

Can You Get a Job in the Proposal Industry? Sharon O'Boyle

Proposal writers, recent graduates, and students interested in the field of proposal writing/management might wonder what types of opportunities are currently available to entry-level or experienced professionals. Questions they might have include: Are there jobs available? How many jobs are available? What types of jobs are available? What education and experience are needed for these jobs? Where are these jobs located? Luckily, many job-hunting websites are available to answer these questions and explore the possibilities. One popular site is Indeed.com. A search on Indeed.com was conducted on November 30, 2020 for positions with 'proposal' in the title. The search was limited to locations within 25 miles of Washington, DC that were posted within the past 15 days. The search results provided answers to the questions listed above and are summarized below.

Are there jobs available?

The answer to this question is a definite 'Yes'!

How many jobs are available?

The search returned 68 available positions.

What types of jobs are available?

There were a variety of job titles among the open positions. Generally, the title categories can be broken down as follows:

Title Category	Count
Proposal Manager	14
Proposal Writer	11
Senior Proposal Manager	9
Proposal Coordinator	7
Proposal Manager/Writer	5
Proposal Development	4
Proposal Technical Writer	4
Senior Proposal Writer	4
Senior Proposal Coordinator	1
All Other Title Types	9
Grand Total	68

Looking through the categories, we can easily see that positions in proposal management are the most in demand. 'Proposal Manager' with 14 jobs and 'Senior Proposal Manager' with 9 jobs comprise over 1/3 of the total available jobs.

What education and experience are needed for these jobs?

Since **Proposal Manager** was the most popular category, these 14 open positions were reviewed to determine what qualifications were necessary for this type of position. The findings are summarized below.

Education

The review revealed that most of the positions, 9, required a bachelor's degree. Interestingly, none required higher than a bachelor's degree.

Education	Job Count
BA required	9
BA preferred	2
PM Certification	1
Not Specified	2
Grand Total	14

Overall Experience

As far as experience goes, a large majority of the positions, 11, specified a minimum of 5 years of overall professional experience. And all of the positions except one required at least 5 years of professional experience.

Overall Experience (Years)	Job Count
15	1
8	1
5	11
1	1
Grand Total	14

Experience in Proposal Industry

All of the positions except one (the same one that did not require 5 years of professional experience above) required at least 3 years of experience directly related to the proposal field. And the majority of the positions, 10, required at least 5 years of proposal experience.

Proposal Experience (Years)	Job Count
15	1
8	1
5	8
3	2
1	1
Not Specified	1
Grand Total	14

(If you don't have extensive experience, there is an article on the APMP website that offers an interesting perspective on the experience issue: <https://apmpnca.org/ezone/why-recent-graduates-are-the-perfect-proposal-writers/>)

Where are these jobs located?

As far as job location, 46 of the 68 jobs were located in Virginia, 12 in Maryland, and 10 in DC. So, Virginia is by far, the best option in the DC area.

After seeing these results, I was curious about prospects in other parts of the country. So I followed up with an identical search in large metropolitan areas across the US, from the Northeast, to the South, to the Midwest, to the West Coast. I found that very few opportunities in the proposal field exist in any city outside the DC area. In fact, the best area outside DC was Chicago which had only 8 opportunities, compared to DC's 68! Here are the results:

Metro Area	Count
DC	68
Chicago	8
Atlanta	7
Dallas	7
Los Angeles	5
Philadelphia	4
Boston	3
New York	3
Miami	1

(Disclaimer: These are opportunities found on Indeed.com. Perhaps other job boards are more widely used in some of these other metropolitan areas.)

So, in summary, for job seekers, the best prospect for a job in the proposal field is for a position as a **proposal manager**, in the **Virginia** suburbs of DC, for individuals who possess a **bachelor's degree** and **5 years' experience** in the proposal field.