

Applying to Federal Agencies

Reasons to Work for the Federal Government

- Student loan repayment assistance
- Superb health insurance and retirement benefits
- Enjoy work/life balance through flexible schedules and generous vacation
- Opportunity to transfer to other agencies and expand your horizons
- Training and professional development

General Tips

- Create an account on USAJOBS: Save searches, jobs and upload multiple resumes
- Make sure that you possess all of the candidate qualifications in your application materials
- Be prepared to take assessments that evaluate your past experience
- 80% of agencies are required to post their positions to USAJOBS.gov, the rest post to their agency websites or hire internally

Job Search Sites

- USAJOBS.gov – Use the expanded search feature to narrow your results
- USA.gov – United States Government’s official web portal
- bls.gov - Working for the Federal Government

Search by Agency

In addition to searching job announcements on USAJOBS, federal recruiters recommend searching by agencies of interest.

- [USAJOBS](#)
 - Can find an alphabetical list of agencies
 - Search by keyword or location – advanced searches help the process
 - Select “Students and Recent Graduates” to search by Pathways programs
 - Create an account and save searches to have vacancies emailed to you when posted
- [Go Government](#) – Select “Find Your Fit” and then “Browse information by agency” or “Browse information by field”

Understanding Federal Pay Grades (GS)

Pay grades in the federal government are identified by General Schedule (GS) Grades, which are determined by background and education, and vary by location and agency:

- GS-4: 2 years above high school education OR an Associate’s degree
- GS-5: 4 years above high school leading to a Bachelor’s degree OR a Bachelor’s degree

- GS-7: 1 full year of graduate school OR Bachelor's degree with one of the following:
 - Class standing (upper third of class)
 - 3.0 or higher GPA; 3.5 or higher GPA in major
 - Honor society membership
- GS-9: Master's degree (or equivalent) OR 2 years of graduate school

Engage in Internships and Experiential Education: The Pathways Programs

- The Pathways Programs are designed for agencies to provide students and recent graduates with clear paths to internships and full-time employment, as well as meaningful training, mentoring and career-development opportunities.
- Internships – For currently enrolled part-time or full-time students; many agencies participate and many positions are paid.
- Recent Graduate Program - Full-time, yearlong programs for individuals with an undergraduate or graduate degree from a qualifying educational institution; participants receive training and professional development.
- Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) - The federal government's premier leadership program for individuals with qualifying advanced degrees; participants receive training and professional development and have at least one rotational or developmental assignment.
- Pathways Program opportunities can be found at USAJOBS.gov.

Determine Your Eligibility

- Provide official documents that verify your status or qualification for non-competitive appointment (i.e., veteran status, participation in student employment/pathways program)

Upload A Targeted Resume

- No page limit (we recommend 1-2 pages for undergraduate students)
- Use the Resume Builder on USAJOBS.gov
- Include details including rate of pay, hours, a supervisor contact information for past jobs
- Include candidate information such as citizenship, veteran status and whether the applicant has worked previously for a federal agency
- Include proficiency in languages other than English and other pertinent information
- Link key words/phrases; experience linked to job announcement/core competencies
- Upload a general resume to USAJOBS; recruiters search the site's resume books

Complete Application Questionnaires

- 25 – 125 questions
- Provide honest Yes/No responses and those that determine your level of experience

Thoughtfully Prepare Federal Essays

- Incorporate KSAs (knowledge, skills, abilities/aptitudes)
- Length is ½ to a full page
- Expected for later-stage applicants
- Demonstrates writing skills

Expect to undergo a Background Check

- Includes credit history and any criminal record (patterns of behavior that relate to job)
- Be honest about past indiscretions