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RESUME AND COVER LETTER TIPS FOR FEDERAL & LOCAL GOVERNMENT APPLICATIONS

Career Center

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WHERE CAN I APPLY FOR GOVERNMENT JOBS?

- ✗ OCI – on and off campus programs
- ✗ Government Honors
- ✗ Presidential Management Fellows (PMF)
- ✗ Symplicity
- ✗ PSJD
- ✗ Directly through agency websites



WHAT IS THE GOVERNMENT HONORS PROGRAM?

- ✗ Entry level attorney recruitment program
- ✗ Temporary positions lasting 1-2 years
- ✗ Competitive
- ✗ Each agency has its own hiring process and timeline
- ✗ Most agencies offer permanent positions



WHAT WILL I DO IN A GOVERNMENT JOB?

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- × Litigation
- × Regulatory
- × Advisory
- × Public Policy



PREPARE TO APPLY

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- ✕ Read the job carefully
- ✕ Research the agency
- ✕ Prepare key words from their website, job description, and contacts
- ✕ Remember the scoring system
 - + Do not be under or over inclusive
- ✕ Follow the application instructions!



WHAT ARE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES LOOKING FOR IN AN APPLICANT?

- ✗ High quality legal work
- ✗ Commitment to carrying out the agency's mission & goals
- ✗ Particular knowledge or skills
- ✗ Enthusiasm
- ✗ Character & leadership skills
- ✗ Communication skills
- ✗ Innovative & can handle responsibility



HOW ARE GOVERNMENT RESUMES DIFFERENT FROM OTHER OCI RESUMES?

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- ✗ Resumes should be 1-3 pages and more detailed
- ✗ Be specific, comprehensive, and concise



SPECIFIC RESUMES

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- ✗ Tailored for each individual job
- ✗ Use key words from the job posting
- ✗ Use all relevant information and transferable skills
- ✗ Use data, percentages, numbers
- ✗ Focus on outcomes to which you directly contributed



COMPREHENSIVE RESUMES

- ✗ More in depth about skills, past duties, accomplishments
- ✗ **Under Education**, include:
 - + relevant coursework
 - + leadership positions
 - + projects/presentations
 - + academic papers
- ✗ **Under Experience**, include:
 - + All relevant information & transferable skills
 - + Consider using 2-3 Experience headings to draw attention to your relevant experiences



COMPREHENSIVE RESUMES

- ✦ Include relevant activities:
 - + Involvement in social organizations
 - + Affiliations
 - + Volunteer experiences
 - + Unique projects or interests
 - + Awards/certificates
 - + Subjects mastered and job-related training
 - + Language skills



CONCISE RESUMES

- ✗ No wordy or irrelevant information
- ✗ If you have more than 1 page, make sure your second page is at least ½ filled
- ✗ No excessive formatting or creative fonts
- ✗ Provide context for acronyms



COVER LETTER

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- Your first writing sample to an employer
- Demonstrates your ability to write informally and be persuasive about yourself
- Complements your resume. Does not restate your resume in narrative form.



COVER LETTER FORMAT

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- **Paragraph 1**
 - Introduce yourself and interest in the job
 - Desired locations (if applicable)
 - Geographic or agency connections
 - 3-4 skills, qualities, or experiences that you can contribute to the agency (use the posting as your guide)
- **Paragraphs 2 & 3**
 - Expand on the 3-4 items listed above, providing examples and evidence
 - State your interests, but that you're flexible
- **Paragraph 4**
 - Keep it short, thank them for their time



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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- ✕ Work with your Career Counselor
 - + Job search strategies
 - + Application tips
 - + Contacts at agencies
 - + Application deadlines
- ✕ Career Center remains open in summer
- ✕ Research Agencies
 - + PSJD – www.psjd.org / Resources
 - + ABA – www.aba.org/statelocal
 - + Agency websites usually have additional tips for applications