

Federal Government Tip Sheet

Most positions within the Federal Government are part of the competitive civil service. The [U.S. Office of Personal Management](#) manages the hiring process for these opportunities, which are listed on www.USAJOBS.gov. However, some federal agencies are excluded from the competitive civil service procedures. This means that these agencies have their own hiring system which establishes the evaluation criteria they use in filling their internal vacancies. These agencies are called Excepted Service Agencies. See a comprehensive list below-- this list is not all-inclusive and is subject to change.

Agency for International Development	Office of Public Affairs	U.S. Court of Federal Claims
Central Intelligence Agency*	Pan American Health Organization	U.S. Department of State*
Defense Intelligence Agency	Post Rate Commission	U.S. House of Representatives*
Federal Bureau of Investigation*	Tennessee Valley Authority	U.S. Mission to the United Nations
Federal Reserve System	U.N Children's Fund	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Government Accountability Office	U.N Development Program	U.S. Postal Service
International Monetary Fund	U.N Secretariat	U.S. Senate
Library of Congress*	U.N. Institute for Training & Research	U.S. Supreme Court Building
National Security Agency*	U.N. Population Fund	World Bank, IFC and MIGA

*agencies that have hired CMU students

If you are interested in working for any of the above Excepted Service Agencies, you should contact that agency directly or visit their website.

Four Steps to Federal Hiring

Find a job

Find a job using the Federal Government's job board www.USAJOBS.gov

Determine eligibility

To determine if you are eligible for the job, review the "Who May Apply" field in the job posting. You must meet all of the requirements listed in that section.

Qualification check

Review the "Qualifications Required" section of the job posting to ensure you meet the required education and/or experience.

Apply online

Only if you are eligible and qualified should you set-up an account and apply online at www.USAJOBS.gov.

How to Write a Federal Resume

Your federal resume will be different from the types of resumes that you are used to creating. You can take advantage of the resume builder tool, which you can access via your USAJOBS profile. This tool will ensure your federal resume includes all of the necessary information. Your USAJOBS profile also allows you to upload up to 10 resumes. If you do upload your own resume, review the tips and tricks below to enhance your federal resume.

- Include all of the qualifications listed in the “Qualification Required” section in your resume
- Only include information that is relevant to the job
- List all experiences in reverse chronological order—most recent to least recent
- List your dates of employment and the number of hours per week you worked at that employer
- List your employer’s address and your supervisors name and contact information
- Formatting doesn’t matter on a federal resume
- Do not use any acronyms
- There is no length limit—your resume can be more than one page

To learn more about writing a federal resume, check out this helpful [video tutorial](#).

Series & Grade Numbers

Each job should have a series & grade number and a promotion potential number at the top of the job description. These numbers help to determine the level of the job being filled. Review the example below.

Series & Grade GS-0510-05/05
Promotion Potential 12

GS = General Schedule
0510 = Occupational Series Code
05/05 = Grade level for job (important—see below)
Promotion Potential = Identifies the highest grade to which you could be promoted without further competition. Some jobs have the potential for noncompetitive promotion and others do not.

As a recent college graduate, there are specific grade levels that you qualify for depending on your education level. Typically recent graduates qualify for GS-5, GS-7, and GS-9 grade level jobs.

GS-5	4 academic years above high school leading to a bachelor’s degree OR a bachelor’s degree
GS-7	Bachelor’s degree with superior academic achievement for two grade intervals OR 1 academic year of graduate education
GS-9	Master’s degree OR 2 academic years of progressively higher level graduate education leading to a master’s degree

Pathways Program for Students & Recent Graduates

The [Pathways Program](#) was developed for students and recent graduates to gain exposure to a variety of federal jobs. This program provides students with meaningful training, mentoring, and career development opportunities. There are three Pathways Programs.

Internship Program

- Paid internship, both part-time and full-time opportunities
- Current students (enrolled at least half-time) are eligible
- Interns are potentially eligible for a permanent appointment (job) upon completion of program requirements and 640 hours of work

Recent Graduate Program

- 2 year, full-time appointment in a chosen occupation
- Recent graduates (undergraduate & graduate) can apply as early at 9 months before graduation and as late as 2 years after graduation
- Participants are potentially eligible for a permanent appointment (job) upon completion of program requirements

Presidential Management Fellows

- Federal Government's premier leadership development program for advanced degree candidates
- 2 year program includes senior-level mentor, individual developmental plan, and at least 40 hours of formal interactive training per year

Frequently Asked Questions

How is my application reviewed?

Applications aren't reviewed until after the job opportunity closes. A staff member from the [U.S. Office of Personal Management](#) screens every application, not computer software. They review each application for edibility and basic qualifications and rank candidates based upon their qualifications. A list of top candidates are then sent to the hiring manager.

Who is a "Status Candidate?"

You may see jobs in which only Status Candidates may apply. A Status Candidate is a current or former federal employee or certain veterans.

Where can I find additional information about applying for federal jobs?

The U.S. Office of Personal Management has created resources to help guide you through the application process. Check out the websites below to learn more about the federal government's recruitment and job application process.

[Recruitment Policy Studio](#)

[USAJOBS YouTube Channel](#)