Career Development Services

*WORKING TOGETHER WITH TICKET HOLDERS*

Background and what is new in 2011

* Executive order 13548 was signed on July 26, 2010 and requires agencies to improve their efforts to employ workers with disabilities through increased recruitment, hiring, and retention.
* Hiring of 100,000 people with disabilities into federal jobs over a 5 year period. Mandatory training of HR and Hiring managers on hiring people with disabilities.
* Each agency was required to develop a specific plan for implementation and meeting hiring goals with 120 days (January 2011).
* Each agency is required to designate a senior-level agency official who will be accountable for the developing and implementation of the agency’s plan for recruiting, training and retention programs, coordinating employment counseling to help match individuals with jobs, and ultimately achieving the agency’s target.
* Increase the use of the Schedule A hiring authority and increase the participation of individuals with disabilities in internships, fellowships, training, and mentoring programs.

Why is Executive Order 13548 important?

* An estimated 20, 000 positions this year
* The Federal government understands accommodation requirements
* The Federal Government has added emphasis on training and retention of disabled individuals – not just placement
* Ticket to Work Program is a designated “pipeline” that the Federal Government will use to fill many of these positions by using a regulation commonly referred to as the **Schedule A hiring authority (or Schedule A)**
* At Career Development Services, we want to ensure that our clients have everything that may be needed, in-hand and available, in order to apply and be considered for these positions.

What is the Schedule A hiring authority?

Schedule A is a federal regulation (5 CFR 213.3102(u))

Schedule A allows federal agencies to hire persons with severe disabilities, non-competitively and/or competitively with others requesting Schedule A consideration.

Schedule A allows federal agencies to consider disabled individuals competitively with other disabled persons or status candidates for posted positions.

Who is eligible for Schedule A?

If you are a current Ticketholder in the Ticket to Work Program and your benefits **have not stopped as a result of** **medical improvement**, you qualify for consideration under Schedule A

Even if you are currently working and your benefits have stopped due to earnings, you may still qualify for Schedule A consideration.

How does the Schedule A hiring authority work?

[www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov) is the portal to posted federal positions.

Federal agency recruiters and placement coordinators can post positions at [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov) , but they may exclude anyone other than individuals who have “status” eligibility from applying for those jobs.

When you apply for posted jobs at [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov), you are generally competing only with others who are eligible to apply as “status” candidates or under special rules.

For many reasons, non-solicited Schedule A packets is the absolute BEST way to land a federal position.

How can someone locate a Placement Coordinator?

* Every agency has a Placement Coordinator – their job is to recruit and place qualified individuals into jobs with the federal government.
* Previously Placement Coordinators were “volunteers” or in rotational assignments.
* Upper level management of each agency has now been tasked to meeting their agency’s hiring target.

What types of positions are available under Schedule A?

* Any federal position is potentially a Schedule A position
* Some positions require advance degrees
* Others may be inter-type positions or positions that do not require any college.
* Most positions require a high school education or equivalent
* Both work experience and volunteer experience can be used to qualify

Position types range from cafeteria workers at federal facilities and hospitals to clerical workers and administrative personnel, to social worker, attorneys, scientists, and executive level managers, and many others.

How can I apply for Schedule A consideration?

**There are two ways to request Schedule A consideration:**

1. Monitor, apply, and request consideration for positions posted at [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov)
2. Submit unsolicited packets to federal Placement Coordinators and/or recruiters

**There are four potential obstacles that every Schedule A applicant has to overcome:**

1. Either know the Schedule A rules, or have close contact with someone who does
2. Know who to ask and how to ask for Schedule A consideration
3. Meet minimum qualifications for a position and be able to pass a background check, if required, and,
4. Obtain and prepare the required documentation

What documentation is required?

* It depends on the agency, the method you are using to apply, and the specific instructions provided in the job posting, if applicable
* At a minimum you will need documentation to support your eligibility for Schedule A, which is usually in the form of at least two of these documents:

1. Certification letter signed by your Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor or Medical Professional, and
2. A copy of your Social Security Benefits letter dated within 30 days of your application or request for consideration for employment; or
3. A Self-Identification of Disability form, also known as a SF-256 form

**In addition, you will need:**

* A Resume and/or application that outline your education, work history, and qualifications and that contain all information required by the federal government, including the request for Schedule A consideration
* Any other documents as specified for a specific posted open position
* You must meet the minimum requirements and qualifications of the position type sought, including education, work experience or combination of both

How do I begin the process?

In order to make the process as easy as possible for you, we have compiled a list of documents that may be required (along with the instructions on where or how to obtain the documents), and examples of what the documents look like.

1. If you haven’t already done so, sign up for your free account at [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov) , then prepare your Resume

using the Resume Builder at the [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov) website. Be sure to answer every question to the best of your ability. Some of the common items that are often overlooked when building the resume are:

* Average hours worked per week
* Salary information
* Name and phone number of Supervisor
* College GPA
* Request for Schedule A consideration (should be typed within the “additional” information section of the Resume Builder)
* Geographical area where you would consider taking a position
* Available References (do not re-list past Supervisors or relatives)
* Double check your Resume for typos, grammatical errors, and be sure to cover all gaps in employment

1. If you would like your Consultant to review your Resume, you can send a printed copy of the Resume via fax or mail

How do I begin the process? (Continues)

1. Create a cover letter that briefly discusses your qualifications, requests Schedule A consideration, and is generic enough to apply for multiple positions
2. Gather your documentation
3. Once you have all of your documents ready and available, keep the originals for your records, but mail copies of the documents to your Consultant. After review, we will notify you of any necessary changes, then label and put the documents in the accepted order.
4. The [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov) website will allow you to store up to 5 documents at the site. This makes it much easier for you to apply for posted positions.
5. At that point, we can partner to get the applications submitted, contact the Placement Coordinators or Hiring Managers, and work towards finding the job for you

Required Documentation and how to obtain it

Over the next few pages, we will go over the documents that may be required and how you can obtain them.

Putting together your Schedule A Packet

In response to posted positions:

* For applications submitted in response to a posting at [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov), you should follow the instructions provided in the posting.
* If narrative responses are required, prepare the answers in a word document and then copy and paste your answer into the application.
* If you apply for a position, make sure you either print or save a copy of the posting in case you need it for future use (such as interview preparation).

Important hint: If you “save” the webpage itself, you will not be able to access the posting after the closing date and after it is removed from the system. The best process is to use the “print preview” button to view the posting in a printable format. Then use your “select all” button, “copy”, and “paste” the copied information onto a word document, then “save” the Word document. If you follow this process, you will always have a copy of the posting available to you.

* Use your documents “stored at [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov) whenever possible.
* Always select the “email me a copy of my answers” button at the end of the application.

For unsolicited packets to Placement Coordinators:

You should include:

* A fax cover page (if you are faxing the document)
* A cover letter addressed to the agency to whom to you are sending the packet
* Include the geographical area for which you would like to be considered, or when applicable a form indicating position and geographical preferences
* Your “Schedule A” usajobs.gov Resume
* Optional Form 612, if requested by the agency
* Documentation to support your eligibility for Schedule A
* Any other documentation specifically requested by the agency
* Each page should have your name, SSN#, and “Schedule A” applicant noted at the top of the page.

What happens next?

* Get all of your required documentation in place.
* Work with your Consultant to get the information in the required format.
* Then, in partnership with your Consultant, start contacting Placement Coordinators and applying for federal jobs.

Resources and links:

Find Placement Coordinators by agency or by state at:

<http://apps.opm.gov/sppc_directory/>

Information on Executive Order 13548

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/executive-order-increasing-federal-employment-individuals-with-disabilities>

Bender Consulting ([www.benderconsult.com](http://www.benderconsult.com)) has contracted with OPM to pre-screen applicants and maintain a database of eligible Schedule A applicants for several agencies. Resumes, along with a request to be added to the database, should be sent to Bender Consulting. Applicants should submit their resume to [resume@benderconsult.com](mailto:resume@benderconsult.com), and reference “Federal Career Opportunities” in the subject line of your email.