

CAREER CENTER

Working for the Federal Government

The federal government is the largest employer in the United States. On average the government has more than 18,000 job openings available daily. The government provides special employment opportunities for veterans, people with disabilities, and students. Some government jobs will repay student loans for recent graduates who qualify.

Working for the government does not always mean living in Washington, D.C. Only fifteen percent of federal employees live in the D.C. metropolitan area. There are opportunities for all majors. Government salaries are comparable to those offered in the private sector.

The Federal Job Search

Looking for a federal job is similar to pursuing jobs in the private sector. The differences in the application process are not as complex as they seem. Most government agencies must legally post job vacancies open to outside applicants on their websites. Most, but not all, government jobs are posted on USAJOBS.gov. To look for openings with a specific agency, visit its website (e.g., CIA, FBI, State Department, etc.).

After the initial application process government jobs often require applicants to write KSA statements (knowledge, skills, and abilities) that communicate how their training and experience have equipped them to meet the job requirements. (See below for more information.)

Read the federal job description and application procedures carefully. Always follow the instructions precisely.

The Federal Résumé

Although USAJOBS.gov allows you to upload two private-sector résumés, it is recommended that you have at least one federal résumé stored in USAJOBS.gov. A federal résumé is different from a private sector résumé in that more detailed information is required. The government requires information, such as salary history, on résumés that is not included when applying within the private sector.

USAJOBS.gov has a résumé builder to help you craft a federal résumé that will contain all the information required by government agencies. To build your résumé, go to http://www.usajobs.gov.

The Federal Job Search

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- Click Create an Account.
- Fill out your personal information in the boxes provided to create your account.
- On your My Account home page, click the Résumés tab.
- Click Build New Résumé or Upload New Résumé. Upload up to five résumés.

When applying for multiple positions, be sure your résumé includes all requested information listed in the job descriptions, since they may have slightly different requirements.

Sample federal résumés are available at http://www.tenstepsforstudents.org/.

Additional features of the USAJobs.gov site allow you to

- Upload up to five additional documents such as additional government forms, transcripts, or other documents.
- Create up to ten job-search agents.
- Check on the status of your applications.
- Save jobs of interest to you.

The USAJOBS.gov Resource Center provides information about how to use the site, federal employment, applying for jobs, and more. Interactive tutorials are available. Separate sections provide easy access for individuals with disabilities, veterans, students, and senior executives.

The Students home page provides information about

- Federal jobs by college major,
- Pathways Program for students and recent graduates
- List of federal agencies, and
- Volunteer.

KSA Statements

Federal vacancy announcements list specific knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) required for jobs. KSAs are designed to determine if you have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to match the job and should be treated as interview questions. This is an opportunity to provide hiring managers with real-life examples highlighting how you have used your skills. You will write narrative statements explaining how your experience has equipped you for the job.

KSA statements may not be required for your initial application, but may be required later during the application process.

KSA Writing Hints

- Write in plain language.
- Do not use acronyms.
- KSAs should be approximately one-half to one page in length.
- Each KSA should be on its own page.
 Include the question at the top of the page.
- Write in the first person. Use one to three real-life examples for each KSA.
- Include special training, certifications, leadership roles, student activities, professional organizations, awards, internships, and volunteer work.
- Use keywords from the questions and job announcement.
- Put your name and social security number at the top of each KSA page.

Sample KSA statements are available at http://www.tenstepsforstudents.org/ and http://www.ksadoctor.com/example-ksa.html.

Searching USAJOBS

To begin searching for federal jobs, enter a keyword term and location in the search boxes on the USAJOBS.gov home page and click Search Jobs. Click Advanced Search to

construct complex searches or find international opportunities with the federal government. You can refine search results by additional criteria including salary and pay grade. As a general rule when searching by grade, the GS-5 through GS-7 range requires a bachelor's degree. A master's degree is often required for the GS-9.

Resources

For more information on the federal job search and federal careers, visit the Career Lab in Lucina 235.

- 150 Best Federal Jobs
- Barron's Guide to Homeland Security Careers
- The Book of U.S. Government Jobs
- Career Opportunities in Politics, Government, and Activism
- The Complete Idiot's Guide to Getting Government Jobs
- FBI Careers
- Federal Civil Service Jobs
- Federal Jobs: The Ultimate Guide
- Find Your Federal Job Fit
- Guide to America's Federal Jobs
- How to Land a Top-Paying Federal Job
- Managing Your Government Career
- The Student's Federal Career Guide
- Ten Steps to a Federal Job

Federal Job-Search Links

Career Center Publications: http://www.bsu.edu/careers/publications

Great Links to Explore: http://www.bsu.edu/careers/links

Overview of Federal Internships:

http://www.makingthedifference.org/federalinternships/

Overview of Federal Jobs: http://www.makingthedifference.org/federaljobs/

Internship Directory (Making the Difference.org): http://www.makingthedifference.org/federalinternships/directory

KSAdoctor.com Sample KSA: http://www.ksadoctor.com/example-ksa.html

Making the Difference.org: http://www.makingthedifference.org

Military to Civilian Translator (America's Career InfoNet): http://www.acinet.org/moc/default.aspx?nodeid=213

Red, White, and Blue Jobs (University of Georgia Career Center):

http://career.uga.edu/job_search/government/federal

Pathways for Students and Recent Graduates: http://www.usajobs.gov/studentjobs/

Ten Steps for Students.org: http://www.tenstepsforstudents.org/

USAJobs: http://www.usajobs.gov

If you need adaptations or accommodations for any of our educational programs or publications because of a disability, please contact Career Center

Lucina Hall 220 Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana 47306 (765) 285-5634
www.bsu.edu/careers/ careercenter@bsu.edu

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