

## SOLUTIONS

# The Merit System Application for Employment Process



**Sending the right  
information keeps  
the process moving**

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One of the most rewarding aspects of any supervisor's job is the ability to provide guidance and support to employees who express the desire to advance into other areas of state service. However, the "mechanics" of how to actually apply for a new position can often raise many questions.

For instance, employees may ask, how does the Merit System employment process work? What happens to an application once it is submitted to the Division of Personnel (DOP)? And what can applicants do to make the process run smoothly? If these are the questions you need to confidently answer for your employees, the information in this article can help.

### **The Merit System Employment Process**

Within Missouri state government, six executive departments and part of three others use the Missouri Merit System Application process (<http://oa.mo.gov/pers/meritagencies.html>). Each month, the DOP receives approximately 2,000 applications for employment with these agencies. With such a large volume, it is important that each application be complete, accurate and kept up-to-date to avoid delays in the process.

To better understand how the DOP and the employee (applicant) work together to complete the application process, let's look at what happens when the application is received in the DOP and what the applicant can do to help ensure their application is processed without delays.

### **What happens when the Division of Personnel Receives the Application for Employment?**

When the application is received at the DOP it is opened and prepared for data entry. Each application is date stamped to document that it was received on time (many applications must be received by a specific date to be eligible for consideration) and to determine the order in which it will be processed. Next, information about the

applicant and the specific job classification title (job class) the applicant is applying for is entered into the Missouri Application Information Resource System (MAIRS). This information is then used to track the application, generate reports and send correspondence, grade notices and examination admission cards (if needed) to the applicant.

Once initial data entry is completed, the application is sent to an analyst for review. The analyst determines if the applicant is eligible for the job class he or she is applying for by evaluating and comparing the applicant's stated qualifications against the established minimum qualifications for the job class. Depending on the specific job class being applied for, the analyst may also analyze and rate an applicant's education and experience using a rating device developed for the specific job class.

Included with the review of the application is the determination of the applicant's eligibility for veterans and/or parental preference points.

Once the review is completed, the applicant's eligibility for the job class and other related information is entered into MAIRS.

If the applicant failed to complete the entire application; submitted inconsistent data; or failed to submit transcripts, certificates, or other supporting documentation, the application may be returned to the applicant or held until the applicant can send the required information to the DOP. This can result in a delay in the process, the inability to add the applicant's name to the Merit Register – and missed employment opportunities.

Applications can be activated for a period of six months. This means that if the applicant wants to apply for another job class within six months of submitting their last application, the applicant can ask the DOP to add that job class to the application the DOP already has on file for them. This removes the need to complete an entirely new application.

However, if critical information about the applicant's education or work experience has changed, the applicant should submit a new application.

Applications are kept on file for a period of one to three years depending on additions to registers. Applications that are on file can be scanned when requested by a state agency so that the agency can review the information on them.

### **What can be done to help ensure the application is processed without delay?**

*All applications should be neat, legible, and complete.* Whenever there is a change in name, address, phone number, etc., the Division of Personnel should be notified.

*The correct position title should be listed.* For example, listing a general title such as bookkeeper instead of Accounting Analyst II can result in the application being reviewed for the wrong position or returned to the applicant. Current vacancies and a list of job categories with frequent hirings and their minimum qualifications can be found on the DOP website at <http://www.oa.mo.gov/pers/newjoas.htm>.

*When completing the employment portion of the application it is important to give complete and accurate information.* The most recent job should be listed first. For each separate employment period the experience should be reported in application format, giving the employer's name, the kind of business, the job title, the start and end dates by month and year, the average (not a range) hours worked per week, a detailed list of duties and the percentage of time spent on each duty. The total percentage of time spent on duties for any one-employment period or job title should not exceed a total of 100%. Any gaps in employment should be explained.

*Each education portion of the application should be completed.* Vocational schools and training programs as well as college and high schools should be included. All required transcripts, licenses, certificates, and supporting documentation must be attached.

*Provide the needed information to receive preference points.* To receive Veteran's Preference points, the specific forms, statements or certificates listed on the application must accompany the application to receive the appropriate points. For Parental Preference points, each question within that portion of the application must be completed.

*The application should be signed and dated.*

Applicants should also make a copy of their application and any information included with the application before submitting the application to the DOP for processing.

By carefully reading the application instructions and including all the necessary information needed to process and evaluate their application, applicants can be proactive in avoiding process delays.

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