WRITING EFFECTIVE JOB POSTINGS

An applicant-focused recruitment means that the application process is easy to navigate and doesn't take a lot of time. The application process enables, rather than deters job seekers. The job posting draws the applicant in, is clear and easy to understand. Applicants can quickly determine if the job fits their unique experience, skills, and abilities.

Simplify

Think about the way you read, or rather, don't read a document. You scan and find the information you want; applicants do the same. Make it easy for the applicant by keeping it simple. Here's how:

- Write to your audience. What words or phrases are common in the industry or profession and will connect to the talent you are seeking?
- Aim for a 7th to an 8th grade reading level and use plain language. The applicant shouldn't have to re-read a sentence to figure out the meaning.
- Use headers to make information easy to find.
- Bullet items and use white space for easier scanning.
- Use action words to engage readers and help them picture themselves being able to do the job or not. Use active voice.
- Use simple sentences. Remove excess adjectives and descriptors. Break complex sentences into two or more sentences.
- Explain acronyms the first time you use them.
- Specify what knowledge, skills, and abilities an applicant need to be hired. Don't leave it to speculation.

What Do You Have to Have in a Job Posting?

- Summary of job duties

- Minimum qualifications

- Special qualifications, if applicable

- Desired qualifications/attributes, if applicable

- Salary

- Application deadline, if applicable

- Supplemental questions, if applicable

- Additional application requirements and instructions

Yes, this is all that is required. There are some other things you will want to include to help the applicant gain a better understanding of the job.

Note: Review the appropriate collective bargaining agreement for any variations.

Additional Items to Consider:

- Job title – Use the working title and make sure it describes the job in terms that are common for the industry or occupation. The classification titles mean nothing to most applicants.

- Labor representation – Note if the position is represented by a union and, if so, which one.

- Working conditions – Include essential conditions about someone's ability and availability to do the job, (e.g. traveling, lifting 50 lbs., working evenings and weekends).

- Selection method – A general statement regarding any skills tests, or interviews that you will be conducting is sufficient.

- Pre-employment checks – Note whether any criminal record checks, driver record checks, background investigations, etc. are required.

- Agency information – Include a sentence or two on the agency and its culture to help provide context for the work.

Be sure to only include items that are really necessary and that will help an applicant know if they can or cannot do the job.

Opening Statement

Grab the applicant's attention and make them want to read more. **This is your sales pitch**. Write as if you were writing a job ad; that's exactly what you are doing. Don't worry about including the details about the job here. This is your opportunity to draw the applicant in and quickly grab their attention – the details can come later.

Consider using questions that include your desired attributes. For example:

- Do you enjoy providing quality customer service?
- Are identifying problems, analyzing facts, and making recommendations your strengths?
- Are you an effective communicator?

Agency Information

Think of this section as answering the question, "Why join us?" Highlight the agency culture and the benefits of working for your agency. Promote the unique qualities of your agency. This is part of your sales pitch, and doesn't need to include a lot of details. You can add a link to your agency's webpage for those that want more information. One-to-two sentences is sufficient. Make sure your statements are accurate about your work environment. For example if you are a low-key office, don't say you are a high-energy office.

What's in it For You?

Use "You" so the applicant can see themselves in the job.

Use needs-supplies statements rather than demands-abilities statements. A study published in the Journal of Business and Psychology found that adding "needs-supplies" statements that focus on what applicants want attracts almost three times as many highly rated applicants than those that only use "demands-abilities" descriptions that focus on what the employer wants. (2017 The Ultimate Hiring Toolkit, LinkedIn Talent Solutions)

Needs-supplies statements:	Demands-abilities statements:
☐ **You will have the opportunity to work on a variety of tasks and develop your skills in many areas.**	☐ The successful applicant will have excellent written and verbal communication skills
☐ **Employees are given many opportunities for advancement within the organization.**	☐ Job incumbents will be required to show initiative in prioritizing tasks and carrying them through to completion.
☐ **You will have many opportunities to collaborate with talented people.**	☐ The successful applicant will enthusiastically support and cooperate with others to develop effective solutions.

What Are We Looking For? – Desired Attributes

Remember, you are not searching for the elusive purple squirrel. It is tempting to list out everything the ideal employee would have, but who really has everything? Identify your five-to-six, can't-live-without attributes. Be specific.

If you have to have it, say it. Make it clear if a desired attribute is essential for hire. **Use the desired attributes to help applicants screen themselves in or out.**

Job Duties

Create a high-level overview describing the day-to-day of the job in one or two sentences.

Use action words and create a bulleted list of job duties. You do not need to list every duty from the position description, but you do want to create a clear picture of what the job entails. Be sure to include essential functions. You should aim for no more than 6-10 duty statements, as the announcement does not have to read like a position description.

Explain duties in plain language. Avoid state/agency jargon and acronyms. 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 service supplies

DEVELOPING A COMPELLING MESSAGE
Why Should I Care?

Writing a job posting takes planning and sometimes knowing where to start is the biggest challenge. Start by thinking about the impacts of the agency and a job well done. This goes beyond duties, and more towards the personal focus regarding why an applicant would even care about or be interested in applying for the job. Personal focus typically involves two key areas:

1. Is it a good job? Is it interesting?
2. Is it a good organization? Do I want to work here?

When writing a job posting you'll want to determine your core message. Here is a methodology you can use to get started.

# Developing the Message

Step 1: Essential questions to answer

- What's the goal of the communication?
- What action do you want people to take?
- What does success look like?
- What are the obstacles?

Step 2: Keep it simple

- Brainstorm all the facts you want to share.
- Group/narrow them down to three key points.
- String points together to create one to two sentences (core message).

Step 3: Give it legs

- Support your key message by expanding on your key points.
- Action verbs are your friend.

Core message		
Supporting Point	Supporting Point	Supporting Point
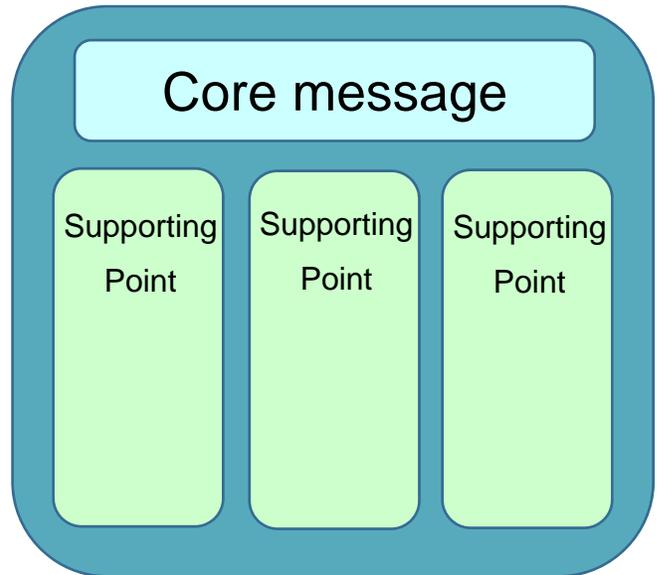
RESOURCES

Department of Administrative Services [Writing Resources](#)

- Writing for easy reading
- Writing guide
- Writing in plain language
- Acronym dictionary
- Editorial style guide