



The Ins and Outs of Applying for a Federal Job

October 13, 2009



**PARTNERSHIP FOR
PUBLIC SERVICE**

The New Landscape for Older Workers



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Agenda

- **The Landscape for the Future of Work**

- **Federal Employment Overview**
 - ✓ Why now?
 - ✓ Find out where the federal jobs are in your area

- **10 TIPS on Landing Federal Jobs**

- **Q&A**

The Landscape

- Rising unemployment rates
 - ✓ 9.8% - 263,000 more jobs lost in September
- AARP Survey shows (45 – 65):
 - ✓ 17% postponed retirement plans
 - ✓ 15% are looking for new jobs due to current job uncertainty
 - ✓ 16% indicated loss of job in the past 12 months
 - ✓ 22% felt it was somewhat likely that their job could be eliminated within the next year


Average duration of unemployment for 55+ workers was 27.7 weeks vs. 22.4 weeks for those under 55.

50+ Workers

- **69% intend to work past traditional retirement age**
 - ✓ **Money**
 - ✓ **Health insurance**
- **Stay mentally and physically active**
- **Desire to contribute skills and abilities in the workplace**

Myths about older workers

- **Can older workers adapt?**
- **Can they handle new technologies?**
- **Are their job skills up to date?**
- **Can they get along with younger bosses?**



OUTDATED



Positive Perceptions of Older Workers

- Loyalty and dedication to the company
- Come to work on time; low absenteeism
- Commitment to doing quality work
- Someone you can count on in a crisis
- Solid performance record
- Solid experience in job/ industry
- Basic skills in reading, writing, arithmetic
- Getting along with co-workers



Benefits of federal government service

Excellent Pay

Be able to influence the future of our country

Excellent advancement opportunities

Competitive health and retirement benefits

Flexible schedules and generous vacation time

Training and professional development

Finding Jobs: USAJOBS.gov

USAJOBS® USAJOBS is the official job site of the United States Federal Government. It's your one-stop source for Federal jobs and employment information.
"WORKING FOR AMERICA"

[Search Jobs](#) [My USAJOBS](#) [Info Center](#) [Veterans](#) [Forms](#) [Employer Services](#)

NEW TO USAJOBS? » [Your career in the U.S. Government starts here!](#)
Explore the **76,677** Federal jobs in the USAJOBS database.

SEARCH JOBS
What: (Job title, keywords) Where: (City, State OR Zip Code)
SEARCH

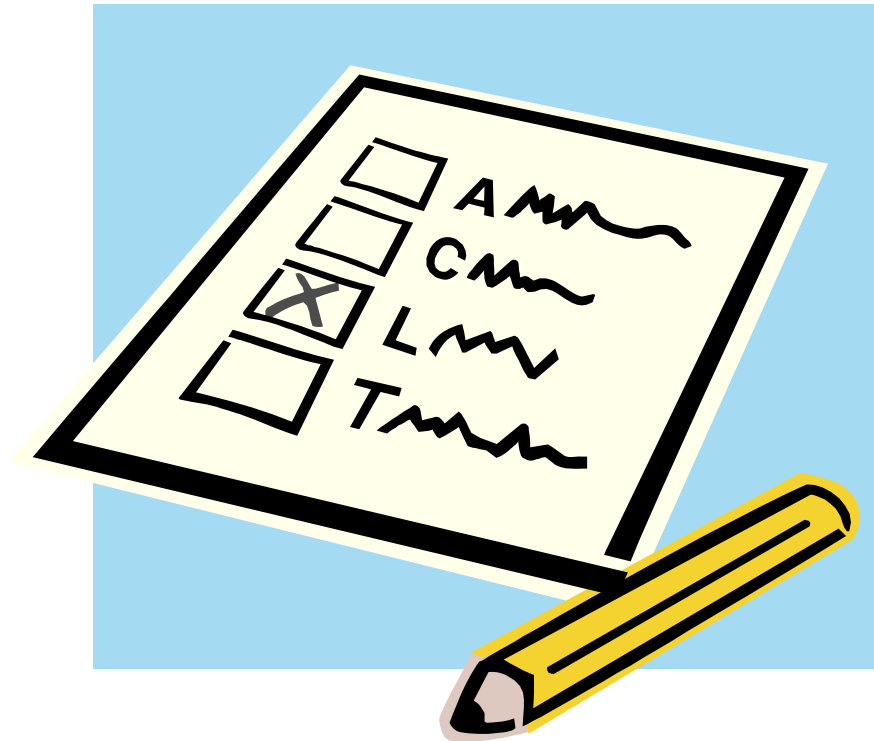
CREATE RESUME
Create and store a resume for applying to Federal jobs. It's fast, and makes it easier for an employer to find you!
CREATE

What did you do at your job today?
Discover an exciting job that [makes an impact!](#)

FEATURED JOB
Deputy Director, RHRC
Focusing on recruiting and retaining the best and brightest at the Rockville Human Resources Center.

FEATURED EMPLOYER
US Forest Service - Working for the Great Outdoors
The Forest Service mission is captured by the phrase Caring for the Land and Serving People.

Have you ever applied for a Federal Job?





Federal Employment Overview – Tim Dirks Partnership for Public Service



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What federal employees say about their jobs ...

“I am able to **make a big difference** by working from within the Government.” (OPM)

“Working for the Government offers me a level of **experience and substantive knowledge** that I could not access in the private sector at this stage of my career.” (STATE)

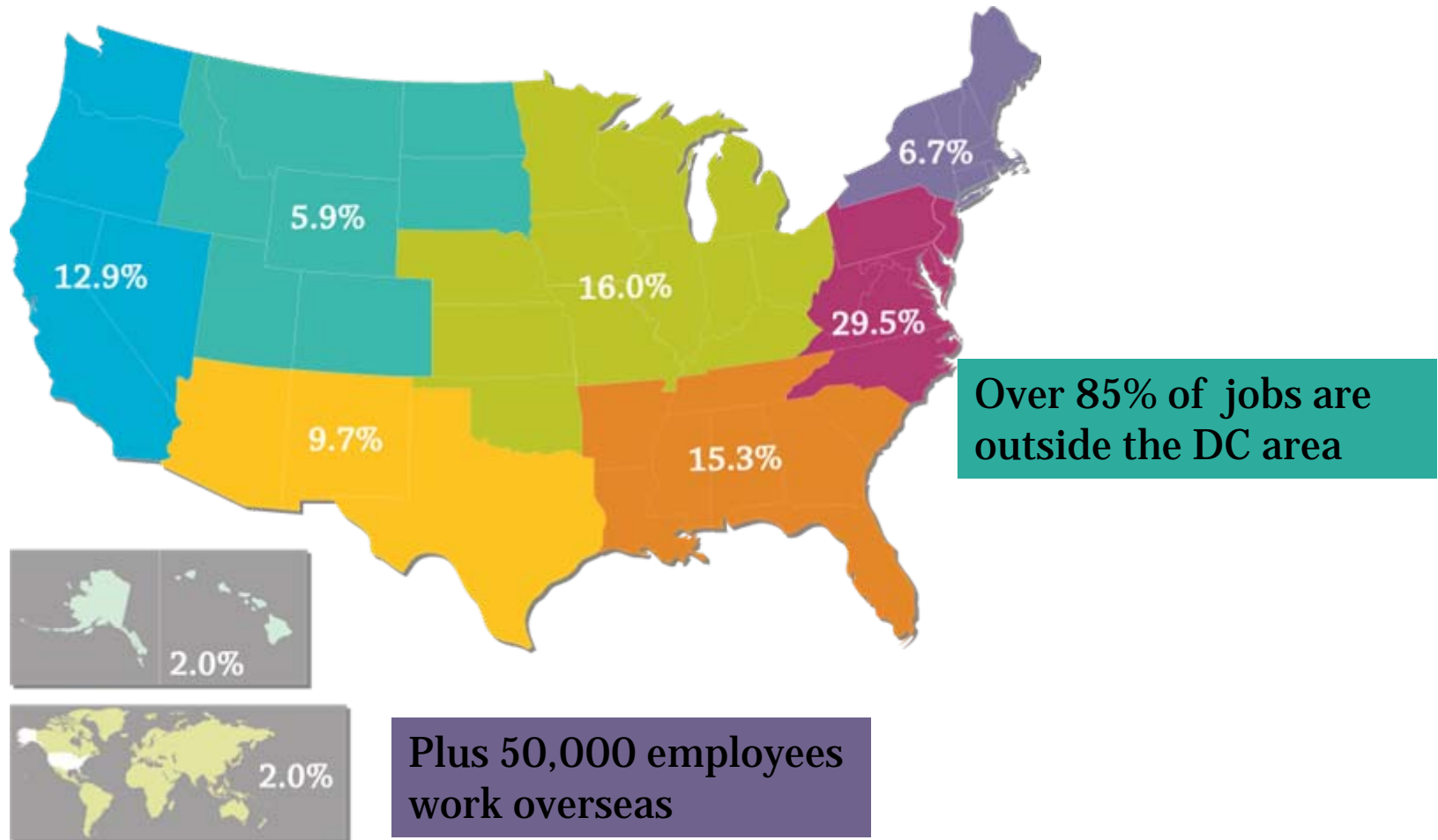
“I work on the **most important national security and humanitarian issues** our country faces today and see real progress towards improving how we respond to crises.” (DOD)



Quick Federal Employment Facts

- Federal government has almost 2 million employees (excluding Postal Service)
- American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 will create thousands more federal jobs over next 2 years
- About 90% in "white collar" jobs
- Almost 90% are in full-time, ongoing jobs
- In 2008 over 220,000 employees separated and 300,000 were hired.
- In 2008, 49,000 (16%) new hires were 50+

Where the Jobs Are: By location





Largest Federal job concentrations outside the D.C. area

City/Metro Area

State

1. Norfolk-Virginia Beach, VA.
2. Baltimore, MD
3. Philadelphia, PA
4. Atlanta, GA
5. San Diego, CA
6. New York City, NY
7. Chicago, IL
8. Salt Lake City-Ogden, UT
9. Oklahoma City, OK
10. Los Angeles, CA

1. California
2. Virginia
3. Texas
4. Maryland
5. Florida
6. Georgia
7. Pennsylvania
8. New York
9. Washington
10. Illinois



Types of Federal Jobs That Are “In Demand”

About 90% of mission-critical jobs over next 3 years are in 9 major areas as projected by federal agencies

- 1. Medical and Public Health**
- 2. Security and Protection**
- 3. Compliance and Enforcement**
- 4. Legal and Related**
- 5. Administration and Program Management**
- 6. Accounting and Budget**
- 7. Information Technology**
- 8. Contract and Grant Administration/other Business**
- 9. Engineering**



High Demand Federal Jobs

- Contracts Specialist
- Grants Management Specialist
- IT Specialist/Manager
- Attorney
- Engineer
- Cyber Security Specialist
- Nurse
- Medical Officer
- Auditor - Accountant
- Financial Analyst
- Criminal Investigator
- Office Assistant-Clerk
- Human Resources Specialist
- Claims Examiner
- Intelligence Analyst
- Program Analyst



Top 15 Federal Agencies Hiring

- > Veterans Affairs* - Veterans Health Administration
- > Army*:
 - > Corps of Engineers
 - > Medical Command
 - > Commands Impacted by Base Realignment
- > Homeland Security:
 - > Customs & Border Protection
 - > Immigration and Customs Enforcement
 - > Transportation Security Administration
- > Commerce* - Census Bureau
- > Air Force* - Materiel Command

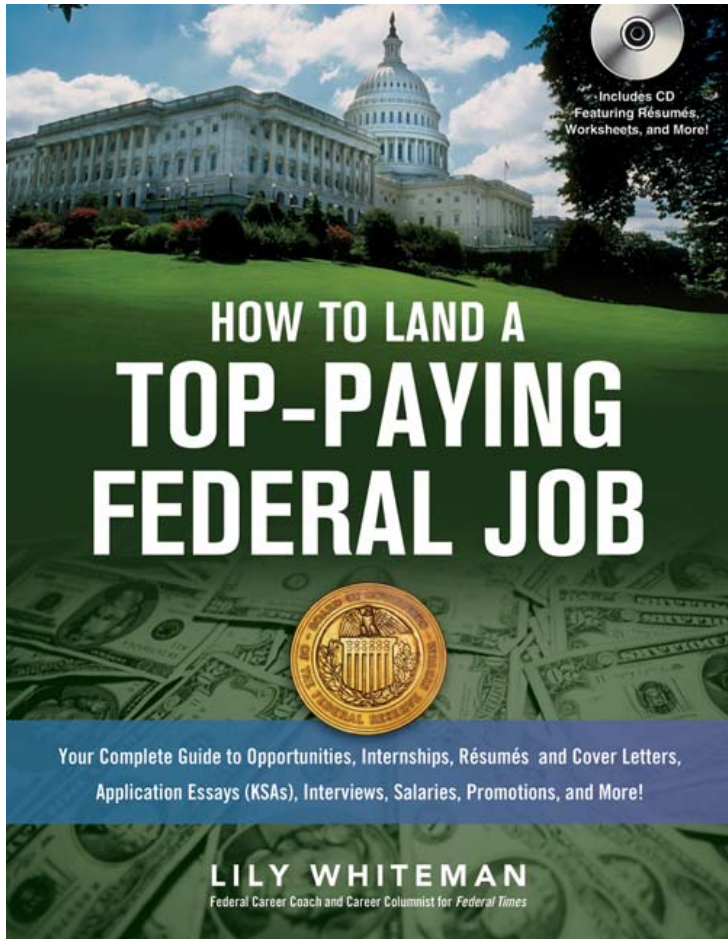
*** Among the Top 20 Best Places to Work in Federal Government**

Top 15 Federal Agencies Hiring (Cont)

- > Social Security Administration*
- > Justice* – Bureau of Prisons
- > Treasury* – Internal Revenue Service
- > Transportation - Federal Aviation Administration
- > Intelligence Community* – FBI and CIA
- > Defense Logistics Agency*
- > Energy* – Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy
- > Agriculture - Forest Service
- > State Department*
- > Interior - National Park Service

*** Among the Top 20 Best Places to Work in Federal Government**

10 TIPS on Landing Federal Jobs



Federal Times
Columnist and Author,
How to Land a
Top-Paying Federal Job

www.igotthejob.net



Lily Whiteman



Setting Realistic Expectations

- Federal agencies hire the best and brightest, and getting a Federal job is very competitive
- Economic conditions and excitement surrounding the new Administration have resulted in a doubling of job applications
- Increase your chances of being hired by:
 1. Carefully review job announcements to ensure you are qualified
 2. Give yourself enough time to complete the detailed process
 3. Follow the application directions carefully
 4. Sell yourself by being fully responsive to questions about your qualifications – experience, knowledge, skills and abilities

TIP #1:

Don't fall for
common myths:



It's hopeless to apply!!

COMMON MYTH:

I already got rejected from one federal job, so I may as well forget the whole federal thing.



TIP #2:

Follow the Federal News

➤ **Follow the news:**

- ✓ The “Fed Page” on WashingtonPost.com
- ✓ *Federal Times* and other federal trade media
- ✓ WhiteHouse.gov

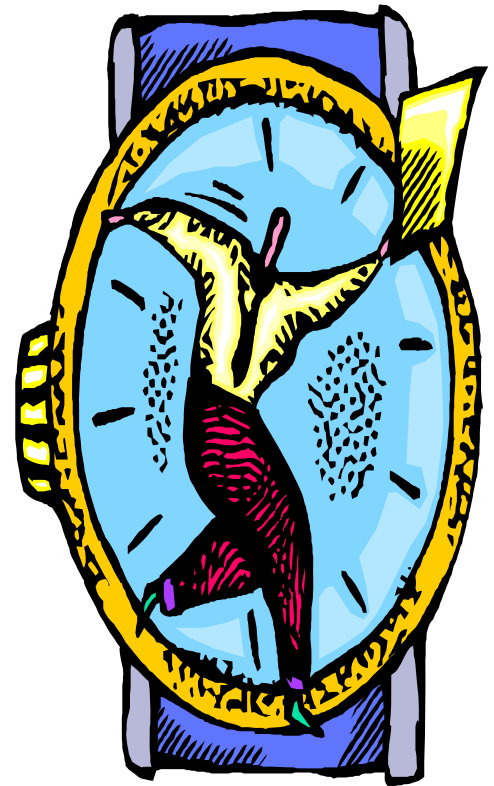
➤ **Follow the money:**

- ✓ New agencies: The Federal Housing Finance Agency
- ✓ Agencies with expanded budgets

TIP #3:

Be a Stickler for Details

- **Make the deadline.**
 - **Answer all application questions.**
 - **Provide all requested documents.**
-





TIP #4:

Ace Short Answer Questions

➤ **Short answer questions:**

- ✓ Applicants rate skills and experience in true/false questions or tiered response questions.
- ✓ Answers that represent highest level of responsibility are worth the most points.

➤ **Troll your background scrupulously.**

➤ **Interpret your experience liberally.**

➤ **Give yourself the highest possible rating for each question without lying.**

➤ **If you can't give yourself the highest rating for almost all answers in an application, focus on other openings.**

TIP #5:

Create a Winning Resume: Content

- **Target each application to each job: Untargeted resume is like junk mail.**
- **How to target your resume:**
 - ✓ Give hiring managers the needle -- eliminate the haystack.
 - ✓ Read description of target job as a question, “How can you prove that you could do this job successfully?”
 - ✓ Emphasize relevant education + experience.
 - ✓ Eliminate irrelevant credentials.
 - ✓ Only required to describe last 10 years of experience.

JANE WHOEVER
1234 Anywhere Lane
Any Town, Any State 12345
Evening Phone: 101-123-4567
Day Phone: 101-123-1234
Email: JaneWhoever@email.com

Country of citizenship: United States of America
Veterans' Preference: No
Highest Grade: GS-1083-14, 01/1996-Present
Contact Current Employer: Yes

AVAILABILITY

Job Type: Permanent

Work Schedule: Full Time

WORK EXPERIENCE

Washington, DC US
Grade Level: GS-14
Salary: \$115,781 USD Per Year
Hours per week: 40

WRITER/EDITOR/COMMUNICATIONS TRAINER , 1083

- * Advise the Mint's Assistant Director for Strategic Planning and other Mint executives on methods for improving internal and external information programs.
- * Promote awareness of agency accomplishments by managing, writing, and editing high-priority, reader-friendly documents. These documents—which are scrutinized by the agency's Assistant Deputy Director, distributed to Congress and stakeholders, and posted on the agency's high-traffic web site—include annual and quarterly reports to Congress, articles and fact sheets.
- * Supervise five writers. Lead teams of writers, policy experts, graphic designers, and IT professionals that produce hard-copy and online documents. Establish standards for documents; supervise and set deadlines for team members; edit documents for accuracy, logic, and style; and report progress to Assistant Director for Strategic Planning and other executives.
- * Serve as one of the agency's main "go to" writers for researching complex, sensitive issues and conveying technical information in easy-to-understand language.
- * Help oversee content of the agency's high-traffic Intranet site.
- * Always meet or beat tight deadlines. Streamlined production of the agency's recent annual reports so that they are now, without fail, released on time. (Before I managed these quarterly reports, they were routinely released late.) In addition, the Mint's 2005 annual report, which I managed, received a special commendation from the Treasury Secretary for its informative, reader-friendly style. I also managed production of more than 15 of the agency's quarterly reports—all of which were released early or on time.
- * Developed and deliver Mint-wide training program—which includes seminars/workshops and one-on-coaching—on how to communicate technical information in reader-friendly language and on career advancement skills. Typically deliver two trainings per month that are each attended by about 30 professionals. Trainings consistently receive top ratings from attendees.
- * Evaluate employee training needs: Selected contractor to provide project management training.

Create A Winning Resume: Format

- Online applications don't accept formatting.
- Create bullets with asterisks.
- Use short bullets.
- Emphasize text with capital letters.
- Get a second opinion.



Building a federal resume online

Resume Sections:

- Candidate information
- Work experience
- Education
- References
- Affiliations
- Desired locations

Keep in Mind:

- Federal resumes require more detail than standard resumes such as:
 - ✓ Education and coursework levels
 - ✓ Dates and number of hours worked per week
 - ✓ Location of position and supervisor contact information
- You can create multiple resumes
- Creating a resume doesn't eliminate the need to apply for a job

TIP #6:

Ace Your Essay Questions

- **Called KSAs (Short for Knowledge Skills and Abilities).**
- **Answer all essay questions.**





TIP #7:

How to Structure Your Essay: A Bulleted List

I have demonstrated my skills in “x” by achieving the following successes:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

TIP #8:

Ace Your Interviews

- **Prepare answers to common interview questions:**
 - Explain what you offer the employer -- not what you want.
 - Give specific examples of your relevant successes.
- **Research your target job and target agency.**
 - The organization's website: Particularly recent press releases, speeches by executives and agency's career site.
- **Role-play interviewing with as many people as possible.**



A Recap: Applying for Jobs

- **Plan ahead**

 - Allow plenty of time to thoroughly complete your application

- **Tailor your resume/application as needed**

 - Always consider using a tailored application for each vacancy you apply

- **Sign up for job alerts**

- **Prepare for a wait**

 - Don't assume you have been rejected if you do not hear back within weeks of submitting your application

- **Follow-up with an agency**

 - Contact the identified representative to learn the status of an application or find out more about a job



TIP #9:

When the Time is RIGHT, Negotiate Your Salary

Value of negotiating salary.

- **You get an offer: Your move.**
- **Bump negotiations from h.r. to hiring manager, if necessary**
- **The four most important words in salary negotiation:**

IS THIS SALARY NEGOTIABLE?

- **Explain why you deserve a higher salary based on:**
 - ✓ Your stellar credentials
 - ✓ A competing offer
 - ✓ Your current salary (include all compensation)

TIP #10:

After You Are Offered the Job: Things You Can Negotiate

- **Salary: Usually negotiable within salary range identified for opening.**
- **Moving expenses**

Because of what I learned today, I will apply for a federal job.





Resources

- **The Government's main job Web site** – lists thousands of job vacancies across the nation and oversees: www.USAJOBS.gov
- **Temporary jobs in the federal government** that support agency efforts to implement the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act
<http://jobsearch.usajobs.gov/a9recoveryjobs.aspx>
- **Agency Web sites**: visit the Web sites of agencies whose missions interest you (e.g. www.state.gov or www.treasury.gov)
- **How to Land a Top Paying Federal Job by Lily Whiteman**: Find free advice and articles on landing federal jobs at this website
www.IGotTheJob.net

Resources

- **Partnership for Public Service: Best Places to Work in the Federal Government** <http://data.bestplacestowork.org/bptw>
- **AARP Real Relief/Skills Assessment/WorkSearch:** www.aarp.org/realrelief
- **AARP web site – Work:** www.aarp.org/money/work
- **Senior Environmental Employment Program:** www.epa.gov/ohr/see/brochure/
- **Agricultural Conservation Experienced Services:** www.acesprogram.org/home.aspx

Thank you for joining us for:

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