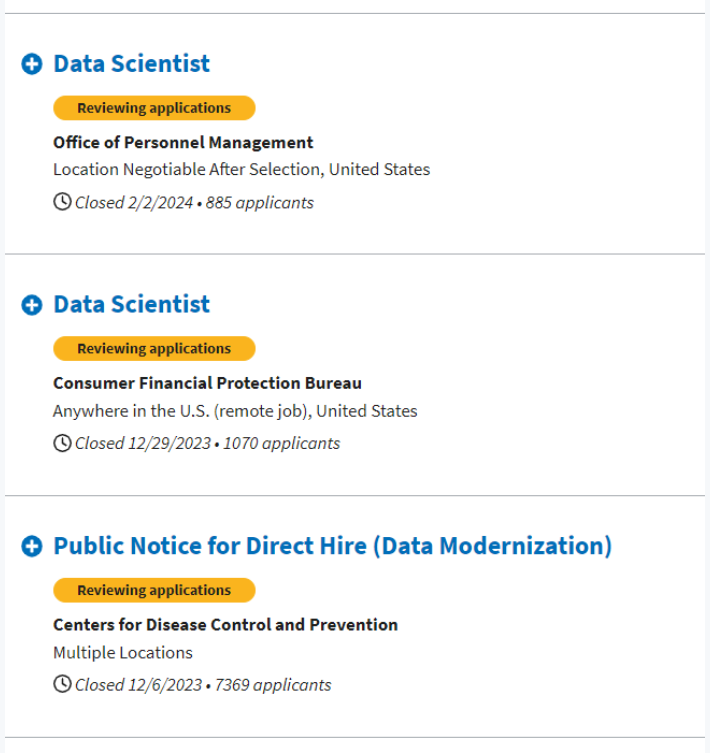
Federal Hiring:

Navigating the Process

Abigail Haddad

This Year, I Applied To Federal Jobs



Applying to Federal Jobs Is Difficult

- The titles and descriptions can be weird
- Ask for various documents
- Hard to tell what the job involves

It Can Take Really Long!



And Then You Try to Hire People...

Hiring People Into Federal Jobs Is Also Difficult...

- So many rules
- Limited discretion
- Compliance-focused: **how can we avoid something bad happening?**

Federal Hiring Is Really Hard On Both Sides

Why I'm Here Today

- I care a lot about improving federal hiring
- It is **possible** to:
  - Write clear resumes
  - Create less-frustrating and better hiring processes

Hi, My Name Is Abigail



Hi, My Name Is Abigail

- **Machine learning engineer** in the DHS AI Corps
- Involved in **hiring processes** at Army and DHS
- **Reviewed technical resumes**
- Applied to federal jobs, **occasionally been hired**

What I'm Going To Cover

1. How to write a **federal resume that doesn't get in the way** of getting hired
2. How to make your **hiring process** more effective
3. The AI Corps, and what we did right

First: What Do We Mean By Federal Hiring?

A review for many of you all

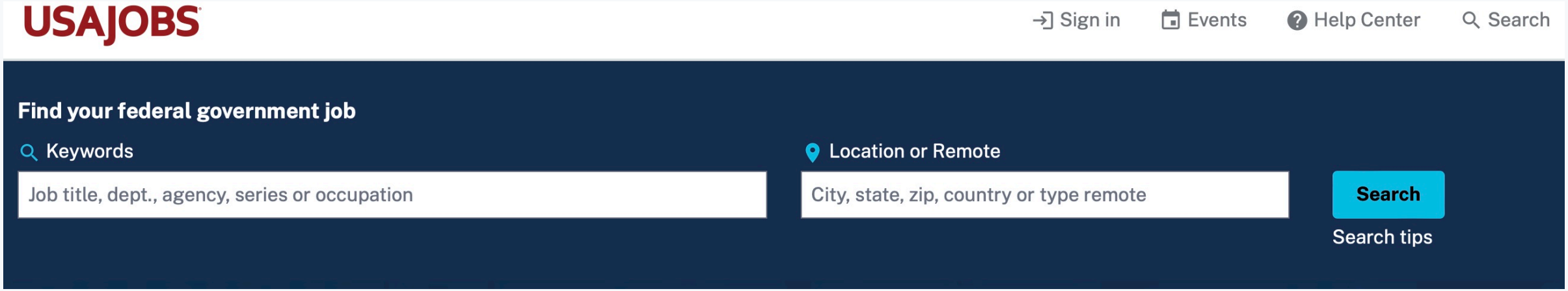
Who 'Works For the Federal Government'?

- Federal Civil Service
- Contractors
- Military
- Elected/appointed

Civil Service Hiring

- Lots of rules
- Limited discretion in hiring
- Specific requirements: citizenship, clearances
- LENGTHY

Where Most Civil Service Job Ads Live



What Do You Need To Apply? A Resume!

What Is It Like Reviewing Resumes?

- CANNOT READ BETWEEN THE LINES
- CANNOT USE INFO NOT ON YOUR RESUME
- MUST COMPARE WITH REQUIREMENTS

What Are Requirements?

Brief Example

You will be assessed on the following competencies:

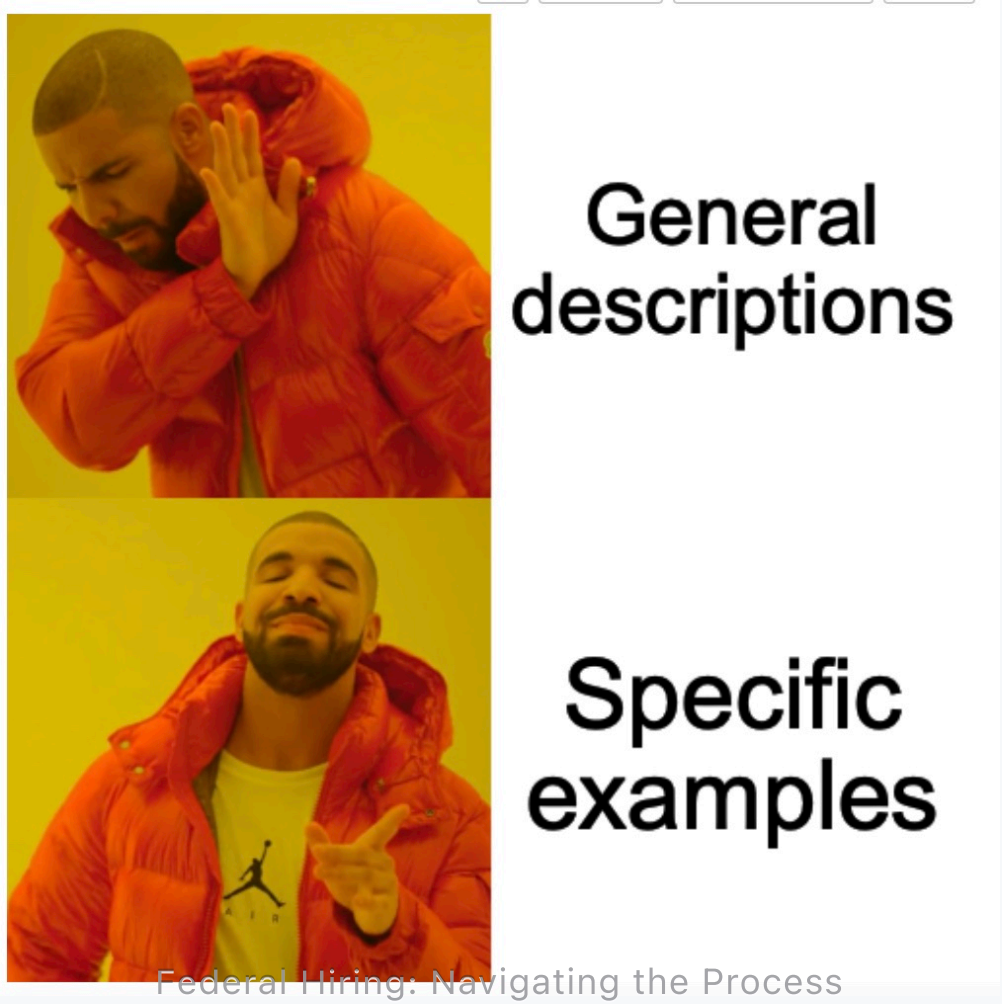
- Decision Making
- Flexibility
- Planning and Evaluating
- Artificial Intelligence
- Technical Competence
- Program/Project Analysis

Detailed Example

Qualifications

In addition to the Basic Requirements for this position, your resume must also demonstrate at least one year of specialized experience at or equivalent to the next lower grade level (GS-12) or pay band in the Federal service or equivalent experience in the private or public sector performing most or all of the following duties: 1) Coordinating project development and management, justification, plans, schedules, study plan development, and support requirements with analysts, engineers, commanders, staff representatives, agency executives, customers and appropriate organizations; 2) Translating research to project phases, planning methods of approach, subdividing projects into significant phases, collecting data, modifying methodology or theory as needed, interpreting results, and deriving recommendations and conclusions; 3) Performing practical application of Data modeling (Dimensional & Relational) concepts like Star-Schema Modeling, Snowflake Schema Modeling, Fact and Dimension tables and performing end to end data and process modeling skills, source to target mapping techniques, and data flow diagrams; 4) Initiating and performing research and major analytical projects on safety related topics, which often lack precedents or previous research involving application of analytical techniques to develop studies of issues that involve considerable complexity; 5) Receiving, coordinating, and modifying requests for modeling and simulation to conform to available data if time constraints are present, advising requestors as to the feasibility of requests, and proposing alternate methods and data when preferred data is not available; and 6) Developing reports of model conclusions including charts, tables, dashboards, and presentations.

Effective Resumes



Being Specific: Example 1

- **Less helpful:** Cleaned data in Python
- **More helpful:** Pulled and cleaned data from daily **.xlsb files** using **Pandas** and **PySpark** within a **Databricks** pipeline, enabling consistent data ingestion for downstream forecasting models.

Being Specific: Example 2

- **Less Helpful:** Did machine learning
- **More Helpful:** Fine-tuned **BERT** using **PyTorch** for text classification. Adopted for x process.

Beyond Technical Skills

- Leading
- Implementing
- Working with stakeholders
- Documenting
- Writing and speaking

Adam's Resume

- Lead integration and delivery of a new data pipeline with Artificial Intelligence capabilities, including regression capabilities and risk mitigation frameworks for training our industry-leading intelligent payment retry machine learning model. System used to detect failure states in live payment workflow, currently processing over 1 billion USD per month.
- Provide senior level advice to executive management on responsible implementation of analytic and Artificial Intelligence capabilities, including deployment through a continuous integration and monitoring environment.
- Direct and implement internal generative Artificial Intelligence products based on the Google Bard Artificial Intelligence Large Language Model platform, leading to new merchant API improvements and internal training products.

Common Resume Questions

- **Format?** Reverse chronological is fine
- **Length?** At least two pages unless entry-level
- **One for each job?** Yes, with tweaks

Additional Resume Advice From Federal Agencies!

Technology Transformation Services

- Avoid acronyms and abbreviations



Department of Labor

- Do not cut out important details to try to fit your resume to one to two pages.



US Digital Services

- Don't just list your tech stack or design approaches; describe what you did and what the outcomes were



Now For Hiring Managers

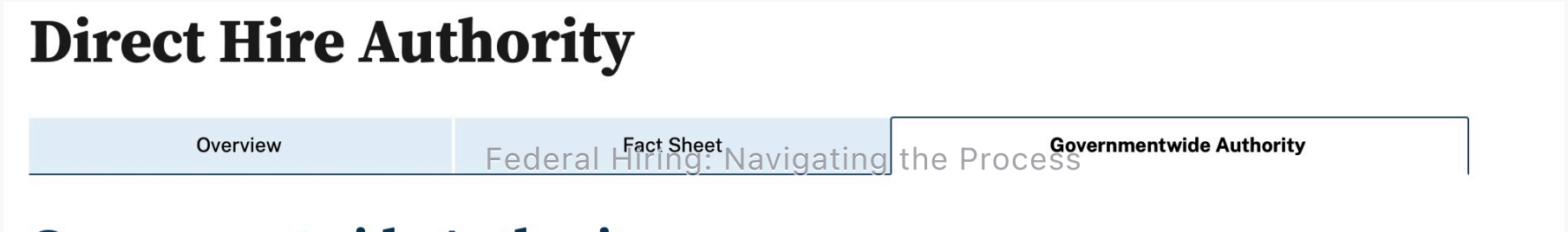
If You're Hiring, There Are (Good) Things You Are Allowed To Do!

You Can....

- Write clear job titles and announcements
- Direct hire for STEM/data/AI jobs
- Use SMEs to screen/interview

Government Direct Hiring Authority!

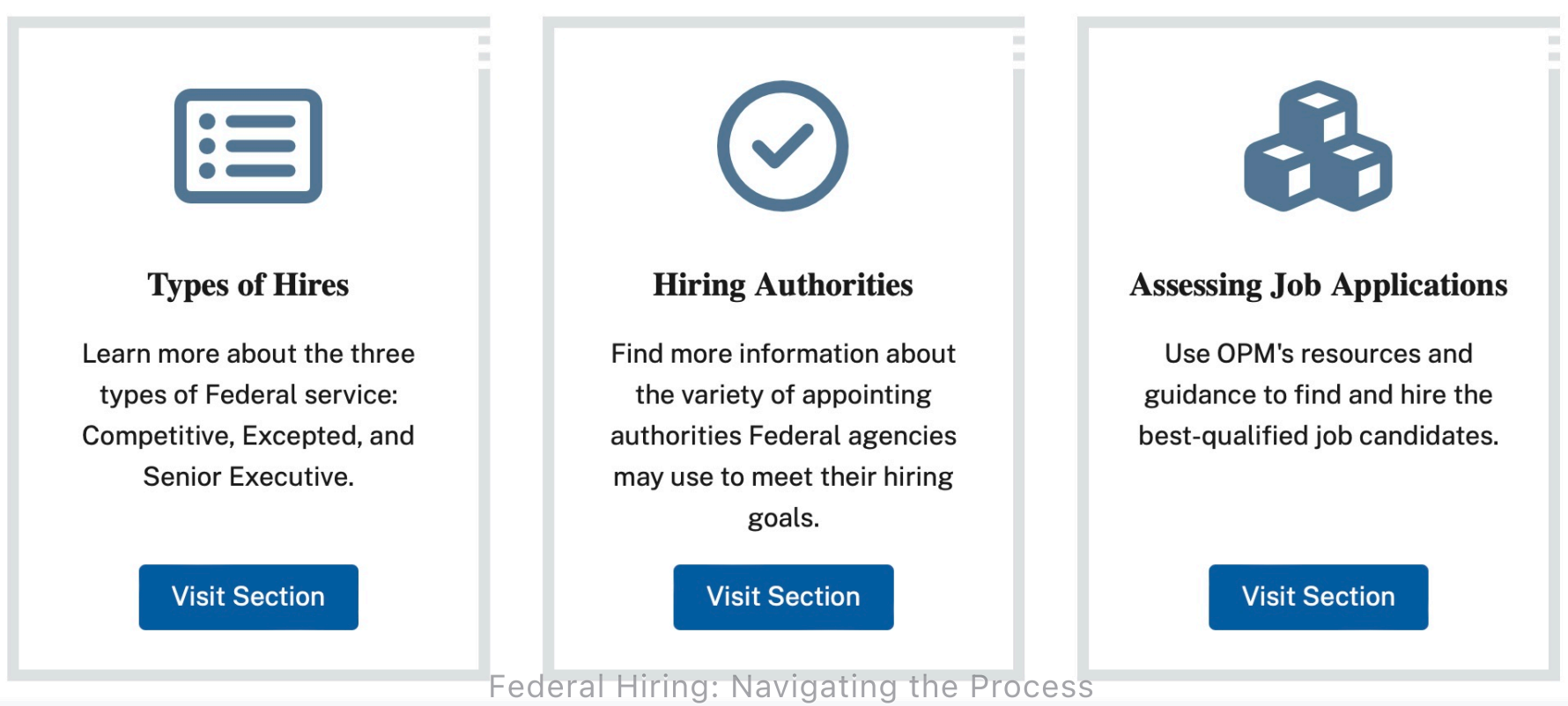
- Review **ALL** of the submitted resumes
- Expedite hiring
- Includes Data Science, Operations Research, Mathematics, Cybersecurity, and AI positions



No SMEs? Borrow Some!



There's Recent Guidance On This



This Is Where I Talk About the AI Corps

DHS Launches First-of-its-Kind Initiative to Hire 50 Artificial Intelligence Experts in 2024

Release Date: February 6, 2024

DHS's New "AI Corps" Will Advance President Biden's Executive Order on AI and Ensure Responsible Use of this Powerful Technology

Secretary Mayorkas to Host Recruitment Event in Mountain View, CA

Who Are We?

- Digital services group within DHS
- Software developers, data scientists, product managers, etc.
- New!

What Happened?

- We got 14,000+ resumes
- We used SMEs for every part of our hiring process
- We hired my very qualified coworkers

Not Everyone Can...

- Get 50 GS-15 remote positions
- Get the support of their cabinet-level official
- Put out press releases

But Everyone Should..

- Get the title right (no "IT Specialist")
- Get the announcement right
- Use SMEs **(whether via DHA or another process)**

I Know This Can Be Hard

In Conclusion!

Please Do These!

- Applicants: be **specific** about your experience, **tailor** your resume for each position
- Hiring Managers: use **direct hire authority**, involve **SMEs** in the process, write clear, accurate job announcements

Thank You!

Connect with me:

🐙 GitHub: github.com/abigailhaddad

🔗 LinkedIn: linkedin.com/in/abigailhaddad

📝 Substack: presentofcoding.substack.com