



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE



DISTRICT ASSISTANT (TEMPORARY) RFS 4/5

CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK

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1 Introduction – Working for the NSW RFS

The NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) is the world's largest volunteer fire service. Our 74,000 members provide fire and emergency services to approximately 95 percent of NSW.

NSW RFS members attend a range of incidents and activities including:

- Bush and grass fires
- House and structure fires
- Storm damage
- Search and rescue
- Motor vehicle accidents
- Community Education
- Bush Fire Mitigation
- Remote Area Operations
- Aviation and Marine Operations
- Communications and Catering

The responsibilities of the NSW RFS are set out under the *Rural Fires Act 1997*.

Our vision and mission is to provide a world standard of excellence in the provision of a community-based fire and emergency service. To protect the community and our environment we will minimise the impact of fire and other emergencies by providing the highest standards of training, community education, prevention and operational capability.

As a volunteer based emergency service, we value:

- Mutual respect
- Adaptability and resourcefulness
- One team, many players, one purpose
- Integrity and trust
- Support, friendship, camaraderie
- Community and environment
- Knowledge and learning.

Our volunteers are supported by around 800 salaried staff that manage the day to day operations and administration of the Service, develop and implement programs, strategies and initiatives to improve community safety and assist our volunteers in the valuable work they undertake.

2 Merit – The basis of recruitment

NSW RFS staff are part of the NSW Public Service. As a Public Service employer, the NSW RFS recruits employees based on merit.

This means that when you apply for a position with the Service, you'll be assessed against the requirements of the role, such as skills, behaviours and any technical abilities required for you to do the role. The assessment panel will also compare you against the skills, experience and abilities of other people applying for the role.

To make this assessment, the panel will use a variety of methods to select the best person for the role. This includes asking you to write an application, do a capability based assessment, sit for an interview, and undertake a referee check.

The NSW Public Service capability framework provides a common foundation for creating and recruiting to roles in the Public Service. You can find out more about the capability framework at www.psc.nsw.gov.au/Sector-Support/Capability-Framework. The capabilities for the District Assistant (temporary) role will be included in the advertisement on the www.jobs.nsw.gov.au website.

3 Using this Information Pack

The NSW RFS is seeking establish a talent pool for the purpose of filling short-term temporary District Assistant (RFS 4/5) vacancies across the State of NSW as required over the next 18 months. This Information Pack explains the application and selection processes for placement in a NSW RFS talent pool for a period of 18 months during which time opportunities for short-term temporary employment may arise.

The process will typically go as follows:

1. Find a temporary District Assistant RFS 4/5 role on www.jobs.nsw.gov.au
2. Create or update your profile and include your personal details on jobs.nsw.gov.au
3. Respond to any pre-screening questions, which includes responding to each of the essential requirements and NSW RFS capability set as identified in the role description (no more than 250 words per requirement) and create your cover letter.
4. Respond to the targeted questions and (no more than 500 words each).
5. Update your resume / curriculum vitae (CV)
6. Submit your application
7. Successful applicants will progress to the selection and assessment process
8. Successful applicants will be placed in a talent pool for a period of 12 months
9. Offers of temporary employment may be made to successful candidate(s) in the talent pool as they arise throughout the 18 months the talent pool is valid
10. Feedback provided to unsuccessful candidate(s)

4 The NSW RFS District Assistant (temporary) Talent Pool

The NSW RFS District Assistant (temporary) RFS 4/5 talent pool will be established for the purpose of filling short-term temporary District Assistant (RFS 4/5) vacancies across the State of NSW as required over the next 18 months.

The District Assistant (temporary) talent pool presents an opportunity to receive offers of short-term employment undertaking a range of support activities in district and area locations.

District Assistant (temporary) employees will have the opportunity to work with experienced volunteers from a variety of geographical areas and become familiar with other emergency service agencies.

District Assistant (temporary) interested in pursuing a career with the NSW RFS may wish to consider applying for the Operational Officer Program in the future.

How does the District Assistant (temporary) Talent Pool work?

Once the recruitment process has completed, District Assistant (temporary) candidates who are successfully placed in the talent pool will indicate their preferences for a short-term assignment. Candidates may receive offers of short-term employment during the 18 months the talent pool is valid.

5 Applying for the NSW RFS District Assistant (temporary) Talent Pool

<http://iworkfor.nsw.gov.au/> is the primary career board for the NSW Rural Fire Service. It lists current vacancies and is the portal for online application and tracking. While some jobs may be listed on other job search websites and / or in newspapers you need to apply for all roles on iworkfor.nsw.gov.au.

Searching for roles

Candidates can search for suitable vacancies by keywords, Government Agency, Job Category, Job Location and Organisation/Entity job title (figure 1). The advanced search option allows you to search using additional criteria such as salary and work type.

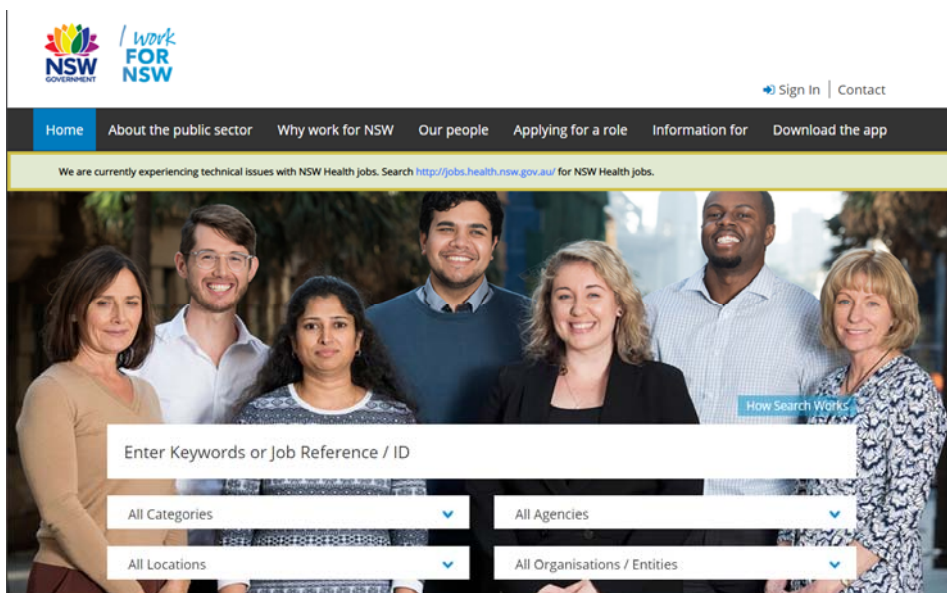


Figure 1

Once you have signed into your account, you can earmark advertisements to your “job cart”, this will group roles you are interested in and separate them from the full list. It is an easy way of identifying advertised roles that interest you so you can quickly navigate to them on your return to the site.

You can also activate the “new job alert” function on your profile. This function triggers an email to your registered email address when a newly advertised role that matches your recorded preferences appears.

6 The application process

6.1 Application

To apply, candidates must submit via the Jobs NSW web portal:

1. **A one page covering letter telling the panel about yourself, what you have done, your skills and why you want to apply for this position.**
2. **A short statement in response to two targeted questions (to provide evidence of experience against required role capabilities). You must be concise and clear and limit your response to one page per question. (500 words)**
3. **A series of short responses addressing the Essential Requirements of the role (Including RFS Capabilities set for Occupational /RFS or National Qualifications). No more than 250 words per requirement.**
4. **A resume / curriculum vitae (CV).**

Understanding the role, what is required and whether you have the right skills and experience are important in deciding whether to apply.

Your application will have a greater chance of success if you follow these principles:

- **Read the advertisement carefully** - All advertisements include a brief description of the role, information on how to apply and a closing date for applications. Keep a copy of the reference number for future enquiries.
- **Read the information package** - The advertisement gives you basic information, but it is important to read the information package from the link provided in the advertisement. Documents in the package may include a role description, organisational chart or other material to help you understand the role and the organisation.
- **Speak to the contact person** - After you read the information package, you will know more about the role and may have some questions. You can phone or email the contact person named in the advertisement to help find the answers. Talking to the contact person may also give you a better understanding of the role, whether it is right for you and what to emphasise in your application.
- **Other information** - Get as much extra information as you can to help you present a covering letter and resume with relevant information. You could look at the NSW RFS website, annual report or other publications.
- **Online application process** – The online application process is presented as a series of 'pages' that require information to be completed prior to submitting your application. Each page has a number of fields. All compulsory fields are identified with a red asterisk (*) and must be completed prior to the page being saved.
- **Submit your application prior to the closing date** – Applications that are rushed may contain mistakes and may affect the outcome of your application. Give yourself enough time to complete and review your application in advance of the closing date.
- **Privacy Statement** - The privacy statement in 'I work for NSW' describes how privacy principles are applied, how and why data is collected and how it is stored. It also outlines circumstances when your information can be disclosed.

TIP: Remember to check spelling, punctuation and grammar, and be succinct. The application itself indicates how well you can communicate and, if written well, can make a positive impression. Your application starts the assessment process.

6.2 Profile (Personal details)

You can create your general profile on iworkfor.nsw.gov.au at any time. This includes personal and contact information, creating a username and recording a password. Your email address is your unique identifier in iworkfor.nsw.gov.au, so you can only create one account per email address.

This general profile can also be created as part of your first iworkfor.nsw.gov.au job application. Once this basic information is captured it will populate any future applications automatically, removing the need to retype the same information.

If your contact details change or you would like to include some additional information, you can amend your profile at any time and submit different information for each application if required.

Data is also gathered on subjects such as diversity to assist with workforce planning. Other information, including how you learned of the job vacancy, is also gathered to provide insight into the most effective ways of advertising. Some of this information is provided on a voluntary basis and some is mandatory.

6.3 Essential Requirements

One of the first steps in the online application process is to be screened for essential role requirements. This is called “disqualification questions” in ‘I work for NSW’ and typically consists of a series of questions designed to provide information about your eligibility to apply, for example having a driver’s licence. It will not be possible to progress with the application in the system if you do not meet one or more of the essential requirements.

6.4 Cover Letter

Your cover letter should be short and specific; highlighting the main points of your claim for the District Assistant (temporary) role.

Your cover letter should be no more than one page in length and include:

- Details of the role you are applying for.
- A brief introduction about yourself.
- A summary of your relevant skills, qualifications and experience.

6.5 Targeted Questions & Essential Requirements

The Targeted Questions seek short statements, based on your actual experience, in response to the targeted questions asked*.

These questions will usually start with phrases such as:

- “Give an example of a situation where....”
- “Describe a scenario....”

Your responses should follow the STAR format (by detailing the Situation, Task, Action and Result).

* Targeted Questions

The advertisement will ask you to include a short statement in response to two targeted questions. These are capability-based questions directly relevant to the role’s duties and are designed to provide evidence of experience in a similar area. This is done by asking you to describe specific situations and to give actual examples of when you have used these specific skills.

In answering the targeted questions you must limit your response to no more than 500 words (approx 1 page) per question.

In addressing the Essential Requirements candidates are to prepare a series of short responses (no more than 250 words each) addressing the dot point requirements as well as those listed within the RFS Capability Set Table. (Shown below)

Essential requirements

- May be required to participate on an after hours and/or on call roster.
- A current driver's licence and the ability to travel.
- During periods of major fire activity, the incumbent may be required to support operational management activities consistent with their skills and background.
- Exercise due diligence in regard to duties and obligations under the Work, Health and Safety Act and associated legislation.

Occupation/ RFS or national qualifications

RFS Capability Set

General	Level 3	A Certificate III in a relevant discipline or equivalent expertise.
Fire Risk Management	Level 3	Current RFS AF certification or equivalent expertise in fire behaviour.
Community Resilience	Level 3	Current RFS CSF certification or equivalent expertise.
Fire/Incident Management	Level 3	Current RFS CLS certification or equivalent expertise.
Learning and Development	Level 2	Current RFS RFI and ASA certification
Fitness	Level 3	No condition preventing normal field activities of the job (i.e. non-arduous).

6.6 Resume/ Curriculum vitae (CV)

Your resume (also known as curriculum vitae or CV) is a snapshot summarising your qualifications, experience, skills and qualities. A resume needs to be clear, concise and neatly organised with content relevant to the role you are applying for.

Your resume should include:

- Education, qualifications and details of any courses or areas of focus that might be relevant to the role (ie NSW RFS courses and qualifications)
- Experience, paid and volunteer in reverse chronological order. For each job, include the role title, name and location of employer, and dates of employment. Briefly describe your role responsibilities for each job
- Special skills, computer skills, achievements, and membership in organisations
- References

In 'I work for NSW', the "work experience" and "education" fields capture traditional resume information electronically.

You may choose to fill this data in the application fields or attach a separate CV as a document attachment.

6.7 Referees

Capabilities for District Assistant (temporary) role are assessed at different stages of the assessment process and panels will treat referee information as an equally important aspect of fact finding about your application.

When the assessment panel is making its final decision, information obtained from your referees will be considered together with your application, resume, capability assessment results, interview and other selection tools used.

The assessment panel may conduct a 360-degree check, which means talking to people you have supervised, you have worked with and who you reported to.

The panel may also ask you for additional referees if they need more information than is available from those you have nominated.

Like the “work experience” and “education” fields in ‘I work for NSW’, referee information can be captured online. Names, contact details and information about your working relationship(s) can all be entered. You can add and remove referee contacts for each application and rearrange the referee order at any time.

6.8 Attachments

You may be asked to attach some form of documentation with your application, for example, a consent form to undertake background checks, and this can be added in the “attachment field”.

Please do not use this function to attach lengthier versions of your application letter. The one page cover letter is all that is needed.

If you delete a document you will be removing the ability for the assessment panel to view that document and therefore it will not be considered as part of your assessment.

Do not delete any document until you have information on the outcome of the recruitment action. If you have any concerns, please contact support@jobs.nsw.gov.au for advice before you delete any documents.

NOTE: It is important to note that your attachment library in ‘I work for NSW’ contains the attachments for all your applications; however, only those marked as ‘relevant’ will be submitted for viewing with your application.

6.9 Submitting your application

Once all information has been entered into the system, you will be given an opportunity to review your application prior to submitting it. Take this opportunity to ensure all details are correct.

When you have successfully submitted your application, you will receive an email from ‘I work for NSW’ acknowledging your submission.

7 The NSW RFS District Assistant (temporary) selection process

Once the closing date has passed, the assessment panel sets to work to determine the most suitable candidate(s) for the talent pool.

The assessment process will be conducted in two ways:

- As a standard panel assessment process, and
- an assessment centre process for capability testing

The assessment process selected by the panel is essential to ensure that the capabilities of successful candidates are in line with the requirements of the District Assistant (temporary) role.

7.1 Standard panel assessment process

This process includes:

- Review of your application, i.e. your cover letter (including responses to targeted questions) and your resume /CV)
- Capability-based assessments*, one of which is an interview
- Rigorous ‘fit-for-purpose’ reference and background checking (which may include 360-degree reference checks to verify your employment and performance claims)

This approach allows the full spectrum of capabilities for the applicant to be assessed using different tools or methods, and at different stages of the assessment process.

It is vital that you ensure the email address listed within the Jobs NSW portal is the best email contact for you. You will be notified by email if you are successful in progression through to capability assessments.

*** Capability-based assessments**

The assessment panel will use a range of appropriate assessments to determine the person who has the capabilities, experience and knowledge best suited to the requirements of the role and the needs of the NSW RFS. Capability-based assessments are a good predictor of your future performance.

The capabilities for the role you are applying for are described in the Operational Officer role description (part of the information package). The NSW Public Service Capability Framework provides a common foundation for creating and recruiting to roles www.psc.nsw.gov.au/Sector-Support/Capability-Framework, which can be supplemented by occupation or profession-specific capability sets, where appropriate.

Assessments:

The following are a brief example of the number of assessments that are used by the NSW RFS when undertaking District Assistant (temporary) capability assessments. Not all assessments are used as this varies dependant on the level of role applied for.

Cognitive ability assessments

Consisting of 20 multiple choice questions completed within 20 minute timeframe. The questions cover areas of technical knowledge applicants would be expected to have on day one of the role, in consideration to the technical capabilities contained within the role description. These may include knowledge about fire behaviour, incident management, hazard management, community engagement etc. The Questions are not specific to the NSW RFS systems or procedures, as to ensure any applicant from a related field will be competitive.

Literacy and Numeracy assessment

Consisting of organising data, and composing a short hand written report, these assessments are designed to assess if candidates have sufficient basic numeracy and literacy skills to perform the role, with ability to participate in induction and initial training regimes.

Computer Skills assessment

Consisting of using a NSW RFS computer and suite of standard Microsoft Office suite of programs, candidates will be asked to construct a letter, develop an excel spreadsheet or similar activity. Detailed instructions are provided to assist the candidate with the use of any template or layout however knowledge of the use of the computer program is essential.

Work samples

Work sample assessments comprise of the candidate being requested to bring a portfolio of documents that are evidence of the candidate's activity within the NSW RFS or similar agency. Each candidate will have up to 20 minutes to explain or discuss the work samples with an assessor. Candidates will be required to sign a declaration of originality, certifying works as their own as well as briefly explaining what the documents are and how they relate to the candidates application.

The samples may consist of any combination of records, reports, plans, notifications, handouts or similar. Samples of documents typically relate to:

- General brigade, unit or similar level activities
- Hazard management activities
- Community engagement activities
- Pre-incident planning and incident management
- Training, assessment and/or excising activities

NOTE: Work sample assessments may be conducted just prior to the interview or undertaken as part of an assessment centre.

Behavioural interviews

The interview is one of the most common forms of assessment. A structured interview allows interviewers to rate candidates in a consistent, standardised manner.

Behavioural questions invite candidates to give examples of like roles or similar situations from their own experience and how they approached them, what they did and what were the results; as well as any lessons learned. The following are examples of behavioural questions:

Question: Tell me about a time when you had to analyse information and make a recommendation? What kind of thought process did you go through? Was the recommendation accepted? If not, why?

Question: Describe a project or idea (not necessarily your own) that was implemented primarily because of your efforts. What was your role? What was the outcome?

Multi-mini interviews

Another interview format is the multi-mini interview (MMI). The MMI uses many short independent assessments (behavioural questions), typically in a timed circuit, to assess candidates' skills, experience and abilities against the capabilities, knowledge and experience standards for the role.

The MMI usually consists of approximately six interview stations, each being a timed (six-minute) interview scenario. Candidates rotate through the stations, each with its own interviewer and scenario. The reviewers then meet as a panel to agree on an overall assessment.

7.2 Assessment process (Capability Assessment)

How they work

NSW RFS capability assessment usually follows after the initial short-listing stages of the assessment process, i.e. cover letter, resume review and targeted questions. Each assessment centre is specifically designed for a particular role with generic transferable capabilities in order to assess candidates' skills, experience and abilities against the capabilities, knowledge and experience standards for the role.

A typical assessment centre incorporates a range of assessments in which your performance is observed and rated by a team of NSW RFS assessors.

This approach also allows the full spectrum of capabilities for the role to be assessed using different tools or methods, but typically conducted in one session.

What to expect

At the beginning of the assessment centre, candidates will receive an initial briefing about the organisation and the structure of the day. Please allow a full day for the completion of the assessment centre.

The notification sent advising candidates of progression through to assessment centre will outline what capability assessment methods will be undertaken on the day.

7.3 Role Location Preference Process

Candidates will be asked where they would prefer to be located across NSW for short-term District Assistant opportunities. Offers of short-term roles are generally based on the order of merit, tempered with submitted

preferences. Generally speaking, the more open to preferences, the greater the opportunity of being assigned a short-term District Assistant (temporary) role. The primary consideration is always to provide as best a level of service as possible to the community and volunteers. The NSW RFS is not bound to offer roles merely to satisfy candidate preferences, but will consider them.

7.4 Offer – Successful Talent Pool candidates(s)

Once the assessment panel has received approval to place the successful candidate(s) in the District Assistant (temporary) talent pool, offers of short-term employment may be made during the 18 months the talent pool is valid. Offers of employment to a District Assistant (temporary) role will be in writing.

7.5 Feedback – Unsuccessful candidates(s)

Unsuccessful candidates will be advised in writing and offered an opportunity to receive feedback. This feedback is a useful way to understand the areas that could be strengthened in future applications. Feedback cannot be given until the conclusion of the entire recruitment action and as such there may be a delay in the ability for the NSW RFS to provide feedback.

7.6 More Information

Further information can be found on the NSW Rural Fire Service [website](#).