



How to Write Effective Job Opportunity Announcements (JOAs)

Effective JOAs

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- Writing effective JOAs supports the Hiring Reform
 - Streamlined and plain language
 - Parallels the private sector
 - More appealing to applicants
 - Easier to understand

Effective JOAs

➤ Effective JOAs:

- Attract applicant's **interest**
- Communicate the job's **essential points**
- Explain (in plain language) **how to apply** for the position
- Explain how applicants will be evaluated and ranked

Effective JOAs

➤ Effective JOAs are:

- Short
 - Fewer than 5 pages
- Accurate
 - Competencies/knowledge, skills, and abilities are current
- Easy to understand
 - In plain language
 - Without Federal jargon, acronyms, organization-specific terms

Effective JOAs

➤ Effective JOAs get applicants' attention by using "you", for example:

- "You will lead a team..."
- "You will research..."
- "You will write..."

Effective JOAs

➤ Effective JOAs use positive statements

Instead of: Your application will be considered incomplete and you will be found ineligible if you fail to submit...

Try: Please ensure you answer all questions and follow all instructions carefully. Errors or omissions may impact your rating or may result in you not being considered for the job.

JOA Required Sections

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- Required Sections Inform the Applicant
 - Job Summary
 - Key Requirements
 - Duties
 - Qualifications
 - How You Will Be Evaluated
 - How to Apply
 - What to Expect Next

Job Summary

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- Use the Job Summary to grab applicants' attention, for example:
- Do you enjoy providing quality customer service?
 - Are identifying problems, analyzing facts, and making recommendations some of your strong competencies?
 - Are you an effective communicator?

Job Summary

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- Then, summarize the job, for example:
 - As a contract specialist, you will serve as a business consultant to program managers, advising them on critical decisions for acquiring the goods and services needed so the United States Government can accomplish its mission.

Key Requirements

➤ List Key Requirements

- U.S. Citizenship or National
- Males born after 12-31-1959 must be registered for or exempt from Selective Service (See www.sss.gov)
- Relevant experience or education (See Qualifications and Evaluations)
- Resume and supporting documents
- Suitable for Federal employment as determined by a background investigation

Duties

➤ Describe the job

- Provide 3 to 5 major duties in bullet format
- Explain duties in plain language
- Avoid Federal jargon and acronyms
- List duties in a logical order
- Write duties so applicants can visualize if the job is a good fit

Duties

➤ Describe the job, for example:

As a contract specialist, you will:

- Work with customers to identify their needs and expectations
- Write basic requests for proposals for services or supplies
- Evaluate bids or proposals
- Negotiate contracts for services or supplies

Qualifications

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- Explain qualification requirements in plain language
 - Do not refer applicants to OPM's *Qualification Standards Handbook* or qualification standards

Qualifications

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- Explain qualification requirements in plain language, for example:
 - To qualify for this position, you must have:
 - A bachelor's degree from an accredited or pre-accredited college or university in any major field of study, or
 - At least 24 semester hours in any combination of the following fields: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management

Qualifications

➤ Translate Federal jargon, for example:

- You may start at \$31,751 (GS-5) per year if you have the following qualifications:

(In plain language, list the qualification requirements for the position)

Qualifications

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- Use plain language to describe specialized requirements
 - **Instead of:** “specialized experience in or related to...at the next lower grade”
 - **Try:** Qualifying experience for this human resources specialist position may include activities such as:
 - Interpreting qualification requirements for applicants and managers
 - Developing valid assessments to hire the best qualified applicants for positions being filled

How You Will Be Evaluated

- Let applicants know how they will be evaluated, for example:

We will evaluate your responses to the questions on the Occupational Questionnaire. The questions relate to competencies (e.g., customer service, interpersonal skills, oral communication, writing) required for the job.

How You Will Be Evaluated

- Let applicants know how long it may take to complete each assessment, for example:

The Occupational Questionnaire should take you approximately 15 minutes to complete.

How You Will Be Evaluated

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- You must define the quality categories in the “How You Will be Evaluated” section of the JOA
 - Defining categories means, simply, stating the name of each category, for example:
 - Qualified
 - Well-Qualified
 - Highly-Qualified

How You Will Be Evaluated

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- Let applicants know what happens as a result of the completed assessment(s), for example:
 - Your name will be placed in one of the quality categories based on the results of the Occupational Questionnaire you completed, and veterans' preference, if applicable. Names of all candidates in the highest quality category will be sent to the hiring manager for employment consideration.

How To Apply

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- Tell applicants how to submit their application, for example:
 - We recommend you apply online, but you may deliver your application package via [Insert agency procedure]. You may include a cover letter. Your complete application package must include:
 - Resume
 - If qualifying based on education, a copy of your transcript(s) or a list of all college courses completed with credit hours received for each course, major(s), and/or grade point average or class ranking

What To Expect

- Tell applicants what to expect after they submit their application, including at what key points they can expect to receive a status update



What To Expect

For example:

- After submitting your application, you will receive an email letting you know your application was received
- We will review all resumes to identify the applicants who meet the requirements stated in the job announcement
- You will receive a notice, at this point, informing you whether you have met these requirements

What To Expect

For example (continued):

- If you pass this initial screening, you will be required to complete the Occupational Questionnaire
- After all application packages have been received and evaluated, the names of all eligible candidates will be placed in a quality category based on the results of the Occupational Questionnaire and veterans' preference, if applicable

What To Expect

For example (continued):

- Names and resumes of all applicants who are in the highest quality category are sent to the hiring manager for employment consideration
- You will be notified whether or not your name was sent to the hiring manager

What To Expect

For example (continued):

- If your name is sent to the hiring manager, you may be invited for an interview
- The hiring manager makes a selection from among applicants in the highest quality category

What To Expect

Example (continued):

- We will contact you if you are selected
- You will receive a notice if your name was sent to the hiring manager but you were not selected

What to Expect

Example (continued):

- If you accept a job offer, we will conduct a suitability and/or security background investigation before we can place you in this job
- We usually make a final job offer within 40 days after the deadline for applications. This timeframe may go beyond 40 days, depending on the level of the background investigation



How to Create Effective JOAs

QUESTIONS?

