

Guide to Getting a Government Job

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Guide to Getting a Government Job

The U.S. Government is the Nation's largest single employer. But if you're job hunting, don't think of Uncle Sam in singular terms. About 3 million Federal workers are spread out among more than 100 Government departments, agencies, commissions, bureaus, and boards. You simply cannot send an application to a single Government entity and be considered for every job that exists.

Today's merit-based system of civil service has roots more than a century old. The Pendleton Act, passed in 1883, was the first step toward overhauling the excesses of the patronage system. Congress agreed to reform civil service laws only after President Garfield was assassinated in 1881 by a disgruntled office seeker he had declined to appoint. Until then, jobs went to political supporters, regardless of merit. Now, the political positions that exist, about 3,000 jobs at the top, are reserved for those who work closely with Cabinet members and the President. So unless you're a friend of the President or a friend of a friend, you'll have to get your Government job on your own.

And there's more than one way to get a Federal job. There's more than one way you can apply for jobs, more than one way you are evaluated, and more than one person doing the hiring. There are affirmative employment programs, cooperative education and other student employment programs, and summer job programs. How you apply for a Federal job depends on your qualifications, the number of vacancies in your field, the number of people applying, where you want to work, the salary you expect, and the kind of job you want. If you are looking for a job with the U.S. Postal Service or are qualified to start above the entry level, you can apply directly to agencies. But if you are a college student or a college graduate looking for a white-collar Federal job, keep reading. The accompanying box, "Who Is Being Hired by the Federal Government? The Word from OPM," gives the short answer to that question, but the long answer is a little more complicated. This article will help you find your way through the Government's hiring maze.

Learning the Basics

If you're like most Federal jobseekers, you don't know where to begin. You might start by learning about the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Although it does not hire applicants (except for its own needs), OPM manages employment policy for more than half the civil service. It develops and gives written exams, rates applicants, and refers applicants to agencies with openings. It also publicizes job openings through automated telephone systems, electronic bulletin boards, and printed materials. Most importantly, OPM defines the qualifications required for different occupations and manages the Administrative Careers With America (ACWA) program. (Helpful hint: People in Federal personnel circles refer to this program by its acronym, pronouncing it like the Latin word for water, aqua.)

Do You Qualify? Check Handbook X-118

OPM writes qualification standards for the scores of white-collar occupations it regulates. You must meet these minimum qualifications to be hired. Qualifications for jobs under ACWA appear in the table that begins on page 18. For information on other occupations and for more complete information about ACWA occupations, consult Qualification Standards for White-Collar Positions Under the General Schedule, generally referred to as Handbook X-118. It gives the name of the occupation and its series number, which will prove very useful because jobs are often listed in numerical order. Perhaps most importantly, Handbook X-118 also gives the requirements for entering jobs at different salary levels.

The Federal Government has several pay systems. About 450 white-collar occupations are part of the General Schedule (GS), which consists of 15 numerical grade levels. (See table, "GS Pay Scales.") College graduates with no experience usually qualify for jobs at the GS-5 level. Even if you are qualified to start at a higher grade, you may need to begin work at the GS-5 or GS-7 level because the agency might be recruiting only entry-level workers. Agencies are not required to hire you at a higher level.

Keep in mind that meeting the minimum qualifications does not necessarily get you a job. Agencies look for the best qualified people. Even though a job such as writer-editor requires no particular degree, employers will look for related experience--school newspaper work, writings, relevant summer jobs--that demonstrates interest and potential for development

in this field.

You can find Handbook X-118 in a looseleaf binder at personnel offices of all Federal agencies, Federal Job Information Centers, and most Federal depository libraries. Some State Job Service offices, college placement offices, and public libraries also have copies.

GS Pay Scales

Federal employee salaries are based on several pay systems. The largest is the General Schedule (GS). The chart shows pay scales for 15 grades covering most white-collar Federal workers, as of January 1, 1993. Blue-collar salaries vary by city or region.

Entry-level positions for most college graduates begin at the GS-5 or GS-7 level. Generally, entry-level professionals and administrators are promoted two grades at a time, often annually, until they reach GS-11. Subsequent promotions are one grade at a time.

Most people are hired at pay step 1 of their grade. Advancement by steps, or within-grade increases, occurs after 52 to 156 weeks, depending on the person's current step.

To make the Government more competitive with private employers, some Federal workers are paid special rates. Higher salaries are paid to some workers who are in short supply, such as engineers, scientists, and health personnel. White-collar workers in New York City, San Francisco, and Los Angeles get an 8-percent cost-of-living differential. Some law enforcement and clerical workers also receive special rates.

A look at ACWA

ACWA, or Career America, is OPM's job-entry program for college graduates who will, if hired, start at the GS-5 or GS-7 level. College seniors within 9 months of graduation may also apply for jobs through this program. Many of the occupations require a specific degree or completion of certain courses, but you can qualify for others with any degree. No experience is required for any of these occupations, but related experience

can always help you compete.

ACWA covers 116 administrative and professional occupations in 7 groups, the first 6 of which require separate exams:

- Group 1: Health, Safety, and Environmental
- Group 2: Writing and Public Information
- Group 3: Business, Finance, and Management
- Group 4: Personnel, Administration, and Computers
- Group 5: Benefits Review, Tax, and Legal
- Group 6: Law Enforcement and Investigation
- Group 7: Professional Occupations. Not Requiring an Exam

Some of the 100 occupations in the first 6 groups have specific educational requirements, but most do not. All 16 occupations in group 7 are professional and, by OPM's definition, require certain academic coursework. The requirements for all 116 occupations, as well as the employment in each, are listed in the table beginning on page 18.

ACWA Applications

Each ACWA group has a different application form. But, generally, you must pass a written test or show that you have the education required or both. One exception is made for those who qualify for the Outstanding Scholar Program; it exempts from testing college students who graduated in the upper 10 percent of their class or earned a cumulative grade-point average (GPA) of 3.5 or above on a 4.0 scale.

To find out which groups you can apply for, visit or call your nearest OPM office or Federal Job Information Center. Ask for each group's Qualifications Information Statement to learn more about that group's jobs, qualifications, and application procedures. You can also call the Career America Connection's automated telephone system at (912) 757-3000. (In the Washington, DC, metropolitan area, call the Washington Area Service Center at (202) 606-2700.)

Applications to take the test for most groups can be submitted at any time, but groups 1 and 2 may be closed in your region. For occupations in group 7, you may apply only when openings are announced; hiring is very limited.

Information statements for groups requiring exams include a test scheduling card, OPM Form 5000 AB, as well as

application details and a list of OPM offices. Complete the test scheduling form and mail it to the OPM office in the area where you want to take your test. You should also request sample test questions. Within a few weeks of mailing your test scheduling card, you should receive materials indicating the time and location of the exam. Also included is a booklet containing sample questions.

You may take as many different exams as you like, but you may not retake a test within an occupational group for 1 year. You must bring a photo ID for entrance to the testing room.

Each written test has three parts. The first part consists of 12 vocabulary and 13 reading questions. The second part has 8 questions on tabular completion and 9 on arithmetic reasoning. The third part is the Individual Achievement Record, which evaluates how well you have used your opportunities in school, work, or outside activities. The exam takes about 75 minutes: 30 minutes each for the first and second sections and 15 minutes for the third.

After the Test: Ratings and Registers

All exams in groups 3 through 6 for the continental United States are processed at the OPM Staffing Service Center in Macon, GA.

You will receive a Notice of Results within a few days of your test date. Your performance on the exam is boiled down to a numerical score, called a rating. Passing scores range from 70 to 100. (Veterans with a passing grade receive an extra 5 points; disabled veterans, an extra 10 points.) The names of all candidates with passing scores are ranked in numerical order on a list maintained by OPM. The list is called a register or competitor inventory. From this register, OPM makes referrals to agencies filling job vacancies.

Names remain on a register for 1 year. But not everyone on a register gets a job. Currently, only those with ratings in the middle to high 90's are being referred to agencies, and there's still plenty of competition. From October 1, 1992, to February 1, 1993, OPM only referred about 6,400 job applicants to agencies, out of about 70,000 eligible candidates for groups 3 through 6. Of those 6,400 referred, only about 200 were hired. As for the others, according to one OPM official, "the vast majority don't hear and probably won't hear."

Along with your test materials, you will have received a background questionnaire, Occupational Supplement Form B, that you must complete and bring with you to the test. It includes questions on your education and experience, and also has some questions about the kind of position you are looking for. For example, it asks you to indicate up to nine specific geographic locations in which you are willing to work. These can play an important role in whether you are called for an interview, because referrals are made according to candidates' designation for working in the agency's location. The central processing system allows you to be considered for employment in several geographic zones without having to take the same exam in each zone. But don't confuse this with the requirement that you take a separate written test for each occupational group that requires one.

Other Jobs, Other Registers

OPM also maintains registers for specialized occupations outside the Career America program. Specialized occupations do not require a written test but do require specific coursework--just as the ACWA group 7 occupations do. Ratings for these registers are based on applicants' education and experience. The specialized occupations include positions in accounting and auditing, biological sciences, engineering, mathematical sciences, and physical sciences. You need to request Qualifications Information Statements for detailed information about the specific educational requirements needed. Call the Career America Connection or visit your nearest OPM office or Federal Job Information Center.

The Qualifications Information Statements you will receive for nontest positions do not, obviously, include a test scheduling card. But you will receive Occupational Supplement Form B. For nontest positions, your rating is based entirely on the information you supply on this form. A computer will read your responses, so you must take special care to indicate that you meet the specific coursework requirements for that occupation. For example, with a public administration or other business degree, you are eligible for accountant positions if you have 24 semester credit hours in accounting. But the computer will not recognize that you meet this provision unless you indicate accounting as an undergraduate major (defined by OPM as 24 or more semester hours, or 36 or more quarter hours) on Form B. Read the instructions carefully when completing the form.

All Form B processing is done at the OPM Staffing Service Center in Macon. You should receive a Notice of Rating within 2 weeks of mailing your form. If you are eligible, your rating will be a numerical score from 70 to 100. Currently, applicants referred to agencies to be considered for openings have scores in the middle to high 90's, as is the case with the ACWA occupations in groups 1 through 6. The geographic location you indicated on Form B likewise plays a role in referrals. National registers are maintained in Macon for accountant/ auditor and bioscience positions. But engineering, physical science, and math registers are downloaded directly to the specific geographic zones you named on Form B. To be considered for positions in more than one zone, you must submit a separate form for each zone.

The SF 171

For many jobs, filling out an application is part of the hiring process. The Federal Government is no exception. An Application for Federal Employment, Standard Form 171 (SF 171), is required for every Federal employee's personnel file. For many positions, including ACWA occupations, you do not need to submit an SF 171 to take a test or complete an Occupational Supplement Form B. But you will still need to submit an SF 171 prior to being hired. For most agencies, the SF 171 is the designated application.

As your prospective employer's introduction to you, the SF 171 is a chance for you to present yourself at your very best. Fill it out quickly and you're wasting your time; thousands of applications are received by Government offices each year, and only the best attract attention. You should spend several hours to complete the application. It may seem tedious, but the time you invest could mean the difference between an interview and a rejection letter.

Blank SF 171 forms are available at Federal Job Information Centers, most Federal agencies' personnel offices, and many post offices, libraries, and State Job Service offices. You can also buy automated programs for producing your SF 171 on a computer.

Before you make any marks on the form, make several photocopies to use as drafts. Then prepare a master copy for each occupation you wish to enter and make photocopies of them. It's acceptable to submit a photocopied SF 171 when applying for jobs. Here are some hints on preparing those masters.

Read the form in its entirety, including the instructions, before you begin completing it. Most of the blocks are self-explanatory, but some deserve special attention.

Item 24, the work experience blocks, can make or break you. This is the section where you are asked to describe your duties, responsibilities, and accomplishments. Duties are the work you perform for your employers, responsibilities involve your independence and judgment, and accomplishments refer to duties performed beyond what is expected of you. If possible, show that you have progressed in each job, and from one job to the next, by taking on more demanding duties or more responsibility.

Note all work experience, including volunteer work related to the position you're applying for. Be specific. You may think everyone knows what a data entry keyer does, but don't stake your future salary on it. If you do not spell out exactly what you did, you may not get credit for any of it. In describing your work experience, use strong verbs, such as performed, rather than weak phrases, such as "was responsible for performing." You also want to use the vocabulary that appears in Handbook X-118 if you are relying on your experience to qualify for an occupation. Whenever possible, quantify your accomplishments. Present yourself in a positive light, but don't overstate your duties.

Type your work descriptions on blank pieces of paper, leaving room for the heading block at the top of the page and the for-agency-use block at the bottom. Then cut both blocks from a photocopy of the SF 171, tape them in the appropriate places on your typed page, and photocopy the new page. The photocopy of your cut-and-paste page, which will not reveal your tape lines, results in a much neater look than trying to fit everything onto the tiny lines provided. Type your name, social security number, the position title, and the vacancy

announcement number on each sheet.

For items 25 through 31, mention all education you have received. Be sure to include seminars, workshops, training programs, and vocational or adult education classes. As mentioned in the Career America discussion, how you specify your major field of study is key in applying for a rating. For some occupations, positions are not limited to a specific major but may require a certain number of course credits. And unless you designate those course credits as your major, your application may be overlooked. As mentioned earlier, for example, accountant/auditor positions may be filled by college graduates with 24-semester hours of accounting credits whose degrees are in related fields such as business administration, finance, or public administration. So if you have 24-semester hours in accounting but majored in finance, list accounting as your major when you apply for a rating as an accountant/auditor.

When you list references for item 36, use names of people who are not related to you who can attest to your working ability. Ministers, doctors, local political leaders, or other character references are of little help in commenting on how you work.

Leave items 1, 48, and 49 blank on your master copy. Item 1 asks what job you are applying for; complete this block each time you apply for a position. Items 48 and 49 are the signature and date certification, and they must be signed in ink on each application. You may wish to leave other items blank on your master copy as well, especially in the section marked Availability. This section asks questions regarding the lowest pay you will accept, the geographic area where you wish to work, and your willingness to travel. You won't be forced to accept a job that pays less than you would like or would require you to move. On the other hand, you could eliminate yourself from consideration for jobs that you might think about under some circumstances if you fail to choose your responses carefully.

Your master copy will save you time because you won't have to start from scratch for every application you submit. But you may need more than one master copy if you're applying for different kinds of jobs. Even if you apply for the same positions in different agencies, you may find that agencies place emphasis on different skills or abilities. You should get a copy of the vacancy announcement for each job you apply for. (See the next section for a discussion of vacancy

announcements.) You need to make sure each application you submit reflects that you meet the qualifications required.

Finally, be sure to proofread your SF 171 carefully before you apply for jobs. And don't forget to fill in the items you left blank on your master copy, including signing and dating the application in ink.

Automated SF 171 software is available. According to OPM, at least two private manufacturers have developed programs that produce acceptable SF 171 applications. These are Federal Research Service, Inc., and the Software Den, developers of "Quick and Easy," and "SF-171 Automated," respectively. Contact retail stores for more information.

Vacancy Announcements and Job Listings

Agencies advertise vacancies with brief statements of job information called vacancy announcements or even briefer job listings. Each announcement or listing includes the job title, occupational series number, grade and pay levels, application opening and closing dates (the period during which applications are accepted), number of vacancies, job location, announcement number, person to contact, phone number, and agency name. Announcements, which may run a couple of pages, also spell out specific job duties, both general and special requirements, and application procedures. They even indicate how important each required skill is.

There are many places to find announcements and job listings, although no one place will have every announcement. Regional OPM offices, Federal Job Information Centers, State Job Service or Employment Security Offices, and personnel offices of Federal agencies are all likely to have some announcements. A more comprehensive list of jobs appears in a commercially published magazine, Federal Career Opportunities Listing. It is available at many libraries and at many of the offices that have the announcements themselves.

Touchscreen and automated computers, available at nearly all Federal Job Information Centers, also provide vacancy information. You can search these listings--called Federal Job Opportunity Listings--by such criteria as occupational series, job title, or geographic location. The computerized lists are updated at least monthly. They are available at State employment service offices and many college placement offices, as well as through the computers at the Job Information

Centers.

Electronic bulletin boards allow you to download job listings on your personal computer. OPM's bulletin board is free (except for the price of the phone call). You can access it by dialing (912) 757-3100 via a modem. There are also six OPM regional bulletin boards.

If you have found only a listing and not the announcement itself, contact the agency advertising the opening, asking that the announcement be sent to you.

For many vacancies, applicants are given only 1 or 2 weeks to submit forms. Be advised that the closing date generally is the day your paperwork must reach the hiring authority, not the date materials must be postmarked by.

Applying to Agencies

Because not all jobs are listed in any one place, you should plan to contact agencies on your own. Each agency's personnel office has the most up-to-date information on its needs and hiring procedures.

You can start your search with a check of U.S. Government listings in the blue pages of the phone book. Call the agencies you think are likely to hire for your occupation. Of course, not every occupation is employed by every Federal agency. On the other hand, you might be surprised at the range of jobs within an agency. For example, you know the Army Corps of Engineers hires engineers, but it employs many other kinds of workers as well. Don't assume that all educators work for the Department of Education or that every librarian is employed by the Library of Congress. Education majors are employed by the Departments of Defense, Interior, Justice, Agriculture, Transportation, and Treasury, among others. Library science majors work in such offices as the Executive Office of the President, Government Printing Office, and Patent and Trademark Office--not to mention the departmental libraries throughout the Government.

Look over the table beginning on page 18. It gives the number of workers in different occupations employed by the largest agencies. These are the places to begin your job hunt for these positions.

Consider visiting Government offices in person to ask about openings. In some Federal buildings, you won't be allowed past the guard desk (though there might be a dropoff box for applications). But in other offices, especially in smaller cities, you might get a chance to meet with someone. Each personal contact you make increases the probability of your getting hired. After all, often the only way you find out about a vacancy is if you're in the right place at the right time.

You might also learn about openings for positions other than the one you're looking for, including clerical and technical jobs. Don't eliminate these outright just because the starting salaries are below those usually offered to college graduates. You may think you're overqualified for some jobs, but they may be good stepping stones to your desired career. Mobility is often easier from within, where you learn more about the agency and have more access to job vacancy information. Many agencies also offer training programs for employees, which can help you gain experience and advance to more responsible positions. Before making a commitment, check out the situation at the agency you are considering working for.

Exceptions, Exceptions

Not all occupations require that you get on an OPM register. In fact, for some occupations, such as those in public safety, you apply directly to the hiring agencies. OPM also grants special authority to some agencies that allows them to hire applicants without prior referral from a register. These special authorities are called delegated case examining, shared case examining, and direct hire authority. There are also excepted positions and agencies that OPM has nothing to do with.

Delegated case examining permits agencies to advertise, evaluate, and hire applicants independently of OPM. In shared case examining, an agency recruits and screens applications before sending them to OPM for final evaluation; OPM then sends a list of the best qualified candidates back to the agency, and the agency makes its selection. Direct hire authority is similar to delegated case examining but applies only to occupations for which shortages exist.

Public safety occupations, which include air traffic controller--deputy U.S. marshal, treasury enforcement agent,

and U.S. park police officer--are filled by delegated examining. You must apply directly to an agency to take a written test for one of these occupations. Delegated examining allows the agencies to develop and give their own tests, as well as evaluate applicants and set hiring standards. Treasury enforcement agents, for example, cannot be older than 37 at the time they are hired. The screening process also includes a series of interviews, a polygraph test, background investigation, and drug testing.

Delegated or shared case examining is used to fill most ACWA group 7 occupations. For public safety and group 7 occupations, there is no national register; evaluation methods vary by region and agency. Some agencies accept applications continually and maintain registers to fill openings as they occur. But most accept applications only when they have vacancies for these positions.

OPM grants direct hire authority to agencies for hiring in occupations for which shortages exist. This authority varies by location, occupation, and agency. To find out which agencies have the authority for which jobs, contact your nearest OPM office or Federal Job Information Center. Ask for a list of agencies that have direct hire authority for your field. You can then contact the personnel offices of the agencies on the list to find out about their application procedures. When you call, ask to speak to someone who handles entry-level hiring in your field. If no phone numbers are given on the list of agencies, check the U.S. Government listings in your phone book's blue pages.

Exceptions to the merit system have been established over the years by law, executive order, and regulation. OPM is not involved in any way with the hiring of people for these occupations and agencies.

The excepted positions include the following:

- * Doctors, dentists, and nurses in the Department of Medicine and Surgery of the Department of Veterans Affairs,
- * Scientists and engineers in the National Science Foundation,
- * Attorneys,
- * Chaplains,

- * Teachers and many other workers overseas,
- * Drug enforcement agents doing undercover work,
- * Part-time workers in isolated areas,
- * Many seasonal workers.

The excepted agencies include such large, well known ones as the Central Intelligence Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Tennessee Valley Authority, as well as several lesser known or smaller agencies. In some agencies, certain occupations are excepted, such as health occupations in the Department of Veterans Affairs and foreign service occupations in the Department of State. Excepted agencies set their own hiring procedures. The names and addresses of some excepted agencies are listed in the "For More Information" section at the end of this article.

Don't Give Up

Federal hiring procedures are constantly changing. but each agency's personnel office should have the most up-to-date information. If there is a best way to look for a Government job, it is to try every method you can for getting a foot in the door. Know your own qualifications and make sure you meet the requirements for getting hired. Visit as many agencies as you can and find out if they're hiring. Leave copies of your SF 171 if possible, even if they're not accepting applications for a specific opening. Keep adapting your strategies to the ones that seem to work best.

And never underestimate the power of your personal network. Ask family members and friends about opportunities that crop up in their offices. Talk to people you know who work for the Government and find out what they do. Meet with people who may have lots of contacts, such as your college professors, and talk to the people they know. Networking is an important tool in the vast Federal work force.

Above all, be flexible. No matter where you look for a job, you can expect setbacks along the way. You're guaranteed to get the runaround more than once, but don't get discouraged. If you are qualified, your persistence will pay off.

For More Information

Reading this article is just the start of your Federal job hunt. Now you're ready to move on. Below is a list of resources to provide you with specific information about tests, job vacancies, and application procedures.

OPM publishes the Federal Career Director, containing general employment and special hiring program information, profiles of Federal agencies, and an index of college majors. You can find the Directory at libraries, OPM offices, and Federal Job Information centers. OPM also publishes brochures on topics ranging from the Federal Cooperative Education Program to the summer Employment Program. To receive them, write

OPM
Career Entry Group
1900 E Street NW.
Washington, DC 20415

To receive Qualifications Information Statements for ACWA positions and information about job vacancies, special hiring programs, salaries, and benefits, call the Career America Connection, (912) 757-3000. You can call this automated message service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Material requested by telephone is usually mailed within 24 hours. Or, write

Office of Personnel Management
Staffing Service Center
P.O. Box 9800
Macon, GA 31298-2699

You can also visit any OPM office or Federal Job Information Center.

If you live in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area, call the Washington Area Service Center's automated phone system at (202) 606-2700 for testing schedules and application materials. The Office of Washington Examining Services schedules most tests on a walk-in basis, and the automated message gives the schedule. You can also follow the instructions on the message to receive the sample questions and Form B for the group for which you would like to take a test.

For exams in groups 1 and 2, and for exams in all groups in Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands,

contact the OPM office in those regions for information and applications. Positions are filled locally, and you may have to file separate applications in each area you want to work.

Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD) numbers are also available in each region. They are listed on information sheets available through OPM's Federal Job Information Centers.

If you have a personal computer, modem, communications software, and telephone line, you can access the Federal Job Opportunities Bulletin Board, (912) 757-3100. Information about examinations currently open and vacancy announcements nationwide can be scanned on line or downloaded to your computer. Although not as comprehensive, OPM regional bulletin boards are available in six areas. They, are

(202) 606-1113 Washington, DC, area
(404) 730-2370 Southeastern States
(215) 580-2216 Northeastern States
(313) 226-4423 North Central States
(214) 767-0316 Mountain and Southwestern States
(818) 575-6521 Western States

Many agencies also publish information about themselves and occupations that are especially important to them. Contact agencies directly to receive these brochures.

The Largest Agencies

The following executive departments and independent agencies employ the great majority of Federal workers.

Agriculture Department
Office of Personnel, Room SM-7
AG PROMENADE
12th Street and Independence Avenue SW.
Washington, DC 20250-9650

Air Force Department
NCR-SPTGDPC, CPO 1100
The Pentagon. Room 5E871
Washington, DC 20330

Army Department
Hoffman Civilian Personnel Office
Hoffman Building II, Room 1S39
200 Stovall Street

Attention: ANCP-HPR
Alexandria, VA 22332-0800

Commerce Department
Office of the Secretary
14th Street and Constitution Avenue NW.
Room 5001
Washington, DC 20230

Defense Logistics Agency
Staff Director, Civilian Personnel
Cameron Station
Alexandria, VA 22304-6100

Education Department
Personnel Office, Room 1156
400 Maryland Avenue SW.
Mail Box 4645
Washington, DC 20202

Energy Department
Office of Personnel
Forrestal Employment Branch AD114.2
1000 Independence Avenue SW.
Washington, DC 20585

Environmental Protection Agency
401 M Street SW.
Washington, DC 20460

Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
Room G-4000
550 17th Street NW.
Washington, DC 20429-9990

General Services Administration
18th and F Streets NW.
Washington, DC 20405

Health and Human Services Department
Office of the Secretary Personnel Office
Cohen Building, Room 1037
330 Independence Avenue SW.
Washington, DC 20201

Housing and Urban Development Department
Employment Office
Room 2258
451 7th Street SW.

Washington, DC 20410

Interior Department
Personnel Office
Office of the Secretary
Room 5456
1849 C Street NW.
Washington, DC 20240

Labor Department
Frances Perkins Building
Room C5516
200 Constitution Avenue NW.
Washington, DC 20210

Justice Department
Personnel Office
Room 603
633 Indiana Avenue NW.
Washington, DC 20531

National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Room 5017 FOB6
400 Maryland Avenue SW.
Washington, DC 20546

Navy Department
Secretariat/Hq. Civilian
Civilian Personnel Branch
Pentagon Division, Room 4D-434
Washington, DC 20350-1000

Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street NW.
Room 1447
Washington, DC 20415

Small Business Administration
Personnel Office
409 Third Street, SW., Suite 4200
Washington, DC. 20416

Smithsonian Institution
955 L'Enfant Plaza, SW., Suite 2100
Washington, DC 20560

State Department
(Civil Service positions)
Employment Information Office

Room 2819
22nd and D Streets NW.
Washington, DC 20520

Transportation Department
Central Employment Information M-18.1
Room 9113
400 7th Street SW.
Washington, DC 20590

Treasury Department
Departmental Offices
Personnel Resources, Room 1318
Main Treasury Building
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW.
Washington, DC 20220

Veterans affairs Department
810 Vermont Avenue NW.
Washington, DC 20420

Excepted Agencies

The following is a partial list of excepted agencies and
excepted occupations within agencies.

Agency for International Development
2401 E Street NW.
Room 1127
Washington, DC 20523

Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System
20th Street and Constitution Avenue NW.
Washington, DC 20551

Central Intelligence Agency
Office of Personnel
P.O. Box 12727
Arlington, VA 22209-8727

Defense Intelligence Agency
Civilian Staffing Operations
Division (DPH-2)
3100 Clarendon Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22201-5322

Department of Veterans Affairs

(Health care occupations)

Veterans Health Services and Research Administration
Recruitment and Examining Division (O54E)
810 Vermont Avenue NW.
Washington, DC 20420

Federal Bureau of Investigation
10th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue NW.
Washington, DC 20535

National Security Agency
9800 Savage Road
Fort Meade, MD 20755-6000
Attention: M352

Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Office of Personnel
Washington, DC 20555

Postal Rate Commission
Administrative Office, Suite 300
1333 H Street NW.
Washington, DC 20268-0001

Tennessee Valley Authority
Employment Services, ET 5C 50P-K
400 West Summit Hill Drive
Knoxville, TN 37902

State Department
(Foreign Service positions)
Recruitment Division
P.O. Box 9317
Rosslyn Station
Arlington, VA 22209

The Other Branches of the Federal Government

The Judicial Branch
(except the Administrative Office of the United States Courts
and the United States Claims Court)
Personnel Office
United States Supreme Court Building
One First Street NE.
Washington, DC 20543

The Legislative Branch

(including senators' and representatives' offices, Library of Congress, and the Capitol) For inquiries about employment at the House, Senate, or Capitol, contact either the House or Senate.

U.S. House of Representatives
Placement Office
Washington, DC 20515

U.S. Senate
Placement Office
SH-142B Hart Building
Washington, DC 20510

General Accounting Office
Office of Recruitment
Room 1050
441 G Street NW.
Washington, DC 20548

The Library of Congress
Employment Office, LM-107
James Madison Memorial Building
101 Independence Avenue SE.
Washington, DC 20540

Who Is Being Hired by the Federal Government -- The Word from OPM

The kinds of workers hired by the Federal Government reflect the kind of work it has to do. According to Civil Service 2000, developed for the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Federal jobs are much more likely to be white-collar and professional/administrative than those in the economy as a whole.

Among Federal workers, the share of professional, administrative, technical, and management-related jobs is about 48 percent, nearly twice the rate for the labor force as a whole. Blue-collar jobs make up only about 19 percent of the Federal work force, compared to 28 percent for the country as a whole. And marketing and sales jobs, which account for more than 10 percent of the national labor force, are almost entirely missing from the Federal job mix, making up a minuscule one-half of 1 percent.

Because of their job requirements, Federal workers have higher language and math skills, on average, than does the

labor force as a whole. For example, some 16 percent of all Federal jobs--more than three times the national rate--require employees to read scientific or technical journals, financial reports, legal documents, or other materials. Algebra, statistics, trigonometry, and calculus are also required for a large proportion of Federal jobs. About 31 percent of Federal workers are college graduates, compared with less than 25 percent for the labor force as a whole.

The majority of Federal workers are in the competitive service, but large numbers are in excepted agencies or occupations, as explained in the article, and even larger numbers work for the Postal Service. (See chart 1.) These workers are employed throughout the country and around the world, although about 12 percent of the jobs are in or near the Capital.

Competition for jobs is extremely keen. Best bets for Federal employment are found among the hard sciences, financial management, health occupations, and some engineering specialties. Chart 3 shows which agencies hired the largest numbers of college graduates in fiscal 1992. OChart, on page 40, shows the occupations of the college graduates hired.

In general, the Federal Government does very little hiring at salaries above \$40,000. In 1987, for example, only 3,000 full-time workers were hired at that level. In contrast, 10 percent of the people in the entry-level professional and administrative positions (at grades GS-5 through GS-8) were new hires that year.

Over the next decade, Federal employment, especially in the Defense Department, may decline. Nevertheless, the number of workers in some occupations will increase. Likely areas of growth are health: law: contract, procurement, and management: and Internal Revenue Service agent.

Chart 1.

Distribution of Federal Civilian Employment by Service,
January 1993

Chart 2.

Distribution of Federal Civilian Employment by Geographic Area,
January 1993

