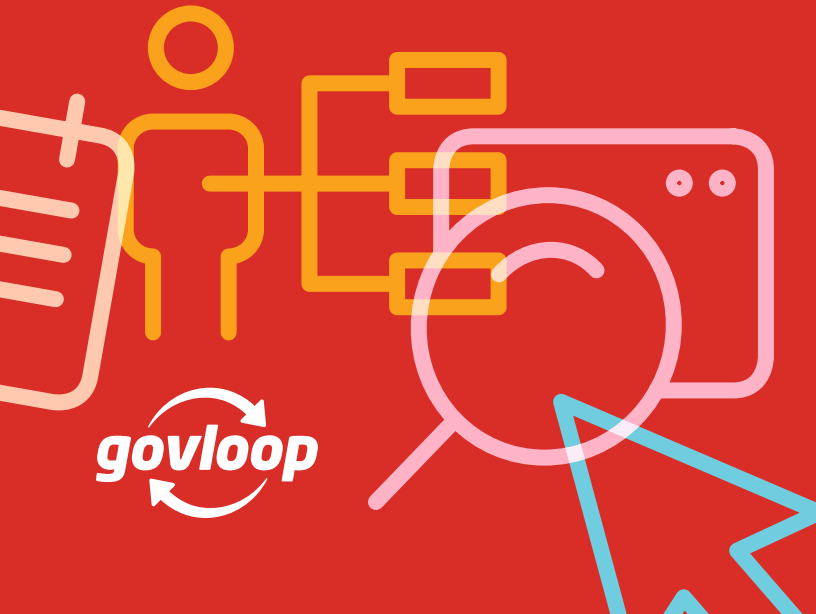


10 Tips

for finding a job
on USAJobs



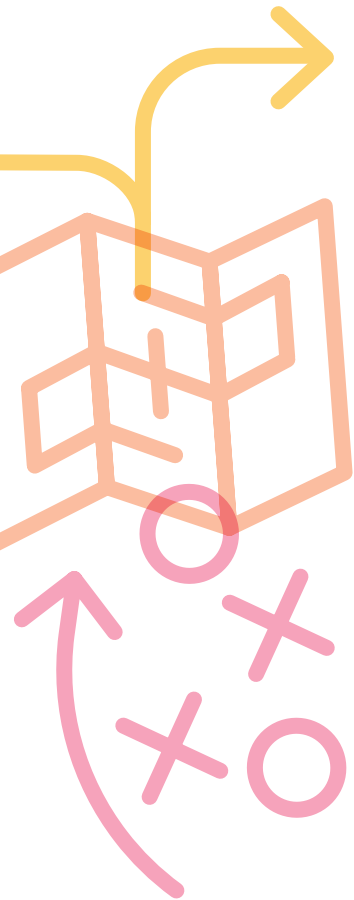
govloop



If you are a federal employee, you have had to navigate the USAJobs platform at one point or another. And chances are if you are not a federal employee but are interested in becoming one, you have poked around the site as well. Sometimes this experience can be intuitive, but other times it can feel like navigating USAJobs is a full-time job in and of itself.

As the main source for federal employment, you shouldn't be at a loss when you pull up the USAJobs page. As a result, we've compiled top ten things you need to know in order to actually find a job on USAJobs.

Follow this guide to get your federal career kicked off today.



1

Start with a plan

This may sound like a no brainer, but strategically planning how you are going to approach applying for jobs through USAJobs **is key to securing a federal position.**

You should start planning before you even visit the page by figuring out what your job priorities are.

Your priorities should include:

- **your general field,**
- **a few agencies you are interested in,**
- **how much money you realistically want to make,**
- **and where you want your job to be located.**

Knowing what you need in a job will help you more effectively tailor your job search and sift through the seemingly endless job announcements.

You should start initially thinking about what jobs you may be qualified for. For example, you may want to start working in policy but if you have a heavy research background you may have to modify your plan based on position qualifications. Break out your resume and old cover letters and start compiling a list of your qualifications so you can easily cross check that against qualification requirements in specific postings once you find ones you are interested in applying to. Once you do a little prep work, you can create your USAJobs account and start diving into your job search.

Understand the federal hiring timeline



While the hiring process from first search to first day **can be extensive**, it is relatively straightforward.

1 After you create your USAJobs account, **complete your profile** so you can save jobs, upload or build your resume, upload and save required documents and start applying to jobs.

2 Once you have established your profile, start searching for jobs. Be sure to do this **while you are logged in** because the platform allows you to save searching criteria.

3 When you find a job you are interested in, fully review the application to **see if you are eligible and meet the requirements**.

4 If you are eligible for the position, **prepare your application** and go through each step in the How to Apply section.

5 Once you have uploaded all necessary information you will be redirected from USAJobs to the agency application system where you may have to **complete a few more agency-specific steps**.

7 Once the announcement period for the position closes, **the agency will review your application** to make sure you are eligible and meet the minimum qualification.

9 The agency will then contact applicants directly to **schedule interviews**.

11 The job offer is final when the background and any additional security checks are complete, at which point **the agency will contact you to set up a start date**.

6 After you submit your application you can go to the application section of USAJobs where **your application status will change to received**.

8 If you are being considered your **application status will change** to referred and if you are not being considered it will change to not referred.

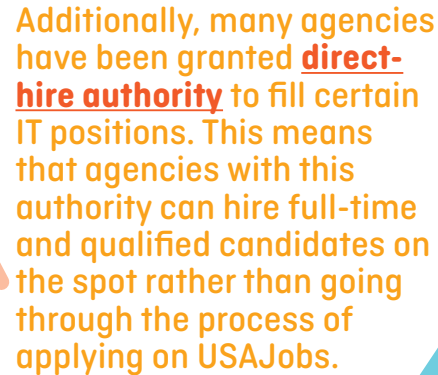
10 If you are selected **the agency will extend a tentative offer**, contingent on a background check. If you are not, your application status will change to not selected.

Tailor your job search


3

Not all federal positions are created equally.

When you are developing your strategy for tackling USAJobs, it is critical that you narrow down your search early. Start with a broad keyword search and refine your results based on what you are looking for in a position. Once you figure out your job priorities, you can refine your broad search by agency, job category, GS level, salary, work schedule or type, and location. Narrowing down your search makes it easy to compile a list of positions that you want and are qualified for. Once you start perusing job announcements, it can also be useful to set up alerts for certain types of postings as well as save posts you are interested in.



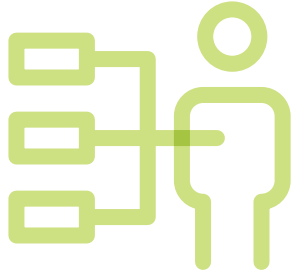
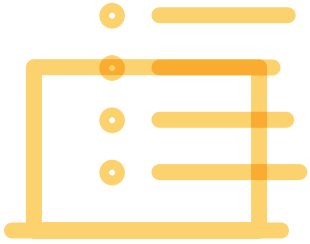
Additionally, many agencies have been granted **direct-hire authority** to fill certain IT positions. This means that agencies with this authority can hire full-time and qualified candidates on the spot rather than going through the process of applying on USAJobs.



If you are interested in securing a job sooner rather than later, focusing your job search on positions with hiring flexibility can dramatically reduce the time from application to start date.

4

Know the details

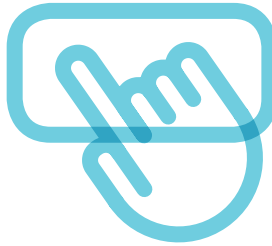


1st

The details at the top of the job announcement will tell you **if you are eligible to apply for the position**. This includes information on who may apply, the closing date of the application, and the location of the position.

2nd

Look at the key requirements section to **make sure you meet the minimum requirements** to hold the position you are interested in. Examples, of key requirements include U.S. citizenship, the ability to obtain a security clearance, and certain age requirements.



3rd

Thoroughly read the How to Apply instructions on the right side of the job announcement. This dropdown section of the application will detail exactly **what you need to do to apply** for the position.

4th

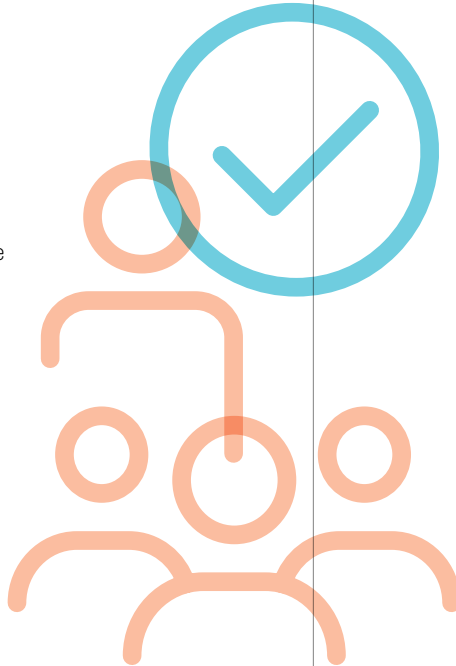
Finally, carefully read the required documents section in order to learn what documents must be included in your application. **Make sure you submit all required documentation**, if you are missing any information you may be disqualified.

Make sure you are qualified

It is also critical that you are qualified for **any position** you are thinking of applying to.

In order to determine this, thoroughly read the Qualifications section in the job description. This portion describes experience, skills and other job related criteria that you must possess in order to be considered for the job. Some positions will have extensive qualifications with multiple layers of requirements while other jobs qualifications will be more simple and straightforward. Examples can include education, specialized experience, knowledge, skills and abilities, security clearance, and substitutions for certain qualifications.

5



Take careful note of what is required in the qualifications section and make sure that is reflected in the resume you submit. While hiring managers will look at all of the materials you submit, they will first make sure you meet the minimal qualifications in your resume.

It can be helpful to leverage the language used in the qualifications section in your resume in order to explicitly show you are qualified for the position.



Understand where you fit on the pay banding systems

The federal government compensates its employees based on **pay banding systems**.

6

Currently, there are five different pay schedules:

- **The Federal Wage System (FWS),**
- **General Schedule (GS),**
- **Law Enforcement Officer General Schedule (LEO),**
- **Executive and Senior Level Pay Tables, and**
- **Special Rate Tables**

Most of the government, operates using the GS pay tables, which range from GS-1 to GS-15 and vary based on locality.

When you're looking at the GS-level in a job announcement, don't choose jobs based on what you want to be paid. Rather, choose jobs that you are qualified for based on your knowledge, skills and abilities. For example, if you are applying to a position that is at the GS-13 level, you need to show in your application that you have worked at the GS-12 level or equivalent for at least a year. If you are looking to join the federal workforce out of college, you are qualified for GS-5 jobs with a bachelor's degree, GS-9 with a masters, and GS-11 with a doctorate. To qualify for jobs at GS-7 and higher with no higher education you must have specific work experience related to the desired job.

For more detailed information about federal pay, leave, salaries and wages check out the Office of Personnel Management's website [here](#).

7

Re-do your resume into a federal one

Once you find jobs that you want to apply for, you want to ensure that you are submitting **the best application possible**.

The federal government does not have a standard job application, so your resume is your application and your one shot to get noticed by hiring managers. In order to make it further into the hiring process, you will likely have to rework your resume so it is more suitable for applying to federal positions.



For examples of what your resume should include and look like click [here](#).

This means disregarding everything you have heard about one page resumes and creating a resume that includes every detail about your professional life and achievements. You should include everything from:

- **Extensive work experience,**
- **Volunteer work,**
- **Roles in community organizations and**
- **Quantifying your accomplishments.**

Remember that your resume must show that you at least meet the minimum qualifications for the job you are applying to.

Understand what security clearances entail

8

Not all jobs require a security clearance however, every federal employee does have to undergo a suitability adjudication process, which **is essentially a background check and determines if they are suitable for federal employment.**

Essentially this is a background check that determines if an applicant is likely to carry out the duties of the position they are applying to with appropriate integrity, efficiency and effectiveness.

For jobs that do require a **security clearance**, it will be denoted under the Security Clearance section of the job announcement. The necessity of a security clearance is a range based on the type of access to sensitive national security information a position has. The level of security clearance can range from not applicable, to background investigation, confidential, secret, top secret, top secret/SCI, Q-nonsensitive, Q-sensitive, L-atomic, and other. The higher the security clearance level, the more extensive background investigation will be. If you are unsure if you can get a certain security clearance, you can filter search results by type of security clearance.



Leverage events to better understand the process

9

Despite the resources offered in this guide, we understand that certain parts of the federal hiring process through USAJobs **can still be a little confusing.**

Fortunately, various federal agencies host in-person and online trainings to help potential federal employees better navigate the federal hiring process. These trainings include everything from agency specific hiring fairs, to general training summits, and workshops. While some of the events are only offered once, like the hiring fairs, many of the virtual training summits are offered in monthly sessions. **You can see a list of USAJobs events and training sessions [here](#).** If you are interested in attending these trainings, check the USAJobs events page frequently, as they update the available trainings often.

While the events are free, many have an attendance cap. So, if you see one you are really interested in be sure to register.

Know what jobs are not on USAJobs

10

While the vast majority of federal jobs you must apply to on USAJobs, **there are some exceptions.**

The excepted service agencies are agencies that are excluded from competitive civil service procedures and have their own hiring systems that establishes the evaluation criteria they use to fill their vacancies.

These excepted service positions are not required to be posted on the USAJobs platform. If you want a position at an excepted service agency, **you should frequently check individual agency websites for their job announcements.** Some examples of excepted service agencies include most federal courts, oversight agencies like the General Services Administration, international agencies like the U.S. Agency for International Development, political systems like Congress, and security agencies such as the Defense Intelligence Agency.

For a more complete list of excepted service agencies, [click here.](#)

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1152 15th St. NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005
P (202) 407-7421 | F (202) 407-7501
www.govloop.com | [@govloop](https://twitter.com/govloop)

