

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING YOUR RESUMIX RESUME

WHY A RESUME? The Human Resources Service Center Northeast (HRSC-NE) is using a computerized resume processing system called the **Standard Automated Inventory and Referral System** or STAIRS.

WHAT IS STAIRS? STAIRS is a knowledge-based automated staffing and recruitment system. Applicants may submit a hard copy resume up to **five (5) pages in length**, to the address shown on the vacancy announcement. Applicants may also submit resumes by using the DON On-Line Resume Builder. Using artificial intelligence, applicant skills are extracted from these resumes and are matched against vacancy skills. The application process is simplified because applicants no longer have to separately address knowledges, skills and abilities, since this information is contained in the body of their resumes.

HOW DOES THE SYSTEM WORK? Your hard copy resume is scanned into the computer by a method that is similar to sending a fax or making a photocopy, as an image. Then, Optical Character Recognition, or OCR, software looks at the image to distinguish every letter and number (character) and creates a text file. The system "reads" the text and extracts important information about you such as your name, address, phone number, work history, years of experience, education, and skills. Your resume is saved and can be stored in the **RESUME BANK**, if you so choose. Then, when vacancies occur, those individuals whose qualifications and skills match the position requirements will be considered.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR STAIRS VACANCIES?

- You can fill out the DON On-Line Resume Builder on the DON web site at www.donhr.navy.mil, **OR**
- You may mail a hard copy of your resume to **HRSC-Northeast, 111 S. Independence Mall East (Bourse Building), Philadelphia, PA, 19106-2598**. Please read the instructions on the announcement carefully for more detailed information.

CAN I REUSE MY RESUME? By using the latest in document imaging technology, your resume can be scanned into a computer system and kept "active" for up to **one year** from the date of receipt, and longer if you so elect. The computer can make it easier for you to be considered for more jobs, and it keeps your resume on file, so it's quicker to update your information.

Once you have a resume in the **RESUME BANK** and a vacancy is advertised, you do not need to submit a new resume. You may use the resume in the **RESUME BANK** to "**self-nominate**" for the specific vacancy by sending an e-mail to: wantajob@ne.hroc.navy.mil (indicating "Self-Nomination" and the vacancy announcement number in the subject line).

HOW IS THIS SYSTEM DIFFERENT? When completing a traditional application, such as a SF-171 or an OF-612, you write to attract the attention of the reader. Anything you do to make your application visually unique, such as expensive paper, color, unusual fonts or typefaces, and graphics, helps to do this. Also, you may believe that the more ways you describe the same kind of experience, and the more adjectives you use, the more credit you will receive in the rating and ranking process. **NONE OF THIS APPLIES TO RESUMES THAT ARE PROCESSED ELECTRONICALLY.** In fact, it may be counterproductive. The important thing to remember is that the personnel specialist will be searching the database for resumes that match the skills and knowledges of the position being filled.

HOW DOES THIS NEW METHOD HELP ME? Here are a few reasons why we think you will prefer this new method better than the old way of finding a job:

- You only have to write one resume to be considered for multiple vacancies at multiple locations;
- It's easier and faster for you to apply for jobs through a process known as self-nomination;
- You need only identify your skills, not provide long, detailed descriptions;
- There's greater objectivity in the referral lists because we use a consistent process;
- Your resume can be up to **FIVE** pages long!

There's just one more thing you need to know. Because we will handle a large number of resumes, we won't be able to return resumes or additional documentation (such as professional certificates or licenses). **Don't send original documents.**

HOW SHOULD I WRITE MY RESUME? First, ask yourself, "What types of jobs am I interested in?" Since you can now utilize one resume for multiple vacancies at a Human Resources Service Center, don't focus your resume on one vacancy or position. Instead, concentrate on defining and identifying all key and meaningful skills you possess for those career fields that interest you. Unlike the SF-171 in which you described your work experience in detail, your resume should be skills-based. We want to know what you did on the job. Instead of describing what your responsibilities were, describe your accomplishments.

Describe your experience with action and concrete words rather than vague descriptions. Simply stated, action words are verbs, and concrete words are nouns, often proper nouns. These words have been labeled as action/concrete words to convey the idea that you should use simple, clear and easily understood terms when preparing your resume. For example, it's better to use, "Directs work, interviews and hires employees, establishes and reviews performance standards, identifies training needs, effects disciplinary action and performs other supervisory duties for 10 employees," rather than "supervising". Using clear and concise terms in your resume will improve the skills match performed by the RESUMIX system, and will increase the HR Specialist's/Management Official's understanding of your skill and experience when reading your resume. A list of action/concrete words is included on pages 44 and 45.

Focus. Starting with your most recent experience, show where you worked, the beginning and the ending dates, and the name and phone number of your supervisor. Include only work experience and skills that are relevant to your career goals. For instance, if your career goals are in the budget area, don't include old experience as a clerk-typist.

Use simple sentences. Emphasize nouns and verbs. Instead of describing what your responsibilities were, describe exactly what you did. Mention the names of any tools, software, or equipment you used, and any specialized knowledge you acquired.

- **Don't** write, "Performed the full range of project management duties for a new information system."
- **Do** write, "Used Microsoft Project to develop timelines. Prepared budget requests, hired staff, selected vendors, negotiated contracts, and designed and implemented a new Unix client-server information system."
- **Don't** write, "Responsible for administrative and computer support in a publishing firm."
- **Do** write, "Used Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Access in support of a large publishing firm. Have skill and knowledge with many operating systems, including DOS, Windows 3.1, Windows 95, and Macintosh. Used Adobe PhotoShop."

Spell it out. Avoid using jargon, abbreviations, and acronyms, unless they are common to a job field. Spell out, at least once, the meaning of any abbreviations and acronyms you use. Remember that ADA can mean a computer language, the American Dental Association, the Americans with Disabilities Act, or Ada, Oklahoma. Even within the Department of Defense, the same acronym or abbreviation can have many different meanings.

List skills once within each description of work experience. Once a skill such as “management” or “budget” is pointed out, you need only use the skill again if you are describing a different position.

Use plain language whenever possible. Use words and phrases that define the level and scope of your experience and skills, i.e., write complex technical documents; prepare policy statements; prepare routine correspondence; speak before groups of 100 or more people; manage multi-million dollar projects; work with groups to build consensus; etc. The information system, the personnelist, or the hiring manager may not understand what you are trying to communicate if you use very obscure words or phrases.

Use modifiers. To define the frequency at which you perform tasks, use modifiers, i.e., occasionally, regularly, once or twice a year, monthly, weekly, daily, etc.

Address acquisition positions. If addressing an acquisition position, indicate the percentage of time spent on acquisition duties.

Address interpersonal traits and attitude. If you have extra space, describe your interpersonal traits and attitude.

PREPARING YOUR HARD COPY RESUME FOR SCANNING: The most difficult resume for the computer to read is a poor quality copy that has font sizes larger than 12 points or smaller than 10 points, has graphics or lines, is too light, or uses paper that is too dark. To ensure your resume is scannable, follow these guidelines:

- Use 1 inch margins, and standard 10 or 12 point fonts such as Courier or Times New Roman. (“Fonts” refer to style of print; “pitch” or “points”, such as 12 point, refers to size of print.)
- Provide a laser printer original of your resume. A typewritten original is also acceptable. Do not use a dot matrix printer; the print may be too light or could be hard to read by the computer.
- Use white 8 ½” x 11” paper, printed on one side only.
- Do not staple your resume.
- Place your name at the top of each page on its own line.
- Use standard address format below your name.
- List each phone number on its own line.
- Do not use fancy treatments such as italics, underlining, and shadows. Limit the use of boldface or all capital letters to section headings and make sure letters do not touch each other. Don’t condense spacing between letters.
- Do not use vertical and horizontal lines, graphics, shading, and boxes. The computer is set to read “text” not “graphics.” If you use complex tables with leader dots (...), the computer may not read your data correctly.
- Avoid two-column format or resumes that looks like newspapers or newsletters.
- Your resume is limited to **five PRINTED** pages, and only the first **five** pages of your resume will be scanned into the computer. Any information on pages after page five will not be used, so please follow the directions. On pages 2 through 5 of your printed resume, be sure to include your name and SSN at the top of each page.