Quick Check for Writing Job Descriptions
(See Pages 12–18 of A Head Start Guide to Job Analysis & Job Descriptions for Details)

☐ DO NOT include anything in the description that might be considered discriminatory, including references to age, marital status, race, religion, gender, or national origin.

☐ Write job descriptions in brief, clear sentences, using a concise, direct, and consistent style.

☐ Begin each sentence with an action verb and keep the sentences in the present tense.

☐ Be specific and realistic about the job's minimally acceptable requirements.

☐ Concentrate on the essential functions of the job (i.e., those that require 5-10% of the person's time), unless organizational standards dictate otherwise.

☐ Follow the job description outline used to guide the analysis, which may include such items as:
  - Date
  - Position Title
  - Job Location
  - Job Classification, if appropriate (see page 13)
  - Position Summary (see page 13)
  - Scope or Source of Authority (see page 13)
  - Key Duties and Responsibilities (see pages 13-14)
  - Equipment Used to Perform Job
  - Qualifications, or Education and Experience (see pages 14-15)

☐ Avoid arbitrary requirements that may be hard to validate.

☐ Avoid technical language or organization-specific terms.

☐ Keep the sentence structure simple and eliminate unnecessary words, including adjectives and articles.

☐ Do not use pronouns such as he or she; refer to the job title rather than to the person.

☐ Limit the job description to one or two pages if possible.

☐ Avoid vague or imprecise language.
- Use generic terms and names.
- Avoid words that have multiple or ambiguous meanings.
- Qualify and quantify.
- Describe the job as it currently exists, not as it might be at some point in the future.
- Talk about the job, not about the person. Talk about desired results or outcomes, not the methods for achieving them.
- Try to reflect the dynamic relationships with other staff and other departments.
- Once the job description has been written, distribute copies to employee and others (as appropriate) and allow sufficient time for review, comments, and suggestions.
- Following the review and comment period, finalize the written job description.
- Have the employee and Director sign and date the description and place it in the employee’s personnel file and such other locations as prescribed in your program’s Policies and Procedures.