How to Apply to U.S. Federal Jobs

March 12, 2010

Paul Binkley, Director
Career Development Services
Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration
The George Washington University

www.linkedin/in/paulcareers -- http://tspppa.gwu.edu

Special Thanks to the Partnership for Public Service & Kathryn Troutman
Agenda

• Why, Where, What of Federal Opportunities
• Types of Opportunities
• How Find Opportunities
• New & Improved USAJobs (?).
• Applying to Federal Opportunities
• Applying to Excepted Service Positions
• Summaries and Web Addresses
Update on Federal Jobs: 2010

Introduction and Tour of the New USAJOBS Website

* Tuesday, April 20, 2010 *
8:00 am - 12:00 noon

at George Washington University
Marvin Center | Room 405 | 800 21st Street NW, Washington, DC

**Agenda**

Take a tour of the new USAJOBS website with Kathryn Troutman, Founder and President of The Resume Place and expert in federal job search. Ms. Troutman will explain the ins and outs of how to use USAJOBS to find the right job announcements for you. Get tips on the best pages and features to use to make your job search easier and faster.

**Speaker Bio**

Kathryn Troutman is a leading expert in federal jobs, a hot topic with the change of administration and the current downturn in the economy. She brings over 30 years of experience in this unique marketplace and has the ability to take the complex subject of federal job searching and break it down into understandable steps. She is the author of the recently-released Second Edition of Ten Steps to a Federal Job: How to Get a Job in the Obama Administration. The first Ten Steps book was honored as the Best Career Guide of 2002 by the Publishers Marketing Association.

**Sponsors**

Career Professionals, Washington, DC Area
The George Washington Career Center

**Prices**

$20 for pre-registration with check received by 4/17/10.
Students $10; must show student ID (photocopy in mail or in person at door)
$30 at the door. Sorry no refunds.

Registration and Directions on reverse >>

Upcoming DC Event

For more information contact:
James Dittbrenner at jimditt@verizon.net
Why Federal Government?

- Number and Variety of positions
- Salary and Benefits
- Quality of Life
- They are Hiring
  - 270,000 by September 2012
- 85% of all jobs outside of DC
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Salary Table—DC Area

www.opm.gov/oca/10tables/html/dcb.asp

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Where to Find Federal Opportunities

Nearly 85 percent of federal jobs are located outside of the greater metro Washington, D.C. area. Where do you want to work? It is possible with the Feds!
What to Expect

• Long job announcements, confusing instructions
• Long waits
• Frustration
3 Types of Opportunities

- Competitive Examination (USAJobs)
- Student Programs (STEP, SCEP)
- Professional Fellowships (PMF, ELP, AFP, etc.)
Competitive Examination

- Traditional hiring method—“Rate & Ranking”
- Vacancies posted on USAJobs—Most posted at www.avuecentral.com
- Eligibility: Open to all or those with “Status”
- Qualified applicants are ranked to identify “best-qualified”
- Applicants’ qualifications assessed with KSAs
- Ranking affected by Veterans’ Preference, other hiring authorities
Student Programs

- Internships
- Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP)
- Student Career Experience Program (SCEP)
- Excepted service appointment
- **Not all positions require citizenship**
- Not required to be posted on USAJobs or StudentJobs.gov

For more information go to www.opm.gov/employ/students/
Student Programs

www.studentjobs.gov

Welcome Students

Your career in the Federal Government starts here! We offer valuable job experience, training opportunities, excellent benefits, and opportunity for advancement. Whether you are student in high school, college, or graduate school seeking work experience or you are about to graduate and begin your career, consider Federal service.

Resources

Federal Jobs by College Major
Student Educational Employment Programs (STEP/SCEP)
Student Career Experience Program (SCEP)
Internships
Summer Employment
Volunteer Service

What you need to know...

- **Governmentwide Hiring Programs for Students** — Current students who are primarily interested in part-time or seasonal work should consider the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP), the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP), or various internships, summer jobs, and volunteer experiences. Individuals interested in starting a Federal career may be interested in SCEP, the Federal Career Intern Program, or the Presidential Management Fellows Program (graduate students). Search student jobs above.

- **Entry Level Employment upon Graduation** — Individuals with an Associate's degree or equivalent will generally be considered at the GS-4 with a Bachelor's...
Student Programs

www.opm.gov/employ/students

Student Educational Employment Program

- Introduction & Background
- Hiring During Traditional Summer Months
- General Information for Students
- Q's & A's for HR Practitioners/Agencies
Exempted Service Hiring
(Honors Fellowship, Emerging Leaders Program, etc.)

- Federal Career Internship Program (FCIP)
  - Other hiring authorities (DHA, Vets, Disabled)
- Hiring protocol *preferred* by agencies
- Created to bring in future managers—has been abused
- Lots of changes coming
New Hires (FY 2007)

How to Find Opportunities

- Your Interests—Focus on those that interest you the most
- Alumni, Faculty, Students
- Partnership for Public Service
  - www.makingthedifference.org
  - www.bestplacetowork.org
  - www.wherethejobsare.org
- USAJobs, AvueCentral.com
- AmericaJob.com (federal, state, local)
- FedJobs.com
- www.fedworld.gov (Dept. of Commerce information site)
- www.resume-place.com
- www.govloop.com
- members.cox.net/govdocs/govspeak.html
New & Improved USAJobs(?)
# Top Occupations in Demand

One of the keys to landing your perfect job is staying up to date on the latest federal hiring trends and we're here to help. This page displays the top 50 Federal occupations with the most postings* in this calendar year and is cumulative through the past calendar month.

*Postings are not equal to Job openings.

Simply click on an occupation title to see if a list of current open job postings.

**Tip:** Sort data by clicking on the header links below.

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<td>Intelligence Analyst / Specialist</td>
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<td>Radiologic Technologist, Diagnostic</td>
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<td>Management and Program Analyst</td>
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<td>US-NY-Westbury NY</td>
<td>$43,052.00+</td>
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Office For Civil Rights

Job Title: Budget Analyst GS-550-9 / 11 (DEU)
Department: Department Of Education
Agency: Office for Civil Rights
Sub Agency: Department of Education
Job Announcement Number: OCR-HQ-2010-0017

Salary Range: 51,530.00 - 61,204.00 USD/year
Open Period: Tuesday, March 02, 2010 to Wednesday, March 17, 2010
Series & Grade: GS-0560-09/11
Position Information: Full time Permanent
Promotion Potential: 12
Duty Locations: 1 vacancy - Washington DC Metro Area, DC
Who May Be Considered: Amendment made to the closing date.

The area of consideration for this position is "All Recruiting Sources". Announcement OCR-HQ-2010-0022 is open concurrently with an area of consideration for "Federal Agencies" status candidates.

All Recruiting Sources refers to all qualified U.S. citizens.

Status refers to current Federal employees serving under a career or career-conditional appointment in the competitive service from a Federal agency.
Analyze and Decide

• Read through the entire position
• What is your time worth?
  – Pay attention to specific requirements of job
  – Do you have the skills, abilities, education the position demands
  – Do not apply for every position
Analyze and Decide

• Department of Education position
  – 23 “All Grade Questions” specific to this position, including:
    1. Prepares budget and financial reports containing statistical data.
    2. **Monitors the use and rate of expenditure of budgeted funds.**
    3. Accesses automated financial systems to review financial activities of a program or unit.
    7. Develops plans for expenditure of program or S&E funds.
    11. Develops cost-benefit analysis of proposed budgetary and program actions.
Analyze & Decide: Tips

• Continuous openings
• Relocation Expenses
• Applying more than once to a position
• Positions with short application periods

This is an open continuous announcement which will establish an inventory of applicants interested in a career as a Management & Program Analyst with U.S. Customs and Border Protection. This applicant inventory will be used to fill vacancies in the following organizational components: Office of the Commissioner; Office of the Chief Counsel; Office of Human Resources Management; Office of International Trade; Office of Internal Affairs; Office of Congressional Affairs; Office of Administration; Office of Information & Technology; Office of Training & Development; Office of International Affairs; Office of Intelligence & Operations Coordination.

Who May Apply: All U.S. Citizens

Relocation Expenses: Relocation expenses may be paid

NOTE: In order to view/and or print the entire announcement, scroll to the bottom of this page and click "Print Preview", then "Print". Instructions on How to Apply and the Required Documents to submit can be found in the printed announcement and by clicking the appropriate tab above.

This position may be filled at the GS-09, GS-11, or GS-12 with a full performance level GS-12. Applicants must apply for each entry grade for which they are interested.

CBP: Securing America’s Borders

Whether on the frontlines or serving behind the scenes supporting our mission, the men and women of CBP are dedicated to keeping America safe. CBP counts on them. Our Nation counts on them. Can we count on you?
Important tips for writing a federal resume

- “Outline” or “Modified Chronological” type
- KEY WORDS, KEY WORDS, KEY WORDS
  - Include as much information that is relevant
  - Make the information easy to find
- Importance of dates
- Achievements/Accomplishments
- Use your online USAJobs resume as a guide for structure/layout
Applying: Federal Resumes Online

Sections:
- Candidate information
- Work experience
- Education
- References
- Affiliations
- Desired locations
Abraham Lincoln
1111 President Drive/ Washington, DC 20005
Evening Phone: 202 200 2222/ Email: alincoln@pastpresidents.com

Country of citizenship: United States of America
Veterans’ Preference: No
Highest Grade: GS-02-1, 06/2003-08/2003
Contact Current Employers

AVAILABILITY
Job Type: Permanent
Temporary Promotion
Federal Career Intern

Work Schedule: Full Time

DESIRED LOCATIONS
US-DC-Washington/Metro
US-VA-Northern

WORK EXPERIENCE
Virginia Cooperative Extension
Fairfax, VA US
Salary: 20 USD Per Hour
Hours per week: 40

Program Coordinator
- Oversees three mentoring programs in limited resource communities
- Recruit, train, and manage 25 adult mentors and 30 youth
- Develop marketing and training materials for use in MPM programs and other county mentoring initiatives
- Write and manage program budgets, hire outside contractors for grant implementation
- Communicate in Spanish, English, and Italian
- Program participants and their families
- Contact Supervisor: Yes, Supervisor’s Name: Clyde Jackson, Supervisor’s Phone: 703-324-6366

Department of State (Educational and Cultural Affairs)
Washington, DC US
9/2002 - 8/2003
Grade Level: 02
Hours per week: 20

Intern then Public Affairs Assistant, GS
- Worked with Italian professionals in regional chambers of commerce, banks, NGOs, and government offices to compile briefs
- Utilized Italian language skills and political and cultural knowledge in a variety of settings (Contact Supervisor: Yes, Supervisor’s Name: Use Miller, Supervisor’s Phone: Dept State in Wash, DC)

EDUCATION
Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law
Washington, DC US

LANGUAGES
Italian
Spoken: Advanced
Written: Advanced
Read: Advanced

Spanish
Spoken: Advanced
Written: Advanced
Read: Advanced

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

AFFILIATIONS
National Italian American Foundation Member

REFERENCES
George Washington
GWU
Professor, Italian Language and Literature
Phone Number: 202-777-3333
Email Address: gwashington@pastpresidents.org
Reference Type: Personal

Skills:
- Strong written and oral communication skills
- Strong analytical abilities and problem solving capabilities
- Grant writing experience (awarded “Dream Caballero” Program Grant by Community and Recreation Services, Fairfax County Government, Dec. 2006)
- Regional expertise in Balkan, Post-Soviet, and Western European political issues (including extensive regional travel and language capabilities)
- Proficient in Microsoft Office programs

Leadership and Service Roles:
- Kaleidoscope Center for Cultural Fluency at UVA: Social Diversity Program, Director Sep. 04-May 05
- Developed forums for dialogue between diverse student groups
- Built partnerships between student groups through cultural programming
- Societas Italiana (Italian Society) at UVA, President Sep. 04-May 05
- Recruited executive committee members, planned meetings, managed a membership base of 40+ students
- Organized club involvement in national Italian-American collegiate workshops and events
- Created community events with local Italian businesses and restaurants

Other Roles at the University of Virginia:
- Council of the College of Arts & Sciences: Italian Department Representative Sep. 04-May 05
- International Residence College: Academic Affairs, Committee Chair Sep. 03-May 04
- Jefferson Literary and Debating Society: Elector Member Jan. 05-May 06
- European Society: Culture Chair Jan. 04-Jan. 05
- St. Anthony’s Catholic Church, Falls Church, VA: Substitute Instructor, ESL Present

Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law
Washington, DC US
OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS
PRODUCTIVITY: Boosted productivity from 110 to 178 cases per hour, in 90 days, through implementation of a targeted training program.

FINANCIAL SAVINGS: Slashed overtime by 51% through efficient training reforms, resulting in the decrease of average monthly overtime from 37% to 18.8%.

Applying: Assessments

Applicants will be assessed for federal opportunities using one of the following methods:

- Application Questionnaire
- Essays (sometimes called KSAs)
Serve as a primary point of contact for a specific subject matter.

A. I have not had education, training or experience in performing this task.

B. I have had education or training in performing the task, but have not yet performed it on the job.

C. I have performed this task on the job. My work on this task was monitored closely by a supervisor or senior employee to ensure compliance with proper procedures.

D. I have performed this task as a regular part of my job. I have performed it independently and normally without review by a supervisor or senior employee.

E. I am considered an expert in performing this task. I have supervised performance of this task or am normally the person who is consulted by other workers to assist them in this task because of my expertise.
14. Examines financial procedures, documents, and reports for completeness, validity, and quality.

- I have not had education, training or experience in performing this task.
- I have had education or training in performing this task, but have not yet performed it on the job.
- I have performed this task on the job, with close supervision from supervisor or senior employee.
- I have performed this task as a regular part of the job, independently and usually without review by supervisor or senior employee.
- This task has been a central or major part of my work. I have performed it myself routinely, and I have trained others in performance of this task and/or others have consulted me as an expert for assistance in performing this task.

15. Applies Federal budget and appropriations processes, laws, regulations, policies and procedures governing an agency's salaries and expenses budget formulation and execution activities.

- I have not had education, training or experience in performing this task.
- I have had education or training in performing this task, but have not yet performed it on the job.
- I have performed this task on the job, with close supervision from supervisor or senior employee.
- I have performed this task as a regular part of the job, independently and usually without review by supervisor or senior employee.
- This task has been a central or major part of my work. I have performed it myself routinely, and I have trained others in performance of this task and/or others have consulted me as an expert for assistance in performing this task.
Applying: What is a KSA?

- **KSA:** Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities under “Qualifications and Evaluation”

**HOW YOU WILL BE EVALUATED:**
What Knowledge, Skills and Abilities are Required for this Position?

The following Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSA's) are required for this position:

**GS-07:**

- Ability to communicate orally.
- Ability to communicate in writing.
- Ability to work with data on a computer.
- Ability to organize the work flow of clerical and administrative support functions.

To preview questions please [click here](#).

Specifically address each KSA in your application, providing examples of how your experience prepares you for this role.
Applying: Writing KSAs

- **Context**
  Describe the specific problem you had to address. What did you have to solve, resolve, respond to, handle, etc.?

- **Challenges**
  Describe the factors that contributed to a particular challenge such as budget cuts, new legislation, institutional reform, new goals from upper management, etc.

- **Action**
  Describe the steps you took to solve the problem. Stay away from the ordinary — be extraordinary in your response!

- **Result**
  Describe the outcomes of your actions — use %, #s, grades. What was the difference you made — highlight THE BEST.
Applying: Writing KSAs

KSA response example: Ability to communicate in writing

• **Context**- As the Newsletter Editor in my living-learning community, I was responsible for writing articles and editing all submissions published in our monthly newsletter.

• **Challenges**- Our community wanted to use the newsletter as a means for reaching out to alumni of the program with the goal of increasing their involvement in the community. Before I started as Editor, we had never had a submission from an alum.

• **Action**- I decided to focus the first newsletter of the year entirely on accomplishments of our alumni, with a message throughout encouraging alumni to submit articles and pictures.

• **Result**- Over the course of the academic year when I was Newsletter Editor, we received an average of 5 alumni submissions per newsletter. Additionally, alumni and program participants rated the quality of the newsletter higher than any other year.
Applying: KSA Summary Tips

- Address key words/phrases mentioned in the position description
- Tie personal experiences to each KSA
- Use illustrative examples
- Focus on outcomes to which you directly contributed
- Use plain language, without acronyms
- Review answers to ensure they are succinct, easy to read and grammatically correct
- Save for other applications
## Applying: Excepted Service

- Application deadlines are often very short
- USAJobs not used
- Non-federal resume
- Moves quickly
What happens after you submit your application

- Rating on 100 point scale
- Veteran’s preference added
- “Cert” list of interviewees

**HOW YOU WILL BE EVALUATED:**

You will be evaluated and rated under Category Rating and Selection procedures. Category rating combines the applicant’s total qualifying experience and education/training into a single quality category. If you meet the basic qualification requirements, we will further evaluate your entire application package to determine the quality and extent of your experience, education, and training for placement in one of the following categories:

1) Best Qualified - Meets the Minimum Qualification Requirements and receives a Quickhire system score between 95 and 100;

2) Well Qualified - Meets the Minimum Qualification Requirements and receives a Quickhire system score between 85 and 94.99;

3) Qualified - Meets the Minimum Qualification Requirements and receives a Quickhire system score between 70 and 84.99.

4) Not Qualified - Candidates who do not meet the Minimum Qualification Requirements as outlined in this vacancy announcement.

Applicant Scoring under HHS Careers: Your answers to the questions must be supported in your resume. Failure to do so will result in your scores being adjusted.
Summary

- **Plan ahead**
  Allow plenty of time to thoroughly complete your application

- **Increase your chances of being hired**
  - Research potential opportunities
  - Consider various employment avenues
  - Search on job Web sites and specific agencies
  - Follow the application directions carefully

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

- **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
Related Websites

- www.USAJobs.gov
- www.avuecentral.com
- www.resume-place.com
- www.opm.gov/oca/10tables
- www.studentjobs.gov
- www.opm.gov/employ/students
- www.opm.gov/fedclass
- www.makingthethedifference.org
- www.bestplacetostowork.org
- www.wherethejobsare.org
- www.americajob.com
- www.fedjobs.com
- www.fedworld.gov
- www.govloop.com
- http://members.cox.net/govdocs/govspeak.html