Armstrong

Federal Job Guide

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As of 2010, the federal government employed over 2.65 million workers in the Executive branch alone. These employees enjoy a variety of benefits including:

- Job security
- A series of noncompetitive raises
- Reinstatement eligibility

If you leave federal service within 3 years of beginning employment, you have 3 years to decide if you want to be reinstated. If you stay within federal service for over 3 years, you have reinstatement eligibility for a lifetime.

- Possible opportunities to move between agencies
- Quality health insurance and retirement plans
- Geographical flexibility

With job openings across the nation and positions in almost every field, the federal government has a wide range of employment opportunities.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**Non-competitive Status**

Most federal positions are competitive, meaning that they are open to applicants outside the federal government and filled according to qualifications and interviews. However, current or former federal employees are eligible for non-competitive status within the federal hiring process. Non-competitive status may also be given to applicants who meet the minimum qualifications and one of the following conditions: veterans, people with disabilities, displaced federal employees, returned Peace Corp volunteers, qualified for the Bilingual/Bicultural program, and applicants to internships and student jobs programs. To find out if you are eligible for a non-competitive status, contact the program/agency you are affiliated with.

If you do have non-competitive status, you can expand your search on USAjobs.gov by clicking “Advanced Search” and checking the box for non-competitive status. As an applicant with non-competitive eligibility, you are given priority in the application process and you may be able to search more positions.
STEP 1: Identify positions and agencies of interest

So you’ve decided that you’re interested in working for the federal government. What now?

Since the government has so many different positions available, it is important to target your search by deciding which positions and agencies are most interesting to you. This section includes a list of possible federal careers by major and a guide to federal agencies. While in this step, it may be helpful to discuss different types of positions with faculty, staff, or current federal employees.

DID YOU KNOW?

Federal Jobs by Region

Federal Jobs are not limited to Washington D.C. They can be found across the United States and even abroad. Note the geographical distribution of Federal Jobs in 2010. 84% of Federal jobs were located OUTSIDE of Washington, D.C., and 15.8% of Federal jobs were located in the Southeast.

Percentage of Federal Jobs by Region, 2010

Government employees specialize in a wide-variety of areas. Below is a chart of federal jobs by major from usajobs.gov. You can qualify for some of these jobs regardless of major (especially with job-related experience). This list is not comprehensive, so remember to search for jobs outside of these titles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANY MAJOR</th>
<th>Accounting</th>
<th>Agriculture</th>
<th>Anthropology</th>
<th>Biology</th>
<th>Communications</th>
<th>Corrections</th>
<th>Counseling</th>
<th>Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement</th>
<th>Dietetics and Nutrition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Protection</td>
<td>Accountants</td>
<td>Soil Conservationists</td>
<td>Anthropologists</td>
<td>General Biological Scientists</td>
<td>Telecommunications Managers</td>
<td>Correctional Institution Administrators</td>
<td>Chaplains</td>
<td>Border Patrol Agents</td>
<td>Dietitians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Rights Analyst</td>
<td>Auditors</td>
<td>Agricultural Commodity Graders</td>
<td>Museum Curators</td>
<td>Entomologists</td>
<td>Communications Specialists</td>
<td>Correctional Officers Program Analysts</td>
<td>Educ. and Vocational Training Specialists</td>
<td>Criminal Investigators</td>
<td>Food Technologists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Officer</td>
<td>Financial Managers</td>
<td>Agricultural Mgmt. Spec.</td>
<td>Program Analysts</td>
<td>Microbiologists</td>
<td>Psychology Aids and Technicians</td>
<td>Educational Services Specialists</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>GAO Analyst</td>
<td>Nutritionists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Analyst</td>
<td>Financial Administrators</td>
<td>Agricultural Program Spec.</td>
<td>Management Analysts</td>
<td>Range Conservationists</td>
<td>Social Service Aids and Assistants</td>
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<td>Internal Revenue Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Logistics Management</td>
<td>Financial Institution Examiners</td>
<td>Agricultural Market Reporters</td>
<td>Archaeologists</td>
<td>Wildlife Biologists</td>
<td>Social Service Reps.</td>
<td>Educational Services Specialists</td>
<td>Corrections</td>
<td>Internal Revenue Officers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contract Representative</td>
<td>Intelligence Specialists</td>
<td>Foreign Agriculture Affairs Specialists</td>
<td>Museum Specialists</td>
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<td>Equal Opportunity</td>
<td>Educational Services Specialists</td>
<td>Corrections</td>
<td>United States Marshals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Claims Examining</td>
<td>Internal Revenue Agents</td>
<td>Soil Scientists</td>
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<td>Compliance Specialists</td>
<td>Educational Services Specialists</td>
<td>Corrections</td>
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<th>Biology</th>
<th>Communications</th>
<th>Corrections</th>
<th>Counseling</th>
<th>Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement</th>
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<td>Chaplains</td>
<td>Border Patrol Agents</td>
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<td>Entomologists</td>
<td>Communications Specialists</td>
<td>Correctional Officers Program Analysts</td>
<td>Educ. and Vocational Training Specialists</td>
<td>Criminal Investigators</td>
<td>Food Technologists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personnel occupations</td>
<td>Contract Specialists</td>
<td>Agricultural Engineers</td>
<td>Museum Specialists</td>
<td>Fishery Biologists</td>
<td>Public Affairs Specialists</td>
<td>Program Analysts</td>
<td>Personnel Specialists</td>
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<td>Nutritionalists</td>
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<td>Program Analysts</td>
<td>Microbiologists</td>
<td>Psychology Aids and Technicians</td>
<td>Educational Services Specialists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paralegal Specialist</td>
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<td>Foreign Agriculture Affairs Specialists</td>
<td>Museum Curators</td>
<td>Zoologists</td>
<td>Vocational Rehab Spec.</td>
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<td>Claims Examining</td>
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<td>Equal Opportunity</td>
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<td>Corrections</td>
<td>Corrections</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

This list is not comprehensive, so remember to search for jobs outside of these titles.
### Positions by major, cont’d

**ECONOMICS**
- Actuaries
- Budget Analysts
- Contract Specialists
- Economists
- Financial Analysts
- Financial Instl. Examiners
- GAO Analyst
- Loan Specialists
- Trade Specialists
- Transportation Industrial Analysts

**EDUCATION**
- Education and Training Specialists
- Educ. and Vocational Training Specialists
- Vocational Rehab. Specialists
- Educational Program Specialists
- Employee Dev. Specialists
- Public Health Educators
- Training Instructors
- Instructional Systems Specialists
- Educational Services Specialists

**ELECTRONICS TECHNOLOGY**
- Communications Specialists
- Electronics Technicians
- Patent Examiners
- Electronics Mechanics

**EMPLOYEE/LABOR RELATIONS**
- Contractor Industrial Rel. Specialists
- Employee Relations Specialists
- Hearing and Appeals Specialists
- Labor Management Relations Examiners
- Labor Relations Specialists Mediators
- Salary and Wage Admin. Workers Compensation Claims Examiners

**ENGINEERING (ANY SPECIALTY)**
- General Engineers
- Civil Engineers
- Mechanical Engineers
- Electrical Engineers
- Electronics Engineers
- Aerospace Engineers
- Industrial Engineers
- Nuclear Engineers
- Computer Engineers
- Biomedical Engineers
- (11 other Engineering fields)

**ENGLISH AND LITERATURE**
- Editorial Assistants
- Printing Specialists
- Public Affairs Specialists
- Technical Writers and Editors
- Writers and Editors
- Misc. Admin. and Programs Specialists
- Program Analysts
- Program Managers
- Management Analysts

**ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES**
- Ecologists
- Environmental Health Technicians
- Environmental Protection Assistants
- Environmental Protection Specialists
- GAO Analyst
- Gen. Fish and Wildlife Administrators
- Fish and Wildlife Refuge Management
- Misc. Admin. and Programs Specialists
- Toxicologists

**EPIDEMIOLOGY**
- Environmental Health Technicians
- Gen. Health Scientists
- Industrial Hygienists
- Microbiologists

**FINANCE**
- Appraisers and Assessors
- Budget Analysts
- Financial Administrators
- Financial Analysts
- Financial Institution Examiners
- GAO Analyst
- Securities Compliance Examiners
- Tax Examiners
- Trade Specialists

**FISH, GAME, AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT**
- Gen. Fish and Wildlife Administrators
- Fish and Wildlife Refuge Management
- Fishery Biologists
- Game Law Enforcement Agents
- Soil Conservationists
- Wildlife Biologists
- Wildlife Rescue Managers
- General Biological Scientists

**FOOD TECHNOLOGY AND SAFETY**
- Consumer Safety Inspectors
- Consumer Safety Officers
- Dietitian and Nutritionists
- Food Assistance Program Specialists
- Food Technologists
- Toxicologists

**FOREIGN LANGUAGE**
- Air Safety Investigators
- Border Patrol Agents
- Customs Inspectors
- Language Specialists
- Equal Employment Opportunity Specialists
- Foreign Affairs Specialists
- Foreign Agricultural Affairs Specialists
- Intelligence Specialists

**FORESTRY**
- Foresters
- Soil Conservationists
- Management Analysts
- Program Analysts
- Gen. Fish and Wildlife Administrators
- Fish and Wildlife Refuge Management

**GEOGRAPHY**
- Cartographers
- Geographers

**GEOLOGY**
- Geodesists
- Geologists
- Hydrologists
- Oceanographers
- Gen. Physical Scientists

**GEOPHYSICS**
- Geophysicists
- Gen. Physical Scientists

**HEALTH**
- Environmental Health Technicians
- GAO Analyst
- Gen. Health Scientists
- Health Physicists
- Health System Admin.
- Health System Spec.
- Industrial Hygienists
- Public Health Programs Specialists
- Safety and Occup. Health Management Specialists

**HISTORY**
- Archives Technicians
- Archivists
- Exhibits Specialists
- Historians
- Intelligence Specialists
- Museum Curators
- Misc. Admin. and Programs Specialists
- Management Analysts
- Program Analysts

**HOME ECONOMICS**
- Consumer Safety Officers
- Food Technologists

**HORTICULTURE**
- Agricultural Mgt. Specialist
- Gen. Biological Scientists
- Horticulturists
- Plant Protection and Quaran. Specialists
- Plant Physiologists
- Specialists
- Misc. Admin. and Programs Specialists

**HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATION**
- Administrative Officers
- Health System Administrators
- Health System Specialists
- Hospital Housekeepers
- Gen. Health Scientists
- Public Health Programs Specialists
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT</th>
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<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship and Training Representatives</td>
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<td>Employee Dev. Specialists</td>
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<td>Equal Employment Opportunity Specialists</td>
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<td>Human Resource Specialist</td>
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<td>Position Classification Specialists</td>
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<th>INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS</th>
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<td>Foreign Affairs Specialists</td>
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<td>Foreign Agricult. Affairs Specialists</td>
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<td>Intelligence Specialists</td>
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<td>Language Specialists</td>
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<td>Public Affairs Specialists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trade Specialists</td>
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<td>International Relations Workers</td>
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<td>Public Affairs Specialists</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Program Analysts</td>
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<th>LAW</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Law Judges</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attorneys</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hearing and Appeals Specialists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal Instruments Examiners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paralegal Specialists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patent Attorneys</td>
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<td>Tax Law Specialists</td>
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<td>Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms Inspectors</td>
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<td>Border Patrol Agents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Criminal Investigators</td>
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<tr>
<td>Customs Inspectors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Game Law Enforcement Agents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Immigration Inspectors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inspect., Invest. and Compliance Specialists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Police Officers</td>
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<td>United States Marshals</td>
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<td>Management Analysts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Analysts</td>
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<td>Social Insurance Claims Examiners</td>
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<td>Veterans Claims Exam.</td>
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<td>Educ. Services Spec.</td>
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<td>Logistics Mgt. Specialists</td>
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<td>Management Analysts</td>
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<td>Manpower Dev. Specialists</td>
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<td>Misc. Admin. and Program Specialists</td>
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<td>Program Analysts</td>
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<td>Support Svcs. Administrators</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Correctional Institution Administrators</td>
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<td>Distrib. Facility and Storage Managers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equipment Specialists</td>
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<td>Facility Managers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gen. Facilities and Equip. Manager</td>
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<td>Housing Managers</td>
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<td>Industrial Property Managers</td>
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<td>Production Controllers</td>
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<td>Consumer Safety Inspectors</td>
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<td>Dieticians</td>
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<td>Pharmacists</td>
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<td>Pharmacology Specialists</td>
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<td>Meteorologists</td>
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<td>Gen. Physical Scientists</td>
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<td>Diagnostic Radiological Technicians</td>
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<td>Medical Technicians</td>
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<td>Nuclear Medicine Technicians</td>
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<td>Pathology Technicians</td>
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<td>Therapeutic Radiological Technicians</td>
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<th>PARK AND RECREATION MANAGEMENT</th>
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<td>Foresters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outdoor Recreation Planners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Park Rangers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recreation Specialists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rec. and Creative Arts Therapists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Management Analysts</td>
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<tr>
<th>MATHEMATICS</th>
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<td>Actuaries</td>
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<td>Cartographers</td>
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<td>Operations Research Analysts</td>
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<td>Consumer Safety Inspectors</td>
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<td>Pharmacists</td>
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<td>Pharmacologists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positions by major, cont’d</td>
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</table>

**PHYSICAL EDUCATION**
- Corrective Therapists
- Outdoor Recreation Planners
- Rec. and Creative Arts Therapists
- Recreation Specialists
- Recreation Aids & Assistants
- Sports Specialists
- Program Analysts

**PHYSICAL SCIENCE**
- Gen. Physical Scientists
- Metallurgists
- Physicists

**PHYSICS**
- Astronomers and Space Scientists
- Geodesists
- Geophysicists
- Health Physicists
- Hydrologists
- Oceanographers
- Patent Examiners
- Physicists
- Gen. Physical Scientists

**POLITICAL SCIENCE/GOVT**
- Archivists
- Budget Analysts
- Historians
- Foreign Affairs Specialists
- GAO Analyst
- Misc. Admin. and Programs Specialists
- Program Analysts
- Public Affairs Specialists
- Social Scientists

**PSYCHOLOGY**
- Rec. and Creative Arts Therapists
- Employee Dev. Specialists
- GAO Analyst
- Personnel Management Spec.
- Psychologists
- Personnel Staffing Spec.
- Position Class. Specialists
- Educational Svcs. Specialists
- Business and Industry Specialists

**PUBLIC HEALTH**
- Environmental Health Technicians
- Food Assistance Program Specialists
- Food Inspectors
- Health System Administrators
- Health System Specialists
- Industrial Hygienists
- Public Health Programs Specialists
- Public Health Educators
- Social Insurance Admin. Veterans Claims Examiners

**PUBLIC ADMIN.**
- Budget Analysts
- Employee Dev. Specialists
- Employee Relations Specialists
- GAO Analyst
- Housing Managers
- Management Analysts
- Manpower Dev. Specialists
- Misc. Admin. and Programs Specialists
- Program Analysts
- Public Utilities Spec.

**PUBLIC RELATIONS**
- Contact Representatives
- Foreign Affairs Specialists
- Foreign Agricult. Affairs Specialists
- Public Affairs Specialists

**PURCHASING**
- Commissary Store Managers
- Contract Specialists
- Purchasing Specialists

**REAL ESTATE**
- Building Managers
- Housing Managers
- Realtors
- Business and Industry Specialists
- Contract Specialists

**REHABILITATION THERAPY**
- Corrective Therapists
- Manual Arts Therapists
- Occupational Therapists
- Physical Therapists
- Prosthetic Reps.
- Rehabilitation Therapy Assistants

**SOCIAL WORK**
- Food Assistance Program Specialists
- Psychology Aids and Technicians
- Social Science Aids and Technicians
- Social Scientists
- Social Service Aids and Assistants
- Social Service Reps.
- Social Workers
- Recreation Specialists

**SOCIOLOGY**
- GAO Analyst
- Social Science Aids and Technicians
- Social Scientists
- Social Service Aids and Assistants
- Social Service Reps.
- Program Analysts
- Sociologists

**STATISTICS**
- Actuaries
- Computer Science Spec.

**SURVEYING**
- Geodesists
- Land Surveyors

**SYSTEMS ANALYSIS**
- Computer Science Specialists
- Computer Specialists
- GAO IT Analyst
- Misc. Administrative and Programs Specialists
- Management Analysts
- Program Analysts

**THEOLOGY**
- Chaplains
- Social Workers
- Program Analysts

**TRANSPORTATION**
- Cargo Schedulers
- Highway Safety Specialists
- Marine Cargo Specialists
- Traffic Mgt. Specialists
- Transportation Industry Analysts
- Transportation Loss/Damage Claims Examiners
- Transportation Operators
- Transportation Specialists
- Travel Assistants

**ZOOLOGY**
- Animal Scientists
- Zoologists
- Physiologists


MakingTheDifference.org also provides a list of federal careers by interest areas at [http://www.makingthedifference.org/federalcareers/](http://www.makingthedifference.org/federalcareers/).

This list is especially helpful because it lists agencies that frequently employ these positions.
FEDERAL AGENCIES

A government agency is an organization that is responsible for carrying out specific government policies. Federal jobs are located within these agencies. USAJobs.gov provides a complete list of federal agencies* at http://www.usa.gov/Agencies/Federal/All_Agencies/index.shtml. As you explore position titles, also explore agencies that may interest you.

There are over 1,300 federal agencies for you to choose from. The largest agencies include:

- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Department of Homeland Security
- Department of the Treasury
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Justice
- Department of Defense
- Department of the Interior
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Transportation
- Department of Commerce
- Department of State
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Department of Labor
- Department of Energy
- National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

*The National Academies of Science (NAS) is not listed but is a government-related organization for scientists, policy experts, and administrative personnel. To learn more visit: http://www.nas.edu.

DID YOU KNOW?

MakingTheDifference.org lists the 5 largest federal job areas (according to 2012 projections) as:

Medical and Public Health (54,114 new hires)
Includes physicians, nurses, pharmacists, medical technicians and nursing assistants.

Security and Protection (52,077 new hires)
Includes intelligence analysis, international relations, foreign affairs, security administration, transportation security officer, park ranger, correctional officer and police officer.

Enforcement and Compliance (31,276 new hires)
Includes inspectors, investigators (including criminal), customs and border patrol and protection, import specialist and customs inspection.

Program Management/Administrative (17,287 new hires)
Includes program managers and analysts who monitor program operations and effectiveness to administrative staff; administrative support jobs account for the least amount of the jobs in this category.

Legal (2596 new hires)
Includes attorney, contact representative, paralegal, passport/visa examining and claims examining/assistance.


*The National Academies of Science (NAS) is not listed but is a government-related organization for scientists, policy experts, and administrative personnel. To learn more visit: http://www.nas.edu.
STEP 2: Search for Postings

Now that you have identified positions and agencies that interest you, it’s time to start finding job openings.

This step is divided into three sections: 1) graduates seeking full-time employment, 2) those looking for internships and fellowships, 3) those interested in Congressional or Foreign Service. It also includes a sample job posting and an explanation of the federal pay scale.

1. If you are a graduate seeking full-time employment:

   • **Create an account on USAjobs.gov.** USAjobs.gov contains most full-time federal job postings; these postings require applicants to submit their applications directly through USAjobs.gov. It is free and easy to create an account. Once you create an account, you can save job postings.

   • **Search USAjobs.gov postings by agency or keywords.** If you consider yourself a generalist try searching for “public affairs,” “communications,” “writer,” “Congressional affairs,” “policy analyst” and “program analyst.”

   • **Read the postings carefully.** Below is a sample job posting with helpful explanations of the various categories and common abbreviations.

   • **Save any jobs of interest.** Since USAjobs.gov contains so many postings, it is helpful to save positions that interest you so you can easily access them later.

   • **Expand your search beyond USAjobs.gov.** Some agencies decide not to post their openings on USAjobs.gov. To find these postings, be sure to:

      * Check the websites of agencies that interest you regularly for new job postings; most agencies have an individual website.
      * Search the classified section in newspapers such as Roll Call and The Hill.
      * Attend Federal Job Fairs. You can find event announcements on USAjobs.gov and on individual agencies’ websites.
Job Title: Administrative Support Assistant
Department: Department Of The Interior
Agency: National Park Service
Job Announcement Number: MWW-DE-11-052 (480164)
Salary Range: $27,990.00-$40,706.00/year
Open Period: Wednesday, June 08, 2011 to June 22, 2011
Series & Grade: GS-0303-04/05
Position Information: Full Time Career/Career Conditional
Promotion Potential: 05
Duty Locations: 1 vacancy—Medora, ND
Who May be Considered: United States Citizens

**JOB SUMMARY:** This is a permanent full-time position located at Theodore Roosevelt National Park located in Medora, North Dakota

**KEY REQUIREMENTS:** US Citizenship, Background Investigation, State drivers license, a NPS uniform, Initial probationary period, Travel up to 5 days a month

**DUTIES:** As an Administrative Support Assistant for Theodore Roosevelt National Park, you will be responsible for a variety of administrative and clerical support functions, including, but not limited to: Answer the phone and greet park visitors providing general information and directions to appropriate personnel for specific information.

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

**FOR A GS-04:** At least one year of general office experience using office automation equipment; **OR EDUCATION:** Have successfully completed 2 years above high school;

**FOR A GS-05:** One full year of specialized experience; **OR EDUCATION:** Successfully completed four years of education above the high school level in any field; **OR A COMBINATION:** An equivalent combination of education and experience.

**HOW YOU WILL BE EVALUATED:** Applicants will be rated according to responses to the occupational questionnaire. A review of the resume and other supporting documentation of the highest scoring applicants will be conducted and compared against the responses to the occupational questionnaire. The score, based on responses to the questionnaire, is a measure of the degree to which an applicant’s background matches the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for the position.

**HOW TO APPLY:** To apply for this position, you must provide a complete Application Package which includes all the following parts: 1. Resume/Application; 2. Complete Occupational Questionnaire; 3. Other Supporting Documents (See Required Documents Section Below)

**REQUIRED DOCUMENTS:**

The following documents are required: Resume, Transcripts, Qualifications (assessment questionnaire), SF-50: showing current grade and tenure if applicable (Awards SF50 will not be considered as proof of status.), Veterans Preference Documentation (DD-214 (Member 4 Copy), VA Letter, SF-15, etc) see veterans preference under the other information section, CTAP/ICTAP Documents

**WHAT TO EXPECT NEXT:**

Once the online questionnaire is received you will receive an acknowledgement email that your submission was successful. Based upon your score, you may/or may not be referred to the hiring official. You will be notified of your rating and/or referral to the hiring official. If further evaluation or interviews are required you may be contacted directly.
DID YOU KNOW?

Decoding the Series and Grade

The sample job posting gives you an idea of what to expect from USAjobs.gov postings. Two of the most confusing sections are the “Series & Grade” and “Promotion potential.”

**GS-0303-04/05**

**GS**-The first two letters of the “Series & Grade Code” represent the pay rate of the position. GS represents “General Schedule” and is the most common abbreviation. Learn more about the GS pay rate in the “Federal Pay Scale” section.

**0303** -This four digit number is the occupational classification of the job. 0303 is the “Miscellaneous Clerk and Assistant Series.” For more codes within the GS group visit: [http://www.opm.gov/fedclass/html/gsseries.asp](http://www.opm.gov/fedclass/html/gsseries.asp).

**04/05**—The last four digits represent the range of entering pay grades. In this posting, an entering employee could be Grade 4 or Grade 5 (out of 15 grades) depending on experience and education.

**Promotion Potential**—This number reflects the highest possible pay grade in the position (or the room for pay raises). For the case listed on the previous page, promotion potential would be GS-05.

Exlected Service Positions

Although most federal service positions are competitive, some agencies fill openings through excepted service. *Excepted service* positions are hired according to the agencies’ individual procedures and may not be publicly advertised. The following agencies frequently have expected service appointments. Contact them directly for more information:

- Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts
- Agency for International Development (USAID)
- Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)
- Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA)
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- Federal Reserve System
- Board of Governors, Government Accountability Office (GAO)
- Military Sealift Command (MSC)
- National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA)
- National Maritime Intelligence Center
- National Security Agency (NSA)
- Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)
- Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)
- Transportation Security Administration (TSA)
- U.S. Court of Federal Claims
- U.S. Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA)
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
- U.S. Department of State
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
- U.S. Mission to the United Nations
- U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO)
- U.S. Postal Service (USPS)
- U.S. Secret Service
- Uniformed Division (USSS).
2. If you are seeking an internship, fellowship, or student job:

- **Browse USAjobs.gov.** Although most of the jobs on USAjobs.gov are full-time, permanent positions, browse the site for positions that meet your needs.
  
  **Tip:** You can search “student” as a keyword on USAjobs.gov to find student employment/internships.

- **Create an account on USAjobs.gov/studentjobs** if you are interested in part-time jobs and entry-level career experience. The job postings and application process are similar to USAjobs.gov, so please refer to the above section for details about searching posts and saving jobs. These jobs may be part of the federal student employment Pathways programs:
  
  * Internship Program (formerly known as STEP & SCEP) provides students in high schools, colleges, trade schools, and other qualifying educational institutions with paid opportunities to work in agencies and explore Federal careers while completing their education.
  
  * Recent Graduates Program provides developmental experiences in the Federal Government. It is intended to promote possible careers in the civil service to individuals who, within the previous two years, graduated from qualifying educational institutions with an associates, bachelors, masters, professional, doctorate, vocational or technical degree or certificate from qualifying educational institutions.
  
  * Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Program is a flagship leadership development program at the entry-level for advanced degree candidates. The Program attracts and selects from among the best candidates and is designed to develop a cadre of potential Federal Government leaders. Students in PMF program may be converted to a permanent position in the competitive service.

- **Research Federal Internship Programs.** Many federal agencies provide internship opportunities to current students and recent graduates interested in government work. Contact individual agencies for more information:
  
  * The Federal Service Student Ambassador Program uses student ambassadors to increase awareness of federal employment on college campuses: [http://www.ourpublicservice.org/OPS/programs/calltoserveambassadors.shtml](http://www.ourpublicservice.org/OPS/programs/calltoserveambassadors.shtml)
  
  * The Public Service Fellows Program, as part of the Partnership for Public Service, provides students (both graduate and undergraduate) as well as recent graduates with the opportunity to work in various roles. For more information about the stipends and fellowships available please visit: [http://www.apps.ourpublicservice.org/fellows/default.aspx](http://www.apps.ourpublicservice.org/fellows/default.aspx).
  
  * A list of additional internship programs is available at [http://www.makingthedifference.org/federalinternships/co-ops.shtml](http://www.makingthedifference.org/federalinternships/co-ops.shtml).

- **Expand your search** beyond USAjobs.gov/studentjobs. Not all jobs are posted on USAjobs.gov/studentjobs. To find additional postings:
  
  * Visit Students.gov. Under the “Career Development” Section, you will find links to additional websites that frequently post internships, student jobs, and fellowships.
  
  * Check individual agency websites for internship opportunities.
3. If you are interested in Congressional or Foreign Service:
These positions are not listed on USAjobs.gov, so please visit the following sites for job postings:

**Congressional postings**: senate.gov, house.gov, politixgroup.com

**Foreign Service**: The U.S. Department of State (state.gov), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA.gov), the International Trade Administration (trade.gov), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID.gov)

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**DID YOU KNOW?**

Federal Internships

Federal internships are not limited to students. Many governmental agencies hire recent graduates as interns. These interns may eventually be hired into full-time positions. Graduates seeking full-time employment may also choose to browse the aforementioned internship sites. When looking at internship programs and postings, remember to clarify if they are hiring for recent graduates or current students.

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**UNDERSTANDING THE FEDERAL PAY SCALE**

Most jobs are paid by GS or “General Schedule.” The General Schedule has 15 grades depending on experience and education; within each grade there are 10 steps (each with a pay increase). **If you are a recent graduate, you should expect the following base on the general pay schedule:**

- GS-2: High School diploma without work experience
- GS-3,4,5: High School diploma with some college and work experience
- GS-5: College degree without specialized experience
- GS-7: College degree with college credentials such as a GPA above 3.0.
- GS-9: Master’s degree
- GS-12: Doctoral degree

If you’re currently employed, the agencies will likely work to provide you with a competitive salary based on your current earnings.

**Other Pay Schedules**

Although the General Schedule is the most common pay schedule, there are many other pay schedules within the Federal government. If you are unsure of what a pay schedule abbreviation means, you can find out more by entering the abbreviation and “federal pay” into a search engine.
STEP 3: Assemble & Submit your App.

So you’ve found job openings and you’re ready to apply? This section contains information about resumes, cover letters, and supplemental documents.

A. Creating a Federal Resume
A Federal Resume is much different from a traditional resume. **Even the best private sector resumes must be edited to fit the requirements and expectations of federal agencies.** Here are some guidelines:

1. Resumes on [USAjobs.gov](https://www.usajobs.gov):
   USAjobs.gov contains a Resume Builder that guides applicants through the process of creating a Federal Resume. Although you can upload your own resume to USAjobs.gov, most postings require a Resume Builder resume. Pg. 18 contains a sample resume from Resume Builder.

2. Resumes outside of [USAjobs.gov](https://www.usajobs.gov):
   If you apply for positions outside of USAjobs.gov, you will need to create your own Federal Resume. Pg. 18 contains a sample resume.

B. Perfecting your Cover Letter
1. **Always submit a Cover Letter.** Although a cover letter may not be listed as a **REQUIRED** document, it is very important to submit a well-written cover letter with your application. Use the cover letter to:
   * Introduce yourself with enthusiasm
   * Highlight your credentials and qualifications
   * Express your interest and knowledge of the organization;
   * Articulate why you want to work for that agency
   * Give the employer an excellent writing sample
   * If you are applying for a noncompetitive appointment include this in the cover letter.
   * Pg. 20 contains a cover letter outline.

2. **Cover letters on USAjobs.gov.** You can upload a cover letter to USAjobs.gov by signing in and clicking “My Documents.” When you apply for a job through USAjobs.gov, you will be given the option to send an uploaded cover letter with your resume. You can upload up to 5 documents, so if you are applying for multiple jobs, upload a personalized cover letter for each.
### Position Title, Series & Grade:

**Name**

Permanent Address:

Street

City, State, Zip

---

Phone Email

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SSN: (Social Security Number) Veterans Status: (Enter “none” if not a veteran)

Citizenship: (Country of Citizenship) Reinstatement Eligibility: (Enter “N/A” if not a former federal employee)

**Objective:**

Position Title, Series & Grade, Agency Name, Department Name, Announcement: (Job Announcement Number)

**Skills and Qualifications:**

Briefly highlight a few (three or four) of your relevant skills and/or qualifications (EX: Two years working in a research laboratory setting). Use action verbs and numbers to describe your accomplishments (EX: managed a $300 budget). Write in paragraph form.

**Education:**

**B.A. History; Minor: Spanish; May 2011**

Armstrong Atlantic State University (AASU); Savannah, GA

GPA: (Can include both Overall and In-Major GPA if over a 2.8)

Dean’s List: Fall 2007, Spring 2008, Fall 2009

- Briefly highlight any relevant coursework, study abroad experiences, or other academic honors.

**Diploma; May 2011**

Name of High School; City, State

GPA: (Can include if over a 2.8)

- Briefly highlight any relevant coursework, student club/activity involvement, or other honors.

**Work Experience:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Hours per week</th>
<th>Street Address, City, State</th>
<th>Supervisor: (Supervisor Name, Supervisor Title), you may contact: (Supervisor Number)</th>
<th>Salary (if paid)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brief description of responsibilities and accomplishments; use action verbs and phrases; Write in a paragraph form but don’t use complete sentences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TIP: Include any relevant experience, including internships (paid or unpaid), volunteer work, and summer jobs in this section.
Sample Federal Resume

Position Title, Series & Grade, pg. 2:

**Training:** (if you already have training in job field)
- List training courses, including title and year
- Current certificates and/or licenses related to the job

**Activities:**
Organization Name, Dates of Membership
- Position, Dates Held
- Other responsibilities in the organization
- Include clubs and organizations at AASU or in the community, volunteer work, or leadership experiences in this section

**Additional Skills:**
- **Language:** Proficient in written and spoken Spanish
  Beginner-level French
- **Computer:** 70 WPM typing ability
  Proficient in Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Access
- **Special Equipment:** List any relevant experience with special equipment

What distinguishes a Federal Resume from a Private Sector Resume?

- Qualifications, experience, and job duties are in paragraph (*not bulleted*) form
- Objective contains position information instead of a statement.
- Federal resumes require additional background information (**SSN, Veteran Status, Reinstatement eligibility**)
- Federal resumes are typically longer than a page.

DID YOU KNOW?

**Veterans’ Preference**

According to USAjobs.gov, **veterans’ preference** grants veterans who have “served on active duty for at least 2 years during a period of war or in a campaign for expedition for which a campaign badge is authorized, or been disabled” an additional 5 to 10 points on their competitive service examination. Veterans’ preference does not guarantee veterans jobs and is not the same as noncompetitive appointments.
Jane Smith  
888 Abercorn Dr.  
Savannah, GA 34101  
Mobile: 123-456-7890  
Email: jsmith@armstrong.edu

Country of Citizenship: United States  
Veterans’ Preference: No  
Contact Current Employer: Yes

WORK EXPERIENCE

Armstrong Atlantic State University, Student Recreation Center, Savannah, GA US  
Salary: 7.25 USD Per Hour  
Hours per week: 16  

OFFICE ASSISTANT
+Managed the front desk of the Student Recreation Center.  
+Provided customer support to Armstrong Atlantic faculty, staff, and students by answering phones, taking messages, swiping cards, and creating guest accounts.  
+Developed excellent organization skills by managing accounts and hours.  
+Worked to finance 100% of college education. (Contact Supervisor: Yes, Supervisor’s Name: Ben Recreation, Supervisor’s Phone: 445-233-1234)

City of Savannah, Recreation Department, Savannah, GA US  
Salary: Unpaid  
Hours per week: 25  
1/2010—5/2010

CUSTOMER SERVICE INTERN
+Initiated customer outreach to Savannah and the surrounding area through programs such as “City Park Adventure 2010” and the “2nd Annual Nature Relay,” working with budgets of over $30,000.  
+Organized over 1000 customer and volunteer files.  
+Effectively managed calendar and schedule appointments for the Director and Assistant Director of Recreation. (Contact Supervisor: Yes, Supervisor’s Name: Wendy Recreation, Supervisor’s Phone: 223-344-5566).

Atlanta Honda, Atlanta, GA US  
Salary: 9 USD Per Hour  
Hours per week: 20  

RECEPTIONIST
+Welcomed and initiated prospective customers in one of the area’s largest car dealerships.  
+Also provided excellent customer service while answering and directing phone calls.  
(Contact Supervisor: Yes, Supervisor’s Name: Jeff Honda, Supervisor’s Phone: 112-223 3444)

EDUCATION

Armstrong Atlantic State University, Savannah, GA US  
Bachelor’s Degree—5/2011  
Major: History  
GPA: 3.7 out of 4.0  
Honors: magna cum laude  
Relevant Coursework, Licensures and Certifications;  
+Studied abroad in Argentina as part of the “History and Culture of Argentina: Gauchos, Wine, and Tango” program—Junior Year (2010)  
+Phi Alpha Theta Honor Society, Sigma Theta Chapter—Member (2009-2011)
EDUCATION

Paideia School
Atlanta, GA US
High School of equivalent—5/2007
GPA: 3.9 out of 4.0
Relevant Coursework, Licensures and Certifications:
ACADEMIC HONORS
+Advanced Placement United States History Student of the Year (2007), National Merit
LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES
+President of the History Club (2007), Peer Mediator (2004-2007), Secretary of
Student Government (2006)

JOB RELATED TRAINING

CERTIFICATIONS
2007, 2008
First-Aid Certified

COMPUTER SKILLS
70 WPM typing ability
Proficient in Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Access

LANGUAGES

French
Spoken: Intermediate
Written: Advanced
Read: Advanced

Spanish
Spoken: Intermediate
Written: Advanced
Read: Advanced

REFERENCES

Supervisor Name
Phone Number: Company Title
Email Address: Phone
Reference Type: Email Professional

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

OVERVIEW OF QUALIFICATIONS
An ORGANIZED and diligent worker with a passion for history and a skill for customer
service. I have proven myself RELIABLE and TRUSTWORTHY with confidential
information in multiple contexts. Able to bring enthusiasm and creativity to work
projects while still maintaining a high attention to detail. Commitment to accomplishing
goals such as becoming proficient in Spanish.

RESUME BUILDER TIPS

• Do NOT activate your resume until you have finished it. If you do, employers will
see your unfinished copy. (You can save it and come back to it without activating it.)

• Resume Builder will let you save up to 5 resumes. If you are interested in multiple
positions, create resumes catering to each job description.
Sample Cover Letter

Name of Contact Person
Contact Person’s Title
Name of Agency
Address
City, State ZIP

RE: Name and number of job opening

Dear Name of Contact Person:

Introduction:
Use the opening statement to show enthusiasm for the position. To do this, you may mention one of the agency’s recent achievements and how it sparked your interest in the position or describe how your work/values align with the agency’s mission.

Middle:
Express your credentials in a bullet or table format and introduce them with a statement such as my qualifications include:

• Do not copy and paste from your resume.
• Address the qualifications in the job posting. For instance, if the posting emphasizes leadership, create a bullet explaining your leadership experience.
• If you have veteran’s preference or qualify for a noncompetitive appointment, state it here.
• Expand on any special circumstances relating to your application (e.g., large gaps in work history, willingness to relocate).

Conclusion:
Briefly wrap up the letter by stating the best way to contact you (phone, email) and thanking the contact person for their consideration.

Sincerely,
Your Name

Enclosure: Resume (if sending as a formal letter or email)

*Adapted from “How To Land a Top-Paying Federal Job” by Lily Whiteman

DID YOU KNOW? KSAs

Application Essays called KSAs (Knowledge, Skills, and Ability) and ECQs (Executive Core Qualifications) were required for federal job applications until last year. In 2010, the Office of Personnel Management issued a Hiring Form eliminating KSAs and switching the application focus to resumes and optional cover letters.
STEP 4: Be Patient

- Most job postings include a section on “What to Expect Next.” This section will give you a basic timeline of the process after applying.
- You may not be contacted for an interview for several months (depending on the closing date), so **APPLY EARLY FOR FEDERAL JOBS** and be patient after applying.
- When invited to interview, follow proper interview guidelines and tips. For more information about interview etiquette visit the Armstrong Career Services website, select “Student & Alumni Services,” then “Job Search Resources,” then “Interviewing Resources.”
- Even after you receive a job offer, you must be patient during the **security clearance process** (includes a background check, fingerprinting, credit checks, and even an investigation of family/friend relationships). Employees have different levels of security clearance. The initial clearance process can take from six months to a year. Higher level clearance can require up to two years. Top Secret, Secret, and Confidential clearance require re-examination every 5 to 15 years.

Summary of Key Points

- **Federal jobs are available in a variety of locations and subject areas.**
- **Start searching and applying to jobs early!** Due to the lengthy hiring process, you should begin applying about 8-10 months before you would like to begin working.
- **Federal resumes are different from private sector resumes.**
- If you are a veteran, formal federal employee, or meet other qualifications, you may be eligible for a **non-competitive appointment** and/or **veteran’s preference.**
- **USAjobs.gov** is a large, central database of federal jobs, but **NOT all federal jobs are listed on this site.**
Additional Resources

The following sources were used to create this guide. Please use them to learn more about federal jobs:


