
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Q: How do I get information about working for FSIS as a Food Inspector?

A: You can find information on our website at www.foodsafetyjobs.gov or by calling our office to request information. (1-800-370-3747, extension 2820)

Q: How do you apply online for entry-level Food Inspector positions?

A: Applicants may apply online by answering questions about their background and qualifications, and providing a resume or application form. Then, as vacancies occur, applicants are referred and considered for locations where they have indicated an interest.

Q: Once I have applied, how long will it take before I get a response?

A: A confirmation "thank you" message is displayed after you submit your online occupational questionnaire. After you have submitted your complete application, you can expect to receive a Notice of Results in the mail in 3-6 weeks. This Notice of Results will provide information on the results of our evaluation and the status of your application.

Q: How long will it take before I'm contacted about a specific vacancy?

A: A definite time limit for when an applicant will start to work cannot be given. As vacancies occur in the area(s) where you have indicated an interest, we will consider you if your score is high enough to be among the top group of applicants. Selections are made on a variety of job-related factors. We cannot predict when or if you will be selected for a position with the Food Safety and Inspection Service.

Q: Where am I most likely to be hired as a Food Inspector?

A: We hire individuals to fill Food Inspector positions nationwide throughout the year. See the Recruitment Bonus list for the shortage areas on our register at www.foodsafetyjobs.gov. While we tend to have a more difficult time filling positions in areas where there is a Recruitment Bonus, listing a geographic area where we are offering a Recruitment Bonus does not necessarily increase your chances of being selected. We encourage individuals to select locations where they truly want to work. When vacancies become available in the locations which you have indicated interest, we may contact you.

Q: Why is FSIS using a new online occupational questionnaire as the assessment tool?

A: The new assessment tool is fast and flexible. It allows us to better meet Agency staffing needs. Applicants have found it much easier to apply under this new application system.

Q: Is the new online assessment tool the same as the old exam?

A: No, the new assessment was recently developed by a team of industrial psychologists with the Office of Personnel Management. The assessment consists of questions addressing important competencies for the Food Inspector occupation.

Q: Is the new assessment tool accurate and valid?

A: Yes. This new assessment tool was developed by Office of Personnel Management (OPM) experts in test applicant design. To develop this tool, they conducted a job analysis of the Food Inspector

occupation by gathering data regarding food inspection tasks, determining important competencies needed to perform food inspection work, and determining specific behaviors which are indicative of successful job performance. From this comprehensive data, OPM prepared a series of questions which address important job competencies for the food inspection occupation.

Q: What will you base my score on?

A: Responses to each question in the assessment are weighted and based on the competencies needed to perform food inspection work. The more closely answers match the typical answers of a highly successful Food Inspector, the higher the score.

Q: Will scores range from 70 to 100?

A: Yes, passing scores on the assessment range from 70 to 100, not including points added in for veteran's preference. An applicant must receive a passing score on the assessment (also referred to as the online occupational questionnaire) to be considered for Food Inspector positions.

Q: May I retake the assessment (online questionnaire) to try for a higher score?

A: Individuals must wait one year before retaking the assessment tool. Because the occupational questions relate so closely to personal experience and personal preferences, answers are not likely to vary a great deal over a period of time less than one year. Applicants who submit new answers to the occupational questions, after the one year waiting period has passed, may be required to provide documentation and justification regarding discrepancies between their original answers and their updated answers. If the updated answers result in a lower rating, the person retaking the assessment will receive a lower rating. If the updated answers result in a failing score, the person retaking the assessment will be rated ineligible.

Q: What can I do if I don't have access to a computer?

A: Most public libraries, college placement offices, employment offices, and community centers have computers and Internet access for patrons at no charge. We strongly encourage individuals to find computer access through one of these public resources, or through a friend or family member. By applying online, you can help ensure that the application is processed quickly. This will help you avoid missing an important job opportunity.

Q: What if I have reviewed this notice and these FAQ's, and I am still having difficulty applying online?

A: You may wish to contact someone in the Examining Systems Section at 1-800-370-3747. They are available to answer questions and discuss alternatives to applying online.