

A grayscale photograph of a person in a suit and tie, holding a small American flag. The flag is the central focus, with its stars and stripes clearly visible. The person's hands are visible, one holding the top of the flag and the other holding the bottom. The background is dark and out of focus.

Red White & Blue Jobs

FINDING A GREAT JOB IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT



PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

www.calltoserve.org



PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

If you're reading this, chances are you're looking for an internship or job. Maybe you are curious about what the people who work for the federal government actually do. Maybe you have no idea what kinds of jobs are out there in the public sector. And most likely, you don't know how to go about finding a job in the government.

This book is designed to get you smart about federal jobs – fast.

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TEN GREAT REASONS TO ANSWER THE CALL TO SERVE

You probably know something about jobs in the private and nonprofit sectors and how to apply, but have you ever considered . . .

1. The Nation's Largest Employer is Hiring!

- ★ Half of the nation's 1.8 million federal employees may be eligible to retire in the next 5 years – that's a lot of openings.
- ★ Unlike some other employers, the federal government will never go out of business. It will always need good people to protect the interests of American citizens.



2. There's a Job for Every Interest

- ★ There are federal jobs suited to every interest and skill, from architecture to zoology.
- ★ You can combine your skills with your interests – for example, use your accounting background to improve the environment, your engineering degree to improve airport security, or your biology degree to conduct cutting-edge medical research.

3. You Can Make a Difference

- ★ The work that government employees do has an impact on the life of every American.
- ★ You can play a vital role in addressing pressing issues, from homelessness to homeland security.

4. The Federal Government Can Help Pay for School

- ★ Federal agencies may help you pay back your student loans if you work there for a certain length of time.
- ★ Pursue a graduate degree, and your employing agency may just pick up the tab!

5. You Can Advance Quickly

- ★ Federal agencies offer excellent training and development opportunities, and training can begin your first day on the job.
- ★ There are a number of "fast track" possibilities for advancement within your field.

6. There are Federal Jobs Around the Country . . . and Around the World

- ★ Only 16 percent of government employees work in the Washington, D.C. vicinity.
- ★ Over 50,000 federal employees work abroad.

7. The Federal Government Values Diversity

- ★ The federal government has steadily increased the diversity of its workforce.
- ★ Federal agencies actively encourage minorities and individuals with disabilities to consider government service through a variety of internship and fellowship programs.

8. Federal Jobs Pay Better Than You Think

- ★ Average government salaries are competitive for most professions.
- ★ Pay can increase pretty quickly for top candidates with strong education and experience.

9. Flexible Work Schedules and Benefits Encourage Work–Life Balance

- ★ Flexible work schedules are a major upside for those with busy schedules.
- ★ Federal benefits, including health insurance, retirement and vacation, are extremely competitive with the private sector.

10. The Federal Government is a Career Builder

- ★ Advance your career by developing highly marketable skills.
- ★ Utilize your federal experiences as a building block for an exciting and diverse career.

★ Did You Know...

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) manages the largest medical education and health professions training program in the nation. More than half of the doctors in the U.S. spent some of their professional education in the VA health care system.



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Alyson McFarland

Program Development Officer, U.S. Department of State

As a child, Alyson McFarland dreamed of traveling and helping people in different countries. She studied Korean, learned everything she could about the culture and politics of the region, and by the time she was twenty-eight she was working for the State Department in the American Consulate in Shenyang, China, right across the border from North Korea.

It's a lucky thing, too. When three North Korean refugees jumped over the wall of the Consulate seeking asylum, the entire world sat on the edge of its seat. Because of her knowledge of Chinese-North Korean affairs and because she spoke Korean, Alyson was able to play a key role in resolving the tense diplomatic crisis.

Alyson dreamed of becoming a diplomat, and made history by realizing her dream.

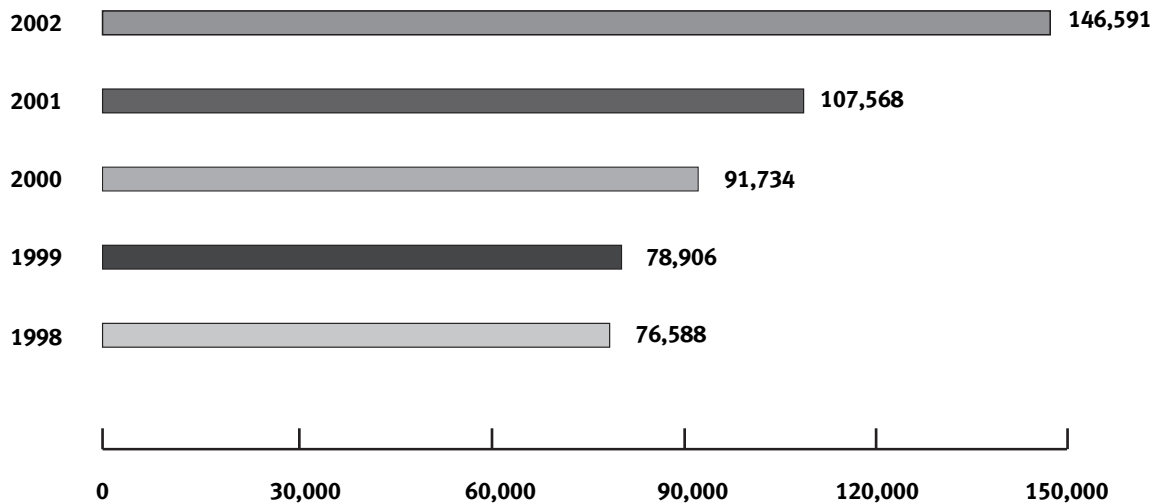
1 The Nation's Largest Employer is Hiring!

People often overlook the fact that with 1.8 million employees, the federal government is the nation's largest employer. Only Wal-Mart, which employs over 1 million workers, comes close with regard to the number of jobs available.

And agencies in every area of the government are hiring. Dozens of government agencies – from small independent agencies like the Federal Election Commission to larger cabinet-level agencies like the Department of the Health and Human Services – are looking for smart and enthusiastic people to join their teams.

The federal government's official job site is USAJOBS, found at www.usajobs.opm.gov. The web site features tens of thousands of jobs and is updated daily to reflect the many new jobs agencies are posting.

Federal Hiring Has Increased Over The Past Five Years



NUMBER OF FULL-TIME, PERMANENT HIRES

SOURCE: FEDSCOPE

There's A Job For Every Interest

Think you need a political science degree to work for the federal government? Think again! The federal government's broad mission means there are jobs in every field.

Looking for a job as an architect? You can work for the Rural Housing Service, the Department of Homeland Security, or one of many other federal agencies. The Department of Veterans Affairs, for example, needs architects to identify the most efficient procedures for hospital construction projects.

Think that biologists are only needed at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention? Think again. Biologists are needed in the Food and Drug Administration to determine the safety and effectiveness of medical products and study the effects of additives and contaminants in food. At the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, biologists track endangered species and reconstruct wildlife habitats.

Do you want to work in the fields of Informational Technology or Computer Technology? Try the Internal Revenue Service or the U.S. Census Bureau. Or, check out the Federal Aviation Administration, which hires computer specialists to design and manage projects to support the National Airspace System.

Agencies in Every Area of the Federal Government Are Full of People Like You

AGENCIES WITH MORE THAN 10,000 FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

Dept. of Defense (Civilian)	595,889
Dept. of Veterans Affairs	191,230
Dept. of Treasury	110,739
Dept. of Homeland Security	108,826
Dept. of Justice	96,330
Dept. of Agriculture	88,231
Social Security Administration	60,983
Dept. of Interior	59,325
Dept. of Transportation	56,897
Dept. of Health and Human Services	51,984
Dept. of Commerce	30,787
National Aeronautics & Space Administration	18,354
Environmental Protection Agency	16,826
Dept. of Labor	15,237
Dept. of Energy	15,082
Dept. of State	14,048
General Services Administration	12,609
Dept. of Housing & Urban Development	10,099

SOURCE: FEDSCOPE, JUNE 2003

MAKE YOUR MAJOR WORK FOR YOU

ANY MAJOR

Administrative Officers
Air Traffic Controllers
Civil Rights Analysts
Claims Examiners
Contract Administrators
Environmental Protection
Specialists
General Investigators
Internal Revenue Officers
Management Analysts
Paralegal Specialists
Public Affairs Specialists
Writers and Editors
.....

ACCOUNTING

Accountants
Auditors
Contract Specialists
Financial Managers
GAO Evaluators
Internal Revenue Agents
.....

AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Engineers
Agricultural Commodity
Graders
Soil Conservationists
.....

ANTHROPOLOGY

Anthropologists
Museum Specialists
.....

ARCHEOLOGY

Archaeologists
Museum Curators
.....

ARCHITECTURE

Architects
Construction Analysts
Landscape Architects
Naval Architects
.....

ARTS, FINE AND APPLIED

Exhibits Specialists
General Arts and
Information Specialists
Illustrators
Photographers
Recreation Arts Therapists
.....

ASTRONOMY

Astronomers
Geodesists

AVIATION

Aircraft Operators
Air Safety Investigators
Air Traffic Controllers
Aircrew Technicians
Aviation Safety Inspectors
.....

BIOLOGY

General Biological Scientists
Microbiologists
Range Conservationists
Wildlife Biologists
Zoologists
.....

BOTANY

Agronomists
Botanists
Forestry Technicians
.....

BUSINESS

Budget Analysts
Contract Specialists
Import Specialists
Internal Revenue Officers
Trade Specialists
.....

CHEMISTRY

Chemical Engineers
Environmental Engineers
Food Technologists
Intelligence Specialists
Toxicologists
.....

COMMUNICATIONS

Telecommunications
Managers
Communications Specialists
Public Affairs Specialists
Writers and Editors
.....

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Computer Science Specialists
Computer Specialists
Program Managers
Computer Programmers
.....

CORRECTIONS

Correctional Officers
Program Analysts
.....

COUNSELING

Chaplains
Psychologists
Social Service Aides
Educational Services
Specialists

CRIMINAL JUSTICE/LAW ENFORCEMENT

Border Patrol Agents
Criminal Investigators
Internal Revenue Officers
Police Officers
United States Marshals
.....

DIETETICS AND NUTRITION

Dietitians
Food Technologists
Nutritionists
.....

ECONOMICS

Actuaries
Budget Analysts
Contract Specialists
Economists
Financial Analysts
Loan Specialists
Trade Specialists
.....

EDUCATION

Education and Training
Specialists
Vocational Rehabilitation
Specialists
Public Health Educators
Instructional Systems
Specialists
.....

EMPLOYEE/LABOR RELATIONS

Labor Relations Specialists
Mediators
.....

ENGINEERING

Civil Engineers
Electrical Engineers
Aerospace Engineers
Nuclear Engineers
.....

ENGLISH AND LITERATURE

Editorial Assistants
Public Affairs Specialists
Technical Writers and Editors
Program Managers
.....

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

Ecologists
Environmental Protection
Assistants
Fish and Wildlife Refuge
Managers

FINANCE

Budget Analysts
Financial Administrators
Securities Compliance
Examiners
.....

FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Foreign Affairs Specialists
Intelligence Specialists
.....

FORESTRY

Foresters
General Fish and Wildlife
Administrators
.....

GEOLOGY

Geologists
Hydrologists
Oceanographers
.....

HEALTH

Environmental Health
Technicians
General Health Scientists
Industrial Hygienists
Public Health Programs
Specialists
.....

HISTORY

Archivists
Historians
Intelligence Specialists
Museum Curators
.....

HORTICULTURE

Agricultural Management
Specialists
Plant Protection and
Quarantine Specialists
.....

HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATION

General Health Scientists
Health System Specialists
Public Health Specialists
.....

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Equal Employment
Opportunity Specialists
Military Personnel
Management Specialists

For more federal jobs listed by degree, please visit www.usajobs.opm.gov/ei23.asp.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Foreign Affairs Specialists
 Intelligence Specialists
 International Relations Workers
 Public Affairs Specialists
 Trade Specialists

JOURNALISM

Agricultural Market Reporters
 Printing Specialists
 Public Affairs Specialists
 Writers and Editors

LAW

Administrative Law Judges
 Attorneys
 Paralegal Specialists
 Patent Attorneys
 Tax Law Specialists

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
 Inspectors
 Border Patrol Agents
 Criminal Investigators
 Immigration Inspectors
 United States Marshals

LIBERAL ARTS/HUMANITIES

Customs Inspectors
 Equal Opportunity Compliance
 Specialists
 Management Analysts
 Veterans Claims Examiners

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Computer Science Specialists
 Financial Managers
 Management Analysts

MANAGEMENT, FACILITIES

General Facilities and
 Equipment Managers
 Production Controllers

MANAGEMENT

Administrative Officers
 Manpower Development
 Specialists

MARKETING

Supply Specialists
 Trade Specialists
 Business and Industry
 Specialists

MATHEMATICS

Computer Scientists
 Mathematical Statisticians
 Operations Research Analysts

MEDICAL SUPPORT

Diagnostic Radiological
 Technicians
 Medical Technicians
 Nuclear Medicine Technicians

METEOROLOGY

Meteorologists
 General Physical Scientists

NURSING

Nurses
 Physicians' Assistants

PARK/RECREATION MANAGEMENT

Foresters
 Outdoor Recreation Planners
 Park Rangers

PHARMACY

Consumer Safety Inspectors
 Pharmacists
 Pharmacologists

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Corrective Therapists
 Recreation Specialists
 Sports Specialists

PHYSICS

Astronomers
 Health Physicists
 Hydrologists
 Oceanographers
 Patent Examiners
 Physicists

POLITICAL SCIENCE/GOVERNMENT

Archivists
 Budget Analysts
 Historians
 Foreign Affairs Specialists
 Public Affairs Specialists

PSYCHOLOGY

Educational Services
 Specialists
 Employee Development
 Specialists

Personnel Staffing Specialists
 Psychologists

PUBLIC HEALTH

Environmental Health
 Technicians
 Health System Specialists
 Public Health Educators

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Budget Analysts
 Management Analysts
 Public Utilities Specialists

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Foreign Affairs Specialists
 Public Affairs Specialists

REHABILITATION THERAPY

Occupational Therapists
 Physical Therapists

SOCIAL WORK

Psychology Aides
 Social Service Aides
 Social Workers

SOCIOLOGY

Social Scientists
 Social Service Aides
 Sociologists

STATISTICS

Actuaries
 Computer Science Specialists
 Operations Research Analysts
 Statisticians

SYSTEMS ANALYSIS

Computer Science
 Specialists
 Computer Specialists

THEOLOGY

Chaplains
 Social Workers

TRANSPORTATION

Highway Safety Specialists
 Transportation Industry
 Analysts

ZOOLOGY

Physiologists
 Zoologists



★ **Did You Know...**
 Federal employees form the front lines of defense against natural disasters. The raging blazes in California were fought by employees of the Forest Service, the risk and management of mudslides was handled by the Geological Survey and disaster relief was provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

3 You Can Make A Difference

Whatever issue or cause you're most passionate about, you can find a job in the government, where you can continue to change the world. Read on for just a few examples.

IT WAS FEDERAL WORKERS WHO ...

- ★ Invented the CAT scan, which helps diagnose cancer, brain disorders and other diseases
- ★ Identified the HIV virus in cooperation with French scientists
- ★ Spearheaded the national effort to restore the Florida Everglades, the world's largest environmental restoration project
- ★ Developed radar and sonar technology
- ★ Developed hydroelectric power and new methods of flood control on the nation's rivers
- ★ Pioneered the bar code scanner
- ★ Made it possible for humans to travel in space
- ★ Developed the vaccine for meningitis and drugs for malaria
- ★ Designed low-cost wastewater treatment systems for use in rural communities
- ★ Developed the Internet

Do You ... Visit nursing homes or coordinate blood drives?

At the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, you can perform research on children's growth and development, prevent and treat disease and ensure that children live a healthy and productive life. www.nichd.nih.gov/

Do You ... Volunteer at food banks or homeless shelters?

At the Food and Nutrition Service, you can develop and improve programs that provide meals to children and adults in day care centers, nursing homes, Head Start centers and family day care homes. www.fns.usda.gov

Do You ... Clean up parks and streams or organize recycling programs?

At the National Park Service, you can protect forests, manage wildlife and lakeshores and present educational programs to children and families about the conservation of cultural and natural resources. www.nps.gov

Do You ... Travel to less-developed countries to teach or volunteer?

At the Foreign Agricultural Service, you can administer grants for programs that combat hunger and malnutrition, promote sustainable development and encourage the growth of democratic participation in developing countries. www.fas.usda.gov/

Do You ... Mentor at-risk youth or tutor children?

At the Bureau of Indian Affairs, you can work with students, parents and counselors to develop programs that will help more young Native Americans stay in school, succeed, and go on to college. www.doi.gov/bureau-indian-affairs.html

The Federal Government Can Help Pay for School

Student loans and the need to pay them back are a reality for many students. You should know that the federal government can provide loan repayment assistance for top candidates, and offers special scholarship and fellowship programs that pay for undergraduate and graduate schooling.

Loan Repayment Assistance

Federal agencies were authorized in 2001 to provide loan repayment assistance to top candidates and employees. In 2002, 16 agencies participated, with the State Department and General Accounting Office providing the most loan repayment. Eight other agencies indicated that they plan to use the program in the near future. www.opm.gov/oca/PAY/StudentLoan/HTML/Report.ASP

- ★ \$10,000: The amount of loan repayment assistance the federal government may now offer per year to employees if they sign up for a three-year commitment
- ★ \$60,000: The total amount that a federal agency may offer for each individual employee, with a three-year commitment
- ★ \$3.1 Million: The total amount of loan repayment the government provided in 2002 – and this is expected to increase in future years

Programs That Pay You ... to Be a Student

Many agencies offer specialized scholarship and fellowship programs to encourage students to work for the federal government. Here are a few examples:

Scholarship for Service Program: Students studying information assurance at select schools can receive tuition, room and board and stipends for the final two years of undergraduate studies or for a master's degree. In exchange for the scholarship, students agree to work for the federal government for a period equivalent to the length of the scholarship.

www.opm.gov/hr/employ/products/recruitment/Scholarship/scholarshipmain.htm

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Science To Achieve Results (STAR) Graduate Fellowship Program: STAR awards 60 graduate education fellowships for masters- and doctoral-level students each year to encourage promising students to obtain advanced degrees and pursue careers in environmental fields. www.epa.gov/epahome/intern.htm

National Security Education Program (NSEP): NSEP awards scholarships to undergraduates for study abroad in areas critical to the country's national security. The program also provides fellowships to students in graduate programs to develop expertise in the languages and cultures of less commonly studied countries. NSEP awardees agree to work for a federal agency involved in national security affairs after graduation. www.ndu.edu/nsep/

Howard Hughes Medical Institute / National Institutes of Health Research Scholars Program: Each year 42 medical and dental students spend nine months to a year conducting biomedical research with senior NIH scientists through the HHMI/NIH Research Scholars Program. Scholars receive a salary while living in a residential community with other participants and are eligible for a scholarship for their remaining year or two of school. www.hhmi.org/research/cloister/index.html



5 You Can Advance Quickly

There are lots of ways for motivated and talented people to advance quickly in the federal government. In fact, it is not uncommon for talented individuals starting at the entry level to nearly double their salary in just three years. With the large number of federal job openings in the next few years, there should be even more opportunities to prove yourself and move up.

Take a look at these examples of fast-track opportunities that also expedite the hiring process:

★ Did You Know...

More than 6,000 Presidential Management Interns (PMIs) have been hired by all cabinet departments and federal agencies since the program launched in 1977.

Federal Career Intern (FCI): This program brings talented people into the government at the entry level for a two-year appointment and usually through a streamlined process. Interested agencies design their own FCI program, but all FCI participants must receive a training component. After two years, successful federal career interns can become permanent civil service employees. For information about career intern openings, contact the agencies in which you are interested directly or visit their Web sites to learn more. Individuals hired through the FCI program typically begin at the GS-7 and GS-9 levels. [See page 14 for more information on the federal pay scale.] www.opm.gov/careerintern/index.htm

Outstanding Scholar Program: Under this program, agencies can directly hire entry-level applicants who have maintained an undergraduate grade point average of 3.5 or better, or who graduated in the upper 10 percent of their graduating class or major university subdivision. Applicants can apply nine months before graduation. Finding the jobs available to “outstanding scholars” is not always easy, because there is no single place to look. However, a good place to start is USAJobs’ entry-level professional listings, using “scholar” as a key word. Students who receive a permanent job through the Outstanding Scholar Program typically come in at the GS-7 pay scale, and can move up to a GS-9 after a year. [See page 14 for more information on the federal pay scale.] www.opm.gov/employ/luevano.htm

Presidential Management Interns (PMI): Designed to prepare talented people for upper-level management positions in the federal government, the PMI program is a prestigious two-year program for those who are completing any type of graduate degree. Applicants must first receive a nomination from their school before participating in the PMI program’s rigorous application process. PMI positions are structured by the individual agencies and differ widely. All include some training opportunities and a rotational assignment, either within the agency or to another agency or branch of government. PMIs are appointed at the GS-9 level, and after one year are eligible for promotion to GS-11. After two years, PMIs are eligible for conversion to permanent positions and promotion to the GS-12 level. [See page 14 for more information on the federal pay scale.] www.pmi.opm.gov

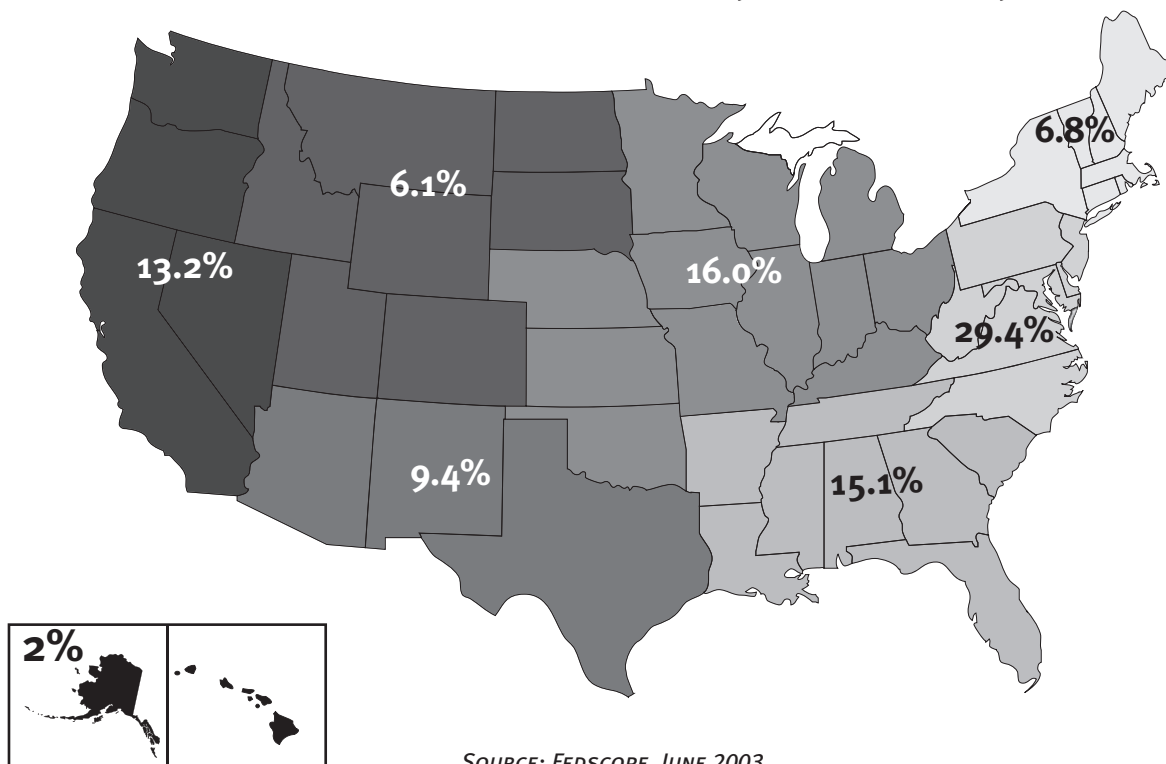
There Are Federal Jobs Around the Country . . . and Around the World

Working for the federal government doesn't mean you have to relocate to Washington, D.C. In fact, about 85 percent of federal jobs are located outside of the greater metropolitan D.C. area.

Opportunities with the federal government span the country... and the world. With offices in small towns and big cities across America, and embassies all over the globe, you can work wherever your heart takes you. A career may send you abroad, keep you close to home, or move you about the country. The choices are limitless.

★ **Did You Know...**
Over 50,000 civilians work for a variety of federal agencies in foreign posts around the world.

You Can Work for the Federal Government in Any Area of the Country . . .



... And in Cities from New York to San Diego, or Someplace in Between

<i>METROPOLITAN AREA</i>	<i>NUMBER OF PERMANENT FULL-TIME FEDERAL CIVILIAN JOBS</i>
Washington, D.C.	253,695
Norfolk	37,957
Baltimore	32,751
Philadelphia	30,118
Atlanta	28,247
San Diego	27,527
Chicago	25,513
New York	24,602
Salt Lake City	21,816
Oklahoma City	21,330
Los Angeles	20,484
Honolulu	18,495
San Antonio	18,372
Kansas City	17,964
Denver	17,617
Boston	15,260

*FULL-TIME PERMANENT FEDERAL JOBS IN METROPOLITAN AREAS
SOURCE: US OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT, FEDSCOPE, JUNE 2003*

DO YOU WANT TO WORK FOR AMERICA - OVERSEAS?

General Services Officers in the Department of State's Foreign Service manage the facilities and logistics at U.S. embassies and consulates in countries around the world. Population Health Nutrition Officers for the U.S. Agency for International Development serve a variety of roles abroad including health, humanitarian assistance and strengthening democracy.

The Federal Government Values Diversity

It only makes sense that the backgrounds of those who work for America reflect the diverse makeup of the nation's citizens. Through a strong commitment to this principle and targeted outreach to underrepresented communities, the federal government has been particularly successful in building and maintaining a diverse workforce at all levels. And the outreach begins at the undergraduate level. Federal agencies offer a number of internship and recruitment programs that specifically target communities with a history of lesser representation in federal service.

Diversity Best Practices recently awarded a CEO Leadership Award to **National Institutes of Health (NIH)** Director Elias Zerhouni, MD, in recognition of the agency's efforts to ensure a diverse medical research workforce. The NIH offers a variety of internships, such as the **Undergraduate Scholarship Program** designed to expand the pool of students from disadvantaged backgrounds interested in careers in biomedical research. www.jobs.nih.gov or ugsp.info.nih.gov/

The **Department of Energy's Mickey Leland Energy Fellowship** encourages students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and Tribal Colleges and Universities to gain experience through summer internships and to consider employment with the federal government after graduation. Leland Fellows have the opportunity to get involved in a variety of projects related to fossil energy in field offices around the country as well as at Department headquarters in Washington, D.C. fossil.energy.gov:7778/education/lelandfellowships

The **Department of Transportation's Summer Transportation Internship Program for Diverse Groups** promotes opportunities at Transportation to women, individuals with disabilities and minorities. Interns can get experience in a variety of fields, including economics, engineering, law, business, environment and criminal justice. www.fhwa.dot.gov/education/stipdg.htm

As of September, 2001, the government was comprised of:

- ★ 56 percent men, 44 percent women
- ★ 69 percent non-minority, 31 percent minority
- ★ 7 percent persons with disabilities



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

John V. Wright, Jr.,
*National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Disability Ambassador*

John Wright, Jr. was born with cerebral palsy (CP), a disorder that affects body movement and muscle coordination. In John's case, his CP affects his walking gait and speech, but his disability has not hindered his work at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) where he worked for nearly 30 years. A computer program called "Naturally Speaking" allows him to write by speaking to his computer, which then translates his speech to text.

Until 2002, John managed a staff of 24 at the Weather Forecast Office – an agency within NOAA – in Blacksburg, Virginia, where he arrived after positions in Texas and Kansas. In 2002, John became NOAA's Disability Ambassador and now works closely with Virginia Polytechnic Institute, where he serves as Coordinator for Disability Outreach and Advocacy. He is responsible for programs that aspire to motivate students with disabilities to pursue higher education and career opportunities.

"Don't allow others to decide what you can and cannot do. Everyone has the right to make those decisions for themselves."

– JOHN V. WRIGHT, JR.

8 Federal Jobs Pay Better Than You Think

How well do government jobs pay? Oftentimes the short answer is pretty well. Salaries for most federal civil service jobs are set on the “General Schedule,” or “GS” pay scale, which maps required experience and level of job responsibility against a system of grades and steps within each grade.

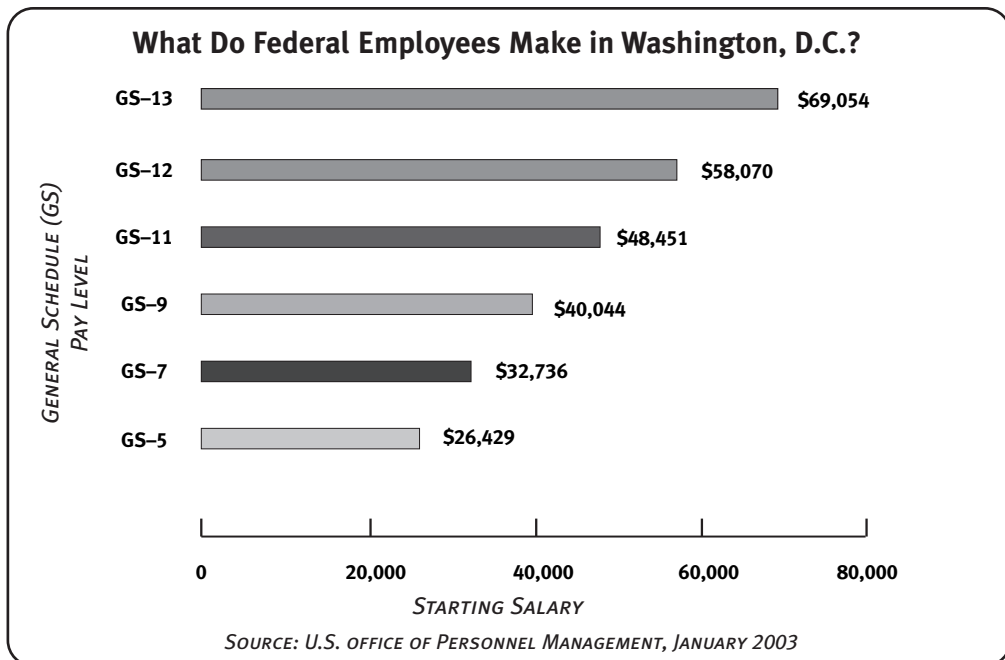
★ Did You Know...

The percentage of women in federal senior executive positions is more than double that of women on the boards of Fortune 500 companies.

A combination of three main factors can help you understand where you are likely to fit on the GS scale:

- 1. Education.** A college graduate with a four-year degree typically starts out at the GS-5 or GS-7 levels, whereas someone with a master’s degree typically starts at a GS-9 or higher.
- 2. Experience.** Your salary can rise pretty quickly as you gain experience in the government; for example, you can move from a GS-7 to a GS-11 in two years, which is nearly a 50 percent increase in pay. Similarly, agencies take previous work experience into account when determining salary.
- 3. Where you live.** The federal government employs people all around the country, and adjusts the pay accordingly in areas with higher costs of living. This is called a “locality pay rate adjustment.”

Remember that these are just rules of thumb – and that advancement can be quick at the entry levels. It is not unusual for capable individuals starting at the GS-5 level to advance to the GS-11 level in three years, or for someone starting at the GS-9 level to advance to the GS-13 level in three years, for example.



Average Annual Salaries in the Federal Government

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Average Salary</i>
All Occupations	\$58,282
Attorney	\$104,890
Astronomer	\$104,322
Financial Manager	\$93,676
Aviation Safety Specialist	\$86,893
Economist	\$83,453
Public Health Specialist	\$80,432
Chemist	\$80,065
Microbiologist	\$76,721
Statistician	\$76,539
Trade Specialist	\$75,956
Electric Engineer	\$75,716
Architect	\$74,903
Computer Specialist	\$74,229
Foreign Affairs Specialist	\$74,164
Criminal Investigator	\$73,731
Accountant	\$72,897
Intelligence Analyst	\$71,482
Public Affairs Specialist	\$70,128
Librarian	\$66,557
Land Surveyor	\$62,744
Nurse	\$60,951
Patent Technician	\$60,264
Social Worker	\$58,215
Customs Inspector	\$48,356
U.S. Marshall	\$47,811
Law Clerk	\$47,499
Park Ranger	\$43,176
Secretary	\$37,317
Engineering Draftsman	\$37,214
Computer Clerk	\$37,188
Human Resources Assistant	\$34,328
Medical Technician	\$32,230
Dental Assistant	\$30,172

SOURCE: U.S. OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT, FEDSCOPE, JUNE 2003

★ Did You Know...

The average entry level federal salary for people with a bachelor's degree in 2002 was \$33,746.

Flexible Work Schedules and Benefits Encourage Work–Life Balance

You want to make a difference – but you also want to have a life! Having a healthy work–life balance is important, and in the federal government, it is not only possible, it’s encouraged.

Federal benefits that enable you to have a balanced life include:

- ★ Flexible work schedules: The flexibility to structure your work hours means you can start and finish work early to take night classes, or you can compress your work schedule to complete 40 hours in nine days and take every other Friday off!
- ★ Great health coverage: Select from one of the widest selections of health plans anywhere. The federal government also offers great deals on life insurance and long-term care insurance.
- ★ Generous annual and sick leave: In addition to 10 federal holidays, new employees get 13 days of vacation and 13 days of sick leave a year. Vacation time increases to four weeks after just three years.
- ★ Help paying for that commute: Federal agencies offer subsidies for mass transit where appropriate, and many also enable you to telecommute from your own home.
- ★ Child care assistance: Many agencies offer on-site child care as well as child care referrals and related resources.
- ★ Great retirement: The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) is the government’s 401(k) retirement plan in which agencies match a portion of your own investment. This is part of a generous three-tiered retirement plan, which also includes social security benefits and a pension.

“I’ve functioned in the federal service as an engineer, as an astronaut, as a physician, as a manager and leader. I’ve had all those jobs. I’ve been in five different agencies . . . There’s not many places you could do that.”

-JAMES BAGIAN



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

James Bagian

*Director, National Center for Patient Safety, Veterans Health Administration,
Department of Veterans Affairs*

Over the course of his twenty-five year career with the federal government, James Bagian has patrolled the skies as an Air Force Colonel, developed housing projects as an engineer, and worked as a flight surgeon, a pilot, and a freefall parachutist. Plus, as a trained astronaut, he’s been in outer space twice.

In the private sector, Dr. Bagian may have had to work for ten different employers to rack up this kind of experience. But in the public sector, he was able to follow his interests, working the entire time for Uncle Sam.

10 The Federal Government is a Career Builder

Going for the “gold-watch retirement” after a faithful career in government is not the only path a government employee can take. In fact, the average person makes 10 job changes over the course of his or her career, so it makes sense to look at each job as a career builder.

Furthermore, once you are a federal employee, it is relatively easy to switch jobs within your agency or to other agencies. This means you can have many different jobs with the federal government and continue to build up your seniority, salary, vacation and retirement.

Alternatively, if you are interested in traversing the public and private sectors, federal government experience can be an unparalleled training ground or a way to apply your skills later on in your career.

★ **Did You Know...**
Approximately one-quarter of all American Nobel Prize laureates have spent at least some portion of their careers in federal service.

"The experiences I gained at the Justice Department were instrumental to my development as an attorney. Representing the United States was a unique honor and privilege that provided me with enormous responsibility at an earlier stage in my career."

– BOB VAN KIRK



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Robert Van Kirk

Partner, Williams & Connolly LLP

At thirty-five years old, Bob Van Kirk became a partner at Williams & Connolly LLP, one of the top litigation firms in the country. How did he get there? Well, serious talent and hard work had something to do with it. And so did the skills he learned and the experience he gained in seven years of government service.

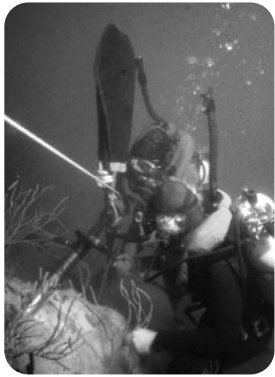
From 1991 to 1995, Van Kirk worked at the Department of Justice as a trial lawyer. He joined the Office of Counsel to the President in 1995, and then served as Acting Assistant Attorney General, where he made recommendations to the President regarding the selection of federal appellate and district court judges.

As an attorney in both the public and private sectors, Bob has gained broad litigation experience. Indeed, he has had the opportunity to argue cases at every level of the federal system, including the United States Supreme Court.

CABINET-LEVEL AGENCIES: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The 15 cabinet agencies are responsible for national priorities ranging from education to defense to transportation.

Every department is made up of multiple subagencies. You can find a complete listing of all subagencies and their Web sites on FirstGov.gov, the U.S. government's official web portal to all federal, state and local government web resources and services. (www.firstgov.gov/Agencies/Federal/Executives.html) Below is a sampling of the vital functions carried out by the cabinet agencies.



★ **Did You Know...**
Pilots with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration fly into the center of hurricanes to collect data which they then transmit via satellite to the National Hurricane Center.

Department of Agriculture

www.usda.gov

- ★ Ensures safety of nation's food supply
- ★ Provides housing, loans and other assistance to rural communities
- ★ Oversees food stamps and other hunger and poverty programs
- ★ Protects natural resources and coordinates initiatives for agricultural conservation

Department of Commerce

www.doc.gov

- ★ Regulates commercial transactions that occur within the U.S., and promotes the export of manufactured goods and services
- ★ Collects data to support business and government, including population and economic censuses
- ★ Provides patent and trademark protection for inventions and corporate identification
- ★ Protects the environment and marine resources

Department of Defense

www.defenselink.mil

- ★ Creates military policy, oversees acquisitions contracts and analyzes intelligence
- ★ Controls the administration of the nation's military affairs in over 6,000 locations
- ★ Researches, develops and tests new technologies and military equipment
- ★ Takes the lead in defense, peacekeeping and humanitarian efforts around the world

Department of Education

www.ed.gov

- ★ Monitors schools to make sure they have good teachers, curricula and facilities
- ★ Prohibits discrimination and ensures equal access to a quality education
- ★ Establishes policies on federal financial aid, and distributes and monitors those funds
- ★ Collects data on America's schools and disseminates that research

Department of Energy

www.doe.gov

- ★ Ensures that the nation has a consistent and safe supply of energy
- ★ Develops clean fuel initiatives and invests in cutting edge research to identify new energy sources like hydrogen fuels and fusion technologies
- ★ Regulates the integrity and safety of the country's nuclear weapons, promotes international nuclear safety and advances nuclear non-proliferation
- ★ Establishes and monitors environmental policies, standards and guidance

Department of Health and Human Services

www.hhs.gov

- ★ Develops programs and regulations covering food safety and medical research
- ★ Oversees national health and well-being for all populations, from infants to the elderly
- ★ Leads programs on food safety, medical research, drug abuse prevention and more
- ★ Gives grants to local and state governments to provide essential health services

Department of Homeland Security

www.dhs.gov

- ★ Protects the nation against further terrorist attacks
- ★ Analyzes threats and intelligence, guards our borders and airports and coordinates the response of our nation for future emergencies
- ★ Provides natural disaster assistance
- ★ Administers immigration laws and provides citizenship services

Department of Housing and Urban Development

www.hud.gov

- ★ Enacts programs to meet the needs of the nation's cities
- ★ Ensures access to decent, safe and affordable housing for America's families
- ★ Insures mortgages, and provides federal housing subsidies for low- and moderate-income families
- ★ Provides grants to states for community development programs and the enforcement of fair housing and equal housing access laws

Department of the Interior

www.doi.gov

- ★ Manages the nation's natural resources, from land and water to coal and natural gas
- ★ Offers recreational opportunities while simultaneously protecting fish and wildlife
- ★ Provides federal services to approximately 1.5 million American Indians and Alaska Natives
- ★ Conducts a wide range of biological and geological research

Department of Justice

www.usdoj.gov

- ★ Provides federal leadership in the prevention and control of all types of crime, from white collar crime to espionage
- ★ Enforces laws and regulations related to the trafficking and use of illicit drugs
- ★ Ensures public safety against foreign and domestic threats
- ★ Ensures fair and impartial administration of justice for all Americans

Department of Labor

www.dol.gov

- ★ Enforces laws to ensure safe working conditions, minimum wages and overtime pay
- ★ Works to meet the workplace needs of groups such as the disabled, the elderly and minorities
- ★ Provides information on employment to the public and employers
- ★ Develops and disseminates data on employment and other labor economics indicators

★ Did You Know...

The Department of Housing and Urban Development is one of the most diverse federal agencies, with more than 48% of its employees of minority background.

Department of State

www.state.gov

- ★ Represents U.S. foreign policy in embassies and missions around the world
- ★ Promotes freedom, security and global stability
- ★ Coordinates diplomatic strategy for the nation and our allies
- ★ Negotiates treaties and guides the President's foreign policy

Department of Transportation

www.dot.gov

- ★ Ensures the safety of vehicles and travelers
- ★ Oversees and regulates the safety of air travel and transportation
- ★ Sets national transportation policy for railroads, highways and seaways
- ★ Builds and supports the nation's transportation infrastructure, including mass transportation systems

Department of the Treasury

www.treas.gov

- ★ Reviews domestic and international economic issues and developments in the financial markets
- ★ Assists in the formulation and execution of U.S. international economic and financial policy
- ★ Prints and coins money and other financial instruments issued by the government
- ★ Develops and implements tax policies and programs

Department of Veterans Affairs

www.va.gov

- ★ Provides healthcare and social support services, and administers veterans' benefits to those who have served in the U.S. military
- ★ Delivers healthcare and other services to the families and survivors of veterans
- ★ Offers rehabilitative assistance to veterans with disabilities
- ★ Ensures a smooth transition for veterans from active military service to civilian life

★ Did You Know...

Since 1990 the Department of Energy Office of Environmental Management (EM) has provided over 1.9 million dollars in scholarships to academically accomplished Hispanic students studying disciplines related to EM's mission.



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Angelica Mendoza

*International Trade Analyst, International Trade Administration
Department of Commerce*

Over the past three years as an international trade analyst with the International Trade Administration, Angelica Mendoza has traveled to exotic destinations such as remote cities in China. The reports she compiles are used by delegates from the Department of Commerce to negotiate potential international trade remedies.

Angelica came into the government right from college as a GS-7, with the potential to be promoted to a GS-12 within three years. And three years later, she has fulfilled that potential. Each year, she has received a raise of \$8,000-\$10,000, and she is making about \$30,000 more than she earned when she began with the government.

Where can Angelica go from here? Nowhere but up.

NON-CABINET-LEVEL AGENCIES: WHAT DO THEY DO?

In addition to the cabinet-level federal agencies you already know, there are over 50 additional independent agencies that do important work for the nation. Many of these agencies also encompass subagencies, so be sure to check them out. You can read about some of the larger independent agencies here, but for a complete list visit www.firstgov.gov/Agencies/Federal/Independent.shtml.

Central Intelligence Agency

www.cia.gov

- ★ Coordinates and conducts intelligence and counterintelligence activities
- ★ Provides foreign intelligence to policymakers to help them make decisions
- ★ Operates special centers to address issues like counterterrorism, international organized crime, narcotics trafficking and arms control intelligence

Congressional Budget Office

www.cbo.gov

- ★ Provides Congress with nonpartisan analyses for economic and budgetary purposes
- ★ Assists in developing economic forecasts and cost estimates for proposed policies
- ★ Analyzes the President's budget

Corporation for National and Community Service

www.cns.gov

- ★ Supports voluntary service through programs including Americorps, Senior Corps and Learn and Serve America
- ★ Works with nonprofits, faith-based organizations and schools to provide opportunities for Americans to strengthen communities

Environmental Protection Agency

www.epa.gov

- ★ Safeguards the nation's air, water and land
- ★ Performs environmental research to identify, understand and solve current and future environmental problems
- ★ Ensures that national environmental standards are met and takes steps to assist states in improving environmental quality

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

www.eeoc.gov

- ★ Interprets and enforces federal equal employment laws
- ★ Monitors the federal sector employment discrimination program
- ★ Investigates allegations of discrimination based on race, religion, national origin, gender, age and disability

Federal Communications Commission

www.fcc.gov

- ★ Regulates interstate and international radio, television, satellite, cable and wire communications
- ★ Educates and informs consumers about telecommunications goods and services



Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation

www.fdic.gov

- ★ Insures savings and promotes safe and sound banking practices
- ★ Maintains stability within the nation's financial system

Federal Reserve System

www.federalreserve.gov

- ★ Supervises and regulates banking institutions and protects the credit rights of consumers
- ★ Establishes monetary policy by influencing money and credit conditions in the economy
- ★ Provides financial services to the federal government
- ★ Promotes the stability of the financial system

General Accounting Office

www.gao.gov

- ★ Studies how the federal government spends taxpayer dollars as the “investigative arm” of Congress
- ★ Advises Congress and the heads of executive agencies about ways to make government more effective and responsive
- ★ Evaluates federal programs, audits federal expenditures and issues legal opinions

General Services Administration

www.gsa.gov

- ★ Develops and implements policies to ensure that the government operates efficiently and effectively
- ★ Secures the buildings, products, technology and other essentials federal agencies need

Library of Congress

www.loc.gov

- ★ Serves as the research arm of Congress and functions as the largest library in the world
- ★ Acquires, organizes, preserves and sustains a comprehensive record of American history and creativity for Congress and the nation
- ★ Provides nonpartisan research and analysis on any topic as needed by Congressional staff

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

www.nasa.gov

- ★ Serves as a leading force in scientific research and in stimulating the public's interest in aerospace exploration, as well as science and technology in general
- ★ Ensures that new technologies are disseminated widely and used effectively
- ★ Explores the universe, searches for life and protects our planet through missions into space

National Archives and Records Administration

www.nara.gov

- ★ Preserves our nation's history by overseeing the management of all Federal records and documents, including the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution
- ★ Houses a collection of over 93,000 motion picture films; more than 5 million maps, charts and architectural drawings; and over 207,000 sound and video recordings
- ★ Maintains the Presidential records, personal papers, audiovisual collections and gifts and artifacts of former Presidents at 13 Presidential libraries, projects and museums

Nuclear Regulatory Commission

www.nrc.gov

- ★ Protects public health and the environment from the effects of radiation from nuclear reactors, materials and waste facilities
- ★ Oversees use of nuclear reactors and nuclear materials, as well as the handling of nuclear waste



Office of Management and Budget

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/>

- ★ Assists the President in overseeing the preparation and administration of the federal budget
- ★ Coordinates the Administration's financial management, procurement, information and regulatory policies
- ★ Evaluates agency programs and policies and sets funding priorities

Office of Personnel Management

www.opm.gov

- ★ Functions as the U.S. Government's center for human resources and employment information
- ★ Maintains USAJOBS and StudentJobs, the official federal jobs and internships Web sites
- ★ Provides federal agencies with human resources policies, tools and guidance to allow them to best achieve their goals

Securities and Exchange Commission

www.sec.gov

- ★ Protects investors and maintains the integrity of the securities markets by requiring public companies to disclose financial and other information to the public
- ★ Enforces laws concerning stock exchanges, broker-dealers, investment advisors, mutual funds and public utility holding companies
- ★ Brings civil enforcement actions against individuals and companies that break securities laws

Social Security Administration

www.ssa.gov

- ★ Functions as the nation's primary income security agency, providing financial protection to more than 152 million workers and their families
- ★ Administers the federal retirement, survivors and disability insurance programs
- ★ Distributes monthly Social Security retirement, disability or survivors benefits to over 45 million Americans

Small Business Administration

www.sba.gov

- ★ Maintains and strengthens the nation's economy by aiding, counseling, assisting and protecting the interests of small businesses
- ★ Offers numerous programs and initiatives to help small businesses obtain government contracts
- ★ Provides information about how to obtain financial assistance for those trying to rebuild or recover from national disasters

Smithsonian Institution

www.si.edu

- ★ Functions as the world's largest museum complex and research organization, comprised of 14 museums and the National Zoo in Washington, D.C., and two museums in New York City
- ★ Houses a vast collection of over 142 million objects of historical, cultural and scientific significance
- ★ Provides the public with educational programs and research

United States Agency for International Development

www.usaid.gov

- ★ Serves as the principal U.S. agency offering assistance to countries recovering from disasters
- ★ Furthers America's foreign policy interests in expanding democracy and free markets to the developing world
- ★ Offers direct support to more than 100 countries in long-term economic and social development assistance

★ **Did You Know...**
The Environmental Protection Agency and the National Science Foundation were among the top agencies for overall employee satisfaction according to the Partnership's 2003 Best Places to Work in the Federal Government rankings.

HOW TO FIND YOURSELF A GREAT FEDERAL INTERNSHIP

Internships and other student work opportunities are among the best-kept secrets when it comes to getting a leg up on landing a full-time job with the federal government when you graduate.

As with any type of job, the best way to find out if the federal government is for you is to try it out. But it's not just a chance for you to test-drive the job – the internship also gives the agency a chance to see if they want to offer you a full-time job when you graduate. In some programs you can even get school credit while interning during the summer or during the school year.

★ Did You Know...

The State Department hires more than 900 interns each year to help advance the nation's foreign policy agenda and maintain diplomatic relations throughout the world.

★ HOT TIP ★

There are a few major student employment programs operated by the federal government. But only the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) gives agencies the option to directly bring you on full time after you graduate! Make sure you ask agencies if you can be hired through the SCEP program.

www.opm.gov/employ/students/index.htm

**The key to finding the right internship is to do your homework.
Here are some key steps:**

- ★ Start with a general search to learn about the wide variety of opportunities:
 - www.calltoserve.org
 - www.studentjobs.gov/e-scholar.asp
 - www.students.gov
- ★ Next, research the agencies whose missions interest you most – agencies sometimes only publicize internships on their own Web sites. Refer to page 18 for a listing of links.
- ★ Before you wrap up your search, you should also consider checking out the many organizations that help place students in federal internships and jobs. See page 26 for some examples and links.
- ★ Don't give up too quickly if you don't immediately find what you're looking for. Sometimes the best way to uncover an internship is to call the agency in the location that most appeals to you!



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Krystal Kennedy

Electronics Engineer, Goddard Space Flight Center, NASA

The Director of NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center is a very busy man. So when he personally called Krystal Kennedy to offer her a job, she was shocked. "I mean, who am I?" she said, "Some little person who just graduated from college."

After high school, Krystal attended the NASA PREP Program, which introduced her to engineering and prepared her for college. While earning degrees in Electrical Engineering and Electronics Engineering Technology at Capitol College, she interned at Goddard Space Flight Center for a summer before beginning a co-op that continued through her graduation. And after graduating in 2002, Krystal was asked to join the Goddard staff to work as an electronics engineer.

By taking advantage of NASA PREP, Krystal prepped herself for a great job in the federal government.

A Few Examples of the Many Internship Opportunities with the Federal Government:

The **Department of Commerce's Ronald H. Brown Commercial Service Fellowship** provides tuition, room and board for three years for undergraduates interested in economics and public policy. After college but before entering graduate school in public policy, fellows work for Commerce and are appointed to an overseas position following graduation.
www.woodrow.org/public-policy/rb_description.html

The **National Security Agency's Graduate Training Program** pays for a master's degree in computer science, electrical or computer engineering, systems engineering, or information operations at the Naval Postgraduate School or the Air Force Institute of Technology. Candidates are assigned to a full-time position at NSA headquarters upon completion of the degree.
www.nsa.gov/programs/employ/index.html

The **U.S. Army's Research Laboratory** offers a 3 to 12 month research opportunity for students to pursue studies in biological and medical sciences, information technology, computer science and other related disciplines. It is one of many educational and research opportunities administered by the Department of Energy's Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education.
www.ornl.gov/orise/educ.htm

★ Did You Know...

If you've served in the armed forces, you may be eligible for certain advantages, including preference for initial employment.



Once You Have an Internship Or Student Job, Take Advantage of Every Opportunity!

- ★ Find a mentor (formal or informal) and get to know the staff in your office
- ★ Attend as many info sessions, receptions and events as possible
- ★ Network, network, network!
- ★ Pay attention to the experiences and advice from interns in other offices
- ★ Ask for letters of reference before you leave

Organizations that Facilitate Internship Opportunities

Check if your college offers any special help landing student employment in the federal government – some schools participate in co-op programs that provide academic credit for an internship. And don't forget about all the non-profit organizations that assist in placing students in internships with federal offices. Below are a few examples.

The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Affairs: The Washington Center places students in internships representing major professional fields in the private, public and nonprofit sectors, with over a third going to federal agency positions. www.twc.edu

The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities' National Internship Program (HNIP): The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities places undergraduate and graduate students in federal agency internships across the country. www.hacu.net

National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO): NAFEO is committed to placing students in all of the federal agencies where the needs of the students and of the agencies can be most effectively met. www.nafeo.org

Washington Internships for Native Students (WINS): WINS is offered free of charge to American Indian and Alaska Native students, and is designed to develop leadership skills in students while they intern with federal agencies in Washington, D.C. www.american.edu/wins

Washington Semester: The Washington Semester offers 13 distinct programs that combine internships (frequently with federal agencies) with seminars and a research project. www.washingtonsemester.com

American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES): The AISES Internship Program is a 10-week summer program that provides opportunities to explore federal careers in select agencies. Applicants must be AISES members and maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0. www.aises.org

Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP): Coordinated by the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy and the Department of Defense, the WRP provides internship opportunities in federal agencies to college students with disabilities. www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/brochures/wrp1.html

KEY STEPS FOR FINDING AND APPLYING TO YOUR DREAM JOB

- ★ Internship and volunteer experience matters. Figure out how best to capture these experiences and skills in your résumé, letters and interviews.
- ★ Think creatively. Want to be an accountant? A lawyer? Chances are, there's a job for your desired profession in several agencies and across the world – 84% of all federal jobs are located outside of the Washington, D.C. area.
- ★ Know who does the hiring. The government may be the largest single employer, but each agency does its own hiring. The newly-updated USAJobs site (www.usajobs.opm.gov) provides information on what opportunities are out there.
- ★ Do your research on the different agencies, and then target your job search. Agencies in the executive branch range in size from 100 staff to over 300,000, and each has its own mission and locations. For more details about each agency, check their Web sites or the U.S. Government Manual at www.gpoaccess.gov/gmanual/browse-gm-01.html.



CHECK OUT THE BEST PLACES TO WORK

Find out what federal employees think are the best federal workplaces overall, and the best organizations for effective leadership, teamwork, training and development, work-life balance, and more. Check out www.bestplacestowork.org, where you can see a comprehensive ranking of federal executive branch organizations. The site is a joint effort of the Partnership and American University's Institute for the Study of Public Policy Implementation and is based upon a survey of over 100,000 federal employees.

- ★ Schedule a meeting with your school's career services office, and pay attention to agency information sessions and job fairs – use these as opportunities to network.
- ★ Keep a file with copies of all of your awards, transcripts, writing samples and a current résumé. Being prepared will make the application process much easier.
- ★ Sell yourself! The application process may appear daunting at first, but the agencies just want to make sure they find the best people for the jobs. Use it as an opportunity to show the government who you are and what you've got!
- ★ Patience is a virtue, and no news may be good news. The federal application process typically takes longer than the private sector, but this does not mean that you're out of the running. Sit tight and apply early.
- ★ Follow up! If you need to make a decision but haven't heard back, call the agency contact.
- ★ Keep this handbook as a reference guide (print additional copies at www.calltoserve.org) for info on applying for federal jobs.

Sites That Can Help You Find and Apply for a Federal Job

USA Jobs: www.usajobs.opm.gov

USA Jobs is the government's official job posting site. Start your federal job search here!

- ★ Matches your skills and interests to government careers and sends you regular email messages when positions that meet your criteria are posted
- ★ Allows you to create a résumé suitable for most federal job applications and stores it for applying to multiple agencies
- ★ Highlights hard-to-fill positions and lets you see which agencies have a large number of openings
- ★ Tracks the status of applications you submitted

Student Jobs www.studentjobs.gov

- ★ Serves as a one-stop shop for information on government agencies offering employment opportunities for current students
- ★ Offers a "résumé builder" that helps you create and store a résumé for applying to federal jobs
- ★ Provides links to agency home pages and student employment information pages

Monster Public Service publicservice.monster.com/

- ★ Offers tips on applying for federal jobs and internships, as well as profiles of public servants
- ★ Allows users to search job openings by keyword, location and job category
- ★ Offers a free weekly e-newsletter, "Monster Public Service News," that contains updates on federal openings, hints, tips on applying and more

The Résumé Place www.resume-place.com

- ★ Specializes in helping federal jobseekers write the best possible federal or electronic résumés and KSAs
- ★ Publishes "Ten Steps to a Federal Job," along with a CD-ROM with samples and training curriculum

AvueCentral www.avuecentral.com

- ★ Allows applicants to apply directly to its member agencies through one site
- ★ Provides information on the number of openings in each state
- ★ Offers tips on effective interviewing techniques
- ★ Describes and offers advice on the key steps in the federal hiring process

Federal Job Search www.federaljobsearch.com

- ★ Offers state-by-state information on federal job openings by occupation and the cities where they are located
- ★ Sends applicants regular emails with new postings that match their career interests profile, including titles, salaries and locations of positions

FedWorld www.fedworld.gov

- ★ Provides an inventory of information on job openings gathered from hundreds of federal human resources offices
- ★ Allows applicants to search for jobs by keyword and location

Public Service Employees Network www.pse-net.com

- ★ Provides resources to help with government jobs that require entrance exams and offers sample questions from civil service tests
- ★ Offers links to various personality and interests assessment tests to help applicants select fields and jobs suited to their strengths and occupational preferences



★ Did You Know...

If endangered animals could talk, many would thank federal employees for their survival. The cooperation of the Bureau of Land Management with local conservation groups has helped to save Nevada's Columbia Spotted Frog – just one of many such lucky critters.

A Cheat Sheet on KSAs and How to Write Them

“KSAs” – an acronym for Knowledge, Skills and Abilities – are a set of questions to help determine if you are a good fit for a job, based on (you guessed it!) your combined set of job-related knowledge, skills and abilities.

Think of KSAs as a set of interview questions. This way, you can look at the KSAs as an opportunity to use real-life examples to sell the experiences, education and activities listed on your résumé (and, as an added bonus, you get to edit your answers before you submit them!). Below are examples of real job openings and their associated KSAs from www.usajobs.opm.gov, plus a question that an interviewer might ask to get at the same information.

A Job Announcement For:	. . . Includes a KSA That Reads:	. . . Which is Like an Interviewer Asking:
Investigative Assistant, GS 5/6	Ability to gather facts and communicate findings clearly, both orally and in writing.	“Tell me about a project you worked on in school or in a previous job in which you had to write a report and present the findings to an audience.”
Accountant, GS 5–12	Professional knowledge of accounting methods, principles and procedures in order to evaluate, design, implement and modify systems for adequacy and accuracy of accounting information.	”What accounting methods and principles have you learned that will enable you to evaluate or modify accounting systems? Also, can you tell me about any internships or school projects in which you utilized accounting methods and principles, and how you used them?”
Park Ranger, GS–7	Knowledge of recreation site operation and maintenance techniques and ability to apply them to work.	“I see you volunteered regularly at the regional nature center during your four years, and that you worked as a life guard for a few summers. What did you learn in those experiences and how would you apply it to this job?”
Microbiologist, GS 7–9	Knowledge of safety procedures and safe handling of hazardous biological agents.	“What experiences do you have working in a lab with hazardous biological agents? If somebody in your lab accidentally knocked over a hazardous sample, what procedures would you follow?”
Intelligence Specialist, GS–9	Skill at making presentations in front of a group.	“Tell me about a time when you had to make a persuasive argument, perhaps for a class project or internship. Tell me about another time when you had to make a presentation for a large audience and the tools and techniques you used.”

Isn't My Résumé Enough?

A résumé is an important component of the job application process, but addressing the KSAs listed in a federal job opening gives you an extra chance to draw attention to your strengths and expand upon the specific factors the agency is looking for. Don't exclude anything from your KSA responses just because it is on your résumé.

So ... How Do I Write a KSA?

Apply the same rules when writing KSAs that you would in submitting an essay response or writing sample – use the active tense, don't ramble and make sure you are answering the question being asked. Don't forget to read it over before submitting your responses.

Here are some pointers:

- ★ Read the job announcement carefully, highlighting key words or phrases describing the position responsibilities so you remember to address those points in your KSA responses.
- ★ Go back to your résumé and outline a list of experiences you've had that address each KSA. Review each list and select the items that best illustrate a link between your experience and each KSA as you compose your responses.
- ★ Add information relevant to each KSA that may not be included in your résumé – such as any specialized training, publications, leadership roles, student activities, or awards. Make sure you take credit for your entire range of experiences, including volunteer work, internships, school projects and extracurricular activities.
- ★ Link all these different examples explicitly to the KSA questions. Whether you've worked as a waitress or cashier, served as a student club officer, or volunteered at a nursing home, the key is to tie these experiences back to the KSAs in a way that demonstrates that you are the best candidate for the job being advertised.
- ★ Write your KSAs in the first person, and use concrete examples to illustrate your skills. This is your opportunity to more fully elaborate on skills and responsibilities outlined in your résumé, and examples are much more compelling than simple assertions. Be sure to include examples that demonstrate your ability to take initiative.
- ★ Focus on any outcomes to which you directly contributed, citing quantitative data where possible. For example, use data that measures how much (like how much money or time you generated or saved), or how many (like how many people attended, how many units you produced), and point to positive change (percentage growth or savings) wherever possible.
- ★ Make sure your answers reflect your level of responsibility. Similarly, clearly identify who you interacted with and how (like providing key information to a manager, working with a group of peers, or supervising a team).
- ★ Tailor each KSA answer to read between half a page and a page in length. Remember that a busy person will be reading through your application, so it is important to find the right balance between providing compelling information and information overload.
- ★ Review your answers to ensure they are succinct and easy to read. Always use plain language and don't use acronyms. Focus on content, and don't forget to proofread.
- ★ Ask a friend who knows you well to read over your finished answers. Your reader should make sure that you have included all of your relevant experiences, that your responses flow well, and that the answers don't contain any typos or grammatical errors.



A Sample KSA: Skill in written communication

Below are examples of answers to a common KSA, “skill in written communication.” It should be clear to you which is the stronger response.

Example of a poor response:

My communication skills are excellent. I am often asked to help out in this regard and have been commended for my work.

Example of a better response:

In the past 10 months, I have taken over a number of assignments previously held by my supervisor:

1. I have been drafting monthly reports on leasing activities under the purview of our office. These are routinely approved by my supervisor without change and are circulated to 10 field offices and Regional Directors.
2. I have assumed the responsibility of reporter for the quarterly meeting of the bureau’s Research Directors. Reports of these meetings are reviewed by the Director’s Office prior to distribution to all participants.
3. In January, I completed the course, “Writing Analytical Reports,” offered through the National Independent Study Center. This was a six-month course involving 24 hours of training and covering such areas as: planning an analytical report; collecting and analyzing data; identifying possible solutions to problems addressed in the report; and organizing, writing and editing the report.

In addition, while I was a student in college I developed and was recognized for my strong written communication skills in a variety of capacities:

1. After my junior year, I was selected for a summer internship with my state representative, for whom I drafted constituent correspondence and press releases. Though I was an intern, the majority of the pieces I wrote were sent out without modification.
2. During my senior year, I served as the chapter president of my honor society, and routinely wrote progress reports to send to the headquarters of the honor society.
3. Throughout college I was a staff writer for the student daily newspaper. As a reporter I wrote both short news stories as well as in-depth feature articles on a weekly basis, and was selected for the feature writing award by the editorial board my junior year.



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Nelson Hernandez

*National Coordinator for Community Affairs,
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation*

Navigating the world of personal finances can be complicated. Economically-disadvantaged Americans and recent immigrants are the most likely to have trouble opening a bank account or establishing credit. As a member of the Community Affairs team at the Federal Deposit Insurance Commission, Nelson Hernandez is working to create opportunities for them.

The “Money Smart” program developed by the FDIC Community Affairs team helps economically disadvantaged adults find their way to financial security. The program is free and offered in multiple languages, helping to make the promise of financial security come true for every American, whether it means growing their savings or building equity to buy a home.

“My career has been focused on helping low- and moderate-income people – working people – achieve the American dream.”

–NELSON HERNANDEZ

A Guide to Federal Lingo

Understanding these common federal terms will make you a more knowledgeable, confident and successful job seeker.

Career–Conditional Employee – This refers to someone who must complete three years of service in the government before being acknowledged as an official “career” employee. Status as a “career” employee also gives you an edge when applying for other federal jobs down the road.

Competitive Service – Jobs that must be filled through a fair, open and merit–based process. Most civil service jobs fall under this category.

Declaration for Federal Employment – In order to work for the federal government you must prove U.S. citizenship and comply with draft registration requirements. This form also asks questions about personal debt, employment history and criminal background.

Excepted Service – Federal positions that are not covered by certain civil service personnel rules and regulations.

Federal Résumé – A résumé that contains all the information required to apply for a federal job. Though some vacancy postings refer to this document, there is no actual mandated form.

Form C – (OPM form 1203) An optical scan form – a standardized sheet similar to those used for the SAT – on which applicants mark the answers to employment questionnaires if required for the application process. Some agencies are now able to have applicants answer these questions online.

General Schedule (GS) – The general pay scale system for white collar jobs in the federal government. Positions are identified by GS level from GS-1 to GS-15. See page 14 for more information

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs) – A set of questions to help determine if an applicant is a good fit for the job (see page 29 for more details). Some agencies may refer to KSAs using other names, such as quality ranking factors or supplemental statements.

Occupational Questionnaire – Questionnaire included in some applications aimed at assessing candidate qualifications through detailed multiple choice or yes–and–no questions.

Optional Application For Federal Employment (OF 612) – The closest thing to the federal résumé form that actually exists. This can be used as the resume part of your application for virtually all federal jobs.

OF510 – A booklet published by OPM, also known as "applying for a federal job," that lists all of the information that has to be included on a federal résumé .

Outstanding Scholar Program – A special hiring authority that enables agencies to select entry or near–entry level candidates based on their college performance. Candidates with a 3.5 grade point average or better may be hired directly without a competitive process.

Public Trust Designation – Positions that require applicants to undergo a background check.

Qualifications Standards Operating Manual – OPM's guide to qualifications required for a particular job at a particular grade level.

★ Did You Know...

The National Institutes of Health has developed a vaccine to treat the Ebola virus. Effective in tests on monkeys and other animals, the first human – a registered nurse with the NIH – tested the vaccine in the fall of 2003.

Superior Academic Achievement – In some cases, applicants who do not have the required experience or education to qualify for a job are nonetheless considered qualified if they graduate in the upper third of their college class, have a grade point average of B or better or belong to a nationally recognized honors society like Phi Beta Kappa.

Status Candidates – Job applicants currently working for the federal government or certain former federal employees.

SF-86 – Security questionnaire required for certain positions. Asks questions regarding education, past and current employers, police records, financial situation, drug and alcohol usage, etc.

Term Position – Under term appointment, the employing agency hires someone to work for a limited period of time between one and four years.

Upward Mobility – A program agencies can use to groom talent by creating or restructuring positions so they can be filled by promising entry-level applicants who will then be offered training and other career-development opportunities.

Veterans Preference – In the competitive process, veterans receive preference points that are added to their scores.



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Jared Feinberg

*Foreign Affairs Specialist, Office of the Secretary of Defense,
Department of Defense*

Jared Feinberg came to the government after working for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Deloitte and Touche Europe Services—both the nonprofit and private sectors. In graduate school, Jared received a fellowship that allowed him to work at the Department of State. Soon after, he was hired as a Presidential Management Intern by the Office of Foreign Assets Control at the Department of the Treasury.

After September 11, 2001, looking for ways to stop the flow of money to terrorist organizations became a government priority. Jared was handpicked, despite being a junior member, to lead an interagency team that assisted U.S. allies in investigating financiers of terrorist groups. Responsibility and rewards came with the territory. Today, at age 28, Jared works for the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

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- ★ Red, White and Blue *Public Health Jobs*

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The Partnership for Public Service is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to revitalizing public service through a campaign of educational efforts, policy research, public-private partnerships and legislative advocacy. By improving public understanding and confidence in government, particularly among young people, the Partnership mission fills a critical and unique role by helping to recruit and retain excellence in the federal workforce.

Call to Serve is a national initiative, co-sponsored by the Partnership and the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, that seeks to educate young people about the promise and potential of careers in public service. Its national network includes more than 500 colleges and universities, 60 federal agencies and 10 youth-oriented organizations.



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