
Government Job Search



Government jobs are often overlooked when job seekers and new graduates look for positions. The government impacts the lives of all Americans and has a wide variety of career paths for any major. Whether you are looking to work at the local, state, or federal level, there are plenty of rewarding positions!

Pro Tip: Government jobs are Equal Employment Opportunity and employers must repost all complaints of employment discrimination under the No Fear Act.

Why Go Into Federal Government?

- **Make a difference** that impacts the lives of all Americans and lives around the globe.
- **Great benefits, pay, and promotions.** The federal government offers competitive salaries, top benefits for retirement and health insurance as well as great vacation and time off.
- **Federal jobs are everywhere.** If you're open to working anywhere, the federal government has opportunities all across the U.S. and world.
- **No matter your major, there is an opportunity for you!** The federal government has opportunities from art to foreign language to zoology.
- **Continuing education and professional development.** Federal employees have access to many training and development opportunities to build new skills or acquire new talents. Also, the federal government has advanced education initiatives for advanced degrees. Take advantage of their hundreds of scholarship opportunities.
- **Collaborative and social justice work.** With world, local, and national issues, the federal government leads innovation in developing new technologies to fighting racial discrimination.
- **Time off!** If you like a work-life balance, the federal government has very flexible work schedules as well as paid, observed holidays and sick leave. If you like a balance in work and personal life, you will like the flexibility the federal government offers.
- **Student loan forgiveness.** Not all agencies or departments offer this; however, some have a student loan pay off or forgiveness program.

Hiring Pathways for Students and Alumni

As a student or new graduate, the Pathways Program offers federal internships and employment opportunities for current students, recent graduates, and those with an advanced degrees. There are three different paths available:

- Internship programs
- Recent graduate programs
- Presidential Management Fellows Program.
 - For more information, go to [Working in Government - Unique Hiring Paths](#) there are many opportunities for diverse hires.

Pro Tip: When researching, make sure departments have inclusive hiring practices and that your values align with theirs. Look for inclusive terminology in departments' mission and about us statements.

For LGBTQ+ friendly departments, see the [HRC Company Index](#).

Start Your Federal Government Job Search

1. Create an Account

Visit the [USAJobs.gov](https://www.usajobs.gov) website and click on "Create an Account". Enter your email address and follow the steps to create your account.

2. Build your Profile

Your profile includes all the information you need to apply to a federal job - your name, address and other important information that are submitted for each job application. It's important to create a profile, because USA Jobs uses this information to improve your job search results and helps you fill in parts of your job applications. With a profile, you can also upload resumes, save jobs and job searches.

3. Create or Upload a Resume

Upload a resume or create one using the Resume Builder. You can store up to 5 unique resumes within your profile to target different jobs.

4. Use KSA's

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs), or Competencies are the attributes required to perform a job and are generally demonstrated through qualifying experience, education, or training.

- **Knowledge** is a body of information applied directly to the performance of a function.
- **Skill** is an observable competence to perform a learned psychomotor act.
- **Ability** is competence to perform an observable behavior or a behavior that results in an observable product.

5. Search for Jobs

Take advantage of the USAJOBS search tool. The more details you provide, the more effective your results will be.

- **Filter your job search** - search for jobs by keyword, occupation or job category, agency, location, salary range and pay grade.
- **Save searches and receive notifications** - set up automated job searches based on your search criteria. USAJOBS will email you (daily, weekly, or monthly) when there are new jobs entered into the database that meet your needs.

6. Understand the Job Announcement

Once you find a job you're interested in, read the entire job announcement and pay close attention.

- **Who May Apply Section** - see if you're eligible for the job. Here are some categories you may see:
 - Students
 - Recent graduates
 - Family of overseas employees
 - National Guard & Reserves
 - Peace Corps & AmeriCorps
 - Open to the Public
 - Federal employees - Competitive service
 - Federal employees - Excepted service
 - Internal to an agency
 - Career transition (CTAP, ICTAP, RPL)
 - Senior Executives
 - Special Authorities

6. Understand the Job Announcement (cont.)

- **Qualifications Section** - learn what skills and experience you need for the job.
- **How to Apply Section** - understand agency specific instructions, required documents, and contact information

Pro Tip: Some job announcements include special considerations for the following populations:

- *Individuals with a disability*
- *Military spouses*
- *Native Americans/Alaskan Natives*
- *Veterans*

Veterans Preference gives qualified veterans preference in appointment over many other applicants, but does not guarantee a job. For more information on points preference, visit [Veterans' Preference](#).

Federal Government Pay Scale

Decoding the pay scale of the federal government can be confusing. You might see letters and numbers to describe position type or pay scale like GS-5 (General Schedule – grade 5) in a new graduate's position. Let's break it down:

- The GS scale goes from 1 (lowest) to 15 (highest). Most new graduates will apply for positions that are GS-5 to GS-7 positions.
- Then, you have the Step 1 – 10. The steps are based on performance, training, and/or years of service with a max of increasing 1 per year. (See table below for GS and step pay).

Minimum annual salary by grade and step (this changes significantly based on where you live)

Grade	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7	Step 8	Step 9	Step 10
1	\$ 19,738	\$ 20,400	\$ 21,056	\$ 21,709	\$ 22,365	\$ 22,749	\$ 23,398	\$ 24,052	\$ 24,078	\$ 24,690
2	22,194	22,722	23,457	24,078	24,349	25,065	25,781	26,497	27,213	27,929
3	24,216	25,023	25,830	26,637	27,444	28,251	29,058	29,865	30,672	31,479
4	27,184	28,090	28,996	29,902	30,808	31,714	32,620	33,526	34,432	35,338
5	30,414	31,428	32,442	33,456	34,470	35,484	36,498	37,512	38,526	39,540
6	33,903	35,033	36,163	37,293	38,423	39,553	40,683	41,813	42,943	44,073
7	37,674	38,930	40,186	41,442	42,698	43,954	45,210	46,466	47,722	48,978
8	41,723	43,114	44,505	45,896	47,287	48,678	50,069	51,460	52,851	54,242
9	46,083	47,619	49,155	50,691	52,227	53,763	55,299	56,835	58,371	59,907
10	50,748	52,440	54,132	55,824	57,516	59,208	60,900	62,592	64,284	65,976
11	55,756	57,615	59,474	61,333	63,192	65,051	66,910	68,769	70,628	72,487
12	66,829	69,057	71,285	73,513	75,741	77,969	80,197	82,425	84,653	86,881
13	79,468	82,117	84,766	87,415	90,064	92,713	95,362	98,011	100,660	103,309
14	93,907	97,037	100,167	103,297	106,427	109,557	112,687	115,817	118,947	122,077
15	110,460	114,142	117,824	121,506	125,188	128,870	132,552	136,234	139,916	143,598

For more information on specific cities' pay tables, go to <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/2021/general-schedule/>.

Pro Tip: Find a list of [Veteran Employment Program Offices](#) responsible for promoting veterans' recruitment, employment, training and development, and retention within their respective agencies. Veterans are encouraged to contact these individuals for specific information on employment opportunities in those agencies.

Frequently Asked Questions

Does the government resume need to be one page?

No, they can be as long as you want; however, put the more relevant information on Page 1 and 2. Remember to put in all of your work experience as they base your pay on all of your experience.

Does the government use an Applicant Tracking System to screen resumes?

Yes and no. All agencies use HR specialists to review all applications, but some use both. When applying for a federal job, it is important to clearly describe how your skills and work experiences align to the selection criteria defined by the job announcement.

What are some of the top tips for building a government resume?

Tailor your resume to every position. Quantify information, if possible. If you saved the company money, raised \$5,000 for a non-profit, or met 200% of sales quota, use numbers to show value and depth. Use keywords to talk about your skills and abilities. Visit [Federal Resume Writing Tips](#) for more information.

What do government employers want to see on a resume?

Government employers want to see leadership, diversity and inclusion, communication, and teamwork. Show how you demonstrated these skills, which come from jobs, volunteering, student and campus organizations, classes and projects, or hobbies.

Can I use a government resume for industry jobs?

You will need both a federal resume and industry or private sector resume. While the federal resume is extensive and represents all your skills and experience, it doesn't work in industry. Be sure to have both ready.

Pro Tip: For veterans and military, be sure to demilitarize your federal resume by translating the jargon. Since you're given preference points, don't forget to add all your military information. (For more information, see the veterans resource packet).

Federal Job Resources

[GoGovernment.org](#) - student-friendly website, created by the Partnership for Public Service, featuring articles to help first-time applicants.

[USAJobs.gov](#) - offers job postings for the federal government, internships, and jobs for recent graduates. Also has the Federal Resume Builder (highly recommended).

[Office of Personnel Management](#) - learn about security clearances, veterans' preference, student loan repayment assistance, retirement plans, etc.

[USAJobs Help Center](#)

[Federal Resume Writing Tips](#)

[Student & Recent Graduates Pathways](#)

[Federal Hiring Events & Trainings](#)

Government Resume Example:



1234 Main St. • Stillwater, OK 74078 • (405) 555-5555 • pistol.pete@okstate.edu

Education (can include more than one school or degree if applicable; do not include high school)

Bachelor of Science
Major: Agribusiness

Graduation: December 2020
GPA: (list if 3.0 or above)

Professional Experience (related to job you're applying for; listed in reverse chronological order)

Administrative Technician

January 2021 - Present
Stillwater, Oklahoma

USDA Agency

- Manage statewide outreach efforts for programs such as: FSA Grant Program, Cooperative
- Initiate agreements, tribal relations, Feds Feed Families program
- Responsible for public relations, media relations and external affairs
- Oversee website content and maintenance
- Plan, design and publish monthly newsletter, GovDelivery
- Serve as Secretary of the State Administration Committee Board
- Attend farm shows, expos, and outreach events as a representative

USDA Pathways Intern

May 2020 – December 2020
Austin, Texas

USDA Agency

- Responsible for collecting, organizing, and analyzing data for the OSU Custom Rates Survey
- Conducted trainings to the enumerators for the OSU Custom Rates Survey
- Organized data for the 2020 June Area Survey
- Pima Cotton Estimates
 - Presented estimate for Pima Cotton yield to the regional board for approval
- Conducted trainings for field enumerators for the Upland Cotton Objective Yield Survey

Social Media Manager

May 2018 – January 2019
Glendale, Arizona

Wholesale Nursery

- Planned, designed, and published the monthly newsletter
- Revised and developed a new website using Wordpress and Bluehost
- Maintained an online presence using Facebook and Instagram
- Coordinated monthly events for Glendal residents

Farm Patch Intern

August 2017 – December 2017
Buckeye, Arizona

Agritourism Farm

- Planned, managed, and conducted farm tours to elementary school students
 - Managed social media for the farm
 - Attended various outreach events and hosted games at fall festivals
 - Worked directly with major agricultural businesses to advance outreach efforts
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Summary of Skills

- Research and information analysis
 - Reliable team leader and active member
 - Effective verbal and written communicator
 - Adaptable to changes in the work environment and required tasks
 - Accomplishes all tasks in a timely manner
 - Excellent project and time management skills
 - Takes initiative
 - Proficient in Microsoft applications
 - Trained in website design
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Activities

Member, Equestrian

May 2015 - April 2019

Oklahoma State University

Stillwater, Oklahoma

- Adapted to the new riding methods of NCAA quickly
 - Mastered time management while balancing upwards of 10 hours a week with practice, being a full-time student, working 25 hours a week and continuing with other team obligations
 - Encourage the team and build leadership skills to add cohesiveness to create a stronger team
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Volunteer Activities

Equestrians with Disabilities

Summer, 2021

- Encouraged and coached equestrians with disabilities at a Summer Bash Horse Show

Special Olympics

Fall, 2020

- Helped provide support to the participants as they competed

Our Daily Bread Food Bank

Fall, 2019

- Shopped for those in need of groceries

Coaches v. Cancer

Fall, 2019

- Organized and participated in activities for children battling cancer at Boone Pickens Stadium.

Stillwater Humane Society

Winter, 2018

- Tended for the animals in the shelter looking for a home

Tulsa Children's Hospital

Spring, 2017

- Motivated the patients by playing short games, reading books, sharing funny stories, and becoming a friend.
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Honors & Awards

- Oklahoma State University Student Athlete Scholar Award— 3 consecutive years
 - 2016 Arizona FFA State Champion in Marketing Plan
 - 2015 Arizona FFA State Champion in Nursery and Landscape
 - Represented the American Junior Paint Horse Association at the Youth World Games in Germany
 - Studied abroad in Chile learning their agriculture practices and conservation methods
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State Government Employment

A job in state government employment can offer a rewarding career with many perks. A career in state government will offer the individual employee the opportunity to make a large impact on the people and communities of the state.

Reasons to Consider a Job in State Government

- Job availability in almost all industries and career fields
- Stability and security
- Better job benefits than private sector including more personal, vacation, and sick leave days
- Superior health care plans with lower costs to the employee
- Typically, more secure with better retirement packages than the private sector

Considerations for Your State Government Job Search

- Unlike Federal positions, jobs in the state government sector are cross posted in general job boards and on state employment websites.
 - Check out this [Online Job Board](#) for all state agency positions in the US.
- Application process and requirements can take longer to complete and be more complicated than the private sector.
- Resume requirements will be different than that of a private sector position. Typically, government resumes are more than one page.

Understanding State Government Employment



Application Process:

Once you have identified the state, agency, and available job(s) you are interested in applying to, you can start the application process.

- Some states will have a general application to complete to determine your eligibility for employment.
- In some cases, to meet eligibility you may have to complete an examination or test for the agency and position you're applying for.
- Expect a longer application process and a longer wait time to hear back from the agency after applying .
- The interview process could be one or multiple interviews with different groups of people over a longer period.



Job Type and Classification:

Most states will classify jobs based on title, job family, salary level, and/or job level and jobs can be designated "classified" or "unclassified."

- This designation type determines pay scale, description, level, and type of job.
- A classified job is a position that is subject to the state's civil service rules.
 - For example, the employee may not be able to participate in political activities or lose their job without due process or hearing.
- An unclassified job is a position that doesn't have the same protections and security as a classified position.
 - For example, the employee can lose their job without cause or due process, but can participate in political activities.

Understanding State Government Employment (cont.)



Salary Level:

- States have pay schedules or guides for all positions that are posted publicly.
- Most jobs will have a salary maximum unlike positions in the private sector.
- Jobs will have a designed pay level usually denoted with a salary band consisting of a number or letter.
- The salary band will reflect the minimum pay, mid-point, and maximum pay for the position during the individual's time in the position.
 - As an example see the [State of Oklahoma Teacher Salary Schedule](#).

State Job Resources

- Job board with all [State Employment Boards](#) for each of the fifty states in the US.
 - Online index of all [US State Agencies](#) broken down by individual state.
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