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Successfully Translate Your Federal Experience to Non-Federal Careers



A Playbook for Federal Workers

A FedsForward x Pyramid Systems, Inc. Collaboration



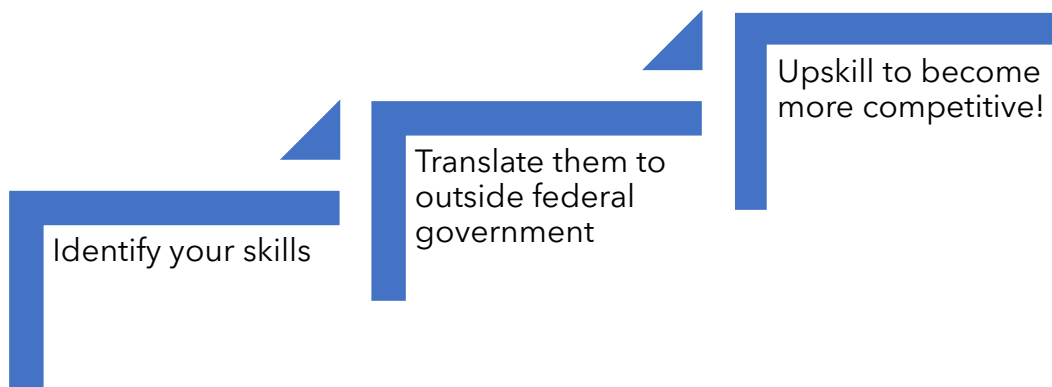
Dear current or former federal workers,

YOU are an asset. Your public service with the Federal government makes you uniquely marketable to employers outside of the U.S. government -- the challenge is to communicate your skills and expertise in a way that can showcase your talent to those unfamiliar with federal workers and to target your job search to new and exciting opportunities where you are a competitive candidate. The skills you have developed up to this point can absolutely bring you to your next role -- one that grows and develops your skills but also allows you to make an impact by extending your public service through organizations in other parts of the economy.

The goal of this playbook is to give you specific suggestions for great next job roles that leverage your government experience. You'll do this by asking tailored questions (or "prompts") to a free AI assistant like ChatGPT, Claude or any other one you prefer.

This playbook is designed for both newbies and AI pros. Never used an AI tool before? Don't worry! We'll guide you through every step of the process to help you discover:

1. What specific skills make you attractive to non-federal employers
2. How to translate those skills to a future employer in a compelling narrative
3. Which job titles/roles might be a great fit based on your experience and preferences
4. What upskilling opportunities could make you even more competitive



This playbook has been developed in collaboration with [Pyramid Systems, Inc.](#) Pyramid Systems is an employee-owned technology firm delivering innovative modernization, cloud, and analytics solutions for federal agencies for 30 years. Pyramid Systems is proud to give back to the civil servant community in collaboration with FedsForward.



FedsForward Playbook

Successfully Translate Your Federal Experience to Non-Federal Careers

Here's to the next step in your mission-driven career.

First things first—**your public service is incredibly valuable**, and the skills you've developed in government are in high demand. You just need to know how to showcase them in the right way!

This playbook is designed to help you discover how your federal experience translates to exciting opportunities outside the federal government. Whether you've never used AI tools before or you're already familiar with them, we'll walk you through this process step by step.

What you'll get from this playbook:

- Discover which of your specific skills are most attractive to non-federal employers
- Translate those skills to a future employer in a compelling narrative
- Identify job titles and roles that match your experience and preferences
- Learn where you might want to upskill to become even more competitive

Getting Started with AI Tools

What's an AI Chatbot?

Think of an AI chatbot like a smart assistant that can help analyze your skills and experience, then suggest career paths based on that information. Tools like ChatGPT, Claude, or other AI chatbots are free to use and incredibly helpful for this process.

What's a "Prompt"?

A prompt is simply the question or instruction you give to the AI chatbot. Think of it as starting a conversation—you're telling the AI what you want to know, and it responds with helpful information.



How to Use This Playbook:


1. Using [this worksheet](#), draft your responses to the prompts where you see [brackets]
2. **Open an AI tool** in your browser (like [ChatGPT](#), [Claude](#), or another AI chatbot)
3. **Copy and paste** each prompt, moving through each of the steps
4. **Click submit** and review the AI's personalized response
5. **Continue** with the next prompt to dig deeper!

💡 **PRO TIP:** Don't be afraid to go back and try different prompts or add more information if you think of something later. This is an exploration, not a test—there are no wrong answers!



Step 1: Translate Your Federal Experience into Non-Federal Sector Roles

In this first step, you will identify your transferable skills and discover roles in for-profit, non-profit, and/or academia that might be a great fit.

 **PRO TIP:** Don't hold back - The more details you share about your achievements, the better recommendations you'll get. This is your chance to shine - those bullet points from your resume are perfect, or just jot down 3-5 new ones that showcase your accomplishments.

For your "Special Skills," think about specific technical abilities you've developed like digital literacy, data analysis, policy development, or mediation skills. Used any cool tools or software? These details help the AI find roles where your specific expertise is valued.

When listing "Soft Skills," remember these are your secret weapon when changing sectors! These transferable abilities often matter more than technical skills. Check out a list of soft skills following the prompt template below:

 Communication Skills Negotiation Presentation skills Public speaking Storytelling Writing reports and proposals	 Critical Thinking Skills Adaptability Innovation Problem-solving Research abilities Thinking outside the box
 Leadership Skills Conflict resolution Decision-making Delegation Project management Talent management	 Teamwork Skills Collaboration Emotional intelligence Networking Team-building Working with diverse groups



- For "Personality Traits," think about how your friends or family would describe you. Are you a thoughtful introvert? An energetic problem-solver? Just a few authentic descriptors will help match you with environments where your personality will be appreciated.

Fill out the below prompts in your worksheet, then copy and paste into your AI chatbot:

PROMPT 1: Translate Your Federal Experience into Non-Federal Sector Roles

I have worked in the federal government and am seeking to transition into [CHOOSE ONE EMPLOYER TYPE: for-profit, non-profit, or academia] sector. Please help me translate my government experience into relevant private-sector job roles.

Here is my background:

1. Last Job Title & Agency: [Insert]
2. Current or Last Grade Level: [Insert]
3. Current or Last Core Job Duties: [Insert]
4. Key Achievements in that Role: [Insert your achievements - these can be bullets, sentences, or paragraphs - whatever best showcases your accomplishments]
5. Special Skills, Tools/Software Used, or Certifications: [Insert]
6. My Soft Skills: [Insert]
7. My Personality Traits: [Insert]
8. Particular Organizations or Roles of Interest (optional): [Insert]
9. Resume: [Upload, link to, or copy/paste if applicable]

Based on this, provide:

- A summary of my transferable skills in bullet form
- 3-5 private-sector job titles/roles that align with my experience, personality, and skills. Please provide a description of what each job title/role would do in an organization
- A short explanation of how my background connects to each job title/role
- Suggested specific companies and/or organizations that employ someone with this job title/role
- Recommended resume/LinkedIn keywords



Step 2: Refine Role Alignment Based on Your Specific Career Goals

Now let's narrow down those options based on what you really want in your next career move.

💡 PRO TIP: This is your chance to paint a picture of your ideal work environment! Think beyond just job titles to what would make you excited to go to work. Mission driven? Be clear that is a priority. Location matters? Mention it. Dream of working remotely? Say so. Passionate about housing policy or cybersecurity? Note it here.

If you have a long-term career goal or job, sharing it helps the AI suggest roles that put you on that path. Don't have a specific long-term vision? That's completely fine too - many successful careers evolve organically.

Don't hesitate to mention your deal-breakers. If certain job characteristics would make you miserable, it's smart to rule them out now. Being upfront about these boundaries saves time and helps find truly suitable matches.

Fill out the below prompts in your worksheet, then copy and paste into your AI chatbot:

PROMPT 2: Refine Role Alignment Based on Your Specific Career Goals

Based on the roles you suggested, I want to further refine my options.

1. I'm most interested in jobs that are: [e.g., hybrid/remote, people-facing, tech-driven, etc.]
2. My long-term career goal is: [e.g., leadership, product management, cybersecurity, etc.]
3. I'd prefer to avoid roles that involve: [Insert]
4. [Optional: I would like my next role to be [e.g., mission-driven, have impact, be public service oriented, include social responsibility, etc.]

Can you:

- Narrow down the job titles to those best aligned with these preferences
- Re-rank or group them by how well they match my goals
- Add 1-2 stretch roles I might grow into with some training



Step 3: Build a Resume That Highlights Your Strengths

Time to transform your experience into a resume that will catch the attention of recruiters and employers from your targeted industries and sectors.

💡 PRO TIP: Non-federal sector resumes are different ([click](#) to learn more)! While government resumes often focus on processes and responsibilities, non-federal employers care more about outcomes and impact, especially those that can be quantified. Did you save money? Improve efficiency? Solve a complex problem? Research a novel area and further collective understanding? These results-oriented achievements will make your resume shine.

Look back at those job titles the AI suggested earlier - did any spark your interest? Add those here! If you have other roles in mind that weren't mentioned, include those too.

Fill out the below prompts in your worksheet, then copy and paste into your AI chatbot:

PROMPT 3: Build A Resume That Highlights Your Strengths

Based on the roles identified for me, please help me build a general resume that positions my federal background competitively.

Here's what I've selected from what you suggested earlier:

1. Target Roles: [List selected job titles]
2. Target Industries (if applicable, e.g. health, finance, housing): [Insert]
3. Target Sectors (For-Profit, Non-Profit, Academia): [Insert]

Given my background summary (if not already shared): [Copy and paste from Prompt 1]

Please provide:

- A general resume outline or sample tailored to my selected roles
- Tips on how to rewrite my job duties using terminology appropriate for my target industries and sectors
- Suggestions on how to emphasize my unique strengths as a federal employee
- Sections or bullet points to add/remove/update
- Resume keywords or phrases relevant to the industry
- Optional: Suggested edits for my LinkedIn profile



Step 4: Highlight Your Unique Differentiators as a Former Federal Employee

Let's make sure your government experience stands out as the competitive advantage you know it should be.

💡 PRO TIP: Your federal experience gives you unique perspectives that make you different from so many other applicants. You've navigated complex processes, managed multiple stakeholders with conflicting interests, and operated within structured environments while still finding ways to innovate. These skills are incredibly valuable to companies dealing with regulations, government contracts, or complex organizational challenges.

Take a moment to review what the AI chatbot previously identified as your transferable strengths. Which 3-5 of these really resonate with you? Perhaps it's your "mission-driven approach," "experience navigating complex regulatory environments," or "strategic project management skills." Choose the ones that genuinely reflect your federal experience and that you'd be excited to bring to your next role.

Fill out the below prompts in your worksheet, then copy and paste into your AI chatbot:

PROMPT 4: Highlight Your Unique Differentiators as a Former Federal Employee

I want to make my resume stand out by clearly showing the value of my federal experience in a way that resonates with [employer type].

Here's what I'd like to emphasize: [Insert 3-5 bullets]

Please:

- Suggest resume language that highlights these differentiators
- Compare typical [employer type] equivalents of my duties and explain how to reframe them
- Give me 2-3 example bullet points that show [employer type] how I deliver value
- Optional: Identify traits that make me valuable to modern [employer type] teams



Step 5: Narrow Down Your Target Job Roles

Let's get even more specific about which roles best align with your preferences.

💡 PRO TIP: Finding the right role isn't just about matching skills—it's about matching values and work style too. A brilliant job on paper can be miserable if the culture doesn't fit you. Think about how you work best: Do you thrive with clear structure or prefer flexibility? Enjoy collaborative environments or independent work? Consider these personal preferences alongside your skills to find a truly satisfying next chapter.

The "stretch roles" mentioned in this prompt are positions that might be slightly beyond your current experience but reachable with minimal learning or support. These can be excellent targets for your career development plan.

Fill out the below prompts in your worksheet, then copy and paste into your AI chatbot:

PROMPT 5: Narrow Down Your Target Job Roles

I've identified several potential [INSERT: for-profit, non-profit, academia] -sector job roles based on my background. I'd like help narrowing them down to those that best align with my career goals, preferences, and likelihood of success.

Here are my current top role options: [Insert from Prompts 1 or 2]

I'm most interested in jobs that offer: [e.g., remote work, fast-paced culture, structured environment, etc.]

Personal/job fit criteria:

- I prefer companies/industries that are: [e.g., mission-driven, tech-focused, stable, etc.]
- I'd like to avoid roles involving: [e.g., heavy sales, 100% travel]

My short- and long-term career goals are: [Insert]


Based on this, please:

- Rank or group these job roles by overall fit
- Provide rationale for each ranking (e.g., skills match, ease of transition, market demand)
- Suggest one or two "stretch roles" I could grow into with minimal upskilling
- Identify roles that are better suited as short-term steppingstones



Step 6: Identify Upskilling Options for Competitive Advantage

Finally, let's explore how targeted skill development can open even more doors for you.

 **PRO TIP:** Strategic upskilling can dramatically expand your opportunities! The good news is that sometimes even small investments (like a certification that takes weeks rather than years) can significantly boost your appeal to employers.

Look for the "skill gaps" between where you are and roles you want, then target those specifically. And remember—upskilling doesn't always mean formal education. Volunteering, side projects, and even leading initiatives in your current role can build valuable skills that make you stand out.

Fill out the below prompts in your worksheet, then copy and paste into your AI chatbot:

PROMPT 6: Identify Upskilling Options for Competitive Advantage

Based on the roles you suggested, I'm interested in what areas for upskilling I could pursue to either (1) make me more competitive to be selected for those roles and/or (2) position me for "stretch" roles beyond the roles you've identified.

Please provide:

- Any relevant upskilling or certification suggestions
- For each upskilling suggestion, please include specific recommendations on how I could acquire those skills, through formal educational programs, apprenticeships, volunteer activities, or otherwise. Include how long it would take to acquire those skills
- Add 1-2 stretch roles I might grow into with this upskilling. Please identify what upskilling would make me a better positioned candidate for each role you identify.



One Last Thing Before You Go: You've Got This!

Remember, your federal experience is a tremendous asset. Private sector employers value the unique perspective, skills, and experience you bring to the table. This playbook is designed to help you communicate that value effectively.

Don't hesitate to revisit prompts, ask follow-up questions, or explore different career paths. The AI is there to help you throughout your journey!

💡 FINAL TIP: As you go through this process, keep a document open to save promising ideas, job titles, and insights. This creates a personalized roadmap for your transition that you can refer back to and refine as you continue exploring options.