

Federal Resumes: Write Your Story – Not Your Resume

By [Jason Kay](#) • February 25, 2015 • [Comments](#)



There are a lot of websites with advice about how to write your resume. Many pages seem to fall into one of two categories: the mechanics, or the semantics.

Tips and advice about the mechanics of [federal resume writing](#) might include things like how

long the document should be, what the layout should look like, and what sections to include.

Information about the semantics of resume writing will offer differing opinions about what the tone of your resume should sound like and what words you should absolutely include or leave out.

While all of the above information is useful and worth taking a look at, the most important advice to take to heart when working on your resume – whether it is the first draft or the thirtieth – is to always keep your writing authentic and make sure you focus on conveying your abilities and experience in an easy-to-read and engaging way. Do not focus all of your time and effort on creating a resume that is structurally sound but lacks real and meaningful content.

With the above thoughts in mind, consider the following tips regarding what content you might want to include on your federal resume depending on the

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position you are trying to obtain. You will need to know how to find that information; how to phrase it appropriately; and how to incorporate necessary skills and keywords while ensuring that your resume remains a tool that helps you tell your story rather than a lackluster document simply listing general [knowledge, skills and abilities](#).

Think Before You Write

What positions are you interested in? Take the time to seek out job descriptions for specific positions you are interested in obtaining, and take a look at what requirements and desired qualifications are listed.

There is no magic formula that can guarantee you an interview without fail, but spending your time and effort familiarizing yourself with the job of your dreams can only help.

Do not simply look at the keywords listed and plug those into your resume, but rather consider your own experiences with regard to the desired candidate the job listing is describing; the way you present your experience and skillsets matters, and can absolutely impact your likelihood of an interview. Consider what combinations of skills are listed, how they are described, and how your experience could benefit your future employer.

Customize Your Resume

Many people claim to use the same resume for all positions they apply for, regardless of field or industry.

This is a terrible idea for a few reasons. Consider, for example, the fact that the employer in question took the time to write out a description tailored specifically for the position you are considering – they did not just post the opening and encourage absolutely everyone to apply, because the majority of potential applicants might not have the specialized experience for which they are seeking. If the employers want someone with general experience that is useful across a number of fields, they will state that in the job listing. Far more likely, however, is the employer that is looking to weed out those individuals without skills or experience pertaining to their needs.

Along the same lines as the information in the previous sections advising you to carefully read and consider job descriptions for positions you are interested in, you should also take the time to tailor your resume for each specific position for which you are applying. It may take extra time to revise your resume when you are applying to multiple positions, however the time will be well worth it when your potential employer reads over your relevant skills and experience and thinks that you would be a great fit for their company.

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February 25, 2015

Fund	Last	Change	YTD
L Income	17.6529	+0.0029	+1.16%
L 2020	23.4699	+0.0088	+2.49%
L 2030	25.5813	+0.0128	+3.12%
L 2040	27.3140	+0.0164	+3.54%
L 2050	15.5562	+0.0107	+4.00%
G Fund	14.6594	+0.0006	+0.29%
F Fund	17.0117	+0.0120	+1.25%
C Fund	27.9862	-0.0170	+3.02%
S Fund	37.9693	+0.0842	+4.61%
I Fund	25.9384	+0.0516	+7.10%

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Open - 2 hours Delayed Arrival - With Option for Unscheduled Leave or Unscheduled Telework

February 26, 2015 - Federal agencies in the Washington, DC area are OPEN under 2 hours DELAYED ARRIVAL and employees have the OPTION FOR UNSCHEDULED LEAVE OR UNSCHEDULED TELEWORK. Employees should plan to arrive for work no more than 2 hours later than they would be expected to arrive. [More...](#)

Be Creative Without Embellishing

Consider the following situation: you have been searching for possible positions to apply for, and you have come across a job for which you believe you would be perfect. Unfortunately, you do not have all of the desired qualifications. Do you send in your resume and cover letter regardless? Should you spend time creating overly embellished skills to include, even if they are not necessarily accurate?

The suggested responses to the above questions are yes and no, respectively.

If you come across a job that speaks to you and you think that you have the experience and skills necessary to be successful, then yes, you should absolutely send your resume in. Even if your experiences do not match exactly with what the employer lists in their job description, it is entirely possible that you have the desired traits and skills to succeed at the job. Explain why you know you would be a good fit for the job in question, and then use your resume to reinforce that idea. Maybe you do not have the desired number of years of experience in the target industry, but instead have experience utilizing the same skills in a different field. Do not be afraid to sell all of your skills and experiences as long as you can clearly explain why they are relevant to the specific position in question.

If you see a job for which you would like to apply, but you do not have any relevant experience or skillsets at all, do not make up experiences or skills if you do not have practical experience utilizing them. Even if you land an interview through the use of highly embellished skills on your resume, consider how the process is likely to end when it becomes clear that you do not possess or have experience with the qualities indicated on your resume. That is not a situation you want to be in. If you are very passionate about a particular position but lack the indicated experience, make sure to emphasize the skills that you do possess on your resume and cover letter. You can always make a case for why you would be a great fit for a position without resorting to embellished information.

Take Advantage of the Federal Format

Unlike standard resumes where any length over two pages is considered taboo, [federal resumes](#) are usually fairly lengthy. You do not have to dissect all of your past experience into two or three bullet points per position – use that to your advantage!

The following are sections that should all be included in your resume, regardless of the job position, in addition to your work experience:

- » Job title, grade, and announcement number

- »

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- » Your full name, mailing address, contact numbers for day and evening, and home email address
- » Country of citizenship if you are not a U.S. citizen
- » Special hiring authorities: Veterans, Peace Corps/AmeriCorps VISTA Volunteers, and persons with disabilities (schedule A). If you are a veteran, make sure to attach/upload supporting documents such as a DD214 or Statement of Service; SF-15, Application for 10-Point Preference; and (if applicable) a Disability Rating Letter from the VA. Returned Peace Corps volunteers should attach their Description of Service (DOS) to be considered for non-competitive federal jobs, and AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers should include their Service Letter. Persons with disabilities should include proof of disability from licensed medical professionals, licensed vocational rehabilitation specialists, or any federal/state agency that issues or provides disability benefits.
- » Education: Ensure that you provide the name and address of the institutions you attended in addition to your major/field of studies (or number of semester hours completed if you have not graduated). Veterans should remember that military training might count towards the qualifications listed in a job announcement, and include your Verification of Military Experience and Training (VMET) document to describe your training and educational background.

Fully Describe Your Work Experience

Ensure that you fully describe your key work history, volunteer experience, and academic accomplishments in addition to any extra-curricular activities not included in the previous categories. Do not cut information out to make your resume shorter; however, make sure to keep your description clear and concise. Avoid using overly technical jargon in favor of simple, laymen's terms.

Professional resume writers will tell you, when writing work experience descriptions, to always keep in mind the position for which you are applying; do not list pages of skills that have no bearing on your application. Spend your time accurately and thoroughly describing the experience and skillsets you possess that are important for the job in question.

When listing your work experience, always begin from the most recent or current position and list your previous held positions in chronological order. Always list the position title, beginning and ending dates of the position (include the month as well as the year), employer's name and address, and include your main accomplishments and duties. You should also state the average number of hours worked per week; the wage you earned; your supervisor's name, mailing address, telephone number, and

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indicate whether or not they can be contacted. This also applies to temporary positions. Do not forget to include the occupational series numbers as well as the beginning and ending grades of the federal positions you held.

Always include job-related training and knowledge. Consider categorizing your job-related skills into the following three categories: self-management skills, functional skills, and technical skills. You should state any current job-related certificates and/or licenses as well as job-related honors, accomplishments, awards, publications, memberships, and leadership activities that you held or received. Veterans should refrain from using military job titles and occupational codes, and rather use your VMET as a starting point to list your duties and accomplishments (remember to keep the information relevant to the position for which you are applying).

Take the time to carefully follow the above advice, and start revising (or creating) your federal resume!

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