



HOW TO APPLY TO FEDERAL POSITIONS ON USAJOBS®

"WORKING FOR AMERICA"

Applying to positions through USAJobs can be a confusing and frustrating experience. With that in mind, NSEP has created this tip sheet to help demystify the application process. Use the five tips below to ensure that your application is rated "Best Qualified" and increase your chances of being referred for an interview.

1. USE KEYWORDS IN YOUR RESUME

Although you may be tempted to send out a generic resume for each position, taking the time to tailor your application to each position will yield the most effective results. Carefully review the vacancy announcement and identify the important keywords and phrases. The keywords can be found in the **Duties**, **Requirements** and **Qualifications** sections of the announcement.

Many positions processed through USAJobs do an initial evaluation based on the appearance of these keywords, which are identified and counted by an automated system. Use the keywords and exact language from the announcement in your own resume as much as possible.

Qualifications

GS-05: You qualify at the GS-05 level if you possess three (3) years of progressively responsible experience, one year of which was experience equivalent to the GS-04 grade level, which has equipped you with the skills needed to successfully perform the duties of the position. You must have experience performing the following duties:

- Analyzing problems, gathering pertinent data, and recognizing solutions; methodically planning and organizing work to ensure timely completion; communicating clearly, both orally and in writing, and providing excellent customer service in person-to-person situations. Such experience may have been gained in administrative, professional, technical, investigative, or other responsible work. Experience in

2. ADVERTISE YOUR SPECIAL HIRING AUTHORITIES

Boren award recipients have two special hiring authorities available to them: **Schedule A** and **NDAA'13**. Advertise your non-competitive eligibility in the **Additional Information** section of your USAJobs resume. When claiming non-competitive eligibility, make sure to also submit a Letter of Certification with your application. Letters of Certification can be requested through NSEPnet.org.

Additional Information:

SPECIAL HIRING AUTHORITIES

Schedule A, 5 CFR 213.3102 (r): Eligible to be hired for federal positions without competition and for a period of up to four years

National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2013 (NDAA'13): Excepted service non-competitive eligibility with conversion to a career or career-conditional appointment upon completion of two years of substantially continuous service.

Additionally, please be aware that Schedule A Disability is different from Schedule A for NSEP award recipients. When creating a profile on USAJobs, the system prompts applicants to select their special hiring authorities from a menu of options. **DO NOT** check “Schedule A Disabled” unless you have a qualifying disability.

Special Hiring Options [?]

Optional

Select from among the special hiring authorities listed below for which you are eligible. (Please note that agencies will require documentation of eligibility prior to your appointment.)

- ☐ Veterans Recruitment Appointment (VRA)
- ☐ 30% or More Disabled Veteran
- ☐ Disabled veterans who have completed a VA training program
- ☐ Military Spouse
- ☐ Certain former overseas employees
- ☐ Schedule A Disabled

3.

SUBMIT ALL REQUIRED INFORMATION

Carefully read the **Required Documents** section and ensure that your application materials include all of the necessary information. Many federal job announcements require applicants to include information such as employer addresses, previous salary history, and supervisors’ names and contact numbers. If your application does not include the required information, you may be disqualified. For this reason, it is not advisable to use your private industry resume when applying to positions through USAJobs. Always utilize the USAJobs resume builder to ensure that your resume contains all required information.

Required Documents

To apply for this position, you must provide a complete Application Package by the closing date of this announcement, which includes:

1. Your Resume showing relevant experience; cover letter required.
2. Writing Sample (Not to exceed ten (10) pages)
3. A complete Assessment Questionnaire
4. Other supporting documents (submit if applicable to you):
 - Non-Competitive or Special Hiring Authority documentation. For further information:
<http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/hiring-authorities/competitive-hiring/#url=Types-of-Appointments>

4.

BE CONFIDENT IN YOUR SKILLS

Most positions require applicants to rate their skills and experience in an online Occupational Questionnaire. The answers to the Occupational Questionnaire are evaluated by an automated system. If you rate your abilities too low, you will be rejected at the outset. This does not mean that you should lie or exaggerate your abilities. However, be confident in your skills. Feel free to draw on experiences outside of full-time work, such as volunteer positions, internships, or school activities, to answer the questions. If you rate yourself as well-qualified or an expert at performing a particular task, make sure that your resume supports that qualification.

11. Collaborate with colleagues for the purpose of gathering, exchanging, and interpreting legal information.

- ☐ A. I have not had education, training, or experience in performing this task.
- ☐ B. I have had education or training in how to perform this task, but have not yet performed it on the job.
- ☐ C. I have performed this task on the job. My work on this task was monitored closely by a supervisor or senior employee to ensure compliance with proper procedures.
- ☐ D. I have performed this task as a regular part of a job. I have performed it independently and normally without review by a supervisor or senior employee.
- ☐ E. I am considered an expert in performing this task. I have supervised performance of this task or am normally the person who is consulted by other workers to assist or train them in doing this task because of my expertise.

5.

FOLLOW UP WITH HUMAN RESOURCES

After submitting your application on USAJobs, it can be worthwhile to immediately follow up with the Human Resources point of contact listed in the vacancy announcement.

Email the HR team and inform them of your special hiring privileges and request that your application be forwarded to the HR Specialist. Make sure to reference the job announcement number in the subject line of the email and attach all of your application materials, as well as your NSEP Letter of Certification.

You may not always receive a response, but it can be an effective way to advertise your special hiring authorities and flag your application for review by the HR Specialist.

Citizenship and Immigration Services

Contact

HR OPERATIONS CENTER-TEAM THREE

Phone: (802)660-1147

Email: HROCTEAM3@USCIS.DHS.GOV

QUICK TIP: Review this USAJobs posting and scan for keywords and required skills and experience. Then, check out our sample federal resume to see how a prospective applicant might incorporate keywords into their own application for the Immigration Services Officer position. For the most effective results, always tailor your resume to each position.

IMMIGRATION SERVICES OFFICER U.S. CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES

POSITION DUTIES

- **Research and interpret** an extensive spectrum of sources including: immigration laws and regulations, operating instructions, legislative history, precedent decisions, state and local laws, international treaties and other legal references in order to follow the correct course of action.
- **Process immigration applications and petitions** using available electronic systems to verify Numerous established data points.
- **Interview applicants and petitioners** to elicit statements in order to assess credibility to determine the applicant's eligibility for specific benefits sought.
- **Provide customer service** to customers via telephone, e-mail, and fax in a professional manner while utilizing the most up to date technologies in communicating with them.
- **Communicating and deciphering** complex and highly technical immigration and nationality laws to customers both orally and in writing using plain language to help them navigate the USCIS systems.

REQUIREMENTS

Be able to provide excellent **customer service**; possess excellent oral **and written communication, analytical skills, technical proficiency** and **decision-making**.

QUALIFICATIONS

- GS-5:** **Analyzing problems, gathering pertinent data and recognizing solutions**; methodically **planning and organizing work** to ensure timely completion; **communicating clearly**, both orally and in writing and providing **excellent customer service** in person-to-person situations.
- GS-7:** **Performing complex administrative duties** requiring different approaches and methods from one assignment to another, **reviewing and screening applications** for benefits to ensure validity of documentation submitted, **providing routine information and assistance** on applications for benefits

KEYWORD SUMMARY



View all the resources available to NSEP award recipients at [NSEPnet.org](https://www.nsepnet.org).



Jane M Boren

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Arlington, VA 22209 US

Day Phone: 571-256-0777

Email: jane.m.boren@gmail.com

Availability:

Job Type: Permanent, Recent Graduates

Work Schedule: Full-Time

Desired locations: United States - DC

Work Experience:

Heartland Alliance

1400 16th Street, NW Suite 210

Washington, DC 20036 United States

01/2015 - Present

Salary: 38,684.00 USD Per Year

Hours per week: 50

Paralegal

Duties, Accomplishments and Related Skills:

Always customize your resume by incorporating keywords and phrases from the job announcement. Recognize any keywords from the Immigration Services Officer job posting?

CASE MANAGEMENT: Manage a caseload of 75 clients and provide paralegal support through intake, case review, and documentation preparation. Interview applicants and petitioners in English, Spanish, and Arabic or with the aid of a telephonic interpreter, if other languages are required. Communicate and decipher highly technical information concerning the immigration legal process in layman's terms to facilitate client understanding. Analyze and assess cases to determine eligibility and present cases to supervisor for further review.

LEGAL RESEARCH: Research and interpret an extensive spectrum of sources including immigration laws and regulations, legislative history, precedent decisions, and other legal references. Draft, translate, and file immigration applications, affidavits, and other supporting documentation for clients. Prepare materials for submission to the Department of Homeland Security, and Immigration Court.

CUSTOMER SERVICE: Utilize excellent customer service and interpersonal skills to communicate

with 20+ clients on a daily basis using both phone and email. Regularly update clients on the status of their case and the progress of immigration proceedings. Ensure ongoing and consistent customer satisfaction by responding to all client inquiries and concerns in a timely and professional manner.

Supervisor: John Smith (000-000-0000)

Okay to contact this Supervisor: Yes

U.S. Consulate General Casablanca

8, Bd Moulay Youssef
Casablanca, Morocco

06/2014 - 09/2014

Salary: Without compensation

Hours per week: 40

Political Section Intern

Duties, Accomplishments and Related Skills:

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS: Utilized Arabic, French, and English sources to research U.S.-Moroccan collaboration on issues including global security and counterterrorism. Analyzed findings and drafted fact-sheets and briefing memos for internal use. In collaboration with a fellow intern, authored a 35-page report on security cooperation in the Maghreb and Sahel region for senior personnel.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION: Compiled a weekly report on Political Section activities and updates for the Executive Office.

TRANSLATION: Monitored Arabic-language news and social media on a daily basis and provided concise and accurate translations to Foreign Service Officers.

Supervisor: John Smith (000-000-0000)

Okay to contact this Supervisor: Yes

Amal Foundation

25, Avenue Al Joulane
Rabat, Morocco

10/2013 - 05/2014

Salary: Without compensation

Hours per week: 15

You have up to 5,000 characters per employment entry. Make the most of this space! Emphasize accomplishments and workplace impact over mundane duties. Also, quantify work by using numbers and percentages as much as possible.

Intern

Duties, Accomplishments and Related Skills:

TEACHING: Taught a weekly class of intermediate English to a group of 10 migrants and asylum seekers. Developed appropriate classroom materials and assignments, with a focus on job-readiness and training. Monitored and tracked student progress through regular assessments.

TECHNICAL PROFICIENCY: Translated organization's web content from French to English and Arabic. Utilized editing software and the organization's web-based content manager to regularly update the website with news, video, and marketing materials.

SOCIAL MEDIA INITIATIVES: Created a Facebook page, which garnered over 500 "likes," to inform the public of programs, services, and events. Served as the page administrator and created original content to post online.

Supervisor: John Smith (000-000-0000)

Okay to contact this Supervisor: Yes

Dulles College Prep Academy

12 W Lasalle St.

Chicago, IL 60603 United States

09/2012 - 05/2013

Salary: 12.50 USD Per Hour

Hours per week: 15

Administrative Assistant

Duties, Accomplishments and Related Skills:

OFFICE ADMINISTRATION: Streamlined office operations by creating highly organized and accessible filing systems. Maintained thorough and accurate academic records for 350 students. Compiled and distributed academic merits, detention slips, and weekly newsletter to students. Tracked application files of 65 prospective students.

WRITTEN AND ORAL COMMUNICATION: Handled high volumes of correspondence with parents and administrators in a professional and timely manner. Responded to both routine and complex inquiries through phone and email.

EVENT PLANNING AND OUTREACH: Independently planned and executed four campus tours and

Special formatting (bullets, bold, italics, etc.) is not always compatible with the USAJobs resume builder. Instead, use headings written in capital letters to emphasize important skills and accomplishments.

information sessions per year. Presented information on the application process to an audience of approximately 50 prospective students and their families. Developed marketing materials and compiled application packets for prospective students.

Supervisor: John Smith (000-000-0000)

Okay to contact this Supervisor: Yes

Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights

6020 S University Ave.

Chicago, IL 60637 United States

10/2011 - 05/2012

Salary: Without compensation

Hours per week: 15

Child Advocate

Duties, Accomplishments and Related Skills:

ADVOCACY: Assisted three unaccompanied immigrant children by advocating for their best interests with respect to custody, conditions of release, immigration proceedings, and safe repatriation. Visited children on a weekly basis and accompanied them to court hearings, meetings, and interviews.

RESEARCH AND WRITING: Conducted legal research on the children's situation in their home countries. Wrote advocacy briefs incorporating domestic and international law. Drafted and submitted best interests recommendations to stakeholders including, the immigration court, immigration attorneys, and the Department of Homeland Security.

Supervisor: John Smith (000-000-0000)

Okay to contact this Supervisor: Yes

RefugeeOne

4753 N Broadway St #401

Chicago, IL 60640 United States

06/2010 - 09/2010

Salary: 3,000.00 USD Student Stipend Paid

Hours per week: 40

Workforce Development Intern

Duties, Accomplishments and Related Skills:

TEACHING: Facilitated a job readiness course and led a group of 10 clients in computer training, interview practice, and interactive job skill activities.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT: Created a detailed 50-page curriculum for use in workforce development training sessions, including all lessons and activities. Drafted career development resources for client use, such as sample resumes and cover letters.

CASE MANAGEMENT: Managed a caseload of five clients and accompanied them to job interviews, employment orientations, and assisted with the completion of new hire paperwork.

Supervisor: John Smith (000-000-0000)

Okay to contact this Supervisor: Yes

Education:

University of Chicago Chicago, IL United States

Bachelor's Degree 06/2014

GPA: 3.6 of a maximum 4.0

Credits Earned: 180 Quarter hours

Major: Political Science

Relevant Coursework, Licenses and Certifications:

Coursework included: Advanced Research Seminar, Immigration Policy, Immigrants and Refugees in American Society

School for International Training Rabat, Morocco

Some College Coursework Completed 05/2014

GPA: 3.8 of a maximum 4.0

Credits Earned: 45 Quarter hours

Relevant Coursework, Licenses and Certifications:

Awarded the nationally competitive Boren Scholarship in the amount of \$20,000 to study abroad for the 2013-2014 academic year. Intensively studied advanced Arabic for 20 hours per week and took courses on migration and transnational identity. Completed a 30 page, independent research project on the experiences of Sub-Saharan African asylum seekers in Morocco.

Showcase your Boren study abroad experience! If you completed volunteer work or an internship while abroad, make sure to also include that in the **Work Experience** section.

Language Skills:

Language	Spoken	Written	Read
Arabic (Modern Standard)	Advanced	Advanced	Advanced
French	Intermediate	Intermediate	Intermediate
Spanish	Intermediate	Intermediate	Intermediate

Additional Information:**SPECIAL HIRING AUTHORITIES**

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Don't forget to advertise your non-competitive eligibility! Use the **Additional Information** section to list your special hiring authorities as well as any honors and awards not listed elsewhere.