- Eligibility
- Other Job Requirements
- Specialized Experience
- Who May Apply

Most jobs have basic eligibility requirements or conditions of employment. These typically include citizenship, minimum or maximum age, physical or medical requirements, licenses or certifications required, security clearances needed, and for Federal positions, satisfying "competitive status" requirements.

Qualifications

Jobs also have minimum qualification requirements. These describe the minimum education, training, or experience necessary for success in the job. If you fail to meet these requirements



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you will not be considered. Don't waste your time by thinking it might be "close enough." Move on to those job openings for which you are eligible and can qualify.

Understanding How Employers Screen or Select Candidates for Personal Interviews

There are a number of processes employers might use to determine the best qualified candidates.

Ranking

If you are eligible and qualified, an employer will rank you among other candidates using pre-defined, job related criteria. Employers will typically compare your experience, education, training, or past performance with that of other candidates. Some ranking processes produce a numerical score against the job-related criteria, which helps determine the Best-Qualified candidates for interviews

Not all Federal agencies use a numerical ranking system for hiring. The U.S. Forest Service, for instance, does not use numerical ranking in its hiring process.

Employers might use other methods to screen eligible and qualified candidates for interview.

These alternate methods might include subject matter expert panels, which generally review your experience, education and training as it relates to the specific requirements in the job. For some positions in some organizations, seniority is the key to getting referred.

Tips for Preparing Your Resume

Here are some tips for completing two different types of resumes: paper and online. There are many different resume formats. Typically, resumes with work experience arranged chronologically work best when applying for Federal jobs. Regardless of the format used, however, there is certain basic information that must be included:

- Contact section: Who are you and how can you be reached?
- Objective statement: What do you want to do?
- Education section: What have you studied and learned?
- Experience/Employment section: What can you do? What have you done?
- Professional activities and accomplishments: How have you been recognized? What are your professional affiliations?
- Miscellaneous: What else do they want to know about you? What else do you think it is important that they know about you?



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Sometimes this is clearly stated in the vacancy announcement; sometimes you have to do some research to figure out what might be important as decisions are made on who remains in the process.

Tips for Completing Your On-line Resume

Carefully and thoroughly read the entire vacancy announcement. Provide ALL the information requested including documentation required for the position. Some agencies use automated systems and others accept resumes. Regardless of how they want you to apply, you must ensure your submission includes information in the following areas:

- 1) Answer ALL job-related questions to the best of your ability. Include accurate details of your experience, education, or training in the narrative input or supporting information fields provided.
- 2) Use ALL portions of the application to provide unique and exemplary information that sets you apart from other candidates.
- 3) Present your most important job-related competencies and accomplishments.
- 4) Present information in a polished (and accurate!) manner.
- 5) Double check for typos and grammatical errors.
- 6) Stress actions and achievements.
- 7) Sell yourself!

For both paper and on-line resumes, you should use action verbs to show the degree to which you were actively engaged in performing work. Some suggested verbs to consider are:

Advised	Delivered	Investigated
Analyzed	Demonstrated	Negotiated
Arranged	Developed	Organized
Budgeted	Directed	Performed
Built	Drafted	Planned
Computed	Evaluated	Presented
Conducted	Filed	Repaired
Coordinated	Gathered	Researched
Counseled	Improved	Supervised
Crafted	Installed	Typed
Delegated	Instructed	Wrote