>>Nicolle:

Welcome and thank you for attending today's webinar Navigating the Federal Hiring Process. If you are overwhelmed by the federal hiring process, then you are definitely in the right place. Our expert presenter will shed some light on the process by identifying where to look for vacancies, what to include in your application materials, what to look for on the vacancy notice as well as tips and strategies for answering the occupational questionnaire, writing your cover letter and building your professional network in the federal sector. But before we introduce officially our expert presenter today, we would like to get some feedback from our audience. We kind of want to know who is in the audience and who is joining us today. So, we're going to launch a brief poll here, what degree are you currently pursuing? Are you a bachelor student? Masters? Doctoral? Alum? Or other? Great, it looks like the majority of our students are at the Masters and Doctoral level. So, our presenter Bill Brantley will be hopefully addressing a lot of your key questions today. Okay so we're going to close the poll up it looks like almost 50/50, 50% Doctoral and 47% Masters students and a few Bachelors exciting to see also perspective and alums on the line as well. So, let's take a second to look at those results and get on with the introduction of our presenter. So, we are very honored to introduce our presenter for today's webinar Dr. William Brantley, Walden University alumnus who received his Doctorate in Public Policy and Administration from Walden. He currently works as a human resources specialist at the office of personnel management in Washington DC and also as an instructor at the University of Louisville and the University of Maryland. Hello Bill and welcome.

>>Bill:

Oh, thank you Nicolle and I’d like to welcome everyone else that came online. Thank you for attending today's webinar.

>>Nicolle:

Today Bill will be discussing the latest trends in the federal hiring process, how to tailor your application materials to put your strongest foot forward and strategies for building your professional network in the federal sector. So, with that I will go ahead and turn it over to our presenter Bill and we'll get started.
>>Bill:

Okay great, thank you again. Now before I get into this I have to do this to make the attorneys at OPM happy, a little disclaimer here I'm not speaking officially for the Office of Personnel Management nor the federal government, I'm speaking just personally as a citizen, as a Walden alumnus and someone who has used these techniques and have helped other use these techniques to get them federal job interviews and such so these have been tested. This is how I got my job currently so you know there's a kind of guarantee, what is it a “good housekeeping guarantee” and one thing I do want to point out is that the federal government is still hiring. I know you hear on the news that government employees or you know pay freezes and all this and it looks like they want to cut back to the size of government but there's still thousands of jobs out there in the federal government and some of these techniques can also be used for state and local governments also and some of the reasons why we still have these jobs out there is there's going to be a retirement wave coming on. I mean a lot of baby boomers are getting ready to retire move on ahead and we have lots of positions right now that need specialists. When I talk about a wide range of jobs pretty much anything you're interested in doing, we you know the federal government hires for, biggest thing right now is cyber security specialist, but if you're a forensic anthropologist they're looking for that, department education is looking for educational specialists so I know Walden educational Masters and Doctorate students might want to look there. So, there's a wide range of jobs out there and you don't have to just work in DC. Their stations are you know job, duty stations as we call them, all the United States and abroad so you don't have to just come all the way over here to DC and still pretty much stay in your hometown or move it to one of the bigger cities maybe San Diego, San Francisco, Kansas City and work there. And one other thing I want to kind of point out is that when you're doing the job search don't think of the federal government as just one big monolith with one big culture. There are a lot of agencies and departments, small agencies, big agencies, they all have their own little cultures, even individual offices have the culture so there's certainly a fit for someone in there. So, if you're kind of a more collegial type you might enjoy the National Science Foundation if you kind of like to come to work every day wearing a suit SEC the Securities and Exchange Commission or FBI might be perfect for you. Let's go ahead and go to the next slide and get a quick overview of the federal hiring process. Now it can seem kind of daunting so I'll boil this down for you and throughout this we're going to talk about the different stages, but essentially what happens in the federal hiring process is a vacancy is announced, usually on USAJOBS on the agency website, in the newspaper, all kinds of different places. You will read that vacancy, you'll learn how to analyze that vacancy, you'll submit your application, usually it's two key pieces a resume and an occupational questionnaire. You may have to make optional documents, we will talk about those a little in a moment and then your documents go in, it goes through a rating process there's a basic qualifications screening where HR specials look at to make sure that you met all the requirements for the job and then it's sent to a panel to review and rate and I've been on a couple of these panels and what we basically do is we're subject matter experts, we sat on the panel looking at paralegal positions and looked at people that have a paralegal background and kind of rated them on you know how would they fit with the
job of the specialized duties and then we give a certification port and if the certified application is sent to the hiring manager and if you're selected, there's an interview and hopefully a job offer. So, that's kind of the process in the case here and I think one of the biggest things that people need to get used to with the federal hiring process is that some time can pass. It's gotten a lot better but sometimes you feel like you put your application out there, you haven't heard anything for a couple months or so and you think it's normal, I always tell folks to just you know keep persevering, keep looking at USA Jobs. There are four major points where you're supposed to get an email from USA Jobs telling you when it's been looked at when it's been uploaded and just keep trying out there because like with this job here, one day out of the blue, I did get a phone call for an interview, a month later gotta out of the blue again, he offered to come work for OPM. So, go ahead and go to the next slide. Okay now talk about vacancy this is the start of the process and where we find these vacancies. Of course, on USAJOBS and it's the premier federal website for job hunting if you're looking for federal jobs and one thing is, don't rely on solely we're going to talk about some other places but this is a good start and you should have at least one resume online, make sure it's searchable you can have kind of a generic resume if you want to throw in there and that way if hiring managers are looking for someone with your specific skills, we will talk about keywords and how important they are in a moment, they can use this to search through your resume. You can also build search agents that automatically email you if you want on a daily basis and you can have up to 10 of these that look at certain job classifications, certain agencies, certain locations, whatever you want to work, wherever you want to work out in whichever agency you want to work at. Now, um I know a lot of wellness students are veterans and there is a big push in the federal government right now for veterans and there's a great website if you're a veteran I would suggest you bookmark this site fedshirevets.gov because not only does it contain job listings, there are also notices of job fairs, special workshops, all kinds of resources to help veterans make the transition from military life to civilian life and finding a federal job and these job fairs you can make them are great. I have volunteered at one in DC, it was a very large event I think 500 to 700 veterans down the Washington Convention Center and it basically you have these booths where all the agencies right there and veterans can go in, in some cases some of these agencies had authority to hire on the spot. I worked one where we had the USA job site online and help veterans set up a resume, help them register, next to us was a VA Veterans Administration coaching area where you basically a veteran can sit down with an expert and they would be coached 101, look at your resume look at your qualifications, help you find the kind of job that you may have done in the military that you could transfer over to the federal. All these also look at the different individual agency websites, most agencies and pretty much all of them actually, had to put their positions on USAJOBS but sometimes like National Science Foundation they don't have to, so you may have some of the jobs listed on USAJOBS a lot more droplets on agency site it's just a good way to cover yourself. So, if you're interested in like a commerce job or an education job, make sure to bookmark the website and look for their specific HR openings and also get to know the agency HR office if you really want to work for education or let's say Department of Defense, get to know the folks down there, call them up, talk to them, they can sometimes alert you to fellowships or job
fairs that may be available for like graduates in Masters or Doctoral programs. news.google.com it's on official website but essentially what I'd like to do with that instead of news alerts on the agencies, so that I can find out about expansions or when they're hiring or any kind of events that are happening that can give me an indication maybe I keep need to put a resume into this app you know to this agency. National Academy of Sciences, a lot of Walden students are interested in kind of continuing on with their education and continuing on with the scholarly practitioners stuff that we do, so National Academy of Sciences has some great job openings for that. Let's go ahead and on to the next slide and we have the Defense Department, has a civilian employment program so just don't think if you're not in the military you can't work for the Defense Department cuz it has a royal robust civilian employment program, almost runs you know kind of parallel with what OPM has. Roll Call, The Hill, Washington Post, the major newspapers find their web sites, bookmark those, take a look through their ads, sometimes you may not find a direct federal job which you might find a contractor job that may get you into the agency that you want to work for and I bring this up here to 55 years and older, senior environmental Employment Program this is something that the EPA runs and this is for folks that are retired or looking at retirement but may still want to work and you have this program which is pretty interesting kind of a concept there. I haven't seen any other programs like any other agencies but if you're interested in the environment you still want to kind of contributing you might want to look at that. The Plum Book, if you have some executive experience or some high-level you know management experience you might want to take a look at this, these are political appointees, these are folks like deputy directors and office chiefs and you know such that your political points so you're not going to be a permanent federal employee but you know it can be pretty exciting job to be maybe a deputy secretary of Department of Commerce. Again, one of the things to do is make sure you bookmark USA Jobs in the agency you're looking at, looking, for check them daily, there is a five-day minimum for job openings so sometimes jobs will pop up and you may have you know those five days and it goes away so always keep checking. Let's go ahead go to the next slide and this is so true, preparation is key, there's a lot of work involved in building the resume and answering the Occupational questionnaire and I also tell you to keep a job book so you can kind of keep a track of what you're doing here because it's really important that you get all your ducks in a row as they say, when you're applying for a job because if you're missing part of an application or something that is you know that they need to evaluate your, resume would just be kicked out your application will be kicked out and you'll never get a warning about that so just kind of a harsh truth there but let you know. So, I see we got a poll coming up.

>>Nicolle:

Yeah with that we're going to find out where everyone is in the process so I'm going to launch another poll here for our audience. So, we're kind of trying to gauge an interest from our audience in this webinar today so where are you in the process? Are you currently in the federal government and seeking out other opportunities? Are you outside of the federal government and currently applying to get in? Or you really just here joining in to today's webinar to gain some new strategies to start
applying? So, we'll wait a few seconds to give our audience. Interesting it's almost looking about sixty forty seventy thirty meaning most of our audience attending today they're here to gain new strategies and about forty percent are outside federal government looking to. So, let's share our results here.

>>Bill:
Okay

>>Nicolle:
So, 67 39 most people are looking for a new strategy so Bill is going to continue talking about that and about forty percent outside and looking to apply so thank you very much and we'll go ahead and get started on the preparation process.

>>Bill:
Okay well great I mean that's that's good to know because I want to make sure I don't give you information you already know about but hopefully some of these tips will help you. Some of these are kind of common sense in one way but I like to be able to kind of pull it all together for you because again you want to be organized when you do this and one of the best ways to organize yourself is to build this master resume. Now this is not what you're going to use to apply for jobs because it's going to be too general too generic. It's more for your help in helping you build the targeted resume that you want to send to the job and it also helps because a lot of these jobs may require security clearance and this is stuff that if you have it already in a file, it helps you a great deal in filling out that security question questionnaire. So, like one when I did Social Security Administration, I had to list all my addresses from ten years back and then I had to list the uh an address when neighbor lives next to me they can verify I lived there, was pretty it was a top-secret clearance, so that's something you can't really dredge out of your mind on the spot so this is why I found the master resume very helpful. Now we are doing with the federal jobs right now and the way resumes are right now, they're going more towards a push of kind of resumes you're looking for in the private sector, but there are still some required pieces of information that you have to have. For all your jobs you have to have the title of the job, the actual name of the company you know is exact as you can get it, supervisors name and number, the address, the salary that you are in the last hour that you received, start and stop dates through this job, the number of hours you know full-time part-time and duties and when we talk about duties we'll talk a little bit later about keywords so you may want to go back but you know list the general duties that you had and when we go back to the keywords you may want to kind of expand upon that. So, that's done, go ahead and go to the next slide. That's the good stuff that you need to have there on education. This is where it's really helpful to go ahead and get all your transcripts. Now I know in some jobs you may be required to send a transcript alone and it’s one of these where you don't open it you know you have it sent directly but go ahead and get all your transcripts for yourself and have those on file because you're going to have to name you know the school that you went, to the address of
the school, start and end date, credit hours earned, the major and the degree, and make sure that you have this you know in hand because when I first started with the state government in Kentucky I had a double major, I was a speech communication major and a paralegal science person and when they looked at my application, where they looked at my resume my transcript I was in a paralegal position but all they could see what speech communication. So, I was almost kicked out of that job after the first ten days on the job because they didn't think I had a degree and I had to go back and get the transcript and show them yes, I do have the paralegal science part also. So, you know just sometimes things like I'd have and it's good if you have your records to back yourself up. All your honors and awards no sense in being bashful here just list everything and all the professional and academic activities. Some people don't think that the things they do for nonprofits or their church whatever matters but in some cases you get some valuable skills maybe you put on a church seminar or conference or whatever and these are valuable skills that can translate to something you do in the federal workforce so when we talk about the key words don't worry you know about whether I got paid for this or not, in some cases they'll actually say any proof you know professional or volunteer activities will count. Just think about keywords transferable skills that you have and that you learn from this. Let's go ahead and go to the next slide, again our address is current in previous and if you are like me kind of getting up there and in the age bracket there you may have forgotten where you were living when you were 21 or 25 and that may have to pop up on the security clearance. Credit history, they will check your credit history especially if you're going for security clearance, so just kind of the guard yourself and make sure you are not surprised you might want to get a copy of your credit history. Achievement stories, now when they used to have the KSA's or knowledge skills and abilities that was the long essays that you used to have to write, they've gotten rid of those but you have this occupational questionnaire, in some cases you may have to write something short maybe a couple paragraphs or so, so it's still a good idea to have an achievement story that showcases a particular knowledge skill or ability that you're very good at and you can use those format problems, actions, challenges, results and feedback to structure it. So, you may still end up having to write something not a long essay but maybe a short essay no more than half a page the most is what I've seen but just be prepared for that and there's a lot of ways that you can cut and paste it from a word document into the USAJOBS resume builders than if you try to think of it on the spot. So, go ahead and go to the next slide. So, we got a master resume put together and the next part of the phase here is we look at applying or you know analyzing of vacancies to see how well you match up to that vacancy. So, the good thing about the master resumes you've done a thorough examination of yourself of the skills you have of how you, you know what kind of knowledge skills and builders you can give to an employer and now we're going to take a look at the vacancy and see how that pops up and there it is. This is pretty much a current one is what you see on USAJOBS, now some agencies have different job systems but the vacancy announcements look very similar and there's some key things to look here for. So, underneath the title office innovation and improvement, four key pieces here the job title, plus the series number and this is the GS those general schedule 0343 that's the job series and if you go on OPM's website and type that in that will tell you what kind of duties and knowledge skill and abilities you need to know
for that job series, 14 is the grade and that tells you basically how much
would get paid for. The Department of Education Agency good stuff to know
but here's something very vital to the job announcement number, when
you're a corresponding with that agency especially their HR office that's
a vital number to have. Make sure that you keep that with you and record
that in your job log and I have on occasion when I first applied for some
jobs, didn't note that thought the vacancy would be there when I came back
on USAJOBS and it disappeared and I had no clue what the job number was so
when I went to one interview I actually forgotten what the duties in the,
what they were looking for and kind of had to wing it so I was successful
but it's not a good feeling to have when you have to tap dance like that.
Let's go ahead and go to the next slide and this is where we're going to
start looking at the duties and what we're looking for specifically is
keywords and keywords you know basically are mostly nouns sometimes
adjectives and adverbs, what you're looking here is what are they looking
for and then match your experience and education to that and echoing the
keywords in the resume and the reason why you want to do this is because
when the HR person is sitting there rating your resume and you're
supporting documents and when the panel is support you know rating it,
they're essentially looking for someone that does fulfill it so let's take
a look at number 2 here, supervise and manage staff while assisting them
in achieving the professional objectives. So, they're gonna be looking for
the key words of have you supervised anyone? Have you managed staff? How
big of a staff? Did you help them as you know our system or help them in
achieving the professional objectives? What does that mean training your
staff developing your staff moving them on to higher you know positions?
Stuff like that, so you want to basically analyze that and find the
keywords and here I would say supervise, manage, you know achieving
professional objectives, those will be some of the keywords and look on
your resume your master resume for instance is that you did this and that
you can show you've done this. So, let's go and go to the next slide and
we're going to keep looking more into that because part of the duties here
is something called specialized experience, these are the must-haves. This
is basically how they are but you know if you don't have these skills
essentially the agencies don’t look at you anymore so you have to have the
specialized experience and take a look at the second paragraph examples of
such experience they include and identifying procedural problems in
program operations using qualitative or quantitative methods. Um there's a
Plain Language Act which was passed last year and the job descriptions are
socially written in Plain Language Act, some are being converted over you
still get some of what we call the federal leave the procedural problems
and program operations. What exactly does that mean? In some cases you
know you may have to take it apart, look it up in the dictionary, look at
some the OPM documentation but once you figure out what that is and from
looking at it here when I analyzed it is could that means six sigma
because that means some things where I worked in a non-profit where we
were hailing you know homeless people or we were handling, maybe handing
out food to folks and we had some different program operations and were
some process problems we had and because I was able to use my dissertation
or my master's thesis and which had qualitative or quantitative methods
when I was doing this, I was able to improve operations, that could be a
valid thing to put in there and say yes I have identified procedural
problems in a program and I identified on my using these qualitative
quantitative methods and it was able to improve the program. You see how
that kind of works there? Sometimes it takes a little bit of time to analyze these but when people are rating this they'll be looking for those specialized experiences and you want something that resonates with those keywords. So, let's go ahead with the next slide and there's just some more and more stuff here the knowledge skills and abilities, again they kind of disappear but they're still back and for example knowledge of pertinent laws, policies, regulations, precedents applicable the program and related resources in the area being studied. Before the reform, it used to be a long essay that you write on this, if you take a look at the bottom just up above the 2012 Walden university pre-preview questions “please click here”, that's the Occupational questionnaire and what will happen in some cases it will ask you a few questions, so let's go ahead and pop the seat to the next slide to see what that questionnaire might look like. Oh, that's the benefits thing, actually think we're a little bit ahead of myself here but benefits we kind of look at. Let me go ahead and go to the next slide. The benefits we look here in some cases it may not be any information that you need to help you apply, but sometimes I look at this because for example in some positions there might be like, they're going to look at your finances, your investments, you may have to put your investments and blind trust, just kind of check the section make sure there's nothing is hidden in here that it may affect your application. Now let's go ahead do the next slide and this is a very vital part here, how to apply, make sure you follow these instructions exactly. I mean you know HR offices at one of the things that they kind of talk about here is the ability to follow instructions so if they say fax things, fax things. If they say go to a certain site and download the cover sheet that goes with your fax because they have a bar code on it make sure you do that. What's also important here if you get this job, make sure it's in your job book agency contact info, that's the person you speak to. This case it would be Ronni, that if you have a question about that job part of the application but just kind of briefly kind of go back over it as long as you have your achievement stories next to you when you're filling out the Occupational questionnaire you should be in good shape. Okay so let's go ahead and next to the next slide and this is where we really start applying for the vacancy so let's go ahead and after the nice filing lady here, let's go on the next slide. Okay, there we go, okay now if you have a choice and you don't have the choice as much anymore with a lot of agencies, you want to try to send in a paper resume, paper cover letter but most agencies now are going online and I like the paper because you can control the way it looks. I'll be honest here if you've ever printed out your online resume that's created by USA Jobs it's not that attractive and you have to do some stuff to make sure it formats correctly or you can just get a big grey block of text it's just hard to read and I've seen some really bad ones where they were really good resumes but just a way of formatting I mean it's basically a text document. You can upload a word document that looks very good of your resume and such and hopefully they will download that too and print it out for you but if you do it online with the job search engines, USAJOBS and some of the other things that people use or some agency use, use a lot of spacing, use capital letters for headings, use characters have set off I like the plus sign or the equals sign that set off parts of the resume just try to make it as readable as possible using you know the text characters when I talk about you know the alphanumeric characters there ok. One thing I like to do this helps me out a lot is I focus my resume
and on USAJOBS you can have up to five resumes at a time, when I have a resume created for a job I make sure to target it and I’ll name it using the job number and/or the job title just so that I can refer back to it and refer back to my vacancy announcement so that when I get the call to go interview I can immediately know which resume I sent in and what I highlighted on that resume and how two see into my vacancy announcements so that I'm prepared for interview. Let's go ahead and go to the next slide. Okay on your federal resume again you can make it look a lot like what you would say in the private industry but again make sure this personal information is on there, your name, address, phone numbers, country of citizenship, social security number, veterans preference if you don't know what the veteran’s preference is for you and please if you're a veteran make sure you use this it's you know it's help you out, you can call the agency contact and ask them and talk to him about it. So, if you're a disabled vet you get so many points, if you're you know not a disabled vet but you've been in war zones there's a whole rating system, a whole point system and make sure you get the points you need. Reinstatement eligibility if you've been a federal employee before and you've been either laid off or left for a while and can come back you know there's a reinstatement of the eligibility that you might come under and if you work for the federal government means before make sure you have the highest federal grade in job series, this can help sometimes in the security investigation kind of help you know speed up the clearance process. On your objective make sure announcement numbers on there, the title and the grade you're seeking. Okay in some jobs you may have three or four different grades you're looking for 7 9 or 11 and you if you don't specify they may put you into 7th grade you know the 7th grade and you really apply you know you really actually qualify for 11th grade so you want to make sure that you apply for the grade that you can get and go for the highest one you can get because it just basically means more money. Let's go ahead next one and keywords keywords keywords. I just pushed this so much but this is how we this is how we rate you this is how we know you're experienced and qualified. So, when you do summary of qualifications, I like to do a little narrative but I even stuff it full of the keywords that I picked out of the specialist specialized experience and the knowledge skills and abilities from the vacancy announcement. Experience of course we've seen all this before, education, activities honors, basically if you've done your masters resume a lot of this is just pull it over cut and paste on the experience part when the duties just stuff that for keywords and emphasize the duties that you did that fit with that vacancy announcement. So Nicolle do we have a question?

>>Nicolle:

Yes we do.

>>Bill:

Okay

>>Nicolle:

Okay so a common question Bill that we get from students is how do you address the qualifications in the job posting in situations where maybe
the exact skills you know you're talking about these keywords, buzzwords and the experience do not match exactly, so for example let's say in the job posting they were requiring that you know how to run an agency specific software database so I might have that database experience but not the specific one that they're asking for so how would you address that?

>>Bill:

Well one thing I always tell people since in a lot of cases you're getting a security review and you know an investigation don't exaggerate don't ever lie on a federal resume it never works okay. So, don't even try that but in some cases, we will give you a good example in my current job, they were looking for someone that knew how to use SAP which is a statistical analysis package. I've used SPSS you know SS and I think they still teach it at Walden I believe in the statistical courses so I haven't ever used SAP but I use SPSS and that is very close to it you know SAP, so when I was going through the interview I said oh you know I've had several statistical classes I did in my dissertation, this is a package that I use and from my review online looking at SAP and looking at different things that you know SAP does I'm pretty certain it was a lot like SPSS and I could do I could transfer and there's that keyword transferable skills like a transfer to skills I had in SPSS into the SAP and pretty much give myself up to speed on it. Another example with my fiancé who goes for archives and records management positions, she often gets asked if she knows how to use a certain kind of software and because she's worked a lot of nonprofits which couldn't afford some of this software, she's worked at the open source version. So, when she talks to him like you know different database systems yeah I've worked with something similar to that and I understand the basic database concepts and how that works in this to you know in archives and records management and I have heard about this software you're talking about and I've you know heard about in the conferences and such and I'm pretty certain I can get up to speed on that in about a week or so with some you know intensive work on it. So, again you know do your best you can show and that you do have those transferable skills, you understand the basic concepts and you know if it's something that you can you know prove an analog to that you've done before you know that usually helps get you there. Ok I mean of course if someone comes in and sometimes these job listings are so amazingly specific it's crazy I don't know how anyone qualifies for them but if someone has that specific experience of course we're going to get an edge up on you but a lot of cases you know I wouldn't worry about it too much because it sometimes it's you know people don't really have that specific experience because it is just a federal government software piece or you know position you know kind of job duty.

>>Nicolle:

That's great Bill that's very very helpful. Ok so now you're going to take us on it looks like to the Occupational questionnaire.

>>Bill:
Yes, and yeah I've read earlier about that and kind of got a little bit mixed up there but um just want to make sure that when you when we talk about the good old KSA's and how they kind of went away and they're still kind of running around in the form of the Occupational questionnaire so the good thing is you don't have to spend pages and pages writing them but you should still know a little bit you know still had those achievement stories help you out here. So, a lot of times what you'll get is a question and this is from the version that's where you click on it and you can see a version of it, when you get onto the online they'll have check boxes and such but for example you may have a question says for the list below please then identify all the activities which you have experienced drafting analyzing recommending legislation and you can just click all these if you have that experience or none of the above or just you know any combination. Now let me give you one caveat, if you do that make sure you reflect somewhere in your resume that you have that experience so because what will happen is that the rater will take a look at what you checked and then they'll go back and review your resume and some questions may even specifically ask you, where in your resume do you show that you have this experience? And you may have to go and you know type in a box here the actual job that you had when you had it in all this so that the rater can go back and confirm that okay. So, that's why you wanted to when you're doing the keywords and the KSA stuff to put more into your resume because this will help sell you on the Occupational questionnaire and help kind of take place of the KSA essay. Sometimes you may have a very simple question give you a great experience yes or no, you type in yes or no and then a box will pop up and say okay when did you do this so if we go to the next slide, I think we have an example one of those kinds of questions if your answer above question was a career job fair any kind of thing please identify the event, you know you will talk about that event you have maximum length of 250 characters. Here's a good tip, don't just type into the box, I always like to use a word document because my spelling is not as good as I like it to be and sometimes I have the grammar checker on too just to make sure I give a good intelligent answer without the spelling errors okay. Just kind of a little tip that you want to do that so realize that even though the KSA the long essays may have gone away there's still some of those got you out there and form of the Occupational questionnaire so that's why it's good to have those achievement stories and always after you finish the occupational questionnaires, go back take a look at your resume and make sure whatever you said in your occupational questionnaire is reflected in your resume and I always like to have a copy of my résumé next to me when I fill out these things so if I do need to recommend make notes on it so I can always go back and check it okay.

>>Lisa:

Bill there's at least a very common question that we've gotten from our audience so far as how far back in work experience should they go? One person mentioned should I go back 20 years, one person said you know I've got 35 years of experience so how far back should they go on these application materials?

>>Bill:
Um the good rule of thumb is they say ten years in some cases but for example you know I haven't been a paralegal for a long time but I applied for a paralegal position a while back and when I say a long time it's been 15 you know 17 years, I went back to that experience talked about that so it's really kind of a judgment call I mean essentially it doesn't hurt you I mean the USAJOBS resume you can add as many of these experience blocks as you want and I know you could focus it that way. So, in your master resume I would suggest going back to every job he had since your first professional job just to have that ok.

>>Lisa:

hmm

>>Bill:

So, 20 years 35 years I don't know I mean um again it depends on the position you're applying for and if you know, if the skills are still valid it's still applicable why not try it.

>>Lisa:

But if they're obsolete if it's no longer relevant than best leave it out and just with the rule of 10 ok.

>>Bill:

Yeah pretty much I mean you know cuz I do a lot IT and no one really cares about my turbo pascal experience ok.

>>Lisa:

Yep 4d base 3 plus and things like that right ok great things.

>>Bill:

Well they stop it when I start talking about my commodore 64 in interviews so you know yeah many trades, make sure it's relevant yeah.

>>Lisa:

Great thank you.

>>Bill:

Uh-huh so let's do we're back to the oh ok we're to the cover letter excuse me and this is an optional but I like to have this anyway because you can upload supporting documents. Now let me just briefly talk about what supporting documents may be. They can be transcripts, they could be professional licenses, licenses for example my project management professional from the project management institute and I have a copy of my certificate scanned in and I can send that up so if I’m trying for a project management position I have that so you may have professional licenses and such like that. I also like to put in a cover letter just
because it may or may not be read but it doesn't hurt and if you keep it short to the point like a page or so it just kind of helps to kind of advertise you some more so you can have a nice opener you know how could you help the organization what kind of professional skills you have and such can help the agency. Put a bullet list of qualifications, again make sure the keywords they're looking for in the specialized experience, a short low conclusion you know just another piece of paper that can possibly help you here. You know again spend your time concentrating on the resume and such but you know cover letter can't hurt and you know you never know what it might lead to in some cases it could mean you may not be qualified for this job but it does look at give me a qualify for something else and the HR office may talk to you about that that's kind of rare but it could happen. Let's go ahead next to the next slide and this is for yourself this is not you don't wanna give this to the agency but this is for yourself along with your master resume you want to have a job log and then the reason is again because you don't know how long it's going to be until they talk to you again about the announcement and it is if you apply for several jobs especially if you're trying to break into the federal government you may pull apply for several jobs at once. When I was trying to get back in back in 2008 I applied for 25 jobs, so you know you want to record what you applied for, make sure you have the job announcement number with you, keep the copies of the announcement numbers, any documents that you may have used for those for those jobs any of the you know the optional documents you may put in there and I also keep my KSA questions from other jobs that I applied for you know they're not used anymore but you can take little brief snippets of them and put them into your resume, your targeted resume, and on the Occupational questions just kind of you know it helped out a little bit there. Any notes you have on how you approach application it's just good thing to keep up with so that when you do get called in for interview you remember what you applied for what they were looking for, how you answer the questions, so you're consistent in the interview because they'll have your resume and any other documents that you may send in with it in front of them so that way it just helps you kind of refresh your memory and keep up with it and it also gives a good way to keep in track of what you applied for and what's been working for anyone hasn't been working for you okay. So, let's go ahead and go to networking. So, this is something that you want to do while you're working on looking for job vacancies because again all the online sources are kind of passive with the networking, this is where you kind of get out there and it also helps you in oh go ahead and jump to the next slide because they have all these points there um helps you find out about openings that's one of the best ways you can and kind find out about openings before they get posted in some cases, helps you learn about the agency's culture, sometimes you may talk to someone you may be interested in going for this agency you talk a few folks that work there you may not worry want to work there you may want to find another office that might be better for you. You can also find out about fellowships this way or contractor jobs. In some cases you may not be able to get into the agency right away as a Fed but you might find a contracting firm that you're doing a contract with a temporary get you into the agency kind of gets you seen lets you learn about the culture and such and you know it's often very possible I mean I’ve seen a lot of times where a contractor actually is invited to come on and hired on at an agency, so in preparing for your networking again just like you're preparing for answering those.
applications, talk about your personal brand and nowadays we look at all the social networking sites so LinkedIn, Facebook you know your own personal website have some networking cards because there's all kinds of events going on, job fairs and such and it's just a good way to get out there and get known and have a good contact management system. If you're like me and your memory is not all that great with names and faces you might want to have a good system there just so that you can actually leave an event type down who you met, get their cards in there so that the next time you email or phone them you know who you're talking to you don't embarrass yourself. Okay so go ahead to the next slide. So, now working your way to a federal job one of the big things I like to push is LinkedIn, it's free I mean there is a paid service of it you know it's free there's a lot of good networking groups on there and go ahead and build your free profile and I use it my email signature and forum postings, I also use it when I'm applying for federal jobs sometimes I will mention my LinkedIn profile in my you know series of qualifications or you know just kind of point out some things that I've done and again you just put the link on there mention you have a LinkedIn profile, it it's not an official part of your application but there's nothing to prevent the person from clicking on and looking at it furthers they want some more information about some other things then they may not apply to that job but will know you as a person. Let's go ahead and go to the next site or next slide excuse me this is GovLoop that's kind of a Facebook for government employees, I've been on this for a long time it's um it's now past 50,000 members I think it's close to 75 but essentially this is where a lot of federal workers on there, state local workers get on there, contractors, they have just launched jobs on GovLoop.com where you go through the USAJOBS kind of pick out the top ten jobs for that week in careers categories. There's all kind of different communities, a great way to network there's all kinds of interest groups on there, agency groups and that so just a good way to kind of find out what's going on in the federal government, learn the culture, find out about new job to network with current employees, past employees and contractors. Okay go ahead to the next slide and back again to LinkedIn the US government connections also see a lot for state and local and again you know just I like LinkedIn a lot because it is a professional you know site and gets you good way to get your professional version you know professional face out there and I believe Walden just got a very big you know presence on there so I went to several different Walden groups and you know as one thing about Walden's alumni network is amazing, just keep it up with your fellow students you've been with that's the way I find out a lot of you know contacts and I find out about a lot of job of job openings and such. So, currently helping a guy right now that I met at through one of the LinkedIn groups he works in the same area with me and helping him with his dissertation at the moment and he's helped me trying to get my fiancé into NARA National Association or national archives and records administration and so you know great way of finding great connections on there you never know who you'll run into. Um networking everybody, let's see here Facebook, somebody just use it I I use it myself I use almost daily but it's more kind of like my friends and such just when you use Facebook do realize that they look at that too during the security clearances so you might want to make sure you guys good information on there and sanitize them in your information. Twitter not as much networking but more like finding out about them agency job openings and alerts you know there's a lot of good
Twitter groups out there state and local within the federal course and it's more kind like a news alert service and you know again use these build your network family and friends always go to them first, Walden classmates have been always very helpful the agency HR contacts again if there's an agency you're interested in like a Veterans Administration get to know the HR folks get to talk to him and you know don't call them all the time like you with your family or friends but get a get to know them talk to him occasionally see what's going on out there. A big believer in professional associations a lot of stuff it's helped me with you know it's been with the project management institute, the business analyst association and American Society Republic Administration, I believe I know in my program that you know code policy folks that we get automatic membership in as a student and I'm not sure about the other programs if you get membership in some of the professional associations but please use that I mean that does help you that does blunt you to what kind of job openings are out there and let's see here and I think we're down to questions now so that's my basic networking message there it's just get out there's talked to a lot of folks, collect names collect you know cards and such and make sure you know keep them that's your best news network out there essentially.

>>Nicolle:

Excellent thank you so much Bill so we're going to go on we are receiving many many questions so glad to see our audience is so engaged. Um one question would be and this is regarding networking since we just got through talking about that um what's the best way to integrate into some of these online social networking groups especially like US government connections if one is joining the group maybe from the outside of the federal government, so what's a good way to ease into and approach these networking environments?

>>Bill:

Okay I can tell you one way that don't want to do it because I see this a lot and it kind of makes you cringe but you have some people that come in and I know they're desperate for a job or they really want to get in there and they kind of jump in and say I'm a student and I'm looking for a job can you help me and it's you know it's not like people don't want to help you but you got to kind of give a little bit more than that to work with and in some cases there's like any kind of social group you want to lurk around a little bit get to know the place because you may start asking this question at this group and it may not be the right group to talk to about this so lurk and learn the culture of the group and learn about what people are interested in and talking about and then kind of gently ease yourself in the conversation and the best way to ease yourself in and this is where it's great to be a Walden student again we have a lot of masters and doctoral students here, you have dissertations you're writing, you have papers you're writing, you have master's thesis that you're writing, you know you've got some great information current information out there and use ourselves as scholar practitioners I see a lot of times someone gets on these groups interesting you know I have this thing going up the agency we're trying to figure out how to do a culture change or we're trying to figure out how to do some kind of training and this may be
something you're working on right now and you can say hey well you know I'm working on the master's thesis on this and this is what I found in the academic literature that could answer your question kind of summarizing a couple research papers or something and kind of throw it out there you know you're seen as a resource you're helping someone and maybe kind of put into your signature line you know that you're looking for a job but kind of low-key and you're kind of giving out help first before you're asking for help and that makes you look more like a valuable resource in the community there and a contributing community member. I mean for example when I was working on my dissertation which was on organizational change you know I'd be on some of the list LinkedIn groups and some people would ask about that and I could say oh well if you're looking at vision you know how to create an organizational vision I have a few papers on that that I could send to you and this is some interesting stuff that they're doing on that.

>>Nicolle:

That's excellent yeah go ahead.

>>Lisa:

And Bill I have a question from a student who's looking to change careers and just lacks the on-point experience and she's finding it difficult to translate what she's currently doing into what she wants to achieve so how do you suggest she best use her job experience if it's unrelated to the position? Does she pull from her for example customer service and management experience of her current job or should she stress her educational experiences more if they're more closely related to the position she's applying for?

>>Bill:

Yeah, I mean again yeah, it's a great question because we're talking again about transferable skills and just how well can your skills transfer I mean there are a universal set of skills. If she's a good writer, a good communicator those are skills that every job needs, if she's good at analysis quantitative qualitative that's another thing she can pull some of the customer service skills I mean those can be kind of redone or you know repackaged to show that new I'm good at negotiation, I'm good at leading a team you know basically another set of good communication skills but it you know when we do the analysis and do the keyword analysis and it looks like your education, it's closer fit yeah emphasize that and talk about you know have his background here in this and I'm a customer service person let's say she wants to go into IT and she's just learning about the IT systems and such and say well you know I'm learning the technology my educational help me feeling for that but my background is a customer service person helps me learn how what users want and how to communicate with people that are going to be using the software packages and how to understand what the requirements are so that I can program a better system form okay more for example go okay I need to go on okay.

>>Lisa:
Okay um terrific um and so volunteer experience that should be included on me as well that we had another okay.

>>Bill:

I'm amazed I'm amazed at people who downgrade their volunteer experience and it is it's just tremendous what they do. I mean one lady she organized this large extended family reunion and she has 300 people come into town for a week and she's organized at hotels and logistics I'm like my goodness you know this is what event planners doing charge large amounts of money to do when you do it yeah look at the details look at the logistics that's amazing. You know great example of project management.

>>Nicolle:

That's excellent that helps people understand their transferable skills. I have a question here from someone who's been self-employed for 15 years.

>Bill:

Yeah

>>Nicolle:

Um I am my own supervisor and I've been self-employed for 15 years so how is this handled?

>Bill:

Okay well that's a good question because I'm actually when we were talking to some of the paralegals a lot of them when I was on the rating panel, were self-employed they freelance themselves out so I mean one of the questions is can you tell us what your supervisor can we contact your supervisor oh yeah you're talking to him now. Again show that you have you know the professional skills and in some cases you may not have a job evaluation because I doubt anyone who's self-employed evaluate themselves but you do have things that you can use to show case okay like a portfolio, you've got client testimonials, you've got other people that you work with that you can in you know solicit their endorsement from, I mean one person there was an interesting resume put on their quotes from clients they worked with and on Facebook you can also have people recommend you and they included some of that in the resume. So, there is a way that if you don't have immediate supervisor if you're self-employed, you actually do have people that evaluate you and that's your clients and one telling way is how well is your business growing, I mean if this person who's been a self-employed for 15 years their business keep growing they must be doing something right because they're making their customers happy and that does and that does translate to good evaluations.

>>Nicolle:

That's great.
Wait we've gotten a couple questions with regards to veterans preference and it seems like you know individuals have been applying for positions they're finding that you know their veterans have a preference in there or there are internal candidates that end up being hired and any suggestions that you might have for being more successful in applying for certain types of positions or certain parts of the country where that might not be as big a challenge in the application process? Bill are you there? Are you there? Hello

Hello Bill

Are you there? Did we lose you?

I think we might have lost him.

Okay well there was another question on the best place to apply for federal jobs just because most of them are located in Washington DC I would suggest that that would be the best place because that's the seat of the federal government so I thought I could just go ahead and answer that. I think the question we're posing with regards to the veterans preference would have been a pretty tough one for him to handle it one person mentioned there in the Norfolk, Virginia area where there are a lot of veterans that we are applying in and military dependents and that's just going to be a really tough thing to overcome because there, there is that preference so um and I'm just trying to see if, if there are other questions on here that we might be able to field while Bill is...

Sure it looks like his phone call got disconnected so we'll just wait that we can field some questions while he's trying to connect back in.

Okay I've been tracking them pretty well throughout the webinar and common questions that we're getting have to do with why, why am I putting salary information on here and social security number and security clearance and and things that they're asking for that I'm not used to putting on a private resume. The federal government has different qualifications that they look at with regards to hiring folks and so if they're asking for salary information you know one person said I have you know a salary from the private sector and how's that going to translate into the government, they just want to see if their position is in the ballpark of what you're making because the presumption would be if it's if it's a drastic salary
cuts from what you're making perhaps outside the federal government that
that might be a position that you might not want so because most people
don't want to take a pay cut so that's really what they're looking at,
they're looking is this salary comparable okay and it can also relate to
your experience as well okay. Bill are you back on by a chance?

>>Bill:

Oh, I apologize for that they were doing some digging on our street and I
was worried electricity would go out but actually this time just went out
so I'm off my land line.

>>Lisa:

Okay well I was just trying to answer a question for you and maybe you can
confirm whether I was right and we answered it. The question related to
the fact that candidates are being asked for salary and social security
information and security clearance and a lot of other things that they
would not put on a resume normally you know that seems kind of privacy
information such as especially salary and social security number and the
question is do we have to make sure that that's on there and why are we
being asked for that information?

>>Bill:

Um in some cases if you’re going for top secret classification they need a
social security number to check that. The best way to do that is to
contact your agency you know to be the HR person and tell them of your
concerns and they're supposed to work with you on that so that sometimes
they you know I’ll give you that information but can I give this you in a
separate document or in some way that I'm certain that it won't be widely
distributed.

>>Lisa:

Okay and the information is being collected regarding salary could you
speak to that as to why they're asking for that in advance of you know
when entering the process?

>>Bill:

Again, with you know it’s part it's kind of a complex question in this
sense it works in the office I working actually pay system. Um part of it
just kind of help to government understand what are fair wages for the job
they're hiring people for. That kind of helped build a statistical
database and second is just kind of you know we look at the job positions
here it's just to kind of help people realize that you know you're not
going to be paid as much as you would maybe in the private sector for some
jobs and it's just you know it's one of the things that government
collects to try to make sure that they do find a good fit for you okay.

>>Lisa:

Got it okay. Terrific.
Bill:

I mean you know it's kind of complaint sometimes folks a while the government asked you for a lot more information I want to give to you but you know that sort of the job to work are very sensitive and they just want to make sure you know that security classification or security investigation that's just on the stuff they add they want to verify.

Lisa:

Hmm okay could it make the process more challenging if one made a lot more money in the private sector than the position was paying in the government? You know could with the government kind of assume well the person is probably not going to be interested in this position if they've because it's such a cut I mean is that a concern?

Bill:

No not as much as just to make sure that they can verify what you state that you made vs what's your social security or tax income information says and all that.

Lisa:

Okay got it great okay and that relates to another question we talk about social security number. The question is one of citizenship to folks with green cards, can they apply for federal employment or do you need the US citizenship?

Bill:

I mean no actually my father is a British, was a British citizen when he applied and you know they're gonna do the naturalization process. No I mean again if you're gotta green card and of course they'll investigate and if you've got a green card you should be able to apply. I mean for specific jobs at the HR folks but no foreign key I've heard a lot of folks that have come from another country.

Lisa:

Great okay um another question here what if one has taken courses at a particular institution but not gotten a degree should we list just even just a few courses that we've taken at a college or university?

Bill:

Oh yeah I mean yeah go ahead and do that and you know always make sure the courses are kind of relevant to what you're looking for too yeah if you are declined for position in some cases one of the questions maybe you may have a mix of education and experience so you may have some experience in this position but you've also taken some courses you didn’t get a degree but you took some courses and that does count so you can you know you can
answer that one questions I have a mix of a creative education you know. I mean don't rule out anything yet go ahead and get your best on here.

>>Lisa:

Okay terrific and another question which related to the question I was posing when we disconnected I'm I've been applying for federal jobs for over four years, I would get correspondence to that say they've selected veteran candidates or internal applicants are there federal jobs in which these two classifications are not given preference?

>>Bill:

Um I mean right now with the Obama administration you know there is a preference to hire veterans for pretty much almost all positions and such I mean that's just you know policy right now um I don't really know any job out there that doesn't have you know it doesn’t have a veteran preference on it um you know again in with the entry levels or you can try to go for the mid-level stuff that maybe give you that kind of experience initiation but right now that's just you know the fact right there that veterans are gonna be a preference. The only job only the only field I know where it doesn't seem to matter as much is the IT because it's kind of specialized and if you have a veteran's preference that seemed to kind of washed out and you’re going for the IT because they looking for more of a background experience for the IT specific system but understanding over four years I know some folks will try for a few years to get in and I’ll just keep keep working in and it to persevere.

>>Lisa:

Great ok

>>Bill:

Maybe one route just to think about this, looking at contractors at my local location or in that related field to get it that way.

>>Lisa:

With that relates to another question we got where are the contractor positions typically advertised? Those are not located on USAJOBS is that correct?

>>Bill:

That is correct.

>>Lisa:

Thank you sir okay.
>>Bill:

And again, it's kind of just various sources again some of the newspaper to talk about, Washington Post, look at your professional associations for example with my fiancé with the archived and records managers there's a lot of contractors that are part of that association that you can talk to and look to the membership directory and in a lot of cases what you can do is talk to the agency maybe the HR folks so the Contracting Officer will tell you this and who they contract with. Some of these places I found my just going on to google and looking for contractors and in a certain field in the area I’m looking for like in DC and they have a lot of listings there but this is again where the networking really helped.

>>Lisa:

Great okay um let's see and we had a couple questions from folks with disabled veteran status and if let's see I'm going to just go back to the question pardon me for just a minute. Let's see, okay so one of our students as a disabled veteran and was saying that he's finding in the process that most of the positions have been filled internally and he's in there wondering why the positions posted sometimes if that seems to be the case that there's an internal candidate.

>>Bill:

You know again it's up to each agency and how they want to handle that and you know there is a preference for internal candidates on this but they don't open up a process in case it will have someone is qualified internally and I understand it can be frustrating believe me, you know when I was looking for some jobs I was perfect for my thought and an internal candidate took it, it happened to my fiancée so you know again in some agencies yeah they have to open up a job not only by law but only to internal candidates but also to external. So, they will have a kind of advantage there does the truth on that.

>>Lisa:

And we're going to close out things with a very easy question Bill, how long did it take you from start to finish from starting to apply for federal positions to getting hired?

>>Bill:

Okay well let’s see, when I started this process in 2008 and you know in all experiences are typical but this is kind of worked with me, I started looking in earnest and March of 2008 and started applying. I got a phone call for the interview around June of that year and actually got offered a position in October and a lot of my friends that was considered lightning speed so.

>>Lisa:

Oh okay alright so several months of lightning speed okay alright terrific.
>>Bill:

Just about six months to a year on the process it's getting better it is getting better but you know they're still still a process there you have to go through. A lot of reasons why is it so slow just have to make sure that the feds have to be fair to everyone they have to make sure that you know things are done in a methodical way okay and when you, in an accountable way so that's why there's some more time of it but again you know when I went to the Veterans Job Fair they had some agencies that were authorized to hire people on the spot they were hired there and on that day you could happen.

>>Lisa:

Great okay terrific well I'm going to hand it off to Nicole to close out the webinar thank you Bill for answering those questions and thank you to our participants for posing some excellent questions.

>>Nicolle:

Absolutely again Bill we want to thank you for this very engaging webinar and all of our audience and their engaging questions it's been great so for our audience out there please feel free we encourage all of our Walden students and alumni to connect with the Walden career services center using some of our resources from our website that are on this slide, you can schedule an appointment we have a blog where we highlight student success stories. Today's webinar including many other webinars we have recorded and their archives so you can view them this webinar within the next few weeks will be archived on our website and you'll be able to view it at any time at your convenience along with a PDF of the PowerPoint that you can go through and take your time. We also encourage you to join our Walden University Career Services LinkedIn group and we're nearing a hundred and sixty members just within a few months so it is growing rapidly. Bill is one of the first ones to join, we can also internet interact with people you know face-to-face but you also want to make sure as we mentioned throughout the webinar today using LinkedIn and online networking because really we do want to grow our professional presence and reputation online so we do highly suggest that you join our career services Walden University Career Services LinkedIn group and finally we do want to thank everyone for participating and especially our presenter today Bill for taking his time to share all of his insights in the federal job search and will close that, please stay posted with our Career Center website on the “under latest news” to view our upcoming webinars we will be offering a topic at least one once a month and feel free to view the archives and with that we'll close it up and thank everyone for joining us today.

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