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Veterans Can Continue Public Service in Civilian Careers – Critical Steps to Applying for Federal Jobs

(sixth in a series of articles on veterans pursuing civilian careers)

There are hundreds of different occupations for civilians with the Department of the Navy (DON) -- from aircraft mechanic to zoologist, says Jean Mercer, director of the DON's HR Systems and Business Transformation. Additionally, notes Mercers, the federal job opportunities "literally exist across the globe, from the hills of Tennessee to the deserts of the Middle East. We find that veterans' experience and skills easily transition to one of our many civilian careers."

Before applying for a job, veterans should secure all the necessary documents they need to attach to their federal resume, recommends Mercer. Veterans should retrieve their SMART transcripts to detail their military training and education. These will need to be uploaded with their federal resume. (Go to https://www.navycollege.navy.mil/smart_info.cfm to obtain SMART transcripts). Veterans should also compile information (DD Form 2586) from VMET (<https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appl/vmet/index.jsp> - DEERs login is required); and military service record information on awards, medals, ribbons (documented on DD Form 1650/3), service evaluations and letters of commendation.

Before searching for federal jobs, veterans should find out how their military occupational specialty or rating relate to federal civilian jobs. Maryland's mil2fed webpage (http://www.mil2fedjobs.com/mil_search.aspx) provides a crosswalk of military occupational specialties or ratings to civilian occupations by occupational codes, title, and position type (white collar or blue collar). The DON's Credentialing Opportunities Online webpage (<https://www.cool.navy.mil/>) also provides veterans with information on civilian occupations relating to their military occupational specialty or rating, collateral duty/out-of-rate assignment, or officer designator or collateral duty/assignment/.



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Writing a government resume is different than for the private sector. Related training is offered exclusively to veterans through TURBOTAP, the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) classes, resume writing courses offered by Fleet and Family Service Centers and tips provided by the Shipmates to Workmates program (<http://jobs.navair.navy.mil/sm2wm/Default.aspx>). Information also is available at www.fedshirevets.gov/ hosted by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the DON Office of Civilian Human Resources (OCHR) webpage dedicated to veterans (<http://www.public.navy.mil/donhr/Employment/Vets/Pages/Default.aspx>).

Next, veterans should go to usajobs.gov and use the built-in resume builder to setup their USAJOBS account. Once the resume is created, veterans should search for occupations which most closely match their military training and skills. Searches can be made by location, desired salary/paygrade and more. Mercer says it is critical to pay close attention to the instructions and key information on the job opportunity announcement. The announcements will list who may apply, how they will be evaluated, geographic location of the job, salary, etc., as well as requirements such as security clearances, medical examinations, travel requirements, shift work, and more. Saving your searches will allow you to receive email notifications as new announcements are posted. OCHR's webpage (noted above) provides tipsheets on how to setup the account. If, after working with the FFSC counselors, applicants have questions navigating the USAJOBS process, the OCHR Employment Information Center is available to answer questions via DONEic@navy.mil or 1-800-378-4559.

The DON remains committed to improving the applicant's experience, reducing the time to fill vacancies and securing quality candidates for DON positions. Civilian careers in the Department of the Navy offer real world challenges with real life rewards – careers where purpose and patriotism unite.

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