



Applying for jobs in the Department of Human Services

Tips for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander applicants

This resource is designed to provide guidance to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people when applying for vacancies in the Department of Human Services. This document provides some tips to assist you through the application and selection process.

Finding vacancies

The department uses a number of publications to advertise vacancies externally, including:

- the career page on the department's website (www.humanservices.gov.au/careers/);
- Indigenous press e.g. Koori Mail, National Indigenous Times; and
- the APSjobs website (www.apsjobs.gov.au).

You can log onto the APS jobs website to set up job alerts. These alerts will notify you when a job matching your search criteria is advertised.

Check the job description

Once you have found a job of interest to you, it is important to understand the duties and responsibilities of the job. Download or request the job description. You should also check:

- whether your skills match the job requirements;
- your eligibility to apply for the job e.g. employment status, required qualifications, prior experience; and
- the location of the job and your willingness to relocate, noting that relocation costs will not be paid.

Contacting the Contact Officer

As part of your research it is recommended that you contact the Contact Officer, whose details are outlined in job advertisements. This is a great opportunity to demonstrate your interest in the role. Questions you may like to ask include:

- What are the exact duties would I be doing?
- What are you looking for in applications?
- Are there other skills and knowledge required for the job that haven't been included in the advertisement?

Writing your application

Your application is your greatest opportunity to present your suitability for the job to the Selection Committee. You will need to provide all the information specified in the job advertisement. This may include some or all of the following:

- responses to selection criteria or questions;
- current resume/curriculum vitae;
- details of referees;
- confirmation of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage (if the position is advertised as a Special Measures opportunity);
- any certificate/qualification you may hold; and
- evidence of essential qualifications.

Selection criteria

If you are required to write to selection criteria or application questions, structure your responses using the STAR model:

Situation— provide a brief outline of the situation or setting

Task— outline what you did

Actions—outline how you did it

Results— describe the outcomes

Outline what the end result was and how it relates to the job you are applying for. It is recommended that you:

- use relevant examples, remembering that you can use examples other than from paid employment such as community groups, sporting roles, mentoring, and volunteer work.
- make sure your responses describe your role, i.e. use 'I' instead of 'we';
- be aware of page or word limits and stick to them; and
- draft your application in Microsoft Word to assist with proofreading if you are submitting your application online.

Resume

Your resume should outline your work history, education and other relevant experience. When applying for a vacancy, make sure to:

- update your recent experience and include experiences relevant to the vacancy;
- update you contact details;
- remember to include any community/cultural roles; and
- include qualifications that are relevant to the vacancy,

You do not need to include your age, gender, marital status, photos, or religion – these details are not necessary when applying for job vacancies. Keep your resume to three pages where possible.

Referees

As part of your application you will be required to provide details of two referees. Ensure you have their current contact details and an email address if possible.

It is preferable that your referees include your current supervisor or manager as well as a previous supervisor or manager. If this is not possible, other options include people you know who are able to comment on your knowledge, skills and personal attributes, such as a sporting coach, teacher or training facilitator, or member of a community organisation. Please note that referees cannot be related to you.

To prepare your referees prior to them completing a referee report, provide them with a copy of your application.

Proof read your application

When you have written a draft application it is a good idea to proofread it for flow and errors. To assist with proofreading it is useful to:

- ask a colleague, mentor, relative or friend to read your application and give you feedback;
- use the spell check function on the computer to find errors – but do not rely on this function; and
- ensure you have a consistent format and use good grammar throughout the application.

Submitting your application

Once your application is ready for submitting you should:

- plan to allow plenty of time to submit your application;
- submit your application using the department's eRecruitment system or allocated link, if possible;
- only provide the documents being requested; and
- ensure you receive confirmation that your application was submitted successfully.

Make sure to contact the Recruitment Team immediately with any issues or if you cannot submit your application online.

Further assessment

The Selection Committee can decide to conduct further assessment of applicants following the assessment of applications. Some of these assessments include:

- Assessment Centres – a method of assessing candidates using multiple assessment methods within one assessment session.
- Interviews – a meeting with representatives of the department to ask a series of questions relating to the requirements of the job.
- Questionnaires – paper- or internet-based questions relating to your suitability for the department and the job.

Tips for preparing for assessment centres and interview activities are to:

- organise a practice interview with someone you know;
- make sure you understand the role requirements;
- read all job pack information carefully;
- write notes and take them with you to the assessment;
- understand what the assessment includes;
- take a copy of your application to refer to if needed;
- if you are asked a question you do not understand, ask for the question to be repeated or reworded;
- take your time to respond to questions;
- ask if there is any more information you can provide.

Tips for completing questionnaires include:

- be open and honest with your responses;
- submit your response by the due date;
- use a quiet place to complete the questionnaire to avoid disruptions; and
- contact the Recruitment Team or the Contact Officer if you experience any problems.

What happens next?

All applicants will be advised of the selection outcome. At this stage you can request feedback on your application and assessment. Feedback can be useful to improve future applications and your participation in assessment activities.

This document was produced by the Indigenous Employment Strategies Team, Recruitment Branch. For more information please contact Indigenous.employment@humanservices.gov.au