



A New Day for the Civil Service

Finding and Getting Federal Government Jobs

Jason Parman
USOPM
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Happy FY12!



Background

- The road to a Federal job can be smooth or rocky...
- There are many ways to get Federal jobs
- Federal jobs are highly desirable and as a result, are often competitive
- This can be a real challenge



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Today's Topics

- **Finding Federal Jobs**
- **Applying for a Federal Job**
- **Resume Writing and Qualifications**
- **Narrative Statements**
- **Changes to the Process**
- **Summary**



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The Job Search

Step 1: USAJOBS.gov



USAJOBS[®]
"WORKING FOR AMERICA"

What: (keywords)

Where: (city, state or zip code)

[Browse Jobs >](#)

[Advanced/International Search >](#)

Search Jobs ▶

[First Time Visitors](#)

[Why Work for America?](#)

[Special Hiring Events](#)

[Individuals with Disabilities](#)

| [Veterans](#)

| [Students](#)

| [Senior Executives](#)

[Site Map](#)

[Contact Us](#)

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[Employers](#)

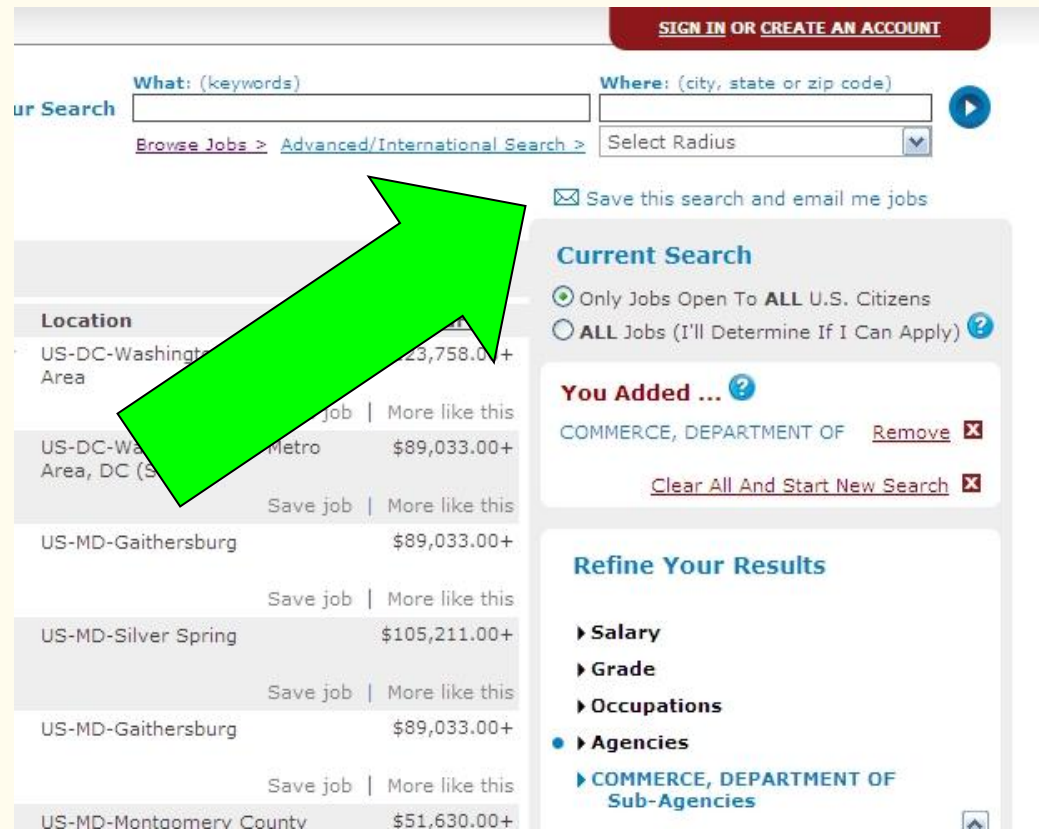
[Privacy Act and Public Burden Information](#)

This is a United States Office of Personnel Management website.

USAJOBS is the Federal Government's official one-stop source for Federal jobs and employment information.

Job Search Agents

- The easiest way to find jobs
- Set it and forget it
- The way HR folks find their jobs



The screenshot shows a job search interface with a search bar, filters, and a list of job results. A large green arrow points to the search filters section.

What: (keywords) **Where:** (city, state or zip code)

[Browse Jobs >](#) [Advanced/International Search >](#)

Save this search and email me jobs

Current Search

Only Jobs Open To **ALL** U.S. Citizens
 ALL Jobs (I'll Determine If I Can Apply)

You Added ...

COMMERCE, DEPARTMENT OF [Remove](#)

[Clear All And Start New Search](#)

Refine Your Results

- ▶ Salary
- ▶ Grade
- ▶ Occupations
- ▶ Agencies
 - ▶ COMMERCE, DEPARTMENT OF Sub-Agencies

Location	Salary
US-DC-Washington Area	\$23,758.00+
US-DC-Washington Metro Area, DC (S)	\$89,033.00+
US-MD-Gaithersburg	\$89,033.00+
US-MD-Silver Spring	\$105,211.00+
US-MD-Gaithersburg	\$89,033.00+
US-MD-Montgomery County	\$51,630.00+

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Steps 2 – 102: Build and Use a Network

- Leverage your network of contacts
- Every colleague, every classmate, every customer, every boss
- You can get a job even when no announcement is posted...and it's perfectly legal
- “You know, I’d be great at that job...”

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Leverage New and Existing Flexibilities

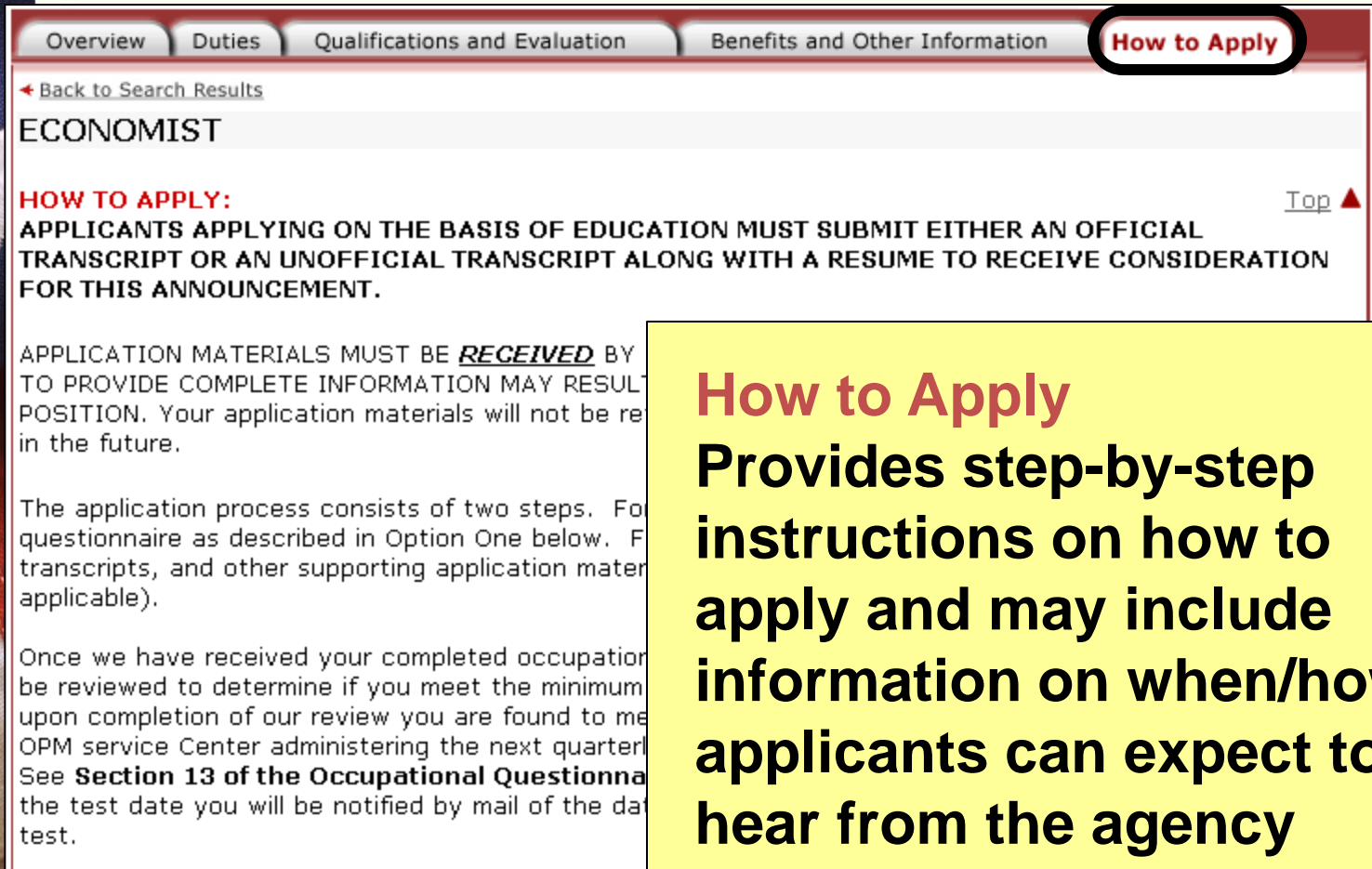
- Consider creating your own opportunity...
 - Student Pathways Program
 - Yesterday's non-traditional student is today's traditional student
 - More agencies looking to hire experienced staff through student appointments



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The Job Opportunity Announcement

How To Apply



The screenshot shows a web page for an 'ECONOMIST' position. At the top, there are navigation tabs: 'Overview', 'Duties', 'Qualifications and Evaluation', 'Benefits and Other Information', and 'How to Apply' (which is highlighted with a red border). Below the tabs is a link for 'Back to Search Results'. The job title 'ECONOMIST' is displayed in large, bold letters. Underneath, the 'HOW TO APPLY:' section is highlighted in red. The text in this section states that applicants applying on the basis of education must submit either an official transcript or an unofficial transcript along with a resume. A 'Top ▲' link is visible to the right of this section. Below the 'HOW TO APPLY:' section, there are three paragraphs of text. The first paragraph discusses the requirement for application materials to be received by a certain date and that incomplete information may result in disqualification. The second paragraph describes the two-step application process, including a questionnaire and supporting materials. The third paragraph explains that once materials are received, they will be reviewed to determine if the applicant meets the minimum requirements, and that applicants will be notified of the next steps.

How to Apply
Provides step-by-step instructions on how to apply and may include information on when/how applicants can expect to hear from the agency

How to Apply

Option A: Online Qualifications Questionnaire

Tips for using the Online Qualifications Questionnaire

- You must click **both** *Finish* **and** *Submit* when the Online Qualifications Questionnaire is not processed – and you must click the *Submit* button, even if USAJOBS says it is submitted.
- You can upload or fax supporting documents with the Online Qualifications Questionnaire.
- You must complete the entire process by the closing date.
- To make sure everything you submitted is received, you should check the following:
 1. Go to [HTTP://www.hr-services.org/usajobs](http://www.hr-services.org/usajobs)

Be careful to follow the “How to Apply” directions closely, since they may differ across agencies

Option B: Paper Qualifications Questionnaire.

If it is not practical for you to use the Online Qualifications Questionnaire, you can write your answers on paper. Follow these steps:

1. You can print a copy of this job announcement so that you can read the questions offline.
2. Obtain and print a copy of the OPM Form 1203-FX, which you will use to provide your answers. You can obtain the form at this URL [HTTP://www.opm.gov/Forms/pdf_fill/OPM1203fx.pdf](http://www.opm.gov/Forms/pdf_fill/OPM1203fx.pdf) or by calling *USAJOBS by Phone* at (703) 724-1850 – after the introduction, press 1, and listen for instructions.
3. You may submit the Form 1203-FX, resume, and any supporting documents either by fax.
 - **By Fax:** If you are faxing a Form 1203-FX, you do not need a separate cover sheet. Simply make sure the Form 1203-FX is on top of any other documents you are faxing. If you are faxing any documents without the Form 1203-FX on top, always use the official cover sheet which is here -- <http://staffing.opm.gov/pdf/usascoversheet.pdf> -- and be sure to fill it out completely and clearly. **The fax number is 1-877-875-4877. Please note: this fax number must be used to submit all application materials. Materials faxed to other numbers will not be considered.** Feed all documents into your fax machine top first so that we receive them right-side up.

Electronic resumes must be submitted by midnight Eastern Time on the closing date.

Applying Online



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Overview of the Online Process

After selecting the job to which you would like to apply, there are usually several steps in the online application process:

- **Create your Federal resume** – remember to highlight your qualifications for the specific job and quantify your accomplishments, when possible
- **Answer the questions posed online** – agencies evaluate and select qualified candidates based on these assessments
- **Submit the complete application package by the stated deadline**



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The Job Application

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Four Standard Aspects

- Applicant Eligibility
- Resumes
- Job-related questionnaires
- Narrative statements

Applicant Eligibility

Applicant Eligibility


Are you a:

- Permanent Federal employee in a competitive position, excepted service position covered by an interchange agreement or eligible for reinstatement?
- Veteran eligible for veterans' preference or separated from the armed forces under honorable conditions after 3 years or more of continuous military service?
- Person with non-competitive appointment eligibility?

No Yes

When submitting an application, agencies request eligibility information including:

- **Past or current Federal employment**
- **Veteran qualifications**
(<http://www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetsInfo.asp>)
- **Non-competitive appointment**

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Requirements for a Federal Resume

Federal resumes require more detail than standard resumes. Essentials include:

- **Information about the opening**
- **Personal information**
- **Education and coursework levels**
- **Work Experience**
 - **Dates and number of hours per week**
 - **Salary**
 - **Location of position & supervisor contact info**
- **Other Qualifications**

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Resume Writing Tips

- DO include all required information
 - USAJOBS resume builder can help with this
- Boring doesn't sell
- Use bullets and storytelling
 - Three to five sentence description summarizing position
 - Bulleted list of top 3 – 5 results achieved
 - Then take defining characteristic of your success and tell a story with it

A vertical strip on the left side of the slide shows a close-up of the American flag, focusing on the blue field with white stars and the red and white stripes.

Job-Related Questionnaire Tips

- Give yourself all the credit you deserve, but none you don't
- Check your responses against your resume and narrative statements
 - Do they match up well?
 - If not, you've got some work to do

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Narrative Responses

Agencies commonly require narrative responses to address characteristics they seek

- **Can be called KSAs, Competencies, Narratives, etc.**
- **Can be extremely important** in the evaluation process in sorting out the best qualified candidates
- **Vary depending on the job**, but examples include: Skill in written and oral communications; demonstrated technical ability; knowledge of specific subject matter areas
- **Are similar to interview questions**; answers should provide concrete examples (coursework and volunteer experience count), particularly to demonstrate quantifiable results, complexity, or leadership

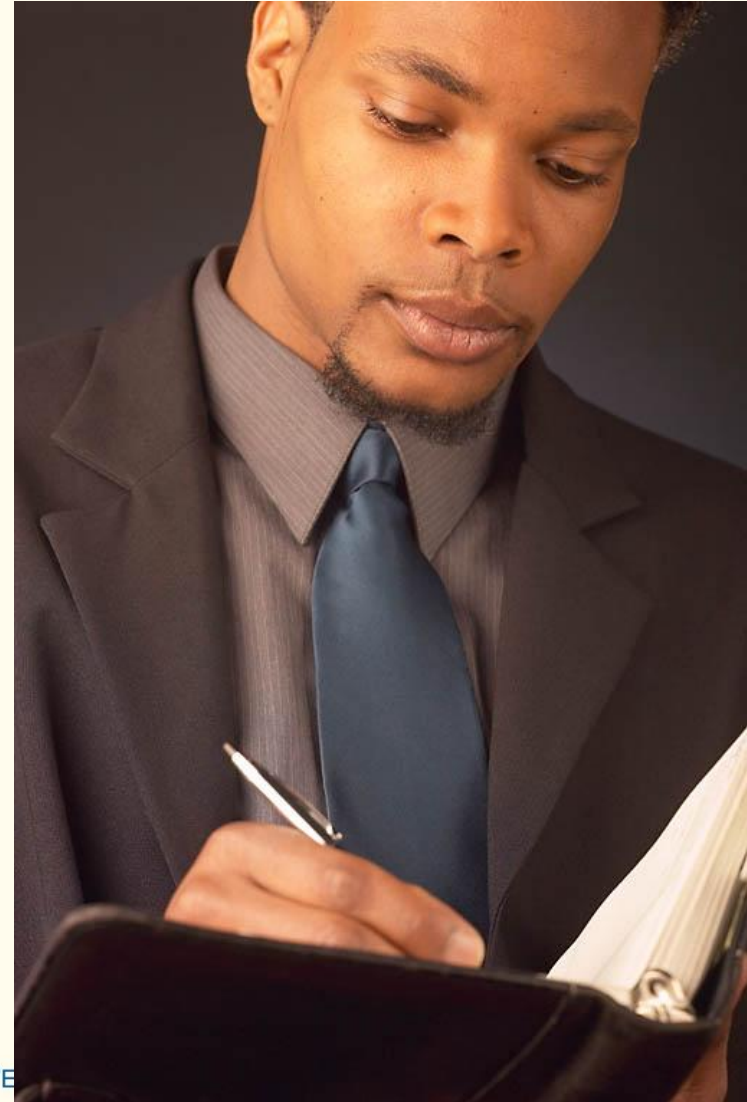
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KSA Response Approach: Context, Challenges, Action, and Result (CCAR)

- **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:** Outcomes of your actions (What was the difference you made – highlight THE BEST)

Narrative Response Tips

- **Address key words/phrases mentioned in the position description**
- **Focus on outcomes**
- **Use plain language, without acronyms**
- **Review answers to ensure they are succinct, easy to read, and grammatically correct**
- **Tell a story about your best example**
- **Inject drama where you can**
- **Use a “magazine article” format**
 - **Start with a hook**
 - **Lay down the facts**
 - **Tie it back in**



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Summary Tips for Applying

- **Plan ahead** – the application process itself can take time; to improve your chances of getting a job, be sure to allow plenty of time to thoroughly complete your application
- **Select carefully** – a tailored application for a few jobs that are a good fit will be more successful than using a standard resume for many jobs
- **Be patient** – the evaluation process can sometimes be lengthy, so it may be some time until you hear back about an application. There may be little or no communication from the agency; security clearances can prolong this time period

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What Happens Next

- After the closing date for applications, the agency evaluates candidate qualifications
- From this assessment, the agency produces a list of qualified candidates
- From the list of qualified applicants, agencies select candidates for interviews
- At this point, agencies are like other organizations
 - They conduct interviews and select the best candidate(s) for the job
 - Some jobs require security clearances

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A Note About Security Clearances

- Applying for jobs that require a security clearance is a two-stage process:
 - 1) Get the job offer
 - 2) Go through a detailed background investigation
- Everyone hired for a Federal job undergoes a **basic background check** of their criminal and credit histories
- Jobs that include access to sensitive information generally require a **security clearance**, which requires a more intensive background investigation that *begins after someone has already received a job offer*

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Summary

- **Federal agencies hire the best and brightest, and getting a Federal job is competitive**
- **Increase your chances of being hired by following a few clear steps**
 - **Consider various employment avenues**
 - **USE YOUR NETWORK**
 - **Follow the application directions carefully**
 - **Bring your best to the application and interview**



Questions & Answers