



VA for Vets Resume Building Guide







Welcome

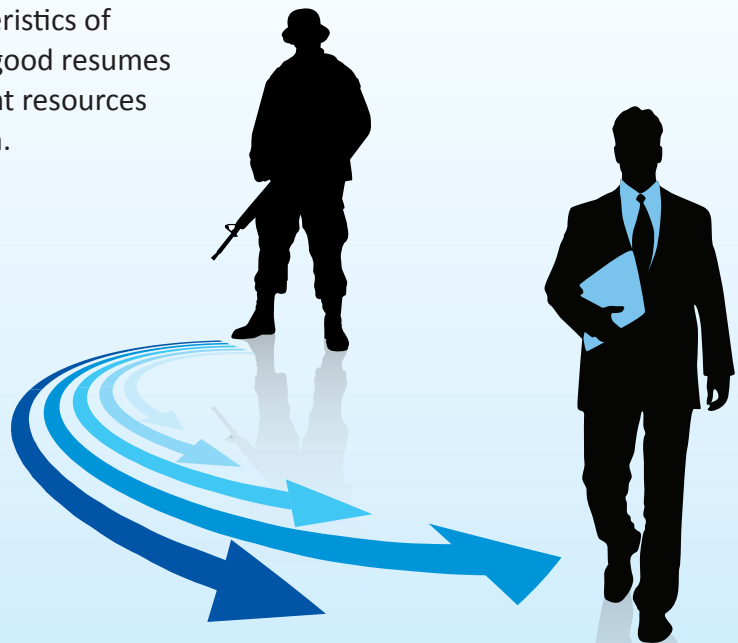
For Veterans and Military Service Members like you, the Federal Government job hiring process can be difficult. It is a challenge to:

- translate military skills
- present your overall military experience in a way that civilian recruiters understand
- identify suitable jobs when the same military position may be called something different in civilian terms

The Internet contains many resources to help navigate the federal recruiting process, but these resources can be confusing. Many websites simply refer you to additional websites with links to other websites. The most helpful resources are those that actually connect you with job openings that fit your background and skills and that honor the sacred pledge that you made to protect our nation.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) created the *VA for Vets* program for just this purpose: to make the process of finding, applying for and obtaining federal civilian jobs easier.

This Resume Building Guide describes the federal recruiting process at a high level, identifies the characteristics of good and bad resumes, provides samples of good resumes and cover letters, and presents many excellent resources sponsored by VA and the *VA for Vets* program.



Contents

<i>About VA for Vets</i>	1
<i>Getting a Federal Job</i>	2
1 <i>Know the Two Job Classes</i>	2
2 <i>Know What Jobs are Posted Where</i>	2
3 <i>Know the Application Process</i>	3
<i>Ten Tips for Navigating the Federal Application Process</i>	3
<i>Understand the Recruiter’s Perspective</i>	4
<i>Building Your Resume</i>	5
<i>Getting Organized</i>	5
1 <i>Know Your Worth</i>	5
2 <i>Know Your Veterans’ Preference Qualifications</i>	6
3 <i>Know What You Want</i>	6
4 <i>Know What Works</i>	7
<i>Getting Started</i>	8
<i>Resumes</i>	8
1 <i>Contact Information</i>	9
2 <i>Work Experience</i>	9
3 <i>List of Technical Skills</i>	10
4 <i>Education</i>	10
5 <i>Job-Related Training</i>	10
6 <i>Languages</i>	10
7 <i>Affiliations</i>	11
8 <i>Professional Publications</i>	11
9 <i>References</i>	11
10 <i>Additional Information</i>	11
11 <i>Honors & Awards</i>	11
<i>Cover Letters</i>	12
1 <i>Contact Information</i>	12
2 <i>Salutation</i>	13
3 <i>Body</i>	13
4 <i>Closing</i>	13

<i>Resume Do's and Don'ts</i>	14
<i>Applying Online</i>	15
<i>Sample Job Posting</i>	15
<i>Good Resume Example</i>	21
<i>Bad Resume Example</i>	24
<i>Accessing Additional Resources</i>	27
<i>Attachments</i>	28
<i>Attachment A – VA FAQs on General Recruiting</i>	29
<i>Attachment B – VA FAQs for Healthcare Jobs</i>	32
<i>Attachment C – VA FAQs for Administration and Other Job Applicants</i>	34
<i>Attachment D – Action Verbs</i>	35
<i>Attachment E – Avoiding the Top 10 Resume Mistakes</i>	37
<i>Attachment F – Resume Tips for Making the Transition</i>	39
<i>Attachment G – Veterans' Preference FAQs</i>	41

The top portion of the page features a close-up, artistic rendering of the American flag. The stars and stripes are depicted with a sense of motion, as if the flag is waving in the wind. The colors are vibrant, with deep blues, bright reds, and crisp whites. The flag occupies the upper left and center of the frame, with the rest of the page being a solid, light blue gradient.

Let the
VA for Vets
help you!

About *VA for Vets*

VA for Vets is a comprehensive career development program that helps Veterans and service members launch or advance their civilian careers at VA. The mission of *VA for Vets* is simple: to create a world-class organization of Veterans serving Veterans. To achieve this, the program's objectives are to:

- Recruit Veterans to work for VA.
- Retain the 100,000+ Veterans currently employed at VA.
- Reintegrate VA's service member employees seamlessly after deployments.
- Recognize and honor Veteran service.
- Educate VA's supervisors, hiring managers, HR professionals and coworkers about Veteran-specific issues and support resources.

The program offers support services tailored to the needs of Veterans and service members like you, including:

- Assess your skills and job interests, create easy-to-read resumes, apply for open VA positions
- Professional training resources to learn more about deployment and reintegration topics.
- Regional Veteran Employment Coordinators (RVECs) to address deployment and reintegration issues or questions related to careers at VA.

From dynamic job searches to professional development and deployment lifecycle support—there is something for every Veteran at *VA for Vets*.



*Our Mission:
To create a world-class
organization of Veterans
serving Veterans*

Getting a Federal Job

The federal hiring process can take a significant amount of time to successfully complete. Knowing about this process will help you navigate it and plan your job search appropriately.

USAJOBS (www.usajobs.gov) is the Federal Government's official employment website. The website collects the job postings of various government programs and agencies into one place and streamlines the application process to more efficiently link qualified candidates with open positions. The *VA for Vets* program uses the same resume template, so your career interests can seamlessly interact with both the program and USAJOBS website.

The three things you should know to unleash the full power of USAJOBS in your job search include 1) knowing the two classes of jobs, 2) knowing what jobs are posted where, and 3) knowing the application process.

1 Know the Two Job Classes

According to the USAJOBS website, the two classes of jobs in the Federal Government include:

- Those in the competitive civil service.
- Those in the excepted service.¹

As the website explains, "competitive service jobs are subject to the civil service laws passed by Congress to ensure that applicants and employees receive fair and equal treatment in the hiring process. A basic principle of Federal employment is that all candidates must meet the qualification requirements before they are hired into the position.

"Excepted service agencies set their own qualification requirements and are not subject to the same Congressional laws; however, they are subject to Veterans' preference. Some Federal agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) have only excepted service positions. Other agencies may have both types of positions."

2 Know What Jobs Are Posted Where

Agencies are only required to post competitive service positions on USAJOBS when they are seeking applicants from the general public and outside of their own agency. It is worth the time to review the career sites of any agencies you are interested in. Still, many agencies post their excepted service positions on USAJOBS to attract candidates from as wide a pool as possible.

¹ Office of Personnel Management. "How Federal Jobs are Filled," retrieved July 29, 2011 from <http://www.usajobs.gov/fhprocess.asp>

3 Know the Application Process

You cannot control how a recruiter analyzes your application, the length of time he or she will take to review your application or whether you receive a response. You can control, however, how you present your background so that it matches the position you apply for, the completeness of your application and your own destiny by not limiting yourself to a single position as you continue your job search. The ten things you can do to effectively navigate this process are described as follows:

Ten Tips for Navigating the Federal Application Process

1. Search USAJOBS!

USAJOBS is your gateway to government jobs.

2. Identify jobs you are qualified for!

Increase your chances of success by finding jobs your experience says you can do.

3. Identify jobs you want to do!

Pick out the jobs you are qualified for and interest you. Apply for all jobs that interest you - don't limit yourself to one attempt.

4. Use the template!

USAJOBS has a template that meets the requirements for government job applications.

5. Use the job description language in your resume!

Job descriptions use specific words to define qualified candidates. USAJOBS tries to match these words to your resume. Use as many of these words exactly as they are presented to increase your chances as a candidate (ex., use "Microsoft" versus "MS" if USAJOBS used "Microsoft"). Unlike private sector job postings, federal jobs have little flexibility with the specific criteria that must be met.

6. Read entire application before submitting!

Upload transcripts and other supporting materials needed and answer any essays or questionnaires. The 2MB size limit may require you to compress your files.

7. Call the recruiter!

Contact names and phone numbers are provided for a reason. Let recruiters know that you are applying for a job and ask if there is anything you should do before you submit your resume.

8. Submit your application before the deadline!

Deadlines are published on the vacancy announcement. Make sure you get your application completed on time.

9. Call the recruiter!

Ask the recruiter to confirm that your application was received and complete. They may or may not call you back, but they will know you are interested.

10. Keep looking!

Increase your chances of landing a new career by applying to multiple opportunities.

Understand the Recruiter's Perspective

From the recruiter's perspective, you are a part of a much more involved and complex hiring process to which you must adhere, ensuring you and any other candidates receive fair consideration for legal employment. Recruiters are required to match the specific skills and competencies listed in an open position description to all applications before declaring someone a suitable candidate. To save them and you time, USAJOBS scans resumes for key word matches and completed applications before alerting recruiters that a possible candidate is available for consideration. You are responsible for making sure that you have completed your application by filling in every required field, answering every supplemental survey question, uploading every supporting document and addressing every requirement as listed.

Recruiters can receive hundreds, if not thousands, of applications to review each week for open positions. While computers can help identify incomplete applications, it still takes a human to assess and accept or eliminate applications. The closer your resume matches the requirements of the position description, the easier it will be for a recruiter to assess you as a suitable candidate.

For a look at this more detailed federal hiring process from the government's point of view, refer to the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) End to End Hiring Roadmap online at <http://www.opm.gov/staffingportal/EndtoEndRoadmap.asp>.

The closer your resume matches the requirements...the easier it will be for a recruiter to assess you as a suitable candidate.

Building Your Resume

Resumes serve one purpose: to get you noticed. You need to be organized, personally and professionally, so you can create a solid resume and cover letter.

Getting Organized

You can get yourself organized by knowing your worth, knowing your Veterans' preference qualification, knowing what you want and knowing what works.

1 Know Your Worth

As a Veteran or Military Service Member you...

Learn quickly.

One reason that you are needed in the federal civilian workforce is that you have already proven you can learn new tasks. You underwent rigorous training. Managers know you understand the value of learning and how to apply it.

Understand the value of teamwork.

Teamwork was instilled in you from the moment you entered boot camp. You understand its value and work well with others.

Lead by example.

You may have been given opportunity and various experiences to be a leader. Federal civilian jobs need people who are highly motivated and lift up those around them.

Respect authority.

People in the federal civilian world respect those who understand rank and authority. Everything has its proper place, and order is needed to function smoothly.

Supervisors take comfort in knowing that you know how to support them with their mission.

Understand cultural diversity.

You know how to work alongside others of different races and religions. You can work with coworkers who may be a little different or challenging. You can adjust to different environments when the situation calls for it.

Perform under pressure.

You were trained to perform well—even when the going gets a little rough. You do not back down from challenges. Your ability to keep going adds stability to a team.

For all of these reasons and more, you are the kind of high performance candidate the Federal Government needs. Weave these words and themes into your professional resume to remind recruiters and supervisors that it's not just the candidate, but the quality of his or her character that makes a difference in the workplace.

2 Know Your Veterans' Preference Qualifications

In recognition of their service and sacrifice to our country, Congress passed the Veterans' Preference Act of 1944.

Veterans' preference is a measurement that provides Veterans special consideration when applying for certain federal civilian jobs. It is intended for Veterans who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces and were discharged under honorable conditions. It does not guarantee Veterans a job or give Veterans' preference in internal agency actions such as promotion, transfer, reassignment and reinstatement. It does, however, give Veterans additional points after their assessment as a qualified candidate for a job in recognition of their status as a service member.

Veterans' preference scores range from 0-10 points. Your Veterans' preference score is in direct proportion to VA's assessment of the length and timing of your service and any disability incurred during that time.

To claim Veterans' preference, you must provide a copy of your DD-214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, or other acceptable documentation as proof of your service. Applicants claiming a 10-point preference will also need to submit Form SF-15, Application for 10-point Veterans' Preference, located at: http://www.opm.gov/forms/pdf_fill/SF15.pdf.

To investigate your Veterans' preference qualifications, visit the Department of Labor's Veterans' Preference Advisor at: <http://www.dol.gov/elaws/vetspref.htm>.

3 Know What You Want

Do you know what kind of job you want? Do you know what kind of job you are qualified to perform? Do you know what you are already qualified to do? If not, consider some exercises that will help narrow your job-hunting focus to jobs that you want and for which you qualify.

- Ask a trusted friend or supervisor for their suggestion of the kinds of jobs at which you would excel.
- Write down the qualities of a job you want and then try to match those qualities to an existing position.
- Write down the qualities of a job or work environment you know you want to avoid to eliminate positions that do not fit your interests.



3 Know What You Want *(continued)*

- Take several personality and professional assessments to help identify your interests and spark new career ideas. For example:

The Veterans' Preference assessment tool is a DOL service created at the direction of President Barack Obama's Executive Order 13518, Employment of Veterans in the Federal Government: <http://www.dol.gov/elaws/vets/vetpref/mservice.htm>.

The Which Historical Military Leader are You Most Like? personality game on Military.com indicates your leadership style: <http://www.military.com/LeadershipTest/1,16183,main.htm,,00.html>.

The Big Five Personality Test is free and measures the five fundamental dimensions of your personality: <http://www.outofservice.com/bigfive/>.

The CoachCompass® Hemispheres assessment is free and evaluates your current career: <http://www.coachcompass.com/hemisphere/index.php>.

The Myers-Briggs personality assessment tool is a for-fee service available at <http://www.myersbriggs.org>.

4 Know What Works

Different types of jobs call for different types of resumes. Creating resumes for different jobs allows you to highlight the experience you have in one area over another, tailoring your experience to a desired position. For example, on one resume, you may wish to showcase the times you coordinated teams and managed assignments, but on another, you may want to focus on your technical proficiency. USAJOBS allows you to create and save up to five different types of resumes.

Remember: The more your application matches a position's requirements, the easier it is for recruiters to assess that you are a suitable candidate.

What makes a resume good or bad can come down to several common indicators, as much as the format you choose.



Getting Started

You should be ready to apply for jobs before you begin to look for them. Once you ready yourself personally and professionally, you should create a resume and cover letter so you have something to upload or copy and paste into the USAJOBS template.

Resumes

Resumes provide a historical snapshot of your experience, knowledge and skills. Recruiters should be able to review your resume, and within a matter of minutes, understand the work you have done, the length of your experience and your capabilities.

Resumes should encapsulate your experience as briefly as possible. Quantifying your experience can make them easier for recruiters to understand. For example, stating that you managed a project is less effective than stating that you managed a team of three analysts to successfully complete a technology project in six months.

What's in a Resume?

All good resumes include some standard information:

- Contact information
- Work experience
- List of technical skills
- Education
- Job-related training
- Languages
- Affiliations
- Professional publications
- References
- Additional information
- Honors and awards
- Veterans' Preference
- Level of clearance held



Resumes *(continued)*

1 *Contact Information*

The first section of a cover letter should include your contact information, such as:

- Name
- Address
- City, State and ZIP code
- Preferred phone number
- Personal email address

2 *Work Experience*

Your most recent experience should be listed first, and the rest of your experience should be listed in reverse chronological order. Experience typically includes the company or agency you worked for, the position you held while there, the dates you worked there, and highlights of your responsibilities while there.

Unless you have not been working for very long, you have no reason to go into detail on the jobs you held early in your career. Focus on your most recent and/or relevant jobs.

Highlight any accomplishments or results of your work that will be interesting and/or relevant to the position, such as those that:

- Required extra effort
- You completed by yourself
- You enjoyed doing
- You did well
- You are proud of
- You received an award for

These should emphasize results you produced, dollars generated or saved, percentage improvements in performance, the extent to which you exceeded goals in the past or organizational turnarounds you produced.

Use action verbs to describe your experience. For every skill, accomplishment or job described, use the most active impressive verb you can think of (which is also accurate). Begin the sentence with this verb, except when you must vary the sentence structure to avoid repetitious writing. You will find a list of action verbs by category in Attachment D – Action Verbs.

Resumes *(continued)*

3 *List of Technical Skills*

Technical skills can vary widely from methodologies to software to hardware. Technical skills do not often require explanation and can be listed by name; however, it is critical that you qualify your experience with each so that recruiters know your level of understanding of these skills. For example, a recruiter that is interested in process improvement will know about Six Sigma (a business management and process improvement methodology), so you will not have to explain it, but if you listed it, you should state what level belt you are and how long you have been practicing. The same rule applies to word processing and programming tools or hardware, such as servers.

4 *Education*

Your education information should only include pertinent facts for each institution, such as:

- The name of the institution where you earned your highest degree.
- The city and state of the institution.
- The date you graduated or received the degree.
- Specific degree that you earned (such as, master's in science or Ph.D. in economics).
- Any minors and/or double majors.

If you attended college or a technical school but did not receive a degree, you should state how long you attended and your field of study. You must be clear, however, that you did not receive a degree. If you did not attend college or a vocational school, then you would include information about your high school education or GED.

List your most recent degree first. If you are still enrolled in an institution, list it. Do not forget to include the anticipated date of graduation and the degree expected.

5 *Job-Related Training*

You have most likely had a significant amount of job-related training through the military. Provide details on the training and courses that you took throughout your career. List only the training that has enhanced your experience and skills and that will be of immense value in your new position. If the course title is not descriptive or is unfamiliar, summarize or briefly describe the course to potential resume evaluators. Don't assume the resume evaluator will understand the terms in your resume. If there is any doubt, describe the meaning.

6 *Languages*

If you include languages on your resume, state your level of fluency (such as, "novice," "intermediate," or "advanced"). If your fluency is very limited, it is probably not worth listing the language. Do not overstate your level of proficiency.

Resumes *(continued)*

7 *Affiliations*

Your professional affiliations can relate your past work and your current job profile if you are working in the same field. On a resume, they inform recruiters that you have professional interest beyond your day-to-day job.

Emphasize current contributions and provide some details to explain your abilities within precise areas. It is recommended that you not include any political affiliations, since hiring managers or an agency may fail to judge you enthusiastically. If you decide to include them anyway, be tactful in describing your involvement.

If you have a lot of affiliations on your resume, recruiters may view you as an “overachiever.” Consider including only the most relevant ones or splitting them into career-related and community-related categories.

8 *Professional Publications*

Only list those publications that relate directly to your career goal or the position for which you are applying. List your publications in reverse chronological order. Potential employers may attempt to track down your publication, so make sure the titles and your authorship are verifiable before including them.

9 *References*

References are typically people who can verify your employment and vouch for your performance. A potential employer always thinks that a provided resume is up to date. If your references are not up to date when the resume is reviewed, your out-of-date list may harm your credibility or frustrate your recruiter.

10 *Additional Information*

Any information that does not fit in the other resume subject areas but is worth highlighting for a recruiter because of its relevance to the position or because it helps you stand out as a qualified candidate can go in this catch-all area.

11 *Honors & Awards*

Awards can tell a potential employer that previous employers or other organizations valued your accomplishments. The fact that you or your team received formal recognition for your efforts is a good indicator of your skills and work ethic.

Cover Letters

Cover letters are an important way to communicate to recruiters all the things that do not fit on a resume. There, you can state your intentions and desired job situation, provide a mission or objective statement, offer additional details, such as travel and relocation preferences, and explain why you are an excellent candidate. If your resume does not meet the position requirements, you will not be considered at all, but a good cover letter can be the difference between a qualified candidate receiving a call or being invited to an interview.

A cover letter should complement, not duplicate, your resume. Its purpose is to interpret the data-oriented, factual resume and add a personal touch. A cover letter is often your earliest written contact with a potential employer, creating a critical first impression.

Cover letters are now accepted in federal submissions but there are character limits.

What's in a Cover Letter?

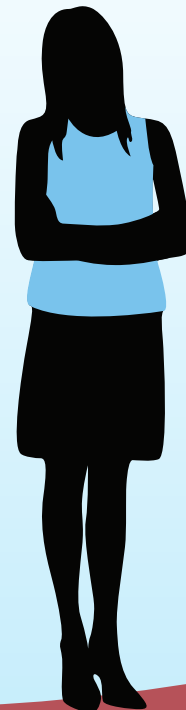
All good cover letters include some standard information, such as:

- Contact information
- Salutation
- Body
- Closing

1 *Contact Information*

The first section of a cover letter should include your contact information, such as:

- Name
- Address
- City, State and ZIP code
- Preferred phone number
- Personal email address



Cover Letters *(continued)*

2 *Salutation*

It is important to include an appropriate salutation at the beginning of the cover letter or message. If you have a contact person for your letter, be sure to include his or her name. If you do not have a contact person, either leave off the salutation from your cover letter and start with the first paragraph of your letter or use a general salutation, such as:

- Dear Hiring Manager
- To Whom it May Concern
- Dear Human Resources Manager
- Dear Sir or Madam

3 *Body*

The body of your cover letter tells an employer what position you are applying for, why the employer should select you for an interview, examples of your work, and how you will follow up. This section of your cover letter should include three paragraphs.

Paragraph one should state who you are, how you heard of the position or the agency and why you are writing. Your goal in this paragraph is to convince the reader why you are the only candidate to interview.

Paragraph two should state why you are interested in the position and/or agency, how your qualifications fit the specific skills needed for the job, some specific examples of how your past

experience has prepared you to do the job, any other relevant skills, qualities, achievements and experiences that make you the best candidate for the job. Tell recruiters how your experiences and skills match the criteria for the position.

Paragraph three should repeat that you are hoping to be considered for the job, give specific information about your plans to follow up and thank the employer for his or her consideration. Note that if you state how you will follow up, be sure to do so.

4 *Closing*

When you write a cover letter or send an email message to apply for a job, you must close your letter in a professional manner, such as:

- Sincerely
- Sincerely yours
- Regards
- Best regards
- Kind regards
- Yours truly
- Most sincerely
- Respectfully
- Respectfully yours
- Thank you
- Thank you for your consideration

Resume Do's and Don'ts

1. **DO** use the electronic resume format provided by USAJOBS.
2. **DO** place your name in bold at the top of the resume.
3. **DO** try to convert any documents you submit to PDF format to make the files smaller and preserve the formatting.
4. **DO** list only one phone number and one email address.
5. **DO** include your name and a page number on each page, if it extends past one page, so recruiters can keep any loose pages together once printed.
6. **DO** include a summary of your experience at the top of your resume (below your name) to highlight the skills and traits of most interest to the recruiter for this particular position.
7. **DO** focus on the “requirements,” “skills” or “qualifications” sections of a position description to pick out “buzzwords” your application should include or address.
8. **DO** use numbers to highlight your accomplishments and define their effectiveness by time and money when possible.

1. **DON'T** use the exact same application for all jobs to which you apply.
2. **DON'T** create a fancy resume format that is stylish but hard to read.
3. **DON'T** decrease the size of your margins to make room for more content—these may not print.
4. **DON'T** include a mission statement, purpose statement, objective or goal on your resume. These can be addressed in a cover letter or interview. Save that resume space for your experience.
5. **DON'T** write long paragraphs that recruiters have to wade through to get to your main skills. Use short lists whenever possible.
6. **DON'T** leave misspellings on your resume. Some recruiters will eliminate candidates for the simplest of reasons.
7. **DON'T** list salary requirements unless the job or listing requires it.
8. **DON'T** give unnecessary personal information, such as Social Security numbers, driver's license numbers or birth dates.
9. **DON'T** assume the evaluator will know what your acronyms mean - spell them out.

Applying Online

The key to landing a job with the Federal Government is to tailor your resume and application to the core duties and responsibilities listed in the job announcement. If you take the time to develop a comprehensive and properly formatted, tailored application package, you will improve your chances of qualifying for the position and getting the attention of the selecting official.

Review the following examples of a USAJOBS job posting at VA and examples of good and a bad resumes, while keeping in mind the information previously covered.

Sample Job Posting

The image shows a screenshot of a USAJOBS job posting page with several callout boxes providing explanations:

- Search Tabs:** A callout box points to the "Search Jobs" and "Browse Jobs" tabs, stating: "These tabs display the labeled information, or you can scroll down to see the same information."
- Multiple Grades:** A callout box points to the "Series & Grade" field, stating: "When the position has multiple grades, such as GS-1712-9/11-12-13, apply to all grades by selecting each grade. Otherwise, the hiring agency will not consider you for the other grades that were not selected."
- Series and Grade:** A callout box points to the "Series & Grade" field, stating: "You can use Series and Grade information to find the OPM description of requirements that any candidate must meet to qualify for this job. The series qualifications are at opm.gov. In this example, you would type '1712 Series' then select Search."
- Recruiter Contact:** A callout box points to the contact information, stating: "Recruiter contact information"
- Key Requirements:** A callout box points to the "KEY REQUIREMENTS" section, stating: "Basic requirements of the job you must meet to be eligible to apply."
- Eligibility Groups:** A callout box points to the "KEY REQUIREMENTS" section, stating: "Other groups that may be listed include: Nationals, Public, Student Program Eligibles, and Status Candidates. **Note:** When a vacancy announcement indicates that status candidates are eligible to apply, Federal Government employees who have served at least 90 days after competitive appointment may apply."

The job posting details shown in the screenshot include:

- Search Jobs** | **My Account** | **Info Center**
- USAJOBS** "WORKING FOR AMERICA"
- Search Jobs** | **Keyword** | **What: (keywords)** | **Browse Jobs**
- QUALIFICATIONS & EVALUATIONS** | **BENEFITS & OTHER INFO** | **HOW TO APPLY**
- Job Announcement Number:** VA-LB-494244-Comp
- SALARY RANGE:** \$89,033.00 - \$115,742.00 /year
- OPEN PERIOD:** Friday, July 08, 2011 to Friday, July 22, 2011
- SERIES & GRADE:** GS-1712-13
- POSITION INFORMATION:** Full Time Career/Career Conditional
- PROMOTION POTENTIAL:** 13
- DUTY LOCATIONS:** Many vacancies - Frederick, MD
- WHO MAY BE CONSIDERED:** United States Citizens
- JOB SUMMARY:** The VA Mission: To fulfill President Lincoln's promise – "To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan" – by serving and honoring the men and women who are America's Veterans.
- YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**
- KEY REQUIREMENTS:**
 - You must be a U.S. citizen to be eligible for consideration.
 - You must submit your resume and supporting documents (see How to Apply).
 - Relocation is Authorized
- Recruiter Contact Information:** 8610 Broadway Rm 305, San Antonio, TX 78217, USA. Phone: (210)904-0724, Email: LORRAE.Manigault@va.gov

Sample Job Posting *(continued)*

Basic job description and responsibilities.

Duties

[Back to top](#) ▲

Additional Duty Location Info:

Many vacancies - Frederick, MD

The Training Specialist serves as an authoritative training specialist within the the Office of Acquisitions and Logistics (OA&L). Responsible for providing a variety of specialized training and educational assessment and design services.

Notice this link! It is easy to miss since it is the same color as other text on the page, but it is a critical part of the overall application.

Plans, designs, and develops training materials and implements the acquisition training programs.
Identifies intrinsic issues, collects data and conducts analysis of information.
Develops and administers agency-wide policies, programs, and procedures for improving technical performance.
Analyzes and projects work force data for the improvement of acquisition career paths.

[View Assessment Questions](#)

Qualifications and Evaluations

[Back to top](#) ▲

QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED:

To qualify for this position, you must have at least:

A) One year of specialized experience, equivalent to at least the GS-12 level, or equivalent pay band in other pay systems in the Federal government. This experience may also have been obtained in the private sector, but must demonstrate that it is comparable to the GS grade indicated. Specialized experience may have been demonstrated by performing duties such as: Examples include: supervising or administering a training program, development or review of training/course materials, aids, devices, etc., and evaluation of training results and work in the occupation or subject-matter field of the position to be filled that required training or instructing on a regular basis.

You must address this basic education requirement in your resume.

CREDIT: Credit will be given for appropriate unpaid work on the same basis as experience. Part-time experience will be credited on the basis of time actually spent on appropriate activities. To receive credit for such experience you must indicate the nature of the duties and responsibilities in each position held and the number of hours per week spent in such employment.

Education:

There is no substitution of education for experience at this grade level.

REQUIREMENTS:

- **Background Investigation:** You may need to successfully complete a background investigation before being appointed into the position.
- **Probationary Period:** You may be required to serve a one year probationary period.

Sample Job Posting *(continued)*

You must address this list of categories in your resume. Use the OPM description of the Grade and Series and as many of the exact words used here in your resume as possible. For example, number one lists "performance-based training techniques." Assuming this applies to you, use those same words to describe your experience.

HOW YOU WILL BE EVALUATED:

CATEGORY RATING: Your application will be evaluated and rated under Category Rating selection procedures. Once the application process is complete, a review of resume and supporting documentation will be made and compared against your responses to the assessment questionnaire to determine if you are qualified for this job. Please follow all instructions carefully. Errors or omissions may affect your eligibility. Qualified candidates will be assigned to a quality category. The quality categories are: **Best Qualified, Well Qualified and Qualified.**

Your application will be evaluated based on your ability to demonstrate the following knowledge, skills and abilities/competencies:

1. Comprehensive and expert knowledge of adult education principles and instruction systems development, to include principles, practices and techniques of performance based training techniques.
2. Skill in survey principles and analyzing data collected from a variety of sources to determine training program strengths and weaknesses including implementing the Kirkpatrick Evaluation model.
3. Ability to plan, design, develop, and oversee contract support services as they relate to training materials and instruction.
4. Ability to collaborate with individuals at all organizational levels to obtain information and implement programs.

Your rating will be based on both your entire application package as well as the responses to the assessment questionnaire. Please note that if, after reviewing your resume and or supporting documentation, a determination is made that you have inflated your qualifications and or experience, your category rating can and will be adjusted to more accurately reflect your abilities, or you may lose consideration for this position.

Sample Job Posting *(continued)*

You can look up the benefits related to this position here, but there is no action you must take at this time.

Benefits and Other Info [Back to top](#) ▲

BENEFITS:

VA professionals feel good about their careers and their ability to balance work and home life. VA offers generous paid time off and a variety of predictable and flexible scheduling opportunities. For more information on the Department of Veterans Affairs, go to <http://www.vacareers.va.gov/>.

Males born after 12/31/1959 must have their Selective Service information to complete their application.

The Department of Veterans Affairs offers a comprehensive benefits package that includes, in part, paid vacation, sick leave, holidays, life insurance, health insurance, and participation in the Federal Employees Retirement System. In addition to traditional "dollars and cents" benefits, we offer a range of benefits to help balance work and life. For more information please visit us at http://www4.va.gov/jobs/job_benefits/benefits.asp.

OTHER INFORMATION:

Selective Service: Males born after 12/31/1959 must be registered or exempt from Selective Service (see <http://www.sss.gov/>).

The **Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan (ICTAP)** and **Career Transition Assistance Plan (CTAP)** provide eligible displaced Federal competitive service employees with selection priority over other candidates for competitive service vacancies. To be qualified you must submit appropriate documentation and be found well-qualified (have a final rating of 85 or more) for this vacancy. Information about ICTAP and CTAP eligibility is on OPM's Career Transition Resources website at http://www.opm.gov/rif/employee_guides/career_transition.asp#ctap.

Be sure to complete any Career Transition Assistance Plan documents if you wish to use this assistance with your application.

Sample Job Posting *(continued)*

How To Apply

HOW TO APPLY:

To apply for this position, you must provide a complete Application Package, which includes:

1. Your **Resume**
2. A complete **Occupational Assessment Questionnaire**
3. Unofficial **College Transcripts** (if qualifying based on education)
4. **Veterans Preference Documentation** (if applicable)

The complete Application Package must be submitted by 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time (EST) on Friday, July 22, 2011

To begin the process, **click the Apply Online** button to create an account or log in to your existing USAJOBS account. Follow the prompts to complete the occupational questionnaire. **Please ensure you click the Submit My Answers button at the end of the process.**

To fax supporting documents you are unable to upload, complete this cover page <http://staffing.opm.gov/pdf/usascover.pdf> using the following Vacancy ID 494244. Fax your documents to 1-478-757-3144.

Note: To check the status of your application or return to a previous or incomplete application, log into your USAJOBS account, select My Applications, and click on the more information link under the application status for this position.

If you cannot apply online:

1. Click the following link to view and print the occupational questionnaire [View Occupational Questionnaire](#)
2. Print this 1203FX form to provide your response to the occupational questionnaire http://www.opm.gov/forms/pdf_fill/OPM1203fx.pdf and
3. Fax the completed 1203FX form along with any supporting documents to **1-478-757-3144**. Your 1203FX will serve as a cover page for your fax transmission.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS:

The following documents are required and must be received by Friday, July 22, 2011:

- **Resume**
- **Completed Occupational Assessment Questionnaire**
- **Unofficial College Transcripts** if education is used to qualify (if selected, you will be required to produce official transcripts before being appointed)
- **Veterans Preference Documentation** (if applicable): DD-214 or Statement of Service, which includes your **dates of service** and your **character of service**, and VA or Armed Forces Disability Letter, and SF-15, Application for 10-Point Preference, as indicated in the "**Veterans Preference**" section below.

USAJOBS tells you exactly how to apply for each job. Make sure you follow the directions given!

USAJOBS tells you exactly which documents you have to include in your application. Make sure you upload each of these documents as listed!

Sample Job Posting *(continued)*

If you plan on claiming Veterans' preference, read the information provided here and be prepared to include a DD-214 and the SF15, if applicable, to support your claim.

VETERANS PREFERENCE:

When applying for Federal jobs, all eligible veterans should claim preference on the Occupational Questionnaire in the section provided and provide a legible copy of DD-214(s) showing all dates of service **as well as** character of service (honorable, general, etc.) or other proof of eligibility.

Additionally, veterans with service-connected disability of 10% or more must also submit an SF15, "Application for 10-Point Veteran Preference **and** a copy of their official statement from the Department of Veterans Affairs, or from a branch of the Armed Forces, certifying their service-connected disability and/or their receipt of compensation for service-connected disability.

Veterans with service-connected disability of less than 10%, non service-connected disability, and Purple Heart recipients, as well as those claiming derived preference for a spouse, widow or widower, or natural mother, must submit an SF15, "Application for 10-Point Veteran Preference **and** the additional documentation required by that form. For more information on veterans' preference see <http://www.fedshirevets.gov>.

Here is the recruiter's and agency's contact information. It is provided so you can contact them regarding your application.

AGENCY CONTACT INFO:

Lucinda C. Brown
Phone: (202) 693-0734
Email: lcbrown@fedshirereg.com

Agency Information:
San Antonio Services Section
1616 Broadway Street 3000
San Antonio, TX 78217
USA

WHAT TO EXPECT NEXT:

Once the online questionnaire is received, you will receive an acknowledgement email that your submission was successful. Based upon your score, you may be referred to the hiring official. If your name is referred to the hiring official, you may be contacted directly by that office for a possible interview. You will receive status notifications through Application Manager or via email generally within 4-6 weeks.

[Back to top](#) ▲

Good Resume Example

The following is an example of a good resume created in USAJOBS to respond to a Training Specialist position at VA.

Robin Lynn Blue
000 Q Street NW
#300
Washington, DC 20003
Evening Phone: 555-555-5554
Day Phone: 555-555-5555
Email: RobinBlue@aol.com

Country of citizenship: United States of America
Veterans' Preference: 5-point preference based on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces
Contact Current Employer: Contact me first

AVAILABILITY **Job Type:** Permanent
Work Schedule: Full Time

Desired Work Environment
Experienced Professionals

WORK EXPERIENCE **Verizon** **7/2006 - Present**
Ashburn, Virginia US

Hours per week: 40

Sr. Instructional Systems Designer

- Completed the front-end analysis, design, testing, and evaluation for several curricula. Managed a team of developers to ensure sound instructional systems development.
- Designed and developed a nine-course new-hire curriculum that uses **performance based training techniques**, and ensured acquisition of the fundamentals skills required for successful execution of the customer representative's job tasks.
- Created community of practice with in house and external training professionals. Initiated and maintained professional contacts with leading practitioners, researchers, education and training institutions, and other contributors to the organizational training industry.
- Enhanced departmental quality by developing instructional design, development, and evaluative criteria standards. Additionally, created tools that ensure implementation of adult education principles, **performance based training techniques**, and instructional systems development.
- Designed and developed measurement tools in accordance with the Kirkpatrick evaluation model. Subsequently conducted level 1, 2, 3, and 4 evaluations for several curricula.
- Developed numerous business processes, job aids, training packages, and evaluation tools to support new equipment and developments in the telecommunications field. Collaborated with individuals at all organizational levels to maximize subsequent performance improvements.
- Created, managed, and executed multiple product implementation plans, coordinating with contracted developers. This included, but is not limited to providing project guidelines and standards, reviewing product progress, reviewing complete project to ensure quality, revising materials, or, when appropriate, returning materials to developer with feedback and instructions concerning needed revisions.

Any Veterans' preference claim is stated on your resume first.

Work experience is listed from most to least recent.

Use the same language found in the OPM Grade and Series, as well as the job description categories listed, to make your resume easy to match against the position requirements.

Good Resume Example *(continued)*

GEICO Insurance
Chevy Chase, Maryland US

4/2003 - 6/2006

Hours per week: 40

Curriculum Manager

- Analyzed and modified pre-existing e-learning library to enhance technical accuracy and consistency with course objectives and instructional goal. Included development of practice labs, knowledge assessments, and scoring system linked to learning objects and material evaluation tools.
- Conducted student performance analyses. Subsequently completed significant adaptation and revision due to subject-matter/student problems.
- Analyzed performance measures to identify areas of opportunity. Subsequently designed, developed and implemented solution systems resulting in operational cost reduction.
 - o Created performance support tools, both electronic and paper based.
 - o Collaborated with individuals at all organizational levels, both domestically and internationally, to ensure successful system implementation.
 - o Employed performance based training techniques to ensure knowledge and skill acquisition.
 - o Developed and implemented marketing and communications plans to launch both department and cross-departmental advanced technical systems. This included the implementation of policies, creation of business processes, procedures, job aids, communication articles for all levels of the organization at headquarters and in the global-field, and the ordering and distribution of collateral.
 - o Designed, developed, implemented, evaluated and continuously improved communication and performance support elements for the implementation of new products, features and programs.

JFK Special Warfare Center and School
Fort Bragg, North Carolina US

2/1998 - 4/2003

Hours per week: 40

Training Specialist

- Analyzed training deployment system and proposed a reengineered architecture. Implemented changes to the course catalog, admission policies, course prerequisites, registration, tracking, and other general learning environment design elements.
- Analyzed student performance forecasts. Implemented several new course prerequisite requirements, program objectives and assessments, and instructional strategies.
- Designed and developed roles, responsibilities, and job descriptions for learning center personnel.
- Streamlined operations and facilities processes to eliminate waste.
- Co-created an electronic performance support tool to recruit learning center personnel.

Good Resume Example *(continued)*

Describe your education starting with the most recent.

EDUCATION	<p>Florida State University Tallahassee, Florida US Master's Degree - 5/2000 Major: Instructional Systems Design Minor: Human Performance Analysis GPA: 4.0 out of 4.0 Relevant Coursework, Licensures and Certifications: Performance Systems Analysis, Instructional Design Principles, Adult Learning Theory, ISD Project Management, Developed and delivered workshop on Instructional Design and Technology to FSU Student Teachers, Conducted Performance Systems Analysis and made subsequent recommendations for job redesign and training for the Bureau of Consumer Services, Bureau of Agriculture.</p> <p>Florida State University Tallahassee, Florida US Bachelor's Degree - 12/1996 124 Semester Hours Major: Behavioral Psychology/Human Performance Management Minor: Business Management GPA: 3.0 out of 4.0 Relevant Coursework, Licensures and Certifications: Organizational behavioral development, human performance management, business management.</p>												
JOB RELATED TRAINING	<p>Managing Projects August 2006 Business Negotiation April 2005 The SRF Loop and Training Delivery July 1996</p>												
AFFILIATIONS	<p>American Society for VP of Program Development Training and Development International Institute of Program and Operations Business Analysis-DC Chapter</p>												
PROFESSIONAL PUBLICATIONS	<p>508 Compliance and the Audience Analysis-white paper July 2000</p>												
REFERENCES	<table><tr><td>Joseph Johnson</td><td>America Online, Inc.</td><td>Training Manager</td></tr><tr><td>Phone Number:</td><td>555-555-5555</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Email Address:</td><td>JoeJohnson@aol.com</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Reference Type:</td><td>Professional</td><td></td></tr></table>	Joseph Johnson	America Online, Inc.	Training Manager	Phone Number:	555-555-5555		Email Address:	JoeJohnson@aol.com		Reference Type:	Professional	
Joseph Johnson	America Online, Inc.	Training Manager											
Phone Number:	555-555-5555												
Email Address:	JoeJohnson@aol.com												
Reference Type:	Professional												
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Possess 15 years of experience executing training analyses, student analyses, performance analyses, objective creation, instructional design, content development, pilots and testing, and levels one -four of Kirkpatrick's evaluation model.-Design and develop blended learning solutions.-Am able to see need and initiate and create appropriate solution.												

Include any pertinent information that did not fit anywhere else on your resume here.

Bad Resume Example (continued)

	GEICO Insurance Chevy Chase, Maryland US	4/2003 - 6/2006 Salary: \$65,000.00 USD Per Year Hours per week: 50
	Curriculum Manager Various duties as required, including analyzing and modifying pre-existing learning library contents to enhance technical accuracy and consistency with course objectives and instructional goals.	
	JFK Special Warfare Center and School Fort Bragg, North Carolina US	2/1998 - 4/2003 Salary: \$53,000.00 USD Hours per week: 55
	Training Specialist In this position I analyzed our deployment systems for training and proposed architecture improvements, including those to our LMS course catalog, admission policies, course prerequisites, registration, and tracking systems.	
EDUCATION	Florida State University Tallahassee, Florida US Master's Degree - 5/2000 Major: Instructional Systems Design Minor: Human Performance Analysis GPA: 4.0 out of 4.0 Relevant Coursework, Licensures and Certifications: Performance Systems Analysis, Instructional Design Principles, Adult Learning Theory, ISD Project Management, Developed and delivered workshop on Instructional Design and Technology to FSU Student Teachers, Conducted Performance Systems Analysis and made subsequent recommendations for job redesign and training for the Bureau of Consumer Services, Bureau of Agriculture.	
	Florida State University Tallahassee, Florida US Bachelor's Degree - 12/1996 124 Semester Hours Major: Behavioral Psychology/Human Performance Management Minor: Business Management GPA: 3.0 out of 4.0 Relevant Coursework, Licensures and Certifications: Organizational behavioral development, human performance management, business management.	
JOB RELATED TRAINING	Managing Projects August 2006 Business Negotiation April 2005 The SRF Loop and Training Delivery July 1995	
LANGUAGES	Arabic Spoken: Novice Written: None Read: None	

Provide enough information to briefly explain your duties in each job. This description is oversimplified for a five-year employment.

Do not include language skills unless you can claim some level of proficiency or the job description asks for "any" language experience.

Bad Resume Example *(continued)*

AFFILIATIONS	American Society for VP of Program Development Training and Development International Institute of Program and Operations Business Analysis-DC Chapter
PROFESSIONAL PUBLICATIONS	508 Compliance and the Audience Analysis-white paper July 2000
REFERENCES	Joseph Johnson America Online, Inc. Training Manager Phone Number: 555-555-5555 Email Address: JoeJohnson@aol.com Reference Type: Professional
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	I possess 15 years of experience in the training industry. I have a lot of experience designing and developing blended learning solutions. I am able to see need and initiate and create appropriate solution. I have experience with Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and Access, Paintshop Pro, Adobe Professional, Internet Explorer, and Robohelp.

Additional Information is used for brief points of interest that did not fit elsewhere on your resume. Use bullets to list items. Use the full names of any tools or software you have experience with and include the length of time you have used them so recruiters know if you have a beginner, intermediate or advanced understanding of each.

Additional Tips for Applying Online:

Be aware of character limitations when listing your work experience. Consider listing no more than 10-15 years of work experience.

USAJobs

- 3,000 characters per job (work experience)
- Unlimited number of jobs

CPOL/Resumix

- 12,000 characters for the entire employment history
- 20,000 characters total for the entire resume

CHARTs-Navy

- 7,500 characters per job
- Limit of six jobs
- 5,000 characters for professional training
- 1,500 characters for professional licenses and certificates
- 7,000 characters for additional information

Accessing Additional Resources

Creating a resume is just one small part of the overall federal hiring process. Use the lessons included in this guide to build a successful resume for civilian employment.

- *VA for Vets* is located online at <http://www.VAforVets.VA.gov>. The program is located at VA Central Office (VACO), 810 Vermont Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20420. Additional career support can be found by contacting *VA for Vets* coaches at 1-855-VA4Vets (1-855-824-8387) or VAforVets@VA.gov.
- USAJOBS is located online at <http://www.usajobs.gov>. USAJOBS is also accessible by TDD 978-461-8404.
- To learn more about USAJOBS, you can review a series of tutorials available as animated lessons or PDF documents at <http://www.usajobs.gov/EI/tutorials.asp#icc>.
- Feds Hire Vets is headquartered in the Veterans Employment Program Office (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 1900 E Street NW, Washington, DC 20415) and is located online at <http://www.fedshirevets.gov/>. They are also accessible by telephone at 202-606-5090.

Attachments

The following attachments have been added to this document to support you in the federal hiring process.

- **Attachment A** – VA Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on General Recruiting
- **Attachment B** – VA FAQs for Healthcare Jobs
- **Attachment C** – VA FAQs for Administration and Other Job Applicants
- **Attachment D** – Action Verbs
- **Attachment E** – Avoiding the Top 10 Resume Mistakes
- **Attachment F** – Resume Tips for Making the Transition
- **Attachment G** – Veterans’ Preference FAQs



Attachment A – VA FAQs on General Recruiting

The following selection of FAQs are displayed on the Department of Defense employment information website and are included here for your consideration.²

Q: What is USAJOBS?

A: USAJOBS (<http://www.usajobs.gov>) provides worldwide job vacancy information for all Federal agencies, employment information fact sheets, job applications and forms online. Job seekers can apply for many positions online. USAJOBS is convenient, accessible through the computer or telephone and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can contact USAJOBS through an Interactive Voice Response Telephone System at (703) 724-1850 or TDD (978) 461-8404.

Q: What does it mean when the Federal job announcement asks me to define my Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs)?

A: Knowledge, skills and abilities are the core requirements for a position. Your knowledge, skills, and abilities must reflect the depth and breadth of your experience as it pertains to the job for which you are applying. KSAs demonstrate that you have the requisite background to perform the position. Failure to address one or all may result in a rating or evaluation of less than best qualified.

Q: What are Selective Factors?

A: They are mandatory knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform the duties of the specific position. If Selective Factors are listed, your application must demonstrate that you possess all of them. Selective Factors supplement basic qualification requirements. If you do not possess any one of the Selective Factors, you will not be considered for the position.

Q: What are Quality Ranking Factors?

A: Quality Ranking Factors are highly desirable knowledge, skills or abilities that are helpful in performing the duties of the position. Your application must address how you meet them. These factors help determine the very best qualified applicant for the position. If you do not meet any one of them, you may not be rated among the best qualified.

Q: Job Announcements often refer to “certificates.” What does that mean?

A: A certificate is a listing of the names of eligible candidates for a job. The certificate is an official document that is given to a supervisor or selecting official from which to make a selection determination.

Attachment A – VA FAQs on General Recruiting *(continued)*

Q: When vacancies are announced by a Federal agency, how can selecting officials fill the position with a Veteran?

A: Agencies must select from the top-rated eligible applicants. Disabled Veterans are considered to have Veterans' preference for employment purposes and may be placed at the top of the Certificate of Eligibles if qualified for the job. Other Veterans and non-Veterans may be referred on the same certificate in lower categories.

Q: I have recently become blind. I was a computer specialist in the military. What jobs can I apply for now?

A: You can still apply for computer specialist positions in Defense. Software tools such as Screen Reader, JAWS, and Dolphins software are available to assist you in your daily work. A Refreshable Braille display is also used, if needed, through the Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program (CAP). Read more about CAP at <http://www.tricare.osd.mil/cap>.

Q: I've read job announcements that identify positions in the Federal Wage System. Can you explain more?

A: The Federal Wage System, or FWS, is a system that groups together the trades and laborer occupations in the Federal Government.

Q: I was a mechanic in the service and now want to consider other types of craft or laborer jobs. Where can I find these types of jobs as a civilian?

A: There are many trades and laborer occupations available throughout the Department of Defense. Machine-Tool Operator, Truck Driver, Telecommunications Mechanic, Electronics Mechanic, Boiler Plant Operator, and Painter are just a few. These and numerous other job opportunities can be viewed at <http://www.usajobs.gov>, the official job site of the Federal Government or call 1-888-DoD 4USA for assistance.

Q: Where can I get information about transitioning from active duty to the civilian workforce?

A: Before transitioning from active duty, military service members should make a visit to their Transition Assistance Program (TAP) Office. TAP was designed by the Department of Defense to smooth the transition of military personnel into the civilian workforce. Whether you're retiring, going back to school, or looking for a new career, success requires planning and resources and the Transition Assistance Program is there to help. of military personnel into the civilian workforce. Whether you're retiring, going back to school, or looking for a new career, success requires planning and resources and the Transition Assistance Program is there to help.

Attachment A – VA FAQs on General Recruiting *(continued)*

The Transition Assistance Office, normally located at the Military Family Support/Service Center on your installation, provides assistance with job searches, career decision-making, advice on current occupational and labor market conditions, resume and cover letter preparation and interviewing techniques. Participants are also provided with an evaluation of their employability relative to the job market and receive information on the most current Veterans' benefits.

In addition, to better assist military service members preparing to transition to the civilian workforce, the Department of Defense and the Department of Labor created a Transition Assistance Program (TAP) Manual. Information contained in the TAP Manual includes excellent advice on career exploration, job search strategies, interview techniques, how to review job offers, how to determine your strengths, how to analyze your skills and competencies, how to assess your financial needs and includes up-to-date information on Veterans benefits. You may find this informative manual at <http://www.dol.gov/vets/programs/tap/>.

Q: Now that I'm getting out of the Armed Forces, how can I convert my military experience toward a civilian career?

A: The Department of Defense (DoD) recognizes the enormous contributions you made and the excellent skills you acquired while serving your country in uniform and are glad that you are considering a civilian career with DoD.

There are over 700 different types of occupations within the Department of Defense. To find information on military to civilian occupation comparisons, there is a great "Skills Translator" tool that can help you locate jobs similar to your military occupation. This user-friendly "Skills Translator" tool also provides salary levels and information on future employment outlook and can be found at website <http://www.military.com/Careers/Home/>.

To also help in your search, you may want to obtain a copy of your Verification of Military Experience and Training (VMET) document (DD Form 2586). This document contains education and training data on skills you acquired while serving on active duty. The primary purpose of the document is to assist you with your civilian job search by cross-walking military skills into civilian job fields. Information about this document can be found on the following websites:

- https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/vmet/owa/vmet_web_display.login
- http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/vmet/owa/vmet_web_display.showpage?p_PageID=FURTHER%

²Department of Defense. Questions and Answers, Retrieved July 28, 2011 from <http://www.dodvets.com/vetqa.asp>

Attachment B – VA FAQs for Healthcare Jobs

The following selection of FAQs are displayed on the Department of Veterans Affairs Careers website page and presented here for your consideration.³

Q: I'm interested in a VA position I saw online (or in a publication). Why can't I apply for it online?

A: For privacy reasons, many healthcare positions must be applied for via traditional paper applications. Those applications must be made to the VA facility where you desire employment consideration. That address can be found within each job posting.

Q: Where do I find the application and other forms I need to apply for a VA position?

A: When applying for a VA position, you will often be asked to submit various forms, such as an application, a Declaration of Federal Employment, Veterans' preference forms, and others. You can find most of the forms you need in the Job Search section (<http://www.vacareers.va.gov/job-search/>) of the VA Careers website.

Q: I'm having trouble downloading (or can't print) the VA job application and other forms that I need. What should I do?

A: For help in downloading required documents or to obtain paper forms in the mail, contact a recruiter at 1-800-949-0002.

Q: How can I learn the status of my job application?

A: Application processing can take up to 60 days, and in some cases up to 120 days. Since hiring decisions are made locally, you will need to call the VA facility where you submitted your application.

Q: How can I get more information about VA salaries?

A: When available, VA salary information is included within individual job postings. Most often, a Professional Standards Board determines an applicant's starting salary based on experience and level of practice. For many healthcare positions, salaries are based on locality pay scales and regional special salary rates; therefore, specific information may be available from the recruiter at the VA facility where you desire employment. Additional salary information for many positions is available at www.opm.gov.

Attachment B – VA FAQs for Healthcare Jobs *(continued)*

Q: Where can I learn more about VA benefits, especially Education Debt Reduction Program (EDRP) and other education support programs I've heard about?

A: Visit the VA Salary & Benefits section (<http://www.vacareers.va.gov/salary-benefits/>) of the VA Careers website or call 1-800-949-0002.

Q: I'd like to apply for a position, but I'm not a U.S. citizen. Are there any exceptions to this qualification?

A: VA hires U.S. citizens, but there are some exceptions made in certain circumstances. Contact the facility where you desire employment for information.

Q: Does VA incorporate Veterans' preference into its healthcare professional hiring policies?

A: Yes. VA is committed to hiring Veterans, and Veteran status figures prominently in our selection process. For more information, visit the Transitioning Military section (<http://www.vacareers.va.gov/va-you/military/>) of the VA Careers website.

³ Department of Veterans Affairs. FAQ for Healthcare Jobs, retrieved July 28, 2011 from <http://www.vacareers.va.gov/resources/faq-healthcare-jobs.asp>

Attachment C – VA FAQs for Administration and Other Job Applicants

The following selection of FAQs are displayed on the VA Careers website and presented here for your consideration.⁴

Q: What does “DEU” mean and how does it differ from a regular human resources department?

A: DEU stands for Delegated Examining Unit. Within the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), there are eight DEUs located throughout the country servicing VA medical centers. DEUs announce certain open positions to the public (via job postings) that VA facilities do not have the authority to recruit for. Those positions generally include non-healthcare or healthcare support jobs, such as clerks/secretaries, police officers, engineers, food service workers, housekeeping aids, and psychology technicians, to name a few. Medical center HR departments have the authority to recruit directly from the public for professional medical positions, such as physicians, RNs, LPNs, social workers, psychologists, pharmacists, etc. Currently, the DEU does not post job announcements for those types of healthcare positions.

Q: I have questions about a job announcement, such as the duties, tour of duty, etc. Who should I contact?

A: Rather than the DEU, you should contact the HR department at the facility where the position is located.

Q: I can't print the announcement or required forms. What should I do?

A: If you do not have access to a computer with printing capabilities, you can go to the nearest VA medical center Human Resources Management Office to obtain all of the required forms and a copy of the announcement.

Q: What happens to my faxed assessment questionnaire and supporting documents?

A: All documents are faxed to the central scanning center in Macon, GA, where they are matched to the correct announcement by the vacancy ID number. The assessment is scanned electronically. If you have completed your assessment online and then faxed supporting documents, they will be matched to your assessment. You should keep a copy of the fax receipt showing that all pages were received.

Q: I want to talk to someone at the DEU about general questions, but the voicemail system says that only messages from preference-eligible Veterans requesting reconsideration, as well as disabled applicants requiring help, will be answered. Why?

A: Please review this entire FAQ section to find the answers to your questions. Detailed instructions are also located within each job announcement. If you still have questions, you can contact the VA human resources office listed in the announcement.

⁴ Department of Veterans Affairs. FAQs for Administration and Other Job Applicants General Questions, Retrieved on July 28, 2011 from <http://www.vacareers.va.gov/resources/faq-other-jobs.asp>

Attachment D – Action Verbs

Management skills

- administered
- analyzed
- assigned
- attained
- chaired
- contracted
- consolidated
- coordinated
- delegated
- developed
- directed
- evaluated
- executed
- improved
- increased
- organized
- oversaw
- planned
- prioritized
- produced
- recommended
- reviewed
- scheduled
- strengthened
- supervised

Communication skills

- addressed
- arbitrated
- arranged
- authored
- corresponded
- developed

- directed
- drafted
- edited
- enlisted
- formulated
- influenced
- interpreted
- lectured
- mediated
- moderated
- motivated
- negotiated
- persuaded
- promoted
- publicized
- reconciled
- recruited
- spoke
- translated
- wrote

Clerical or detailed skills

- approved
- arranged
- catalogued
- classified
- collected
- compiled
- dispatched
- executed
- generated
- implemented
- inspected
- monitored

- operated
- organized
- prepared
- organized
- prepared
- processed
- purchased
- recorded
- retrieved
- screened
- specified
- systematized
- tabulated
- validated

Research skills

- clarified
- collected
- critiqued
- diagnosed
- evaluated
- examined
- extracted
- identified
- inspected
- interpreted
- interviewed
- investigated
- organized
- reviewed
- summarized
- surveyed
- systematized

Attachment D – Action Verbs *(continued)*

Technical skills

- assembled
- built
- calculated
- computed
- designed
- devised
- engineered
- fabricated
- maintained
- operated
- overhauled
- programmed
- remodeled
- repair
- solved
- trained
- upgraded

Teaching skills

- adapted
- advised
- clarified
- coached
- communicated
- coordinated
- developed

- enabled
- encouraged
- evaluated
- explained
- facilitated
- guided
- informed
- initiated
- instructed
- persuaded
- set goals
- stimulated

Financial skills

- administered
- allocated
- analyzed
- appraised
- audited
- balanced
- budgeted
- calculated
- computed
- developed
- forecasted
- managed
- marketed
- planned
- projected
- researched

Creative skills

- acted
- conceptualized
- created
- designed
- developed

- directed
- established
- fashioned
- founded
- illustrated
- instituted
- integrated
- introduced
- invented
- originated
- performed
- planned
- revitalized
- shaped

Helping skills

- assessed
- assisted
- clarified
- coached
- counseled
- demonstrated
- diagnosed
- educated
- expedited
- facilitated
- familiarized
- guided
- referred
- rehabilitated
- represented

Attachment E – Avoiding the Top 10 Resume Mistakes

According to Military.com, it's deceptively easy to make mistakes on your resume and exceptionally difficult to repair the damage once an employer gets it. So prevention is critical, especially if you've never written one before. Here are the most common pitfalls and how you can avoid them.⁵

1. Typos and Grammatical Errors

Your resume needs to be grammatically perfect. If it isn't, employers will read between the lines and draw not-so-flattering conclusions about you, like: "This person can't write," or "This person obviously doesn't care."

2. Lack of Specifics

Employers need to understand what you've done and accomplished. For example:

- A. Worked with employees in a restaurant setting.
- B. Recruited, hired, trained and supervised more than 20 employees in a restaurant with \$2 million in annual sales.

Both of these phrases could describe the same person, but the details and specifics in example B will more likely grab an employer's attention.

3. Attempting One Size Fits All

Whenever you try to develop a one-size-fits-all resume to send to all employers, you almost always end up with something employers will toss in the recycle bin. Employers want you to write a resume specifically for them. They expect you to clearly show how and why you fit the position in a specific organization.

4. Highlighting Duties Instead of Accomplishments

It's easy to slip into a mode where you simply start listing job duties on your resume. For example:

- Attended group meetings and recorded minutes.
- Worked with children in a day-care setting.
- Updated departmental files.

Employers, however, don't care so much about what you've done as what you've accomplished in your various activities. They're looking for statements more like these:

- Used laptop computer to record weekly meeting minutes and compiled them in a Microsoft Word-based file for future organizational reference.
- Developed three daily activities for preschool-age children and prepared them for a 10-minute holiday program performance.
- Reorganized 10 years worth of unwieldy files, making them easily accessible to department members.

5. Going on Too Long or Cutting Things Too Short

Despite what you may read or hear, there are no real rules governing the length of your resume. Why? Because human beings, who have different preferences and expectations where resumes are concerned, will be reading it.

That doesn't mean you should start sending out five-page resumes, of course. Generally speaking, you usually need to limit yourself to a maximum of two pages. But don't feel you have to use two pages if one will do. Conversely, don't cut the meat out of your resume simply to make it conform to an arbitrary one-page standard.

Many Federal resumes should not go back further than 10-15 years. Often this is due to character limitations when submitting the resume online and relevancy of work experience. For example: An IT position worked 18 years ago is probably no longer relevant to the skills needed for a new position in IT.

Attachment E – Avoiding the Top 10 Resume Mistakes

(continued)

Here are a few parameters when entering information into federal databases:

6. A Bad Objective

Employers do read your resume's objective statement, but too often they plow through vague pufferies like, "Seeking a challenging position that offers professional growth." Give employers something specific and, more importantly, something that focuses on their needs as well as your own. Example: "A challenging entry-level marketing position that allows me to contribute my skills and experience in fund-raising for nonprofits."

7. No Action Verbs

Avoid using phrases like "responsible for." Instead, use action verbs: "Resolved user questions as part of an IT help desk serving 4,000 students and staff."

8. Leaving Off Important Information

You may be tempted, for example, to eliminate mention of the jobs you've taken to earn extra money for school. Typically, however, the soft skills you've gained from these experiences (such as, work ethic, time management) are more important to employers than you might think.

9. Visually Too Busy

If your resume is wall-to-wall text featuring five different fonts, it will most likely give the employer a headache. So show your resume to several other people before sending it out. Do they find it visually attractive? If what you have is hard on the eyes, revise.

10. Incorrect Contact Information

I once worked with a student whose resume seemed incredibly strong, but he wasn't getting any bites from employers. So one day, I jokingly asked him if the phone number he'd listed on his resume was correct. It wasn't. Once he changed it, he started getting the calls he'd been expecting. Moral of the story: Double-check even the most minute, taken-for-granted details -- sooner rather than later.

⁵ Avoid the Top 10 Resume Mistakes, Retrieved July 27, 2011 from <http://www.military.com/Veteran-jobs/content/career-advice/resume-writing/avoid-the-top-10-resume-mistakes.html>

Attachment F – Resume Tips for Making the Transition

According to Military.com, you're leaving the service and are faced with the daunting task of developing your resume. No doubt your military career is studded with accomplishments, but even the most decorated Veteran needs to figure out how to make the transition to a civilian position. Follow these tips to draft a high-impact resume that shows how your military experience is transferable to a civilian job.⁶

Define Your Civilian Job Objective

You can't effectively market yourself for a civilian job if you don't have a clearly defined goal. Because so many service people have diverse backgrounds, they often make the mistake of creating resumes that are too general to be effective. Before writing your resume, do some soul searching, research occupations and pinpoint a specific career path. If you're having trouble with this step, tap into your local transition office or solicit the help of a career coach. If you're torn between two or more potential goals, set up different resumes

Create a Resume That Speaks to Employers' Needs

Now that your objective is defined, you're ready to create a winning resume. Consider a resume's purpose: To answer the employer's question, "What can this person do for me?"

A great way to start thinking about employers' needs is to research your target job. Search for jobs, scour company Web sites and read as many job postings as possible. What types of skills and experiences are employers seeking? What aspects of your background are most relevant?

Any information that does not relate to your goal should be eliminated or de-emphasized, and this includes any unrelated military awards, training and distinctions. For example, that medal you won for rifle marksmanship doesn't belong on a civilian resume. This is often the hardest step for ex-military personnel, which is why it's so common to see military resumes span five pages or more. As you decide which information to include, ask yourself, "Will a potential employer care about this experience?" Only include information that will help you land an interview.

Assume No Knowledge of the Military

Demilitarize your job titles, duties, accomplishments, training and awards to appeal to civilian hiring managers. Employers with no exposure to the military don't understand the terminology and acronyms, so translate these into civilianese. Show your resume to several nonmilitary friends and ask them to point out terms they don't understand. Refer to job postings for help substituting civilian keywords for military terms.

Attachment F – Resume Tips for Making the Transition

(continued)

Showcase Your Accomplishments

Your military career has offered you excellent opportunities for training, practical experience and advancement. Tout your accomplishments so the average civilian understands the importance of your achievements and the measurable outcomes.

Here's an example of a demilitarized accomplishment statement:

Increased employee retention rate by 16 percent by focusing on training, team building and recognition programs. Earned reputation as one of the most progressive and innovative IT organizations in the Army's communications and IT community.

Here's an example of incorporating a military award so employers understand its value:

Received Army Achievement Medal for completing 400+ medical evaluations and developing patient database using MS Access. The database improved reporting functions and tracked patient demographics, records, medication, appointments and status.

Flaunt Your Military Background

You might have heard you need to develop a functional resume format to mask or downplay your military experience, but the opposite is true. Your military experience is an asset and should be marketed as such. Many employers realize the value of bringing Veterans on board. Attributes honed in the military include dedication, leadership, teamwork, positive work ethic and cross-functional skills. If you fear a potential employer won't realize the significance of your military experience, make sure your resume clearly communicates the value you bring to the table.

If You Were in Active Combat, Leave out the Details

Defending your country and its interests is among the most admirable pursuits, but the sad truth is actual references to the horrors of combat leave many employers squeamish. While you might have worked in a short-range air defense engagement zone, this experience might not relate to your future goal. Tone down or remove references to the battlefield.

Test-Drive Your Resume

For some Veterans, developing a resume that works in the civilian world is an ongoing process. After you've polished your resume, start your distribution and keep track of your resume's response rate. Solicit feedback and listen carefully to suggestions for improving your resume. Continue modifying the document until it successfully generates job interviews.

⁶ Out of Uniform: Resume Tips for Making the Transition, Retrieved July 27, 2011 from <http://www.military.com/veteran-jobs/content/career-advice/military-transition/military-to-civilian-transition-resume-tips.html>

Attachment G – Veterans' Preference FAQs

Q: What special skill sets and qualities does a Veteran bring to the organization?

A: Ready supply of needed skills. Due to the cutting-edge training and education the military offers, Veterans and transitioning service members have technical skills in areas of critical importance: acquisition, information technology, communications, security, information gathering, and medical technology. Many already hold required security clearances for some Federal positions.

Q: What is Veterans' preference?

A: Veterans' preference in its present form comes from the Veterans' Preference Act of 1944, as amended, and is now codified in various provisions of Title 5, U. S. Code. By law, Veterans who are disabled or who served on active duty in the Armed Forces during certain specified time periods or in military campaigns are entitled to preference over others in hiring from competitive lists of eligibles and also in retention during reductions in force. In addition to receiving preference in competitive appointments, Veterans may be considered for special noncompetitive appointments for which only they are eligible.

Q: Why is Veterans' preference given?

A: Since the time of the Civil War, Veterans of the Armed Forces have been given some degree of preference in appointments to Federal jobs. Recognizing their sacrifice, Congress enacted laws to prevent Veterans seeking Federal employment from being penalized for their time in military service. Veterans' preference recognizes the economic loss suffered by citizens who have served their country in uniform, restores Veterans to a favorable competitive position for Federal Government employment, and acknowledges the larger obligation owed to disabled Veterans.

Q: When does Veterans' preference apply?

A: Preference in hiring applies to permanent and temporary positions in the competitive and excepted services of the Executive Branch. Preference does not apply to positions in the Senior Executive Service or to Executive Branch positions for which Senate confirmation is required. The legislative and judicial branches of the Federal Government also are exempt from the Veterans' Preference Act unless the positions are in the competitive service (Government Printing Office, for example) or have been made subject to the Act by another law. Preference applies in hiring from civil service examinations conducted by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and agencies under delegated examining authority for most excepted service jobs including Veterans Recruitment Appointments (VRA), and when agencies make temporary, term, and overseas limited appointments. Veterans' preference does not apply to promotion, reassignment, change to lower grade, transfer or reinstatement.

Note: Veterans' preference does not require an agency to use any particular appointment process.

Attachment G – Veterans' Preference FAQs *(continued)*

Q: What special skill sets and qualities does a Veteran bring to the organization?

A: Ready supply of needed skills. Due to the cutting-edge training and education the military offers, Veterans and transitioning service members have technical skills in areas of critical importance: acquisition, information technology, communications, security, information gathering, and medical technology. Many already hold required security clearances for some Federal positions.

Q: How can a Veteran or employer determine eligibility for Veterans' preference?

A: The Department of Labor's Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy (OASP) and Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) developed an online, interactive system called the Veterans' Preference Advisor to help Veterans understand:

- Whether or not they are eligible to receive Veterans' preference,
- The type of preference to which they may be entitled,
- The benefits associated with the preference, and
- The steps necessary to file a complaint due to the failure of a Federal Agency to provide those benefits.

The Veterans' Preference Advisor leads the inquirer through a series of questions to determine eligibility and provides specific information and instructions for filing a complaint. It is important to note that the tool is intended to be a first step and to provide general information, but it does not offer definitive advice regarding an individual's Veterans' preference entitlement. The Veterans' Preference Advisor can be accessed at the Department of Labor's website under elaws Advisors.

Q: What are the different Veterans' preferences?

A: Veterans' preference uses a numerical rating system. Veterans receive additional points for their status as a Military Service Member either while they served or as they currently serve.

Attachment G – Veterans' Preference FAQs *(continued)*

Q: How can I find out what kind of Veterans' preference I have?

A: The Department of Labor's Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy (OASP) and Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) has an "expert system" to help Veterans assess the preferences to which they are entitled. Two versions of this system are currently available, both of which help disabled Veterans determine the type of preference to which they are entitled, and the benefits associated with the preference.

Q: What is a "Derived Preference" for hiring consideration?

A: Derived preference, available to eligible spouses (including widows or widowers), is based on the qualifying service of a Veteran who is not able to work. Under certain circumstances, mothers of deceased or disabled Veterans are also eligible for derived preference. Derived preference follows the same appointment process as Veterans' preference.

Q: How does Veterans' preference impact the numerical rating for a job position selection?

A: Under the numerical rating system, Veterans are afforded preference points based on their classification. The points gained through this preference are added to their overall rating based on knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) and experience.

Q: What are the classifications of Veterans who are eligible for Veterans' Preference?

A: There are four classifications of Veterans' preference:

Classification	Description	Preference Points
TP	Preference eligible with no disability rating	5
CPS	Disability rating of 30% or more	10
CP	Disability rating of at least 10% but less than 30%	10
XP	Disability rating less than 10%	10

Attachment G – Veterans’ Preference FAQs *(continued)*

Q: If I believe my or another’s Veterans’ preference rights may have been violated, where can I file a complaint?

A: Preference eligibles who believe their rights under any law or regulation relating to Veterans’ preference have been violated may seek information or file a complaint with the Department of Labor’s Veterans’ Employment and Training Service (VETS). Complaints must be filed in writing and within 60 days after the date of the alleged violation. The VETS Staff Directory on the Department of Labor website lists the locations for the National Offices, and Regional and State Offices.

Q: What does the Veterans’ Employment and Training Service (VETS) do with my complaint?

A: Upon receipt of the initial complaint, filed within 60 days of an alleged violation, VETS conducts an investigation to determine if the claimant’s Veterans’ preference rights have been infringed upon or if a claimant was denied the opportunity to compete under merit promotion procedures when the agency is accepting applications from outside its workforce. If VETS determines that the case has merit, every effort is made to resolve it. If a resolution is not reached in a timely manner, or in cases of appeal, the claimant may elect to elevate the complaint to the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB).

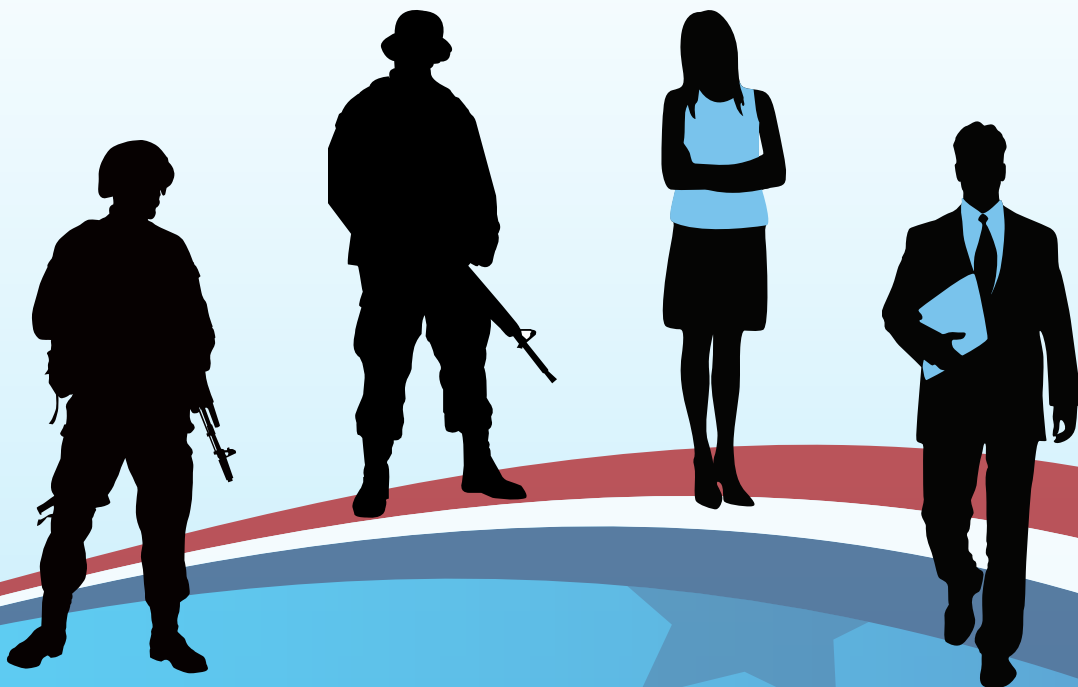
Q: Can a Veteran be eligible for multiple classifications?

A: No. A Veteran can meet the specifications for multiple classifications but they can only select one for consideration and inclusion for their numerical rating.

Q: Where can I get more information about Veterans’ preference?

A: Specific details regarding Veterans’ preference can be found in the Vet Guide on the OPM website and the Feds Hire Vets website. You may also submit questions to “Ask an Expert” on the VA for Vets website.

Let the *VA for Vets* help you!



VA **for** VETS

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