GETTING INTO Government

A Guide for High Achievers

ROBERTSON FOUNDATION FOR GOVERNMENT

govloop

This guide was made possible through funding from the Robertson Foundation for Government, E R S R T V S ½ X J E Q M P] J S Y R H helping government meet its talent needs by identifying, educating and motivating top U.S. graduate students to pursue federal government careers in foreign policy, national security and international affairs.

Established by the family of the late philanthropists Charles and Marie Robertson, and named in their honor, the Robertson Foundation for Government pursues a mission that was central to Mr. and Mrs. Robertson's philanthropic activities: strengthening the United States government and increasing its ability and determination to defend and extend freedom throughout the world by improving the training and education of men and women for government service, with particular emphasis on international relations and foreign affairs.

Robertson partnered in the preparation of this guide with GovLoop, the leading knowledge network for government that connects and advances the careers of nearly 70,000 public sector professionals. Through blogs, discussions, research guides, in-person events and online training, GovLoop connects government to improve government through innovative approaches and resources.

INTRODUCTION / OVERVIEW

Me and all my friends
We're all misunderstood
They say we stand for nothing and
There's no way we ever could

Now we see everything that's going wrong
With the world and those who lead it
We just feel like we don't have the means
To rise above and beat it

So we keep waiting
Waiting on the world to change
We keep on waiting
Waiting on the world to change

It's hard to beat the system
When we're standing at a distance
So we keep waiting
Waiting on the world to change

- John Mayer, "Waiting on the World to Change"

If you've ever tapped your foot or nodded your head to Mayer's song and agreed with the lyrics, this guide is a clear call for you to put away your cynicism and do something about society's challenges.

3RI WSPMH ½VWX WXIT MW PEYRGLMRK E GEVIIV MR KSZIVRQ

Now we already hear you saying, "But government is one of those institutions where I feel like I'm 'standing at a distance.' I know people who've tried to get into government, but the process is cumbersome and, after all, isn't there a hiring freeze?"

We know. That's why we created this guide - and we did it with a community-based approach.

We interviewed and surveyed current interns in government, federal agency hiring managers and college/ university career counselors to get their tips - the real deal - on how to break through the barriers and P E R H] S Y V ½ V W X K S Z I V R Q I R X K M K ; I E P W S X V M I H X S I \ X V E G X W through the government hiring process. So that's how we structured this career-related books out there.

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Paul Binkley, Strategic Planning, Education, and Human Capital Consultant

Charles DeLuca, J C, R S Q M W X 'L M I J *M R E R G M E P 3 J ½ G I 9 7 8 V I E W Y V] (I T E V X Q I R X

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Heather Krasna, J, V I I V 'S E G L E R H % Y X L S V S J ± . S F W 8 L E X 1 E X X I V * M R H E * Y P ½ P P M R K 7 X E F P I ' [illegible]

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Joel McFarland, J M, R E K I Q I R X E R H 4 V S K V E Q % R E P] W X (I T E V X Q I R X S J) H Y G E X M S R

Camille Roberts, (R, X L S V * I H I V E P 'E V I I V) \ T I V X 'S E G L '' 'E V I I V 7 I V Z M G I W

Michael Schneider, (M, I G X S V S J X L I ; E W L M R K X S R 4 Y F P M G 4 S P M G] 4 V S K V E Q E X 7] V E G Y W I 9 R M Z I V W M X] ´ W 1 E \ [I P P 7 G L S S P S J 4 Y F P M G 4 S P M G]

Doris Tirone, ; Q E R 6 I W S Y V G I W 7 T I G M E P M W X 2 E X M S R E P % I V S R E Y X M G W E R H 7 T E G I % H Q M R M W X V E X M S R 2 % 7 %

Kathryn Troutman, 8 Y R H I V 4 V I W M H I R X 8 L I 6 I W Y Q I 4 P E G I E R H % Y X L S V S J ± * I H I V E P 6 I W Y Q I + Y M H I &SSO²

Yulia Vershinina, W, W S G M E X I (M V I G X S V 3 J ½ G I S J 'E V I I V % H Z E R G I Q I R X E X , E V Z E V H 9 R M Z I V W M X] / I R R I H] 7 G L S S P S J + S Z I V R Q I R X

Lily Whiteman, 8 H I V E P 8 M Q I W 'S P Y Q R M W X S R ±'E V I I V 1 E X X I V W² E R H % Y X L S V S J ±, S [X S 0 E R H E 8 S T 4 E] M R K * I H I V E P . S F²

As we learned from these experts, it's not easy to sort through the various vacancies, translate the job H I W G V M T X M S R W M R X S T P E M R) R K P M W L E R H O R S [[L I R [L S E

Our Shtick: Yours truly has put together a guide:

1. DISCOVER: How Do I Find Government Career Opportunities?
2. DECIPHER: How Do I Understand the Government Hiring Process?
3. DELIVER: How Do I Cut Through the Crowded Field of Candidates?

These are the three main areas that we believe, if we succeed in giving you a solid understanding, will ge your proverbial foot in the door with enough of a wedge to kick it open and get into government.

So that's our pledge and our challenge to you now that you have this resource available to you:

Stop trying to beat the system from a distance.

Stop waiting for the world to change.

Break in and start working from the inside out.

It begins right here, right now...and we're here to he

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Discover

HOW DO I FIND GO
CAREER OPPORTUN

;LIVI HS]SY ½RH KSZIVRQIRX NSFW# ;LEX X]TIW SJ STT-SVXY
ships and internships to volunteer possibilities that build up your experience? This section will provide a pretty comprehensive answer to those questions.

Of course, the answers depend on the level of government where you are trying to make a difference. Right from the start, we can share with you a few websites that are helpful resources:

Federal

USAJOBS.gov
Jobs.GovLoop.com
TomManatosJobs.com/

State

50StateJobs.com
Career One Stop
GovtJobs.com
Careers in Government

Local

GovJobs.com
ICMA Career Network
PublicServiceCareers.org
Public Tech Jobs

> “Many innovations in policy practices whether it’s in education, sustainability or affordable housing take place at the state and local government levels. Unwilling to wait for Washington and eager to make an impact, many high achieving students pursue careers in cities and states. This often allows them to be at the cornerstone of innovative policy making.”

Yulia Vershinina
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%HZERGIQIRX
,EVZEVH /IRRIH] 7GLSSP

Unfortunately, it’s not as easy as showing up on one of those sites, per JSVQMRK E UYMGO WIEVGL ½RHMRK E JI[NSFW WSVXMRK ISY SQMKLX FI UYEPM ½IH ERH WYFQMXXMRK E VIWYQI 2SRI SJ XLSWI WMXIW EVI TIVJIGX [LIR MX comes to narrowing down your opportunities, so we wanted to give you a few tips we’ve learned based on interviews with experts and our own personal experience.

We also want to be upfront in telling you that this guide is geared largely toward federal opportunities. It’s hard to use a broad brush to talk about federal, state and local government opportunities. That being said, we would encourage you to apply many of these same principles for a federal job search to your quest for government work closer to home. After all, we agree with Yulia Vershinina, Associate Director of Career Advancement at Harvard’s Kennedy School, who said that state and local government positions likely align with many of your interests:

“Many innovations in policy practices whether it’s in education, sustainability or affordable housing take place at the state and local government levels. Unwilling to wait for Washington and eager to make an impact, many high achieving students pursue careers in cities and states. This often allows them to be at the cornerstone of innovative policy making.”

If you are considering a career in state and local government, be sure to look at individual government websites. For these positions, while those WMXIW EFSZI EVI ½RI IWTIGMEPP] MJ]SY´VI [MPPMRK XS [SVO MR NYWX EPSRK ER] geographic location), you should really go to the source - the city, county or state’s website - to get the best information.

Now let’s get to the tips for getting a government job. Are you ready? Let’s go.

USAJOBS.gov

-J [I LEH XS KMZI]SY WSQI EHZMGI MR ½RHMRK XLI VMKLX JIties, it would begin with USAJOBS. And if we had to narrow down your tactical approach there, we’d recommend these two actions:

- 9WI %HZERGIH 7IEVGL XS 6I½RI =SYV 0MWX SJ 3TTSVXYRI
- Create a Saved Search and Set It Up to Receive New Postings

We lay it all out for you below.

Use Advanced Search to Refine Your List of Opportunities

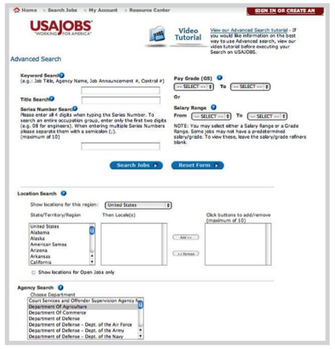
We recommend using the Advanced Search feature for one reason: USAJOBS can be overwhelming. There are thousands of government jobs ERH MX´W LEVH XS ORS[[LMGL SRI MW VMKLX JSV]SY 8LEX stop needs to be the Advanced Search page. Here’s how it works:

1. Sign in if you have an account or create a new account.

This becomes important later on, so we’d recommend you just go ahead and take care of this part now. If you don’t, you will go down this road with us below and might have to redo your work. Take a few minutes and come back. We’ll be waiting for you.

2. Go to USAJOBS.gov and ignore the main search. Click directly on Advanced Search.

See the link by the yellow arrow below? Click it.



Fill out this page on USAJOBS as completely as possible

3. Fill out as many of the parameters as you can.

=SY QMKLX FI XIQTXIH XS ½PP SYX XLI OI][SVH FS\ ERH LMX ±7IEVGL .SFW ² 6IWMWX XLEX YVKI ERH XEOI XLI XMQI XS ½PP SYX XLMW FEKI EW GSQTPIXIP] EW possible. We talk you through each section below.

Keywords

Look at your resume. What words jump out at you again and again? Is it budget analysis, project management or human resources? Those are the words you want to enter here. Just pick one phrase at a time so that you GER WEZI WITEVEXI WIEVGLIW QSVI SR XLEX FIPS[SYX SJ KVSYTW &VS[WI XLEX PMWX SJ KVSYTW MR XLI

Title Search

(S]SY ORS[E WTIGM½G XMXPI MR KSZIVRQIRX XLEX EPMKRW [MXL]SYV WOMPP sets? Maybe it's management analyst, program analyst or contracting of ½GIV 8LMW MW XLI TPEGI XS TYX XLEX MRJSVQEXMSR -]SY´VI PSSOMRK]SV OSVI information about the most common titles in government, we cover that KVSYRH MR XLI ±(IGMTLIV² WIGXMSR T

Of course, before you go ahead and pick a title, you might want to consider what Doris Tirone, Human Resources Specialist at the National %IVSREYXMGW ERH 7TEGI %HQMRMWXVEXMSR 2%7% XSPH YW

Donna Dyer,
(MVIGXSV SJ 'EVIIV 7IVZMGIW
(YOI 9RMZIVWMX] 7ERJSVH 7GLSSP SJ PMIMRK GSQTIXMXMZI ²
Public Policy

"We encourage our students to use key words generously. Don't apply for a federal job XLEX HSIWR´X ½X]SYV UYEPM½GEXMSRW. Use USAJOBS' powerful search engine in a way that makes sure you are not ½RHMRK NSFW JSV not be fully and completely UYEPM½IH XLEX WIVMIW ²

±- HSR´X VIGSQQIRH XLEX TISTPI WIEVGL SRE WTIGM½G NSF XMXPI YR PIWW XLI] EVI EFWSPYXIP] GIVXEMR XLI] [ERX XS LMH SR QMRH SJ [SVO

The reason for that is because there are so many jobs in the federal government with overlapping responsibilities for which individuals possess WOMPP WIXW XLEX QMKLX UYEPMJ] XLIQ JSV XL SW LNSF XMXPI WLEVGL SRE job title, they are taking out a lot of job opportunities that they might otherwise [LMGL]SYJ]SY[MPP 8LI WEQI LSPHW XVYI JSV WIVMIW 9RPIWW]SY EVI EFWSPYXIP] WYVI HSR´X YWI XLEX EW E OI][SVH IMXLIV %KEMR XLI SRP] XLMRK]SY [MPP KIX EVI XLI NSFW MR

Yulia Vershinina of Harvard's Kennedy School echoed that sentiment:

"Students seem to shoot for program analyst role, but those positions XMSRW XIRH XS FI XLI QSWX GSQTIXMXMZI ERH LEVHWXW XS KVX LIR I meet with students, we analyze the skills and see where a TEVXMGYPEV TIVWSR ½XW 3JXIR XMQIW ±WSGMEP WGMRGI EREP]WX² ½XW VIEPP] [IPP [MXL students skills set and applying for this type of position may increase your GLERGIW SJ SJ FIMRK GSQTIXMXMZI ²

To sum up, if you know what you want, go after it. If not, keep your options open.

Series Number

The Occupational Series in government is so complicated it requires an entire handbook to explain. Let us summarize all 200 pages in this [E]]SY´ZI KSX WTIGM½G WOMPPW ERH EKIRGMIW [ERX WTIGM Are you a lawyer? See series 0900. Former accountant or budget geek? Check out 0500. Our hunch is that you're looking somewhere in the white collar occupational series, which narrows your options to only see if any of them apply to you. Dig a bit deeper and you might be able XS TMRTSMRX]SYV ZIV] WTIGM½G RMGLI MR KSZIVRQYRX 8LI narrow down the opportunities and focus your search. We go over the different occupational series and some common titles on page 15 below.

Michael Schneider, Director of the Washington Public Policy Program at Syracuse University's Maxwell School, added:

"Pick your job series wisely. Here's the number of job openings in a sample week based on an extract of white collar opportunities on USAJOBS:

212	Information Technology
202	Generalist
130	Human Resources
117	Acquisition
73	Program Management
51	Budget
16	Auditing
14	Comm / Public Affairs

If your career is focused on being an auditor or communications professionals, there are just not that many openings and you need to be aware of it. There are literally 10 times more IT jobs."

Steve Ressler,
Founder, 7 SZ0SST GSQ

For more information, see Steve's full post entitled, 8MTW SR 4PE Federal Career ²

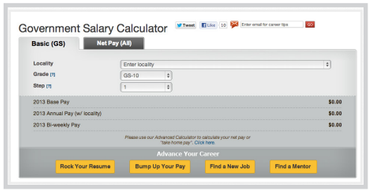
Pay Grade or Salary Range

You might be saying "Show me the money!" and enter a salary range, expecting to get top dollar for your talent. Not so fast. Be sure you have a rudimentary understanding of government salaries. Skim these salary tables for starters. We'd also encourage you to check out our nifty salary calculator:

The 2012 General Schedule is below - many locations also have an additional locality payment XS VI¾IGX LMKLIV GSWX SJ PMZMRK JSV I\EQTP

metro area has locality payment of an extra 24.27% on top of wages). Below is the basic chart:

Grade	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7	Step 8	Step 9	Step 10	WITHIN GRADE AMOUNTS
1	$ 17,803	$ 18,398	$ 18,990	$ 19,579	$ 20,171	$ 20,519	$ 21,104	$ 21,694	$ 21,717	$ 22,269	VARIES
2	20,017	20,493	21,155	21,717	21,961	22,607	23,253	23,899	24,545	25,191	VARIES
3	21,840	22,568	23,296	24,024	24,752	25,480	26,208	26,936	27,664	28,392	728
4	24,518	25,335	26,152	26,969	27,786	28,603	29,420	30,237	31,054	31,871	817
5	27,431	28,345	29,259	30,173	31,087	32,001	32,915	33,829	34,743	35,657	914
6	30,577	31,596	32,615	33,634	34,653	35,672	36,691	37,710	38,729	39,748	1019
7	33,979	35,112	36,245	37,378	38,511	39,644	40,777	41,910	43,043	44,176	1133
8	37,631	38,885	40,139	41,393	42,647	43,901	45,155	46,409	47,663	48,917	1254
9	41,563	42,948	44,333	45,718	47,103	48,488	49,873	51,258	52,643	54,028	1385
10	45,771	47,297	48,823	50,349	51,875	53,401	54,927	56,453	57,979	59,505	1526
11	50,287	51,963	53,639	55,315	56,991	58,667	60,343	62,019	63,695	65,371	1676
12	60,274	62,283	64,292	66,301	68,310	70,319	72,328	74,337	76,346	78,355	2009
13	71,674	74,063	76,452	78,841	81,230	83,619	86,008	88,397	90,786	93,175	2389
14	84,697	87,520	90,343	93,166	95,989	98,812	101,635	104,458	107,281	110,104	2823
15	99,628	102,949	106,270	109,591	112,912	116,233	119,554	122,875	126,196	129,517	3321



Find out additional details about your take home pay and other valuable information with the +SZ0SST +SZIVRQIRX 7EPEV] 'EPGYPEXSV

Most agencies are covered by the General Schedule above, but there are a few outliers. There are special pay systems for a few specialized job ½IPHW WYGL EW PE[IRJSVGIQIRX NYHKIW ERH HSXSW, agencies have their own pay schedule - the Transportation Security Ad QMRMWXVEXMSR 87% YWIW E WTIGMEP TE] FERH W]WXIQ [LMPI ½RERGMEP EKIR GMIW WYGL EW 7IGYVMXMIW)\GLERKI-'SQQMWWMS SRWYQIV *MRER GMEP 4VSXIGXMSR &YVIEY '*4& *IHIVEP ,SYWMR %HQ VEXMS *,*% ERH 3J½GI SJ XLI 'SQTXVSPPIV SJ XLI 'YVV GL their own pay system, which are usually approximately 25% more than WVGQPEXSV RSR ½RERGMEP EKIRGMIW

Location Search

This one is pretty straightforward, right? Well, there are even a few pearls of wisdom we can offer on where you work. If you want to work in a W T I G M ½ G W T S X start with a search on federal jobs by state. It's no surprise XLEX XLI (' QIXVS EVIE (' 1EV]PERH -MVKMRME XMSR WXEXIW PMOI 'EPMJSVRME ERH 8I\EW GSQMERK MRMEW majority of government jobs aren't in Washington - that's just where a lot of them happen to be clustered.

Also, be sure you understand the region around a city where you want to work. Some agencies are not in Washington, DC, but are located on the outskirts in cities like Bethesda or Fort Meade, Maryland, or Arling

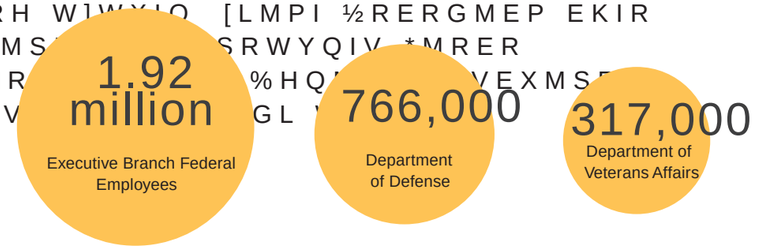
ton and Alexandria, Virginia. It might be worth checking an online map to be sure you aren't unnecessarily limiting yourself by excluding a city on the outskirts of your target location. In addition, most job search sites like USAJOBS.gov let you choose a distance radius to search, so be sure to use that tool.

One quick caveat: Do a reality check for somewhere that you've never lived before. Ask someone who lives in a particular locality about the commuting options and the relative time of each mode of transit. Some XMQIW QMPIW GER XEOI ER LSYV MR E GEV ERH QMPIW minutes on a train.

Agency Search

If we had a dollar for every student fresh out of college that wanted to work at the State Department or USAID, we'd be extraordinarily wealthy. The fact is that there are so many other agencies and sub-agencies that have appealing missions that it might behoove you to skip this box.

It might seem simple, but the largest agencies have the most opportuni ties. Consider, for example, that in December 2012, OPM shows that there were:



8LEX QIERW QSVI XLER SJ IQTPS]IIW ERH QSVI MQTSVXER - job vacancies) are DoD or VA!

Of course, if you have a strong desire to work for a particular agency, go for it. Just remember that there may be even fewer openings in those M W [M X L P I W W (E R S H Y V I E Y] X L E R X W [SVO JSV XLI ;LMXI ,SYWI 7GMIRGI ERH 8IGLRSPSK] 4SPMG]# ;MXL SRP] JYPP XMQI WX are not likely to see many opportunities there. A good place to start for understanding the relative size of each agency is OPM's list of federal employees by agency.

Do you feel like you have no idea what agency might work best for you? Joel McFarland, a former Federal Career Internship Program participant,

8LI 97 3J½GI SJ 1EREKIQIRX 3 Federal)\IGYXMZI & S-Ex for senior leaders - in the larg est cities with a federal presence The list of FEBs is a great chea sheet for cities where there are often large agencies like CDC i Atlanta or USDA in Kansas City [MXL FMK ½IPH SJ headquarters.

Video Tutorial

If you'd like a bit more information on using the Advanced Search, USAJOBS has a snazzy tutorial video that walks you through the Advanced Search page).

says what helped him was to "search around the agency's website to understand the work they do and how they turn that into a job description." Here's a good list of all agencies

With all that being said, this is the part of the search process where we'd recommend that you keep your options a bit more wide open once you're in the system. Take it from Bryan Kempton, Director, Of ½G! SJ 'EVIIV 7IVZMGIW ERH %PYQRM 6IPEXMSRW 9RMZIVWMX] SJ 1EV]PERH School of Public Policy, who advises students on how to navigate the hiring process:

±&I GVIEXMZI ERH ¾I\MFPI [MXL]SYV JIH WXYHIRXW EVI SRP] MRXIVIWXIH MR ½RHM employment opportunities within the most well-known or ob ZMSYW JIHIVEP EKIRGMIW SV HITEVXQIRX WXYHIRXW LS[IZIV VIEPM^I XLEX QER] JIHIVEP ORS[R SV IZIR YRPMOIP] EKIRGMIW ERH HITEV sources for navigating the entirety of the federal government is the Wash MRKXSR -RJSVQEXMSR (MVIGXSV] EZEMPEFPI M YV GEVIIV WIVZMGIW SJ½GI SV YRMZIVWMX] PMFVI GLEWI E WYFWGVMTXMSR ²

Occupational Series

We covered this under "Series" above. The good news is that Advanced Search makes it easy for you to truncate down once you ORS[[LIVI]SY ½X

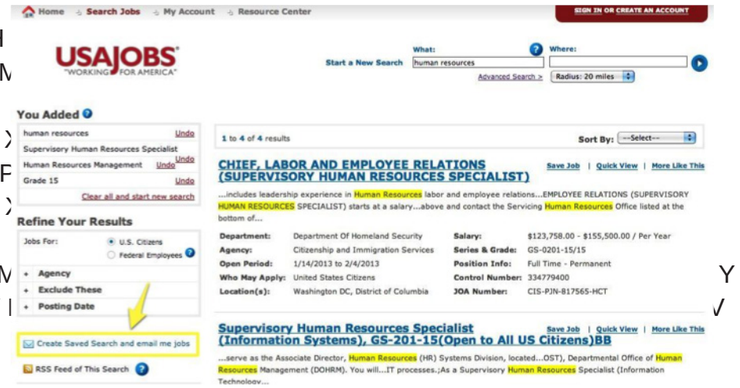
Exclude Postings for Jobs Open Longer Than 30 Days

Don't hit "yes" here. In fact, we wish OPM had an option to "Exclude Postings for Jobs Open Less 8 L E R (E]W ² .YWX PIEZI XLMW EX RS 1SWX of the jobs where you even have a chance are open for longer periods. Sometimes you'll see a job opening with a one year opening period - kind of confusing, eh? Don't worry. Go ahead and apply. This is often called an open, continuous job announcement and throughout the year an agency may interview from this candidate list.

There are a few other boxes to check here and there that are self explanatory, but the quick overview we just shared should get you oriented enough to achieve your number one goal: getting a government job.

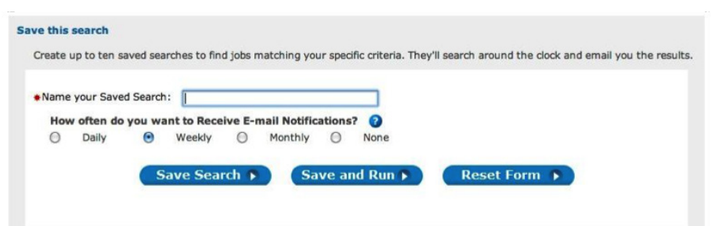
Create a Saved Search and Set It Up to Send New Postings

;LMPI]SY GER XV] XS QEOI]SYV VIWYQI QEXGL E TSWMXMSR should - see below), the best thing you can do to save yourself time is XS ½PXIV SYX XLI STTSVXYRMXMIW XLEX EVIR´X XLI VMKLX ½ search on cruise control. Once you've created an account on USAJOBS and played around with some of the search options, consider setting up one or more saved searches. It's a bit hidden, but on the left WMHIFEV SJ XLI WIEVGL VIWYPXW TEKI]SY [MPP ½RH XLI WE We've highlighted it for you below:



3HHP] [LIR]SY GPMGO SR MX]SY´PP FI FVSYKLX FEGO XS advanced search page and lose your original search, so you'll have to IRXIV]SYV TEVEQIXIVW EKEMR WSVV] ¯ W]WXIQ KPMXGL

2S[LIVI´W XLI QSWX MQTSVXERX TEVX SRI WM^I HSIW RSX ½ [SYPH VIGSQQIRH XLEX]SY WIX YT E JI[½PXIVIH WIEVGLIW S ety of parameters. For instance, you might want to set up separate searches based on keywords, title, series and location. Then you'll come to the bottom of the page and see this:



Give it a clever name like “My Perfect Public Affairs Job” and pick a frequency for the new opportunities that will conveniently start to arrive in your email. Depending on how quickly you want to break into government, you can adjust how often you get updates. Federal careers expert Camille Roberts advises if you are conducting an aggressive job search, to set it for ‘Daily’, especially to begin with so you GER KIX E WIRWI SJ [LEX MW EZEMPEFPI %PWS WSQI NSFW GPSWI [MXLMR ½ZI days so you would miss those opportunities if you set it to ‘Weekly’. She also talked about a potential Saved Search approach:

±-J]SY EVI RI[XS 97%.3&7 ERH XS KIX E KSSH JIIP JSV NSF XMXPIW in government, set up one Saved Search just on a few criteria, M I PSGEXMSR ERH TE] SV +7 PIZIP 0IX MX VYR JSV E [IIO ERH WII [LEX GSQIW MRXS]SYV MRFS\ 8LMW LEW LIPTIH Q] GPMIRXW ½RH NSFW XLI] RIZIV would have thought to apply for because they were using too many criteria. JSGYWIH SR NSF XMXPIW SV FEWMRK XLI

-J]SY RIIH XS WIX YT E RI[IQEMP NYWX]SY GER LEZI IZIV]XLMRK VIPEXIH XS]SY (S RSX YWI WSQL[IPMRK &PEHX&S]&K QEYWP XSS your name in the email such as CamilleRoberts@gmail.com 8LMW LIP XLI VIGVYMXIV QEXGL]SYV IQEMP XS]SYV HSGYQIRXW ERH LIPTW [MXL]SYV FVERH

%JXIV]SY WII [LEX MW EZEMPEFPI JSV E QSVI FEWIH SR ERSXLIV GVMXIVME 7XYH] and it will save you hours and hours of pouring over job announcemer XLEX EVI RSX E KSSH ½X =SY QMKLX NYW PSSOMRK JSV %PWS - LEZI JSYRH XLEX P MR E WXVMRK %JXIV WIXXMRK YT XL ½VW ting familiar with job announcements, set up 5 Saved Searches and spre SYX XLI OI][SVHW EQSRK XLIQ ²

So there you have it. Save and send searches to yourself. Review them regularly. Be patient. The right job is on its way to your inbox.

Not all federal jobs are on USAJO

You may think that all agencies will put their positions on USAJOBS.gov, but that is not true. Numerous EKIRGMIW LEZI TSWMXMSRW XLEX EVI GSRWMHIVIH ±)\G-ITXIH QIRXW XLEX EVI RSX WYFNIGX XS XLI WXERHEVH ETTSMRXQIR

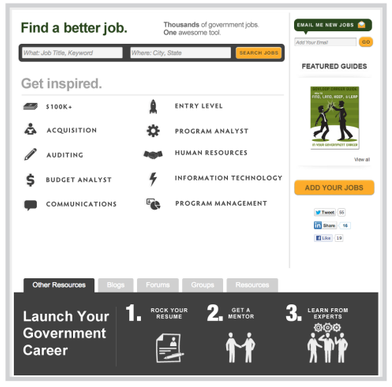
But wait, you might be saying, what does ‘Excepted Service” mean? We like how the folks at MakingaDifference.org explain “Excepted Service”:

- There are two main ways to enter the federal civil service — through an excepted service appointment or through a competitive process. Regardless of whether you are applying for an excepted or competitive position, what is important to recognize is that it is typical for hundreds and even thousands of individuals to apply to any one position, so take care in reading the details of the application and make sure you are addressing everything that is asked for.

- Excepted service is a special authority used by the federal government, which allows agencies to use a streamlined hiring process rather than hiring through the traditional competitive process. This authority allows agencies to help meet an unusual or special hiring need. Agencies can use this authority to individuals with backgrounds in highly needed or hard to recruit areas of government, like attorneys, chaplains, medical doctors, etc., because for these types of jobs it is SJXIR MQTVEGXMGEP XS YWI WXERHEVH UYEPM½GEXMSR traditional competitive process.

Examples of agencies where “Excepted Service” might apply include: CIA, FBI, U.S. court systems, security jobs, and legislative/policy positions. A full list of these agencies with links to the respective job websites can be found here. You can also learn more in this GovLoop Discussion.

Jobs.GovLoop.com



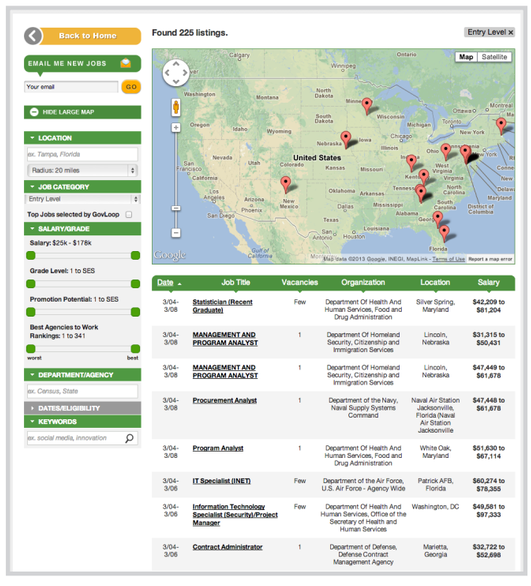
. SFW +SZ0SST delivers the best federal job opportunities by topic and EPPS[W JSV MRGVIEWIH ½PXIVMRK SYX quality and awesome data mashups

6IGSKRM^MRK XLI MQTSVXERGI SJ ½PXIVMRK SYX XLI STTSVXYRMXMIW XLEX aren't right for you, GovLoop built a special website called Jobs.GovLoop.com. We've built it on top of USAJOBS data, which we mashed up with LinkedIn, GlassDoor, BestPlacestoWork and GovLoop information, then basically tried to provide a new approach to WIEVGLMRK JSV JIHIVEP NSFW provide wx PMOI [E]W XS WIEVGL JSV ¾MKLXW

In fact, let us walk you through the site:

First, when you land on the homepage, you'll see that we've picked several of the main job categories, from acquisition to auditing to human resources to program management and information technology. We've also included a couple of the more common titles like Budget Analyst and Program Analyst as well as a categories for entry level ERH / [IORS[ ]SY [ERX XS W[MRK JSV XLI FMK JYRGI VMKLX JVSQ the start).

Basically, you can click on these categories and be taken immediately to a page where we've immediately truncated the results for you. On that next page, you can:



1) Filter by grade AND promotion potential ½RH that +7 NSF XLEX KSIW XS E

2) Search by location - both visually with maps and by keywords.

* MP Best Places to Work Data JSV FIWX EKIRGMIW WOMT agencies that rank poorly).

4) Filter by how many days the job is open FYX don't be scared away by short windows).

5) Select jobs by whether they have multiple vacancies TVS XMT]SY NYWX YTSLH .]SYV GLERGIW ERH Salary

6) Filter by if the job is for all U.S. Citizens or Status Candidates GYVVIRX JIHIVEP IQTPS]IIW

Now let's say you click on one of those job opportunities. What you get on the next page is something we're pretty proud of since you GER´X ½RH MX ER][LIVI 8LI NSF VIWYPXW

- integrated with LinkedIn to show you who you know at the agency where the job is located
- tied to Glassdoor user reviews of the agencies and jobs
- separated according to key job information under tabs for IEWI SJ ZMI[MRK ZW WGVSPPMRK H 3 &
- linked to other related job openings so that you can keep moving ahead in your quest for the perfect position.

Finally, like USAJOBS, we send out a weekly email for each of those job categories mentioned above where we pick the top 10 most interesting jobs each week. Feel free to sign up and let us do the searching for you.

3R IZIV] NSF TEKI -]SY XMSR TYPPIH MR-JVSO HSSV &IWX 4PEGIW X +SZ0SST

In fact, taking a slice of 1,260 white collar jobs on Jobs.GovLoop.com, GovLoop Founder Steve Ressler penned a blog post titled "Hot Stats About Federal Job Openings" that pulls back the curtain on USAJOBS listings. Here's an excerpt:

60% of openings are for current feds - If you are already a fed, make sure you are applying for XLIWI STIRMRKW -J RSX HSR´X FI HMWGSYVEKIH XLM your secret key to unlock the door)

17% are open less than 10 days - For these jobs you LEZI XS FI UYMGO XS ½RH SYX EFSYX XLIQ XS ET ply. Some argue most of these jobs have internal candidates, FYX SXLIV GEVIIV EHZMWSVW ERH ,6 SJ½GMEPW LEZI X that just as often these are real openings with quick turnarounds.

61% SJ STIRMRKW EVI QMH XS WIRMSV PIZIP +7 15) - Translation: there are a lot fewer entry and lower level grade openings.

21% have multiple vacancies - I always encourage

folks to especially look at these job openings as these are agencies motivated to quickly hire and your odds are in creased

We talk more about multiple vacancies and some of the other nu
ERGIW EVSYRH JIHIVEP NSF HIWGVMTXMSRW FIPS[FYX WYJ½GIMX XS WE] XLEX
XLI GSQTIXMXMSR MW ½IVGI FYX]SY GER GSQTIXI

Best Places to Work Tip

If you're new to the Best Places to Work in the Federal Government® rankings, we wanted to tell you a little more about them. Even if your heart is set on working in a particular agency, you might be open to others based on what you learn about another agency if it's considered one of the best in government.

Best Places data comes from the survey responses of nearly 700,000 civil servants to produce a detailed
ZMI[SJ IQTPS]II WEXMWJEGXMSR ERH GSQQMXQIRX EGVSWW
RIVWLMT JSV 4YFPMG 7IVZMGI YWIW HEXE Federal Employee View SJ
point Survey to rank agencies and their subcomponents according to a Best Places to Work index score. Agencies and subcomponents are measured on overall employee satisfaction and scored in 10 workplace categories, including:

- effective leadership,
- employee skills/mission match,
- pay,
- teamwork, and
- work/life balance.

The Best Places to Work rankings allow you to make side-by-side comparisons of how agencies or their subcomponents ranked in various categories to see how they compare to other agencies and whether they have improved or declined over time.

1SWX VIPIZERX JSV QER] SJ]SY VIEHMRK XLMW KYMHI EVI XL

LXXT [[[FIWXTPEGIWXS[SVO SVK &48; VEROMRKW HIQSKVET

Basically, those agencies received the top scores fr
people under 40 years old - that's good to know if yo
want an organization that is friendly to rising stars lik
you.

International Jobs:

The World is Bigger Than You Think

Most new graduates want to work in an agency that has a global scope and impact. The default agencies for these job seekers always seem to be State Department and USAID. What you may not know is that there are at least 45 other agencies or subcomponents with an international facet.

Browse the agencies below and learn a bit more about each of them. In fact, some of these agencies might give you a better chance of getting into government as there are likely fewer applicants for open
STTSVXYRMXMIW 1SVISZIV E QSVI WTIGMEPM EKIRG] [SYPH E
½PP E YRMUYI RMGLI

Do you have an interest in saving the planet? Check out the Environmental Protection Agency's International Cooperation.

%VI]SY E JER SJ ¾]MRK ERH JIIP KSSH EFSYX QIITMRK SYV W
US Department of Transportation has an Aviation and International Affairs component.

- Agency for International Development
- Air Force
- Army
- Aviation and International Affairs, U.S. Department of Transportation
- Bureau of Industry and Security, U.S. Department of Commerce
- Bureau of International Labor Affairs, U.S. Department of Labor
- Central Intelligence Agency
- Citizenship and Immigration Services &YVIEY JSVQIVP] -QQMKVEXMSR ERH Naturalization Service)
- Coast Guard
- Commission on International Religious Freedom
- Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe
- Cuba Broadcasting/Radio and TV Marti
- (IJIRWI (ITEVXQIRX (3(
- Environmental Protection Agency, International Cooperation
- Foreign Agricultural Service
- Global Affairs, State Department
- Homeland Security Department
- Import-Export Bank
- International Affairs, Department of Treasury
- -RXIVREXMSREP %JJEMVW 3J½GI Department of Interior
- International Broadcasting Bureau
- International Education, Department of Education
- International Intellectual Property, U.S 4EXIRX ERH 8VEHIQEVO
- International Trade Administration
- Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission
- Joint Chiefs of Staff
- Marine Corps
- Millennium Challenge Corporation
- National Guard
- Navy
- 3J½GI SJ 2EXMSREP (V
- Organization of the Department of Defense
- Overseas Private Investment Corporation
- Peace Corps
- Political Affairs, U.S. Department of State
- Public Diplomacy, U.S. Department of State
- Radio Free Asia
- Radio Free Europe
- State Department
- 9 7 ¯ 'LMRE)GSRSQMG Review Commission
- U.S. Court of International Trade
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection
- U.S. Trade Representative
- 9RM½IH 'SQFEXERX 'SQ
- Veterans Affairs
- Voice of America
- White House

USAJOBS

Since working in an agency with a global scope is so popular, we did want to give you a few quick pointers on using USAJOBS to search for international opper tunities:

- Go to USAJOBS and click on “Advanced Search” as we sug gest above.
- Try using “international” or “foreign” as your keywords.
- If you know the country where you’d want to work, use the location search to narrow your options by VIKMSR XLIR F] GSYRXV] _ ERH]SY GER IZIR WIPIGX E WTIGM½G city, if you’d like.
- =SY QMKLX ½RH XLEX WSQI of these jobs have “Multiple Locations”
  - Contact the agency to learn more about how the op portunity might differ in the various locations.
  - Even if one of those loca tions is in the US, go ahead and apply anyway.
  - &I ¾I\MFPI ERH GSRWMHIV a different country than the one you originally had in mind; perhaps it could lead to a transfer down the road.

%RSXLIV STXMSR MW XS ½PXIV SYX International Relations and International Cooperation jobs by checking the box or search MRK SR SGGYTEXMSREP WIVMIW ERH ©XLSYKL [I HMH ½RH XLMW STXMSR QMKLX ½PXIV E FMX XSS much.

Given the number of agencies listed there, we’re certain that you QMKLX NYWX HMWGSZIV SXLIV MRXIVREXMSREP STIRMRKW XLEX ½X SYV passions and skills.

Interested in the foreign service? Obviously, the State Department runs the largest foreign service program, but did you know there is also a Foreign Agricultural Service, a Commercial Foreign Service and even a USAID Foreign Service?

8LEX WLSYPH KIX]SY WXEVXIH ERH]SY´PP ½RH XLEX XLIVI EVI EHGIRX number of opportunities out there), but let’s say you try pretty hard and can’t seem to land that international opportunity. If you’re re ally set on a government gig that takes you around the globe, but GER´X WIIQ XS ½RH E [E] MR EJXIV WIZIVEP EXXEQTXW]SY QMKLX JERX XS get foreign experience on your resume in other ways. From teaching MR (ITEVXQIRX SJ (IJIRWI)HYGEXMSR %GXMZMX] (S) % WGLSSPW XS ZSPYRXIIVMRK MR RSR TVS½XW SV 2+3W SV IZIR WIVZMRK EX E QMPMXEV] exchange, the resources below help you think about a couple other viable avenues to get some international experience:

- LXXT [[[JIHIVEPNSFW RIX SZIVWIEW LXQ]SY QMKLX ½RH XLEX ETTPMIW ERH TEWWIW XLI UYEPMJMGEXMSR WXEKI XLI] [M
- LXXT [[[QEOMRKXLIHMJJIVIRG SVK JIHIVEPGEVIIVW MRXIVREXMSREP VIPEXMSRW WLXQP
- LXXT [[[WXEXI KSZ Q JWM XG LXQ
- LXXTW LIPT YWENSFW KSZ MRHI\ TLT 8IEGLIVW
- LXXTW LIPT YWENSFW KSZ MRHI\ TLT 0MRKYMWXW
- LXXT [[[YQEWW IHY GEVIIVW MQEKIW ,SPS %%VSEH [MXL XLI 97 +SZIVRQIRX THJ

Intelligence Jobs:

Sneak Into Government

Have you ever wondered how you can get a job in the intelligence GSQQYRMX]# -X´W RSX E WIGVIX SL G QSN]SY LE2I that one). The U.S. intelligence community is now comprised of 17 agencies all working independently and collaboratively to gather the necessary intelligence necessary to conduct foreign relations and national security activities.

What’s unique about the intelligence community is that they ac tively recruit people from all backgrounds. They need diverse skill sets from recent graduates, former military members, and profes sionals in career transition. Yulia Vershinina of Harvard University says that:

“Intelligence series aren’t necessarily easier to get, but since many intelligence roles require more unique and specific skills sets, your chances are higher of getting a position if]S Y QMKLX XLSWI VIUYMVIQIRXW -´ZI WIIR QER] XMQIW XLEX ETTPMIW ERH TEWWIW XLI UYEPMJMGEXMSR WXEKI XLI] [M

Truth be told, getting a job in the intelligence community is an ar duous task that can take over a year to complete. You must submit an application and after you’re selected as a candidate go through the security clearance process. Only after you’ve completed the security clearance process can you be officially hired. Realizing this can save you some headaches in the future, apply early so that your job hunting isn’t diminished due to the long security clear ance process.

To apply, you can search on USAJOBS.gov. Start by using “intelli gence” as a search term then narrow your search by searching for specific agencies you’re interested in. You can filter out Intelligence NSFW F] GLIGOMRK XLI FS\ SV WIEVGLMRK SR SSG GYTEXMSR ERH 7MRGI WIZIVEP)\GITXIH 7IVZMGI -RXIPPMKIRGI 'S agencies don’t post on USAJOBS, you might also contact a recruit er directly from the intelligence agency you’re interested in using the information provided on their respective websites. Below are

The U.S. Intelligence Community

- Air Force Intelligence
- Army Intelligence
- Central Intelligence Agency
- Coast Guard Intelligence
- Defense Intelligence Agency
- Department of Energy
- Department of Homeland Security
- Department of State
- Department of the Treasury
- Drug Enforcement Administration
- Federal Bureau of Investigation
- Marine Corps Intelligence
- National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency
- National Reconnaissance Office
- National Security Agency
- Navy Intelligence
- Office of the Director of National Intelligence

Where can I learn abo the different Federal agencies?

Look no further than:

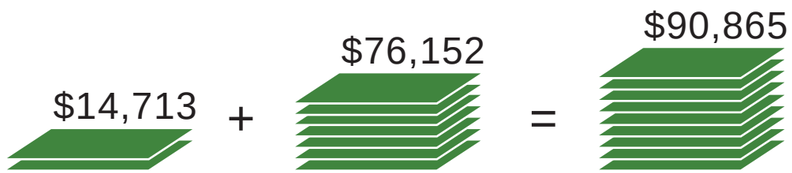
LXXT [[[YWE KS
JIHIVEP MRHI\ WI

You can find links to every single agency and sub-agen cy component there.

some websites and resources that make the process flow faster and give you access to more information:

- Intelligence.gov represents the 17 different agencies listed above and give information about the application process.
- Intelligence Virtual Career Fair is a free online career fair every February that allows you to learn about available intelligence jobs, interact with recruiters, and learn how to apply for positions. See www.ICVirtualFair.com for more details.

Oh, and one other quick word on security clearance jobs: you might be wondering if they pay more. Here's a snippet taken from the 2012 Clearance Jobs Security Clearance Compensation Survey:



Earnings for professionals with an active federal security clearance increased over two percent since the 2011 ClearanceJobs.Com TIRWEXMSR 6ITSVX [MXL ER EZIVEKI XSXEP GSQTIRWEXMSR SJ The average base pay for cleared workers is $76,152, with ad ditional compensation in the form of overtime, danger pay and FSRYWIW GSRXVMFYXMRK ERSXLIV SV

Not bad, eh? If you're a big 24 or Bourne Identity fan, this might be the best place for you to get started in government.

Special Hiring Program

Are you special? Of course you are. In speaking with Donna Dyer, a career advisor at the Sanford School of Public Policy at Duke Uni versity, "special hiring programs are the best way for new gradu ates to get a government job." There are several opportunities for you to consider, but your starting point should be the Pathways Program. One agency program analyst said that, "Pathways allows for an individual who has little to no federal career experience get into the door. Once you have crossed through that federal career steel door, it is easier to move around."

Furthermore, government careers expert Camille Roberts of CC Career Services said,

±4EXL[E]W MW ER I\GMXMRK TVSKVEQ -X GER VIEPP tern solidify their decision to work in public service as well as provide a paid educational opportunity to work in their chosen field side by side with people performing the work they are MRXIVIWXIH MR -X KMZIW XLIQ LERHW SR I\TIVMIRGI XLEX MP] KEMRIH SXLIV[MWI 7SQI MRXIVRW [LS GSQTPIXI XLI T IPMKMFPI XS GSRZIVX XS E TIVQERIRX JIHIVEP NSF [2]

8LIVI EVI TVSKVEQW YRHIV 4EXL[E]W XLI 4VIWMHIRX 1ER Fellows Program, Internships and Recent Graduates. We highlight each below:

So what is Pathways?

Here's a quick excerpt from the official website:

The Pathways Programs offer clear paths to Federal internships for students from high school through post-graduate school and to careers for recent gradu ates, and provide meaningful training and career devel opment opportunities for individuals who are at the beginning of their Federal service.

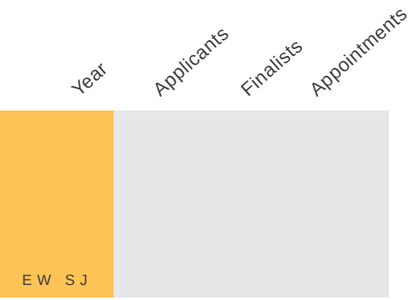
Presidential Management Fellows Program

For more than three decades, the PMF Program has been the Fed eral government's premier leadership development program for advanced degree candidates. This program is now for individuals who have received a qualifying advanced degree within the preced ing two years.

Since this is such an important program, GovLoop and the Robert son Foundation created a "Guide to the Presidential Management *IPPS[W 41* 4VSKVEQ" that was designed to help prospective candidates navigate the process. In that guide, we explain PMF in this way:

The PMF program is a great way to start your career as a public servant in the Federal government. First, you should know that it's a two-year commitment. PMF participants are paid a full salary

4EXLXS 4sYourGoStop re source to tips and information on the 41* ERH 4EXL[E]W 4VSK XLI TVSGIWW [MXL TIIV



PMF Selections 2007-2011

ERH FIRIJMXW EX XLI +7 +7 SV +7 VSWMGIW year) levels depending on your appointment. In some situations, TEVXMGMTERXW QE] IZIR FI TVSQSXIH XS EWIL $70,000/year). Depending on the agency where a PMF participant is working, they may be eligible for the Federal Student Loan Re payment Program.

One current federal intern suggests, "recent graduates from Mas ter's and Ph.D. programs should apply for the Professional Man agement Fellows Program. Although it is extremely competitive, you have several opportunities to apply. If you are not chosen, you can use that time between applications to develop yourself through volunteering or other membership functions and come back stronger for the next opportunity."

Moreover, in order to appreciate just how competitive, "it's im portant to remember to look at the number of applicants versus finalists," said Kaleigh Emerson, PMF Class of 2010, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services."

Good idea. Let's look at those numbers. Below are some statistics from the Class of 2012:

;I EPWS ORS[XLEX XLI RYQFIV SJ ETTPMGERXW JSV XLI PIZIP SJ [EW [MXL FIMRK REQIH WIQM JMREPMWXW %X XLI same time, the number of available positions does not seem to be getting much larger, making it even more competitive. Note the trend for the previous five years in the table to the right.

Although it's a pretty exclusive program, the good news is that once you get into government via PMF, you have a solid shot at ad vancing faster than your peers. The federal service retention rate JSV 41*W MW EJXIV XLVII]IEVW ERH

One quick note: if you are selected as a PMF finalist, you are not guaranteed a job; you will only be eligible for a PMF appointment by a Federal Agency. Although you may not receive an appoint ment immediately, you have one year to receive an appointment and can still apply to Federal positions outside of the PMF pro gram on USAJOBS.

In case you want to do a bit more sleuthing on recent stats, we found this infor mation at:

LXXT [[[TQJ KS HME JIFC WPMHIWC C

Vicki Schneider at The Maxwell School of Syracuse University and Career Development Advisory for RFFG underscored this ad Vice MKL EW +7 YT XS

±8LI JMREPMWX QYWX QEVOIX LIV LMQWIPJ [MXL TVSV GMIW 'LIGO SYX XLI PMWX SJ 41* STIRMRKW [IPP FIJ make contacts, follow up by showing up early at the relevant XEFPI ERH JSPPS[XLEX YT [MXL TIVWSREP GSRXEGX SV MRXIVZMI[² IXG 9WI XLI 41* TVSGIWW SV EWS XS MRJS SXLIV STIRMRKW EGXYEP SV TVSWTIGXMZI²

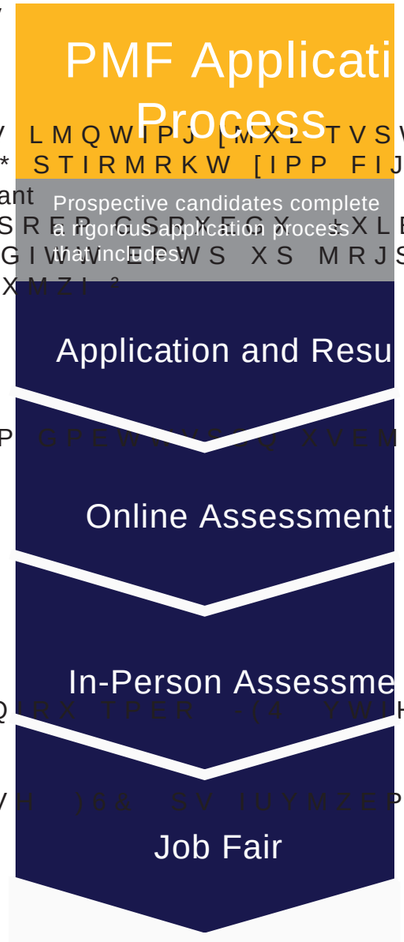
If you make it to the Finalist level and successfully land a place ment with an agency, the requirements for completion will include:

- QMRMQYQ SJ LSYVW SJ JSVQEP GPEW year)
- complete at least one developmental assignment four to six months in length
- create a performance plan and undergo an annual perfor mance review
- GVIEXI ER MRHMZMHYEP HIZIPSTQ TPER (YWIH goals for your time in the program
- 6IGIMZI)\IGYXMZI 6IWSYVGI &SEVH]6& SV IUYMZEP certification that you have met all program requirements

To learn more about the PMF Program, we'd encourage you to visit the resources we put together at PathtoPMF.com. In addition to the guide that we produced, you can ask questions in our dis cussion forum or watch video interviews with current and former PMFs, career advisors and agency PMF coordinators. Of course, the official information can be found at PMF.gov.

Internship Programs

The new Pathways Internship Program replaces the former Student 'EVIIV)\TIVMIRGI 4VSKVEQ 7')4 ERH 7XYHIRX 8IQTSVEV] TPS]QIRX 4VSKVEQ 78)4 8LI -RXIVRWLMT TVSKVEQW EVI for students from high school to graduate school to provide an opportunity to work in agencies and explore Federal careers while still in school. If you're looking for a way to get your feet wet in a Federal agency and still be a student, this is the program for you!



"Right after I got accepted into my graduate program, I signed up for the WGLSSP´W NSFW MRJ XVMW WIVZ 2SX QSVI XLER ERE later, the Fish and Wildlife 7IVZMGI 97*;7 TSWXIH MRXIVRWLMTS-R XLI sponded immediately and got XLI TSWMXMSR- %PXLSYKL, ternship was unpaid, I made many connections during my XMQI SR XLI NSF 3RI SJ XLIQ actually emailed me to let me know that he was leaving his post, and thought I would be the perfect person to take LMW TPEGI 7S - ETT. MILHKS WMPS GSPPIKI]IEV-GSPPIKIW YRMZIVWMXMIW EGVSWW LMW WLSIW EW E 7')4 RSIty colleges, and junior colleges); 4EXL[E]W TVSK-VEQ [EW EG GITXIH ERH RS[LIVI EQ professional, technical, vocational, and trade school;

Dorothy Amatucci, -RXIVR 97 *MWL ERH ;MPHPMJI 7IVZMGI ERH JSVQIV +SZ0SST*IPPS[

- advanced degree programs or other qualifying educational institutions where a student is pursuing a qualifying degree or certificate

So what happens after you successfully complete an internship? =SYV TSWMXMSR GER FI GSRZIVXIH XS E TIVQER[job!) within 120 days after your internship ends if you do a few things right. Here are the key things to have in mind if you have your heart set on a full time position:

- Must complete at least 640 hours of work experience acquired through the internship program
- Complete your degree or certificate program
- Perform your internship job successfully
- Meet the qualification standards for the full time position that you'd be converted to

If you perform exceptionally well during your internship, agen GMIW LEZI XLI HMWGVIXMSR XS [EMZI YT XS required hours for people who demonstrate high potential and outstanding academic achievement.

What's great about the Internship program is that the positions are paid, can be part-time or full time, and completion of the program also makes a person eligible for conversion to a permanent job in the civil service. The position lengths range from temporary, summer only, or one year or longer depending on the specific agency. The positions that you would be selected for also benefit you academically: they are related to your field of study and aca demic career goals. - VI Chassy Kant, a former Internship participant said that he also "reached out to contacts I made during my internship" when looking for a full time job.

As with most Federal positions, there are some eligibility requirements. For this program, the requirements are simple: you are a current student in an eligible institution, which include:

How do you apply? If you've read this far into the guide you should be very familiar with the USAJOBS.gov website. Do an advanced search for jobs with "intern" listed in the title. Each position will have different application requirements and processes so pay particular attention to what's listed under the "Eligibility" and "How to Apply" tabs. You can also go directly to:

LXXTW [[[YWENSFW KSZ .SF7IEVGL 7IEVGL *IXGLWYRXW#7XYHIRXW

We can't stress enough that this may be your best shot at getting into government with less experience than other candidates. Toni Harris, the Director of Career Services at NYU's Wagner School, mentions that many times internships can help you land a full time position in a different way:

±&I STIR XS MRXIVRWLMTW MR EPP WIGXSVW TYFPMG RSRTVSJMX .YWX QEOI WYVI XLEX XLI] TVSZMHI XLI to compete for the government roles you plan to pursue after graduation XMSR ;LEX EVI]SYV XEVKIX LMVMRK QEREKIVW WIIOMRK M %VI]SY QMWWMRK ER] SJ XLSWI WOMPPW SV EXXVMFYXIW [MPP LIPT]SY JMPP XLI KETW ²

Recent Graduates

For all of the recent graduates out there, there is a program de WMKRIH WTIGMJMGEPP] JSV]SY -J]SY LEZI VGIRXP] KVE the past 2 years; veterans potentially have longer) from qualifying educational institutions, these programs give you a way into Federal agencies and also provide career development, training, and mentorship.

The recent graduate positions last for one year and you are eligible if you meet these requirements:

- GSQTPIXIH]SYV HIKVII EWWSGMEXI professional, doctoral, vocational or technical degree or certificate) in the previous 2 years
- have been a veteran within the last six years and cannot meet the 2 year requirement due to military service-obligations

What do these Recent Grad programs offer? Well, if you are selected for a position you will receive orientation into the agency, mentorship by an employee of the agency throughout the program, an individual development plan to create and track your

While Pathways Internships are paid and are possible direct feeders to full-time jobs, note that there are also plenty of unpaid internships offered by agencies outside the auspices of the Pathways Program. Some of these are posted to USAJOBS as "volunteer programs", like State Department's unpaid internships, but most often listed under the career section of agency websites. Many agencies offer both paid and unpaid internships, so you may wish to look beyond USAJOBS for these opportunities.

As Tamara Golden, Career Consultant from the University of California San Diego's School of International Relations and Pacific Studies adds:

±9RTEMH MRXIVR be a viable foot in the door with an agency or provide valuable connections and pathways to future opportunities, especially those that add MQTSVXERX WOMI to your resume or provide you [MXL E WIGYVMX

career planning, professional development and training, as well as at least 40 hours of formal, interactive training each year of the program. Receiving this type of individual training and mentoring is invaluable to your long-term career goals!

Here's what a current Pathways intern has to say about the flexibility that the recent graduate program provides:

"[Pathways] gives more freedom for the graduate to try out different TSWMXMSRW *SV MRWXERGI - EQ MR XLI 4EXL[E]W TVSKVEQ ERH - [SVO JSV XLI :% &IGEYWI - EQ 4EXL[E]W - GER HS [SV days and toggle between quality workforce development and commu RMGEXMSRW 8LMW MW FIRIJMGMEP XS QI FIGEYWI - EQ MR E to try out different job positions to see where I fit best, all while I have GSRWMWXIRX JM\IH TSWMXMSR MR 5;(²

Former intern Dorothy Amatucci had a similar assessment of her experience:

"Pathways has been great for me because the program is so JPI\MFPI ;SVOMRK TEVX XMQI LIPTW QI program. KMZIW QI IRSYKL XMQI XS EPWS JSGYW SR WGLSSP [SVO -X EPWS PIXW]SY WII ERH YRHIVWXERH [LEX MX´W PMOI MR E]SY EVI QSVI XLER NYWX E ±WYQQIV MRXIVR² - LEZI FIIR [MXL 97*;7 for almost a full year now, and this has given me the time to focus on long-term projects that, in my opinion, are more indicative of what "real" KSZIVRQIRX [SVO MW PMOI - HSR´X [ERX XS I don't think three months is really enough time to get to know how PEVKI SVKERM^EXMSRW PMOI KSZIVRQIRX VJ[EPC [SVO

Just like the internship programs, you have the possibility of having your position converted to a permanent job. To be eligible for full time conversion you must have completed one year of continuous service at the agency, demonstrate successful job performance, and meet the qualifications of the full time position.

How do you apply to the recent graduates positions? Just like the SXLIVW RSXMGMRK E XVIRHSAJOBS.gov EHZERGH for "Recent Graduate" and you'll be shown a large list. Be aware of the different deadlines for applications and qualifications as they vary from position to position.

Fellowship Programs

Fellowships are unique in that they provide an individual the opportunity to serve in an ideal setting for advanced subspecialty training. If you are chosen for a fellowship you are given the opportunity to study and gain invaluable insight into a particular field of study. The fellowship programs can last anywhere from 6 weeks to several years.

Fellows programs aren't just designed for high achieving recent KVEHYEXIW XLI]´VI EPWS JSV LMKL EGLMIZMRK JEGYPX] were once probably high achieving recent grads) who want to further their background! We'll list some of the most interesting fellows programs below:

Department of Homeland Security Secretary's Honors Program

MRSGYPEXMSRW 8LMW MW E LMKLP] GSQ premier program for exceptional recent graduates looking for a career at DHS. Qualified candidates apply for a limited number of slots and are selected based on their academic performance, experience and other criteria. Those selected for the program will be offered a variety of incentives and enhanced career opportunities including Department rotations, mentorships, focused on-the-job training and inclusion in various professional development programs.

ICMA Local Government Career Fellows Program

This highly competitive career-development opportunity is designed to generate interest in local government careers among graduate students and recent graduates. Selected fellows are placed in a full-time management-track local government positions, shaped by direct mentorship under senior government leaders and rotational assignments.

National Defense Science and Engineering Graduate Fellowships:

The program seeks to identify individuals who desire to pursue careers in science and engineering fields of study. Selected fellows are allowed to pursue their graduate studies at whichever university they choose to attend. The goal is to provide the United States with talented, doctorally trained American men and women who will lead state-of-the-art research projects in disciplines having the greatest payoff to national security requirements.

Pamela Harriman Foreign Service Fellowships:

This program inspires the best of a new generation to pursue careers in public service. The fellowships are offered annually to three outstanding undergraduates from across the nation. Each student will be given the opportunity to spend a summer in a professional position with the United States Department of State.

Public Health Informatics Fellowship Program at CDC:

This program at CDC provides training and experience for its participants to effectively apply computer and information science and technology to real public health problems, including the abil ity to lead and manage all aspects of the design, development and implementation of public health information systems.

White House Fellows

Founded in 1964, the White House Fellows program is one of America's most prestigious programs for leadership and public service. White House Fellowships offer exceptional young men and women first-hand experience working at the highest levels of the federal government. Selected individuals typically spend a year working as a full-time, paid Fellow to senior White House Staff, Cabinet Secretaries and other top-ranking government officials.

Where can you find a list of fellowship program

Good question. You can find fellowships on USAJOBS.gov by doing an advanced search for "Fellowship" or a thorough list can be found at this address:

- LXXT [[[I\TIVMIRGI GSQ EPYQRYW MH!KSZIVRQIRX WSYVGICTEKI!LSQI MH!EVXMGPIC

Also, be sure to check out GovLoop's list of government fel lowships here:

- LXXTW HEXE KSZPSST GSQ +SZIVF KVEQW[QXTN^

If you're looking for state and local fellowships, you can prob ably find a few at:

- LXXT TYFPMGWIVZMGIGEVIIVW SV

Direct Hire Authority

We wanted to quickly touch on other direct hiring authorities. As Charles DeLuca, an Economist at the IRS, said, "Special hiring programs are very useful, but not applicable to most." Here's what you need to know:

(MVIGX ,MVI %YXLSVMX] (,% MW -ER ETTSMRXMRK LMVM ity that the Office of Personnel Management can give to Federal agencies for filling vacancies when a critical hiring need or severe shortage of candidates exists. If you qualify for a position under a DHA, you've got a great start at landing a job!

Some think that DHA is only for Veterans, those with disabili ties, or minorities, but you can be hired under DHA for a variety of other positions that might be more applicable to the broader population:

- TSWMXMSRW MRZSPZIH MR -V-EUM 6IGSRWXVYGXMSR quires fluency in Arabic or related language)
- positions in Federal Acquisition
- -RJSVQEXMSR 8IGLRSPSK] 1ER-EKIQIRX -RJSVQEXMSR rity)

Where can you find a full list of current government wide direct hire authorities? OPM provides a convenient list of current posi tions they have provided with direct hire authorities here.

Below we quickly highlight some common direct hire authorities ERH LMVMRK TVIJIVIRGIW JSV :IXIVERW ERH WTSYWIW TI abilities, and minorities.

Veterans Preference (Spousal Preference)

If you are a veteran, knowing about these special hiring authorities will help you enhance your job search. It is important to note that veterans are not entitled to appointment under these authorities, but that the agencies may use them entirely at their discretion. These positions can be for full time, part time, long term, and tem porary positions.

=SY EVI IPMKMFPI JSV :IXIVERW´ 6IGVYMXQIRX %TTSMRXQIRX 6YPI you:

- are in receipt of a campaign badge for service during a war or in a campaign or expedition, OR
- are a disabled veteran, OR
- are in receipt of an Armed forces Service Medal for participation in a military operation, OR
- EVI E VIGIRXP] WITEVEXIH ZIXIVER [MX MRXIXSL, PEVX many fellowships that look for high-achieving AND
- WITEVEXIH YRHIV LSRSVEFPI GSRHMXMSRW (separated under honorable conditions) (Executive Order 13496)

honorable or general discharge), you are VRA eligible.

You must provide documentation of your preference / appointment eligibility. To see a full list of requirements and forms please see www.FedsHireVets.gov.

People with Disabilities

If you are a person with disabilities, there are special programs in place to assist you in your search for a job. Most agencies have a 7IPIGXMZI 4PEGIQIRX 4VSKVEQ 'SSVHMRE agement recruit, hire, and accommodate people with disabilities. These SPPCs help determine the essential duties of the positions and modifications needed for people with disabilities, help advise candidates about special hiring authorities, and monitor / evaluate programs and make changes as needed.

Federal agencies are required by law to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified employees with disabilities. These accommodations can include interpreters, readers, or personal assistance, modified job duties, restructured worksites, providing JPI\MFPI WGLIHYPIW ERH WMXIW L\ XIG nology and equipment.

For a full overview of the accommodations made for persons with disabilities please see:

LXXT [[[STQ KSZ TSPMG] HEXE SZIVWM

Minorities

OPM has sustained efforts to create a more diverse federal workforce as a model of equality, diversity, and inclusion. OPM has is sued government-wide inclusion and diversity strategies, which focus on diversity, workplace inclusion, and sustainability. Recently, XLI 341 LEW VITSVXIH XLEX QMRSVMXMIW EGGSYRX JSV total workforce.

The OPM also renewed the Hispanic Council on Federal Employ QIRX 'SYRGMP XS EHZMWI XLI (M-VIGXSV SJ 341 SR XLI ment, hiring, retention, and advancement of Hispanics in the federal workplace.

If you're looking for opportunities that specifically reach out to minorities, there are many fellowships that look for high-achieving people. See the above fellowships section to see a full list of opportunities. Also, be sure to check with the agency you are looking to apply to as many have established hiring practices established.

Where to Get Experience Tip

Get Experience with the Public Sector via Consulting, Contracting or a Non-Profit: If you are interested in public service, you do not necessarily have to contribute as a federal employee. The federal government contracts out a large percentage of its work. One good way to get into the public sector on the industry side is to work for one of these consulting companies. They can be quicker to hire, give you opportunities to see a variety of agencies across consulting projects, and may pay a little more. Plus, you often work on-site with other government employees so it is common to eventually get hired by the federal government.

There is a lot of variety in the consulting companies both in terms of size, specialties and pay. Do your homework. Here is one list of the top 200 government contractors and you can also use Vault to research consulting companies. Federal consulting firms such as Deloitte and Booz Allen Hamilton hire a lot of recent graduates, while more technical consulting companies often require past GSRWYPXMRK IXIVMRGIW GIVXMJMGEXMSRW ERH look WSQIX for contracting opportunities.

When students ask which route to go, we usually still encourage federal employment. Although your salary may start lower, it goes up faster and you generally have more responsibility and authority more quickly.

There are also hundreds of non-profits, including government associations that play an important role in improving public service. Non-profits such as the Partnership for Public Service have a fellowship program and hire lots of recent graduates and are a great way to contribute to federal service. Look at the list of government employee associations and check their websites for openings. You can also use a site like Idealist.org to look for a variety of not-for-profit organizations that get government grants and allow you to gain experience that's right on the fringe of public service, often positioning you effectively for a jump to the agency that administers your program - and this is true on the federal, state and local levels.

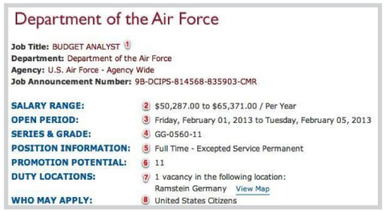
Decipher

HOW DO I UNDERST
GOVERNMENT HIRI
PROCESS?

7IEVGLMRK MW NYWX XLI ½VWX LYVHPI XS KIXXMRK E KSZIVR
it's always a bit challenging to understand the actual job descriptions. This section is designed to walk you through a typical description and break it down into manageable chunks, hopefully enabling you to weed out the ones that won't work for you. To the right is a screenshot of the top of a federal job announce ment on USAJOBS.

1. Job Title

First, in order to get a better sense of the typical titles, GovLoop has put together a simple resource that explains a dozen of the most common positions in government, including a general sense of the type of work you would perform, the education requirements and relevant degrees, as well as links to people who


Department of the Air Force

Job Title: BUDGET ANALYST
Department: Department of the Air Force
Agency: U.S. Air Force - Agency Wide
Job Announcement Number: 9B-DCIPS-814568-835903-CMR

SALARY RANGE: $50,287.00 to $65,371.00 / Per Year
OPEN PERIOD: Friday, February 01, 2013 to Tuesday, February 05, 2013
SERIES & GRADE: GG-0560-11
POSITION INFORMATION: Full Time - Excepted Service Permanent
PROMOTION POTENTIAL: 11
DUTY LOCATIONS: 1 vacancy in the following location: Ramstein Germany View Map
WHO MAY APPLY: United States Citizens

%X XLI XST SJ LEGL 97%.SFW EM RSYRGIQIRX TEKI]SY [MPP ½RH HIXEMPW about the opening that you will want to pay special attention to

LEZI XLMW XMXPI RS['PMGO SR IEGL PMRO XS ½RH¾X LY TTS XLMPXEHSRVXJEW]SYIWTIGMEPPJ XIGL XLMRO ½XW FIWX [MXL]SYV FEGOKVSYRH SV EWTMVEXMSRV Examples of tech talk to users and management.

- %HQMRMWXVEXMZI 3J½GIV 7TIGMEPMWX
- Budget Analyst
- Computer Scientist
- Contract Specialist
- %HQMRMWXVEXMZI 7TIGMEPMWX
- Human Resources Specialist
- IT Specialist
- Management Analyst
- Program Analyst
- Public Affairs Specialist

Here's a full list of OPM's top 20 white-collar government occupations.

Of course, these titles aren't exhaustive, but we've likely covered 70% of the jobs where you'd consider submitting an application. GovLoop Founder Steve Ressler described a few of them in this way:

- Program Analyst - Really all this job means is "jack of all trades." Can you read/write/speak/analyze? This is the category for you. Agencies hire under program analyst categories for a variety of jobs.
- Budget/Financial Analyst - Like stats/numbers? There are XSRW SJ FYHKIX ½RERGI NSFW [LIVI]SY LIPT XLI EKIRG] TPER and execute the budget. They are always in need of smart people and these jobs offer a great career trajectory.
- Acquisitions - Do you like buying stuff? Acquisition is the KSZIVRQIRX´W FY]IVW 8LMW MW XLI QSWX MR HIQERH ½IPH MR government and, honestly, one of the core skills any government leader needs.
- Human Resources - Some people think HR is lame and that it's a lot of paper pushing, but HR is moving to less of a pa TIV[SVO ½IPH ERH QSVI SJ E WXVEXIKMG ±LS[HS [I QERER talent?" There is lots of interesting work, tons of jobs, and a real need for MPA/MPP skills
- Information Technology - There is a huge need for IT workers. Most of the openings are for mid-level folks, but there is a shortage of folks, which presents a great opportunity to

2. Salary Range

Every job announcement will have a salary range. That's one of the nice things about government vacancies - you pretty much know what you'd be making for the next ten years if all goes well in terms SJ ERRYEP WXIT MRGVIEWIW RSX EGGSYRMRK JSV pay freezes).

We already talked about the salary ranges above, including the cur VIRX TE] WGEPI TEKI WS]SY LEZI WSQ WIRWI SJ [LEX XLI mean. Your default might be to look at the larger number in the range and think that you could negotiate right into the upper end of that grade level. Be careful in that thinking. You might have some wiggle room in the initial back and forth about compensation, but we'd urge you to see the lower end of the range as your most likely starting point. Don't fret, but also don't get ahead of yourself. You can often count on that that step increase each year along with cost of living adjustments...or you can make a move into a job at another grade level once you're in the federal system.

3. Open Period

This one is pretty self-explanatory - it's basically the date range for when you can submit an application. What's important to note here is the length of that period. Originally, our recommendation was that if an announcement is open for less than two weeks, it's probably "wired" for someone already in the agency. Then we talked to Doris Tirone, a Human Resources Specialist at NASA, who said that two weeks is actually pretty standard, especially because agencies have an HE] TIVMSH XS ½PP TSWMXMSRW J-VSQ XLI XMQI XLI] EVI TS cally, Doris told us:

±8IR GEPIRHEV HE]W MW XLI RSVQ 8LEX GSQIW JVSQ LM IREGXIH MR [LMGL QEHI X-LI LMVMRK TVSGIWW QS WMWXIRX FIX[IIR SVKERM^EXMSRW 2S[TPIEWI RSXI XL VIUYMVIQIRX XLEX ZEGERGMIW FI TSWXIH JSV HE]W 341 W

Feeling Ready to Supervise People?

Often these titles above will have "Supervisory" in front of them - and it means just that. You will have people under your direct management in those positions. If you feel like you're ready for that kind of responsibility or have that level of experience, you're usually bumping yourself up several steps of pay and performance expectations. Our hunch is that most entry level positions for people getting into government will not be supervisory, so it could be one way you narrow your search. Make sure you have the right background and experience or you could be wasting your time with an application. The salary range might look nicer on those announcements...but you might EPWS FI PIWW UY

TIVMSH SJ EX PIEWX ½ZI FYWMRIWW- HE]W FYXVEKIVIQ/IRXVMJWW MQTSXEP E JEVX low for open period that provides an adequate amount of time to give the TYFPMG RSXMGI SJ E ZEGERG] -R QER] GEWIW standard, but it could be more or less depending on the agency's recruit QIRX TPER ²

Now, it's not a bad idea to look for jobs with multiple vacancies or a longer open period as it might mean that an agency is casting the net especially wide. In fact, one federal applicant shaped his strategy in this way:

±- HMHR´X ETTP] XS ER] XLEX SRP] LEH SRI TSWMXMSRW QMRMQYQ STIR TIVMSH SJ SRI QSRXL XLEX LEH

Translation: Don't be afraid of the openings with a short fuse. Throw]SYV LEX MR XLI VMRK ¯ ERH HSR´X [EMX leverage an agency hiring spree and avoid the crowded lines for the harder-to-get jobs.

4. Series and Grade

Just in case you've never heard of series, grade and step, here's the simplest way to break it down:

- Series: This is the occupational code we were talking EFSYX EFSZI 'PEWWM½GEXMSR MR KSZIVRQIRX complicated, so the easiest way to explain this is that it's an area of specialty. You may read all about the different occupational codes in this nifty handbook
- Grade: 6EXI SJ FEWMG TE] EWWSGMEXIH [MXL E WTIGM½G PIZIP SJ [SVO SV VERKI SJ HMJ½GYPX] VIWTSRWMFMPMXMIW ERH GSQTIXIRGMIW requirements.
- Step: There are 10 steps within a grade under which an employee is paid. For example, you could be step 2 of a GS 7 or step 6 of a GS 11.

-R KSZIVRQIRX]SYV WEPEV] GLERKIW F] QSZMRK YT ERH DS[R XLI scale. Most white collar, entry-level positions will be in the GS 7-9

5. Position Information

8LMW MW TVIXX] IEW] XS ½KYVI SYX ¯ ERH [LSZIVIH ±)GJJXL WMXMSRXEZEMEEZI TEKSSOIH-JSVYE LEZI ERIVYSWXMSRW eligibility just pick up the phone and call the contact person listed on the job announcement to learn more.

Still feel a little fuzzy on this topic? Here's some more reading about excepted service and competitive service.

6. Promotion

Do you want to know if you can eventually move up a grade from this position once you've proven yourself? "Promotion" is where you ½RH SYX 7SQI ERRSYRGIQIRXW QMKLX PMWW SRI LMRRL QMKLX ½RH]SY PMQMXIH XS XLEX KVEHI SRP]]SY WXEVX EX in GS 11 unless you get a new job.

Toni Harris, Director of Career Services and Alumni Relations at New York University's Wagner School of Public Service, says that if you're looking at a job's promotion potential, "a job that has a range is a great sign." So if the position you're looking at shows a range of GS levels, that's one way to know that advancement is possible.

You might also be wondering how quickly you can move up. Typically, your pay escalates by one step each year. It's actually somewhat rare to jump a couple steps at a time. If you're eager to get ahead faster, you'll either want to look for positions with better promotion potential or you'll need to apply for another opportunity down the road.

Some jobs have the potential for noncompetitive promotion and others do not; it depends on how the position is structured.

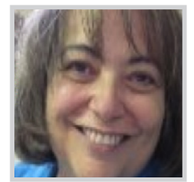
You can average new graduates should p JSV NSFW EX XLI +7 E

Here's how it breaks down, general WITH EOMRK

- GS-5 !)RXV] PIZIP W college
- GS-7 ! 9RHIVKVEHYEXI TSMRX EZIVEKI EFSZ bachelor's degree and one year-of re IZERX I\TIVMIRGI
- GS-9 ! 4ISTPI [MXL E [KVIEXIV 36 [MXL E FEGL XS E +7
- GS-11 ! 1MH GEVIIV TIS VIEH] XS XEOI XLI RI their master's or bachelor's + 5 year I\TIVMIRGI EPWS TIS here

If you have a masters degree, loo XS XLI BUT if you have a Master's degree, don't say you won't take a GS-7. Be willing to take the GS-7. Get your foot in the door and have more oppor -

W lowest grade level you are willing to accept, RSX NYWX XLI SRI]SY for ²



Doris Tirone, ,YQER 6IWSYVGIW 7TIG

We can't overemphasize the XVYXL SJ XLMW W get your foot in the door. Once you're in the system, you've got more room to maneuver.

Here's another quick GovLoop Ressler tip:

All jobs have a grade and all openings have promotion po tential. This is huge and you should look for jobs that have promotion potential to GS- ERH]SY LMX X MX KSIW XS +7

For jobs with promotion potential, promotions may occur after you have:

- worked at the lower grade level for at least one year;
- performed at an acceptable level of competence;
- and demonstrated your ability to perform work at the next higher grade level.

For example, a position advertised at the GS-11 level with promo XMSR TSXIRXMEP XS XLI +7 PIZIP QIERW XLEX]SY [SYPH FI IPMKMFPI JSV TVSQSXMSR XS XLI +7 PIZIP EX XLI IRH SJ]SYV ment. Once promoted to the GS-12 level, you would be eligible for TVSQSXMSR XS XLI +7 PIZIP EX XLI IRH SJ E

It also depends on whether the job is one grade interval job or a two- KVEHI MRXIVZEP NSF % NSF XLEX KSIW YT XS a two grade interval job - so the normal progression would appear in XLI NSF HIWGVMTXMSR PMOI XLMW - pens like this:

- XS ! SRI]IEV IZIR XLSYKL]SY EVI KSMRK YT X[S KVEHIW
- 9 to 11 = one year
- 11 to 12 = one year
- XS ! SRI]IEV

Again, this varies, but we'd encourage you to look for some of the X[S LST STTSVXYRMXMIW *SV XLSWI [LS PMOI please go here:

LXXT [[[STQ KSZ TSPMG] HEXE SZIVWMKLX JEGX WLIIXW [MXLMR KVEHI MRGVIEWIW

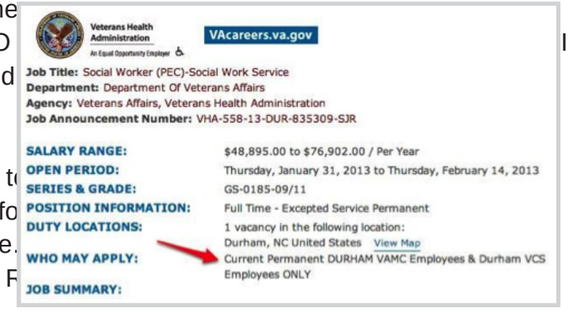
7. Duty Locations

You might think this is straightforward: this is the physical place where you'll work. That's true, but there's a trick here that most newcomers to government don't know. Sometimes there are multiple vacancies SV QYPXMTPI HYX] PSGEXMSRW -J]SY ½RH E kind of information, your odds of getting the job just ratcheted up about 17 notches. That means the agency is likely hiring a bunch of positions under this particular title.

8LMRO EFSYX [LIR XLI 8VERWTSVXEXMSR 7IGYVMX] %HQMRMW was hiring agents for airports across the country. That's the equiva lent of a gold rush for people trying to get into government jobs. If you stumble upon one of these announcements and you feel like it's E WSPMH QEXGL HSR´X LIWMXEXI XS ETTP] ERH FI ¾I\MFPI [willing to work, if possible - that increases your chances even more!).

8. Who May Apply

Again, you may think this one is obvious, but sometime XLI EKIRG] [ERXW E WTIGM½G- O ample to the right that wants only people who've worked in a particular facility.


Veterans Health Administration
An Equal Opportunity Employer
VAcareers.va.gov

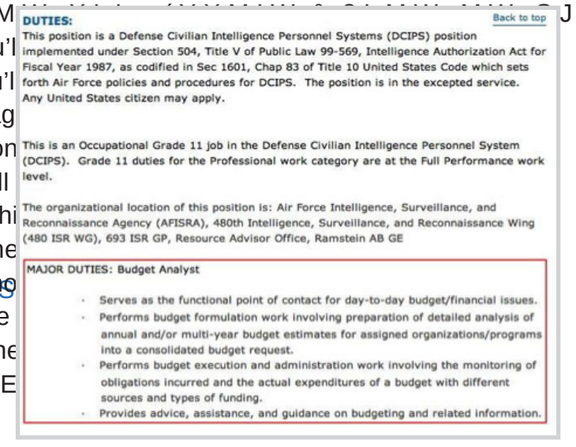
Job Title: Social Worker (PEC)-Social Work Service
Department: Department Of Veterans Affairs
Agency: Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration
Job Announcement Number: VHA-558-13-DUR-835309-SJR

SALARY RANGE:	$48,895.00 to $76,902.00 / Per Year
OPEN PERIOD:	Thursday, January 31, 2013 to Thursday, February 14, 2013
SERIES & GRADE:	GS-0185-09/11
POSITION INFORMATION:	Full Time - Excepted Service Permanent
DUTY LOCATIONS:	1 vacancy in the following location: Durham, NC United States View Map
WHO MAY APPLY:	Current Permanent DURHAM VAMC Employees & Durham VCS Employees ONLY
JOB SUMMARY:	

Make sure you only apply for jobs that are available t U.S. Citizens. About 60% of government jobs are only fo current feds - don't waste your time applying for those. ERH XLI TVSQSXMSR PIZIP , MRX 8LMW MW E ½ P

9. Duties

8LI RI\X WIGXMSR]SY´PP ½RH M pretty straightforward. It gives you a sense of what you'l do in this job. Read it all carefully. The part where you'l want to take some notes is if it starts using languag about the position itself. For instance, in the position to the right, we've boxed out some of the stuff you'll want to measure your resume against. If you've done thi kind of thing, start to map and adapt your resume to the exact language you see here. That becomes even mo important in the next section. We cannot overstate the importance of carefully looking at this section and the 5YEPM½GEXMSRW WIGXMSR SJ E


DUTIES: Back to top

This position is a Defense Civilian Intelligence Personnel Systems (DCIPS) position implemented under Section 504, Title V of Public Law 99-569, Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1987, as codified in Sec 1601, Chap 83 of Title 10 United States Code which sets forth Air Force policies and procedures for DCIPS. The position is in the excepted service. Any United States citizen may apply.

This is an Occupational Grade 11 job in the Defense Civilian Intelligence Personnel System (DCIPS). Grade 11 duties for the Professional work category are at the Full Performance work level.

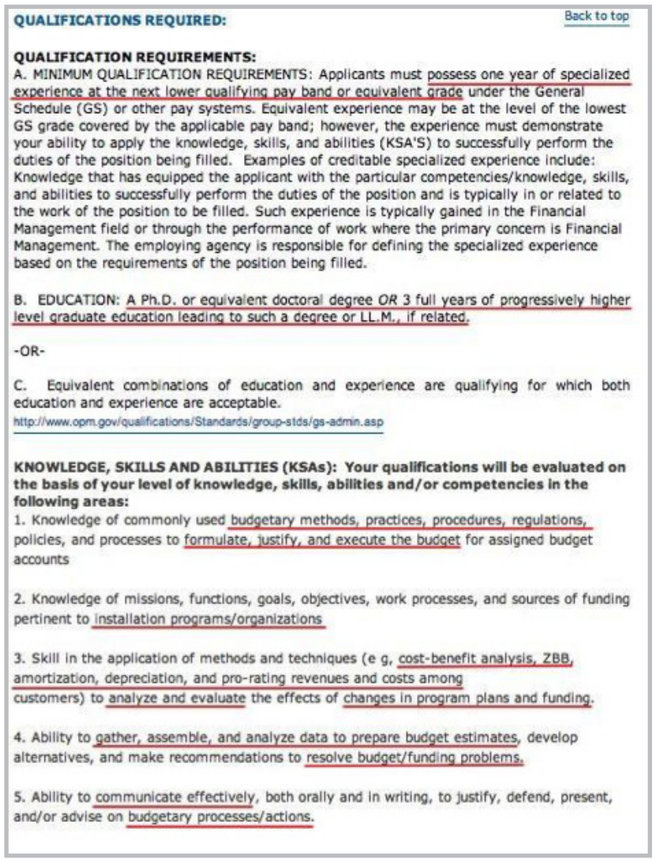
The organizational location of this position is: Air Force Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Agency (AFISRA), 480th Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Wing (480 ISR WG), 693 ISR GP, Resource Advisor Office, Ramstein AB GE

MAJOR DUTIES: Budget Analyst

- Serves as the functional point of contact for day-to-day budget/financial issues.
- Performs budget formulation work involving preparation of detailed analysis of annual and/or multi-year budget estimates for assigned organizations/programs into a consolidated budget request.
- Performs budget execution and administration work involving the monitoring of obligations incurred and the actual expenditures of a budget with different sources and types of funding.
- Provides advice, assistance, and guidance on budgeting and related information.

10. Qualifications

Most federal resume experts will tell you that this is the most impor last part of the job announcement. If you want the job, you've got to borrow the language here and speckle it throughout your own re sume. We talk more about that below, but see the graphic below for what you might want to do with the typical announcement. Donna



QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED: Back to top

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:
A. MINIMUM QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS: Applicants must possess one year of specialized experience at the next lower qualifying pay band or equivalent grade under the General Schedule (GS) or other pay systems. Equivalent experience may be at the level of the lowest GS grade covered by the applicable pay band; however, the experience must demonstrate your ability to apply the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA'S) to successfully perform the duties of the position being filled. Examples of creditable specialized experience include: Knowledge that has equipped the applicant with the particular competencies/knowledge, skills, and abilities to successfully perform the duties of the position and is typically in or related to the work of the position to be filled. Such experience is typically gained in the Financial Management field or through the performance of work where the primary concern is Financial Management. The employing agency is responsible for defining the specialized experience based on the requirements of the position being filled.

B. EDUCATION: A Ph.D. or equivalent doctoral degree *OR* 3 full years of progressively higher level graduate education leading to such a degree or LL.M., if related.

-OR-

C. Equivalent combinations of education and experience are qualifying for which both education and experience are acceptable.
http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/Standards/group-stds/gs-admin.asp

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES (KSAs): Your qualifications will be evaluated on the basis of your level of knowledge, skills, abilities and/or competencies in the following areas:
1. Knowledge of commonly used budgetary methods, practices, procedures, regulations, policies, and processes to formulate, justify, and execute the budget for assigned budget accounts

2. Knowledge of missions, functions, goals, objectives, work processes, and sources of funding pertinent to installation programs/organizations

3. Skill in the application of methods and techniques (e g, cost-benefit analysis, ZBB, amortization, depreciation, and pro-rating revenues and costs among customers) to analyze and evaluate the effects of changes in program plans and funding.

4. Ability to gather, assemble, and analyze data to prepare budget estimates, develop alternatives, and make recommendations to resolve budget/funding problems.

5. Ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, to justify, defend, present, and/or advise on budgetary processes/actions.

Dyer, Director of Career Services for Duke University's Sanford School of Public Policy, explains her process of helping potential applicants:

> "We instruct students to prepare their resumes by looking at verbs and, hopefully, if a job description is well-[illegible] agency will say 'we want someone to calculate, [illegible] We conduct workshops with students in which we look at job descriptions and ask them to highlight verbs and keywords that they think the hiring [illegible] still think that means 'must know French' because there are so many people in the queue that if you [illegible] ever the requirement is -- then you're not going to [illegible]
>
> In other words, we do a lot of work in helping them [illegible]

Another government careers expert, Camille Roberts, echoed Dyer's advice when it comes to considering a potential position. Roberts suggested asking yourself a couple questions and do a quick-assess ment:

> (SIW XLI HIWGVMTXMSR WSYRH PMOI WSQIXLMRK [MPP FI WYFNIGX XS GLERKI EX ER]
> (SIW XLI HIWGVMTXMSR WSYRH PMOI WSQIXLMRK [MPP FI WYFNIGX XS GLERKI EX ER]
> HS#
>
> 6IEH XLI UYEPM½GEXMSRW ZIV] GEVIJYPP] 6EXLIV XLER [SYRKPMRK SR E WGEPI JVSQ XS

!2S ORS[PIHKI SV I\TIVMIRGI SV XVERWJIVEFPI VIPIZERX WOI
!*EMV ORS[PIHKI RS I\TIVMIRGI SV XVERWJIVEFPI VIPIZERX
!+SSH ORS[PIHKI RS I\TIVMIRGI FYX LEZI XVERWJIVEFPI VIP
!)\GIPPIRX ORS[PIHKI I\TIVMIRGI ERH XVERWJIVEFPI VIPIZE
!%HZERGIH ORS[PIHKI I\TIVMIRGI ERH XVERWJIVEFPI VIPIZE

-J]SY LEZI QSVI ´W ERH ´W XLER]SY TVSFEFPJ EVI R
6IEH XLI WTIGMEPM^IH I\TIVMIRGI ERH FI WYVI]SY LEZI I\EQ
QMKLX FI ±TIKKIH² JSV ER MRXIVREP GERHMHEXI ETTP] ER][E
GYX EX ½KYVMRK SYX MJ]SY GER VIEWSREFP] ETTP] ERH
HIWGVMFI]SYVWIPJ EW GSQTIXIRXSM RnX inSW those keywords and look for the "deal breakers."

4PIEWI EPWS RSXI XLEX XLIWI ZIVFW ERH OI][SVHW EVI EPW
when it comes to working up your resume. They represent the language that you'll want to weave into your professional experience... but we're getting ahead of ourselves. Of course, if you want to jump ahead, check out the resume tips on p. 60 below.).

KNow you ought to know one more very important piece of advice before you virtually copy the job description language into your resume. We talked to an agency Human Resources Specialist who, in the next section, shared some very important information about preparing your application materials.

What's Going on During the Application Review Process?

Government is notorious for having a long hiring process. It also often feels like you've dropped it into the proverbial black hole after you hit "submit." We wanted to address this phenomenon to clear the air a bit. We spoke with [illegible] Agencies. If you want to hear the behind-the-scenes edition for one agency, read the vignette below that was shared with us by Doris Tirone, a Human Resources Specialist at NASA:

> ±-R EHZERGI SJ STIRMRK XLI ERRSYRGIQIRX XLI ,6 7T
> KEWYGSQTPIXMSR [MPP FI YWIH XS LIPT YW MHIRXMJ] XLI
> are going to help us identify the difference between a good
> GERHMHEXI ERH E KVIEX GERHMHEXI *VSQ XLIVI [I FYMPH
> ERRSYRGIQIRX
> XS

Your Federal Resume: Behind-The-S

1

Many agencies use evaluative software to assist them in re
ZMI[MRK ETTPMGEXMSRW -R XLIWI MRWXERGIW 97%.3&7 MW YWIH EW ER
IPIGXVSRMG [IF FEWIH ETTPMGEXMSR XS GSPPIGX VIWYQIW ;LIR XLI
ZEGERG] ERRSYRGIQIRX GPSWIW [I XVEGO EWO
XLIQ MRXS SYV EKIRG]´W [IF FEWIH ETTPMGEXMS
JVSQ XS XS ETTPMGEXMSRW 6MKLX RS
EZIVEKI SJ ETTPMGEXMSRW TIV KVEHI PIZIP EI

2

&EWIH SR SYV NSF EREP]WMW ERH XLI GVM
analysis, we use the system as a tool to separate applications
ERH XIPP YW LS[QER] GERHMHEXIW JEPP M
8LMW MW GEPPIH ±'EXIKSV] 6EXMRK² 8]TMGEPP]
XLI FIXXIV ERH XLI FIWX ;LIR E LYQER VIWSYVGI
GEXMSR MX´W YWYEPP] FIGEYWI XLI] ³FEWMGEPP
XLI PS[IWX SJ XLI UYEPMJ]MRK GEXIKSVMIW

3

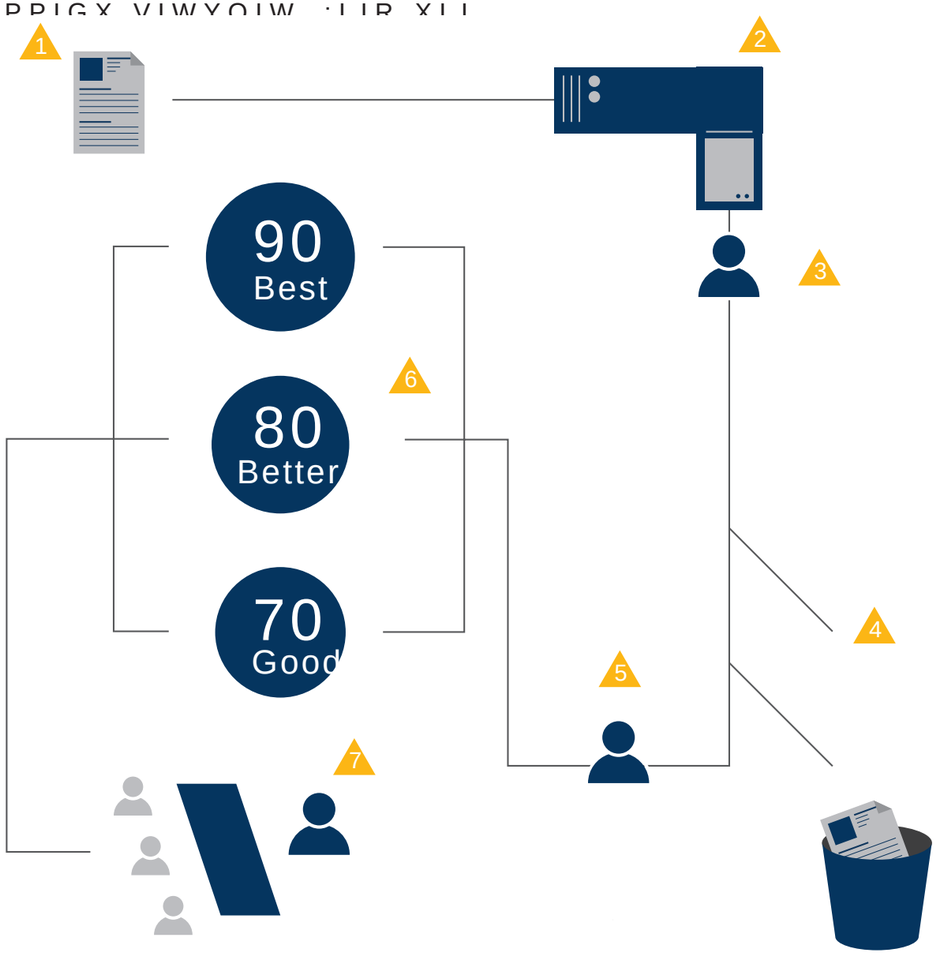
The human resource specialist who's doing their job is reading
all those resumes and trying to verify the accuracy of the infor
QEXMSR XLEX LEW FIIR TVSZMHIH F] XLI XS
XLI] EVI FEWMGEPP] UYEPM½IH ERH [I ½RH XLEX
UYEPM½GEXMSRW JSV GSRWMHIVEXMSR MX MW S

4

-R SVHIV XS FI UYEPM½IH XLIVI EVI WSQI FI
MRWXERGI]SY QE] RIIH XS LEZI E GIVXEMI
you don't have it, you're not going to be found basically quali
½IH 8LI SRP] XMQI ER ,6 7TIGMEPMWX YWYEPP] \
TIVWSR GPEMQW XLI] EVI UYEPM½IH JSV XLI NSF
IHYGEXMSR ERH I\TIVMIRGI ERH GPEMQ XS LEZI X

&YX LIVI´W [LEX LETTIRW ERH XLMW MW XLI TE\
plicants are not honest and they say they have what it takes to be basically
UYEPM½IH MX HSIWR´X QIER [I´VI KSMRK XS XEOI XLI XSSP´W [SVH JSV MX -R QER]
cases, cutting and pasting position descriptions in a person's resume is not
XLI [E] XS EWWYVI XLEX]SY EVI KSMRK XS KIX
%TTPMGERXW GYX ERH TEWXI ZIVFMEKI JVSQ XL
SJ XLI TSWMXMSR HIWGVMTXMSR

We're reading these resumes - and we're saying, 'this is what he says he can
HS SV [LEX WLI´H PMOI XS HS´ 3JXIRXMQIW -´
HMWGSZIV ³8LMW TIVWSR HSIWR´X LEZI XLI IHYGEXMSR
ERH - [MPP HMWUYEPMJ] XLIQ



5

3RGI [I ORS[ER ETTPMGERX MW FEWMGEPP] UYEPM½IH
is to evaluate applicants based on those pre-determined skills
criteria and separate candidates into those who are basically
;LMPI XLMW MW RSX IRXMVIP] HMWLSRIWX MX WPS[W HS[R
LSRIWX ;LIR EVI TPEGIH MW XLEX JEWXIV XLI ,6 7TIGMEPMWXW
SJ XLI ZEGERG][ERRSYRGIQIRX SYX MW ETTVIGMEXIH EW [IP
UYEPM½IH ERH XLSWI [LS E
;I HS XLEX F] VIEHMRK XLI VIWYQIW EKEMR

8LEX´W [L] XLI VIWYQIW EVI WS GVMXMGEP FIGEYWI XLIVI EVI WS
XLEX WYTTSVX XLI WTIGMEPM^IH I\TIVMIRGI VIUYMVIQIRXW
FI GSRWMHIVIH -J [I HSR´X WII EGXYEP I\EQTPIW SJ XLSWI
XLEX E TIVWSR EGXYEPP] HMH XLI NSF XLI] EVI HMWGYWWMRK

6

3RGI [I ½RH XLI TISTPI [LS QIIX XLI FEWMG UYEPMJMGEXMSRW
KIRIVEP I\TIVMIRGI ERH IHYGE-XMSR ERH XLI] FIEZR KXLVI
M^IH I\TIVMIRGI EW [IPP XLI W]WXIQ WITEVEXIW GERHMHEXIW MRXS
XLVII KVSYTW SYV XSSP WITEVEXIW GERHMHEXIW
ERH ³ ´

;I [ERX XS VIJIV EX PIEWX XLVII TISTPI JVSQ XLI LMKLIWX
ETTPMGERXW WS [I PSSO EX XLI XST KVSYT SJ GERHMHEXIW
EFPIH ZIXIVERW MR XLI TSSP XLIMV ETTPMGEXMSRW ¾SEX XS XLI XST SJ KVSYT
is called “Veterans’ Preference” and these are the candidates we consider
½VWX -J XLIVI EVI RS UYEPM½IH ZIXIVERW MR XLI LMKLIWX
applicants, we refer all other candidates who are in the highest group of
UYEPM½IH ETTPMGERXW

2S[MJ XLIVI EVIR´X XLVII TISTPI MR- XLI LMKLIWX KVSYT
dates, we’re allowed to merge groups together and create one group out of
XLI WERH W 8LIR [I PSSO EKEMR EX XLI ZIXIVERW
XLI XST SJ XLMW RI[KVSYT © XLMW MW [LEX TVIJIVIRGI
only time this happens is if we don’t have enough candidates to refer from
XLEX LMKLIWX MRMXMEP KVSYT

7

3YV KSEP MW XS VIJIV EX PIEWX XLVII TISTPI WS XLI LMVMRK SJ½GMEP
[MPP LEZI E WYJ½GMIRX RYQFIV SJ TISTPI XS ½PP XLSWI
MX´W YT XS XLI LMVMRK SJ½GMEP XS EWWIWW XLIMV
can’t merge them and get me three people, then I am going to cancel this
ERRSYRGIQIRX ERH WXEVX SZIV ´ 3V-QE]FI [I´PP YWI SRI SJ XLSWI LMVMRK
MFMPMXMIW ERH HS E HMVIGX LMVI ²

9PXMQEXIP] MR GSRWYPXEXMSR [MXL XLI LYQER VIWSYVGIW
GSQI XS E HIGMWMSR ERH MWWYI E GIVXM½GEXI
consider. That’s when the interview comes into play, which we’ll cover
below. A few other insider nuggets from Doris include:

- There are time limits on the process. “OPM gives
ER EKIRG] HE]W JVSQ XLI HEXI SJ XLI ERRSYRGIQIRX
a position, so the process shouldn’t drag out for 6 months.
±%X SYV EKIRG] [I LEZI E XS - HE] QIXVMG XS IZEPYEXI ET
plications after the vacancy closes.”

The HR folks know their stuff. I [E3Q4 TPGWXM½IW IEGL
Qualifications Examiners only people who are allowed to do
Applicant Vetting Group people who have gone through OPM’s
GUVE M½GEXMSR XVEMRMRK ERH [I LEZI XS OIIT SYV G
tion current. We have to re-certify every three years. That
means going back through training, being re-tested and
LEZRKXVI WTMXGM½PH ²
Sometimes HR offices are just overwhelmed. ³ ´
Agencies where it seems to take longer are likely to be
short-staffed: “There might be only one HR Specialist who
is handling several vacancy announcements at one time and at
ZEVMSYW ½PXIV WXEKIW JVSQ XLIVI ETTPMGERXW
%YXLSV QEXL RSXI
Applications. There are only so many hours in a day
and you don’t really want an HR Specialist doing analysis
after eight hours anyway. In those cases, it could take longer.
dough. We’re talking days. Sometimes it’s weeks. The
time it takes to vet applications really just depends on how
XLI EKIRG] WXEJ½RK STIVEXMSR MW WIX YT ²

“Once the scores are determined, they can be
changed. In most cases, scores are determined through
an electronic application system that’s been coded before
the vacancy was ever posted, and it’s based on a job
SJ XLI TSWMXMSR ² =SY GER´X MR¾YIRGI XLI LMVMRK Q
HR person, even if they wanted to like you and pass you
through. It just doesn’t work that way.

With all that being said, let’s jump back to some wisdom from Toni
Harris, who sent us this about the “black hole” of USAJOBS ap
plications:

“Patience is a skill you need to master when applying to federal
NSFW &IWMHIW]SY LEZI RS GSRXVSP SZIV XLI LMVMR
TWSYVGIW SJ½GMEPW XLEX [SYW XLIV IRIVK] SR [LEX]SY GER GSRXVS
GSQI XS E HIGMWMSR ERH MWWYI E GIVXM½GEXI
both an impeccable application and building a network to support your job
WIEVGL)ZIV]XLMRK IPWI MW SYX SJ]SYV LERHW ²

Breathe.

If you’re best qualified, the call will come.

Should I submit 100 or 10 applications?

While we have heard stories of people submitting 100 applications ERH EGXYEPP] KSX E NSF [I [SYPH RSX VIGSQQIRH XLEX ETTVSEGL Instead, it's a much better use of your time to conduct a targeted search, tailor your resume and application, and make sure you're p ting your best foot forward each time you're throwing your hat in the ring. Listen to some advice from Camille Roberts again, who say

"Be selective. Don't apply for something for the sake of applying if it is a stretch. Take time to read the announcement CAREFULLY. See if]SY EVI E KSSH ½X &I WYVI]SY UYEPMJ EPMX] MR quantity. It only takes one."

That being said, she also acknowledged that "The federal employment landscape is a tedious and long process. Be prepared for that. Set realistic expectations and plan ahead." While you want to be more targeted, she also said, "Do not apply to one position and stop. Apply to several at a time, if you qualify."

Government career advisor and author Paul Binkley sums it up this way:

"Don't fall into the simple math trap -- the more positions I apply to, the better my chances. In my mind, quality trumps quantity 99 times out of a 100 for so many reasons, not the least of which is how much time and effort it takes to submit a really good application.

He goes on to say:

"Most positions posted to USAJOBS have a questionnaire to identify XLI FIWX UYEPM½IH MRHMZMHYEPW -=SY G TVIZMI[XL naire via a link in the How to Apply section of the job announcement

There are three main types of questions: yes/no, choose all that apply, and multiple choice questions that ask you to rate your PIZIP SJ I\TIVMIRGI ERH ORS[PIHKI M R WT

If you cannot answer the highest level of experience on at least SJ XLI UYIWXMSRW EWOIH XLIR]SY WL you should apply."

Binkley has a full blog post on this topic titled "Don't Fall Into the 7MQTPI 1EXL 8VET 9WI XLI". He also has a JYPP FSSO SR "Students Federal Career Guide, 2nd Ed". Check it out.

Now don't get us wrong. We have also heard examples of people who were able to bust through the bureaucracy. Here's what one long-time federal employee said:

±8LI ½VWX NSF - LEH EW E HIJIRWI GSRX TVMSV [SVO I\TIVMIRGI -X [EW Q] ½ had a contact there, made a good impression, and passed the language test. As a Title 10 federal employee at National Defense University, the job I had required a master's degree - this was before I went back to school. But again, I had previously worked on the project and they knew me, so I got the job."

&I WIPIGXMZI FYX MJ]SY VIEPP] [ERX E make a strong case for yourself and don't regret the missed opportunity - just don't do that for dozens of jobs or you could get FYVRX SYX TVIXX] JEWX ERH [I VIEPP] [E don't do that).

What's the Best Location - Headquarters or the Field?

While you might think that the default answer is "headquarters," a better answer might be "both." Again, we turn to government career expert Lily Whiteman for some insight. By striving to get experience in both XLI LIEHUYEVXIVW ERH ½IPH SJ½GIW]SY [MPP

- learn about the ways in which relationships between head UYEVXIVW ERH XLI ½IPH GER FI WXVEMRIH HY XS KISKVETLMG and cultural differences
- position yourself as the go-to person for bridging the gulf among 'warring' worlds
- gain street cred for a future senior executive position by having multi-locational experience
- learn to relate well to people in unique contexts
- speed time to completion of projects that might otherwise get held up by hand-wringing and political power struggles
- pad your professional networking list through nationwide contacts

%RH HSR´X JSVKIX SJ XLI KSZIVRQIRX [SVOJSVGI MW RSX MR'EWL ington, DC. Why not work closer to home, if you can, and build up valuable experience that could fast track your career down the road?

%PWS OIIT ER I]I SYX JSV PEVKI WTIGMEPX] SJ½GIW 8LI] YWYEPPJ LEZI LMKLIV KVEHIW XLER RSVQEP ½IPH TSWMXMSRW *SV IEQTPI XLI (ITEVX QIRX SJ %KVMGYPXYVI LEW E FMK TEVX SJ XLIMV -3 SJ½GI MR /ERWEW MX] Missouri. The US Citizen and Immigration Services and Immigration ERH 'YWXSQW)RJSVGIQIRX LEZI E FMK SJ½GI MR &YVPMRKXSR .IVQSRX where people process immigration issues. The Environmental Protec XMSR %KIRG] LEW E PEVKI GSRXVEGXMRK SJ½GI MR MRGMRREXM 3LMS YW toms and Border Protection has a large part of their Chief Financial 3J½GIV XIEQ MR -RHMERETSPMW -RHMERE &I WYVI XS HS WSQI WPIYXLMRK ERH ½RH SYX MJ XLIVI´W E GSSP GMX] [LIVI]SY H[ERX XS FVIEO MR ERH spend some time getting experience and rising up the ranks.

&] XLI [E] MJ]SY KIX 0MP] ;LMXIQER´W FSSO]SY GER ½RH E KVIEX XEFPI

on pages 40-44 with the relative advantages and disadvantages of [SVOMRK MR IMXLIV XLI ½IPH SV LIEHUYEVXIVW

That being said, positions generally have a higher grade at head quarters and a higher percentage of the senior government positions are located in DC. You are closer to power and it is easier to move around agencies in DC. So please know that we are not discouraging you from applying to opportunities in DC. Just don't feel like you have to be there if you want to work somewhere else in the country and still get great federal career experience.

Should I go with the executive or legislative branch?

Many students are interested in legislative branch jobs. There are a few legislative agencies that operate similar career paths – agen GMIW PMOI +SZIVRQIRX %GGSYRXEFMPMX] 3J½GI +%3 'SRK 6IWIEVGL 7IVZMGI '67 ERH 0MFVEV] SJ 'SRKVIWW EVI TSTY recent graduates as they have several research and oversight posi tions. In fact, career advisor Donna Dyer at Duke recommended these kinds of opportunities as a unique way to get into government:

±8LI WQEPPIV MRHITIRHIRX EKIRGMIW ERH TPEGIW PM '&3 XLEX EVI PIKMWPEXMZI FVERGL GER FI E PMXXPI FM with their applications and take longer to hire if they don't get ETTPMGEXMSRW JVSQ GERHMHEXIW [LS GER WYGGIIH MR XLI QSVI PMQIR] XS VIGIMZI ERH GSRWMHIV QSVI SYXWMHI ETTPM XLI VMKLX TIVWSR JSV XLI NSF [LMGL KMZIW RI[TISTPI E GL KSZIVRQIRX ²

Legislative committees are also popular stops, but generally look for MRHMZMHYEPW [MXL \TIVXMWI EPVIEH] MR XLI ½IPH SJ XLI G tol Hill legislative positions are worth a book in itself as most of the PIKMWPEXYVI WXEJJ TSWMXMSRW EVI ½PPIH [MXL VIGIRX KVE low pay, long hours, high responsibility, and high turnover -- and based on the whim of each Congress member. Most of the time in order to land a Hill job, you must either know somebody or have previously interned on the Hill. You can try to get onto a Capitol Hill listserv which will help in getting access to these types of jobs. A couple lists to take a look at would be Tom Mantos, PMWXWIVZ Z Bradley verse JII FEWIH

Where is there a lot of hiring happening in government right now?

A lot of the hiring is based on where the action is currently in government. For example, MR E FMK TV eral government is imple menting the Affordable Care Act. So there are increasingly more vacancies at Health and Human Services, which is the main agency running the pro gram. However, often there is less obvious trickle down ef fects. For instance, IRS is han dling the enforcement side of Affordable Care Care so they have a lot of openings and 341 MW LERHPMR portions of the health insur ance coordination and have jobs as well. A good source of information is just follow ing the broader news like The Washington Post as well as niche publications like Federal Times and Government Exec utive that will report stories like “Patent and Trademark 3J½GI TYWLIW XS new patent lawyers.”

Once again, Whiteman has some great insight here:

> Congressional staffers help the members of Congress do their NSFW XLI] [VMXI ERH XVEGO PIKMWPEXMSR VIWIEVGL ERH WXVEXIKM^I policy alternatives, plan the appearances of members of Con gress, write their speeches, negotiate compromises, communicate with the TVIWW QIIX [MXL PSFF]MWXW ERH VIWTSRH XS GSRWXMXYIRXW´ GSRGIVRW

-RHIiH QER] ,MPP NSFW TVSZMHI TVMQI STTSVXYRMXMIW XS MR¾YIRGI QIQFIVW SJ 'SRKVIWW ERH XLIVIF] MR¾YIRGI LMWXSV] &YX HIWTMXI XLI TS[IV XLEX QE] EGGSQTER] ,MPP NSFW ,MPP GEVIIVW MRZSPZI WSQI VIPEXMZI HMWEHZERXEKIW *SV SRI XLMRK SRP] EFSYX WXEJJIVW [SVO SR XLI ,MPP ERH E VIPEXMZIP] WQEPP RYQFIV SJ WXEJJIVW [SVO MR XLI HMWXVMGX SJ½GIW SJ QIQFIVW SJ 'SR KVIWW WS XLI ,MPP EGGSYRXW JSV SRP] E ZIV] WQEPP TIVGIRXEKI SJ XLI JIHIVEP [SVOJSVGI

Whiteman goes on to explain that “Congress hires lawyers, econo mists, communications experts, experts on various policy issues, IT professionals, procurement managers, administrative assistants and many other types of professionals.” Note that these jobs are not found on USAJOBS. You can learn more about those opportunities here:

- LXXT XLILMPP GSQ VIWSYVGIW GPEWWM½IHW IQTPS]IV
- LXXT [[[STENSFW GSQ GETMXSP LMPP NSFW LXQP
- LXXT [[[LSYWI KSZ GSRXIRX NSFW
- LXXT [[[WIREXI KSZ IQTPS]QIRX TS TSWMXMSRW LXQ

*MREPP] HSR´X JSVKIX EFSYX WXEXI PIKMWPEXMZI STTSVXYRMXMIW =SY GER ½RH a full list of jobs and a wealth of information about those kinds of op TSVXYRMXMIW EX XLI 2EXMSREP 'SRJIVIRGI SJ 7XEXI 0IKMWPEXYVIW 2'70

Deliver

HOW DO I CUT THR
CROWDED FIELD O
CANDIDATES?

In General: Government Job Applications

So you've learned how to discover the right job for you and how to decipher the pesky and peculiar gov ernment hiring process. So how do you ensure that you deliver the goods - making sure that you drive LSQI XLI TSMRX XLEX]SY´VI UYEPM½IH ERH VIEH] XS VSGO E just so happens to be the one we're going to answer next - from having a stellar resume and application to acing the interview to knowing when to follow up to building an impeccable network of people who will vouch for you or give you good advice about getting into government.

*VSQ XLI SYXWIX]SY WLSYPH TVSFEFP] ORS[XLMW VIEPMX]

±=SY GER RS PSRKIV XLMRO ³NYWX KIX QI MR JVSRX S
MW QYGL QSVI XLER XLEX =SY RIIH XS VIWIEVGL XLI S
TVSHYGX SV WIVZMGI =SY QYWX FI XLI WSPYXMSR TVS
EX XLI VMKLX XMQI ERH E PMXXPI FMX SJ PYGO EP[E]W LIPT

;I´H PMOI XS XLMRO XLEX XLMW KYMHI ERH XLMW WIGXMSR MR TEVXMGYPEV [MPP make you more than lucky.

The Government Resume: When Cookie Cutters Won't Work

The USAJOBS resume builder may seem like something you don't RIIH XS HS ½KYVMRK]SY EPVIEH] LEZI]SYV VIWYQI GSRZIRMIRXP] MR E .doc or .pdf format, but here's what one current federal intern says:

±&YMPH]SYV VIWYQI MR 97%.3&7 VEXLIV XLER WYFQMXXMRK E VIWYQI YWMRK ERSXLIV JSVQEX XS IRWYVI EPP VIUYMVIH MRJS ¼W WYFQMXXIH²

HR Specialist Doris Tirone at NASA echoed this sentiment:

"I can always tell the difference when someone submits an application XLVSYKL E [IFWMXI SXLIV XLER 97%.3&7 ERH XLI] SJXIR LEZI E PSI VEXI SJ WYGGIWW ²

GovLoop has developed a great infographic with tips on using the USAJOBS Resume Builder to make your resume the best it can be. In summary: pay attention to keywords in job descriptions as recruiters look for them, be concise, use numbers to highlight your accomplishments.

Are you worried that you don't have enough experience? Here's what noted government careers expert Camille Roberts would say, in general, to applicants who are just coming out of school:

±*SPPS[HMVIGXMSRW SR XLI NSF ERRSYRGIQIRX 8VERWPEXI]SYV WGLSSP GSPPIKI TVSNIGXW MRXS XVERWJIVVEFPI WQMPPW XLEX VIPEXI XS XLI NSF -J]SY [IVI XLI XIEQ PIEHIV SR E TVSNIGX MRGPYHI MX]SY [IVI MR E WYTTSVXMRK VSPI MRGPYHI MX 8LMRO EFSYX]SYV GSPPIKI TVSNIGXW PMOI E NSF ;LEX VSPI HMH]SY TPE]# -J]SY EVI GYVVIRXP] MR GSPPIKI EFSMH XLSWI X]TIW SJ EGXMZMXMIW KIX MRZSPZIH 4EVXMGMTEXI MR EGXMZMXMIW XLEX EVI SJJIVIH ;VMXI EFSYX XLI VIWYPXW -J]SY [IVI WIPIGXIH XS TVIWIRX

GovLoop also has created a helpful "Rock Your Resume" group that has resume tips, examples of resume transformations and a chance to ask your peers to critique your resume to make sure it's ready for prime time. We've listed the basic tips below - follow these resume guidelines and you'll be on the fast track to a government job!

1. Basics: Formatting

- 9WI TX JSRX TX MW HMJ½GYPX XS VIEH ERH TX XEO much space
- Use a serif font like Times New Roman. This will make it easier to read.
- Use bullets. Most employers can't be bothered to read full paragraphs.
- Avoid using tables and templates to format your resume. If you send a Microsoft Word version of your resume, employers can see the lines of the template, while the formatting of tables can often be distorted when converted to PDF.
- For Federal positions, make section headings match those of USAJOBS Resume Builder.
- Don't waste valuable real estate!
  - Don't go overboard with the size of your name. Most employers can read it at 11pt just as well as they can at 20pt, but at 11pt it doesn't take up as much space.
  - (SR´X YWI XLI WEQI VIWYQI LIEHIV JVSQ XLI ½VWX TE on each subsequent page. It not only takes up space, but GSYPH PIEH ER IQTPS]IV [LS ½RHW SRP] SRI TEKI SJ]S VIWYQI XS XLMRO MX MW XLI ½VWX TEKI
  - Margins for your resume should be no larger than 1" and no smaller than 0.7".
  - Don't waste space saying "references available upon request." Employers know this!

2. Quick! Grab Their Attention!

- Keep in mind your resume needs to make an impact within 5-10 seconds!
- Speak the language of the prospective employer. Be sure to use keywords from the position description to describe your skills and accomplishments.
- Leave out the generic "objective" section.

- In federal resumes, include a "summary" section after your REQI ERH GSRXEGX MRJS 8LMW WLSYPH FI E FVMIJ PMRI TVS ½PI WYQQEV] MRGSVTSVEXMRK- OI[SVHW JVSQ Write using a sentence structure, but don't use "I." TSWMXMSRW scription.
- For federal resumes, you can also craft a "Core Competencies" section by using keywords from the job announcement along with your expertise and skills. Again, target each NSF ERRSYRGIQIRX F] EHHVIWWMRK IQTPS] Don't use passive voice!

3. Structure Your Experience

- 'SRWMHIV YWMRK E ±QSHM½IH GLVSRSPSKMGEP a hybrid version of the functional and chronological that is organized in reverse chronological order, but has subsections focused on the skill set the employer has said they need. Each description, then, has longer bullet points that EVI JSGYWIH SR WTIGM½G WOMPP WIXW HIXIVQMRIH F] XLI NSF ER nouncement.
- Make the last subsection of every position description a "Key Accomplishments" section.
- Nothing on your resume is more important than your accomplishments. If you don't share how you affected an organization or how your output was used, employers won't get the full picture. After you write each bullet point, ask yourself "so what?" Whenever possible, quantify your accomplishments. In place of measurable accomplishments, give as much detail as you can.

4. Educate Yourself

- Move your education section after your professional experience, even if you are in school. Hiring managers tend to be more interested in your experience than in your course work.
- List education experience in reverse chronological order.
- Include graduation dates, GPA, and related coursework.
- Did you write a thesis or do research projects? If so, include their titles.
- If your GPA is based on a 4.0 scale, there is no need to say so.
- Consider including capstone projects as pro bono experience in your experience section.

5. Polish Your Writing Style

- 7TIPP SYX EPP EGVSR]QW [LIR XLI] ETTIEV XLI ½VWX XM
- Do not use contractions.
- Start each bullet point with an action verb and use verbs found in the position description. Avoid using verbs like conduct, perform, play, prepare, administer, support, assist, maintain, or the dreaded "responsibilities included." Those passive verbs don't give you the credit you deserve!

6. Be Consistent!

- Think you're done? Go back and check your entire resume for consistency of:
  - JSVQEXXMRK WTEGI JSRX IXG
  - tense;
  - punctuation;
  - HEXI JSVQEX YWI QSRXL ERH]IEV ERH
  - bullets.
- 4EWXI]SYV ½REP VIWYQI MRXS E XI\X ½PI ERH VITPEC bullets or other symbols that don't translate well into an EWXIVMWO SV SXLIV OI]FSEVH W]QFSP (SYFPI GLIG consistency, then you can simply copy and paste your clean resume into the USAJobs Resume Builder.

In addition to these gems, the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago has some excellent resume and curriculum vitae templates for a variety of positions and experience levels:

LXXT LEVVMWWGLSSP YGLMGEKS IHY GEVIIV HIZIPSTQIRX management-skills-development

If you decide to use any of these templates, don't forget to follow the guidelines we've laid out above.

“Everyone knows the old adage regarding what happens when you assume plies to federal internship and writing your federal resume so tion is spelled out with keywords used in the original announce

Bryan Kempton,
(MVIGXSV SJ XLI 3-J½GI SJ ²EVIV ²V
ZMGIW EX XLI 9RMZIVWMX] SJ 1EV]PERH
School of Public Policy

Oh - and when you are ready to hit submit, listen to this advice - again, from Camille Roberts:

> Follow the steps very carefully and complete every section ac
> WEPEV] WYTIVZMWSVW ERH +4%)ZIR MJ SY XLMRO SY ZIVMJMIH
> MWX [MPP PMOIP] FI XLIX VSXTVWSRQIV ERH IQEMP EVI EGGYVEXI
> XS WGSVI]SYV 97%.3&7 ½ HIWEPP XLI XMQI ERH - EQ WLSGOIH EX LSI
> VIWYQI 8LIMV-VSPI MQWSWFIR
> GPYWMZI RSX MRGPYWMZI %TTVSEGL
>
> 7EZI]SYV [SVO (SR´X IQFIPPMWL]SYV EFMPMXMIW &I TEXMIRX ERH TIVWMWXIRX
> (SR´X ETTP] EX XLI PEWX QMRYXI JSV E NSF 8EXIVW
> GSQTYXIV MRXIVRIX MWWYIW SV MJ 97%.3&7 LEV

That seems like a good idea to us.

Professional Reviews and Resources

If you’re really intent on getting a government job and feel like these tips we’ve laid out above don’t bring you far enough, then consider connecting with a professional resume reviewer. Here are some places you could go for help:

- CC Career Services
- Federal Prose
- Federal Resume Experts
- Federal Resume Writer
- Federal Resumix
- GovLoop Rock Your Resume Group
- Heather Krasna
- Lily Whiteman
- Resume Place

Cover Letters

Many federal positions do not require cover letters but they are still relevant in many situations. A cover letter should be designed to give the employer the information they need in the shortest most concise form. The purpose of your cover letter is NOT to summarize your resume, it is to prove your thesis and highlight your writing abilities. Your cover letter and resume should support each other and be in sync.

The introductory paragraph should do just enough to catch the reader’s eye and be a good platform to launch into your other “substance” paragraphs. In the middle paragraphs, be concise and write clearly without distracting the reader with too many random thoughts. Your concluding paragraph should restate your thesis and tells the reader that you just proved your thesis. LEZI [LEX
The Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago seems to think that cover letters are still extremely relevant. They have a document on their website that breaks down how to write effective cover letters for a variety of positions:
LXXT LEVVMWWGLSSP YGLMGEKS IHY WMXIW HIJEYPX ½PIW
XOIVW TXX
Also, check out Paul Pinkley’s blog posts on GovLoop for even more information.

Do I Need to Worry About KSAs and Essays?

;I´ZI KSX WSQI KSSH RI[W LIVI EW HIPMZIVIH F] 0MP] ;LMXIQE
literally wrote the book on this stuff):

> “Much to the relief of federal job applicants, federal agencies
> [IVI HMVIGXIH F] XLI TVIWMHIRX MR XS IPMQMREXI I
> XMSRW YWYEPP] GEPPIH /7%W ERH)'5W JVSQ NSF ETT
> EVI YWIH MR MRMXMEP WGVIIRW SJ ETTPMGEXMSRW 8LIVIJS
> TSVXYRMXMIW RS PSRKIV MRGPYHI XLIWI X]TIW SJ QYGL VIZ

Nevertheless, federal agencies are still allowed to use essay questions in
JSPPS[YT WGVIIRW SJ ETTPMGEXMSRW 8LIVIJSVI EX WSQI
a federal job, you may discover a juicy opening that is attached to an ap
TPMGEXMSR XLEX LEW IWWE] UYIWXMSRW ²

Whiteman’s book has a CD that accompanies it with a chapter called “Writing Killer Application Essays,” so you can check that out, if you are so inclined.

Another careers expert, Kathryn Troutman also covers this ground in her book “Ten Steps to a Federal Job,” with several tips for writing
[MRRMRK REVVEXMZIW LIV XMTW ETTP] WTIGM½GEPP] JSV /7
adapting for a post-KSA world):

+MZI SRI JERXEWXMG I\EQTPI XLEX XMI RXS XLI NSF HLWGVMTXMSR OI][SVHW

5YERXMJ] SV UYEPMJ]]SYV VIWYPXW EGGSQTPMWLQIRXW

0IX XLI ''%6 'SRXI\X 'LEPPIRKI %GXMSRW 6IWYPXW HVMZI]SYV WXSV]

;VMXI MR XLI ½VWX TIVWSR

4VSSJVIEH]SYV IWWE]W SV LEZI WSQISRI IPWI HS WS

Like we said, it may not come up often, but be ready to put a bit more time into these essays - the payoff will be worth it, we promise.

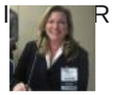
How Do I Shine in the Interview?

7S]SY´ZI QEHI MX XLVSYKL XLI ½VWX WXIT ERH WGSVIH ER MRXIVZMI[JSV your dream position, great job! Now, how do you stand out from the other candidates? Chris Grant and Charles DeLuca, current federal employees, say to pay attention to what the job description mentions so you're prepared for an impressive interview.

> "The interview had more technical questions about skills needed JSV XLI NSF ±
>
> ±-J ETTP]MRK JSV E XIGLRMGEP NSF FI TVITEVIH JSV QSVI WTIGM½G UYIWXMSRW ²

Prepping for an interview by researching more about the agency also shows you're a well-polished applicant. Joel McFarland says-he be came "educated on what programs the agency ran and looked for WTIGM½G HEXE TVSKVEQW² XLEX [IVI QIRXMSRIH MR XLI NSF HIWGVMTXMSR to stand out.

One of the most important, and often forgotten, techniques for a good interview is well-polished body language. Kathleen Smith has a great post on GovLoop about the 6 essential tips for body language when interviewing that we've added here for you:



6 Body Language Tips for Interviewing

Posted by VEXLPIIRSTQMEXLEV] EX TQ

As we mention frequently, people make snap decisions about you FEWIH SR ½VWX MQTVIWWMSRW

It's important that you present a positive total package to a potential employer. One aspect of that is body language. Many of the judgments XLEX MRXIVZMI[IVW QEOI EFSYX]SY EVI WYFGSRWGMSYW ¯ X realize they are judging you when they judge you. Some body language tips to keep in mind when you interview:

Have a good handshake

=SY [ERX XS WLEOI XLI SXLIV TIVWSR´W LERH ½VQP] FYX RS 8LMW MWR´X E WXVIRKXL GSRXIWX +MZI MX WLEOIW ERH F weak handshakes often don't realize they have a weak handshake. Practice with some friends - yes really - and get feedback. It may WSYRH WMPP] FYX MX´W MQTSVXERX % KSSH LERHWLEOI GS and assurance.

Sit up straight

Sit up straight during your interview, and when you are seated-wait MRK JSV XLI MRXIVZMI[IV XS EVVMZI % PSX SJ SJ½GI JYVRMX and slouchy. Sit on the edge of the chair or sofa, which helps you sit up straight. Leaning very slightly forward projects an interest in what the interviewer is saying.

Smile

Attitude is more important than most job seekers realize. Don't paste a frozen smile on for the entire interview, but being friendly, cordial and positive makes people want to work with you. And hire you.

Be present

Look the interviewer in the eye when they speak. Acknowledge them F] RSHHMRK SV SXLIV[MWI EJ½VQMRK SGGEWMSREPP] XLEX attention to what they are saying. Focus, concentrate and be present in the moment.

Sit still

You may be nervous or antsy, but strive to sit still and be calm. Avoid JSSX XETTMRK ½HKIXMRK XETTMRK-]SYV TIR ing your throat, or whatever your nervous tic may be. You want to appear comfortable and professional, not nervous and unhappy to be there. If you're unsure of your nervous tics asks friends or colleagues.

Be open

Don't cross your arms. Or your legs. Crossing your arms gives a sig nal that you are uncomfortable and unreceptive. Crossing your legs can make you slouch.

Many interviewers are as uncomfortable as you are. Anything you can HS XS LIPT TYX XLIQ EX IEWI ERH WLS[XLEX]SY EVI GSSP competent professional will help your chances of securing the posi tion.

*SPPS[YT [MXL E RMGI IQEMP -J]SY- VIEPP] QIER [LEX]SY W MRK -J XLI QEREKIV MW SR XLI JIRGI MX WLS[W XLI LMVMRI LEZI MRMXMEXMZI MRXIVIWX ERH IRXLYWMEWQ 8LI ETTPMGE TMJEXMRK [MXL]SY MW LIPTJYP MJ XLI] LEZI E WXVSRK LSWVXGSPIEXL LIPQ

Salary Negotiation

With most positions, there is room for negotiation, but there's a technique to it. Don't expect to be able to jump to the upper level SJ XLI TE] WGEPI JSV ER IRXV] PIZIP NSF FYX HSR´X FI WEXI lowest either.

7SQI TSWMXMSRW QE] LEZI FIRI½XW -MRGPYHIH MR XLI GSQTIF EKI XLSWI EVI ZEPYEFPI 8LIWI FIRI½XW GER FI RIKSXMEXI HSR´X I\TIGX XSS QYGL 8LIVI MW E -½RI PMRI FIX[IIR TVSTIV tion and being greedy. ½HIRX ERH

Taken from[XXT [[[KSZPSST GSQ]VPSEÅPKWEKPSXKWT W JSV MRXIVZMI[MRK

NASA's Doris Tirone had a few additional thoughts about the inter viewing process:

> One of the recommendations that I make to job seekers is that EX XLI IRH SJ XLIMV MRXIVZMI[XLI ½VWX XLMRK XLI] WLSYPH HS MW XS EWO WIZIVEP WXERHEVH UYIWXMSRW
>
> - ;LEX´W XLI RI\X WXIT MR XLI TVSGIWW#
> - ,S[HMH XLMW TSWMXMSR FIGSQI ZEGERX#
> - ;LS HSIW XLMW TSWMXMSR VITSVX XS#
> - May I contact you in a couple weeks if I have not heard anything ERH MJ WS [LS WLSYPH - GSRXEGX#

8IPP XLI LMVMRK QEREKIV EX XLI IRH ³- VIEPP] PSZI XLI NSF 8LERO]SY JSV]SYV XMQI XSHE] &EWIH SR [LEX -´ZI LIEVH -´Q I\GMXIH EFSYX XLMW STTSVXYRMX] -X sounds like it would be a great opportunity for me, but I also hope that you JSYRH Q] UYEPM½GEXMSRW XS ½X [LEX]SY´VI PSSOMRK JSV ´

Salary Negotiation Tips

1. Timing is Everything

2. Ask it right

3. What to do if you can't get to yes

)\GIVTX gets SQ ESR +SZ0SST JVSQ GEVIIV I\TIVX ,IEXLIV /VEWRE

- XLMRO QER] TISTPI EVI EJVEMH XS EWO EFSYX WEPEV] WII XLI HGLP lent book "Women Don't Ask"). This stems from insecurity that just by asking they might sour the relationship with an employer or even lose a precious job offer. However, salary negotiation is par for the course in the professional world, and if it's done right it can add thousands to not just your starting salary, but salaries you later earn for the rest of your career. My book Jobs That Mat ter LEW RYQIVSYW WEPEV] RIKSXMEXMSR XMTW WTIGM½G XS TYFPMG WIGXSV employment. Here are just a few tips that apply to many job offers.

It is not recommended to discuss salary before you receive a job SJJIV 8LMW MW HMJ½GYPX FIGEYWI QER] IQTPS]IVW [MPP EWO]SY JSV JSVV salary requirements before or during the interview. It's ideal to state something like "I would be glad to discuss that with you when we know we are mutually interested in working together," or to turn around the question and ask if they have a range in mind. The reason for this is that if you state a range that is too high, you might be taken out of the running before you have a chance to prove to the employer that you are the ideal candidate; and if you state something too low, you have just lost money you could have earned. So try not to answer the question—and cer XEMRP] HS RSX FI XLI TIVWSR XS FVMRK YT WEPEV] ½VWX

One important thing to note is that, even though you have to dis close prior salaries in a federal application, the prior salary history MW JVSQ [LEX - YRHIVWXERH RSX YWIH XS HIXIVQMRI]SYV JYXYVI WEPEV] =SY KVEHI MW MRWXIEH FEWIH SR [LIXLIV]SY QIIX XLI UYEPM½ GEXMSRW JSV XLI NSF EX E TEVXMGYPEV KVEHI FIZ 2 XI XS JIHIVEP ,6 folks: correct me if I'm wrong!).

Once you receive an offer, it is incumbent upon you to ask ques tions. You have to know exactly what is included in the offer, es TIGMEPP] XLI WEPEV] FIRI½XW WXEVX HEXI ZEGEXMSR X]TMGEP [SVOMRK hours, dress code, etc. If you don't know something, now is the time to ask.

3RGI]SY LEZI XLI SJJIV XLI XVMGO MW EPWS spot. Ask for some time to think about it. Then, reply with a care fully researched response. Find out the average salaries in your ½IPH F] YWMRK WMXIW PMOI Salary.com, Payscale.com, Glassdoor.com, OPM for federal jobs, and Guidestar JSV RSRTVS½XW ERH M are a student or recent grad) by asking your college career center what the average salaries are for students with your background. Counter the offer with a number that is higher than the offered amount, but not so much higher as to be insulting, and back up your request with data about the average salaries as well as spe GM½G VIEWSRW [L]]SY HIWIVZI QSVI

It's possible to jeopardize an offer if you don't make the request MR XLI VMKLX [E] =SY ½VWX LEZI XS EP[E]W and excited by the offer. If you just state that you are waiting for a better-paying offer, you could lose the offer by showing you're just not that excited by it. Instead, show enthusiasm, but temper it with some questions about salary. If you are really afraid to ask for more money, you can start by asking if the employer would mind if you ask a question about salary. The vast majority will reassure you that it is OK to ask the question.

If you have to take a lower salary, perhaps because the employer simply doesn't have the budget to offer more, consider asking what the promotional timeline is and whether you could have an early performance review tied to a potential raise. Be sure to get this in writing.

For other tips, visit SalaryNegotiations.com and be sure to check out GovLoop's Government Salary Calculator XS ½RH SYX [LEX 3VMKMREXIX TSWX KSZPSST GSQ TVS½PIW FPSKW WEPEV