

How to Conduct a Federal Job Search



Do you know what to expect when applying for Federal Jobs? Navigating the federal job search can be very time consuming and confusing; however, with the right tools and steps the process can run very smoothly. Here are ten steps worth taking in order to land a federal job, which often results in good pay, benefits, stability, and career growth. **Any student can apply for a federal job or internship, you just need to be prepared!** (Tips from: Troutman, K, & Troutman E. (2004). *The student's federal career guide: 10 steps to find and win top government jobs and internships*. Baltimore, MD. The Resume Place, Inc.)- which can be found in the Career Services Resource Center.

Ten Steps for a Federal Job Search

1. **Network:** Think about this statement, "They can't hire **you** if they don't know who **you** are. They can't hire **you** if you don't know who **they** are." Start talking to friends and family who may have contacts in the federal government. Furthermore, contact individuals who hold federal jobs and ask to conduct an informational interview.
2. **Find your agency and job title:** Know what job titles are correct for you. There are approximately 75 majors matching 450 job titles and agencies. Related information can be found in the Career Services Resource Center.
3. **Internships:** A federal internship can be your ticket to a federal career. Different from a typical summer internship, the federal internship program is a two-year full-time employment opportunity for recent college graduates. More than 100 different intern programs are identified in the following web site: www.studentjobs.gov/d_internship.asp. For summer internships, check out the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) or the Student Temporary Experience Program (STEP). Many of these positions are paid. Also be aware that there are Fellowship Programs as well.
4. **Understanding Federal Jobs-Target Your Salary and Grade:** The federal civil service has different grading and pay structures for its professional and trade workforces. It is important for you to know what categories you fall into when applying for jobs. Related information can be found in the Career Services Resource Center.
5. **Find Vacancy Announcements:** Locating a vacancy announcement for which you are qualified can be like finding gold! Find an agency and office whose mission is right for you. A great place to start researching is www.usajobs.gov. Try searching by desired salary range and location to avoid missing some opportunities for which you may be qualified.

Ten Steps for a Federal Job Search—Continued

- 6. Write Your Federal Resume:** Your federal resume *is* your federal application. This is the most important document you will write and submit for a federal job. Also, beware that a federal resume **is not** the same as a private industry resume. Related information and samples can be found in the Career Services Resource Center and www.tenstepsforstudents.org.
- 7. Write KSA's and Cover Letters:** KSA is an acronym for "Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities." They are narrative statements written by the applicant that reflect successful performance in their background. Cover letters should be limited to one page, should be well-written, should express your appreciation for a review of your resume and should express what you will do to follow up.
- 8. Apply for Federal Jobs:** There are more than 50 ways to apply for federal jobs; therefore, it is imperative that you follow the directions of each individual vacancy announcement.
- 9. Track and Follow up:** Asking questions, gaining information, developing relationships, and becoming known are a helpful part of the application process. You **can** call to check on the status of your application.
- 10. Interview for a Federal Job:** The federal government uses many different approaches to interviewing. Please use Career Services to assist you in understanding these approaches and preparing for your interviews.



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