

Quick Check for Writing Job Descriptions

(See Pages 12–18 of **A Head Start Guide to Job Analysis & Job Descriptions** for Details)

- DO NOT include anything in the description that might be considered discriminatory, including references to age, marital status, race, religion, gender, or national origin.
- Write job descriptions in brief, clear sentences, using a concise, direct, and consistent style.
- Begin each sentence with an action verb and keep the sentences in the present tense.
- Be specific and realistic about the job's minimally acceptable requirements.
- Concentrate on the essential functions of the job (i.e., those that require 5-10% of the person's time), *unless organizational standards dictate otherwise*.
- Follow the job description outline used to guide the analysis, which may include such items as:
 - Date**
 - Position Title**
 - Job Location**
 - Job Classification**, if appropriate (see page 13)
 - Position Summary** (see page 13)
 - Scope or Source of Authority** (see page 13)
 - Key Duties and Responsibilities** (see pages 13-14)
 - Equipment Used to Perform Job**
 - Qualifications, or Education and Experience** (see pages 14-15)
- Avoid arbitrary requirements that may be hard to validate.
- Avoid technical language or organization-specific terms.
- Keep the sentence structure simple and eliminate unnecessary words, including adjectives and articles.
- Do not use pronouns such as he or she; refer to the job title rather than to the person.
- Limit the job description to one or two pages if possible.
- Avoid vague or imprecise language.

- Use generic terms and names.
- Avoid words that have multiple or ambiguous meanings.
- Qualify and quantify.
- Describe the job as it currently exists, not as it might be at some point in the future.
- Talk about the job, not about the person. Talk about desired results or outcomes, not the methods for achieving them.
- Try to reflect the dynamic relationships with other staff and other departments.
- Once the job description has been written, distribute copies to employee and others (as appropriate) and allow sufficient time for review, comments, and suggestions.
- Following the review and comment period, finalize the written job description.
- Have the employee and Director sign and date the description and place it in the employee's personnel file and such other locations as prescribed in your program's Policies and Procedures.

