Federal Job Search Strategies

Information provided by
Schar School of Policy and Government

and

PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE
Agenda

➢ Part 1: Opportunities and benefits
  - A job for every interest
  - Benefits of government service
  - Where the Jobs Are

➢ Part 2: Navigating the process
  - How to search for a federal internship or job
  - How to apply for a federal internship or job
  - Essays and KSAs
  - Summary
Part 1: Opportunities and Benefits
Benefits of Federal Service

➢ Have the opportunity to make a difference
➢ Be able to influence the future of our country
➢ Enjoy work/life balance
Federal Pay and Advancement

➢ General Schedule (GS) is the pay scale for many federal jobs from 1-15

➢ Each GRADE has 10 steps, allowing for a range of salaries

➢ Varies by geographic location

➢ Within a few years, you can progress through several grades
Benefits of Federal Service

➢ Student loan repayment assistance
  • Up to $10,000 per year
  • In 2009, 36 agencies provided 8,454 employees with $61.8 million in assistance

➢ Flexible schedules and generous vacation time

➢ Training and professional development

➢ Competitive health and retirement benefits

Student Loan Repayment Source
# General Schedule (GS) grade criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Qualifying Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GS-5</td>
<td>4 academic years above high school leading to a Bachelor’s degree or an earned Bachelor’s degree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| GS-7  | Bachelor's degree with one of the following:  
  - Class standing (upper third of class)  
  - 3.0 or higher GPA; 3.5 or higher GPA in major  
  - Honor society membership |
| GS-9  | Master’s degree (or equivalent) |
| GS-11 | Doctorate degree |

# Selected 2011 starting salaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>GS-5</th>
<th>GS-7</th>
<th>GS-9</th>
<th>GS-11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td>$32,722</td>
<td>$40,534</td>
<td>$49,581</td>
<td>$59,987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>$34,316</td>
<td>$42,508</td>
<td>$51,995</td>
<td>$62,909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas</td>
<td>$33,101</td>
<td>$41,002</td>
<td>$50,154</td>
<td>$60,681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York City</td>
<td>$35,309</td>
<td>$43,738</td>
<td>$53,500</td>
<td>$64,729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>$37,073</td>
<td>$45,923</td>
<td>$56,172</td>
<td>$67,963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, D.C.</td>
<td>$34,075</td>
<td>$42,209</td>
<td>$51,630</td>
<td>$62,467</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [http://opm.gov/oca/11tables/indexGS.asp](http://opm.gov/oca/11tables/indexGS.asp)
**Selected 2019 starting salaries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>GS-5</th>
<th>GS-7</th>
<th>GS-9</th>
<th>GS-11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td>$35,701</td>
<td>$44,223</td>
<td>$54,095</td>
<td>$65,448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>$37,583</td>
<td>$46,554</td>
<td>$56,945</td>
<td>$68,897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas</td>
<td>$36,456</td>
<td>$45,158</td>
<td>$55,237</td>
<td>$66,831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York City</td>
<td>$39,053</td>
<td>$48,375</td>
<td>$59,173</td>
<td>$71,593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>$41,193</td>
<td>$51,026</td>
<td>$62,415</td>
<td>$75,515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, D.C.</td>
<td>$37,955</td>
<td>$47,016</td>
<td>$57,510</td>
<td>$69,581</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where the Jobs Are: By Location

The Federal Gov’t is the nation’s largest employer, with 1.67 million full-time, permanent workers.

Only 12.2% in the Washington, D.C. metro region

Plus 50,000 employees work overseas
Where the Jobs Are: By Occupation

In 2012, roughly 103,631 people were hired into the federal government at the entry-level (GS-5, GS-6, GS-7, GS-8, GS-9) into the following occupations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th># Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medical and Public Health</td>
<td>54,114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security and Protection</td>
<td>52,077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliance and Enforcement</td>
<td>31,276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>23,596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration/Program Management</td>
<td>17,287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting and Budget</td>
<td>16,664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td>11,549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business and Industry</td>
<td>10,765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>10,642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>10,560</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 2: Navigating the Process
Tools for Narrowing Your Search

➢ Use these resources to target agencies of interest:

➢ Ourpublicservice.org
➢ Gogovernment.org
➢ Bestplacestowork.org
➢ USAJOBS.gov
➢ USA.gov
➢ Individual agency websites
Where to Look: gogovernment.org

- Agency profiles
- Application and federal resume tips
- Security clearances information
- Student loan repayment information
- Profiles of young feds
Where the Jobs Are 2009

Welcome to the 2009 Edition of Where the Jobs Are

Where the Jobs Are is the only comprehensive projection of hiring needs for critical occupations in the federal government. This edition is the third in an ongoing series produced by the Partnership for Public Service, covering fiscal years 2010 through 2012, and updating information in the 2005 and 2007 reports.

Most federal hiring will be concentrated in five professional fields:
MEDICAL & PUBLIC HEALTH, SECURITY & PROTECTION, COMPLIANCE & ENFORCEMENT, LEGAL, and PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Top Areas Where Government Is Hiring

Medical and Public Health

- Occupational areas and positions include physician (all disciplines), nursing, dietitian/nutrition, occupational and rehabilitation therapy, radiology, pharmacy, industrial hygiene and consumer safety.

- Projected hires: 54,114

Security and Protection

- Occupational areas and positions include intelligence analysis, international relations, foreign affairs, security administration, transportation security

- Projected hires: 52,077
## AGENCY REPORT

### Overall Engagement Score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency Subcomponents</th>
<th>Overall Engagement Score</th>
<th>Scores by Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective Leadership</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>61.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Leadership: Empowerment</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>55.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Leadership: Fairness</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>58.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Leadership: Senior Leaders</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>55.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Leadership: Supervisors</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>70.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Skills-Mission Match</td>
<td>81.6</td>
<td>81.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A–Z Index of U.S. Government Departments and Agencies

Get contact information for U.S. states, territories, and federal agencies. Find the home page, email, phone numbers, addresses, and more.

A

• AbilityOne Commission
• Access Board
• Administration for Children and Families (ACF)
• Administration for Community Living
• Administration for Native Americans
Student Pathways into Government

➢ Executive order on December 27, 2010
➢ Being implemented first week of August 2012
➢ Announced Student Pathways Programs:
  • Internship Program
  • Recent Graduates Program
  • Presidential Management Fellows Program
Getting Started: student programs

➢ Unpaid Internships
➢ Paid Internships
➢ Recent Graduates Program
➢ Presidential Management Fellowship (PMF)
Student Pathways Program

➢ Internship Program:
  • Paid opportunities while still in school
  • Agencies may convert eligible participants to full-time employment

➢ Recent Graduate Program:
  • Apply within 2 years of receiving degree
  • Veterans can apply within six years of receiving a degree if they have been actively serving in the military

➢ Presidential Management Fellows Program:
  • The recruiting calendar will be adjusted to better align with academic calendars
  • Open to advanced degree students within two years of graduation
Where to Look for Positions

• Handshake - https://careers.gmu.edu/handshake
• Popular job/internship search engines
• Gogovernment.org
  - Partnership Facebook Fan Page
• USAjobs.gov
  The Government’s main job Web site
• Agency Web sites
  Visit the Web sites of agencies whose missions interest you
Now Let’s Search

How to Apply
Impact of Hiring Reform on Your Application

➢ As per a memorandum issued by President Obama, agencies were required to implement the following changes by November 1, 2010:

• Eliminate KSAs from the initial application process
• Allow individuals to apply with a résumé and cover letter
• Improve the quality and speed of hiring
• Notify applicants about their status during the process

➢ Visit opm.gov/ and search Hiring Reform for additional information
Overview of the Application Process

To find and apply for a federal job, follow these steps online:

1. Search for specific positions
2. Create your federal resume
3. Complete application questionnaires
4. Submit the complete application by deadline
5. Follow up with the agency contact
Launch the Process at USAJobs.gov
Search by Various Fields

Sign up for email alerts or the RSS Feed for your search

Refine your results by selecting one or more of these categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Analyst</th>
<th>Starting at $114,560 (AD-1)</th>
<th>Permanent</th>
<th>Full-Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board</td>
<td>Washington, District of Columbia</td>
<td>02/01/2019 to 04/04/2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reading a Vacancy Announcement

**Duties**

**Requirements**

**Conditions of Employment**

**Summary**

Adhere to strict standards of conduct, foremost being honesty and integrity.

Undergo a rigorous background investigation, credit checks and a polygraph in order to obtain a Top Secret Clearance.

Pass a Physical Fitness Test (PFT) at least twice during the application process; must be physically fit to complete training at the FBI Academy and maintain a high level of fitness throughout your career.

Pass a medical exam, which includes, but is not limited to, meeting visual and hearing standards.

Successfully complete approximately 20 weeks of employment as a Special Agent trainee, while housed at the FBI Academy.

Upon graduation from the FBI Academy, be available to transfer to one of the FBI's 56 Field Offices, including San Juan, Puerto Rico or remote resident agencies (satellite offices) to meet the needs of the FBI. Special Agents rarely return to their processing office. Applicants should ensure that their families are prepared for and support this move.

Throughout your career, be available for temporary duty assignments anywhere in the world on either a temporary or a long-term basis.

Work a minimum of a 50-hour workweek, which may include odd hours, and be on-call 24/7, including holidays and weekends.

Be willing and able to participate in arrests, execute search warrants, raids and similar assignments.

**Responsibilities**

**Wherever you wish to work**

**Special Agents**

For more information on eligibility requirements see: [https://fbijobs.gov/working-at-FBI/eligibility](https://fbijobs.gov/working-at-FBI/eligibility).

**Qualifications**

You must:

- **Ability to**
  - Be at least 23 years old and not have reached your 37th birthday on appointment.
  
- **A high-level**
  - Must have a bachelor's degree or master's degree from a U.S.-accredited college or university.
  
- **Able to**
  - Have two years of full-time professional work experience (see work experience waiver for exceptional).
  
- **Ability to**
  - Possess a valid driver's license with at least six months driving experience.
  
- **Ability to**
  - Meet the FBI's Employment Eligibility requirements.
  
- **The drive**
  - Meet all FBI physical requirements, be physically fit to complete training at the FBI Academy in Quantico, VA, and maintain a high level of fitness throughout your career.

**Travel Requirements**

For more information about the Special Agent Selection System (SASS), physical fitness requirements and work experience waivers, please visit: [https://fbijobs.gov/career-paths/special-agents](https://fbijobs.gov/career-paths/special-agents).

**Education**

- **Supervisory**
  - BA/BS degree from a U.S.-accredited college or university.

**Additional information**
Reading a Vacancy Announcement

➢ **Overview**: Summary of the organization’s mission and impact, plus a brief description of the job and its key requirements

➢ **Duties**: Lists major duties and responsibilities of the position, adding more detail to the brief overview

➢ **Qualifications and Evaluations**: Identifies skills and experience needed for the role and explains how applications will be assessed

➢ **Benefits and Other Info**: Describes additional elements of the compensation package or perks associated with the job

➢ **How to Apply**: Provides step-by-step instructions on how to apply and may include information on when/how applicants can expect to hear from the agency
Reading a Vacancy Announcement

Qualifications
Applicants must demonstrate that they meet the Basic AND Specialized Experience requirements as noted below.

How to Apply
To apply for this position, you must complete the occupational questionnaire and submit the documentation specified in the Required Documents section.

*To begin, click Apply Online to create a USAJOBS account or log in to your existing account. Follow the prompts to select your USAJOBS resume and/or other supporting documents and complete the occupational questionnaire.
*Click the Submit My Answers button to submit your application package.
*It is your responsibility to ensure your responses and appropriate documentation is submitted prior to the closing date.

To verify your application is complete, log into your USAJOBS account at https://my.usajobs.gov/Account/Login, select the Application Status link, and then select the more information link for this position. The Details page will display the status of your application, the documentation received and processed, and any correspondence the agency has sent related to this application. Your uploaded documents may take several hours to clear the virus scan process.

To return to an incomplete application, log into your USAJOBS account at https://my.usajobs.gov/Account/Login and click Update Application in the vacancy announcement. You must re-select your resume and/or other documents from your USAJOBS account or your application will be incomplete.

The complete Application Package must be submitted by 11:59 PM (EST) on 06/25/2019.

Follow the “How to Apply” instructions closely – they may differ across agencies.
Build Your Federal Resume

To build a resume, click on the Documents Tab

Simply click this tab to get started on your Federal Resume
Build Your Federal Resume

- Federal resumes require more detail than standard resumes
- 1-5 pages in length
- On USAJOBS.gov you can store up to 5 resumes and tailor them for different positions
- Carefully review the job vacancy announcement or position description
- Focus on the “duties” or “responsibilities” section, and customize your resume accordingly by identifying and including key words and phrases
Build Your Federal Resume

Sections:
- Candidate information
- Work experience
- Education
- References
- Affiliations
- Desired locations
Prepare for Assessments

➢ Application Questionnaires
   • Between 25-125 questions
   • May include yes/no questions as well as experience-based questions
   • **Tip**: Preview questions using a link found in the job vacancy announcement

9. The number of civic or social organizations (which have regular meetings and a defined membership) that I belong to is:
   A. none
   B. 1
   C. 2 or 3
   D. 4 to 6
   E. 7 or more

10. In organizations to which I belong, my participation is best described as:
    A. do not belong to any organizations
    B. not very active
    C. a regular member but not an office holder
    D. have held at least one important office
    E. have held several important offices

11. My previous supervisors (or teachers if not previously employed) would most likely describe my basic math skills as:
    A. superior
    B. above average
    C. average
    D. below average
    E. do not know
Prepare for Assessments

➢ Application Questionnaires
  • Between 25-125 questions
  • May include yes/no questions as well as experience-based questions
  • Tip: Preview questions using a link found in the job vacancy announcement

➢ Essays
  • Knowledge, Skills and Abilities essays (KSA’s)
  • Typically a ½ page to a full-page in length
  • Tips: Address key words and phrases mentioned in the position description, use substantive examples, tie your personal experiences to each KSA, focus on outcomes to which you directly contributed, and avoid acronyms

Qualifications and Evaluations

QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED:

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES:

Academic Background
Knowledge of economics principles, theories, concepts, quantitative methods, and data analysis techniques.
Ability and willingness to work in a developing country with limited modern conveniences.
Ability to communicate effectively other than in writing.
Ability to write persuasively and effectively in English.
Ability to work in teams and achieve results.
Prepare for Assessments

➢ Application Questionnaires
  • Between 25-125 questions
  • May include yes/no questions as well as experience-based questions
  • **Tip**: Preview questions using a link found in the job vacancy announcement

➢ Essays
  • Knowledge, Skills and Abilities essays (KSA’s)
  • Typically a ½ page to a full-page in length
  • **Tips**: Address key words and phrases mentioned in the position description, use substantive examples, tie your personal experiences to each KSA, focus on outcomes to which you directly contributed, and avoid acronyms

➢ Cover Letters
  • Additional opportunity to show how you fit
  • Contact the agency’s HR office
Stay on Top of Your Application

➢ USAJOBS.gov
  • Track your status using the Application Manager

➢ Agency Web sites
  • Contact the agency within two weeks after submitting your application to confirm its status
What Happens Next

➢ After the closing date for applications, the agency evaluates candidate qualifications

➢ From this assessment, the agency produces a list of qualified candidates

➢ From the list of qualified applicants, agencies select candidates for interviews

➢ At this point, agencies are like other organizations
  - They conduct interviews and select the best candidate(s) for the job
  - Some jobs require security clearance
Summary and Questions?

Duane Bradshaw  
Director of Career Development  
703-993-3188  
dbradsha@gmu.edu

Brian Bar  
Assistant Director of Career Development  
703-993-8559  
bbar@gmu.edu