

# **THE FEDERAL RESUME HANDBOOK**

Revised February 2003

# Overview

## What is a Federal Resume?

The **Federal Resume** is one of three documents accepted as an official application for position vacancies within the Federal government. The other two are the OF-612 and the traditional SF-171. The SF-171 is considered “obsolete”, no longer available and some agencies prefer it not be used; however, some agencies prefer it. It is not always easy knowing which one to use. We recommend going with the “latest and greatest” Federal resume, as this tends to be the most widely accepted and it can help your image to go with what is current.

Read the job vacancy announcement **VERY** carefully. Some agencies have their own requirements for presenting your experience. If a Federal resume is permitted, please read the format for constructing it as explained in this document. Federal resumes should be developed in the “Chronological” resume format. The Federal staffing specialist who reviews the resume for initial qualifications must know where, when and how long you were at the position mentioned, along with a lot of other information. The Functional resume format will not work for a Federal resume.

## What Information Must Be Included?

The **Federal Resume** must include additional information that is not typically requested in the private sector and if you don’t supply this information, your application could be rejected. Required information is as follows:

**Job Information** (Announcement number, title, series and grade of job for which applying)

**Personal Information** (Full name, mailing address w/ zip code, day and evening phone numbers w/ area code, social security #, country of citizenship, veteran’s preference, reinstatement eligibility, highest Federal civilian grade held)

**Education** (High school: name, city, and state, date of diploma or GED, Colleges or universities: name, city and state, majors, type and year of any degrees received)

**Work Experience** (Job title, duties and accomplishments, employer's name and address, supervisor's name and phone number, starting and ending dates, hours per week, salary, indicate whether we may contact your current supervisor)

**Other Qualifications** (Job-related training courses, skills, certificates and licenses, honors, awards and special accomplishments; for example, publications, memberships in professional or honor societies, leadership activities, public speaking and performance awards)

## **More Specific or General?**

The purpose of the resume in the private sector is to get an interview and is more general in nature. In the Federal government, the purpose of the resume is to "show" your qualifications so that you can be "certified" by the Human Resources office, by meeting eligibility requirements. This means that your resume needs to include more specifics and similar language as the vacancy announcement because the Human Resources Specialist is looking to see if you have the "specialized" or directly related experience requirements of the position for which you are applying.

## **How Far Back Should I Go?**

It is suggested that you develop a resume that covers about ten years, with lots of stories about what you did and how well you did it, or accomplishments. Focus on the position for which you are applying, in a way that best reflects your competencies for the position.

## **How Long Should My Resume Be?**

The resume that goes into the application package should be no more than three to five pages; plus the pages for your knowledge, skills and abilities statements and any other announcement-specific information, such as performance ratings. There are exceptions to this, of course, but use three pages as a guideline. If you do not have the work experiences for three pages, then your resume may only be one or two pages long.

# Mary Doe

Any Street  
Any Town, 11111 USA  
(H) 111-111-1111  
(W) 222-222-2222  
[marydoe@xxx.com](mailto:marydoe@xxx.com)

SSN: 123-45-6789  
Citizenship: United States of America  
Veterans Preference: 5-Point (DD 214 attached)  
Federal Status: Program Analyst, GS-343(Series)-12(Grade)

These items are REQUIRED. Veteran's Preference is either "None," or 5-Point or 10-Point. Federal Status, give your official job title, followed by your series and GS number.

**Objective:** Ann#12345-SS, Program Manager, GS-301-13

## Summary of Experience

This should be a concise and concrete statement of work experience. Use of words like, □ "Over 11 years experience as a . . ." are OK, however, you want to watch how you "date" yourself. If you only have two years of experience, you may not want to bring this out in this summary. On the other hand, saying you have 35 years of federal experience can be just as ineffective. This summary should be about 6 to 8 lines and bulleted to quickly show what you want them to know about you up front. Use this as your "brag" time.

## Professional Accomplishments

**Department of Transportation, Washington, DC**  
Office of the Director  
123 Streets, Any Street  
Any town, Any State 12345  
Supervisor: John Doe, Phone: 333-333-3333  
May be contacted

Starting and Ending Dates—  
Month and Year

**8/99-Present**

40 Hours per Week

Starting Salary \$98,000

Ending Salary \$99,000

If you do not want the person contacted, say "Do not contact." Give explanation in Cover Letter as to why.

*Staff Assistant, GS-Series-Grade*

Optional; however very effective

*Summarize the job here.* This is optional. If the hiring office knows about this kind of work, maybe you don't need this. If they do not know about this work, this is the place to tell them, in a few concise sentences.

Bullets need to focus on outcomes

- Bullets should tell job duties in terms of what happened in your work or accomplishment statements. This is where your results from the work you have done in this position make you different from the other applicants. Each bullet should be somewhere between 4 to 6 lines.

- In some of the bullets, you can speak of your results in terms of “percentages”, “time”, or dollars. “. . . as a result, the budget came in under 9% of the projection.” “. . . the report was submitted 70 days before it was due.” “My work in monitoring expenses for the program resulted in a savings of over \$29 billion.
- The position(s) you have held for the last five years typically should have more bullets (approximately 4 to 8 bullets), since this is the position that best relates to the position for which you are applying. The position you had five or more years ago typically does not add as much value to your resume, so reduce the number of bullets for this position to maybe two bullets, unless your previous experience is the only experience from which you are taking job-related experience.

Bold only first line of organization name and dates so they stand out.

**Department of Transportation**, Washington, DC  
 Covered Wagons Department  
 Any town, Any State, Zip  
 Supervisor: Steve Eod, Phone: 444-444-4444  
 May be contacted

**5/95-8/99**  
 40 Hours per Week  
 Starting Salary \$97,000  
 Ending Salary \$98,000

*Program Manager, GS-Series-Grade*

Use a text box to summarize what you did in the position. Indent it so it stands out.

- Same ideas about bullets as noted above.

Indent so the degree stands out.

### Education

Don't mix "Training with Education.

*Masters of Science* in Wagon Wheels, University of Anywhere  
 City, State Anywhere, Zip Code, 19XX

*Bachelors of Arts*, Wheel Design, College of Anywhere  
 City, State Anywhere, Zip Code, 19XX

Name, City, State, zip code (if known) and date of diploma are required

*Diploma*, Any High School, City Anywhere, State Anywhere, Zip Code, 19XX

High School Info Required

### Training

Only required information is title and year; however adding name of school and hours completed could work to your advantage

2001	<i>English Composition</i> University of Maryland Graduate School, 3cr
2000	<i>Computer Keyboard</i> USDA Graduate School, 40 hrs over five days
1999	<i>Conflict Management</i> Price George's County Adult Education Program, 1 hr
1998	<i>Brain Surgery</i> John Hopkins Medical School, First year medical student (part time)
1997	<i>Basic Supervision</i> DOT Connection, 40 hrs for First Time Supervisors

## Awards

List all of your awards, starting with the most recent and working backwards.

5/99—Received \$25,000 cash bonus for developing a new concept in traffic management of camels

10/98—Recognized for outstanding work in developing a new phone system for the office. Certificate presented by the President of the United States

Current  
Only

To be “certified” usually means you did something special to get it.. Classroom attendance and the like do not count.

## Certifications

1/99—Business Coach Certification awarded by the National Association of Business Coaches, Anywhere, NN. Certified to conduct coaching sessions and to train others in the techniques of coaching.

3/99—Wagon Bander. Certified to install steel bands on wagon wheels. Awarded by the International Association of Wheels.

## Publications

Use a MLA or other standard format.

Doe, Mary. (19XX). *How To Put Sails on Covered Wagons*. New York: Any Publisher.

## Presentations

“*Will Oxen Remain the Prime Mover of Ox Carts.*” Presented to the National Association of Cow Dealers, Any Town, USA, March 19XX.

# Worksheet To Get Started In Developing Your Federal Resume

\_\_\_\_\_  
Your Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City – State – Zip Code

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number (H) or (W)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email address

Social Security No. \_\_\_\_\_

Citizenship: \_\_\_\_\_

Military Preference: None 5 points 10 points (DD 214 included—Yes No)

Federal Status: \_\_\_\_\_  
Official job title (per OPM) -Series Number-Grade

## Summary of Experiences

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Professional Accomplishments

**Department of Transportation,** \_\_\_\_\_ **-Present**  
City-State Year Started in this position

\_\_\_\_\_  
Organization

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address

\_\_\_\_ Hours Per Week

Beginning Salary \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Ending Salary \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip Code

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
His/Her Office Phone No

Supervisor May\* Be Contacted \*If you don't want them to be contacted, explain in cover letter

If you want to give a brief summary of the work you do in this position, do it in the box above.  
Keep it to about 4-6 lines, max of 8

In the space provided in the above box, enter your first bullet or paragraph. You want to give the outcomes from your work experience.



Make Copies of this Page and Use For Subsequent Paragraphs on Your Accomplishments


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Ph.D or Master level degree. You can either name the school first, or name the degree first. If you graduated from a “prestigious” school perhaps you want to list it first. If you want to emphasize the

degree, then list it first. All degrees should be spelled out, such as "Master of Business Administration," not MBA. Unless you want to emphasize what the degree is about, you don't need to spell out the discipline of the degree.

List your undergraduate degree. Same comments as noted above apply here. List name, city, state, zip code(if known), majors and type and year of any degrees received. If no degree, list total number of credit hours earned and indicate whether semester or quarter hours.

List any community college or associate degrees here.

List your high school. Start with diploma, then name of high school, location (city and state), zip code(if known) and year graduated.

## Awards

List your awards and give a one line explanation what the award was about. If there are more than one page of awards, list the awards as the last page to the resume. Add dates.

## Certifications

List any "certifications." These are certifications that are only granted to those who complete a course of instruction, pass an exam or some other unique factor that give you a skill or ability that others do not have because they have not completed the certification process.

## Publications

If you have anything published, work related or not work related, you can list your publication in this part of the resume. Use a standard site process. Many use the *Chicago Style Manual*. Others are just as good.

## Presentations

List major presentations you have made. Major means large conferences, Congressional committees, Secretaries of Departments, White House. Don't forget presentations you may have made as member of your community or as a member of an organization.