Finding and Applying for Federal Jobs

University of Pennsylvania

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Introduction

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- Ella Holman
  - Manager, Federal Workforce, Partnership for Public Service
Partnership for Public Service
Agenda

• Discovering Federal Opportunities
  • Why the federal government?
  • Find the right fit

• Applying for Federal Opportunities
  • Current state of federal hiring
  • The application process
Why Go Government?
Understand the Hiring Landscape

- Overall—1.8 million full-time, non-seasonal, permanent (FTNP) federal civilian employees

- In FY 2017 81,106 FTNP new hires
  - 25.21% of them were between the ages of 20 - 29

- More than 379 agencies and subcomponents
  - 19 large (15 cabinet)
  - 23 mid-size
  - 23 small
  - 300+ subcomponents

- 85 percent of the federal workforce is based outside of the Washington, DC metro area
Find the Right Fit: By Location

- Mountain West: 7.2%
- West North Central: 4.8%
- Pacific West: 11.7%
- East North Central: 7.6%
- West South Central: 9.1%
- East South Central: 5.1%
- South Atlantic: 31.8%
- Mid Atlantic: 6.4%
- Northeast: 2.8%
Find the Right Fit: By Career

In FY 2017:
- 81,106 FTNP new hires
- 25.21% of them were between the ages of 20 - 29

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Number of Entry Level New Hires in FY 17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medical, Hospital, Dental and Public Health</td>
<td>14,788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Administration, Clerical, and Office Services</td>
<td>6,696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous Occupations</td>
<td>3,836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal and Kindred</td>
<td>4,392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigation</td>
<td>4,160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Find the Right Fit: By Agency
# General Schedule (GS) Grade Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Qualifying education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GS-4</td>
<td>Associate degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS-5</td>
<td>Four academic years above high school leading to a bachelor’s degree OR a completed 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      |
| GS-11 | Doctoral degree      |
Federal Pay

General Schedule (GS) is the pay scale for most federal jobs

- Grades 1-15
  - 10 steps within each grade

- Locality Pay: salary varies by geographic location

- Some occupations have separate scales (e.g., IT, engineering)

- Move up several grades within a few years:
  - GS-7 Step 1: $45,972
  - GS-11 Step 1: $68,036
# Pay and Benefits

<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>$35,000</td>
<td>$43,441</td>
<td>$53,137</td>
<td>$64,290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>$36,896</td>
<td>$45,703</td>
<td>$55,905</td>
<td>$67,638</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>$36,213</td>
<td>$44,857</td>
<td>$54,896</td>
<td>$66,386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>$38,245</td>
<td>$47,374</td>
<td>$57,948</td>
<td>$70,111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>$40,315</td>
<td>$49,937</td>
<td>$61,084</td>
<td>$73,905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington D.C.</td>
<td>$37,113</td>
<td>$45,972</td>
<td>$56,233</td>
<td>$68,036</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Possible career progression over 2-3 years

Finding the Right Fit
In 2010, former President Barack Obama signed the Hiring Reform Initiative creating the Pathways Programs. These programs are designed to “offer students and recent graduates more uniform and transparent pathways to public service” and “improve recruiting and provide for training, mentoring, and career development opportunities.”
Pathways Programs

- Presidential Management Fellows
- Recent Graduates Program
- Internship Program
Pathways: Internship Program

**WHAT**
- PAID opportunities to INTERN at federal agencies and explore different career paths
- Eligible to be hired for full-time employment upon successful completion of the program

**WHO**
- Current undergraduate students in qualifying educational institutions and programs

**MORE INFO**
- Unpaid volunteer positions are still available at many federal agencies
PATHWAYS
Recent Graduates Program

WHAT
- Dynamic developmental program
- Participants go to an orientation, receive 40 hours of training and development, complete an Individual Development Plan (IDP) and are assigned a mentor
- Eligible to be hired for full-time employment upon successful completion of the program

WHO
- Individuals with undergraduate or graduate degrees from qualifying educational institutions or programs

MORE INFO
- Candidates must apply within two years of degree or certificate program
- Eligible veterans have six years to apply after completing their education
PATHWAYS
Presidential Management Fellows Program

WHAT
• Government’s most prestigious fellowship program
• 2-year leadership development program
  • Participants go to an orientation, receive 80 hours of training and development, complete an IDP, are assigned a mentor and have at least one rotational or developmental assignment

WHO
• Individuals with qualifying advanced degrees

MORE INFO
• Applications are open for TWO WEEKS in the fall
• Candidates can apply during their final year as well as within two years of advanced degree completion
• Learn more at http://pmf.gov
Additional Preferences
Given to Applicants

- Veterans’ Preference
- Persons with Disabilities
- AmeriCorps VISTA
- Returning Peace Corps Volunteers
How to Apply
Five Steps to Apply for a Federal Job

1. **SEARCH** for positions
2. **CREATE** your federal resume
3. **COMPLETE** application questionnaires
4. **SUBMIT** your complete application
5. **FOLLOW UP** with the agency
How to Apply: SEARCH for positions
Where to Search

- USAJOBS.gov
- Agency websites
- Career centers
- Career fairs
- Social media
- Personal networks
SEARCH: USAJOBS.gov
Narrow Your Search

- Agency
- Job Categories
- Grade
- Salary
- Work Schedule and Work Type
- Location
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Occupational Group</th>
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<th>Occupational Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0100</td>
<td>Social sciences and psychology</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>Copyright, patent and trademark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0200</td>
<td>Human resources management</td>
<td>1300</td>
<td>Physical sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0300</td>
<td>General administrative</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td>Library and archives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0400</td>
<td>Natural resources and biology</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>Math and statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0500</td>
<td>Accounting and budget</td>
<td>1600</td>
<td>Equipment, facilities and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0600</td>
<td>Medical, hospital and public health</td>
<td>1700</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0700</td>
<td>Veterinary sciences</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>Investigation, enforcement and compliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0800</td>
<td>Engineering and architecture</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Quality assurance and inspection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0900</td>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Supply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000</td>
<td>Information and arts</td>
<td>2100</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1100</td>
<td>Business and industry</td>
<td>2200</td>
<td>Information technology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How to Read a Job Announcement

CRITICAL COMPONENTS

Overview  Requirements  How to Apply

Student Trainee (Financial Clerk)
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
Office of Inspector General
Deputy Inspector General for Audit

Overview
Open & closing dates
- 10/02/2018 to 10/31/2018
Pay scale & grade
- GS 4
Appointment type
- Internships - (Pathways Intern)

Service
- Excepted
Salary
- $29,847 to $43,119 per year
Work schedule
- Multiple Schedules

Locations
- Denver, CO
- Indianapolis, IN
- Yorktown, VA
- Many vacancies

Relocation expenses reimbursed
- No
Telework eligible
- No

This job is open to
Students
- Current students enrolled in accredited educational institutions from high school to graduate level, includes internships, pathways and other student programs.

Clarification from the agency
- All U.S. citizens eligible for the Pathways Internship Program

Apply
- Print
- Share
- Save
Announcement number
Qualifications

Requirements

Conditions of Employment
- You must be a U.S. Citizen or National.
- Meet educational requirement.
- Required to pass a background investigation and fingerprint check.
- Must be registered for Selective Service, if applicable (www.sss.gov)

A student enrolled in high school or enrolled as a degree-seeking student in a qualifying educational institution.

Qualifications

You must meet the United States Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) qualification requirements (including specialized experience and/or educational requirements) for the advertised position. You must meet all eligibility and qualifications requirements by the closing date of the job announcement. Additional information on the qualification requirements is outlined in the OPM Qualifications Standards Handbook of General Schedule Positions. It is available for your review on the OPM Website.

Specialized Experience: is experience that has equipped you with the particular knowledge, skills and abilities to perform successfully the duties of the position, and that is typically in or related to the position to be filled. To be creditable, specialized experience must have been equivalent to at least the next lower grade level in the federal service.

Candidates for the GS-05 grade level must have at least 1 year of specialized experience equivalent to the GS-04 grade level in the Federal service. Specialized experience for this position includes: performing a range of clerical duties (such as: typing, filing, answering routine customer questions, compiling data, preparing or making changes to documents and/or forms, preparing/formatting charts/graphs/reports), or assisting higher level employees with monitoring/updating status and conducting basic research.

OR

Candidates can substitute specialized experience by possessing 4 years of completed education above high school.

OR

Candidates can combine education and experience only if education in excess of the first 60 semester hours is creditable toward meeting the specialized experience requirement. One full academic year of study (30 semester hours) beyond the second year is equivalent to 6 months of specialized experience.

General Experience: is progressively responsible clerical, office, or other work that indicates the ability to acquire the particular knowledge and skills needed to perform the duties of the position.

Candidates for the GS-04 grade level must have at least 1 year of general experience.

OR

Candidates can substitute general experience by possessing 2 years of education above high school.

OR

Candidates can combine education and experience converting the two into percentages to ensure qualifications are met.
Job Overview

Summary

About the Agency

One or more vacancies may be filled through this announcement.

This position is in the bargaining unit.

The Recent Graduates Program affords developmental experiences in the Federal Government intended to promote possible careers in the civil service to individuals who have recently graduated from qualifying educational institutions or programs within 2 years prior to application. Upon successful completion of the program and at the agency’s discretion, the appointee may be converted to a term or permanent position in the competitive service. Conversion is NOT guaranteed.

Qualifying education includes recent graduates who have completed qualifying associates, bachelors, masters, professional, doctorate, vocational or technical degree or certificate. Veterans unable to apply within two years of receiving their degree due to military service obligation will have up to six years after degree completion to apply.

This position is located the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE), Office of Migrant Education, at the U.S. Department of Education. Its mission is to provide excellent leadership, technical assistance, and financial support to improve the educational opportunities and academic success of migrant children, youth, agriculture workers, fishers, and their families. The OME administers grant programs that provide educational and supportive services to the children of families who migrate to find work in the agricultural and fishing industries. The OME also administers several contracts and special initiatives.

**THE SELECTION CERTIFICATES MAY BE SHARED AMONG PROGRAM OFFICE ACROSS THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**
**Duties**

**Summary**
At the Architect of the Capitol (AOC), our employees are passionate about AOC’s mission to serve Congress and the Supreme Court, preserve America’s Capitol and inspire memorable experiences. AOC is the authority for the preservation, maintenance and construction of the most iconic treasures and buildings on Capitol Hill. We are seeking an Engineer/Architect Student Trainee who will assist professional engineers and/or architects and admin staff in the operations of the Capitol Power Plant.

[Learn more about this agency]

**Responsibilities**
This position is located in the Architect of the Capitol, Utilities and Power Plant Operations, Engineering Division. The trainee will receive increasingly more responsible assignments to provide training and development in their respective engineering discipline. The trainee will have non-competitive promotion up to the GS-9 level.

**Responsibilities:**
- Performs well-defined tasks in various aspects of engineering and architecture. Receives formal training and on-the-job instruction designed to familiarize the trainee with the functions and operations of the Capitol Power Plant and to provide experience in the application of architectural/engineering knowledge to projects at the plant. Specific duties are dependent upon the occupational specialty that corresponds to the college major.
- Assists professional level architects or engineers or other staff in routine and progressively responsible duties which are directly related to the student’s academic studies and occupational career goals.
- Performs specified arithmetic computations using engineering software and programs, standard tables, or other engineering practice.
- Supports engineering project team(s) and accomplishes assigned tasks.
- Operates and makes adjustments to a variety of instruments and equipment.
- Gathers and compiles data from records, specifications and drawings. Recognizes and resolves readily apparent errors.
- Creates drawings of simple facilities and equipment from sketches and models or marked up prints when the details fit a familiar pattern and are easily visualized.
- Follows all relevant safety rules, regulations and standard operating procedures and comply with all OSHA safety rules and regulations.
How to Apply: CREATE your federal resume
Build a Federal Resume

- What is the difference between a federal resume and a traditional resume?
  - Length
  - Level of detail
  - Required information

- Create an account on USAJOBS.gov
  - Build and store up to 5 federal resumes
  - Upload your non-federal resume
Building a Federal Resume

Documents - Resumes

Get noticed by recruiters—make your resume searchable
If you make your resume searchable, your profile and resume will be visible to recruiters searching our resume bank. Only one resume can be searchable at a time.

Resumes (0/5)

Do not include in Resume
- Classified or government sensitive information
- Social Security Number (SSN)
- Photos of yourself
- Personal information, such as age, gender, religious affiliation, etc.
- Encrypted and digitally signed documents

Additional Help
What should I include in my resume?
Federal resumes can range in length:
from 1 to 5 pages for entry-level applicants!
Build a Federal Resume: Tips

Tailor resumes using the job announcement
  • Focus on the “Duties” section
  • Customize your resume using key words and phrases

Expand on your experience
  • Include additional details to demonstrate your qualifications for the job
  • Consider volunteer work, awards, and affiliations

Make a master resume
  • Then alter for specific positions and remove information that doesn’t apply to a specific position
How to Apply: COMPLETE application materials
Application Materials: Questionnaires

- **Length**: 15-100+ questions
- **Type**: Varies and can include yes/no questions as well as those meant to determine your level of experience in different areas
- **Additional Information**: Remember to include transferrable skills. Don’t sell yourself short!
Application Materials: Supplemental Materials

- Transcripts
- Writing Samples
- References
- Eligibility information
  - Past or current federal employment
  - Veteran qualifications
  - Disability status
  - Non-competitive appointment
    - Peace Corps and AmeriCorps Vista
How to Apply: SUBMIT your application
SUBMIT Completed Application
Submit Your Application

• Submit your application online
  • USAJOBS
  • Individual agency websites
  • External hiring systems

• Apply in advance of deadline

• Call HR contact with clarifying questions
How to Apply: FOLLOW UP with the agency
What to Expect Next

Next steps

Once you successfully complete the application process, you will receive a notification of receipt. Your application package will be reviewed to ensure you meet the basic eligibility and qualifications requirements, and you will receive a notification. A review will be made of your online questionnaire and the documentation you submitted to support your responses. A list of qualified applicants will be created and sent to the selecting official. All applicants reviewed and/or referred will receive a notification letter.

A list of qualified applicants will be created and sent to the selecting official. All applicants reviewed and/or referred will receive a notification letter.

The selecting official may choose to conduct interviews, and once the selection is made, you will receive a notification of the decision.
Track Your Application

The agency will evaluate your application will notify you at 4 points in the process:

- When your application is received
- If you meet basic qualifications
- When your application is referred to the selecting official
- If you are offered the position

You can track your application status using USAJOBS

**TIP:** Agencies receive a high volume of applications
Follow Up with the Agency

Tips:

• You can find a contact and phone number listed in the job announcement
• Call with a specific question and purpose
• Wait 2-3 weeks…
• Reference the announcement number
• Be considerate of their time!

Agency contact information

Shannon Thompson

Phone
571-272-4927

Fax
000-000-0000

Email
shannon.thompson@uspto.gov

Address
PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
550 Elizabeth Lane
Elizabeth Townhouse
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
United States
Checks and Clearances

Background Checks

- Individual’s criminal and credit histories
- About 90% of background investigations are undertaken by the Office of Personnel Management

Security Clearances

- More extensive investigation to discover applicant’s character and behavior patterns
- The agency’s decision of whether to grant clearance is based on the investigation
Security Clearances: How to Prepare

- Begin gathering relevant information now
  - You will need to complete the non-sensitive (SF-85) or national security (SF-86) clearance forms
- Be smart and curb your bad habits now
- Stay out of debt or diligently repay it
- Be completely honest!

**TIP:** You can view the SF-85 and SF-86 forms on USAJOBS!
Resources

- GoGovernment.org
- BestPlacestoWork.org
- Agency Websites + Social Media
- USAJOBS Help Center
- USA.gov
Top Advice for Current Students

• Begin looking/planning as soon as possible

• Summer deadlines:
  • Early fall for top security agencies
  • January/February for most other agencies

• Each agency will have a distinct process

• Do your research!
Questions?
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OURPUBLICSERVICE.ORG