

Federal Internships and Jobs

Career & Internship Services

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Benefits of Federal Employment

- Work/life balance: Many agencies offer flextime, time-sharing and the option to work remotely
- Meaningful work in service to the country
- Generous health benefits, retirement plans, and paid leave
- Career advancement: One-third federal employees are expected to retire by 2018, leaving room for new hires and potential for promotion

About Federal Jobs

GS scales: Education Level and Pay Grade

Most federal positions fall under the General Schedule or “GS” pay scale. In general, more education allows you to enter the federal service at a higher GS level. Annual salaries for GS levels are also provided.

GS-4	Associate degree or 2 years of full-time study after high school	\$29,657
GS-5 to GS-7	Bachelor's degree or 4 years of full-time study after high school (depending on agency policy and applicant's credentials)	\$33,181 - \$41,101
GS-9	Master's degree or 2 years of full-time graduate study	\$50,275
GS-11	Ph.D. or equivalent doctorate or advanced law degree	\$60,827

Occupational Series

All federal positions are grouped under broad categories, called occupational series, each with their own four-digit number. These series numbers are very useful for researching and understanding positions. For instance:

0100	Social Science and Economics	1100	Business and Industry
0700	Veterinary	1800	Inspection (food inspection)
1900	Ag Commodity Grading	0400	Natural Resources Mgmt
1300	Physical Sciences (food, forestry products, hydrology)	0000	Miscellaneous (includes construction management., outdoor recreation, park ranger, and environmental protection)

For a list of occupational series and federal position descriptions, visit: <http://z.umn.edu/fedseries>

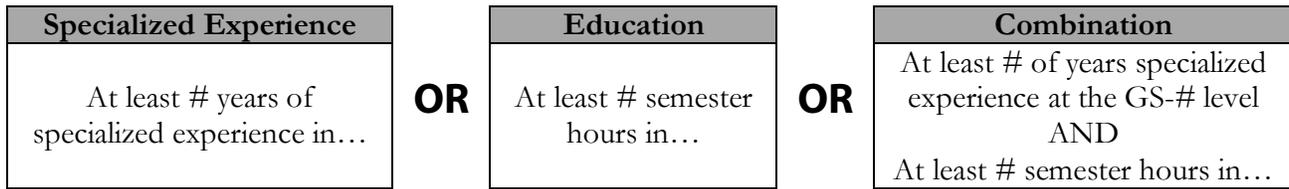
USAJOBS Search

USAJOBS is the federal government’s official job posting and application website. For best results:

1. Go to www.USAJOBS.gov and click on “Advanced Search”
2. Select an appropriate pay grade range (typically GS-4 to GS-7 for undergraduates)
3. Enter a series number that fits your field of interest (find them here): <https://www.usajobs.gov/Help/working-in-government/unique-hiring-paths/students/federal-occupations-by-college-major/>
4. If location is important to you, select the areas you are interested in and be sure to click “Add>>”
5. Click “Search Jobs” and if you find a position that interests you try clicking “More Like This”
6. Try a separate search that includes an agency and job title you are interested in

Am I qualified?

Most federal positions require U.S. citizenship. Other minimum qualifications can be very specific and complicated, but they typically follow the same pattern:



IMPORTANT: Meeting any one of these requirements means you meet the minimum qualifications. Also, be aware that volunteer and unpaid internship experiences can count as specialized experience.

Getting Your Foot in the Door

Pathways Programs

<https://www.USAJOBS.gov/StudentsAndGrads>



- **Internship Program:** Paid positions for graduate and undergraduate students. Eligible participants may convert to permanent or term appointment.
- **Recent Graduate Program:** Designed to develop professionals that have graduated within the previous two years. Eligible participants may be converted to permanent positions.
- **The Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Program:** A competitive leadership development program at the entry-level for advanced degree candidates (graduate or professional).

Networking

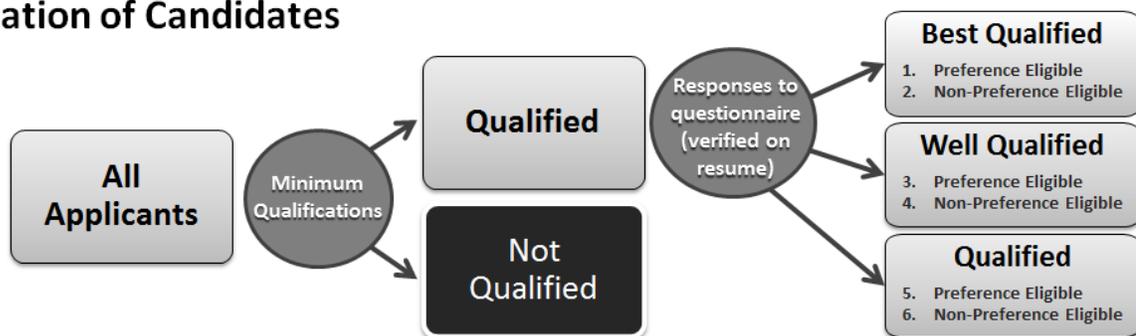
Networking with government employees can help you to better understand federal hiring and advancement processes, and may even help you find job openings before they are posted on USAJOBS. Many federal occupations have their own professional associations, hold conferences, and host networking events and career fairs. Visit GovLoop.com, GovCentral.com, and agencies' Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter sites.

Application and Selection

USAJOBS Process

- **Timeline:** Start now! Job openings may remain open for only 5-10 days, and it can take several days for a new account (required to apply) to be activated by [usajobs.gov](https://www.usajobs.gov). Set up automatic email notification or check USAJOBS often. The hiring process may take up to two months.
- **Application documents:** Can be extensive, including resume, questionnaires, transcripts, references, and other supplemental materials such as veteran or disability status.
- **How you will be evaluated:** If you meet the minimum requirements, you could be placed in a category with other candidates (ex: "Best-Qualified"), which is determined by your responses to a questionnaire. Within each category, a preference eligible candidate (such as a veteran) has hiring priority over a non-preference eligible candidate (see diagram).
- **Interviews:** Interviewers may not ask follow-up questions so be sure to provide complete answers. What you don't say may count against you.
- **Security clearances:** Some federal jobs require criminal background and credit checks, so be honest (dishonesty results in automatic disqualification).

Evaluation of Candidates



Special Hiring Authorities

“Special Hiring Authorities” are laws that allow agencies to hire certain populations without competing against other candidates. These populations include veterans (and spouses, widows, or mothers), persons with severe disabilities, and former Peace Corps or VISTA volunteers. If you belong to one of these groups, be sure to research “appointing authorities” at <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/hiring-information/hiring-excellence/tools-resources/>

The Federal Resume

USAJOBS allows you to upload your current resume or create a federal resume. Federal recruiters strongly recommend that you build a new resume specific to federal positions in the USAJOBS Resume Builder.

A resume written for a federal job application is different from a typical resume in some important ways:

- **Length:** Normally 3-5 pages. Be as concise as possible while still being thorough. Assume your resume is the only source of information they will have which to base their hiring decision.
- **Keyword Matching:** It is crucial to match the phrasing and keywords in the job description to the language in your resume. Hiring staff cannot assume you have the required experience unless it is explicitly stated.
- **Proof:** Each one of your responses to the application questionnaire (details below) must be supported by a statement in your resume. Unsupported responses may result in a lowered category rating.

Matching Your Education to Job Requirements

Federal positions commonly have more detailed education requirements, such as a certain number of credit hours in specific areas. It is important to clearly outline in your resume how you meet each of these educational requirements. Below is an example of how this information can be matched to a posting.

Posted Job Requirements	Possible Resume Content
Applicant must have completed 2 years of study above high school that included at least 12 semester hours in any combination of courses such as forestry, agriculture, crop or plant science, range management or conversation, wildlife management, watershed management, soil science, natural resources (except marine fisheries and oceanography), outdoor recreation management, civil or forest engineering or wildland fire science. No more than 3 semester hours in mathematics is creditable.	<u>Relevant Coursework, Licensures and Certifications:</u> Completed more than 24 semester hours in natural resource courses: Environmental Policy, Law and Human Behavior (3 credits); Forest Ecology (3 Credits); Economics and Natural Resources Management (4 credits) Managing Recreational Lands (4 credits); Basic Soil Science (4 credits); The Soil Resource (4 Credits); Calculus I (4 credits – Regularly added/subtracted/multiplied/divided whole numbers, fractions, and percents. Project WET certified. First Aid and CPR certified 2013.

Matching Your Experience to Questionnaire

The federal application process commonly includes a questionnaire that helps rank you against other candidates. These questions often follow the multiple-choice format below:

14. Use topographic maps to determine watershed area extent and other topographic features
- A I have not had education, training or experience in performing this task.
 - B I have had education or training in performing this task, but have not yet performed it on the job
 - C I have performed this task on the job. My work on this task was monitored closely by a supervisor or senior employee to ensure compliance with proper procedures.
 - D I have performed this task as a regular part of a job. I have performed it independently and normally without review by a supervisor or senior employee.
 - E I have supervised performance of this task or am normally the person who is consulted by other workers to assist them in doing this task because of my expertise.

It is important that you **support** each of your responses with a statement in your resume that **matches** the response level. Below are examples of questionnaire responses with corresponding resume statements that could support each response.

Questionnaire Responses	Resume
<p>Operate farm equipment (i.e. tractor, plow) to prepare land for planting a crop.</p> <p>D. I have operated this equipment/tool frequently to accomplish a task. I have used it independently and normally without oversight of another person.</p>	<p>Operated a tractor independently for more than 50 hours per year over four years, plowing a 500-acre corn and soybean farm in preparation to plant seeds.</p>
<p>Compute mathematics (including basic arithmetic, algebra and geometry) to perform job related tasks.</p> <p>E. I am considered an expert in this task. I am normally the person consulted by others to assist in its use because of my expertise.</p>	<p>Tutored 10 high school students in basic arithmetic, algebra and geometry, resulting in 100% of students passing their math tests.</p>

Additional Resources

Other Routes to Government Employment

- Workforce Recruitment Program for students with disabilities, <https://wrp.gov/AboutPre.do>
- Work for government contractors such as Fluor, L-3 Communications, or Deloitte
- Third-party internship providers (Washington Semester, Washington Internships for Native Students)
- Peace Corps, Student Conservation Association, and VISTA Service (AmeriCorps)

Researching Federal Jobs

- **Best Places to Work:** <http://www.bestplacetowork.org/>
- **GoGovernment:** <http://gogovernment.org/>
- **A-Z List of Agencies:** <http://www.usa.gov/directory/federal/index.shtml>