

# **We Want You! (To Work for a Federal Agency)**

What You Need to Know about  
Applying for a Position in a  
Federal Library or Archive

Tuesday, November 18, 2014  
ARL Diversity and Leadership Programs

# Presenters

## Moderator



Kathel Dunn, National Library of  
Medicine (NLM)

## Presenters



Lindsay Franz, History  
of Medicine Division,  
NLM



Carlos Martinez, III,  
Library of Congress



Ashley D. Stevens,  
National Records and  
Archives Administration

# Objectives

1. Explore future employment possibilities in federal libraries: where they are; emerging roles and responsibilities; advantages and challenges to working for a federal agency
2. Discuss how to keep abreast of opportunities in federal libraries
3. Review application process and evaluation criteria
4. Describe interview processes

# Presenter



Kathel Dunn, National Library of  
Medicine (NLM)

# We Want You!

## Applying for a Position in a Federal Library or Archive

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Kathel Dunn  
Library Operations  
National Library of Medicine  
National Institutes of Health  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



# NLM just hired recent graduates to work in:

- Acquisitions
- E-resource management
- Reference
- Preservation
- Outreach
- Digital preservation
- Web development
- Social media analysis and deployment
- Systems
- Data analysis
- Customer service
- User experience (web)
- Education and training



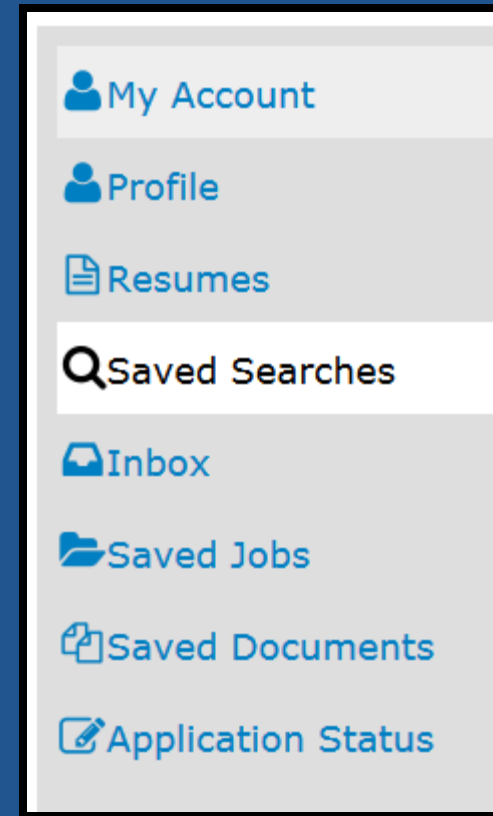
# Finding and Applying for a Federal job

- *Where to find*: Federal jobs
  - USAJobs.gov
  - Careers in Federal Libraries Google Group
- *How to apply*: know the process
  - Understanding the job ad
  - Answering questions for eligibility
  - Eligible: Best qualified, well qualified, qualified
  - Federal resume
  - Cover letter (not so much)
- *How to prepare* for interviews



# USAJobs.gov

- Create an account
- Upload documents: resume, transcripts
- Create alerts – “saved searches”





# Careers in Federal Libraries Google Group

<https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/careers-in-federal-libraries>

The Careers in Federal Libraries group promotes Federal jobs for information professionals. Questions? [CIFL2008@gmail.com](mailto:CIFL2008@gmail.com)

-  Resume Reviewers as of October 2013  
By CIFL since2008 - 1 post - 288 views 
-  Opportunities as of May 2011 (internships, practicums, fellowships, awards, scholarships, and more)  
By CIFL since2008 - 1 post - 485 views 
-  webinar Federal jobs Nov 18th  
By CIFL since2008 - 1 post - 9 views
-  Alturas CA -- GIS specialist -- Forest Service  
By CIFL since2008 - 1 post - 4 views
-  Quantico VA -- data analyst -- Marine Corps  
By CIFL since2008 - 1 post - 4 views
-  Quantico VA -- research analyst -- Marine Corps  
By CIFL since2008 - 1 post - 5 views
-  Washington DC -- p/t student interns GG 5/9 -- Defense Intelligence Agency  
By CIFL since2008 - 1 post - 5 views
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# Understanding the job ad



## Smithsonian Institution

**Job Title:** Supervisory Collections Specialist

**Agency:** Smithsonian Institution

**Job Announcement Number:** 15R-YH-300023-DEU-NMAAHC

<b>SALARY RANGE:</b>	\$75,621.00 to \$98,305.00 / Per Year
<b>OPEN PERIOD:</b>	Thursday, November 13, 2014 to Wednesday, November 19, 2014
<b>SERIES &amp; GRADE:</b>	GS-1001-12
<b>POSITION INFORMATION:</b>	Full-Time, Permanent - Federal
<b>PROMOTION POTENTIAL:</b>	12
<b>DUTY LOCATIONS:</b>	FEW vacancies - Washington DC, DC <a href="#">View Map</a>
<b>WHO MAY APPLY:</b>	This position is open to all U.S. Citizens or U.S. Nationals. Note: Federal employees with permanent status or individuals eligible for special appointing authorities may also apply to Job Announcement # 15R-YH-300023-MPA-NMAAHC.
<b>SECURITY CLEARANCE:</b>	Public Trust - Background Investigation
<b>SUPERVISORY STATUS:</b>	Yes

### **JOB SUMMARY:**

[About the Agency](#)

The Smithsonian Institution values and seeks a diverse workforce. Join us in "Inspiring Generations through Knowledge and Discovery."

**ATTENTION:** Due to the large number of qualified applicants for positions of this type, this job announcement will close at 11:59 pm Eastern Time on either: (A) The closing date listed above or (B) The date that 100 applications are received; whichever occurs first. If the announcement closes on the date that 100 applications are received, all applications submitted by 11:59pm that day will be given consideration, including those in excess of 100.

# DE or MP?

- DE = Delegated Examining Authority—the public can apply
- MP = Merit Promotion—Federal employees only can apply



**Job Title:** Technical Information Specialist (Web Project Coordinator), GS-1412-12/13  
**Department:** Department Of Health And Human Services  
**Agency:** Food and Drug Administration  
**Job Announcement Number:** FDA-CFSAN-15-DE-1244229DT

This vacancy is also being announced concurrently with vacancy announcement **FDA-CFSAN-15-MP-1244230** under merit promotion procedures. Please review that announcement to see if you are eligible for consideration under merit promotion procedures. **NOTE:** Applicants must apply separately for each announcement in order to be considered.



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# Answering questions for eligibility

\* 3. Which of the following best describes your knowledge of collections management functions, standards, and practices?

1. I have expert knowledge of 4 collections management functions, standards, and practices (including collections preservation, storage, collections documentation, and registration) through on-the-job training and/or college-level coursework.
2. I have expert knowledge of 3 collections management functions, standards and practices (including collections preservation, storage, collections documentation, and registration) through on-the-job training and/or college-level coursework.
3. I have expert knowledge of 2 collections management functions, standards and practices (including collections preservation, storage, collections documentation, and registration) through on-the-job training and/or college-level coursework.
4. I do not have expert level knowledge of collections management.

\* 4. Which of the following best describes your experience in using FileMaker Pro?

1. I have used FileMaker Pro to query and record collections management data.
2. I have used FileMaker Pro to query collections management data but not record it.
3. I have not used FileMaker Pro to query and record collections management data.



# Eligible: Human Resources staff decide

## HOW YOU WILL BE EVALUATED:

Once the application process is complete, a review of resume and supporting documentation will be made and compared against your responses to the assessment questionnaire to determine if you are qualified for this job. If, after reviewing your resume and or supporting documentation, a determination is made that you have inflated your qualifications and or experience, you may lose consideration for this position. Please follow all instructions carefully. Errors or omissions may affect your eligibility. Qualified candidates will be assigned to a quality category. Best Qualified, Well Qualified or Qualified. The category assignment is a measure of the degree in which your background matches the competencies required for this position. Your qualifications will be evaluated on the following competencies (knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics):

1. Knowledge of the principles and techniques of education and instructional methods to implement fish and wildlife related environmental education programs.
2. Skill in using computer software and operating systems to prepare reports, education materials and utilize social media, to document and publicize work in the urban environment.
3. Ability to foster and maintain collaborative relationships.
4. Skill in managing and coordinating people in the accomplishment of work efforts.
5. Communicate orally and in writing.

**NOTE:** You should be aware that your ratings are subject to evaluation and verifications. The numeric rating you receive is based on your responses to the questionnaire. Do not overstate or understate your level of experience and capability. If a determination is made that you rated yourself higher than is supported by your application, your application is incomplete, you will be assigned a rating commensurate to your described qualifications. If you are considered ineligible.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

**Job Title:** Education Specialist

**Department:** Department Of The Interior

**Agency:** Interior, US Fish and Wildlife Service

**Job Announcement Number:** R2-15-1236651-JL-DEU



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# Federal resume

- 5 pages or more is not untypical
- Tips
  - Move away from list of job duties—you're marketing yourself
  - Focus on accomplishments
  - Use words from job ads in your resume
- *Federal Resume Guidebook: Strategies for Writing a Winning Federal Resume*; Kathryn Troutman, author



# Reflect:

Reflect on your current and previous positions and ask yourself the following questions:

- What has been most challenging about your job?
- What did you do most in your job?
- What problems did you solve?
- What do you really do in this job?
- Who is your biggest customer, or who do you talk to the most?
- Who is your most popular and/or most problematic customer?
- Did you make improvements or do something that got better results than your employer had been getting before?
- Did you ever set up a new system that saved time or money for the office?
- If you were asked what made you really great at your job, what would you say?
- What might your boss or coworkers have said made you really great?



# Re-frame

From your current resume and from the answers to the questions, re-frame your answers to include at least one of the key characteristics below:

- Quantify, using numbers or percentage
- Present work highlights using specifics
- Use others' comments to demonstrate how good you are
- Contextualize your work within your place of work
- Convey the significance of your work; what you did meant something



# Re-write

Creation	To demonstrate initiative, resourcefulness, organizational skills, and creativity
First or only	Define the level or scope of your experience and skills
Outcomes	Demonstrate action and results
Employment	Movement, action, and decision-making abilities
Leadership	Management, supervision
Primacy	How important are you to the project? Subject-matter expert?
Persuasion	Can be used in describing teamwork (coach, inspire, unite)
Success	Results and positive thinking
Authorship	Include writing and editing documents
Newness	Happening for the first time? Innovative?
Degree	Quantify if possible; otherwise use quantifiable-like words: significantly, fully
Quality	High quality, excellent, outstanding
Competencies	Capabilities, competencies, knowledge, skills, abilities

# Example

- **BEFORE:**

Answered reference questions at busy reference desk; assisted with re-design of library web site

- **AFTER:**

Answered an average of 50 reference questions each week from students, staff, and faculty; received positive feedback for answers leading to successfully written papers, and grant applications.

Participated as a team member in an interdisciplinary team of five staff to re-design the library web site leading to a 25% increase in use of the site for the period January 2013–December 2013, compared to previous year.



# Resume Builder or PDF? Be prepared for both



Smithsonian Institution

**Job Title:** Museum Specialist

**Agency:** Smithsonian Institution

**Job Announcement Number:** 15R-MR-299828-DEU-NMAH



**WE DO NOT ACCEPT UPLOADED RESUMES OR CVs; YOU MUST SUBMIT YOUR RESUME VIA THE RESUME-BUILDER WITHIN THE USA JOBS PORTAL IN ORDER TO BE CONSIDERED. PLEASE DO NOT EMAIL YOUR CREDENTIALS TO THE HR SPECIALIST.**



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- ***How to prepare for interviews***



# Interviews... Get Prepared

- Why are you interested in the position?
- If we were to ask your supervisor what you are particularly good at, what would he or she say?
- If we were to ask your supervisor what you need to improve on, what would he or she say?
- Have you handled a difficult situation with a colleague?
- What's an example of a time you've received constructive criticism and how did you handle it?





# Interviews: how much do you care?

- ***Why are you interested in the position?***
- Why are we asking?
  - Do you want to work here or do you just want a job?
  - Do you know how to research and be prepared in advance?
  - What kind of contributor will you be?



# Interviews: what can you tell us about you?

- ***If we were to ask your supervisor what you are particularly good at, what would he or she say?***
- ***If we were to ask your supervisor what you need to improve on, what would he or she say?***
- Why are we asking?
  - What are your strengths? Weaknesses?
  - What are you telling us about yourself?



# Interviews: how do you improve?

- Have you handled a difficult situation with a colleague?
- What's an example of a time you've received constructive criticism and how did you handle it?
- Why are we asking?
  - How do you improve?
  - How do you get better?
  - How do you learn?
  - If we have to tell you you're making a mistake, how would you handle it?



# Ask for help

Kathel Dunn  
Associate Fellowship Coordinator  
[Kathel.dunn@nih.gov](mailto:Kathel.dunn@nih.gov)



# Presenter



Ashley D. Stevens, National  
Records and Archives  
Administration



## **In Pursuit of the National Archives: From Student to National Archives Employee**

Ashley D. Stevens, Archives Technician  
National Archives at Philadelphia  
14700 Townsend Road  
Philadelphia, PA 19154  
Phone: (215) 305-2049  
Email: [Ashley.Stevens@nara.gov](mailto:Ashley.Stevens@nara.gov)

# ABOUT ME

- Originally from Brunswick, GA
- Realized my archival dreams at 23 years old
- Hold a M.A. in Public History and MLIS from the University of South Carolina.
- Pursuit of Professional Career – lived in Columbia, S.C., Seattle, W.A. (briefly), Death Valley, C.A., and now Philadelphia, P.A.



# CHOOSE WISELY

- Objective: Get a job at the National Archives
- Internship Requirement in Graduate School
  - Used opportunity to get familiar with type of work at NARA.
  - Interned for 2 ½ months at the National Archives @ Seattle – processing, some reference work and professional development





# BE WILLING TO EXPLORE INDIRECT ROUTES

- Job search started in final year of graduate school (2010-2011).
- Results: Graduated in May 2011 without a job.
- Job offer from unlikely source – Great Basin Institute with contracted work to National Park Service
  - Applied in March 2011, Notified I was not selected in May 2011. Call back in late-July 2011 for position



## INDIRECT ROUTES, PART 2

- Phone interview with GBI HR manager and DEVA Museum Curator
- Why do you want to work with us in the NPS?
- Started August 2011 and moved to California
- Used opportunity to seek resume help from actual government employees

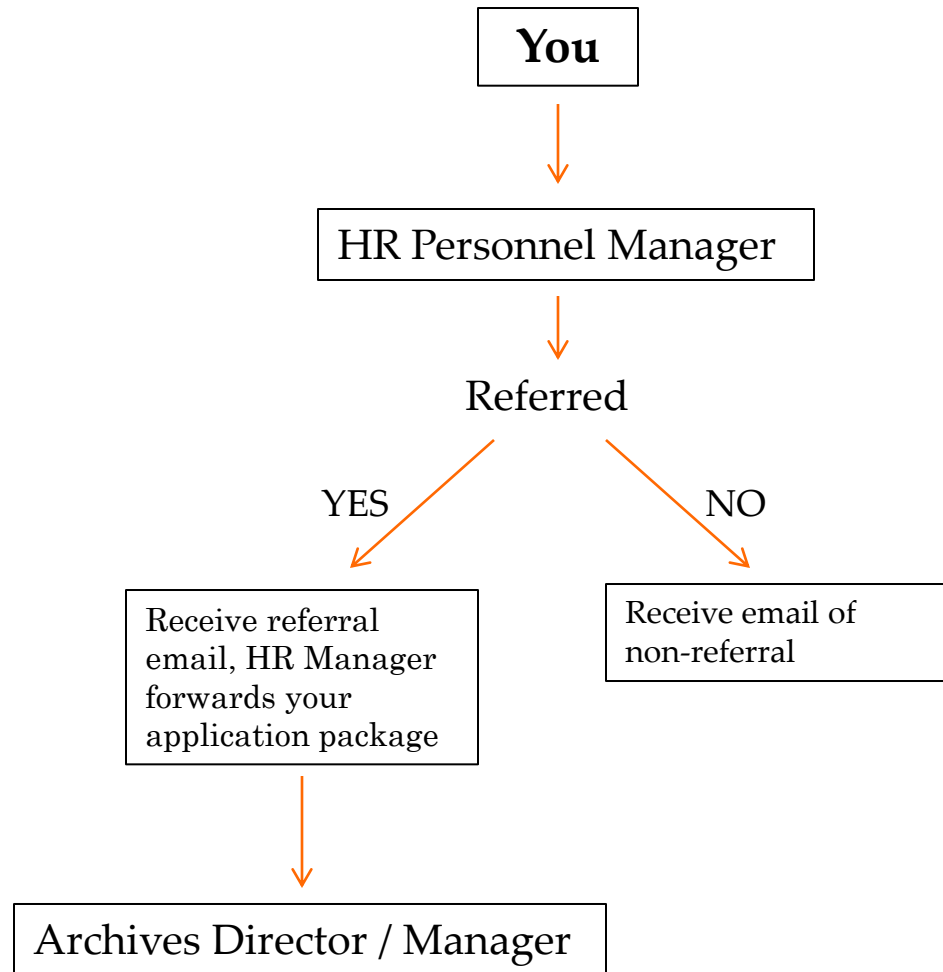


## BE REALISTIC

- NPS job had a definitive end date—July 2012
- Job search began 4 months in to my one year contract position
- Applied for government jobs with my new, improved resume
- Received a call in August 2012 for position in National Archives @ Philadelphia
  - Director specifically cited my Seattle and NPS experience as a big bonus during the interview



# GOVERNMENT HIRING PROCESS



# GOVERNMENT RESUME TIPS

- Federal resumes can be long
- Cover letters are unnecessary
- Put any experience that maybe be useful
- Create a Word doc *instead of* USAJobs.gov Resume builder
- Use “buzzwords” or key phrases from job announcement
- Veterans preference is an obstacle for non-vets but not insurmountable



# THE INTERVIEW

- Likely to occur after notification of referral to archives manager
- Standard interview — speak to experience and skills. Know 'why' you want to work there.
- Phone interviews are commonplace



# Presenter



Lindsay Franz, History of Medicine  
Division, NLM

# Finding a Job is Easy

...getting it is the hard part!

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Lindsay Franz  
Technical Information Specialist  
NLM Division  
National Library of Medicine  
National Institutes of Health  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services





# Experience Where You Least Expect It

- Graduated with MLIS in 2013, University of Maryland
- Began working as Records Management Consultant for a bank
  - May 2013–May 2014: revamped and established a tracking system for bank's files
  - January 2014: interim supervisor of bank's digitization department



# Federal Hiring Process: 4 Month Process from Start to Finish

- May 2014—Notified of position, NIH Recent Graduates (Librarian)—NLM Pathways, Applied June 2014
- July 2014: Alerted by USAJOBS—Not Referred (NR) status → gave up hope
- August 2014: 2 Interviews—1<sup>st</sup> via Skype 2<sup>nd</sup> in person
- August 2014: Job offered
- September 2014 started job



# Technical Information Specialist, History of Medicine Division

- Assist Systems Librarian
- Work with entire division on a variety of projects
- Technical job which allows me to work with historical materials
- On going education as responsibilities continue to grow



# Skills

- **Programming**—MLIS Program provided an excellent base to build upon
- Understanding a variety of **Integrated Library Systems (ILS)**—Variety in internships introduced me to numerous systems
- **Microsoft Access**—Rebuilding Historical Audio Visual (HAV) Department Access Database

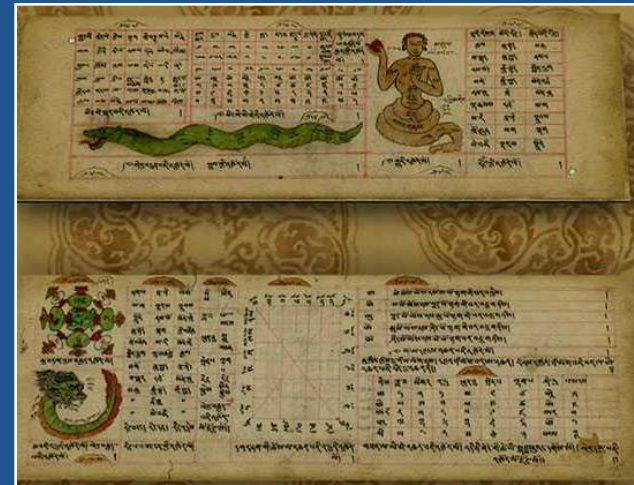


# The National Library of Medicine

- Federal Libraries promote continuing education
- First month spent attending courses to learn about NLM and their departments
- Technology like no where else!
- Collection like no one else!



*Circulating Now* highlights NLM's historical collection.



*Mongolian Book of Astrology* from NLM's Turning the Pages Collection allows individuals 'touch and turn' these pages in a realistic way.



# My Advice to You

- Get an Internship and then get another one!
- Connections from ARL CEP Fellowship at NLM led to my Internship within their Rare Books & Early Manuscripts Department
- Proven talent gets hired



Harper's  
Weekly  
Cartoon  
1885.



Dr. Frances Kelsey  
receives award from  
President John F.  
Kennedy



# Presenter



Carlos Martinez, III, Library of  
Congress

# INTERNSHIPS, FEDERAL CONTRACTING, AND GETTING A FEDERAL JOB

My Experiential Journey in Four Federal  
Agencies



# Paid Internship Programs

- Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) National Internship Program
  - <http://www.hacu.net/hnip>
- The Washington Center, Federal Diversity Initiative Program
  - <http://www.twc.edu/internships/additional-programs/federal-diversity-internship-initiative>
- Both programs provide opportunities for paid federal internships both in and outside of DC

# My HACU Internship Experiences

- National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Center for Legislative Archives.
  - ▣ Summer 2012, 10-week session
    - Repurposed legacy data
    - Shadowed reference archivists
    - Independently provided reference services
- Library of Congress, Office of Strategic Initiatives, Repository Development Center
  - ▣ Fall 2012, 15-week Session
    - Worked with multiple units in the Library
    - Produced report for eSerials for eDeposit project
    - Documenting procedures and recommendations

# Federal Employment and Contracting

- ▣ Temporary Appointments as Federal Employee
  - ▣ Not-to-Exceed (NTE)<sup>1</sup>
    - ▣ Competitive Appointments
    - ▣ Noncompetitive Appointments
- ▣ Finding Federal Contracting Positions
  - ▣ LAC Group
  - ▣ TRAK Records and Library
  - ▣ ASRC Federal
  - ▣ Zimmerman Associates, Inc. (ZAI)
- ▣ Other resources
  - ▣ Indeed.com
  - ▣ I Need A Library Job (INALJ.com)

1. "Temporary And Term Employment" 5 C.F.R. § 316.302

# Creating USAJobs Saved Searches

- Keyword (e.g. “Library”), Agency, Location, etc.
  - ▣ Yields many results, not the most effective
- Occupational Series or Categories
  - ▣ Yields specific results by Series Number
    - 1400—Library and Archives Group
      - 1410—Librarian Series
      - 1411—Library Technician Series
      - 1412—Technical Information Series
      - 1420—Archivist Series
      - 1499—Library and Archives Student Trainee Series
    - 2210—Information Technology Management
    - 0301—Miscellaneous Administration and Program
- You can elect to have search results sent to you daily, weekly, or monthly.

# Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs) and the Structured Interview

- Most federal applications require a questionnaire, in which you will demonstrate your knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- Some are multiple choice, some require essays.
  - (e.g. The Library of Congress requires all applicants to demonstrate their KSAs by selecting an answer from 3 or 4 choices. The applicant then must provide a short description of how that supports the choice by discussing his/her experience education, or training.
- The Structured Interview is a series of questions asked of every applicant, usually consisting of a panel of three people.
  - The questions in the KSAs will likely be what is asked during the structured interview. It will benefit you to practice your responses based on those questions.

# Questions?

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- If you have any questions about anything related to looking for a job in a federal library or archive, please feel free to contact me via email.
  - [66martic@cardinalmail.cua.edu](mailto:66martic@cardinalmail.cua.edu)
- Thank you!

# Thanks!

Questions?

Contact us:

[mpuente@arl.org](mailto:mpuente@arl.org)