Federal Job Application Quick-Start Checklist

Vernon J. DeFlanders Sr. · NextGenAdults

Edition: September 27, 2026 · Prepare well. Step forward.

Use this checklist for each announcement. This is an application aid, not an assurance of eligibility or selection. Keep one copy beside the announcement; check a box only when you have evidence.

Before writing

[ ] Save the announcement number, agency, position, series/grade, closing date and time zone.

[ ] Read “This job is open to,” “Qualifications,” “Required Documents,” “How You Will Be Evaluated,” and “How to Apply.” Check any applicant-number cutoff.

[ ] Confirm you are eligible for the hiring path and can demonstrate the qualifications for each grade selected. Eligibility and qualifications are separate tests.

[ ] Copy each specialized-experience requirement into the evidence worksheet; identify the job, dates and example supporting it.

[ ] Note required assessments, travel, location, work schedule, license, citizenship or suitability conditions. Ask the announcement contact if an instruction is unclear before the deadline.

Build a readable resume

[ ] Keep the submitted federal resume at two pages or fewer. OPM's rule applies to competitive and excepted-service Title 5 announcements; USAJOBS enforcement began September 27, 2025. Limited exceptions require explicit announcement instructions, including how to submit an additional document. Do not attach extra resume pages to evade the limit.

[ ] Include contact information; each relevant employer/job title; start/end month and year; hours per week; and federal series/grade when applicable.

[ ] Provide concrete evidence of required experience. Keep every claim true; never copy sample achievements as your own.

[ ] Include education, licenses, certifications and supporting documents when relevant or required. Do not invent a “GS equivalent” for a private-sector job.

[ ] Include supervisor contact or clearance details only when relevant/requested and accurate. Never publish sensitive identifiers or classified details.

[ ] Export and inspect the actual submission file. PDF preserves layout and is recommended by OPM; follow the announcement's accepted formats and upload limit. Check legibility, page count and selectable text.

Documents and submission

[ ] Attach only required/relevant documents: transcripts, eligibility evidence, licenses or other items specified. Keep personal evidence private.

[ ] Make questionnaire answers consistent with the resume. If asked for separate narratives, follow their exact length and format; a KSA worksheet alone is not an application requirement.

[ ] Complete the agency application and assessments, not merely the USAJOBS handoff.

[ ] Review the attachment list and preview every file. Remove unintended older versions.

[ ] Submit before the deadline; save confirmation, the announcement and the exact documents sent. Reopen application status and confirm completion instructions were satisfied.

My application record

Position / agency: _____

Announcement / grade: _____

Deadline / time zone: _____

Required documents: _____

Evidence gaps to resolve: _____

Submission confirmation / date: _____

Follow-up date / official contact: _____

Reference

OPM two-page resume guidance. Reviewed September 27, 2026. The announcement controls position-specific requirements.