

COMPLIMENTARY ASSISTANCE DOCUMENT

Thank you for investigating our services, here is a summary of the employment sites we use Nation Wide to help our enrollees search for employment. We have also identified and explained some traps associated with the sites to help you through your search should you go further without help

There is also an evaluation procedure included to help you read effectively government vacancy announcements.

Websites - Most of the sites we use, which should be relevant to your search areas.

<http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/> - This is the main website for the Federal government. The vast majority of Federal jobs are listed here in some capacity. There are other federal organizations that do not advertise on this site, and there is an additional resource to find them. However, there are traps with using this site.

1. **No closing date.** If there is no closing date to a position, then it is usually a pool announcement and there is no guarantee that a position actually exists. Most likely, the government organization that posted it is doing so to solicit resumes for reporting purposes, needs additional prospective applicants for potential openings, and for other reasons other than actually hiring someone. It is similar to when a large corporation lists every single job they possibly could have on Monster, Hot Jobs or another employment site. Actually they are not necessarily hiring for that opening. Read very closely a vacancy announcement that does not have a closing date.
2. **Closing date far into the future.** If a position has a closing date that is several months into the future, or is open for an entire year, you may have missed out. What you need to look for is the **FIRST INTERMEDIATE CUT-OFF DATE**. The government will set interim deadlines, and will fill the opening only with the applications they receive prior to the first cut-off date. Any applications that they receive after the cut-off date will only be considered if the first group did not meet their qualifications or if additional positions occur. If you find the announcement, and submit your application prior to that date, then you are actually applying for an open job. If you apply after the intermediate cut-off date, then you are submitting your resume to an announcement that may or may not have a position associated with it.
3. **Very large pay ranges.** Certain government vacancy announcements will list a pay range from GS-1 to GS-15. When you see this giant pay range, look very carefully at the announcement. It may be a position, or it may be nothing at all. Look in the announcement to see what the promotion potential is. So, if you see a position that says GS-5 with promotional

potential to GS-12, then that is OK (as long as it does not break any of the other rules), but if it does not discuss promotion potential, then watch out, they may be up to something else. In many instances, when you see these announcements, you may need to look and see whether you need to go to an additional site to see where the positions actually are. Quite often, these announcements are notifications of a job category, and will also indicate that there may or may not be current openings.

4. **Nationwide announcements.** Any positions listed below the heading of "Start of National or Worldwide announcements" are basically a crap-shoot about whether there are actual openings where you want them to be. The reason is that the government does not indicate up front where the position is located, and it may not exist in the specific area where you want to work. There are some announcements that are legitimately listed there, for example the DEA, ATF and other similar regulatory organizations list their positions in this section, because as a condition of employment, an employee's duty station is assigned nationwide after training, but positions that do not fit into this category of employment, and are listed in this section have something that the government is hiding just below the surface. You should concentrate on positions that list a specific location, rather than nationwide recruitment.
5. **Field Operating Office of Office of the Army.** Especially for people in Eastern half of the US, avoid any announcement from this organization like the plague. These announcements are USUALLY sent out by the Western hiring authority for the Department of the Army, and therefore do not have positions in the Eastern half of the US. Additionally, most of these positions are also listed under what is described under bullet 4, which is a second strike against it. When you open any announcement from this organization, you first need to look and see whether they immediately refer you to a second website. If they do, then there is nothing there, or if there is something, it is in the western half of the US. Also, if the announcement lists a series of four digit GS codes under the same announcement, then there is nothing there. Be very, very careful in looking at these.

*** There is an exception to this rule. If this organization lists a position with a specific duty location (in your case, Pennsylvania) then it is a viable position. Again, if this organization does not list a specific duty station, then there probably is nothing there. ***

6. **Air Force 443 announcements.** Any announcement that has the following distinction: from the Air Force and the code "443" requires membership in the Reserves as a condition of employment. If you are willing to do this, then this is viable position. If you are not willing or unable to make this additional commitment, then it is not a viable opportunity.

7. **US Army Reserve Command.** Same as number six, except that this is the Army rather than the Air Force.
8. **Who may apply.** This is the last trap that the government is that, even though the announcement is listed under their section designated for all US Citizens, they will sneak in limitations of who is allowed to apply. When reading a position, you will also need to look very carefully at that section to see whether you are allowed to apply. The phrase that you are looking for is "open to all US citizens with or without Civil Service Status." If it says that, or relays that message to you, then it is an option for you.

<http://www.donhr.navy.mil/Jobs/default.asp> - This is the main site for the US Navy. Many of the positions that are listed on this site are pool announcements and may not actually have jobs associated with them. Look very skeptically at any position that has one or more of the following characteristics, as described above with USAJOBS:

1. Large pay range.
2. No closing date.
3. Closing date far into the future.

There is an additional issue with this site that you need to be aware of:

1. Duty stations of Mechanicsburg, PA, Philadelphia, PA and Lakehurst, NJ. - When you see these three duty stations, ***listed in this website***, then read it very carefully to see whether the position is actually there, or whether they are referring you to the regional Human Resource Office, which is located in this region at those three stations. If you see this duty station, followed by one or more of the preceding four characteristics on no closing date, large pay range, etc., then it is probably not a job, but a solicitation for resumes for potential openings serviced by one of those three Human Resource Offices.

<http://cpol.army.mil/va/scripts/public.html> - This site is very straightforward and direct. The only thing you really need to lookout for is the Who can apply section. Tobyhanna, PA has a tendency to list a series of promotional announcements on this site. If you read an opening that is titled "Merit Promotion Announcement" then it is not something you can apply for. Also, this site will have positions that have a very large list of different categories of eligible applicants. For each announcement, read this section very carefully, and as long as you qualify in one of those categories, then you can apply.

<http://www.govtjobs.com/jobsourc.html> - This is another private service similar to CS that has summarized resources at the federal, state and local level. It lists additional federal resources to help fill in the gaps not serviced by USAJOBS.

How to determine whether to apply for a job?

In determining whether an individual could apply for a job, it is a negative process where I am looking for a reason that an individual does not meet the advertised qualifications. Once there is a "no," then the position is not a viable option, and I do not read any further. Here is a structured approach that I do to try and identify positions.

1. **Look at the "Who may apply" section.** - This is the preliminary factor you should use. If you do not fit one of the categories that the government states are allowed to apply, then there is no point to read any further, it is not something for you. The list of who can apply is generally listed near the top of the announcement and will itemize out the individual categories. In USAJOBS, the way to limit the number of positions that do not apply to you is to indicate that you do not have any special appointing authority on the webpage where you set your search parameters. Most other sites do not have this type of limitation, so you will have to go through one by one.

There is a trap, though, with USAJOBS. It is necessary to still read the Who may apply section, even though you indicated on USAJOBS that you are an outside applicant. Some positions, which are actually for internal applicants, are still listed under the section for external applicants. You should always look at the "who may apply" section of every vacancy announcement.

*** First major exception to this guideline. When looking at the Navy site listed above, most if not all positions with an "indefinite" deadline are for internal applicants only. When reading the descriptions, they are nothing but internal resume solicitations. Do not bother with them at all.***

*** Second major exception to this guideline. If you are a veteran with VEOA or other eligibility, it is very difficult to impossible to limit the search engines to only refer positions that are for Veterans only. Those positions are grouped in with the rest of the positions for internal applicants. So, when veteran's search USAJOBS, they need to read the "who to apply" section very closely to see whether they are allowed to apply.***

2. **Look at Duty Location** - Positions will list the duty station. If you are unwilling to go to the duty station to work, then this is not a viable option for you and then you should not read any further. When there are multiple duty stations associated with a single position, the government will give you a mechanism to identify which specific duty station you are interested in applying.
3. **Look at the Minimum Qualifications** - This is next aspect that is of the most importance. You need to read the minimum qualification section and make a determination of whether you meet and demonstrate that you have what the government requires. If you do not think that you can adequately demonstrate them in your resume, application or other submission, then this the announcement is not something for you to consider any further. The government's qualifications are considered hard, meaning if you are lacking something that they require, then they

will automatically reject your application. It is, therefore, imperative that you demonstrate in your resume, application and other submissions how you meet the minimum qualifications they require.

4. **Look for any additional, special requirements** - The government will sometimes sneak in additional requirements beyond what they call the minimum requirements, but in reality, they still are minimum requirements because they say that successful applicants will demonstrate possession of the additional requirement. If this section exists, read it carefully and see whether you meet this additional requirement.
5. **Look at the actual job duties section** - Now that you have determined in your own mind that you have the minimum qualifications, are willing to travel to the location where the job is, and are allowed to apply, then read and see if it is a job you are interested in doing. It is only valuable to look at the job duties section only after you determine that you are eligible to apply, are willing to go to the duty station and meet any minimum and special requirements.
6. **Look at the Rating Factors section (or KSA or Testing)** - The next way to evaluate whether a position is a viable one is to look at the section of the vacancy announcement that itemizes how the government will further evaluate candidates. There are two different ways to approach this:
 - a. **Tests** - If there is a civil service test, this is mechanism that the government will use to evaluate you as a potential applicant. The higher you score, the better candidate they see you as.
 - b. **Rating Factors** - When there are rating factors, the government is in reality asking you interview questions, and expecting you to provide written responses back to them. When looking at a position, you need to also determine whether you will have the general ability to provide an answer the questions they are asking. In some instances, the government will also indicate which ones are central, and of the most importance, and which are not as important.

If a KSA or rating factor has the designation of a "screen-out element," then it is another mandatory requirement. If you cannot demonstrate that you possess the screen-out element, then the position is not viable.

The government will also list a KSA or rating factor that contains a requirement that can only be obtained by actually working for the government, then there may be a problem. However, there are ways around that. Say, for example, that the ratings factor is something that you may have experience with in another way. A good example of this is in government inspection. Many people have experience in abiding by and privately implementing regulations, when they want to be regulators, it is necessary for them to discuss how their implementation of regulations will then qualify them to enforce regulations. In looking at the rating factors, you need to

determine how well you can provide answers to their questions. If you generally think you can, then it is an option for you.

7. **Look at what needs to be done to apply** - The next step is look at the how to apply section, to determine what exactly needs to be done, and whether you can get it done in a timely manner.
8. **Look at the closing date** - The next element you need to assess is the closing date. There are two things you need to determine with this piece of information. First, you need to see whether the government requires the applications be received by the closing date, or only postmarked by the closing date to receive consideration. After you know what the exact deadline is, you then need to assess whether you have the ability to complete what is required to apply prior to the government's deadline. If you think that you will be able to complete the application prior to the government's deadline, then it is viable and continue on. If not, then it is not a viable option.

If a position meets all of the following categories, then it is a viable option for you. As you can see, it is a very involved process and there is a substantial amount of information that needs to be evaluated prior making an application.

Though you have chosen not to use our service, this booklet was designed to help you without our assistance. Should you proceed with this process on your own, and have any questions, please feel free to e-mail us at info@careersystemsllc.com. As a professional courtesy, we will respond to your inquiry in a timely manner.

We wish you the very best in your endeavors and all of your career objectives.

Thank you,

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