

Employment Guide

look

Careers in Government



The U.S. Government, the largest employer in the United States, hires approximately two percent (almost 2.7 million) of the nation's entire workforce. Full-time federal workers earn, on average, an annual salary that exceeds \$67,000. The U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that the annual compensation for federal workers is \$106,871 (pay plus benefits) compared to \$53,288 for the private sector.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Government Service – The New Hot Job!	2
Discovering a Career in the Government	3
Which Federal Government Department Is Right For You?	4
Did You Know?	4
The District of Columbia: A Unique Place for Government Service	5
13 Largest District Government Agencies	5
Getting Your Foot in the Door	6
2006 - 2016 District of Columbia High Growth Occupations in Government	7
10 Best Places To Work in the Federal Government	8
Benefits for Federal Employees	8
Getting Paid!	9
Key Programs to help Expedite Entry in the Federal Government	10
Key Programs to help Expedite Entry in the District Government	10
An Important Resource for Government Service	11

GOVERNMENT SERVICE – THE NEW HOT JOB!

Twenty years ago, a government job was not considered an attractive option for young college graduates in search of their “dream job.” In fact, the common-held belief was that government workers forfeited high wages in exchange for job stability and security. The government was considered “safe” and “a fitting choice” for older job seekers, interested only in “settling” for jobs that often lacked excitement and challenge. Today, that belief is changing. Government is, inarguably, now the hottest place to work. It is attracting a younger workforce, offering them an opportunity to make a difference in the United States and the world. Moreover, today’s government workers are getting excellent wages and benefits and job stability, as soon as they come onboard.

Government workers are public servants. Their primary responsibility is to serve the public and contribute to the welfare of the country. Throughout his presidential campaign and in his inaugural address, President Barack Obama pledged to invest in young people if they would, in turn, “reinvest in their communities” to help make the United States of America stronger and better. Young American workers are answering the call – volunteering with community based organizations and seeking work with the federal, state, and local government.

Part of this investment may be to make government more appealing and attractive to new recruits with offers of student loan repayments, bonuses, flexible work schedules, and the opportunity to live and work outside of the United States and throughout the country. The salary, as compared to the private sector, is equally enticing. The U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports that state and local government workers get paid an average of \$25.30 an hour, 33% higher than the private sector wage of \$19 an hour. With pensions and other benefits, such as health and life insurance, retirement, and tuition reimbursements, the gap can even increase up to 42%, reports the BLS.



DISCOVERING A CAREER IN THE GOVERNMENT

From planning and organizing to investigating and supporting research and development, the government is perhaps the only industry that employs workers in every career discipline. Consequently, maneuvering through myriad career options to find the “right” path can become frustrating and overwhelming to many job seekers, particularly those new to the workforce. However, if there is a sincere desire to serve country and people, job seekers will come to realize that there isn’t a wrong or a right career path in government service.

Starting or switching to a career in government may be one of the most important decisions job seekers will make in their professional lives. Those interested in government work must have the ability to analyze, understand, and problem solve. They must demonstrate excellent communications skills, exercise diplomacy, and be a team player. Last, but not least, they must keep abreast of relevant applications—technological or otherwise—related to their line of work.

CAREERS	OCCUPATIONS	BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES
Public Management & Administration	City Administration, City Council, City or County Clerk, Court Administrator, General Service Officer, Management Analysis Officer, and Program Administration Officer.	Manage public services and programs to meet national, state, and community needs. Analyze community problems and prepare reports for city council, state legislatures, federal agencies, etc.
Governance	Policy Advisor, President, Vice President, Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Mayor, Cabinet-level secretary, Representative, Senator, Assistants, Deputies, Chiefs of Staff, Commissioner (county, city, or state agency), Congressional Aide, Legislator, legislative Assistant, and Lobbyist.	Direct change through political processes.
Planning	Commissioner or Director (various agencies), Economic Development Coordinator, Urban and Regional Planner, and Program Associate.	Analyze problems and design programs and services to meet community needs; prepare reports, develop budgets and manage stage activities.
National Security	National Security Advisor, Military Officer, Electronic Warfare Operations, Combat Operations, Special Forces, Submarine Officer, Combat Engineer, and Intelligence/Counterintelligence, etc.	Protect the nation from danger—foreign or domestic.
Revenue and Taxation	Tax Auditor, Internal Revenue Investigator, Revenue Agent/Officer, Assessor, Tax Attorney, Tax Policy Analyst, and Tax Examiner.	Deal with revenue, data, and details. Watchdogs for local, state, federal government on matters pertaining to taxes.
Regulation	Chief of Field Operations, Code Inspector, Business Regulation Officer, Equal Employment Opportunity Office, Immigration Officer, Police Office, Safety Officer, Customs & Border Protection Officer.	Gather evidence to determine compliance with federal, state, and municipal laws; investigate violations related to tax collections, employment and business practices, narcotics, and other crimes, etc.

Although the educational requirements for opportunities in each of these areas range from general academics and post secondary and professional studies, many government workers enter the workforce with a high school diploma and acquire their knowledge and skills through on-the-job training before working up the ranks to higher and better paying positions.

WHICH FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

Are you a number cruncher? Or, do you prefer counterintelligence work? Whatever your area of interest, the federal government most likely covers it. There are 15 executive federal departments that administer programs that oversee an aspect of life in the United States. Each provides a diverse blend of career opportunities to job seekers.

- **Defense** – Manages the military forces –the Departments of the Army, Navy, and Air Force.
- **Veterans Affairs** – Administers programs to aid U.S. veterans and their families.
- **Homeland Security** – Prevents foreign and domestic attacks in the United States; administers the country's immigration policies; and oversees the Coast Guard.
- **Treasury** – Regulates banks and other financial institutions; administers the public debt; prints currency; and collects federal income taxes.
- **Justice** – Ensures the country's public safety by working with state and local governments to prevent and control crime; enforces federal laws; prosecutes cases in federal courts; and operates federal prisons.
- **Agriculture** – Promotes U.S. agriculture worldwide; researches new ways to grow crops and conserve natural resources; ensures safe meat and poultry products; and oversees programs, such as Food Stamps and School Lunch.
- **Interior** – Manages federal lands, including the national parks and forests; operates hydroelectric power systems; and promotes conservation of natural resources.
- **Health and Human Services** – Performs health and social science research; assures the safety of drugs and foods, other than meat and poultry; and administers Medicare, Medicaid, and other social service programs.
- **Transportation** – Sets national transportation policy; plans and funds the construction of highways and mass transit systems; and regulates railroad, aviation, and maritime operations.
- **Commerce** – Forecasts the weather; charts the oceans; regulates patents and trademarks; conducts the census; compiles statistics; and promotes U.S. economic growth through international trade.
- **State** – Oversees the nation's embassies and consulates; issues passports; monitors U.S. interests abroad; and represents the United States before international organizations.
- **Labor** – Enforces laws for fair pay workplace safety, and equal job opportunity; administers unemployment insurance; regulates pension funds; and collects and analyzes economic data.
- **Energy** – Coordinates the national use and provision of energy; oversees the production and disposal of nuclear weapons; and plans for future energy needs.
- **Housing and Urban Development** – Funds public housing projects; enforces equal housing laws; and insures and finances mortgages.
- **Education** – Monitors and distributes financial aid to schools and students; and collects and disseminates data on schools and other education matters.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Washington, DC has the largest number of federal workers— 245,368— and Vermont, the least, with 2,485 workers.
- The Obama Administration is expected to hire 600,000 government workers within its first four years.

THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: A UNIQUE PLACE FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICE

The District of Columbia is unique in that it operates as a local government and hosts the national offices of the federal government and its agencies. More than 10 of the largest employers in the District are government agencies and according to the Department of Employment Services Labor Market Information Projections, the metro area consist of more than 215,735 public employees – federal, state, and local government, combined. That represents 27 percent of the local employment market.

13 LARGEST DISTRICT GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

AGENCY	RESPONSIBILITIES
Child and Family Services	Protects child victims, and children at risk, of abuse or neglect.
District Department of the Environment	Works to improve the quality of life in the District of Columbia by protecting and restoring the environment, conserving our natural resources, and providing energy policy and services.
DC Public Schools	Provides students a quality education that prepares them to become future leaders and productive citizens.
Department of Consumer & Regulatory Affairs	Protects the health, safety, economic interests, and the quality of life of District residents, businesses, and visitors by issuing licenses and permits, conducting inspections, enforcing building, housing, and safety codes, regulating land use and development, and providing consumer education and advocacy services.
Department of Employment Services	Plans, develops and administers employment-related services to all segments of the Washington, DC metropolitan population.
Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department	Provides emergency medical care and transportation (EMS), fire prevention, fire suppression, hazardous material response, and technical rescue services to the District's residents and visitors.
Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency	Manages the District's emergency operations to prevent, respond to, and recover from natural and man-made emergencies.
Department of Human Services	Coordinates and provides a range of services to assist economic and socially-challenged residents of the District.
Metropolitan Police Department	Safeguards the District and protects and serves its residents and visitors.
Department of Motor Vehicles	Promotes public safety by ensuring the safe operation of motor vehicles.
Office of Tax and Revenue	Collects tax owed to the District and accounts for all revenues.
Office of Unified Communications	Provides fast, professional, and cost-effective response to emergency and non-emergency calls in the District.
University of the District of Columbia	Provides quality and affordable college education to individuals pursuing professional certification, associate, baccalaureate, and graduate degrees.

The order of the list, as presented, makes no assumption as to which agency is larger than the other.

GETTING YOUR FOOT IN THE DOOR

In The District Government

To find a job in the District government, job seekers should first visit www.dchr.dc.gov and click on "Employment Opportunities," and then on "Current DC Government Positions Available" to view the listing of jobs openings. Opportunities marked "Open to the Public" are open to everyone. Opportunities marked "Agency" are open only to employees currently working in the agency.

Opportunities marked "District Government" are open only to current employees in the District government. Opportunities marked "Special Area" are open to a specific category of employees.

Each job opening listed on the website offers the title of the job, work location, and other general information such as salary range, grade, work hours and days, agency name, and the length of employment. The District government requires that all interested applicants complete and submit the DC Employment Application (DC2000). Once you are registered on the city's online application system, you may apply for the job online by clicking on "Apply for this Job."

All applicants are required to submit answers to several ranking factors. Your responses help hiring managers assess your qualifications for the job.

In The Federal Government

Agencies are required to post their job openings on the federal government's central job site, USAJOBS.gov. There are also other equally useful sites: www.fedjobs.gov; www.firstgov.gov; www.studentjobs.gov; www.govtjobs.com; www.military.com; and www.hirevetsfirst.gov. It is important that job seekers conduct the necessary research to familiarize themselves with the agency and the responsibilities of the vacant position. An honest assessment of your past experience to determine if you have the skills the agency seeks is critical before moving forward.

One of the biggest challenges many job seekers face with the federal application process is answering the Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSA) questions. KSA responses help hiring managers determine the applicant's qualification for the job. Take the time to answer each question thoroughly and honestly before submitting your application. The application process usually takes time to complete. Compile all samples of work related to the job for which you are applying to present at your interview.



2006 - 2016 DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA HIGH GROWTH OCCUPATIONS IN GOVERNMENT

OCCUPATIONS	AVG. HOURLY WAGE	AVG. ANNUAL WAGE	EDUCATION/TRAINING
Business Operations Specialists, all other	\$41.49	\$86,300	Bachelor's degree
Detectives and Criminal Investigators	\$42.25	\$87,870	Work experience in a related occupation
General and Operations Managers	\$59.25	\$123,240	Bachelor's or higher degree, plus work experience
Human Resources, Training, and Labor Relations Specialists, all other	\$42.28	\$87,930	Bachelor's degree
Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	\$30.96	\$64,400	Long-term on-the-job training
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	\$29.65	\$61,660	Associate degree
Lawyers	\$71.79	\$149,330	First professional degree
Correctional Officers and Jailers	*	*	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Registered Nurses	\$35.11	\$73,040	Associate degree
Managers, all other	\$56.21	\$116,910	Work experience in a related occupation
Management Analysts	\$39.88	\$82,960	Bachelor's or higher degree, plus work experience
Logisticians	\$39.27	\$81,690	Bachelor's degree
Computer Specialists, all other	\$46.91	\$97,570	Associate degree
Janitors and Cleaners, except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	\$11.90	\$24,750	Short-term on-the-job training
Air Traffic Controllers	*	*	Long-term on-the-job training

**Not Available or Suppressed*

10 BEST PLACES TO WORK IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

RANK	AGENCY (LARGE)
1	Nuclear Regulatory Commission
2	Government Accountability Office
3	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
4	Intelligence Community
5	Department of State
6	Environmental Protection Agency
7	Department of Justice
8	General Services Administration
9	Social Security Administration
10	Department of Commerce

Source: www.bestplacetowork.org

BENEFITS FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

Student Loan Repayment. Federal agencies may offer student loan repayment of up to \$10,000 per calendar year, with an overall cap of \$60,000 per eligible employee. Recipients must commit to work for the agency for at least three years.

Great Health Coverage. The federal government offers a large selection of health insurance plans and covers most of the cost. It also offers life insurance and long-term care insurance.

Flexible Work Schedules. With management's approval, government workers can choose the time they start working. Full-time employees can also compress their work schedule to complete their 80-hour biweekly work in fewer than 10 workdays.

Family-Friendly Vacation and Leave Policies. Full-time federal workers get 10 paid holidays annually, from 13 to 26 days of vacation each year depending on years of service, and 13 days of sick leave. Other leave programs – ranging from leave sharing to time-off for medical conditions and family responsibilities – are also available.

Child Care Program. More than 200 federal agencies sponsor on-site child care centers for their employees. The Department of Defense Child Care System, for example, provides child care for more than 200,000 children through 800 child development centers, family child-care homes and school-age care programs.

Generous Retirement Benefits. The Thrift Savings Plan is the government's 401(k) retirement plan in which agencies match up to five percent of your salary. This is part of a generous three-tiered retirement system that includes Social Security benefits and a fixed amount pension.

Transportation Assistance. Federal agencies offer subsidies for mass transit where appropriate. Also, many workers can have the option of telecommuting.

Source: www.bestplacetowork.org



GETTING PAID!

The District Government assigns each position a Classification (occupation title), based upon the nature of the work to be performed. A pay Grade Level (pay range) is assigned based on the difficulty of the work and the amount of education, experience, training, skills and abilities, and licenses or certifications required for the position. The more difficult the work and the more education, experience, and skills needed, the higher the grade level and salary.

With many different pay scales, a District government salary depends upon the position's Classification, Agency, Appointment Type (Wage Service, Career Service, Legal Service, Management / Supervisory Service, Excepted Service), or whether it is union. Most employees are hired on a "step" scale at Step 1, but can be hired at a higher step depending upon the experience, skills, and education the employee brings to the position.

Employees on step pay scales who receive at least the minimal satisfactory rating on their Annual Performance Review will progress from Step 1 to Step 5 each year on the anniversary date of their hire date and will progress from Step 5 to Step 10 every two years. Employees also receive a pay increase when a market adjustment is made to their pay scale (sometimes referred to as a "Cost of Living Adjustment" or COLA). Benefits such as paid holidays, paid vacations, paid sick leave, health insurance, life insurance, disability insurance, metro subsidies, the 5% contribution District government makes to your retirement plan, flexible work schedules, telecommuting, and opportunities for performance and incentive bonuses, makes a career with the District government very rewarding!

For federal government jobs at most agencies, salaries are set on the General Schedule, or GS pay scale, which, like the District's system, links required experience and level of job responsibility to a system of grades and steps within each grade. Grades start at GS-1 and go up to GS-15. Grades above 15 are in the Senior Executive Service. As your grade increases, so does your salary. Your GS scale is contingent upon:

Education. A college graduate with a four-year degree, for example, may start out at the GS-5 (approximately \$27,026*) or GS-7 (\$33,477*) levels. An employee with a Master's degree may start at a GS-9 (\$40,949*) or higher.

Experience. Experience is always taken into account when determining starting salaries. As you gain more federal experience, your salary increases. For example, you can advance from GS-7 to GS-11 (\$49,544*) in two years - a near 50 percent increase.

Place of Residence. Eighty-five percent of all federal jobs are located outside of the Washington D.C. area. Salaries are adjusted in areas with higher costs of living. This is called a locality pay rate adjustment. In Washington, DC, for example, the starting salary for a GS-5 is \$33,269**; for a GS-7 is \$41,210**; for a GS-9 is 50,400**.

*Source: www.opm.gov/oca/08tables/indexGS.asp

**www.federaljobs.net/paytables/09gstbls.txt



KEY PROGRAMS TO HELP EXPEDITE ENTRY IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The **Federal Career Intern Program (FCIP)** brings talented people into the government at the entry level for a two-year appointment. Individuals are hired at the GS - 5, - 7 or - 9 pay levels, with approximate starting salaries of \$27,000, \$33,500 or \$41,000, respectively, based on location. After two years, successful federal career interns can be converted, non-competitively, into full-time positions. Contact the agency for more information.

The **Presidential Management Fellow (PMF)** is a prestigious two-year program that is open to graduate students in their final year of study. The program prepares talented people for upper-level management positions in the federal government. To be accepted in the PMF program, an applicant must first be nominated by his/her school and then successfully complete the program's rigorous evaluation process. PMF positions are structured by each individual agency and differ widely. Visit www.pmf.opm.gov for more information.

The **Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP)** is a temporary and paid internship that exposes students enrolled in a high school, a two- or four-year college or university, a technical or vocational school, or a graduate program, to government service. The internship can last for a summer or as long as the student is in school. Applicants must be U.S. citizens. Visit www.opm.gov/employ/students/intro.asp for more information.

The **Student Career Experience Program (SCEP)** allows undergraduate and graduate students access to substantive internships in federal agencies. The work must be related to the student's area of study and requires the agency to have a formal agreement with the student's institution. Most positions are paid, and students may also receive academic credit. If the student successfully completes 640 hours of work, he or she can be appointed to a permanent position without going through the traditional hiring process. Applicants must be U.S. citizens. Visit www.opm.gov/employ/students/intro.asp for more information.

KEY PROGRAMS TO EXPEDITE ENTRY IN THE DISTRICT GOVERNMENT

The **Capital City Fellows Program (CCFP)** is a mayoral initiative that attracts recent graduates of master's degree programs in public administration, public policy, urban planning, and related fields to work for the city of Washington, DC. Candidates compete for two-year fellowship appointments during which they complete four six-month rotations in different city agencies.

The **Centralized College Internship Program** offers undergraduate and graduate students an opportunity to gain hands-on public policy municipal government experience. The salaried program spans six weeks during the summer and candidates must commit to 40 hours a week during the internship period.

The **High School Intern Program** promotes leadership and development among 11th graders attending the District's public high schools. Students receive mentorship and professional and career development from mentors throughout the District government. The program lasts 20 weeks, beginning in the Spring. Students receive academic credits for the first 60 hours of work and then are paid minimum District hourly wages, thereafter.

For more information on these programs, contact the D.C. Department of Human Resources at 202. 442.9700 or visit www.dchr.dc.gov.

The **DC Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP)** offers District youth, ages 14 – 24, an opportunity to work with District and federal agencies to gain hands-on experience in civil service. The program generally runs for 10 weeks during the summer.

The **Mayor's Youth Leadership Institute (MYLI)** is a year-long, four-level program designed to train District youth, ages 14 -17, in leadership and self development. The Institute's Youth Government is a replication of the District government and youth leaders are given the opportunity to shadow local politicians for an up-close view of the way local government operates.

For more information on these programs, contact the DOES Office of Youth Programs at 202.698.3492 or visit www.summerjob.dc.gov.



AN IMPORTANT RESOURCE FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICE

Call to Serve is a joint effort of the Partnership for Public Service and the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to educate a new generation about the importance of a strong civil service, help re-establish links between federal agencies and college campuses, and provide students with information about federal jobs. More than 670 colleges and universities and 75 federal agencies are participants of this program. For more information, visit www.ourpublicservice.org/OPS/programs/calltoserve.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CAREER CENTERS

FULL-SERVICE CENTERS

Franklin Street Career Center

1500 Franklin Street, N.E.
Washington D.C., 20018

Naylor Road Career Center

2626 Naylor Road, S.E.
Washington D.C., 20020

SATELLITE CENTERS

U.S. Veterans Affairs Assistance Center

(Veterans Only)
1722 I Street, N.W., Room 335
Washington D.C., 20006

South Capitol Career Center

Center-CVS/pharmacy
4049 South Capitol Street, S.W.
Washington D.C., 20032

Columbia Heights Career and Information Center

1480 Girard Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20010

Business Opportunity Workforce Development Center

2311 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, S.E.
Washington, DC 20020

Business Resource Center

64 New York Avenue, N.E., 3rd Floor
Washington, DC 20002

Emery Career and Information Center

5701 Georgia Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20011

For hours of operation, please visit www.does.dc.gov



Susan Gilbert, Program Manager/Business Services

Workforce Development Bureau

609 H Street, N.E.

Washington, DC 20002

Note: The statistics in this publication may change with receipt of additional information.

Notice of Non-Discrimination

In accordance with the D.C. Human Rights Act of 1977, as amended, D.C. Official Code Section 2-1401.01 et seq., (Act) the District of Columbia does not discriminate on the basis of actual or perceived: race, color religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, disability, source of income, or place of residence or business. Sexual harassment is a form of sexual discrimination, which is prohibited by the Act. In addition, harassment based on any of the above-protected categories is prohibited by the Act. Discrimination in violation of the Act will not be tolerated. Violators will be subject to disciplinary action.

The Department of Employment Services is an Equal Opportunity Employer/Provider. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to persons with disabilities.



Government of the District of Columbia
Adrian M. Fenty, Mayor

Department of Employment Services
Joseph P. Walsh, Jr., Director

LABOR
MARKET
RESEARCH
INFORMATION

