

Tips to Consider When Applying for FDA Human Foods CSO Positions

Part of the USA Jobs application process is a self-assessment of your Knowledge, Skills, and Ability (KSA). It is important to know that this is designed for the system to determine if the applicant should be forwarded for further evaluation. The answers to the KSAs will give you a ranking score. [The higher you rate yourself on the self-assessment, the better the chances are of having your application referred to the hiring team for further evaluation and possibly an interview.](#) This is not a time for modesty, the computer won't care if you are modest or not, you can show your modesty during the interview.

As you are completing your resume, and answering the KSA, you might want to consider the following [*examples/illustrations of activities](#) that are very applicable to helping to evaluate your KSAs that are essential to the CSO job and might lead to higher ratings during your self-assessment:

If you worked in a laboratory or a company and performed laboratory type activities:

Administered microbiological tests on fish and fish products.

- Performed bacteriological assays on seafood samples to determine the presence or absence of microorganisms.

Conducted weekly internal audits to evaluate facility sanitation protocol adherence.

- Following established Company Food Safety Plan, performed visual assessment to ensure the equipment is well-maintained, clean, and calibrated for use as per established Company plan.

Observed and documented refrigerated storage conditions.

- Checked refrigerator temperatures to ensure products are stored in a manner to protect from pathogenic microbial growth that can lead to foodborne illness.

Tested products for variety of pathogens including Salmonella, Listeria, and E. coli.

- Experienced with detection and isolation of Salmonella and Listeria spp. using selective agar, and VIDAS.
- Independently performed the analyses, detection, isolation, verification according to ISO 17025 quality system.

If you worked in food production facility:

Conducted label quality assurance.

- Audited finished product labels in between chocolate chip cookies and chocolate chip cookies with walnuts to ensure the correct label is adhered to identify potential allergens.
- Comparing ingredient labels to finished product labels to ensure all allergens listed from the ingredient label are on the finished product label.

Monitored manifest log of all ingredients received for warehouse storage.

- Received goods from transporter; verified receivables and documented shipment lot number, delivery date, required storage conditions, etc.
- Moved goods to storage facility based on chronological order of receipt.

If you worked at any restaurant or fast-food

Protection against foodborne illnesses.

- Followed cooking guidelines to ensure that the product is being protected from inadequate time and temperature which may result in pathogen growth.
- Refrigerated raw ingredients and monitored refrigerator temperatures to ensure prevention of pathogen growth.
- Ensure the prevention of allergen cross-contamination.

SKILLS *(examples only)*

- Computer: Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Teams, Zoom, and Adobe Acrobat
- Languages: Fluent Cantonese, Proficient Spanish
- Writing: Proficient writing in-depth reports including scientific articles, patient care reports, and research papers
- Communication: expertise in negotiation, conflict resolution, public speaking, presentation, active listening, teamwork, and more.

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CERTIFICATIONS *(examples only)*

- Preventive Controls Qualified Individual (PCQI)
- HACCP Certified – Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points
- California Food Handlers Card

Additional Resources to Assist You:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) webinar on navigating the federal application process (08/06/2024).

- [Click here to watch the video recording](#) of the virtual event.
- [Click here for a PDF copy](#) of the slide deck presentation

Helpful Links to FDA plus YouTube Video Spotlights

- [Jobs and Training at FDA](#)
- [Interested in a Career at FDA?](#)
- [Résumé Writing](#)
- [How to Apply for Federal Jobs](#)

Links to information about the FDA Consumer Safety Officer Position

- The Pitch: <https://youtu.be/OZH--mjfJFE> (1 min. 15 sec.)
- Short Version: <https://youtu.be/J2RDNgQz11k> (1 min. 38 sec.)
- Long Version: <https://youtu.be/l0hXz14REUQ> (3 min. 9 sec.)