VA's Guide to
The Application Process

Part 1: USAJOBS "My Account"

"My Account" in USAJOBS is the area within USAJOBS where applicants begin the application process. For VA, Application Manager, which is a feature associated with USA Staffing, is the internal application system that applicants are seamlessly transferred to Application Manager after completing the first steps of the application process through USAJOBS. That is where they will complete and submit their application(s).

Functions within USAJOBS

At **My Account**, the applicant has the option to do several things:
- Create or upload a résumé
- Set up a job search query
- Assemble an application
- Upload supporting documents
- Edit account profile information
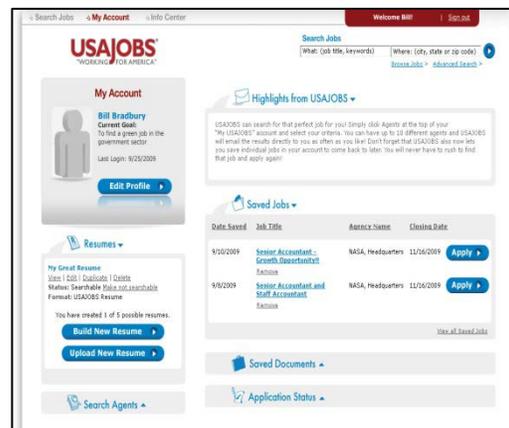
Résumés

My Account allows the applicant to view, delete, rename, edit or upload existing résumés. The applicant can also create a new résumé using Résumé Builder. Applicants are urged to use Résumé Builder to ensure their résumés contain all the required information (i.e. start and end month/year). If applicants upload résumés, they need to check the document to make sure all this information is included.

Creating the résumé in Résumé Builder is a simple 4-step process:
1. Identify basic information
2. Describe experience
3. List education and training
4. Save (either for later or in the USAJOBS searchable candidate database)

Applicants can store up to five different résumés; these can be created through Résumé Builder or uploaded.

Note: Personal, uploaded résumés cannot be larger than 3MB.

Notice that one of the résumés listed in the illustration above is identified as searchable, while the other is not. This means that the first résumé can be viewed in the USAJOBS résumé bank.
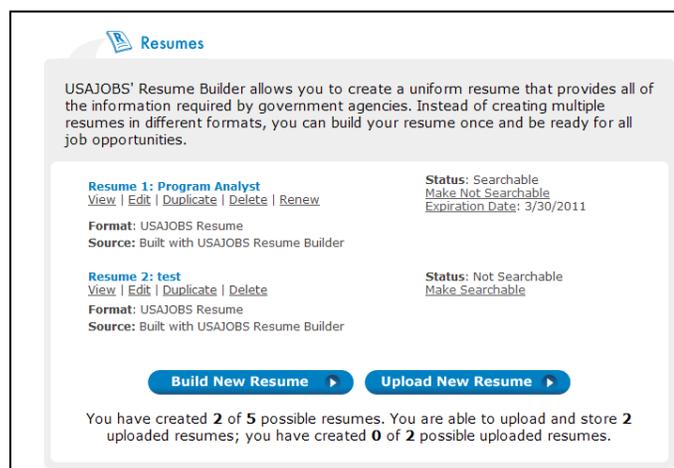
The résumé bank is a large pool of saved résumés that recruiters can browse online when looking for applicants. The second résumé was marked "Confidential" when the résumé was built. It is not included in the résumé bank. The second résumé will still be completely visible to the manger when submitted for a specific vacancy announcement.

Job Search Agents
Applicants can also create job search agents. In the agent, the applicant specifies what type of job they are interested in applying for, the duty location, etc. Applicants can build up to ten of these searches. Then, whenever a job is posted that is a match of what the applicant has entered, an email is automatically sent to the applicant with a link to the vacancy's announcement.

Note: Internal merit promotion postings cannot be found in searches through USAJOBS.

Application Tracking
My Account tracks applications that were submitted by clicking the "Apply Online" within the last 18 months.

Save Jobs
The "Saved Jobs" feature allows applicants to save links to announcements that are of interest. When applicants want to refer back to the announcement, they simply click on the link listed in their account.

To save a link, the applicant simply clicks the "Save job" link at the USAJOBS search list. After the link has been saved, the pale gray "Save job" changes to "Saved" in bold type.

Saved Documents
Using the "Saved Documents" feature, applicants can upload several documents to their account to submit with applications. Up to ten documents such as the DD-214, SF-50, SF-15, transcripts and others can be stored in the account.

Note: The size limit for these uploaded documents is 3MB. To avoid too-large files, applicants should save documents in PDF (Adobe Acrobat) format.

Uploading is a simple process of choosing the file category that will be uploaded (such as DD-214), browsing the computer for the saved file, assigning a name for the saved document, and clicking "Upload."

Now the applicant is ready to find a vacancy for which online applications are accepted.
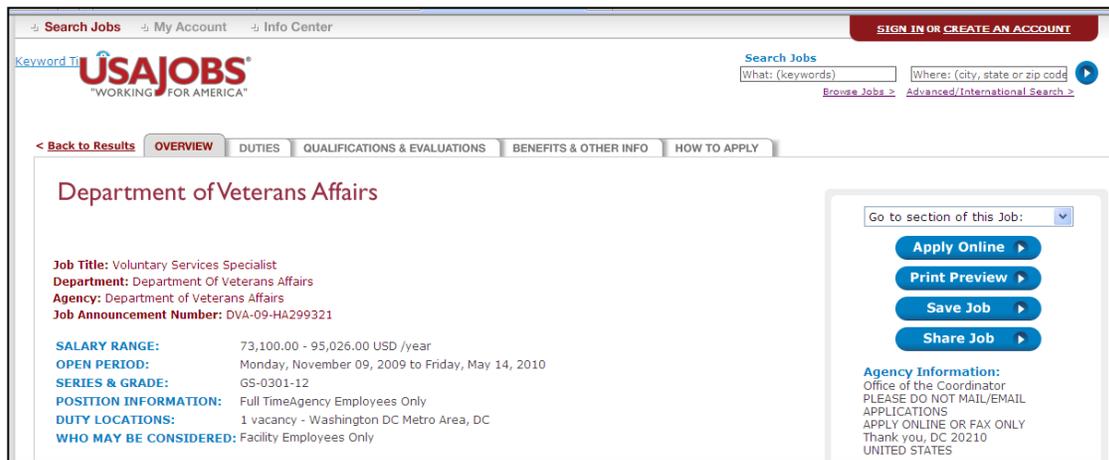

Part 2: Applying to a Vacancy

When a vacancy of interest is found on USAJOBS, applicants simply click "Apply Online" to begin the online application process. If not already signed into their USAJOBS account, they will be asked to do so.

The first screen the applicant sees is one that lists all supporting documents that are saved within their **My Account**. Any of these saved documents may be "highlighted" and "selected" for submission with the current application package they are putting together.

Then the applicant clicks on the "Apply for this Position Now" button at this screen. After clicking this button, the applicant is taken to Application Manager to complete the Questionnaire and submit the required application materials.
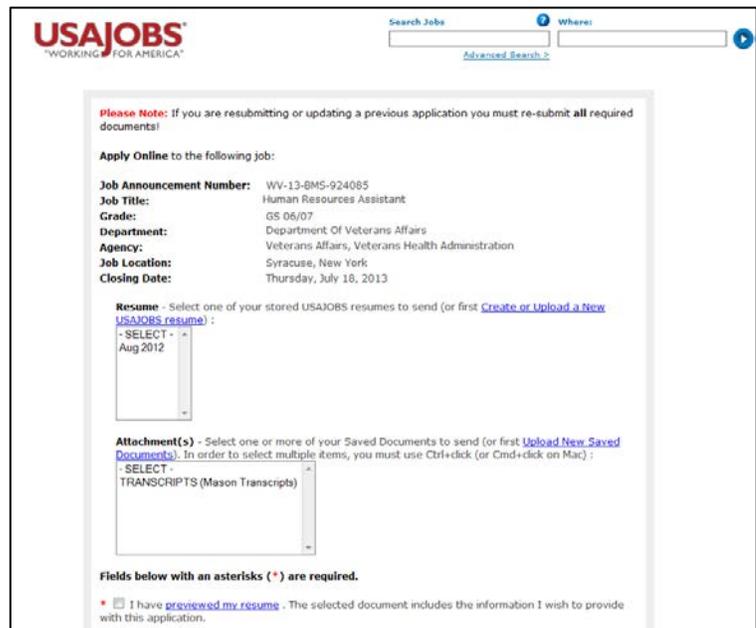
Note: Files selected for an application in the USAJOBS My Account automatically transfer to Application Manager. The applicant can also select files to attach while in Application Manager.

<u>Options for Applying</u>
Applicants may apply electronically or by faxing their application materials. Applicants should be strongly encouraged to apply electronically. The process is much easier, more secure, and less prone to error than faxing materials.

- Fax materials do not have the same image quality, must be verified by the OPM processing center manually, can become separated from each other, and are more likely include errors in the Vacancy Identification Number (meaning the document cannot be matched up with the announcement).
- Status notifications are more limited.
- USAJOBS allows applicants to store documents such as the DD-214, SF-50 and transcripts in their online account. Copies can then be easily attached to applications whenever needed, instead of locating and uploading the files again.

Facility Computer Workstations

Where possible, facilities should establish a computer workstation (preferably a personal computer with an all-in-one printer/scanner/fax or the equivalent) in each HRO or other secure area for use by employees applying for USA Staffing recruitments. Employees should use the workstation during non-duty work hours (break, lunch, etc.). The workstation is intended to assist current VA employees with the transition to a new application system. The computer system should not be used for personal purposes unrelated to the USA Staffing application process.

Tip: These workstations may also be used by HR Staff or employees to access e-Quip, VetPro, e-OPF, and/or other HR automated programs. In fact, a computer already being used for these purposes may be converted into a consolidated workstation so that the computer may also be used for USA Staffing.

<u>Tips for Faxing Materials</u>
- Use *only* the OPM Form 1203-FX as a coversheet - do not use an additional cover sheet.
  - If requesting the OPM Form 1203-FX via phone, press 1 after the introduction on the recording, then listen for instructions to request the form.
- Applicants may submit multiple documents for the same vacancy announcement using one cover page.
- If the applicant has uploaded documents using Application Manager, the applicant **SHOULD NOT FAX** the same documents to the Processing Center.

To verify that uploaded documents have been processed, inform the Applicant to wait one hour to ensure they have cleared the virus scan.

Part 3: Application Manager

When in Application Manager, applicants are provided full terms and conditions of use of Application Manager. To move forward with the application process, applicants must click "Accept and Proceed."

Once in the system, the questionnaire is displayed within the navigation box at the left of the screen, to guide the applicant through the application process.

If an assessment questionnaire is marked as "All responses are required", Applicants will see a red <u>Required</u> message when they skip an assessment question.
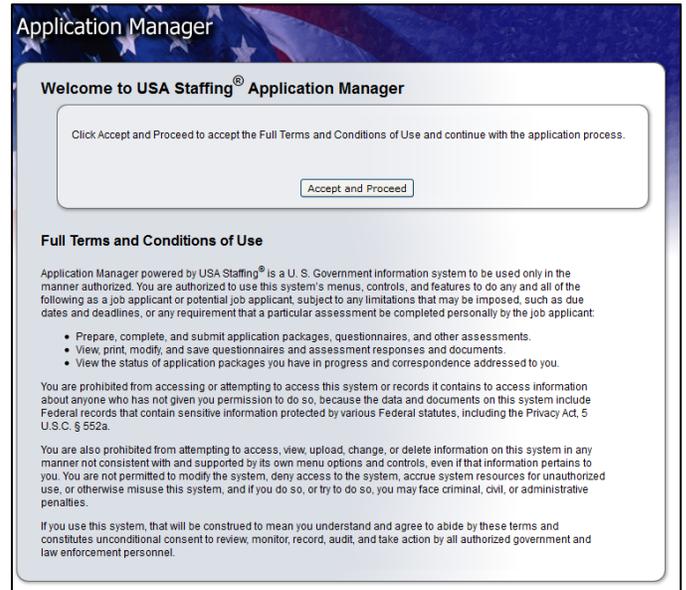
Questions in the assessment questionnaire are often presented in more than one page (shown as "sections" in the Navigation Box). The applicant clicks **Next** as each page is completed. The applicant's work is saved when **Next** or **Previous** is clicked.

Note: Information is not always saved when the applicant selects an item in the Navigation Box.

Tip: Applicants may want to leave and come back to the Questionnaire at a later point in time, before the application is submitted. When in USAJOBS My Account, click on "Application Status." At the far right column, applicants can click "more information…" which will take them automatically to the unfinished questionnaire.


At the "Upload Document" page, the system will display the documents that were brought over from the USAJOBS My Account. The "Upload Document" page allows the applicant to copy electronic files (such as a PDF copy of a transcript) to Application Manager. The uploaded files will be added to the applicant's package for that vacancy.

Tips to keep in mind:

- Applicants should keep a copy of their SF-50 (Notification of Personnel Action), DD-214 (Certification of Discharge from Military Service), and transcripts in their USAJOBS account then the documents will always be easy to locate and attach to an application.

- If the Application package is later changed or updated, the applicant must return to the "Submit My Answers" page and complete that step again.
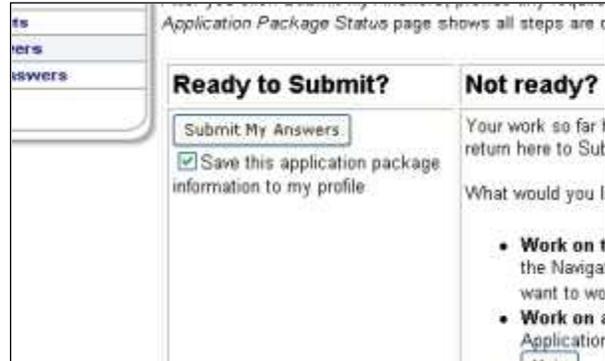
To fully complete the application process, the applicant must click the "Submit My Answers" button.

Instead of displaying the "Ready to Submit" option, the system will inform applicants that required items are missing and will not allow applicants to submit their answers if the following situations occur:

- Narrative responses marked as required, are not completed by the applicant. The applicant must return to those items to complete the required narrative responses. (Application Manager will identify the section in which narratives have not been completed.)

- Assessment questionnaires marked as "All responses required", are not completed by the applicant. The applicant must return to any unanswered questions to complete the questionnaire. (Application Manager will identify the section in which answers to questions have not been completed).

For USAJOBS My Account tutorials and guides, please visit:
http://www.usajobs.gov/ResourceCenter

VA USA Staffing Program Office has also created these additional resources:

- Applying Online with USAJOBS and Application Manager Pamphlet
http://www.va.gov/ohrm/joblistings/apply_usa_staffing.pdf

- Uploading Documents Aid
http://www.va.gov/OHRM/joblistings/uploading-and-using-documents-online.doc