

While the process of finding a job or internship within the federal government may seem like it would be similar to standard job searches, there are some major differences in the ways that federal agencies conduct this search. The objective of this guide is to help you understand those key differences and prepare you for developing the skills necessary to be a competitive candidate.

Utilizing USAJobs to benefit your search:

Although it is certainly not required to utilize this database, it is constantly being updated as positions in various areas become available. Additionally, they provide extensive resources regarding the search and application process for traditional and post-traditional (veterans, continuing education students, non-U.S. citizens, etc.) students. The following is a step-by-step process for navigating this search:

1. **Create your profile:** USAJobs requires a free profile before any positions can be searched in their database. On top of having your personal information on hand for potential employers, the profile also allows you to create custom searches, edit your information as necessary, and store required documents.
2. **Search the database:** Be sure that your account is signed in before searching, just in case you come across any jobs that are of particular interest to you so you can save them to your profile. The job search engine provides a wide variety of options for narrowing down your search, including (but not limited to) salary, location within a certain range of miles from a location of your choice, agency, or specific occupational field.
3. **Review the posting:** Once you've found a job that you're interested in, make sure that you are in fact qualified for this position. If you find that you are not but you were looking at pursuing that specific field, the qualifications will give you an idea of how you can prepare yourself for those kinds of careers in the future.
4. **Prepare your application:** Each posting should have an option titled "How to Apply" which details exactly what you will need to provide for the application. The required documents section will tell you what documents, including resume and cover letter, are needed to be eligible for each position.
5. **Apply:** If you are eligible for a specific position and can provide the required documents, you can submit your completed application to the agency's specific application system. It is possible that you will receive an email from the agency's application system when your application is received.

Once you've completed these steps, the agency will review your application and you will enter into the job selection process for that agency. This includes interviews, contacting references, and finally sending out job offers to eligible candidates.

Federal Resumes:

Most conventional resume tips and strategies do not apply to federal resumes. While traditional resumes should be no more than one or two pages in length depending on the position that you are applying for, federal resumes require far more detailed information. It is not uncommon for federal resumes to extend onto multiple pages in length as the writer gains more experience. Federal agencies require applicants to include *every* position that they have held, regardless of length of time or occupational field. While language skills are always an added bonus in the job market, many federal agencies will put significantly more weight to or even require candidates to have advanced study in one of many critical languages, depending on the nature of their work. A list of these critical languages can be found at:

<https://nsep.gov/content/critical-languages>

Be aware that veterans must also include their military separation forms (DD-214) and other applicable documents (SF-15 and SF-50) when applying for federal jobs.

A sample federal resume is provided at the end of this guide.

Career Exploration:

Job shadows offer a more hands-on approach to exploring opportunities within a specific field of work. This option allows you to follow a professional in your field of interest for an agreed upon amount of time (typically between a day and a full week). While informational interviews allow you to talk about a professional's experience, this allows you to see their work first hand.

Be prepared to pursue advanced degrees as you intend to move up in your field. While many agencies may not necessarily require them, some will prefer or highly recommend it. Progression into higher levels of administration will require advanced study in related subject areas. The requirements for education should be posted within each job description.

Keep in mind that, due to the nature of certain federal jobs, there may be severe limitations on what you are allowed to see or do during your job shadow. Some agencies may not allow job shadows at all depending on the confidential nature of their work. It is always best to ask if you are unsure.

Background checks:

Federal agencies require all employees to pass extensive background checks for security purposes. Typically this includes a candidate's credit and criminal history in order to make sure they are not considered a national security risk or committed any crimes potentially damaging to the image of the agency/country.

Federal agencies list:

There are too many departments and agencies to list out on this guide. If you are interested in finding out more about these agencies and departments at the federal and state levels, please follow the link below:

<https://www.usa.gov/agencies> (Click the "A-Z Index of U.S. Government Agencies" option)

George Washington
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington DC 20005 US
Mobile: (555)704-1776
Email: g washington1@president.com

Country of Citizenship: United States of America
Veterans' Preference: Yes (or no, if you are not a veteran)
Contact Current Employer: Yes

AVAILABILITY: Job Type: Permanent, Temporary, Recent Graduates
Work Schedule: Full Time

DESIRED LOCATION: US-MA-Boston

EDUCATION: **B.A.** (May 20XX), **Salem State University**, Salem, MA 01970 US
35 Semester Hours (Or however many you have)
GPA: 3.75 out of 4.0
Major: History, Political Science (double major)
Minor: Military Science
Relevant Coursework:
History of the Colonial United States, War and Society, World Politics

WORK EXPERIENCE: **Department of State (Educational and Cultural Affairs)** Washington, DC US **9/20XX-8/20XX**
Grade Level: NA
Hours per week: 20
Intern
Supervisor: James Madison (555-316-1751)
Okay to contact this supervisor: Yes

- Wrote fifteen articles about foreign education initiatives in Bureau newsletter and press releases
- Drafted twenty memoranda for the Undersecretary of State on a variety of policies and topics
- Assembled financial and budget information for use in Educational and Cultural Affairs internal materials
- Assisted with administrative tasks such as filing documents and organizing meeting logistics

U.S Consulate (Department of State) Paris, France **6/20XX-8/20XX**
Grade Level: NA
Hours per week: 45
Political and Economic Section Intern, NA
Supervisor: Thomas Jefferson (555-413-1743)
Okay to contact this Supervisor: Yes

- Researched and wrote five regional economic and political briefs for US
- Ambassador's Madrid consulate district visits
- Compiled ten briefs with fifteen professionals in regional chambers of commerce, banks' nongovernmental organizations, and government offices to enable shared understanding of material
- Synthesized information from external research and interviews
- Provided administrative support through sorting mail, filing documents, and answering multi-line phone system
- Utilized French language skills, political, and cultural knowledge in a variety of official settings

ABC Afterschool Program

Philadelphia, PA US

9/20XX-4/20XX**Salary:** 15 USD/hour**Hours per week:** 40**Program Coordinator****Supervisor:** Ben Franklin (555-117-1706)**Okay to contact this supervisor:** Yes

- Developed and monitored program goals and policies resulting in the highest recorded performance in ten years.
- Oversaw three mentoring programs in limited resource communities to promote a safe and healthy youth development
- Recruited, trained, and managed twenty-five adult mentors and twenty youth
- Coordinated ten minute, weekly presentations on mentoring initiatives

LANGUAGE SKILLS:**English**

Spoken: Advanced

Written: Advanced

Read: Advanced

French

Spoken: Advanced

Written: Advanced

Read: Advanced

REFERENCES:

Name: Alexander Hamilton
Employer: Department of the Treasury
Title: Secretary of the Treasury
Phone Number: (555-111-1755)
Email Address: a.ham@treasury.gov
Reference Type: Personal

Name: Marquis de Lafayette
Employer: Army of France
Title: Major General
Phone Number: (555-096-1757)
Email Address: lafayette@france.fr

Reference Type: Professional

ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION:

Skills:

- Working knowledge of Western governments and political structure
- Proficient in Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook)

Class Projects:

Leading a Revolution: How the United States United, April 20XX

- Completed a sixty page capstone paper on colonial American training and tactics over the course of the Revolutionary War
- Presented to over fifty members of the campus community on this topic

Leadership Roles at Salem State University:

War News Radio, **Weekend Co-Host**, 08/20XX-05/20XX

- Recruited executive committee members, planned group meetings
- Managed a membership base of forty students
- Reported on institution and national news weekly for student body

Political Science Department, **Representative**, 09/20XX-05/20XX

- Represented more than one hundred students in department meetings
- Partnered with local high school to plan and execute political science centered programming for college bound seniors