

Debunking the Worst USAJOBS Federal Application Myths

by Kathryn Troutman

www.resume-place.com

Federal jobseekers need to have confidence in the USAJOBS automated application system for federal promotions. These comments and complaints are the most prevalent among federal jobseekers. It's time to debunk the myths and apply for more federal jobs the right away.

True or False?

USAJOBS resumes are scanned for keywords by an automated system.

NOT TRUE.

USAJOBS federal resumes are scanned real people, by HUMAN RESOURCES SPECIALISTS who actually read the resumes. And HR specialists do read for keywords. The HR specialists either read the resumes on the screen or print them to review, then determine the Best Qualified and prepare the List of Certified Eligible Candidates for the supervisor.

True or False?

On USAJOBS announcements, the KSAs were eliminated on Nov. 1, 2010.

MOSTLY TRUE.

Most federal agency Human Capital Officers are attempting to comply with the 11/1/10 Executive Initiative by President Obama, to eliminate the separate written narratives - KSAs - from initial applications. This is a recommendation, not a law. So, you will still find the KSAs written in the vacancy announcement. There could be instructions to include examples or language in your resume or it's possible that you may have to write them later if you are referred to a supervisor.

Additionally, the KSA accomplishments will be critical for your Structured Interview with a federal agency.

Here is some good news: The long written KSA narratives will mostly be eliminated, but the short four- to six-line mini-KSAs are going to thrive with these accomplishments inside the federal resume.

True or False?

When you apply for a job through USAJOBS, you never hear from anyone after you apply for a federal job.

NOT TRUE, USUALLY.

The USAJOBS Answer Tracking System is good for tracking the application. In President Obama's initiative, he asked federal human resources specialists to communicate more and more frequently with jobseekers. You can see all kinds of information, i.e., if you are found eligible, best qualified, referred, did not meet minimum qualifications or were best qualified, but not among the most qualified.

True or False?

You have to add the street addresses for each employer for your entire career in the USAJOBS federal resume.

NOT TRUE.

You only have to add city, state and zip of employers in the last 10 years.

True or False?

You have to include your college and high school years of graduation in the USAJOBS resume builder.

NOT TRUE.

You do not have to add college and high school graduation dates, which in some cases could indicate ages of applicants who are over 50. I recommend not including dates in 1970s and '80s on the resume.

True or False?

Your USAJOBS resume is your life history.

NOT TRUE.

The official instructions for "What to Include in your Federal Resume" state that you should include Recent and Relevant positions for the job. Recent in this case means 10 years. You can add positions older than 10 years, but keep those jobs shorter and don't include anything over 20 years old. Relevant would be any job that demonstrates specialized experience for the position. The former application form, SF-171, was considered to be a life history application.

True or False?

When you apply through ApplicationManager.gov or USAJOBS.gov, you can't get the score of your federal resume.

NOT TRUE.

You can get your score. Sometimes your resume / questionnaire score will be posted in application tracking pages of both of these automated application sites. Sometimes the HR specialist will simply write that you were Eligible, Best Qualified or Referred without the score.

If the score isn't posted, you can request your score by emailing the HR representative from the same email address that is in your application. This information will help you on your future applications. For instance, if your score is 99 and you were not referred to a supervisor, it might indicate a veteran had extra points and the veteran's application rose to the top of the list. Or, if you are Eligible but not Referred and your score is 89 or 92, you might want to work on the resume to improve it and make it match the announcement better. Some of the specialized experience could be missing.

True or False?

You can simply upload your private industry resume into the USAJOBS builder now and start applying for federal jobs.

Technically, yes, you can do this.

BUT if the resume you upload does not include all of the information required on the federal resume, you will not be considered for a federal position. To be considered, the resume must contain: work experience, month and year; hours per week worked; supervisor's names and contact numbers; city, state and zip of employers. Additionally, the uploaded resume may not upload along with the various questionnaire systems that different agencies use. The Resume Builder is a safer application.

True or False?

When you apply for a position with USAJOBS, if you check off that you will accept a Permanent position, you will also be considered for Temp or Term positions.

NOT TRUE.

You must check off each type of position you will consider. It is advantageous to check off as many types of positions that you can accept, because Temp or Term positions may be convert to Permanent positions later.