



GUIDE TO GETTING A FEDERAL JOB

The Center for Career Services & Cooperative Education
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The federal government employs nearly 2 million people, making it the nation's largest employer. Joining this team opens the door to valuable experiences, training opportunities, excellent benefits and opportunity for advancement. Familiarize yourself with the tips below to get started...

- 1. Learn about internships.** Current students can take advantage of federal employment opportunities now, including *Student Temporary Employment Program* (STEP) and the *Student Career Experience Program* (SCEP). These opportunities are generally offered as paid positions, and some may offer academic credit (co-op). If you're looking for a career in the federal government, securing one of these experiences now can greatly increase your marketability. View student jobs at www.studentjobs.gov
- 2. Identify federal job titles.** While major doesn't dictate your career, knowing how your major translates into areas of employment is important. Click [here](#) to see federal job titles by major. Would you rather find out what jobs match your interests? Check out the USAJOBS [career exploration](#) section for online job matching tools.
- 3. Browse federal job announcements.** Jobs are advertised through www.usajobs.gov. Each posting will list job title, pay grade, geographic location, closing date, knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs), duties and qualifications, and how to apply. You may want to begin browsing by [Agency](#) and [Occupation](#). NOTE: If you're interested in positions that require **security clearance**, review the process [here](#).
- 4. Familiarize yourself with federal terms.** The federal government may seem like it has its own language. Consequently, some of the terms can be misunderstood or confusing. When in doubt, use the [glossary](#) of federal terms.
- 5. Understand the pay scale.** Under the General Schedule (GS) pay system, employees automatically receive annual pay increases. A bachelor degree (without previous employment experience) typically qualifies for a GS-7 position. All GS pay rates are listed [here](#).
- 6. Create your federal resume.** Federal resumes are highly detailed, which allows job seekers to exceed the "1 page rule." The best place to start is the [USAJOBS Resume Builder](#). You're able to create one resume, store it and use it for any of your online federal applications.
- 7. Apply for federal jobs.** Different agencies can require different application procedures, so keep it simple and follow directions. Pay close attention to application deadlines and write your KSAs (see below). If you haven't already created an account with USAJOBS, do so [here](#).
- 8. Writing KSAs.** KSAs (Knowledge, Skills and Abilities) are similar to essays. They're written in first person using the present tense. KSAs are separate from your resume and cover letter, giving you the opportunity to more fully represent how you can meet the job requirements. Include as much information as possible, even if it's already listed on your resume, and never leave a KSA blank. More KSA tips and examples are [here](#).
- 9. Track your applications.** Track your application(s) using one of the following: 1) Keep a copy of the sent item in your email account, 2) Save your KSA, resume, etc. on a storage device, or 3) Utilize the tracking page on USAJOBS. If you send your application via snail-mail, send via FedEx or regular mail requesting a return receipt (ensures delivery).
- 10. Interview effectively.** Be sure to prepare for the interview in advance. Know your strengths, weaknesses, and accomplishments. Call 973.655.5194 and make an appointment with a career counselor for a mock interview session. Also, attend one of our Interviewing [workshops](#) or view [tips online](#).