

Finding A Great Job In The Federal Government A Comprehensive Guide

Part One – How To Find A Federal Internship

The key steps for finding and applying to a federal job begin with experience. Internships and volunteer experience build skills and impress employers. Here are a few steps to find the right internship for you:

1) Start with a general search to learn about the wide variety of opportunities:

Federal Government's official job site: www.usajobs.opm.gov

Other good sites:

www.makingthedifference.org

www.studentjobs.gov/e-scholar.asp

www.students.gov

2) Next, research the agencies whose missions interest you most. Here is a list of the federal government departments:

Cabinet-level Agencies

- Department of Defense www.defenselink.mil
- Department of Veterans Affairs www.va.gov
- Department of Treasury www.treas.gov
- Department of Homeland Security www.dhs.gov
- Department of Justice www.usdoj.gov
- Department of Agriculture www.usda.gov
- Department of Interior www.doi.gov
- Department of Transportation www.dot.gov
- Department of Health and Human Services www.hhs.gov
- Department of Commerce www.doc.gov
- Department of Labor www.dol.gov
- Department of Energy www.doe.gov
- Department of State www.state.gov
- Department of Housing & Urban Development www.hud.gov
- Department of Education www.ed.gov

Non-cabinet-level Agencies

- Central Intelligence Agency www.cia.gov
- Congressional Budget Office www.cbo.gov
- Corporation for National and Community Service www.cns.gov
- Environmental Protection Agency www.epa.gov/
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission www.eeoc.gov
- Federal Communications Commission www.fcc.gov
- Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation www.fdic.gov
- Federal Reserve System www.federalreserve.gov
- General Accountancy Office www.gao.gov
- General Services Administration www.gsa.gov
- Library of Congress www.loc.gov
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration www.nasa.gov
- National Archives and Records Administration www.nara.gov
- Nuclear Regulatory Commission www.nrc.gov
- Office of Management and Budget www.whitehouse.gov/omb/
- Office of Personnel Management www.opm.gov
- Securities and Exchange Commission www.sec.gov
- Social Security Administration www.ssa.gov
- Small Business Administration www.sba.gov
- Smithsonian Institution www.si.edu
- United States Agency for International Development www.usaid.gov

Biologists are needed in the Food & Drug Administration, Architects for the Rural Housing Service, Computer Technologists for the IRS or Federal Aviation Administration, and many others.

For a full list of federal jobs listed by majors and degrees, see: www.usajobs.opm.gov/ei23.asp.

3) You may also consider checking out the many organizations that help place students in federal internships and jobs. Here are some examples and links:

- The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Affairs - www.twc.edu
- The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities' National Internship Program (HNIP) - www.hacu.net
- National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO) - www.nafeo.org
- Washington Internships for Native Students (WINS) - www.american.edu/wins
- Washington Semester - www.washingtonsemester.com
- American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) - www.aises.org
- Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) - www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/brochures/wrp1.html
- Washington Internship Institute - www.ielnet.org/

Part Two – Key Steps for Finding and Applying To A Federal Job

1) Internship and volunteer experience matters. Figure out how best to capture these experiences and skills in your resume, letters and interviews.

2) Do your research on the different agencies, and then target your job search. For more details, see:

- Newly-updated USAJobs site - www.usajobs.opm.gov
- U.S. Government Manual (details about each agency) - www.gpoaccess.gov/gmanual/browse-gm-01.html
- Comprehensive ranking of what federal employees think are the best federal workplaces - www.bestplacestowork.org

3) Schedule a meeting with your Career Consultant, and pay attention to your Career Center website for agency information sessions and job fairs – use these as an opportunity to network.

4) Research online. Here is a list of websites that can help you find and apply for a federal job:

- USA Jobs - www.usajobs.opm.gov
- Student Jobs - www.studentjobs.gov
- Monster Public Service - <http://forums.monster.com/forum.asp?forum=3507%20>
- The Resume Place - www.resume-place.com
- AvueCentral - www.avuecentral.com
- Federal Job Search - www.federaljobsearch.com
- FedWorld - www.fedworld.gov
- Public Service Employees Network - www.pse-net.com

5) Prepare for KSAs: KSAs are a set of questions to help determine if you are a good fit for a job based on your combined set of job-related Knowledge, Skills and Abilities. The KSAs complement, but do not replace your resume. Look for examples at www.usajobs.opm.gov.

6) Apply: Keep a file with copies of all of your awards, transcripts, writing samples and a current resume. Being prepared will make the application process much easier. Sell yourself!

7) Follow up: If you need to make a decision but haven't heard back, call the agency contact.

Part Three – Other Helpful Web Sources

The following section will guide you to find miscellaneous federal opportunities and scholarships.

Work for Issues and Causes

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development - www.nichd.nih.gov

Food and Nutrition Service - www.fns.usda.gov

National Park Service - www.nps.gov

Foreign Agricultural Service - www.fas.usda.gov

Bureau of Indian Affairs (mentoring at-risk youth) - www.doi.gov/bureau-indian-affairs.html

Scholarships/ Fellowships/ Loan Assistance

- Loan Repayment Assistance - www.opm.gov/oca/PAY/StudentLoan/HTML/Report.ASP
- Scholarship for Service Program - www.opm.gov/hr/employ/products/recruitment/Scholarship/scholarshipmain.htm
- The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Science To Achieve - www.epa.gov/careers/stuopp.html#star and the Results (STAR) Graduate Fellowship Program - www.nsf.gov/funding/
- National Security Education Program (NSEP) - www.ndu.edu/nsep/
- Howard Hughes Medical Institute / National Institutes of Health Research Scholars Program - www.hhmi.org/research/cloister/index.html
- White House Fellowships - www.whitehouse.gov/fellows/

Fast Track Opportunities

Motivated students can be hired directly after graduation! Expedite the hiring and promotion process with these helpful resources:

- Federal Career Intern (FCI) - www.opm.gov/careerintern/index.htm
- Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) - www.opm.gov/employ/students/index.htm
- Outstanding Scholar Program - www.opm.gov/employ/luevano.htm
- Presidential Management Interns (PMI) - www.pmi.opm.gov

Embracing Diversity

The federal government is successful in building and maintaining a diverse workforce at all levels.

- National Institutes of Health (NIH) offers a variety of internships such as the Undergraduate Scholarship Program - www.jobs.nih.gov (ugsp.info.nih.gov/), designed to expand the pool of students from disadvantaged backgrounds interested in careers in biomedical research.
- The Department of Energy's Mickey Leland Energy Fellowship encourages students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and Tribal Colleges and Universities to gain experience through summer internships and employment related to fossil energy - <http://fossil.energy.gov/education/lelandfellowships/>
- The Department of Transportation's Summer Transportation Internship Program for Diverse Groups promotes opportunities at Transportation to women, individuals with disabilities and minorities - www.fhwa.dot.gov/education/stipdg.htm

07/2009