

# FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT

## *Uncle Sam Wants You!*

### Why Consider Federal Employment?

- They are the largest employer in the United States.
- Half of current employees may be eligible to retire by 2017.
- May qualify you for a student loan forgiveness program.
- Job security: The government will never go out of business.
- Agencies seek graduates of all majors, not only Political Science majors.
- Generous benefits package including competitive health, vacation and retirement plans.
- Jobs are available in every state, not just Washington, D.C.

### Myths

Applying for a government job may seem daunting, but the reality is, most people are qualified for all types of federal work. There are many questions to answer concerning the process. Here are a few common myths on applying/working for the government:

Myth	Reality
Federal employees are paper pushers who get caught up in bureaucracy. Your work doesn't make a difference.	Young federal employees get to work on substantive issues that affect the future of our nation. It's a great place to contribute and make a difference.
Salaries for federal employees tend to be low. It's better to get a job in the private sector where you can make much more money.	Entry level salaries are competitive with many industries. Federal employees can advance quickly. Plus, benefits are better than in the private sector
Every federal job is located in Washington, D.C. You don't want to live in such a busy, expensive, politically-charged area.	84% of federal jobs are located <i>outside</i> the D.C. metro area. There are also 50,000 jobs located abroad.
The government only hires political and social science majors. They do not need other academic backgrounds.	Some of the highest-priority need areas are public health and medicine, engineering, the sciences, business/accounting, and information technology.
You've heard working for the government means strict hours, with little time to have a personal life.	Most jobs offer flexible work schedules for those with busy schedules.
The government doesn't like to hire anybody with a diverse background, or those with a disability.	Agencies encourage minorities and those with disabilities to consider government service through a variety of internship and fellowship programs.

### Mission Critical Occupations (MCO's)

MCO's are areas where an agency must fill positions to accomplish the mission of their agency. These are key areas where you should focus your efforts. For example, the federal government will need to fill 274,000 MCO positions by 2015. See [www.wherethejobsare.org](http://www.wherethejobsare.org) for more information. Mission-critical hiring is concentrated in the following occupational areas:

- Medical & Public Health
- Security & Protection
- Compliance & Enforcement
- Legal
- Administration/Program Management



**WE WANT YOU!**

## Applying for Federal Jobs

The process is more time-consuming than a traditional job search, despite the fact that agencies have improved their speed and quality of hiring in recent years (agencies now try to make decisions within six weeks of posting their job). They have eliminated the essay from the first round, and focus on your resume and cover letter. Unlike previous years, applicants are notified about their status. Don't be intimidated by the federal resume, which is different from a traditional resume.

## The Federal Resume

- 1-5 pages in length
- Includes more specific job information (average hours worked/week, salary, employer address)
- Sections include: personal information (citizenship), education, work experience, references, affiliations, desired locations.
- Entering data into [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov) helps to create 5 federal resumes and 2 non-federal resumes.
- Candidates may be asked to write essays in the second and third rounds of the process (up to a full page in length for each).
- Candidates are still encouraged to forward their one-page civilian resume to the interviewer.

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Job Title and Vacancy Announcement Number: CS-356- Nurse  
Veteran's Preference: N/A  
Federal Civilian Status: N/A  
Country of Citizenship: U.S.A.

CERTIFICATIONS  
Red Cross First Aid

EDUCATION:  
University of Irvine — Irvine, CA 9705  
Degree: Nursing Degree, May 2002  
Academic: GPA: 3.50  
Major: Delivery Nurse  
Academic Honors: Spring 2002  
Honor Society Membership: Beta Gamma

TRAINING  
LPN Nursing Program  
University of Irvine, Irvine, CA 9705

COMPUTER SKILLS:  
Word, Excel, Internet

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:  
General Hospital  
233 Heath road, Irvine, CA 9705  
From: 11/95 — To: Present  
Salary: \$9.50/hour  
Hours: 30/week  
Supervisor: Jane Bond  
Telephone: (714) 454-7855  
Present employer may be contacted.  
Position: Delivery Nurse  
Help delivery room, work with doctors, take care of babies

Volunteer Experience:  
Red Cross — OC Chapter, 6/92 — 4/95  
Stevenson, MD 21230, 15 — 5 hours per week  
Supervisor: Cynthia Help, Telephone (714) 458-8785  
Help social services, deliver food and clothing, help with fundraising events

## Negotiations

While we like to think everything is negotiable, federal hiring is a standardized process. The General Schedule (GS) Scale is used to determine your rate of pay. The grades range from 1-15, with 10 steps within each grade. Salary can vary based on geographic location. Most bachelor degree holders begin at GS-5, but can start at a GS-7 with a high GPA and/or academic honors. Master's degrees may start at GS-9; doctorate holders can start at GS-11.

## Background Checks

So you've received the job offer. Now the real fun begins. Uncle Sam wants to know more about you in order to grant you a security clearance. They'll first conduct a **basic background check** of your criminal and credit histories. **Honesty is more important than having a spotless record.** Past mistakes will be considered on a case-by-case basis; lying will disqualify you. A more intensive investigation begins once the offer has been made. They'll be looking at your international experience and contacts (dual citizenship, travel/study/live overseas, foreign-born spouse), drug use, financial history and disciplinary record. If you are brought aboard, you'll be given one of three types of clearances:

- Top Secret
- Secret
- Confidential (vast majority get this)

### *Important websites to learn more information*

- [www.USAJobs.gov](http://www.USAJobs.gov)
- [www.wherethejobsare.org](http://www.wherethejobsare.org)
- [www.usa.gov](http://www.usa.gov)
- [www.bestplacestowork.org](http://www.bestplacestowork.org)
- [www.makingthedifference.org/federalcareers](http://www.makingthedifference.org/federalcareers)
- [www.fedscope.opm.gov](http://www.fedscope.opm.gov)
- [www.feb.gov](http://www.feb.gov)
- [www.lib.lsu.edu/gov](http://www.lib.lsu.edu/gov)
- [www.calltoserve.org/toolkit](http://www.calltoserve.org/toolkit)
- Individual Agency websites

For more career-related tips, visit [www.kent.edu/career](http://www.kent.edu/career)