

USAJOBS Communications Forum

August 20, 2025

Presented by:
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Agenda

1. Merit Hiring Plan Update
 - New JOA standard language
 - Two-page resume limit
2. VET feedback survey
3. Applicant communications journey map that highlights communication pain points and opportunities for improvement



Merit Hiring Plan Update: New JOA Standard Language

- The USAJOBS program office added standard language to job opportunity announcement (JOA) templates to comply with the [Merit Hiring Plan](#)
- These changes were applied to all JOAs opened on or after 7/18/25:
 - The Additional Information section now contains:

Candidates should be committed to improving the efficiency of the Federal government, passionate about the ideals of our American republic, and committed to upholding the rule of law and the United States Constitution.
 - The [Equal employment opportunity policy](#) in the Fair and Transparent section has updated content:

Candidates will not be hired based on their race, sex, color, religion, or national origin.

Two-page Resume Limit

Merit Hiring Plan Update: Two Page Resume Limit

- The Merit Hiring Plan requires federal agencies to limit resumes to two pages.
- USAJOBS is planning to implement changes that ensure all applicant resumes are two pages or less on **September 27, 2025**.
- OPM will publish guidance on the Merit Hiring Plan and the two-page resume limit soon.
- Talent Acquisition Systems that accept resumes outside of USAJOBS should take steps to enforce the two-page resume limit.

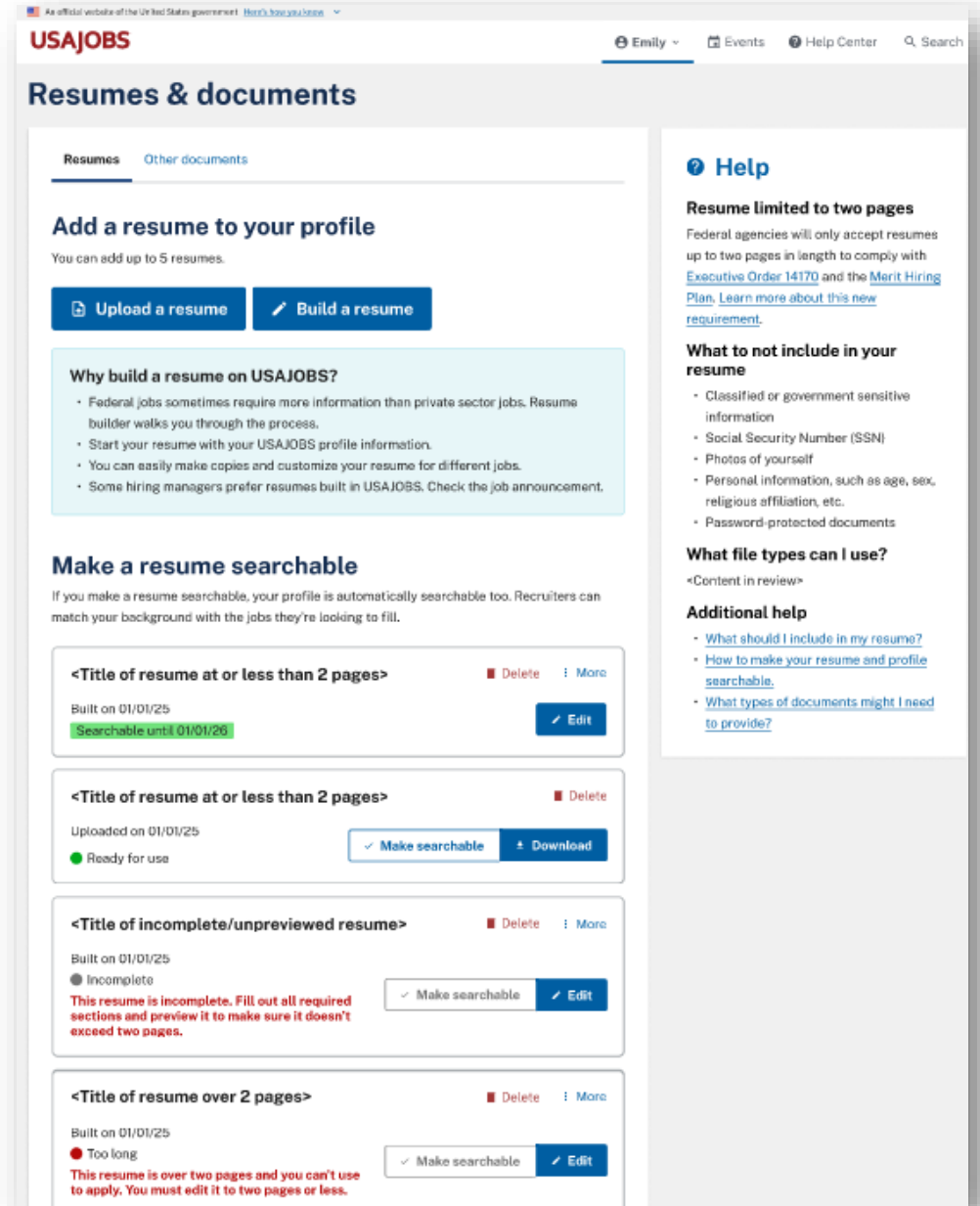
Preparing Job Seekers

USAJOBS will help ensure job seekers are aware of these changes by:

- Posting banners on USAJOBS that notify job seekers of this upcoming change and encourage job seekers to act now to reduce their resumes to two pages or less
- Updating Help Center content
- Updating sidebar help content where resumes are created/uploaded
- Posting updates and other resume best practices on the USAJOBS's LinkedIn page (follow us here [USAJOBS | LinkedIn](#))
- Emailing job seekers who have searchable resumes informing them of the new two-page resume limit

Existing Resumes stored in Seeker Profiles

- USAJOBS will validate the page length of all resumes stored in the job seeker's profile (uploaded and builder resumes).
- The job seeker will need to take action on resumes stored in their profile based on the resume length and status (e.g., Ready for use, too long, etc.).
- Job seekers will need to mark a new two-page resume searchable.



This is a mock-up and subject to change.

New Resumes Uploaded to Seeker Profiles

- After the two-page resume requirement goes into effect, all new uploaded resumes to USAJOBS will be converted to PDF before being accepted into the job seeker's profile.
- USAJOBS will continue to accept the current file formats and current file size limits will still apply.
- The job seeker must review the pdf version of their uploaded resume before they can save it in their profile.
- USAJOBS will not allow the resume to be saved in the profile if it exceeds two pages.

An official website of the United States government [Here's how you know](#)

USAJOBS Emi

Upload a resume

! **This resume is over two pages.**
After we converted this resume to a PDF, it is longer than two pages and can't be uploaded.
You must upload a resume that is two pages or less.

1 of 3 Page Width

Elaine Helms
1000 Main Street
San Francisco, CA 94102
ehelms@gmail.com

Objective: Dedicated and results driven Human Resources Specialist with 20 years of experience in talent acquisition, employee relations, and organizational development. Seeking an opportunity to leverage my skills and experience in a dynamic organization.

Work Experience

Human Resources Specialist
Tech Solutions Inc., Alexandria, VA (Remote)
01/2020 - Present

- Lead recruitment efforts, including sourcing, interviewing, and onboarding new employees.
- Develop and implement HR policies, ensuring compliance with local and federal regulations.
- Handle employee relations, addressing conflicts, and facilitating a positive work environment.

Human Resources Coordinator
TechStart Solutions, Tempe, AZ
03/2018 - 12/2019

- Provided support in employee relations matters, addressing inquiries and resolving issues.
- Facilitated orientation for new employees, communicating company policies and benefits.
- Assisted in the development and implementation of employee training programs.
- Managed HR data entry, ensuring accuracy and completeness of employee records.
- Conducted training sessions on HR topics, such as diversity and inclusion, about harassment prevention, and performance management.
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Human Resources Clerk
Global Staffing, Los Angeles, CA
06/2015 - 08/2017

- Conducted training sessions on HR topics, such as diversity and inclusion, about harassment prevention, and performance management.

Human Resources Clerk
Global Staffing, Los Angeles, CA
08/2013 - 05/2015

- Assisted in the recruitment process by coordinating interviews, conducting background checks, and processing new hire paperwork.
- Managed benefits administration, including enrollment, communication, and handling employee inquiries.
- Collaborated with department managers to assess staffing needs and provide strategic HR support.

Education

Cancel

Resume Builder Resumes

USAJOBS will streamline the layout of the resume builder and convert all builder resumes to PDF. The following fields will be available in USAJOBS builder resumes*:

- **Required fields:**

- Contact information: Name and how best to contact you (email and phone)
- Relevant work experience: should align to the JOA and address all required qualifications and include job title, employer, start/end dates, number of hours worked per week
- Education, certification or licensure: If required, education should include school/institution name, completion date, degree type and GPA

- **Optional fields:** current security clearance, job-related training, language skills, organizations/affiliations, professional publications and references

- **Removed fields:** availability, location preferences, salary, street address

**Applicants will be guided to include this same content in uploaded resumes to drive consistency.*

Resume Builder Mock-up

USAJOBS

Emily ▾Events ▾Help Center ▾Search

Build a resume

Save progress and return to documents

Resume name *

<name> Resume <date>

Update resume name

1 Relevant work experience

You may add up to 10 entries.

+<Job title>

<Federal employer name>

May 2022 - May 2025

+<Job title>

<Non-federal employer name>

May 2022 - May 2025

+<Job title>

<Non-federal employer name>

May 2022 - May 2025

Add work experience

2 Education, certification or licensures

You may add up to 10 entries.

+<Degree or level attained>

<School or program name>

+<Degree or level attained>

<School or program name>

+<Degree or level attained>

<School or program name>

Add education

3 Job-related training (optional)

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.

Edit job-related training

4 Language skills (optional)

You may add up to 10 entries.

+<Language>

Help

Create your resume using the USAJOBS resume builder. We'll guide you through the process of adding your educational background, work experience, references, language skills, professional affiliations and any additional info you think will strengthen your resume.

Resumes soon limited to two pages

Starting end of September 2025, federal agencies will only accept resumes up to two pages in length to comply with [Executive Order 14170](#) and the [Merit Hiring Plan](#).

[Learn more about this new requirement.](#)

Builder Resume PDF Mock-up

[Name]

Phone: [Phone number]Email: [Email address]

Relevant work experience

[Formal job title]

[Employer name]

[City/Town if provided], [State if provided] [Country if provided]

[Duties, Accomplishments and Related Skills]

[Start date] - [End date]

Hours per week: [avg. work hours per week]

Series: [Series if provided] - Grade: [Grade if provided] |

[Formal job title]

[Employer name]

[City/Town if provided], [State if provided] [Country if provided]

[Duties, Accomplishments and Related Skills]

[Start date] - [End date]

Hours per week: [avg. work hours per week]

Education, certification or licensures

[School or program name], [City/Town], [State]

[Degree or level attained]

Major: [Major if provided] | Minor: [Minor if provided] | Honors: [Honors if provided]

GPA: [GPA if provided] of a maximum [of GPA Max. if provided]

Credits Earned: [Total credits earned if provided]

Coursework: [Relevant coursework if provided]

Certifications or licensures: [Relevant certifications or licensures if provided]

Completion date:

[Completion Date]

Job-related training

[Job related training]

Language skills

[Name of language]

Spoken: [Spoken skill] | Written: [Written skill] | Read: [Reading skill]

[Name of language]

Spoken: [Spoken skill] | Written: [Written skill] | Read: [Reading skill]

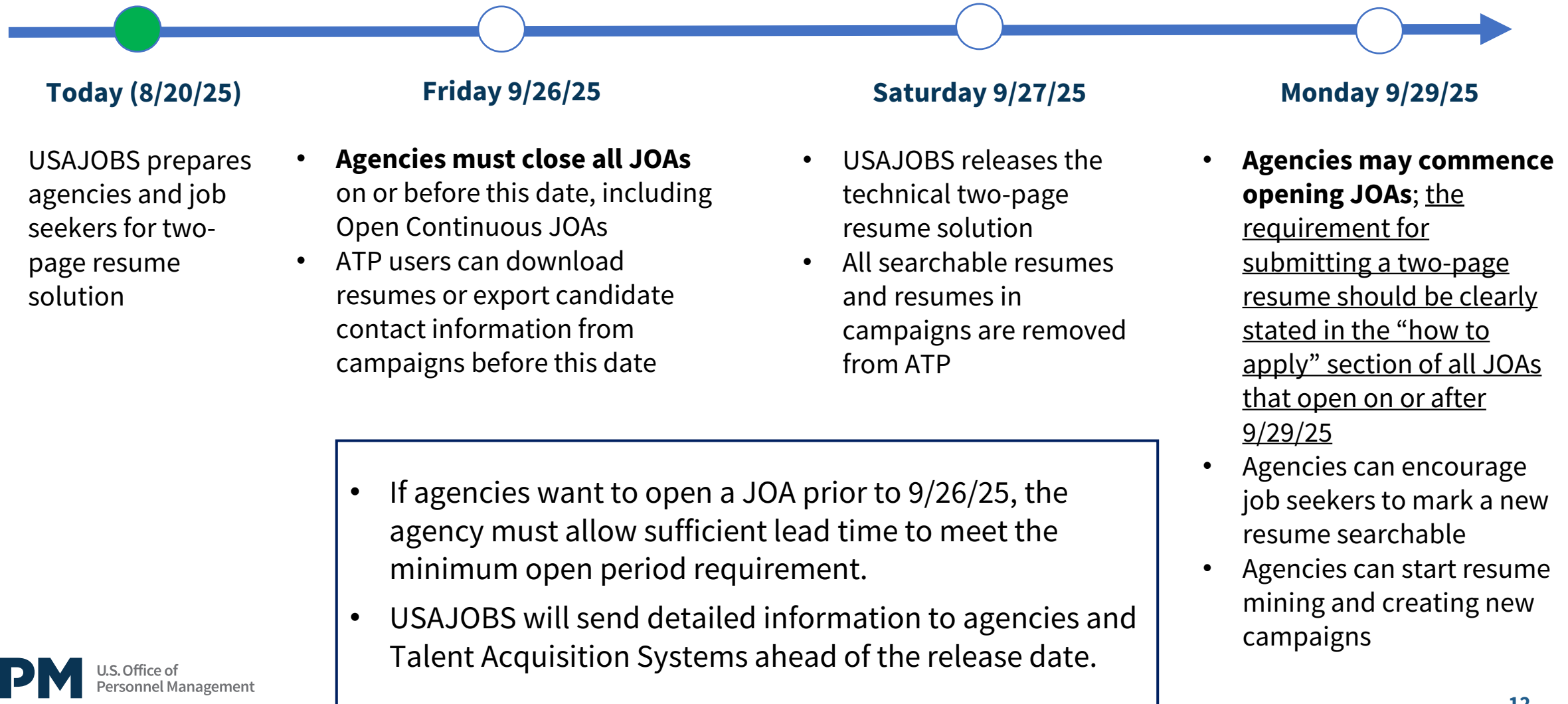
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Searchable Resumes and Campaigns in ATP

- All searchable resumes and resumes added to campaigns will be removed from the Agency Talent Portal on 9/27/25.
- USAJOBS is communicating with job seekers that have a searchable resume to take action on the resumes stored in their profile and mark one resume searchable after 9/27/25.

Timeline for Agency Action



Merit Hiring Plan Resources

Online Resources for Agencies

- [Merit Hiring Resources Page](#)
 - [Merit Hiring Plan](#)
 - [Fact Sheet: OPM Launches Merit Hiring Plan to Modernize Federal Workforce and Restore Accountability](#)
 - [Guidance on Using the Four Short Essay Questions](#)
- [Executive Order 14170 - Reforming the Federal Hiring Process and Restoring Merit to Government Service](#)
- [Public Law 118-188 – Chance to Compete Act](#)
- [OPM Delegated Examining Operations Handbook](#)

The Merit Hiring Learning Series

OPM Talent Team

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is pleased to provide a free, government-wide learning series to support HR professionals, Talent Team members, hiring managers, and agency leaders in effective implementation of the Merit Hiring Plan.

Must have a .gov or .mil email to register on [Eventbrite](#).



Upcoming Events

August 21 – OPM Tools: This session will educate attendees on the OPM system features and tools that will help agencies implement the Merit Hiring Plan.

September 15 – Pooled & Shared Hiring (including Candidate Inventory): Overview of pooled hiring, such as the benefits, the authorities that allow pooled hiring and the OPM tools that facilitate pooled hiring.

September 16 – USAJOBS Agency Talent Portal Overview: Learn how to access and navigate the Agency Talent Portal (ATP) to use features, such as resume mining, campaigns, events, Talent Programs and Talent Pools.

Virtual events are hosted on MS Teams Townhall. Depending on your agency's network, the Teams Townhall features may not be available to you.

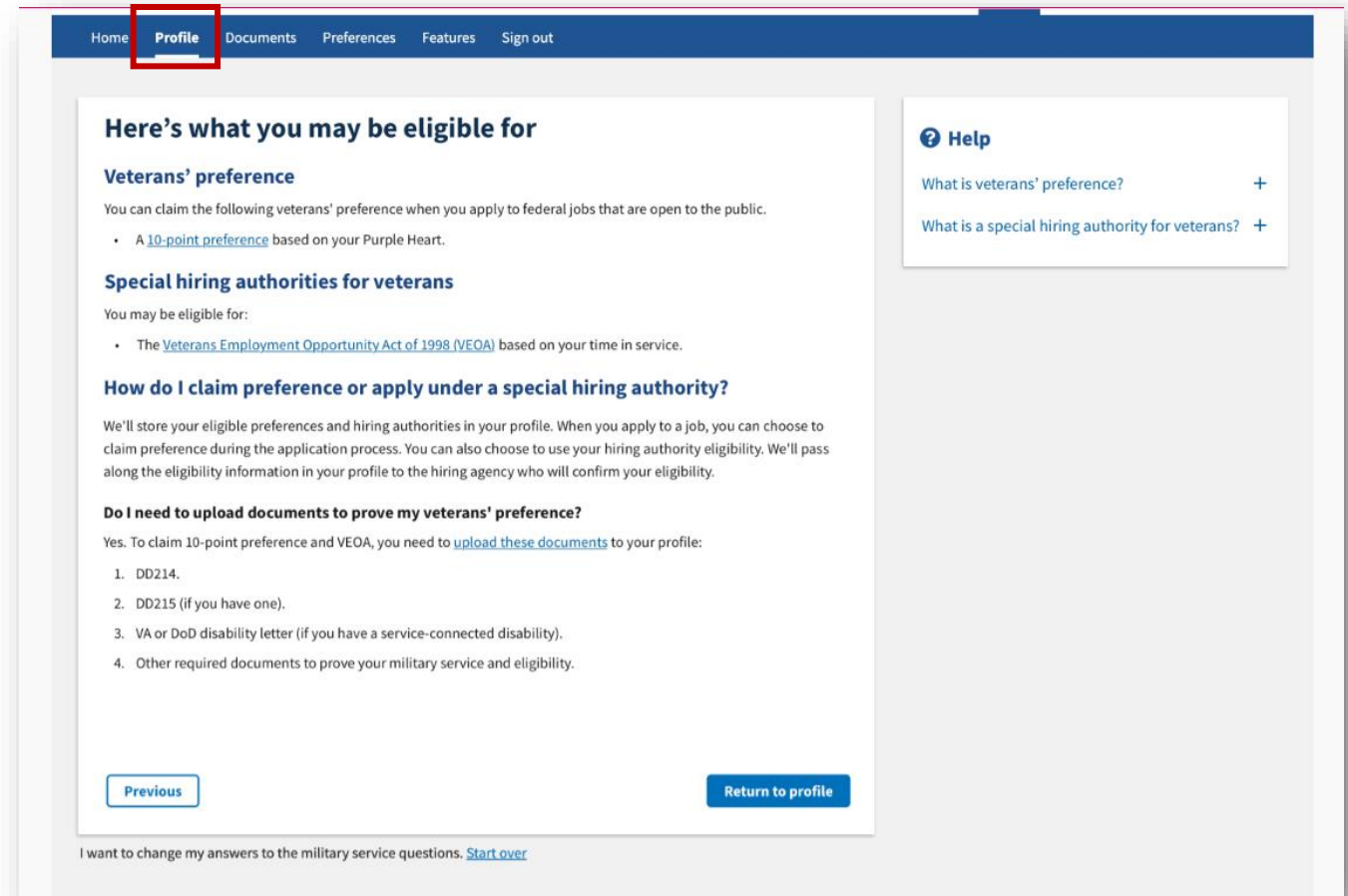
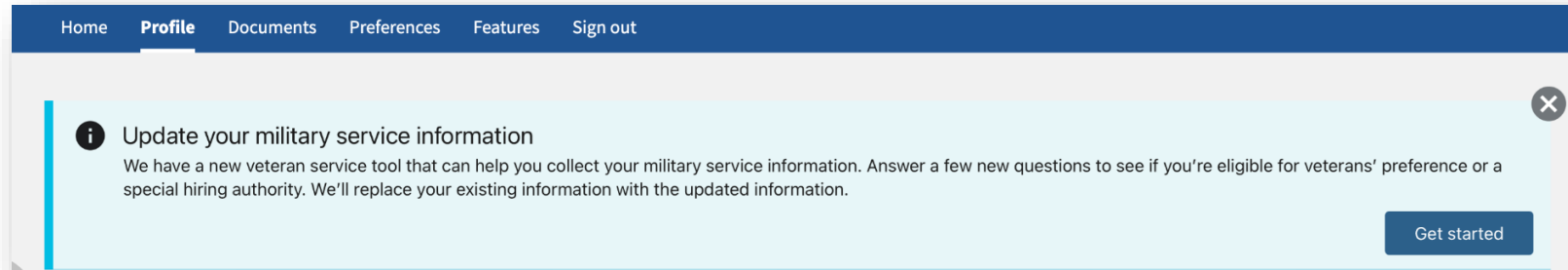
Veterans Eligibility Tool

Veterans' Eligibility Tool

The job seeker can learn about their veteran's or military spouse preference by responding to questions regarding their military service or affiliation

The VET does not verify veterans or military spouse preference - it is an educational tool only

The VET is accessed from the USAJOBS profile



VET Feedback Survey

- We are looking for feedback and ways to improve our VET!
- Please fill out the feedback survey once you try out the tool by pressing the “Help us improve” button in the bottom right corner of your results page

The screenshot displays a web interface for a VET Feedback Survey. A modal titled "Help us improve" is centered on the screen, asking if the user found the information useful and providing thumbs up/down buttons. Below these are text input fields for optional feedback and a "Submit" button. The background shows a sidebar with a "Help" section containing two expandable items: "What is veterans' preference?" and "What is a special hiring authority for veterans?". The main content area includes sections for "Special hiring authorities for veterans", "How do I claim preference or apply under a special hiring authority?", and "Do I need to upload documents to prove my veterans' preference?". A red rectangle highlights the "Help us improve" button in the bottom right corner of the page.

Special hiring authorities for veterans
You may be eligible for the following special hiring authority or authorities.

- The [Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998 \(VEOA\)](#) based on your time in service.
- The [Veterans Recruitment Appointment \(VRA\)](#) based on your service-connected disability
- The [Schedule A hiring authority](#) based on your service-connected disability

How do I claim preference or apply under a special hiring authority?
We'll automatically store your eligible preferences and hiring authorities in your profile. When you apply to a job, you can choose to claim preference during the application process. You can also choose to use your hiring authority eligibility. We'll pass along the eligibility information in your profile to the hiring agency who will confirm your eligibility.

Do I need to upload documents to prove my veterans' preference?
Yes. To claim 10-point preference, VEOA and VRA, you need to [upload these documents](#) to your profile:

- DD214
- DD215 (if you have one)
- VA or DoD disability letter (if you have a service-connected disability)
- Other required documents to prove your military service and eligibility

[Previous](#) [Return to profile](#)

Help us improve

Did you find this information useful?

Tell us what is working or not. (optional)

1000 characters allowed

[Submit](#)

🇺🇸 An official form of the United States government. Provided by [Touchpoints](#)

Help

What is veterans' preference? +

What is a special hiring authority for veterans? +

[Help us improve](#)

Top recommendations and journey map

Applicant Communications and Notifications Design Research

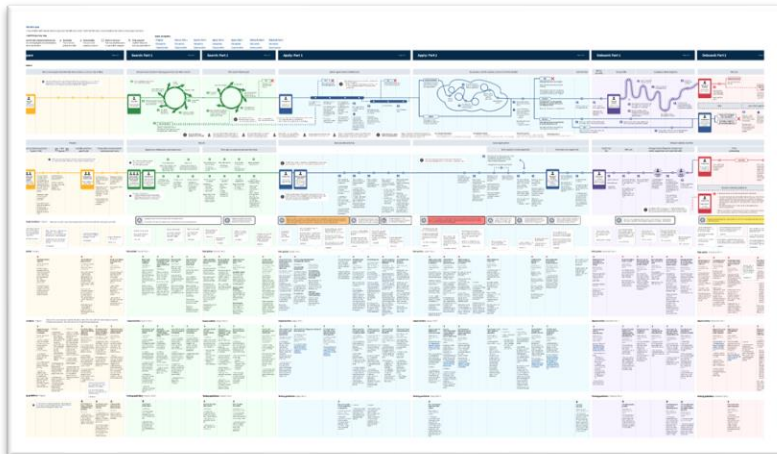
By Elizabeth Ferguson, USAJOBS design researcher

EXTERNAL

August 2025

Contents

- Recap of research
- Journey map
- Top recommendations
- Appendix: Example emails for inspiration
- Delivered by email: Journey map and this presentation deck



Journey map

Top recommendations
Upgrade the *content* of your own email templates, piece by piece.

Other recommendations to consider
Improve the *display* and *timing* of emails with talent acquisition system functionality.

General awareness
Texting guidelines

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Top recommendations

NASA Pathways - Application acknowledgement email
(Thank you for applying and what to expect)

Subject: Your Application Was Received.

Microsoft - Application acknowledgement email
Subject: Thank you for your Application!

Airbnb - Application acknowledgement email
Subject: Thank you for applying to Airbnb!

Hi _____

Thank you for your interest in _____ role; your application is in good hands! One of our recruiters will personally review it and get back to you within a few weeks. We know how much time and energy go into applying for a job - congratulations on taking this first step!

If you have any questions about the hiring process at Airbnb, you might find the answers on our common questions [LINK] page.

Thanks again for your interest and application; we'll be in touch soon!

Regards,
Airbnb Recruiting Team
[Logo]

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Examples you can reference

Recap of research

We finished the research.



USAJOBS conducted 40 interviews with job seekers, applicants, new hires and staff about notifications and communications.

We presented the main research findings at the April 2025 USAJOBS Comms meeting.

You can email USAJOBSEngagement@opm.gov for a copy of the original report.

Today, we're focusing on a few of the main takeaways.

- We heard most loudly and clearly about cold, robotic, and receipt-like **job application status emails** (also known as "statuses," "notifications," or the "four required touchpoints").
- Many of these emails are perceived as hurting, and not helping, the reputations of federal agencies and recruitment relationships that hiring teams are working so hard on.
- Many emails that we saw are very similar to templates provided by talent acquisition systems that were only meant to demonstrate functionality.

We should be treating emails with the same care that we do our public-facing webpages.

Emails are the glue that hold together the application process for candidates.

The rest of the takeaways are in the original report. This includes other types of emails across job seekers and new hires and closely related online touchpoints on USAJOBS.gov and Agency Talent Portal.

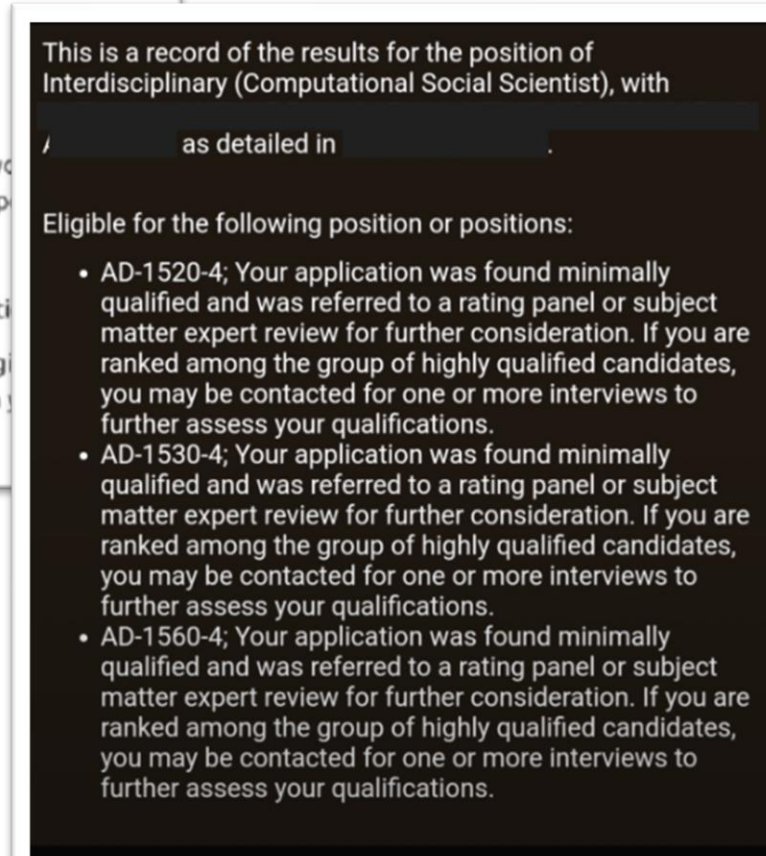
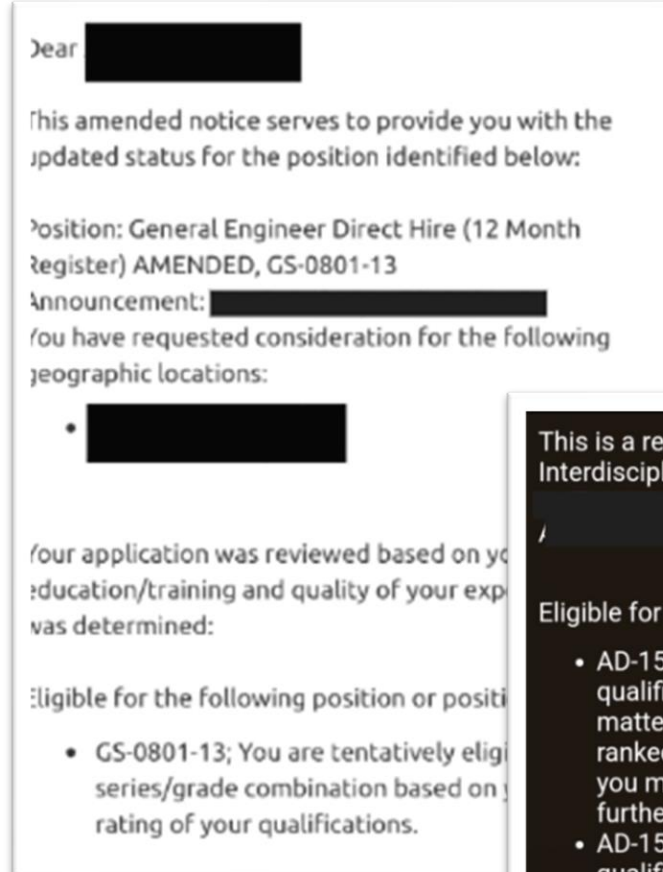
Here are a few examples.

These are typical job application status emails.

They appear voiceless, brandless, and possibly like spam.

Even reading the emails carefully, it's hard to know:

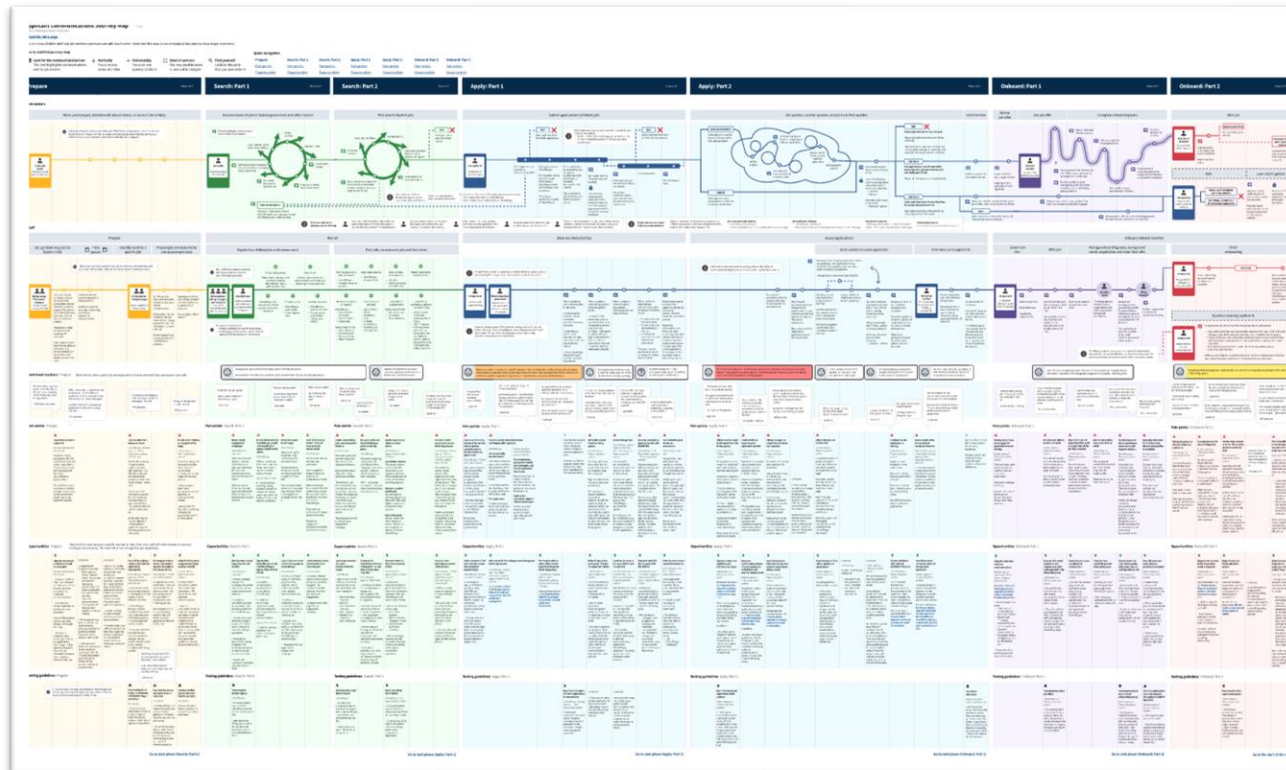
- **What happened** (Is the application moving forward or its not?)
- **What you're supposed to do** (Wait, visit your application status webpage, learn more about the agency, keep applying to jobs)
- **What you should expect next** (Either you'll get an interview, or you won't get an interview, and in that case, you'll get another email saying that someone else was selected).
- **What some words even mean.** Technical terms are appropriate with colleagues, but applicants can't be expected to rely ONLY on these terms without definitions or alternatives. (For example: notice, record of the results, updated status, eligible, tentatively, minimally, qualified, series, grade, self-rating, and requested consideration.)



We made a journey map.

We made a map so that we can more easily see where we can each improve applicant communications.

We'll walk through highlights in a few slides.



Meanwhile, the Merit Hiring Plan was released.

The Merit Hiring Plan has great language regarding this topic:

Applicant communications is one of seven major goals of the Merit Hiring Plan:

"Improve communication with candidates to provide greater clarity regarding application status, timelines, and feedback, including regular updates on the progress of applications and explanations of hiring decisions where appropriate."

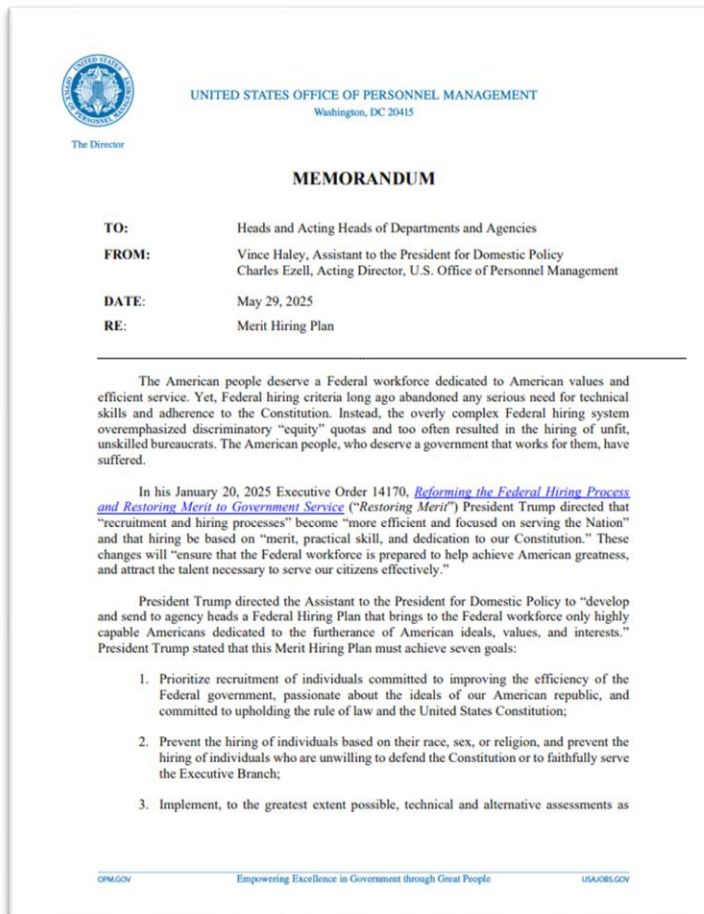
Section III. Improving the Job Application Process:

"To improve communication with candidates throughout the hiring process, OPM will require automatic generation of USAJOBS and USA Staffing notifications for applicants at key stages of the hiring process, instead of relying on agency HR professionals to send notifications."

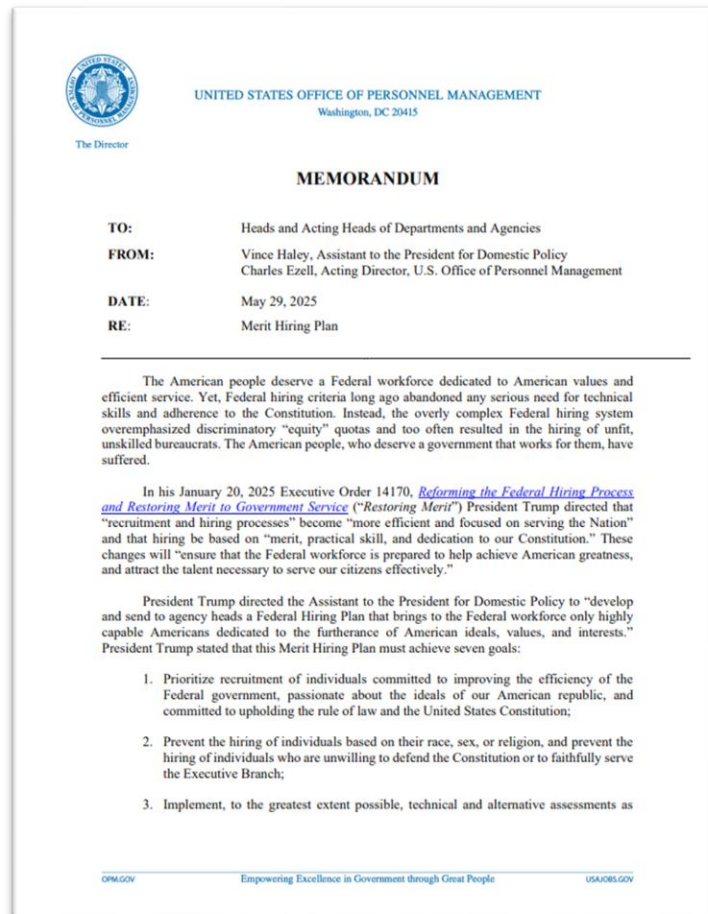
Section III. Improving the Job Application Process:

"Send timely communications to applicants about their application status. Applicants should receive notifications for each applicable stage of the hiring process, including application acceptance, determination of qualifications, issuance of certificates to the hiring manager, and selection or cancellation of announcement. Agencies should use data analytics to verify applicant notifications were sent."

Provide clear communication to applicants and develop improved application processes that are user-friendly, accessible, transparent, efficient, and responsive to the public."



The plan has details about the timing of job application status emails. This is excellent.



But the content and display of these emails matter just as much, if not more, than the timing.

In addition, what matters is not just job application status emails.

There are **other** emails types, **missing** email types, and **online** touchpoints that can be enhanced, too.

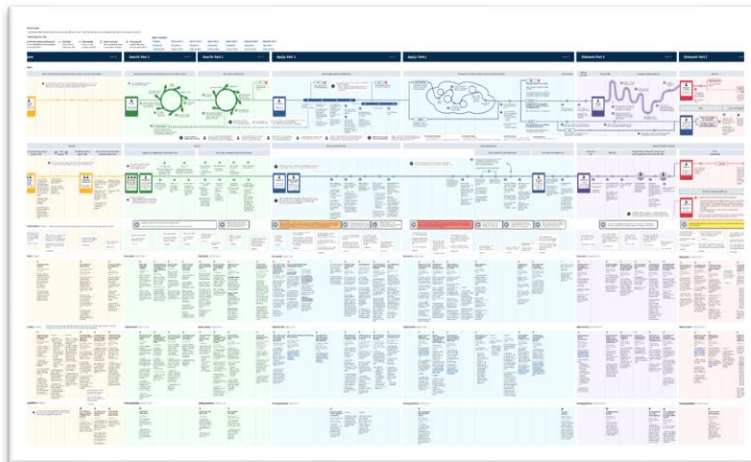
We are confident in all of this because of the extensive research we did.

This is a challenging problem space to solve for.

It is not so easy to just update thousands of template emails across all federal agencies and systems, all at once or one by one.

However, the problems we heard about will not go away until email templates are upgraded.

We hope the information today will help you further satisfy the Merit Hiring Plan.



The journey map can help you decide where to apply your efforts.

Top recommendations	
Work	Next Step
Start by publishing new templates for the first and last job application status email types. Remove old ones.	Upgrade these email types in your TAS: 1) application acknowledgement 2) disposition - Treat the application submitted and disposition emails as major branding moments. - Use the email to build a recruitment relationship with the applicant. - Don't use the word disposition, even if it's hard to do. Or explain it, even if it's hard to do. - Insert the unique URL to the applicant's job application status pages into status emails. - Don't start from scratch. Use the inspiration board we have in Miro. ❤️ Includes NASA Pathways! - User test your new emails with job seekers. Get other approvals as necessary. - Add the new template to your TAS admin area. Remove all old templates from your TAS admin area.
Publish new templates for remaining two status emails. Remove old ones.	Same but harder 🤖 1) eligibility 2) referral OR 1+2) eligibility and referral together Don't use the words "eligibility" and "you're referred" as they are used today, even if it's hard.
Add missing email types.	Identify and publish missing email types as templates in your TAS, such as: "No updates yet" messaging to applicants who are waiting - Check-ins for new hires - Revised tentative job offer - Canceled announcements - Subsets of job application status email types for "other" types of hiring, e.g. pooled and direct hire
Discuss whether you all need community while you work on this hard project.	Discuss what kind of camaraderie you need to take on this hard work. Who should host what types of working groups? Who should work with who? Are you all willing to share great examples of your job application status emails with each other?
Discuss other ways OPM can mandate and help.	Discuss what call to actions, supports or resources that you need to do this hard work. Beyond the recent memo and executive order, how else can OPM mandate or encourage improvements to the content and display of emails that HR are sending to applicants?

Top recommendations can help you decide what to do.

Journey map

A walkthrough of the map

Highlight #1: How to use the map

Highlight #2: Outdated templates

Highlight #3: Job application status emails

Keep in mind that there is more in here that might relate to your work.

Highlight #1: How to use the map

There are seven phases in the map.

To use the map, choose a phase that you focus on and read from top and bottom.

Prepare

Search: Part 1

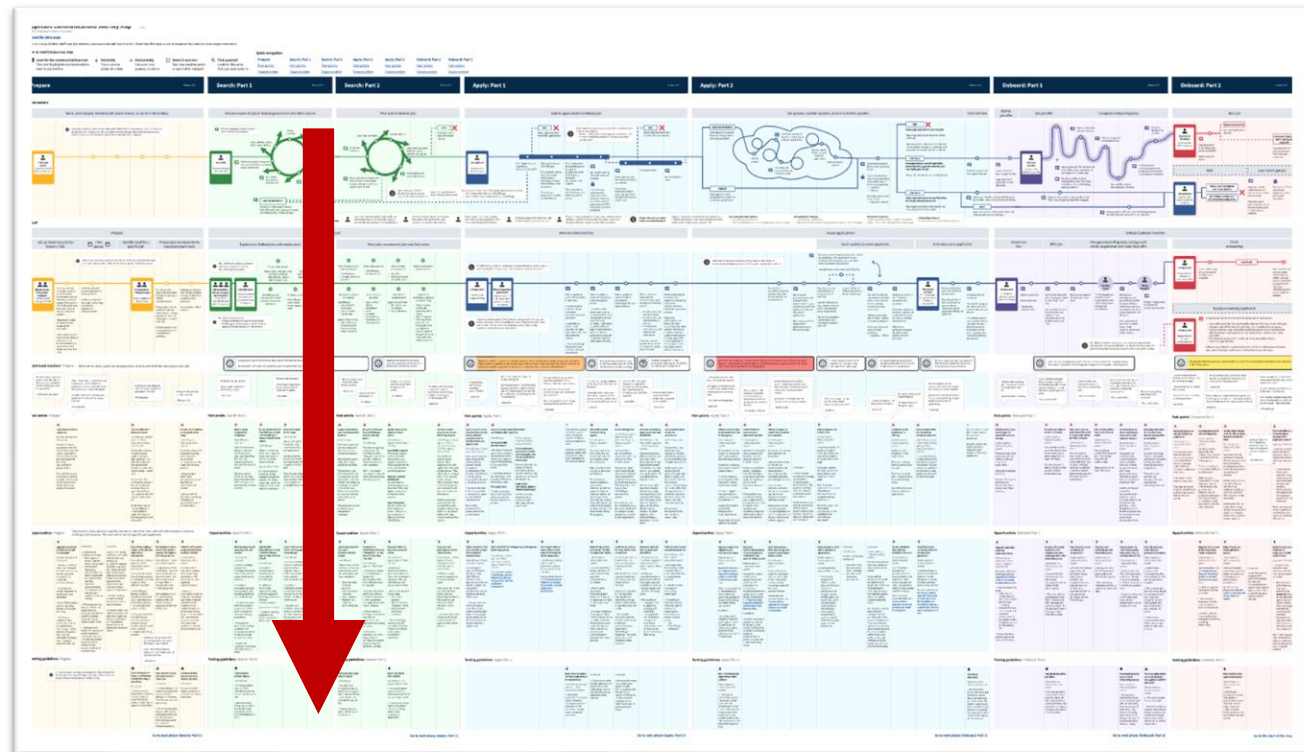
Search: Part 2

Apply: Part 1

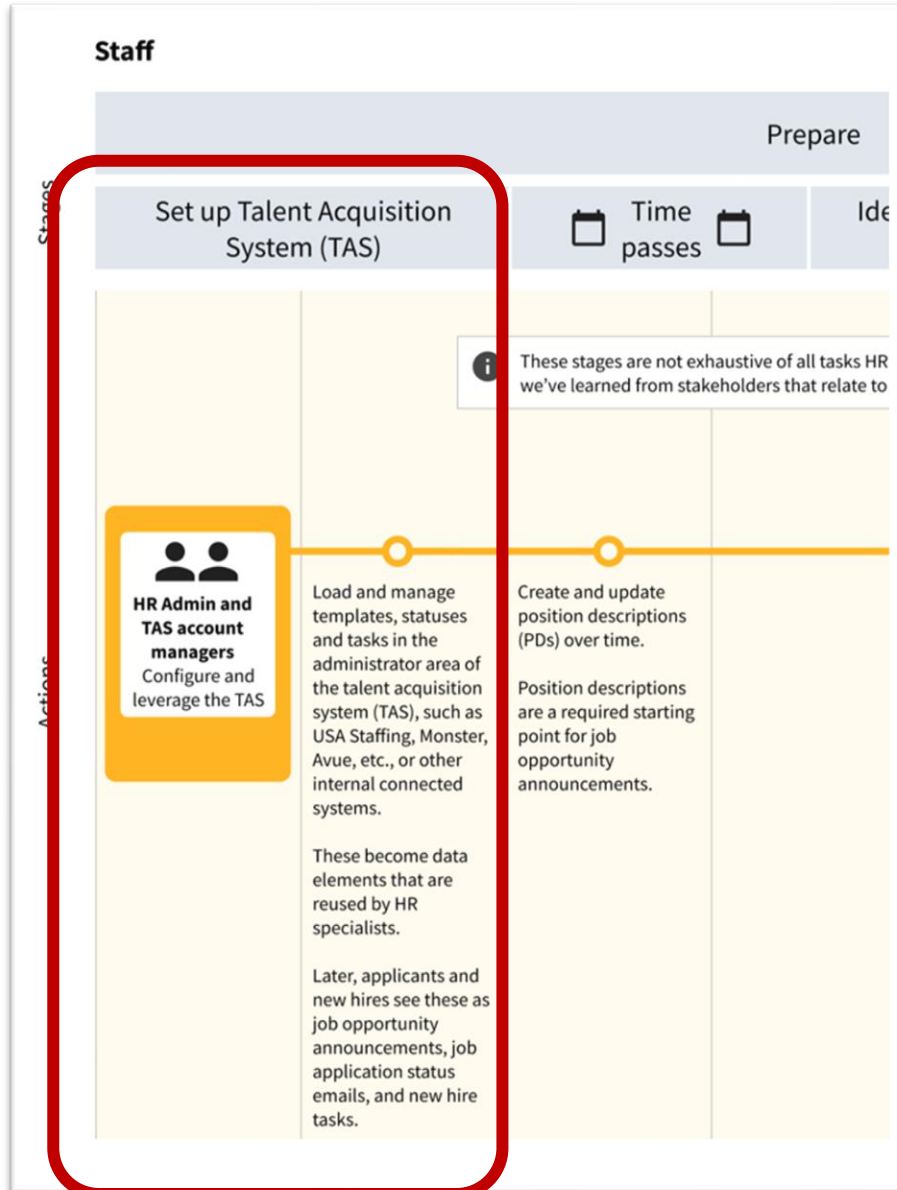
Apply: Part 2

Onboard: Part 1

Onboard: Part 2



Highlight #2: Outdated templates



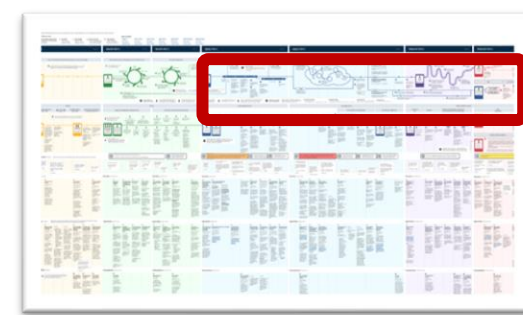
- Over time, staff add templates, statuses, and tasks into the administrator area of systems.
- These become data elements that are reused by HR Specialists.
- Later on, this is what job seekers, applicants and new hires are shown.

Staff who created or are responsible for template content may not be the staff who handle day-to-day applicant inquiries.

This content may become outdated without upgrades.

Highlight #3: Job application status emails

After they apply, applicants may have wondered, worried or totally forgotten about their applications by the time they receive application update emails.



Apply: Part 2

Get updates, wait for updates, and/or try to find updates.

Get an email stating the application was received.



This is the only automated job application status email as of now. It is one of four required status types in OPM's Delegated Examining Handbook.

WONDER OR WORRY

Some applicants want to know what happened to their job application.

May figure out how to check the online status of the job application

Wait for updates

May figure out how to contact HR or the help desk

May ask family, friends, or social media for explanations

More waiting for updates

FORGET

Some applicants stop paying attention until they receive an update email.

Get an email saying if they're moving forward or not.



This is one of the four required job application status email types. It can be sent separately:

- Eligibility
- Referral

More often, they're sent as one email:

- Eligibility + referral

END



Some applicants don't move forward

These applicants do not make it onto the certificate.

Wait

Learn didn't get job



FEELS LIKE THEY NEVER GET FINAL UPDATE

GETS FINAL UPDATE BUT IT'S COLD AND LEGALISTIC

Applicants on the certificate should receive a final update, but not all do.

Note that recent policy documents call for automating more of these types of updates.

This is one of the four required job application status email types: Disposition

CONTINUE

Some applicants move forward but they do not get selected in the end

They make it onto the certificate but they may or may not be interviewed.

Highlight #3: Job application status emails



These emails cause the greatest pain points for applicants and take away from everyone's hiring goals.

(The quotes below are not direct quotes, but amalgamations of what we heard loudly and clearly.)

These emails are cold. They look and sound like receipts. I struggle to understand even the most basic information in them because of the words used.

They make me feel ghosted.

- Applicant

We are creating our own conspiracy theories. We wonder if HR is just hiring their buddies. Because HR is not debunking us. They are not explaining enough about how they look at applications.

- Applicant

It's hard to prove it, but these system emails may contribute to the frustrated, if not mean tone, of some of the applicant emails I receive.

Applicants may forget that real people are responding to emails.

- HR Specialist

These emails are like ominous robots that interrupt the lovely conversations with my applicants that I work so hard on.

- Hiring team member

Top recommendations

How can we help each other send great emails on time?

How can we help each other send great emails on time?

Top recommendations

Upgrade the ***content*** of your own email templates, piece by piece.

Other recommendations to consider

Improve the ***display*** and ***timing*** of emails with talent acquisition system functionality.

General awareness

Texting guidelines

Top recommendations: Upgrade the *content* of your own email templates, piece by piece.

Work	Next Step
Upgrade the first and/or last job application status email templates. (And remove old templates.)	1) Application acknowledgement and/or 2) Disposition (you were not selected) email types • Rewrite them. • Don't start from scratch. Use examples in the Appendix (includes NASA Pathways! ❤️) Gather more. • Share content with real job seekers and get their feedback. • Add to your TAS admin area. • Remove old templates.
Upgrade remaining emails. (And remove old templates.)	1) Eligibility 2) referral OR 1+2) eligibility and referral combined • Same but harder 🤖
Add other missing email templates.	Identify and publish missing email templates, such as: • "No updates yet" to applicants who are waiting • Check-ins for new hires • Revised tentative job offer • Canceled announcements • Subsets of job application status email types for "other" types of hiring, e.g. pooled and direct hire
Find community while you work on this hard project, if needed.	Lean on your federal HR community and job seekers • Share examples with your federal agency HR colleagues • Share content with real job seekers and get their feedback
Identify other ways OPM can mandate and help, if needed.	Have a discussion • Beyond the recent memo and executive order, how else can OPM mandate or encourage improvements to the content, display and timing of emails that HR are sending to applicants? • Email USAJOBSEngagement@opm.gov with any of your ideas.

Next few slides: a few promising emails taken from the Appendix

- Note that we haven't user tested these emails to validate them.
- Still, they appear to meet needs across the wide variety of participants we spoke to.
- There are easier to read versions are in the Appendix.

Notion



They say
thank
you

Thank you for your interest in
Notion



no-reply Mar 27



Hi

Thanks for your thoughtful application - it
has been great learning more about you.

Unfortunately, we will not be moving
forward with your candidacy for our
position. Please keep an eye
out on our [Careers Page](#) and follow us on
[LinkedIn](#). Opportunities that more closely
align with your skillset may open up in the
future and we'd be more than happy to
reconnect when the timing is right.

Wishing you all the best on your search in
the meantime.

Warm regards,
Notion's Recruiting Team



← Reply

→ Forward



They say
thank you
again.

They treat you
as a real person
- they say they
took the time to
learn about you

The word
"unfortunately"
is very clear.

You know
right away
you're not
getting it.

They have
a nice
team name

They have a
logo which
makes it
look legit

They
sound like
a real
person.

They
immediately
build a recruiter
relationship
with you.

They link you
back to their
Careers
Page.

They tell
you to
follow them
on LinkedIn

They say
something
kind at the
end.

This example shows how you can:

- Add a human touch, even when your email is sent in bulk.
- Find a nice way to say that if you meet our requirements, we'll be in touch.
- Build on the recruitment relationship with useful links.

NASA Pathways

4. Disposition Letter

(For referred but not selected applicants)

Dear ,

Thank you so much for your interest in the position at NASA, listed under vacancy announcement .

While your resume was referred to the selecting official, another applicant was selected for the - - position in: .

Although you were not selected for this opportunity, as similar vacancies are identified, additional selections may be made.

We truly appreciate the time and effort you invested in applying and encourage you to explore other exciting opportunities with NASA. You can learn more and apply for future roles by visiting **Careers at NASA**.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please don't hesitate to reach out to the at or .

Thank you again for considering NASA in your career journey!

Sincerely,
NASA Staffing Services

They have
a team
name

They have no
logo, but simply
bolding the text
gives it a legit
feeling.

PLEASE DO NOT RESPOND

AUTOMATICALLY GENERATED.

They say
thank
you

They are
grateful that
you were
interested in
them

They
acknowledge
the hard work
it takes to
apply

We don't know
the subject line
- hopefully it
doesn't say
Disposition

They are
super direct.
Someone else
got selected.

They build a
recruiter
relationship.
You could get
selected later.

They tell
you where
to go find
future roles.

They even
let you
contact
them!

This example shows how you can:

- Sound gracious and encouraging while delivering bad news.
- Explain in direct terms, like a real person would, that they did not get it because someone else got it, but that they could still get selected.
- Use "Sincerely" to indicate real people are involved.
- Bold your hiring team name to give the impression of a logo.

NASA Pathways - Eligibility / Referrals *(Combined Notice of Results AND Notice of Referral)*

Dear _____,

We appreciate your interest in the position at NASA, advertised under vacancy announcement _____.

Your rating is: _____

If you are eligible and your application was not referred, it is because you were not among the best qualified candidates. Please note that the grade for which you were considered is a result of the academic level you indicated in your responses to the application questionnaire.

To determine which applicants were referred, we reviewed:

- Your responses to the application questionnaire
- Your results of the USAHire assessment
- Any relevant supporting documents

Please note that we cannot change your responses or consider additional information or documentation should you think you provided an insufficient application package in error.

You can view your application package—including your responses to eligibilities, preferences, and assessment questionnaires—in your **USAJOBS account** on the application status page. You can also monitor the status of the announcement through your USAJOBS account.

What happens next?

- If you were **not referred**, you will receive no further status on this announcement.
- If you were **eligible and referred**, you may or may not be contacted for an interview. You will receive an email informing you of the final disposition of your application.
- All referrals are considered **tentatively eligible** until such time as requirements can be verified by the Center's determination that you meet their eligibility requirements, as well as the NASA Staffing Services Branch's final review of your application package and official transcripts.
- We expect all selections and job offers will be made no later than **60 days prior to the proposed start date** for this internship. If you have not been contacted by this time, you will not be selected for a position.

If you have any questions regarding this notice, contact _____ at _____ or _____.

For more information about **NASA's Pathways Programs**, please visit:
<https://www.nasa.gov/careers/pathways>

Sincerely,
NASA Staffing Services

PLEASE DO NOT RESPOND TO THIS EMAIL MESSAGE. IT IS AUTOMATICALLY GENERATED.

This example shows how you can handle a complicated email like the combined eligibility and referral results email.

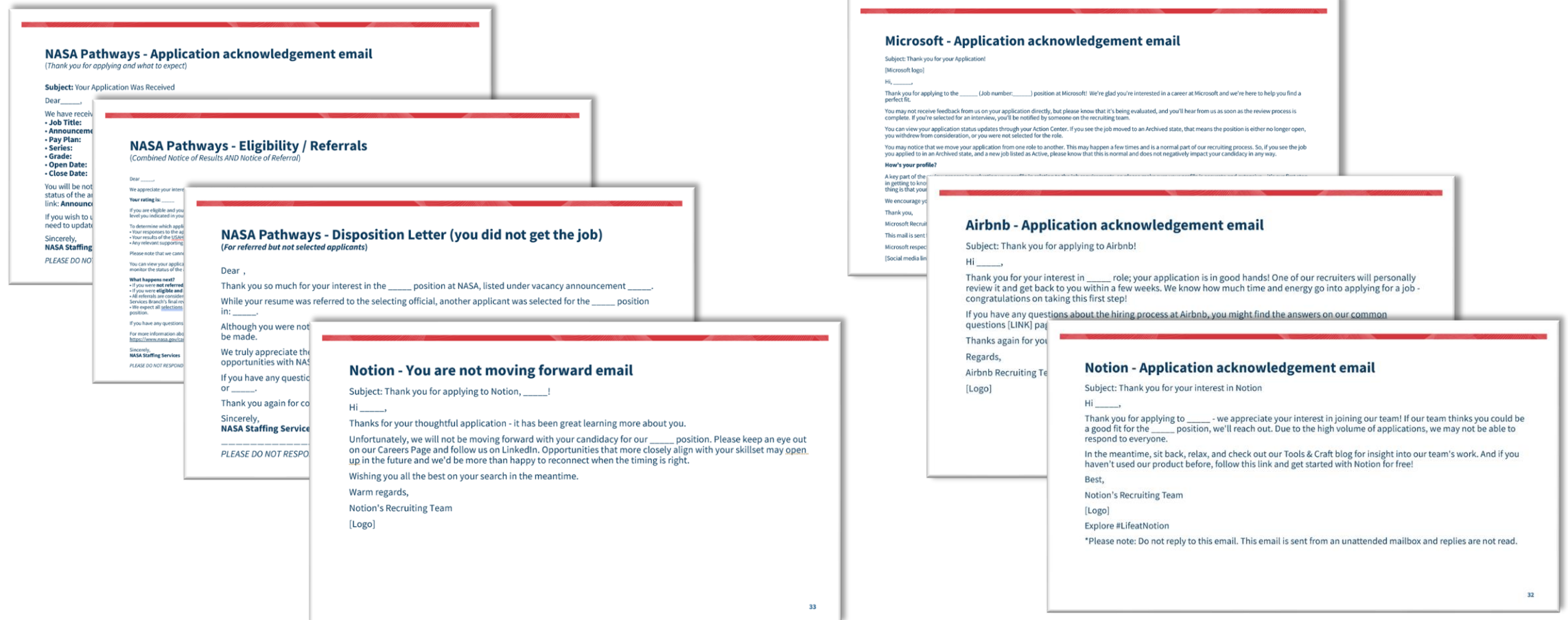
This email manages to:

- Explain to many candidates in multiple scenarios, what just happened and what will happen next.
- Provide a timeline.
- Still use HR terminology but with sensible explanations.

Examples of great emails

There are more examples in the Appendix.

Examples you can reference



General principles for writing and setting up emails

- **Be kind and warm.** Use an encouraging tone. Where possible, use an appealing layout or design, even if this means adding HTML to emails over time.
- **Be easy to understand.** Use different words, or explain technical HR language, even if it's hard to do.
- **Set expectations.** Spell out what will happen next, from the candidate's point of view, not only yours.
- **Be honest.** Be up front about what may not happen, even if it's hard to do.
- **Build your reputation.** Link to helpful resources. Show people where to learn more.
- **Write and design for people who know less,** not more, about federal hiring.
- **Visualize the steps.** When possible, use visuals to show at a glance how all of hiring works in federal government, not just the part you specialize in.

How else can we help each other send great emails on time?

Other recommendations to consider

Improve the ***display*** and ***timing*** of emails with talent acquisition system functionality

General awareness

Texting guidelines

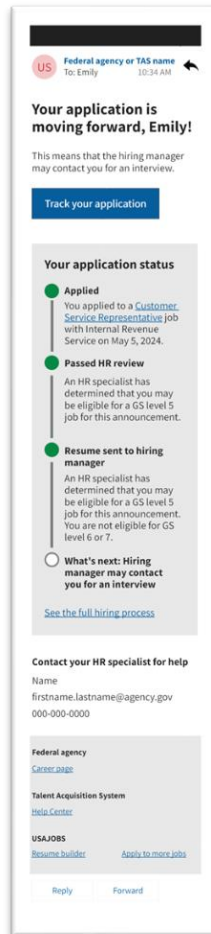
Other recommendations to consider

Work	Next Step
Improve the *display* and *timing* of emails with talent acquisition system functionality	• Work with your account manager to ensure you're leveraging current functionality (email functionality, reminders) • Over time, discuss enhancements that can help further (e.g. HTML, stronger branding, system-prepared drafts)

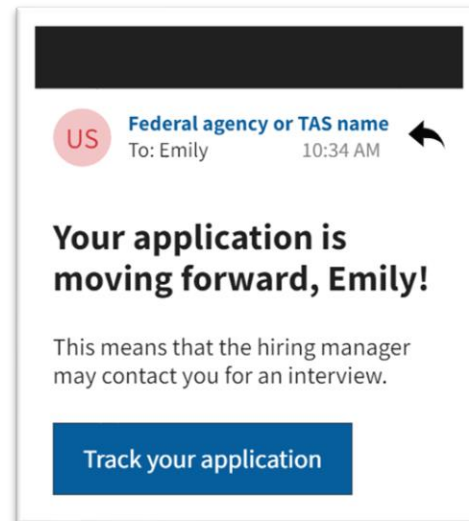
Texting guidelines

Work	Next Step
Guide texting conversations	Advise each other when it comes to adding any future texts <i>USAJOBS's texting API will be live soon and you can speak with your account manager about using it through your talent acquisition system.</i> Generally • More texting at all times, in all corners of federal hiring, is not better. • User test the end-to-end experience of new texts. • Continue to find ways to increase trust in our texts. Specifically • Don't text job search results. • Don't text reminders to finish applications or assessments (unless you research a specific business case). • Don't text about job application status updates. • Do text about interviews. • Do text about tentative job offers. • Do text about only the most critical onboarding task(s). • Don't complete tasks over text between the applicant and HR Specialist. • Don't text the final application update.

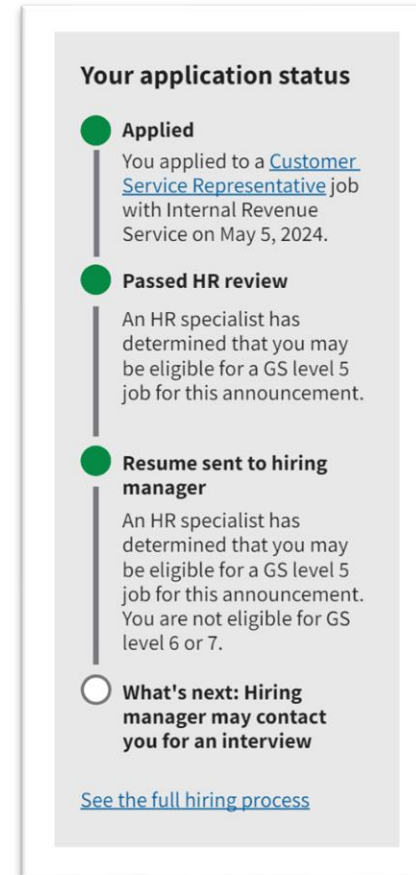
Concepts that visualize recommendations: Appealing job application status emails



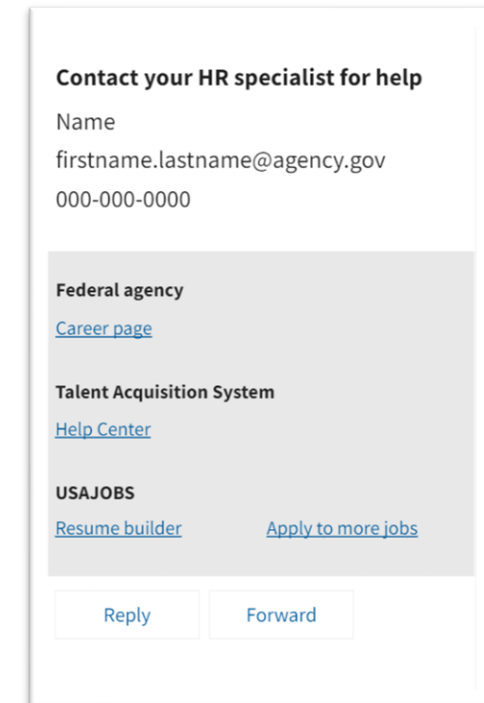
Full email



Simple language, visually appealing, and a button



Visual timeline

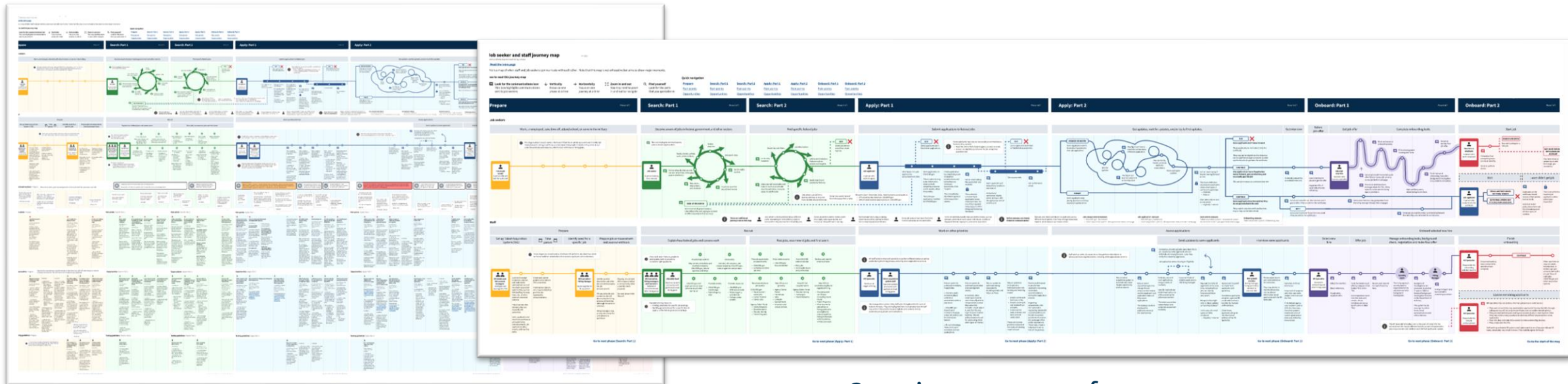


Help section and customized footer

Next steps

Next steps

- We will share out this deck, journey map and top recommendations after this meeting.
- The Appendix has more email examples to reference.
- Please reuse the journey map for your own planning purposes.
 - We purposefully designed it so that you can reuse for other topics. You can place the PNG into PowerPoint or a whiteboarding tool and crop out the bottom rows.



Crop journey map for reuse

Next steps

- What would help you tackle improving applicant communications?
 - Please USAJOBSEngagement@opm.gov with any of your ideas.

Thank you

Elizabeth.Ferguson@opm.gov

Appendix

Inspiration for job application status emails

NASA Pathways - Application acknowledgement email

(Thank you for applying and what to expect)

Subject: Your Application Was Received

Dear _____,

We have received your application for the following job:

- **Job Title:**
- **Announcement:**
- **Pay Plan:**
- **Series:**
- **Grade:**
- **Open Date:**
- **Close Date:**

You will be notified of the final disposition of your application once the selection process is complete. You can monitor the status of the announcement through your **USAJOBS Account** on the application status page or by following the link: **Announcement Status**.

If you wish to update or change your resume, supporting documents, or answers to any of your biographic information, you will need to update your application at **USAJOBS** before the closing date shown above.

Sincerely,
NASA Staffing Services

PLEASE DO NOT RESPOND TO THIS EMAIL MESSAGE. IT IS AUTOMATICALLY GENERATED.

NASA Pathways - Eligibility / Referrals

(Combined Notice of Results AND Notice of Referral)

Dear _____,

We appreciate your interest in the position at NASA, advertised under vacancy announcement _____.

Your rating is: _____

If you are eligible and your application was not referred, it is because you were not among the best qualified candidates. Please note that the grade for which you were considered is a result of the academic level you indicated in your responses to the application questionnaire.

To determine which applicants were referred, we reviewed:

- Your responses to the application questionnaire
- Your results of the USAHire assessment
- Any relevant supporting documents

Please note that we cannot change your responses or consider additional information or documentation should you think you provided an insufficient application package in error.

You can view your application package—including your responses to eligibilities, preferences, and assessment questionnaires—in your **USAJOBS account** on the application status page. You can also monitor the status of the announcement through your USAJOBS account.

What happens next?

- If you were **not referred**, you will receive no further status on this announcement.
- If you were **eligible and referred**, you may or may not be contacted for an interview. You will receive an email informing you of the final disposition of your application.
- All referrals are considered **tentatively eligible** until such time as requirements can be verified by the Center's determination that you meet their eligibility requirements, as well as the NASA Staffing Services Branch's final review of your application package and official transcripts.
- We expect all selections and job offers will be made no later than **60 days prior to the proposed start date** for this internship. If you have not been contacted by this time, you will not be selected for a position.

If you have any questions regarding this notice, contact _____ at _____ or _____.

For more information about **NASA's Pathways Programs**, please visit:

<https://www.nasa.gov/careers/pathways>

Sincerely,

NASA Staffing Services

PLEASE DO NOT RESPOND TO THIS EMAIL MESSAGE. IT IS AUTOMATICALLY GENERATED.

NASA Pathways - Disposition Letter (you did not get the job)

(For referred but not selected applicants)

Dear ,

Thank you so much for your interest in the _____ position at NASA, listed under vacancy announcement _____.

While your resume was referred to the selecting official, another applicant was selected for the _____ position in: _____.

Although you were not selected for this opportunity, as similar vacancies are identified, additional selections may be made.

We truly appreciate the time and effort you invested in applying and encourage you to explore other exciting opportunities with NASA. You can learn more and apply for future roles by visiting **Careers at NASA**.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please don't hesitate to reach out to the _____ at _____ or _____.

Thank you again for considering NASA in your career journey!

Sincerely,

NASA Staffing Services

PLEASE DO NOT RESPOND TO THIS EMAIL MESSAGE. IT IS AUTOMATICALLY GENERATED.

Microsoft - Application acknowledgement email

Subject: Thank you for your Application!

[Microsoft logo]

Hi, _____,

Thank you for applying to the _____ (Job number: _____) position at Microsoft! We're glad you're interested in a career at Microsoft and we're here to help you find a perfect fit.

You may not receive feedback from us on your application directly, but please know that it's being evaluated, and you'll hear from us as soon as the review process is complete. If you're selected for an interview, you'll be notified by someone on the recruiting team.

You can view your application status updates through your Action Center. If you see the job moved to an Archived state, that means the position is either no longer open, you withdrew from consideration, or you were not selected for the role.

You may notice that we move your application from one role to another. This may happen a few times and is a normal part of our recruiting process. So, if you see the job you applied to in an Archived state, and a new job listed as Active, please know that this is normal and does not negatively impact your candidacy in any way.

How's your profile?

A key part of the review process is evaluating your profile in relation to the job requirements, so please make sure your profile is accurate and extensive – it's our first step in getting to know you! You can build your profile anyway you'd like – you can import it from LinkedIn, manually update it, or import/attach a resume. The most important thing is that your profile tells your story!

We encourage you to check back frequently and continue to look for opportunities that match your interests, as new jobs are being posted regularly.

Thank you,

Microsoft Recruiting

This mail is sent from an unmonitored mailbox. Please do not reply.

Microsoft respects your privacy. To learn more, please read our Microsoft Data Privacy Notice.

[Social media links]

Airbnb - Application acknowledgement email

Subject: Thank you for applying to Airbnb!

Hi _____,

Thank you for your interest in _____ role; your application is in good hands! One of our recruiters will personally review it and get back to you within a few weeks. We know how much time and energy go into applying for a job - congratulations on taking this first step!

If you have any questions about the hiring process at Airbnb, you might find the answers on our [common questions \[LINK\]](#) page.

Thanks again for your interest and application; we'll be in touch soon!

Regards,

Airbnb Recruiting Team

[Logo]

Notion - Application acknowledgement email

Subject: Thank you for your interest in Notion

Hi _____,

Thank you for applying to _____ - we appreciate your interest in joining our team! If our team thinks you could be a good fit for the _____ position, we'll reach out. Due to the high volume of applications, we may not be able to respond to everyone.

In the meantime, sit back, relax, and check out our Tools & Craft blog for insight into our team's work. And if you haven't used our product before, follow this link and get started with Notion for free!

Best,

Notion's Recruiting Team

[Logo]

Explore #LifeatNotion

*Please note: Do not reply to this email. This email is sent from an unattended mailbox and replies are not read.

Notion - You are not moving forward email

Subject: Thank you for applying to Notion, _____!

Hi _____,

Thanks for your thoughtful application - it has been great learning more about you.

Unfortunately, we will not be moving forward with your candidacy for our _____ position. Please keep an eye out on our Careers Page and follow us on LinkedIn. Opportunities that more closely align with your skillset may open up in the future and we'd be more than happy to reconnect when the timing is right.

Wishing you all the best on your search in the meantime.

Warm regards,

Notion's Recruiting Team

[Logo]

Thank you for attending!

Join us for our next forum
In October!

Contact Information:

Megan Arens
USAJOBS Customer Experience Manager
Megan.Arens@opm.gov

Raima Roy
USAJOBS Engagement Analyst
Raima.Roy@opm.gov

Subscribe to our USAJOBS Program Office bulletins to receive information on new features, downtime and free trainings:

- [USAJOBS Communications](#)
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Send an email to USAJOBSEngagement@opm.gov if you have any questions or issues.