USAJobs Workshop

Virtual Presentation

J. Foreman, BOEM Alaska, Resource Evaluation
Thursday, April 1, 2021
Before we begin...

- This presentation contains tips and suggestions for best practices for building competitive application packets within the USAJobs platform.
- This presentation is focused on technical/scientific positions advertised for federal employment via the USAJobs website.
- Never misrepresent your skills, experiences, or qualifications on any portion of your application (resume, assessment questionnaire, cover letter, etc.).
- There is no guarantee of success for current or future job applications based on following recommendations presented herein.
Presentation Outline

- Introduction: So you want to work for the Federal Government?

- Before you Apply: How to Read Between the Lines of the Job Announcement

- Applying for the Job
Presentation Outline

- Introduction: So you want to work for the Federal Government?
  - Types of Job Announcements (MP, DEU, Pathways, etc.)
  - GS Scale Explained
  - Overview of Hiring Process
  - Assessment Toolkit

- Before you Apply: How to Read Between the Lines of the Job Announcement

- Applying for the Job
• Delegated Examining Authority (DEU) or externally available positions
  • Open to any US Citizen
  • Veteran’s Preference: Yes

• Merit Promotion (MP) or internally available positions
  • Often open to all current, or recently departed federal employees
  • Sometimes limited to in-agency applications
  • Veteran’s Preference: No

• Jobs can be offered as only DEU, only MP, or as both DEU and MP

• **QuickTip:** If you qualify for both internal and external announcements, apply for both. **This may be two separate applications**
• Internship Program
  • Open to Current Students (Accredited Program leading to a qualifying degree or certificate: High School, College, and Professional, Technical, Vocational, or Trade Schools
  • Job will be related to field of study

• Recent Graduate Program
  • Open to Recent Graduates within 2 years of degree completion, veterans within 6 years of degree completion
  • Mentorship, formal training, potential for career advancement
  • Program Completion: Conversion to full time possible

• Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Program
GS Scale: “General Schedule”

**SALARY TABLE 2021-AK**  
**INCORPORATING THE 1% GENERAL SCHEDULE INCREASE AND A LOCALITY PAYMENT OF 29.67%**  
**STATE OF ALASKA**  
**TOTAL INCREASE: 1%**  
**EFFECTIVE JANUARY 2021**  

*Annual Rates by Grade and Step*

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GS Scale: Grades

**ENTRY LEVEL**
- GS-05 and GS-07: Entry Level, B.S.
- GS-03 and GS-04: Internships, concurrent enrollment

**MID-CAREER**
- GS-09: Specialized Experience and/or Advanced Degree (M.S.)
- GS-11: Specialized Experience and/or Advanced Degree (Ph. D.)

**ADVANCED**
- GS-12: Specialized Experience
- GS-13: Specialized Experience
- GS-14: Specialized Experience
- GS-15: Specialized Experience

**SUPERVISORY**
- GS-14: Specialized Experience
- GS-13: Specialized Experience
- GS-12: Specialized Experience

Further Reading: [https://gogovernment.org/pay-and-the-general-schedule-gs/](https://gogovernment.org/pay-and-the-general-schedule-gs/)
# GS Scale: “General Schedule”

## SALARY TABLE 2021-AK

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STATE OF ALASKA

TOTAL INCREASE: 1%

EFFECTIVE JANUARY: 1%

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* Denotes rates adjusted for locality.
New hires will typically start at a GS XX Step 1, unless they are able to negotiate a higher starting step.

Once an employee reaches their full promotion potential, they begin climbing the step ladder at the rates indicated on the graphic.

Exceptional performance ratings can allow employees a “quality step increase”.

In-grade Salary Increases: Steps
## Hiring Process: Overview

### Identify Staffing Need
- Approval to advertise
- Internal or External Advertisement?
- Select Hiring Committee

### Develop Assessment Strategy
- Identify the need for SME
- Appoint SME/SME Panel
- Choose Assessment Strategies

### Develop Job Announcement
- Identify Competencies
- Select and Develop Assessment Tool(s)*
- Send to HR for Posting to USAJobs

### Human Resources
- Verify education, citizenship, special hiring
- Verify screening responses
- Send initial list to SME

### Subject Matter Expert (SME)
- Verify specialized experience requirements
- Conduct secondary or tertiary assessment
- Generate Eligibility List: Best Qualified

### Hiring Committee
- Interviews (Multiple Rounds Possible)
- Reference Check
- Offer Letter, Acceptance, Background Check

### QuickTip:
*Applicants must meet all minimum requirements by the closing date of the job announcement*
General and Technical Competencies: Choose one.
- Self report technical questionnaire (KSA’s), or
- SME panel interview, or
- SME review of written narratives

Technical Competencies only: Choose one or more
- SME panel interview
- SME review of written narratives
- SME structured resume review

Click here to explore sample assessment schemes, rubrics, and questions.
Situation 1: Occupational Questionnaire + Writing Sample + SME Panel Interview (DEU)

Phase 1: Applicant completes a short, multiple choice self-report questionnaire about their experience and expertise. Applicant submits application packet on USAJobs

- Scores for minimally qualified candidates vary from 70-100, SME recommends the cut-off score of 80.
- Eligible candidates with a score of 80 or above and veterans preference eligible candidates claiming 10 point preference or higher advance to the next assessment phase

Phase 2: Eligible applicants are invited to submit a writing sample.

- Writing sample is reviewed by SMEs and scored using a structured rubric to assess the candidate’s technical or writing skills. Scores vary from 0-100, SMEs recommend a cut-off score of 85.
- Eligible candidates with a score of 85 or above advance to the next assessment phase

Phase 3: Applicants are invited to a SME Panel Interview

- Interviews are scored using a structured rubric. Prior to the interview process, the SME panel determines the cut-off score of 90 to generate an eligibility list of the best qualified candidates.
- Eligibility List: Qualified, Preference eligible candidates listed above qualified non-veterans
Situation 2: Job Knowledge Test + SME Resume Review (MP)

Phase 1: Applicant completes an automated, multiple choice job knowledge test questionnaire consisting of 10-15 technical subject based questions.

- Job knowledge test is developed by the SMEs and contains questions related to technical knowledge required for the advertised position.
- Scores for minimally qualified candidates range from 70-100, SME recommends a cut-off score of 85.
- Eligible candidates with a score of 85 or above advance to the next assessment phase.

Phase 2: Structured SME Resume Review

- SME reviews eligible resumes for competencies (identified in job announcement). Resume contents are scored based on a pre-determined scoring matrix, with each competency receiving a numerical rating (0-5). SME panel determines a cut-off score that will be used to identify the best qualified candidates for the final eligibility list.
- Best Qualified Candidates will be contacted by the hiring committee to set up an interview.
SME Process: Timeline and Next Steps

- **Timeline varies based on assessment tool(s) used**
  - Usually a minimum of 2 weeks but can be up to a month for large applicant pools.

- **At the conclusion of the SME assessment process, a list of eligible, best qualified candidates with accompanying documentation is sent to HR**
  - HR reviews the SME generated eligibility list and accompanying documentation to ensure the SME process was conducted fairly
  - **HR makes the final decision on the eligibility list.**
  - Final “Best qualified” list is sent to the selecting official
  - **Eligibility List Example** Geologist 1350 GS 7-11
    - A technical job advertised as a DEU GS 7-11 position will have three eligibility lists: GS7 DEU, GS9 DEU, and GS11 DEU.
    - A technical job dually advertised under DEU and MP for a GS 7-11 position will have six eligibility lists: GS7 MP, GS9 MP, GS11 MP, GS7 DEU, GS9 DEU, and GS11 DEU.

- **Selecting Official leads the hiring committee in conducting interviews**
  - An offer will be made to a candidate on one of the final eligibility lists.
Introduction: So you want to work for the Federal Government?
  - Types of Job Announcements (MP, DEU, Pathways, etc.)
  - GS Scale Explained
  - Overview of Hiring Process
  - Assessment Toolkit

Before you Apply: How to Read Between the Lines of the Job Announcement
  - Overview + Location: Multi-grade announcements, Multiple positions vs single vacancy
  - Duties: Responsibilities, Promotion Potential
  - Requirements: Education, Specialized Experience, or combination, Evaluation Criteria, Questionnaire preview

Applying for the Job
Job Announcement: Overview + Location

Overview

Accepting applications

Open & closing dates
02/18/2021 to 03/01/2021

Pay scale & grade
GS 4 - 9

Appointment type
Internships

Service
Competitive

Salary
$31,401 to $80,874 per year

See Responsibilities tab for more information.

Work schedule
Full-Time

Location

2 vacancies in the following location:

Anchorage, AK
2 vacancies

Relocation expenses reimbursed
No

Telework eligible
Yes as determined by agency policy

This job is open to

Students
Current students enrolled in accredited educational institutions from high school to graduate level. Includes internships, pathways and other student programs.

Clarification from the agency

Students

Apply

Print

Share

Save

Announcement number
BOEM-MMJJ-21-WL-037(PW)

Control number
582634400
1. “This job is open to”: Identifies who can apply for this position. The example position is only open to current students.

2. Application Window: Assume the application closes at midnight eastern (8pm Alaska). Never wait until the last day to submit your application. All required qualifications including time in grade must be met by the closing date.

3. Pay Scale and Salary Ranges: This position may be filled at a GS 4, GS 5, GS 7, or GS 9 level. Salary Range listed represents the range of pay for a GS4 Step 1 to a GS 9 Step 10. **First time hires to Federal Government generally start at the lower salary range of the grade level.

4. Number of vacancies. This announcement will be used to fill up to 2 vacant positions.

5. Relocation: Yes/No, if yes – relocation expenses will be provided to move a new employee to the commuting area

6. Telework Status: All employees are currently under maximum telework flexibility

7. Announcement Number (PW): PW = Pathways. Other abbreviations include DEU (Delegated Examining Unit), MP (Merit Promotion), and DH (Direct Hire)
1. **Summary**: Provides a brief introduction to the role being advertised. Be sure to research the mission of the agency to which you’re applying.

2. **Responsibilities**: These are the elements the selected person will be responsible for at their full promotion potential.

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**Duties**

**Summary**

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) manages the exploration and development of the nation’s offshore resources. It seeks to appropriately balance economic development, energy independence, and environmental protection through oil and gas leases, renewable energy development and environmental reviews and studies. For information about our bureau go to: [http://www.boem.gov/](http://www.boem.gov/)

This internship opportunity is within the Office of Resource Evaluation in the Alaska Regional Office located in Anchorage, Alaska.

At the full performance level GS-09 the major duties of this position include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Incumbent performs detailed geophysical, geological, or engineering studies on multiple OCS block areas, which involve moderate to complex Alaska structural and stratigraphic features, to determine the structure and stratigraphic delineation of oil and gas reservoirs on the Federal OCS and contiguous areas with minimal assistance from the staff geoscientists, engineers, and Section Supervisor.

2. The incumbent receives classroom and/or on-the-job training in support of oil and gas exploration and development, assessment of undiscovered resources, and fair market evaluation to assist more experienced staff.

3. Attends training courses, performs scientific studies related to resource evaluation under the guidance of senior employees, ability to work in the office and remotely, provides feedback on Pathways experience.

4. The incumbent conducts detailed subsurface mapping of oil and gas reservoir studies to support recommendations to management, with minimal assistance from staff and Section Supervisor. Projects involve determining the thickness and extent of the reservoirs for use in lease sales in support of fair market value, national assessment of undiscovered resources, and/or in support of the National Oil and Gas Leasing Program.

5. The incumbent will analyze, evaluate, and interpret geological, geophysical, and/or engineering information and related data to carry out moderately complex geoscientific investigations. Duties include subsurface mapping to estimate reservoir size and extent, identification of producing hydrocarbon plays, and possible exploration targets.

6. In coordination with an Alaska BOEM subject matter expert (SME) the incumbent may travel to different locations in Alaska meetings in support of BOEM programs.

7. Attends and participates as an observer in external meetings with industry professionals, lessees, lease operators, and various offices within the Alaska Region. Attends and participates in office meetings and provides feedback on internship experience.

The Office of Resource Evaluation has determined that the duties of this position are suitable for telework.
3. Identifies the position’s highest non-competitive promotion potential

Salary Information:
GS-04 Step 01 $31,401- GS-04 Step 10 $45,823 per annum.
Special Salary
GS 05 Step 01 $41,059 GS 05 Step 10 $53,379 per annum.
GS-07 Step 01 $50,860- GS 07 Step 10 $66,120 per annum.
GS-09 Step 01 $62,212- GS-09 Step 10 $80,874 per annum.
First time hires to the Federal government normally start at the lower salary range of the grade level.

Travel Required
Occasional travel - You may be expected to travel for this position.

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<th>Supervisory status</th>
<th>Promotion Potential</th>
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1. Conditions of Employment: All conditions must be met in order to be hired.

2. Qualifications: These qualifications must be met by the closing date of the announcement.

3. Grade Specific Requirements: Higher grades will have more requirements. For non-pathways announcements, specialized experience or competency requirements are also listed here.

Requirements

Conditions of Employment

- This position is subject to a pre-employment background investigation.
- Use of Direct Deposit is required.
- You will be required to sign a Pathways Participant Agreement
- Selective Service: If you are a male applicant born after December 31, 1959, you must certify that you have registered with the Selective Service system, or are exempt from having to do so under the Selective Service Law. See http://www.sss.gov/

Qualifications

To be eligible for this internship all of the following requirements must be met:

1. You must be at least 16 years of age
2. You must be enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a degree or certificate program at a qualifying educational institution on a full or part-time basis.
3. If enrolled, you must be in good academic standing (At least a 2.0 GPA)
4. You must provide a transcript (official or unofficial) and proof of enrollment/acceptance.

NOTE: You must continue to meet these eligibility requirements throughout the duration of your appointment under the Pathways Internship Program.

GS-04 Qualification Requirements

To qualify for a GS-04 you must have completed 2 full academic years of post high school study or have an associate’s degree.

GS-05 Qualification Requirements

To qualify for a GS-05 you must have completed 4 academic years of post-high school leading to a bachelor’s degree or equivalent degree.

GS-07 Qualification Requirements

To qualify for the GS-07 grade level you must have completed one (1) full academic year of graduate level education, or have eligibility under the Superior Academic Achievement Provision and completion of a bachelor’s degree.

GS-09 Qualification Requirements

To qualify for a GS-09 position you must have completed 2 academic years of graduate level education or a master’s degree or equivalent graduate degree.
Requirements, cont.

4. Education: Requirements will be listed here. If the announcement is interdisciplinary (more than one job series), education requirements may vary from series to series.

**Education**

Education. You are required to submit verification of your current part-time or full-time student enrollment, in addition to a copy of your official or unofficial transcripts in order to determine your eligibility and qualifications for this position.

Foreign Education: Education completed in colleges or universities outside the United States may be used to meet the specific educational requirements as stated above. You must provide acceptable documentation that the foreign education is comparable to that received in an accredited educational institution in the United States. For more information on how foreign education is evaluated, visit:


**Additional information**

Applicants who include vulgar, offensive, or inappropriate language or information in their application package will be ineligible for further consideration for this position.

Identification of promotion potential in this announcement does not constitute a commitment or an obligation on the part of management to promote the employee selected at some future date. Promotion will depend upon administrative approval and the continuing need for and performance of higher-level duties.

The application contains information subject to the Privacy Act (P.L. 93-579, 5 USC 552a). The information is used to determine qualifications for employment, and is authorized under Title 5, USC, Section 3302 and 3361.

**Important Note:** All Department of the Interior (DOI) employees are subject to the conflict of interest restrictions imposed upon all employees of the Executive Branch of the Federal Government and may be required to file a Financial Disclosure Report. In addition, DOI employees, GS-15 and above, who work in the Office of the Secretary, along with the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) and the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) employees (at all grade levels), are further restricted concerning their interests in Federal lands and resources administered or controlled by the Department of the Interior. This includes holding stock in energy corporations which lease Federal lands (e.g.: oil, gas, coal, alternative energy resources, etc.) if you have any such investments you should contact the DOI, BOEM or BSEE Ethics Office before accepting employment. DOI employees are held to the highest level of integrity. Employees must be objective and impartial in the performance of their work. All potential issues (e.g.: work-related interactions with friends, family members, or previous employers) must be disclosed at the time of application or during the interview process.

NOTICE: This employer participates in E-Verify and will utilize your Form I-9 information to confirm you are authorized to work in the U.S.

You will also earn annual and sick leave.
5. “How you will be evaluated”: Describes the assessment tools selected for this announcement.

6. If available: Always preview the questionnaire.

How You Will Be Evaluated

You will be evaluated for this job based on how well you meet the qualifications above.

All applicants who meet the basic eligibility and qualification requirements will be referred to the selecting official in veterans’ preference order.

To preview the assessment questionnaire click: https://apply.usastaffing.gov/ViewQuestionnaire/11038497

Close

Background checks and security clearance

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Security clearance</th>
<th>Drug test required</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>No</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Position sensitivity and risk</th>
<th>Trust determination process</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moderate Risk (MR)</td>
<td>Credentialing, Suitability/Fitness</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
1. Required Documents: Your application MUST have all of the identified documents attached to your final application packet.

*Tip: Upload documents to USAJobs as they are available to you. Just finished Spring semester? Upload your new transcript to the system. This way – they will be ready to attach to your application package when its time to apply.
Agency Contact Info: This contact person is available to answer posting related questions

How to Apply

Your complete application, including required documents, must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET) on the closing date of this announcement.

To apply on-line, you must complete and submit an application by accessing the USAJOBS website at www.usajobs.gov. To begin, click the Apply Online button near the bottom of this screen and follow the prompts to register into your USAJOBS account, answer the questions, and submit all required documents.

To return to your saved application, log in to your USAJOBS account at www.usajobs.gov and click on "Application Status." Click on the position title, and then select Apply Online to continue.

Applicants who apply and "opt-in" under this job opportunity announcement agree to have their application, associated documents and applicable personal information shared with other Bureaus/Offices within the Department of the Interior (DOI) that have vacancies within the same occupational series, grade, promotion potential and in the same geographic location(s), including within the same metro/commuting area. Applying to this announcement does not replace the need to apply to other job opportunity announcements for which you wish to receive consideration.

Agency contact information

Whitney Lovato

Phone
703-787-1032

Email
whitney.lovato@bsee.gov

Address
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
45600 Woodland Road
Sterling, VA 20166
US

Learn more about this agency
Presentation Outline

- **Introduction: So you want to work for the Federal Government?**
  - Types of Job Announcements (MP, DEU, Pathways, etc.)
  - GS Scale Explained
  - Overview of Hiring Process
  - Assessment Toolkit

- **Before you Apply: How to Read Between the Lines of the Job Announcement**
  - Overview + Location: Multi-grade announcements, Multiple positions vs single vacancy
  - Duties: Responsibilities, Promotion Potential
  - Requirements: Education, Specialized Experience, or combination, Evaluation Criteria, Questionnaire preview

- **Applying for the Job**
  - Use the job announcement to build your application package.
  - Resume Building: *(USAJobs resume builder)*
  - Application Checklist: Required Documents
  - Combining assistantships, research experience, and internships on your resume
Tips for building a strong application package

- Preview the Questionnaire/Assessment Tool
  - For Self-Assessments: Rate yourself against your peers, not your superiors.
  - Ensure that your resume reflects your assessment responses. For example: If you claim to have experience ArcGIS, you should have at least one job/experience on your resume whose description includes how you used ArcGIS for that job.

- Use the USAJobs Resume builder to input your resume.
  - Use wording pulled from the responsibilities section and the qualifications section focusing on the defined “specialized experience” or competency description in the job announcement to describe your qualifying experience.
  - Your resume is your opportunity to demonstrate to HR and the SME that you qualify for this position based on your individual experiences and abilities.
  - For entry level positions, always include relevant experience even if you meet the education requirement – demonstrate that you are well qualified, not just minimally qualified.
Apply for all grades advertised on the announcement whose GS-scale covers your acceptable minimum salary amount.

- Since multiple grades are advertised on a single announcement, you will only need one application package.
- Tailor your application package to the highest grade. For example: In general, the requirements for the GS12 level are identical to the GS11 level plus an added or expanded technical competency requirement.

Apply for all hiring authorities if the announcements are split. (See next slide for Example)

- If you are applying for more than one announcement, you will need to attach all documents to BOTH announcements.
- **QuickTip:** Print your responses to any assessment questionnaires to ensure consistency across duplicated questions.
Tips for building a strong application package

- **Additional Documents:**
  - Feel free to attach your “private sector”, one-two page resume or your CV to your federal application, but be sure to ALSO build a resume using the USAJobs resume builder.
  - Cover Letters are generally not required, but are a good idea. Cover Letters are your opportunity to introduce yourself to the SME and the Hiring Committee prior to the interview process.
Hiring under multiple authorities.

A. Split Announcement
If you qualify for both announcements, you must apply separately for both jobs. *Be sure to attach required documents to BOTH application packets.

B. Single Announcement
Single application for all hiring authorities. Attach your documentation to the single application packet.
Closing thoughts

- Represent yourself honestly, but give yourself credit where credit is due
- Apply early, late applications are not accepted
- Double check that your required documents are up to date and attached to your application
- Contact your references ahead of listing them to ensure they are willing to give you a *good* reference
- Be patient! Sometimes it can take a month or two for your application status to be updated.
- Don’t be discouraged if you don’t get the first, third, or tenth job you apply to. Government employment is highly sought after, some job announcements receive hundreds of applications.
- Interview attire is still business professional, even for virtual interviews
Resources
