

Tips for Job Fair Success

Are you ready for your next job fair or career day? Job fairs are ideal for reaching out to a large group of people in a short period of time. When done well in coordination with other means of marketing and outreach (advertisements, social media, agency career website, etc.), job fairs/career days can be highly effective in promoting your agency's brand and employee value proposition. However, successful events do not happen automatically. You must prepare for the event, follow through, and evaluate your efforts afterwards. Below you will find useful tips and recommendations that can help make the difference between a good and great event.

When?	Action	Comments/Questions to Ask
BEFORE	Select capable recruiters to represent you	Choose recruiters who are knowledgeable of your organization, mission and culture. They need not be professional HR staff. Any employee who can communicate this information accurately and enthusiastically will do. Staff should be able to give a realistic job preview by describing a typical "day-in-the-life" for the positions to be filled.
BEFORE	Train and prepare your recruiters	Recruiters should be familiar with the positions to be filled (how many, where they are located, salary and benefits, and how to apply). All recruiters must understand the basics of the Federal application and hiring processes. Use the resources on USAJOBSRecruit to train recruiters. Encourage all potential recruiters to register at www.USAJOBSSRecruit.gov and complete the tutorials to sign up for the Federal Service Ambassadors (FSA) program.
BEFORE	Do your homework prior to the event	Be aware of the type of event you are attending (secondary school, college, community-based organization, civic organization, government agency). Know the event organizers since they will be your allies in coordination. Will you be dealing with career services staff, Congressional or Federal agency staff, community leaders, student organization officers, etc.?
BEFORE	Prepare recruitment materials, handouts, and exhibits/displays	Do you have enough flyers, brochures, multimedia resources (e.g., CDs), or other printed material for distribution? It is usually better to have more than you need than not enough – you can ship back unused materials. Do you have a banner, display or tablecloth that promotes your organization's brand? If possible, ship your handouts to the event venue prior to arrival. Does the facility allow for return shipment of any unused materials?
BEFORE	Coordinate event registration, travel arrangements, and related logistics	Are there any costs associated with the event (registration fees, booth/table, parking, advertising, travel)? Did you complete and submit your travel authorization?

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DURING	Be upbeat and engaging	Few things tarnish an employer’s reputation more than recruiters who speak the right words but whose body language/manner say “apathy” when talking about the organization or positions. Recruiters who stand and actively engage job seekers get better results than those who sit behind a table for the duration of the event.
DURING	Refer when necessary	Recruiters should know enough about the organization, positions and application/hiring processes to direct job seekers; however, they should refer job seekers to appropriate subject matter experts for answers to more difficult questions (e.g., to OPM for more information on the application process or www.FedsHireVets.gov for specific hiring authorities for veterans).
DURING	Ensure continuous coverage	Your table should never be completely unattended – this is a sure-fire way to turn off potential applicants. Ideally, you will have more than one person available at any given event. If not, take short breaks and return quickly.
DURING	Actively listen and respond	Do not just tell job seekers to “go to the website for information;” you will stand out if you listen, learn and inform using a more personal approach.
DURING	Go the extra mile	Don’t take a “one-size-fits-all” approach with job seekers – some will only need to be pointed in the right direction while others will require a detailed explanation and suggestions – try to accommodate each need within reason – this will improve your employer brand and will entice job seekers to apply.
AFTER	Evaluate the overall success of the event	Don’t concentrate only on how many you spoke with – what was your sense of the level of interest? What could you do at future events to attract more people to the table? Did you also deliver a presentation? Was it well-attended? If not, what can you do to improve future presentations and generate more interest?
AFTER	Evaluate the venue and logistics	Was the venue adequate (facility size and layout, parking, accessibility, etc.)? Did you have a good flow of traffic at your table? If not, what could have been done better? Did you complete your travel voucher?
AFTER	Learn from the good and the not so good	Allow the successes or shortcomings of the event to inform future decisions on human resources (new recruiters needed?), budget (was return on investment worth it?), and whether to attend similar events moving forward.