

Frequently Asked Questions: Job Descriptions

What is the purpose of a job description?

- Serves as a definition of the functions, responsibilities and skills needed for the job
- Used for recruitment to support the Manager and Talent team during the selection process and used to attract qualified candidates
- Provides guidance for training, development, succession planning, and organizational development
- To aide in formulating goals for employees
- Provides a basis for employee reviews, discipline, salary, and goal setting
- Serves as a legal document that can be useful in wrongful termination or discrimination lawsuits

What should the job description contain?

- Basic information
- Context and Mission of the District
- The Opportunity
- This Role Will (Job Duties and Responsibilities)
- Qualifications
- Working Conditions/Physical Demands
- What We Offer

What should each section include? How should I write it?

Basic Information

Position Title	Job Title <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Should be based on the main function or role of the job• Stay away from vague or overly specific job titles• Describes both the level of responsibility and role of the job
FLSA Status	Exemption status; determined by the Talent Department
Location	Primary location of the position. It should be noted if there are any other locations.
Salary Band	Band of Position; determined by the Compensation Department
Function	Primary Supervisory Organization
Compensation	Range of Band associated with the Salary Band. Must show Minimum - Midpoint - Maximum.
Union	Union, if applicable
Reports To	Immediate Supervisors Position

Context and Mission of the District

This section is an overview of the District and overall mission. This section remains consistent on all job descriptions reflecting the goals, mission, vision, and strategy for the District.

The Opportunity

Summarizes the main points of the position, which may include a high level view of the key responsibilities, functions, and duties. This should be in paragraph form, usually one (1) – three (3) paragraphs.

This Role Will (Job Duties and Responsibilities)

Job duties and responsibilities are the foundation of the job description, conveying the complexity, scope, and level of responsibility of a job. It is important to accurately, concisely, and completely describe the duties and responsibilities of the job. This section should be well written and organized.

1. Think of the job in terms of its key accountabilities, or main responsibilities/functions
2. From the key accountabilities and responsibilities, generate specific job duties associated with each
 - a. What is the main reason this job exists?
 - b. How do the duties of the job contribute to the mission of the District?
 - c. Does the job have supervisory duties?

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- d. What outputs, deliverables, and end results is the job ultimately responsible for?
3. Condense the specific job duties into eight (8) to ten (10) duty statements, beginning each statement with an action verb

Tips and Tricks:

- Present a bulleted list in order of importance or percentage of time spent over the course of the year; sort in order of importance
- Begin each statement with an action verb in present tense
- Use clear, concise, and gender-neutral language
- Write the duties in terms of what the position requires, not upon the capabilities of an individual
- Describe the position based on current or imminent needs, not long-term or past needs. Consider what the job will look like in the next six (6) to twelve (12) months
- Industry technical terms and acronyms or abbreviations may not be common knowledge. Use the full term the first time, followed by the acronym in parentheses before using it elsewhere in the job description
 - Example: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Other duties that are not performed often or are not an essential function of the role can be left out and covered with a generic statement at the end of this section, such as, “*Performs other duties and assists with special projects as assigned*”
- Do not write the job description as a step by step guide on how to do the job
- Do not write the job description based on the desired job classification or band

Qualifications

Identifies the minimum education, knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) and experience necessary for entry into the job.

Knowledge: Acquired information, concepts, or theories through education or work experience

Skills: Competences and functional skills required for the position such as verbal and written communication skills, time management skills, conflict resolution skills, etc.

Abilities: An acquired or natural talent to perform an action, complete a task or exhibit a specific behavior in certain situations, such as demonstrated ability to manage a high volume of work with conflicting priorities and deadlines.

This section must include:

1. Level of Education (such as high school diploma, Bachelor’s degree, Master’s degree), and your concentration of study. Adding a statement such as *Equivalent combination of education and experience will be considered* will account for candidates with extensive work experience who may not possess the required credentials, and should be used when applicable
 - a. Example: *Bachelor’s Degree in Criminal Justice or Private Investigation required, Master’s Degree in Criminal Justice preferred. Five (5) to Seven (7) years of equivalent work experience will be considered*
2. Years of work experience required and preferred. Specify the type of work experience needed and quantify minimum years of experience.
 - a. Example: *Three (3) to five (5) years of experience working in a private investigative capacity or related area required*
3. Special Training, certifications, or licensure required and preferred
4. Special knowledge, skills, or abilities
 - a. Example: *PC skills or special languages*

Tips and Tricks:

- Present in a bulleted list in order of importance

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- Be sure to include all duties that require a specific skill-set or have significant impact, even if they are not performed often
- If you are having trouble deciding whether or not a qualification is required or preferred, ask yourself “*Would I hire a candidate who does not meet this requirement?*”
- Use additional preferred qualifications to identify any assets or nice-to-haves that an ideal employee may bring to the role. Ensure the required minimum qualifications are clearly stated first.
- All job qualifications must be neutral and non-discriminatory. Job Qualifications cannot exclude citizenship, sex, age, disability, etc.

Physical Demands and Working Conditions

Describes the working environment and physical demands of the position.

Include the job requirements, such as amount of manual effort, climbing, lifting, reaching, exposure to harsh conditions, exposure to dangerous chemicals, travel time, etc. The identification and explanation of the physical requirements of a job have legal ramifications related to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and should be prepared thoughtfully.

What We Offer

Total Rewards package that is offered when working with the District, including, retirement information, health care, vacation and sick time, etc. This information is provided by the Talent Department.

What are common action verbs that can be used in describing Job Duties and Responsibilities in the Job Description?

Suggested action verbs are listed below. Other resources can be used to identify appropriate action verbs. For a more defined list, visit the *Writing Job Descriptions: Action Verbs* job aide for guidance.

Acquires	Determines	Maintains
Administers	Develops	Manages
Advises	Directs	Obtains
Advises	Enforces	Orders
Approves	Establishes	Organizes
Authorizes	Establishes	Participates
Coaches	Executes	Prevents
Compiles	Formulates	Purchases
Consults	Guides	Receives
Controls	Implements	Reports
Cooperates	Informs	Requires
Coordinates	Initiates	Schedules
Counsels	Initiates	Secures
Creates	Instructs	Serves
Decides	Issues	Supervises
Delegates		Trains