

# Asian Pacific American



## FEDERAL CAREER GUIDE

A PUBLICATION OF DOL/OPM

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND  
U.S. OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT



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May 2006

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# U.S. SECRETARY OF LABOR ELAINE L. CHAO

SECRETARY OF LABOR  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20210

Dear Friend:

I am pleased to present the 2006 edition of the *Asian Pacific American Federal Career Guide*. Building on the success of the annual Asian Pacific American Federal Career Advancement Summits since 2001, it is my hope that this publication will be useful to all Asian Pacific Americans interested in government service or advancing into leadership positions.

The purpose of the *Guide* is to help Asian Pacific Americans become more aware of the advantages of working for the Federal government and the skills required for even greater success.

The *Asian Pacific American Federal Career Guide* offers you a clear picture of the resources and professional fulfillment available in public service. I am confident that our Nation will continue to draw on the strength of its multicultural heritage to ensure a brighter future for all Americans, and this publication is part of that effort.

Sincerely,



Elaine L. Chao

“I am **committed** to cultivating a new generation of leaders.”

— U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao



A MESSAGE FROM

# OPM DIRECTOR LINDA M. SPRINGER



The Director

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT  
Washington, DC 20415-1000

Dear Colleagues:

The Asian Pacific American Federal Career Guide is a premier training resource for federal employees of Asian Pacific American backgrounds. President George W. Bush has tasked us with creating a more diverse workforce that is results oriented and citizen-centered. We want to recruit the best talent and train current employees at every stage in their federal career.

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The APA Federal Career Guide is a comprehensive source for those seeking insight on how to start and build a successful federal career. Web links are included to provide information on how to increase advancement opportunities and gain the skills needed to excel in the federal workplace.

I am pleased you have taken the first step to educate yourselves and invest in your federal career by familiarizing yourself with this guide. You can also access a full array of federal employment opportunities on the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's official job website at [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov). I hope you find this guide to be an informative and helpful resource that you will share with your colleagues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Linda Springer".

Linda M. Springer  
Director



“The **APA Federal Career Guide** is a comprehensive source for those seeking insight on how to start and build a successful federal career.”

– OPM Director Linda M. Springer

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# FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Over 2.6 million people today proudly call themselves Federal employees. These dedicated Americans have selected the Federal government as their employer of choice, where every day they know their work touches the lives of Americans at home and abroad. There is an old Navy recruitment slogan saying, “It’s not just a job, it’s an adventure.” A career in the Federal government can be an adventure, offering challenging career opportunities in approximately 900 occupations in this country and in over 180 foreign countries.

The Federal government offers entry-level, mid-career and senior management positions for all skill and interest areas. Federal employees protect our national parks, perform medical research, predict economic trends, help find affordable housing, train workers for better jobs, enforce the law, and ensure our national security. All these jobs add to the quality of life for every American.

Not only is public service interesting and satisfying, but it offers great opportunities for training and development, career advancement and mobility. The Federal government offers a generous benefits package, including competitive salaries, paid holidays, vacation and sick days, a 401(k)-style savings investment plan, and health and life insurance. Federal employees enjoy a stable and family-friendly environment that offers a good work/life balance.

The Federal government is dedicated to building a diverse workforce that reflects the many cultures of America, including Asian Pacific Americans. The government wants the best and the brightest. The Federal government is an equal opportunity employer. All qualified candidates receive consideration for all positions without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, marital origin, disability, political affiliation, marital status, sexual orientation, or other non-merit factors.

“It’s a **great place** to be, and perhaps the **right place** for you.”

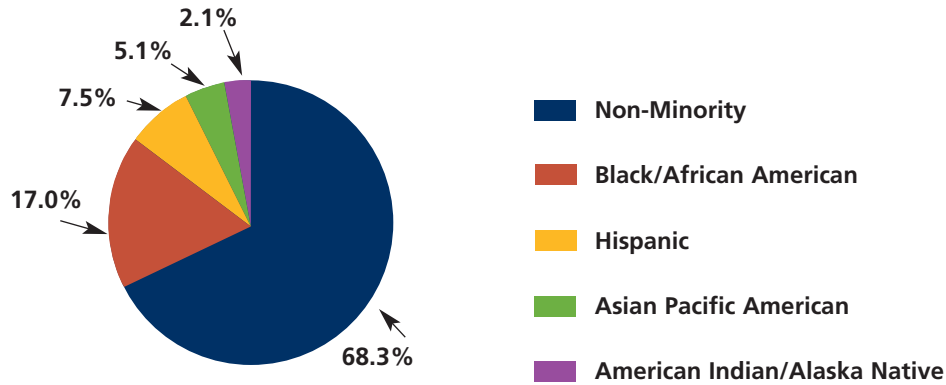


# FEDERAL WORKFORCE

The Federal government is the nation's largest employer, with 97% of these employees working in the United States and 16% in the Washington Metropolitan area. This means the majority of Federal jobs are outside Washington, D.C. and are available in your state and perhaps even your city! About 94% of Federal employees work full-time. The average full-time Federal employee is 46.4 years old and has worked 15.8 years in the Federal government. Approximately 41% of the Federal workforce has a bachelor's degree.

The Federal workforce is diverse, with 31.7% comprised of members of a minority group. Of this, 17% is Black, 7.5% Hispanic, 5.1% Asian Pacific American, and 2.1% American Indian/Alaska Native. Approximately 44% of the Federal workforce is female and 6.7% of the overall workforce consists of people with disabilities.

## The Federal Workforce by Race



\*As of January 2006

The average full-time Asian Pacific American Federal employee is 46 years old and has worked an average of 13 years in government. Approximately 55.4% of Asian Pacific American Federal employees have a bachelor's degree or higher. The representation of Asian Pacific Americans in upper management is charted on the next page.

## APA Representation in Upper Management of Federal Government

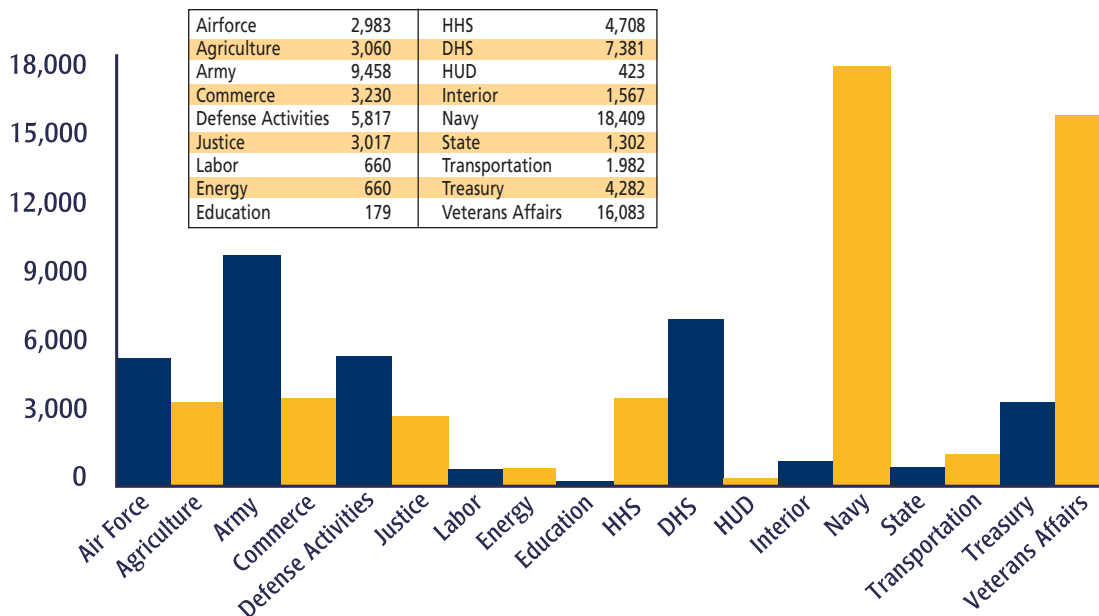
	% in Total Federal Workforce	% in Supervisory Management Positions	% of SES
FY 2002	4.8%	3.2%	1.9%
FY 2003	4.8%	3.2%	2.1%
FY 2004	5.0%	3.4%	2.2%
FY 2005	5.1%	3.5%	2.2%

SOURCE: Office of Personnel Management

In 2005, there were 95,832 Asian Pacific Americans in the Federal workforce. The three Federal Executive Departments with the highest representation of Asian Pacific Americans are the Department of Navy (10.5%), Department of Commerce (8.1%), and the Department of Health and Human Services (7.3%). Agencies with the largest numbers of Asian Pacific Americans are the Department of Navy (18,409), the Department of Veterans Affairs (16,083) and the Department of the Army (9,458).

The Federal government is committed to the recruitment, development and retention of Asian Pacific Americans. In FY 2005, the Federal government had 12,145 Asian Pacific American new hires.

## Number of APAs in Federal Executive Departments



SOURCE: Office of Personnel Management

## GOVERNMENT CAREER

Careers with the Federal government span the country and the world. With offices across America and embassies all over the globe, there are opportunities wherever you look. A career may send you abroad, keep you close to home, or move you around the country. The choices are limitless.

In 2005, the average Federal employee had served for about 16 years. By contrast, the median time spent in a private sector job was about three years. Why do people stay in government jobs so much longer? The main reason is a job with the Federal government offers a vast range of career options without sacrificing the opportunity to stay with an employer for a long time.

Of course, you don't have to stay for 16 years. For many, the public sector has been a career, but that trend is shifting. Over the past few decades, the average length of time a person stays in a job in every sector of private business has decreased, and that is true for the government too. More and more, government service is a career building block for people to build skills and move on to something else.

Despite the slow reduction of the overall Federal workforce over the past few years, the normal annual attrition of employees (Table 2) and the high projection of future retirements (Table 3) within the workforce mean a steady influx of new employment opportunities. In fiscal year 2005, 234,116 new employees joined the Federal service.

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**Table 1 — New Hires For Fiscal Year 2005**

Agencies	Competitive Service Appointments	Excepted Service Appointments	Senior Executive Service (SES) Appointments	Totals
Cabinet Level	86,775	129,425	257	216,457
Independent	5,103	12,502	54	17,659
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>91,878</b>	<b>141,927</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>234,116</b>

**Table 2 — Separations For Fiscal Year 2005**

Agencies	Quit	Retirement	Reduction in Force (RIF)	Termination or Removal	Death	Other Separation	Totals
Cabinet Level	83,625	54,585	1,726	71,110	2,744	254	214,044
Independent	6,257	7,100	182	4,545	294	4	18,382
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>89,882</b>	<b>61,685</b>	<b>1,908</b>	<b>75,655</b>	<b>3,038</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>232,426</b>

**Table 3 — Retirement Projections (Fiscal Years 2006 through 2009)**

Retirement	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009
Rate	3.7%	3.8%	3.9%	3.9%
Number	58,031	56,900	60,915	61,267

SOURCE: Office of Personnel Management

# FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT

There are many reasons why so many people want to work for the Federal government. Federal employment offers challenging professions for all academic majors and interests, career advancement and development, generous benefits, abundant opportunities, and a satisfying work/life balance.

## Challenging Professions

No matter what your interests and/or skills, the Federal government has a job for everyone. There are more than 15 Cabinet departments and hundreds of government agencies with jobs throughout the United States and around the world. These departments and agencies are often tasked with high-profile, life-affecting, and time-sensitive missions.

## Career Advancement and Development

The Federal government is facing an aging workforce, with more than 70% of Federal senior executives reaching retirement age in the next few years. As a result, there will be many opportunities for accelerated growth in management and leadership positions for those who are prepared.

The Federal government offers many opportunities for development and growth. Federal agencies offer on-the-job training, online training, in-house classroom training or send employees to external training. Some agencies offer tuition reimbursement so employees can continue their education.

In addition, Federal agencies offer a variety of development programs to help employees gain the skills they need to progress to the next level.

## Make a Difference

Federal employees often say they chose a career in the Federal government to “make a difference.” Many employees spend their whole professional lives in the government and build satisfying and fulfilling careers.

## Generous Salary and Benefits Package

Most white-collar Federal employees are paid under the worldwide General Schedule (GS) pay system. In the contiguous 48 States and Washington, D.C., GS employees are entitled to locality pay. Currently, there are 32 locality pay areas (e.g., Boston, Los Angeles, Washington), but the largest is the catch-all “Rest of U.S.” (RUS) locality pay area. The 2006 RUS locality pay rates, shown on the following page, are also available on OPM’s Web site at [www.opm.gov/oca/06tables/html/RUS.asp](http://www.opm.gov/oca/06tables/html/RUS.asp)

# 2006-RUS

## FOR THE LOCALITY PAY AREA OF REST OF U.S.

Annual Rates by Grade and Step

*Effective January 2006*

GRADE	STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5	STEP 6	STEP 7	STEP 8	STEP 9	STEP 10
1	18,399	19,014	19,626	20,234	20,847	21,207	21,810	22,420	22,444	23,010
2	20,687	21,179	21,864	22,444	22,694	23,361	24,029	24,696	25,363	26,030
3	22,572	23,324	24,077	24,830	25,583	26,335	27,088	27,841	28,594	29,346
4	25,338	26,183	27,028	27,873	28,718	29,564	30,409	31,254	32,099	32,944
5	28,349	29,295	30,240	31,185	32,130	33,075	34,020	34,966	35,911	36,856
6	31,601	32,654	33,708	34,761	35,814	36,867	37,920	38,974	40,027	41,080
7	35,116	36,287	37,457	38,627	39,797	40,967	42,138	43,308	44,478	45,648
8	38,890	40,187	41,483	42,779	44,075	45,371	46,668	47,964	49,260	50,556
9	42,955	44,387	45,819	47,252	48,684	50,116	51,549	52,981	54,414	55,846
10	47,303	48,880	50,456	52,033	53,609	55,185	56,762	58,338	59,915	61,491
11	51,972	53,705	55,437	57,170	58,903	60,636	62,369	64,102	65,834	67,567
12	62,291	64,367	66,443	68,519	70,595	72,671	74,747	76,823	78,899	80,975
13	74,074	76,543	79,012	81,480	83,949	86,418	88,886	91,355	93,824	96,292
14	87,533	90,450	93,368	96,286	99,203	102,121	105,039	107,956	110,874	113,791
15	102,964	106,396	109,827	113,259	116,691	120,123	123,555	126,987	130,419	133,850

## REST OF U.S. PAY SCHEDULE

Using the 2006 RUS (Rest of U.S.) pay schedule, the minimum starting salary for the lowest grade (GS-01, step 1) is \$18,399, while the maximum salary for the highest-graded employee (GS-15, step 10) is \$133,850. Entry-level professionals, usually college graduates, typically start at the GS-05, step 1 (\$28,349), or GS-07, step 1 (\$35,116), and graduates with masters degrees often start at GS-09, step 1 (\$42,955). These salaries are examples. The RUS area salary rates are the lowest level of locality pay. Higher salaries are paid in the remaining 31 locality pay areas. The average pay for all GS employees worldwide is \$62,812.

In exceptional circumstances, factors other than geographic location may influence starting salaries, such as appointments based on the superior qualifications of the candidate or a special need of the agency for the candidate's services. In addition, the Office of Personnel Management authorizes special rates for specific occupations, grades, and locations to alleviate existing or likely significant recruitment or retention problems. Some examples of occupations with current special rates at certain GS grades include medical officers, engineers, and information technology specialists. Federal employees typically receive an annual pay schedule adjustment in January each year, as well as periodic "within-grade" salary increases at 1-, 2-, or 3-year intervals. If employees perform well, they may earn performance awards or be promoted to the next grade level. For more information on Federal pay policies, visit the OPM Web site at [www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov).

The benefits available to Federal employees compare favorably to those provided by many non-Federal employers. Federal employees enjoy:

- ★ 10 paid holidays each year;
- ★ 13-26 vacation days, depending on length of service;
- ★ 13 sick days each year;
- ★ a 401(k)-style savings and investment plan (Thrift Savings Plan);
- ★ the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS);
- ★ Shared-cost health coverage;
- ★ Health care and dependent care flexible spending accounts;
- ★ Life insurance; and
- ★ A family-friendly working environment.

In addition, many Federal agencies offer:

- ★ Training and career development programs;
- ★ Flexible work schedules and telecommuting;
- ★ Health and child/elder care programs;
- ★ Employee assistance programs;
- ★ Assistive services and technology;
- ★ Transportation subsidy;
- ★ On-site child care and child care subsidy for qualified individuals;
- ★ On-site gym facilities; and
- ★ Student loan repayment.

# FEDERAL JOB

Applying for a job in the Federal government can sometimes be confusing. However, the process is not so hard if broken down into three simple steps: 1) find a job opening; 2) read the vacancy announcement; and 3) complete the application.

## Step 1: Finding a Job Opening

To begin a job search for Federal employment, the best place to start is the OPM job Web site (USAJOBS) found at [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov).

USAJOBS is the official Federal employment Web site that has general information about careers in the Federal government. USAJOBS allows potential applicants to complete an interest questionnaire to see what career areas fit their interests and the occupations associated with those areas, conduct a targeted search of over 21,000 current job openings on any given day, get standard government application forms, create and store up to five resumes, receive e-mail notification when a new vacancy announcement is posted, and often apply online.

USAJOBS is also accessible by telephone at (703) 724-1850 or TDD (978) 461-8404. USAJOBS contains Federal job listings that are open to applicants who are not current or returning Federal employees, as well as current employees seeking transfer or promotion opportunities outside of their agency. Detailed information about how Federal jobs are filled is available at [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov).

Additional Web sites with specific job information include OPM's e-Scholar at [www.studentjobs.gov/e-scholar.asp](http://www.studentjobs.gov/e-scholar.asp), which provides students (high school and higher), parents, and career professionals

with information on different educational opportunities offered by Federal government departments and agencies or partnering organizations. This includes information on apprenticeships, cooperative education programs, fellowships, grants, internships and scholarships.

Senior management positions are listed on [www.jobsearch.usajobs.opm.gov/ses.asp](http://www.jobsearch.usajobs.opm.gov/ses.asp), and information about the Senior Executive Service is available at [www.opm.gov/ses/](http://www.opm.gov/ses/).

A list of all Federal departments' and agencies' Web sites where agency information can be obtained can be found at [www.firstgov.gov/Agencies/Federal/All\\_Agencies/index.shtml](http://www.firstgov.gov/Agencies/Federal/All_Agencies/index.shtml).

Federal job openings may also be advertised in college career services offices, in newspapers and magazines, and other venues where Federal agencies reach possible candidates. Federal agencies also participate in academic and professional job fairs.

## Step 2: Reading the Vacancy Announcement

A "vacancy announcement" is government jargon for a current job opening. It "announces" to the public that a job is available and is an invitation for candidates to apply for that job. The vacancy announcement describes the job and specifies what qualifications are required and how to apply.

Although Federal agencies are trying to standardize the Federal application process, there may be variations from agency to agency. Therefore, carefully read each vacancy announcement to determine the steps to take in order to submit a complete application package.

The vacancy announcement includes the following key pieces of information:

**Position Title** – the title of the job, an indicator of what the job is about;

**Announcement Number** – the identifying number for the position which you must include on your application materials;

**Grade Level** – the level of the job, an indicator of the complexity of the job and the amount of responsibility associated with the position;

**Salary** – the salary range of the position;

**Promotion Potential** – the highest GS level you can be promoted to for this specific job;

**Location or “Duty Station”** – the location of the job and what percentage of travel is required for the job, if applicable;

**Open and Close Dates** – the time frame of when the agency will accept applications;

**Areas of Consideration** – who is eligible to apply for the position:

- ★ “Status” – for current or former government employees
- ★ “Non-status” – for all applicants (it may also say “All Sources”);

**Duties and Responsibilities** – an overview and/or day-to-day description of the job;

**Job Qualifications** – what is required of applicants in order to be considered;

**Other** – any other requirements, such as writing samples, written tests, physical fitness tests, drug tests, security clearances, or previous performance appraisals;

**Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs)** – the qualifications and personal attributes an applicant needs to have in order to successfully perform the job. These are also known as evaluation factors, rating factors, or core competencies. As noted below, many agencies have replaced KSAs with online self-assessment questions;

**U.S. Citizenship** – most Federal positions require U.S. citizenship, although there are exceptions. The vacancy announcement will state whether U.S. citizenship is required.

## Step 3: Completing the Application

Federal agencies may have agency-specific procedures for applying for a position, so carefully read all directions in the vacancy announcement to ensure the application is prepared correctly.

Most agencies require a resume, or a completed OF-612, which is an optional application form for Federal employment. The OF-612 is not necessarily better than a resume, but the OF-612 may prompt an applicant to include detailed information that might not be included in a standard one-page resume. Therefore, if using a resume, it is best to use the free Federal resume builder available in USAJOBS which contains the same elements as the OF 612. If not using the Federal resume builder in USAJOBS, be sure to include detailed information and do not limit it to one page.

## HINT:

An incomplete application or resume often precludes an applicant from further consideration. Therefore, make sure to read all instructions carefully and include all requested information.



*When preparing a government resume, include the following information:*

#### Job Information:

- ★ Announcement number;
- ★ Title and grade of the position.

#### Personal Information:

- ★ Full name, mailing address (with zip code);
- ★ Day and evening phone numbers (with area code);
- ★ Veterans' preference (if applicable);\*
- ★ Country of citizenship;
- ★ Reinstatement eligibility (if applicable);
- ★ Highest Federal civilian grade held (if applicable).

#### Education:

- ★ **High school:** Name, city, state, and date of diploma or GED;
- ★ **Colleges or universities:**<sup>+</sup> Name, city, state, zip code;
- ★ **Majors:** Type and year of degree(s) received (If no degree, show total credits earned and indicate whether semester or quarter hour);
- ★ Send a copy of college transcript only if requested by vacancy announcement.

#### Work Experience (paid and non-paid):

- ★ Job title;
- ★ Starting and ending dates;
- ★ Salary;
- ★ Employer's name and address;
- ★ Supervisor's name and phone number;
- ★ Hours worked per week;
- ★ Duties and accomplishments;
- ★ Indicate if contact is permissible with current supervisor;
- ★ Other Qualifications.

#### Other Relevant Information:

- ★ Job-related training courses (title and year);
- ★ Job-related skills, i.e., other languages, computer software/hardware skills, tools, machinery, typing speed;
- ★ Job-related certificates and licenses;
- ★ Job-related honors, awards, and special accomplishments (e.g., publications, memberships in professional or honor societies, leadership activities, public speaking, and performance awards).

#### More About KSAs

In the past, "Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities" (KSAs) have been a standard in government applications. KSAs are also known as evaluation factors, rating factors, or core competencies. Although many agencies are now using online questions in lieu of this aspect of government applications, some still use them. Therefore, below is a description of how to prepare this component of the application.

Although the resume or OF-612 may explain how an applicant has the KSAs required for the position, it is strongly recommended to provide a separate narrative statement in addition to the resume or OF-612. This narrative statement should articulate how specific education, work, professional or volunteer experience demonstrate possession of each KSA listed in the vacancy announcement. Addressing each individual KSA makes an application stronger. For example, "oral communication

\*Those who have served in the U.S. military on active duty and received an honorable or general discharge may be eligible for veterans' preference and possibly a noncompetitive appointment. For specific information on veterans' preference, access the VetGuide on OPM's Web site at [www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetguide.asp](http://www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetguide.asp).

<sup>+</sup>Do not list degrees received based solely on life experience or obtained from schools with little or no academic standards. Upon request from the employing Federal agency, you must provide documentation or proof that your degree(s) is from a school accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, or that your education meets the other provisions outlined in the OPM Operating Manual. It will be your responsibility to secure the documentation that verifies that you attended and earned your degree(s) from this accredited institution(s) (e.g., official transcript). Federal agencies will verify your documentation.

## HINT:

Tailor each application (resume and KSAs) to the specific job for which you are applying.

skills" could be demonstrated by a presentation given to colleagues or customers, active membership in a campus speaking association or club, or by successful work as a volunteer academic tutor.

KSAs help the Human Resources Office determine whether applicants meet the basic eligibility or "minimum qualifications" of the job. In addition, it is used to determine which applicants are best qualified for the job and will make the "Certificate of Eligibles." This "certification" is forwarded to the hiring manager where she or he will again review the KSAs to determine which applicants will be invited for an interview.

### Additional Documentation

Many Federal applications will ask for additional supporting information such as transcripts, additional government forms, or questionnaires. Please read and follow directions carefully to ensure the application is complete.

### Contact the Agency

The vacancy announcement will always include a contact name (or office) and a phone number. If an applicant has questions about how to complete the application, call this number. Applicants can also call to confirm whether their application has been received and is complete, and the status of the vacancy announcement.

## HINT:

Once prepared, your Federal application includes several pages. Therefore, it is recommended to include identifying information on all sections or pages of the application such as your name, social security number, and announcement number.

## HINT:

Mail, express mail, hand-deliver or fax your application to the correct location well in advance of the closing date. The application must be postmarked or received no later than close of business (C.O.B.) of the stated application deadline closing date. If the application is late, you may not be considered for the position.

For a list of postsecondary educational institutions and programs accredited by accrediting agencies and state approval agencies recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education, refer to the U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education Web site at [www.ope.ed.gov/accreditation](http://www.ope.ed.gov/accreditation).

For information on Educational and Training Provisions or Requirements, refer to the OPM Operating Manual available at [www.opm.gov/qualifications/SEC-II/s2-e4.asp](http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/SEC-II/s2-e4.asp).

## Special Hiring Authorities

In addition to the standard hiring method noted above, there are several exceptions to the rule. These exceptions are called “special hiring authorities” and permit Federal agencies to hire through a different or abbreviated method. Some of these programs include:

**Student Programs:** There are many opportunities in government for high school, college and graduate students, including part-time, full-time, and temporary positions that can lead to permanent full-time employment. Explore these opportunities at [www.studentjobs.gov](http://www.studentjobs.gov).

**Summer Employment:** Summer job opportunities are available in Federal agencies throughout the United States and cover a wide variety of positions. Summer positions are listed on USAJOBS and on agency-specific Web sites. Explore these opportunities at [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov).

**Student Educational Employment Program:** The Student Educational Employment Program provides employment opportunities for students enrolled or accepted for enrollment as degree-seeking students taking at least a half-time academic, technical, or vocational course load in an accredited high school, technical, vocational, two- or four-year college or university, graduate or professional school. This program has two components: the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) and the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP). Students in the SCEP may convert to a permanent position following completion of their academic and work experience requirements. More information is available at [www.usajobs.opm.gov/students.asp](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/students.asp).

**Outstanding Scholars Program:** The Outstanding Scholar and Bilingual/Bicultural programs were established to address the under-representation of African Americans and Hispanics in Federal government. However, the programs have never been restricted to those designated minority groups. The program hires college graduates from accredited schools with a grade point average of 3.5 or higher on a 4.0 scale. It can also be used to hire those in the upper 10% of their graduating class or in a major university subdivision such as a College of Arts and Sciences. These appointments are made without going through the standard hiring process for jobs at the GS-5 and GS-7 levels in covered occupations. Check out this program at [www.opm.gov/employ/luevano.asp](http://www.opm.gov/employ/luevano.asp).

**Presidential Management Fellows Program:** The Presidential Management Fellows Program is designed to attract outstanding graduate students from a wide variety of academic disciplines who have an interest in and commitment to a career in the analysis and management of public policies and programs. The program is a two-year internship program that often includes job training, leadership development, and rotational assignments. Presidential Management Fellows are hired at the GS-9 level and after successful completion of the first year, are eligible for promotion to GS-11 level. Upon completion of the program, the fellows are eligible for conversion to a permanent position and are eligible for promotion to a GS-12. Check out this program at [www.pmf.opm.gov](http://www.pmf.opm.gov).

**Student Career Intern Program:** The Federal Career Intern Program is designed to help agencies recruit and attract exceptional individuals into a variety of occupations. It is intended for positions at the

GS-5, GS-7, and GS-9 levels. In general, individuals are appointed to a two-year internship. Upon successful completion of the internships, the interns may be eligible for permanent placement within an agency. Those interested in this program must contact specific agencies directly. OPM does not provide a central source for career intern programs. Check out this program at [www.opm.gov/careerintern](http://www.opm.gov/careerintern).

**Scholarship for Service Programs:** Scholarship for Service (SFS) is a unique program designed to increase and strengthen the cadre of Federal information assurance professionals (information

technology/cyber security) that protect the government's critical information infrastructure. This program provides fully funded scholarships including tuition, room and board, and books. Participants also receive stipends of up to \$8,000 for undergraduate and \$12,000 for graduate students. Students funded for more than one year will also serve a paid internship at a Federal agency. In exchange for the scholarship and stipend, students agree to work for the Federal government for a period equivalent to the length of the scholarship or one year, whichever is longer. Check out this program at [www.sfs.opm.gov](http://www.sfs.opm.gov).



# CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The Federal government is committed to employee training and development. There are many available programs, as well as individual agency initiatives, to help Federal employees obtain the skills and training necessary for career advancement and development.

## Agency Specific Career Development Programs

**Training:** Although it varies from agency to agency, most Federal agencies offer some combination of on-the-job training, in-house classroom training, online training, and external training from professional training institutes or associations. Some agencies offer tuition reimbursement, and many Federal employees continue their education and complete a college or graduate degree. OPM offers training specifically for the Federal employee, providing skills needed to successfully perform and/or advance in their career. For example, the Federal Executive Institute and the Management Development Centers are dedicated to developing career leaders for the Federal government. Locations in Charlottesville, Virginia, Shepherdstown, West Virginia, and Denver, Colorado offer exceptional residential learning environments and are staffed with program directors, seminar leaders, and facilitators drawn from America's elite corps of training professionals. For more information, visit [www.leadership.opm.gov](http://www.leadership.opm.gov).

**Agency Career Development Programs:** In addition to training, the Federal government and individual agencies offer career development programs. These programs incorporate training and development activities that enable participants to position themselves to move up to the next level.

**Administrative Staff Development:** Some Federal agencies have career development programs to specifically train and develop administrative staff. For example, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission

has three developmental programs for support staff: the Certified Professional Secretaries Program, which enables secretaries to obtain college credits in six different disciplines; the Computer Science Program; and the Administrative Skills Enhancement Program.

**Mid-Career Development Programs:** Several agencies offer mid-level career development programs. For example, the Department of Housing and Urban Development designed a Mid-Level Development Program to enhance the supervisory, managerial and leadership skills of high-performing, mid-level employees in the Office of Administration. The 16-month program consists of a mix of formal training, developmental on-the-job assignments, required reading, seminars, and the establishment of professional relationships. The Department of Labor (DOL) created the Management Development Program for GS-13s and GS-14s. This program prepares mid-level employees for leadership through intensive training, mentoring, 360-degree feedback, and regional rotation. Upon completion of the program, participants can be promoted non-competitively to the next level.

**SES Candidate Development Programs:** Senior Executive Service (SES) Candidate Development Programs (CDPs) are competitive programs designed to create pools of qualified candidates for the government's top management positions. CDPs include a variety of activities preparing participants for success in the SES so they are well positioned to lead change both within their agencies and throughout the Federal government. SES CDP

programs are announced on agency Web sites. Check them out at [www.opm.gov/ses/candevprg.asp](http://www.opm.gov/ses/candevprg.asp).

## Federal Wide Career Development Programs

**Aspiring Leader Program (GS-5-7):** The Aspiring Leader Program prepares Federal employees at the GS-5-7 levels for positions as team leaders, supervisors and managers.

**New Leader Program (GS-7-11):** The New Leader Program (NLP) is a six-month leadership development program designed to develop future public service leaders by providing assessment, experiential learning and individual development opportunities. The program provides a solid training and development foundation of leadership skills and team building, which are enhanced by agency developmental experiences.

**Presidential Management Fellows Program (GS-9-12):** Students completing a college master's degree are eligible to compete for this two-year internship program. Its purpose is to attract outstanding men and women from a variety of academic disciplines and career paths with an interest in and commitment to excellence in the leadership and management of public policies and programs. The program includes classroom training and at least one rotational assignment. See [www.pmf.opm.gov](http://www.pmf.opm.gov) for details.

**Executive Leadership Program (GS-11-13):** The Executive Leadership Program (ELP) is a 12-month nationwide program open to individuals at the GS-11-13 levels who have little or no supervisory experience. ELP provides residential training, developmental work experiences, needs assessment,

and career planning, which gives participants the skills, experience and exposure to move into positions of more responsibility.

**Executive Potential Program (GS-13-15):** The Executive Potential Program is a year long competency-based leadership program designed to develop senior-level public service employees into more effective leaders. The program is based on the Office of Personnel Management's Executive Core Qualifications and the USDA's Graduate School Leadership Effectiveness Inventory.

**Congressional Fellows Program (GS-13-15):** The Congressional Fellows Program provides an opportunity for senior level personnel (GS/GM-13-15 or uniform service equivalents), to work in congressional offices or with committee staff members to develop legislative issues.

**Senior Executive Service (SES) Developmental Seminars (GS-14-15):** The USDA Graduate School offers SES seminars designed to help participants position themselves for selection into SES. Each seminar reflects different key components of OPM's Executive Core Qualifications.

**Congressional Seminar Series:** These programs help participants gain a more thorough understanding of legislative operations, the culture of Congress, and the way their actions affect a Federal agency and its mission.

**Human Resources Professional Development Leadership Program:** In partnership with the Federal section of the International Personnel Management Association (IPMA), the six-month Human Resources Professional Development Leadership Program prepares GS-12 and GS-13 human resources professionals for leadership

positions and provides a new perspective on evolving roles.

### Federal Learning and Exchange Programs

#### **Intergovernmental Personnel Act Mobility Program:**

The Intergovernmental Personnel Act Mobility Program provides for the temporary assignment of personnel between the Federal government and state and local governments, colleges and universities, Indian tribal governments, Federally-funded research and development centers, and other eligible organizations. For more information, visit [www.opm.gov/programs/ipa](http://www.opm.gov/programs/ipa).

#### **Detail and Transfer of Federal Employees to**

**International Organizations:** An agency may detail or transfer an employee to any organization designated by OPM as an approved international organization. A detail or transfer may not exceed five years but may be extended three additional years with approval of the head of the agency. A transferred employee is entitled to reemployment in a former position or one of like status and pay within 30 days of application for reemployment. For more information, visit [www.opm.gov/employ/internat](http://www.opm.gov/employ/internat).

**Executive In Residence Program:** Executives in Residence are career government executives who serve as visiting full-time faculty members at three residential learning facilities. For more information, visit

[www.leadership.opm.gov/content.cfm?CAT=EIRP](http://www.leadership.opm.gov/content.cfm?CAT=EIRP).

For other career transition resources, please visit [www.opm.gov/ctap](http://www.opm.gov/ctap).

### Individual Career Enhancing Activities

**Rotational Assignments and Details:** Many agencies offer short-term “rotational assignments” or “details” where employees are sent to a new office to learn a new subject area, gain breadth in their occupation or increase their level of expertise so that they better perform their job when returning to their home office and/or prepare to move ahead in their career. A rotational assignment, or more often a detail, is also beneficial to the host office when it needs temporary assistance during a period of heavy workload or to fill a temporary vacancy.

**Mentoring:** Mentoring is a way to learn from a senior professional, usually within an employee’s own career field. Generally, there are three different kinds of mentoring: (1) Supervisory mentoring consists of the day-to-day coaching and guidance that an employee receives from their supervisor; (2) Informal mentoring is an unofficial pairing of individuals that naturally occurs between people as needs arise; and (3) Structured/facilitated mentoring is the most formal type of mentoring, consisting of planned, sequenced steps, and is organizationally sponsored. Many agencies use formal mentoring programs to develop a well-trained and versatile workforce. Many professional organizations and associations also offer mentoring programs.

**Professional Associations:** Many occupations have national and local professional associations. Federal employees should join a professional association for training, networking, and general career growth. Professional memberships can often be paid for by Federal agencies and is a good way to stay abreast of current information and developments in the field.



# RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Many awards and bonus programs are used to recruit, reward, and retain high performing employees. Examples include:

**Annual Performance Award:** A monetary award based on an employee's annual performance rating.

**Instant Good Job Award:** A monetary or time-off award as a one-time recognition of a special act on a project.

**Incentive Awards:** A monetary or time-off award (honorary and/or non-monetary). Check out this opportunity at [www.opm.gov/perform/reward.asp](http://www.opm.gov/perform/reward.asp).

**Recruitment Incentive:** An agency may pay this incentive to an employee newly appointed to a difficult-to-fill position in return for signing an agreement to fulfill a period of service with the agency. The incentive may be up to 25 percent of basic pay for each year in the service agreement (or higher under certain circumstances). For more information, visit [www.opm.gov/oca/pay/html/reconbfs.asp](http://www.opm.gov/oca/pay/html/reconbfs.asp).

**Relocation Incentive:** An agency may pay this incentive to an employee who must relocate to accept a difficult-to-fill position in a different geographic area in return for signing an

agreement to fulfill a period of service with the agency in that area. The incentive may be up to 25 percent of basic pay for each year in the service agreement (or higher under certain circumstances). For more information, visit [www.opm.gov/oca/pay/html/rebonfs.asp](http://www.opm.gov/oca/pay/html/rebonfs.asp).

**Retention Incentive:** An agency may pay this incentive to an employee who has unusually high or unique qualifications or who is fulfilling a special agency need and who would be likely to leave the Federal service without the incentive. The incentive may be up to 25 percent of basic pay (or higher under certain circumstances). For more information, visit [www.opm.gov/oca/pay/html/retalifs.asp](http://www.opm.gov/oca/pay/html/retalifs.asp).

**Student Loan Repayment:** The Federal student loan repayment program permits agencies to repay Federally-insured student loans as a recruitment or retention incentive for candidates or current employees of the agency. Agencies may make payments to the loan holder of up to a maximum of \$10,000 for an employee per calendar year and a total of not more than \$60,000 for any one employee. For more information, visit [www.opm.gov/oca/pay/studentloan/index.asp](http://www.opm.gov/oca/pay/studentloan/index.asp).



# LOOKING AHEAD

A career in the Federal government is **challenging**, but also **rewarding**. The Federal government needs the **best** and brightest to serve this country for the betterment of our nation. The **contributions** Federal employees make today, tomorrow and in the future, ensure that America will remain a world leader and successfully respond to the challenges of the 21st century.

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