

# Federal Careers



**AN INTRODUCTION**

# Why work for the Federal Government?



- Interesting Work.
- Immediate Responsibility and Real-World Experience.
- Serve the Public Good.
- Develop Expertise Highly Valued in the Private Sector.
- Job Security and Benefits.
  - Salary Range (Washington, DC): \$62,000-155,500
  - Student Loan Forgiveness: up to \$10,000 per year
    - ✦ also qualify for Public Service Loan Forgiveness (*see Equal Justice Works website for details*)
  - Worklife Programs, including flexible work options, e.g., telecommuting

# Attorney Hiring



- Attorney jobs are in the **Excepted Service**, typically under an appointment called "Schedule A".
  - Consequently, agencies may hire applicants for attorney positions without following the civil service hiring procedures and qualification standards normally used for competitive service jobs.
- **Projected Attorney Hiring, 2010-12**
  - Department of Justice: 2,700
  - Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) 389
  - Department of Treasury 339
  - Department of Homeland Security 745
  - Department of Veterans Affairs 925
  - Securities and Exchange Commission 441
  - Federal Trade Commission 201

# Attorney Roles



- **LITIGATION – Trial Attorney**
  - Department of Justice
  - Agencies with “independent litigating authority”, e.g., the FTC, SEC, FDIC, Department of Labor, NLRB, and special boards such as Surface Transportation Board
  - The majority of agencies have “coordinate jurisdiction” with the DOJ, meaning that DOJ attorneys initiate all lawsuits and handle any depositions and oral arguments, while the agency attorneys draft the legal papers and provide the subject-matter expertise.
- **REGULATORY/ADVISORY – Attorney-Advisor & General Attorney**
  - Rendering legal advice and services with respect to questions, regulations, practices, or other matters falling within the purview of a Federal Government agency (this may include conducting investigation to obtain evidentiary data and recommending an agency course of action); preparing interpretative and administrative orders, rules, or regulations to give effect to the provisions of governing statutes or other requirements of law.
- **TRANSACTIONAL – Attorney-Advisor & General Attorney**
  - Drafting, negotiating, or examining contracts or other legal documents required by the agency's activities.

# Competitive Service Hiring



- **There are many jobs that are filled by attorneys but are not classified as attorney positions.**
  - ✦ Policy Analyst
  - ✦ Mediator
  - ✦ Contract Specialist
  - ✦ Management and Program Analyst
  - ✦ Ethics Compliance Analyst
  - ✦ Compliance Specialist
  - ✦ Public/Government Relations Specialist
  - ✦ Labor Liaison
  - ✦ Paralegal Specialist

These employees are hired through what is known as the “competitive service,” for which the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) posts open positions on [USAJobs.gov](https://www.usajobs.gov) and applicants compete in a merit system organized by OPM for those jobs.

## Competitive Service Legal Positions . . .



- Paralegal Specialist
- Legal Assistant
- Tax Law Specialist
- Claims Assistance and Examining
  - Dept. of Labor (1,330; 2010-12 projected hires 360)
  - Dept. of Veterans Affairs (8,800; 2010-12 projected hires: 4,200)
  - Social Security Administration (1,800; 2010-12 projected hires: 3,500)
- Hearings and Appeals Specialist

# What Can You Do With a JD?

## Part I . . .



- **0341 – Administrative Officer Series**
  - Administrative Officer
    - ✦ Assist in monitoring the business and financial aspect of federal grants, assist in the solicitation, award, administration, and termination of federal contracts, assist in conducting studies of work processes and administrative procedures, identify, analyze, and recommend solutions to problems found in work process and procedures. (*definition from HHS*)
- **0343 – Management and Program Analysis Series**
  - Generally speaking, an analyst gathers, records, and analyzes data that pertains to a specific agency, program, or project. They may track policy development or watch legislative movement within a particular field. They compile the information and use it as an advisory tool to counsel management on the effectiveness of operations, programs, and policies.
    - ✦ Management Analyst
    - ✦ Program Analyst
    - ✦ Policy Analyst

# What Can You Do With a JD?

## Part II . . .



- 1100 – Business and Industry Group
  - Contract Specialist
    - ✦ Contract Specialists execute and administer contracts for the procurement of supplies, services, construction, or research and development. Tasks involve the use of formal advertising or negotiation methods, evaluation of contract price/cost proposals, administration or termination and close-out of contracts, and the development of policies and procedures for contracting/procurement work.
      - <http://www.nab.usace.army.mil/Employment/ct-specialist.htm>
      - <http://ncip.nssc.nasa.gov/>
    - Procurement Analyst
    - Contract Negotiator
    - Contract Termination Specialist
  - Industrial Property Management Specialists
  - Purchasing Agent
  - Financial Analyst
  - Insurance Examiner
  - Loan Specialist
  - Realty Specialist/Officer
  - Grant Specialist



# What Else Can You Do With a JD?

## Part III. . .



- **0200 – Human Resources Management Group**
  - Mediator
  - Labor Management Relations Specialist/Examiner
  - Equal Employment Manager
  
- **0300 – General, Administrative, Clerical, and Office Services Group (*catch-all group*)**
  - Policy Analyst
  - Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Specialist
  - Public/Government Relations Specialist
  - Labor Liaison
  
- **0500 – Accounting and Budget Group**
  - Tax Specialist
  - Budget Analyst

# What Else Can You Do With a JD?

## Part IV . . .

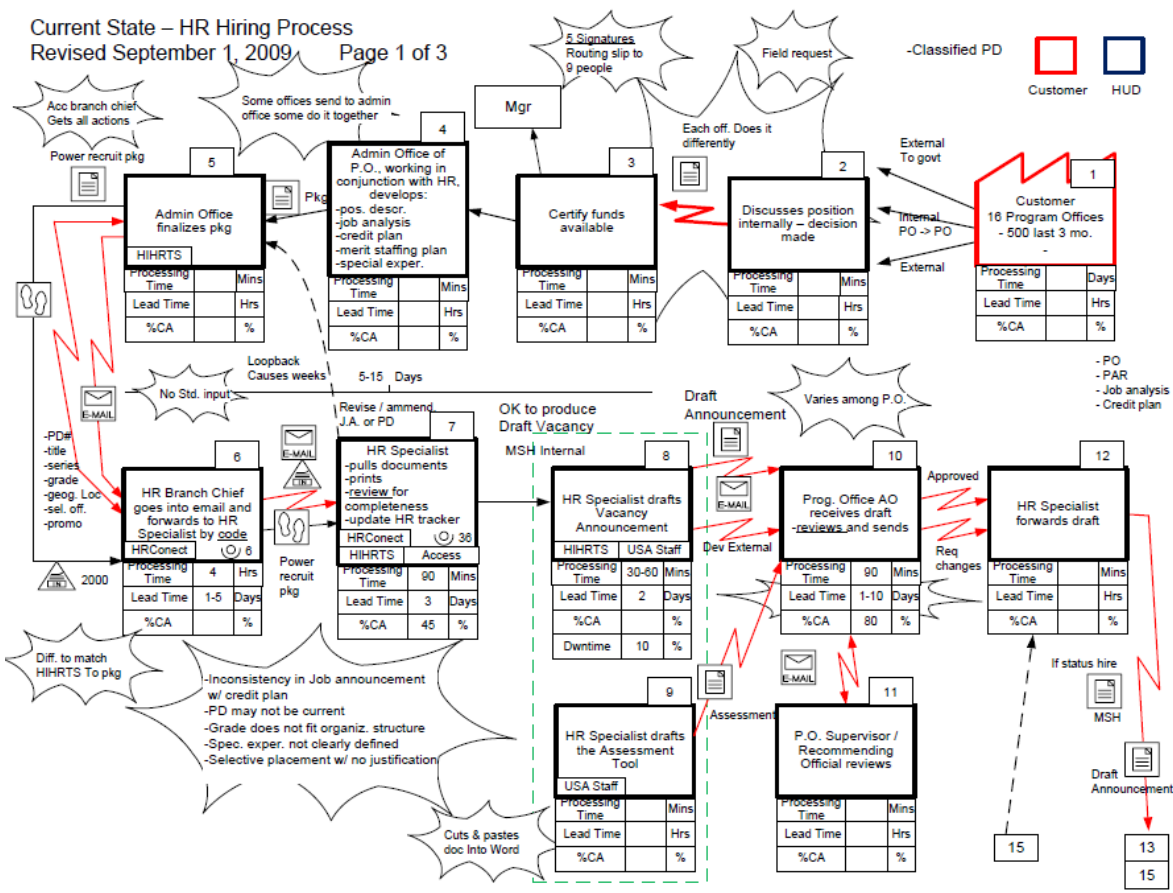


- **1800 – Inspection, Investigation, Enforcement, and Compliance Group**
  - Compliance Specialist/Analyst
  - Equal Opportunity Investigator/Specialist
  - Ethics Compliance Analyst
  - Wage & Hour Compliance Investigator/Specialist
  - Investigator
  - Criminal Investigator
  - Import Specialist
  - Trade Specialist
  - Special Agent

# HUD Hiring Process

A terrifying look at the dysfunctional federal competitive service hiring process.

15 steps just to get a job posted.



# HUD Hiring Process

## Bureaucracy Run Amok!

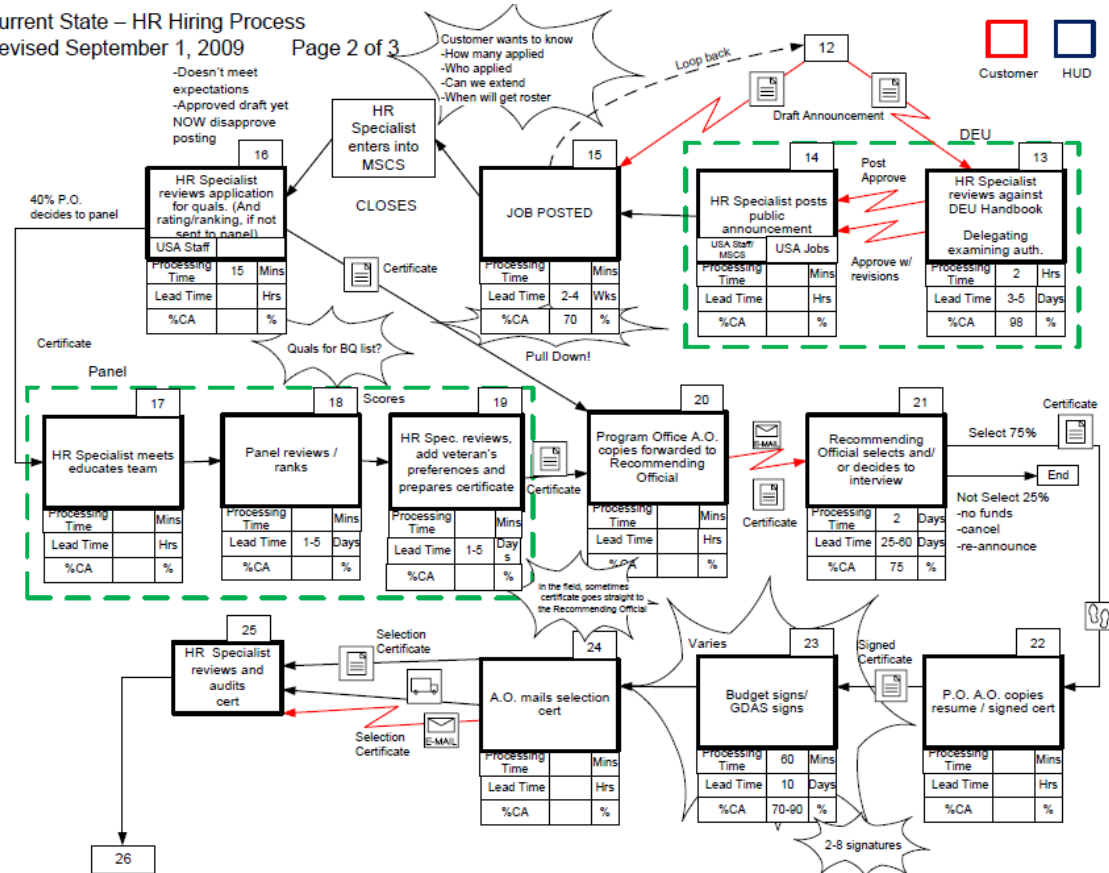
### Step 18:

Panel of experts reviews & ranks candidates.

### Step 19:

Veteran's Preferences

Current State – HR Hiring Process  
Revised September 1, 2009



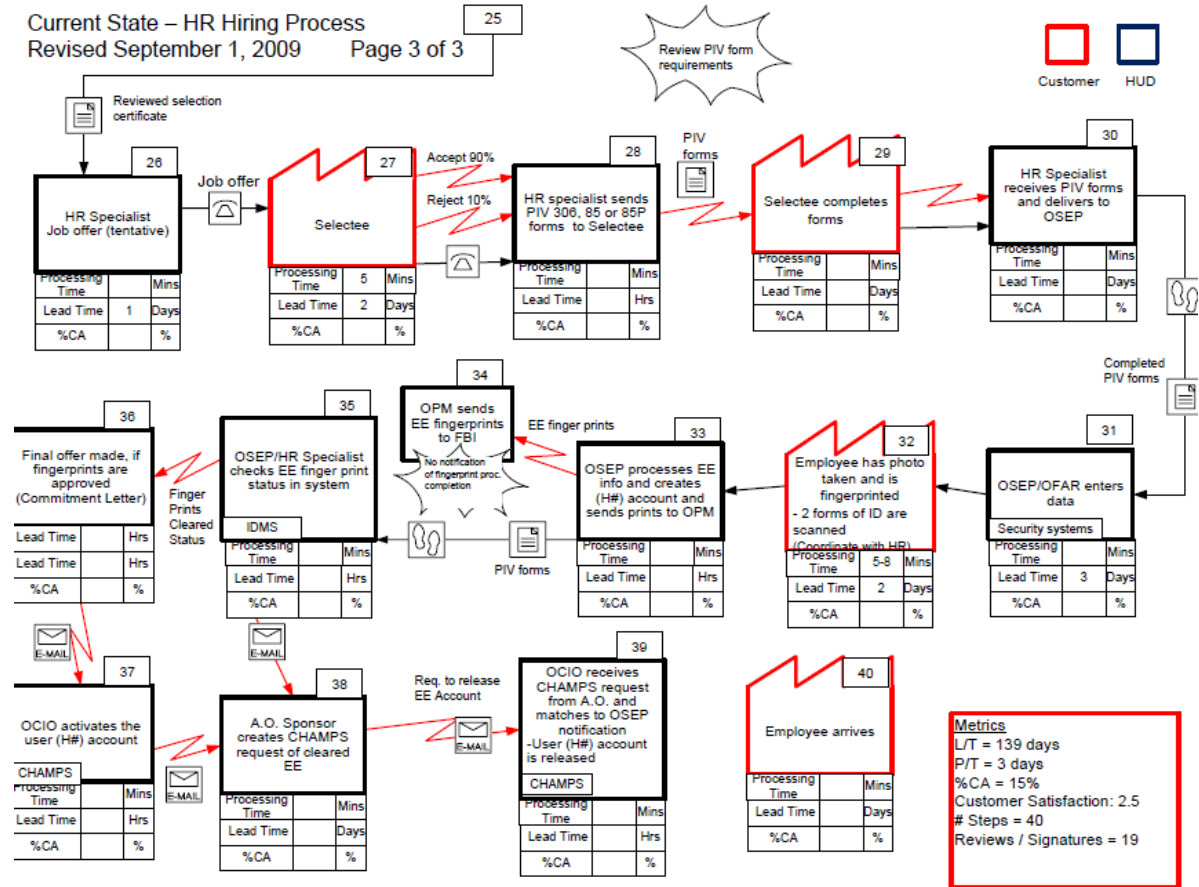
# HUD Hiring Process

Process took 139 days

40 Steps

19 required signatures

Current State – HR Hiring Process  
Revised September 1, 2009 Page 3 of 3



# Federal Hiring Reform



## **THE WHITE HOUSE**

*Office of the Press Secretary*

For Immediate Release May 11, 2010

May 11, 2010

## **MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

**SUBJECT: Improving the Federal Recruitment and Hiring Process**

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By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including section 3301 of title 5, United States Code, I hereby direct the following:

Section 1. Directions to Agencies. Agency heads shall take the following actions no later than November 1, 2010:

(a) consistent with merit system principles and other requirements of title 5, United States Code, and subject to guidance to be issued by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), adopt hiring procedures that:

- (1) eliminate any requirement that applicants respond to essay-style questions when submitting their initial application materials for any Federal job;
- (2) allow individuals to apply for Federal employment by submitting resumes and cover letters or completing simple, plain language applications, and assess applicants using valid, reliable tools; and
- (3) provide for selection from among a larger number of qualified applicants by using the "category rating" approach (as authorized by section 3319 of title 5, United States Code), rather than the "rule of 3" approach, under which managers may only select from among the three highest scoring applicants . . .

# Reform in Action



Over the summer, HUD instituted the hiring reforms requested by President Obama including the elimination of KSAs, the introduction of multiple choice questionnaire, and dispensing with the “Rule of 3” in favor of “category rating”, cutting its hiring time in half.

*“How HUD cut its hiring time in half”*, Federal Times, August 15, 2010

# Excepted Service



- Excepted service is the only way to bypass this Kafkaesque process.
  - Excepted service agencies
  - Schedule A
  - Schedule B
  - “Mission Critical Hiring Authority”
    - ✦ OPM will permit an agency with delegated examining authority under 5 U.S.C. 1104(a)(2) to use direct-hire authority under 5 U.S.C. 3304(a)(3) for a permanent or nonpermanent position or group of positions in the competitive service at GS-15 (or equivalent) and below, if OPM determines that there is either a severe shortage of candidates or a critical hiring need for such positions.
      - <http://www.nab.usace.army.mil/Employment/ct-specialist.htm>



# Excepted Service Agencies



- Federal Courts
- USAID, Peace Corps and US Foreign Service
- Library of Congress
- USPTO
- CIA, NSA, FBI, FEMA, and other intelligence/security agencies
- General Services Administration
- Federal Reserve System
  - ✦ <http://www.federalreserve.gov/careers/attorney.htm>
- Select agencies in the Energy, Transportation & Agriculture sectors
- Complete list at <http://www.usajobs.gov/ei/exceptedservice.asp>

# Excepted Service Appointing Authorities



## “Schedule A”

- OPM cannot develop qualification standards or examinations for attorney jobs. Thus agencies use the Schedule A exception to hire attorneys.
- Also used to hire persons with disabilities.

## “Schedule B”

- Student Programs:
  - Student Temporary Employment Program
  - Student Career Experience Program
  - Federal Career Intern Program
    - Emerging Leaders Program
  - Fellowships, Scholarships, and Similar Programs
    - Administrative Fellows Program
    - Presidential Management Fellows Program

# How to Get Hired



**ATTORNEY  
LAW CLERK  
SUMMER LAW CLERK  
LEGAL INTERN**

# Attorney Hiring



- Virtually all federal agencies hire their entry-level attorneys pursuant to Legal Honors Programs.
  - Highly competitive.
    - ✦ Must have demonstrated commitment to agency's mission/work.
    - ✦ Prior work/internship experience is the most important factor – not grades or school.
    - ✦ Successful candidates usually participated in the agency's Summer Honors Program (paid) as a 1L or 2L. *However, prior internship experience with the agency generally guarantees an interview.*
    - Example: Federal Trade Commission, Bureau of Competition
      - [http://www.ftc.gov/bc/recruit/summer\\_program.shtm](http://www.ftc.gov/bc/recruit/summer_program.shtm)
      - <http://www.ftc.gov/bc/recruit/ap-faqs.shtm>

# Government Honors & Internship Handbook



- University of Arizona Government Honors & Internship Handbook
  - <https://www.law.arizona.edu/career/honorshandbook.cfm>
  - Honors Programs (3Ls; JLCs)
    - Entry level attorney positions
    - Application deadlines in fall
  - “Summer Law Clerk” ~ “Summer Honors” ~ “Summer Associate” ~ “Summer Legal Intern” Programs (1Ls; 2Ls)
    - Paid summer employment
      - *At many agencies, there is an understanding that an offer for post-graduate employment (“advance commitment”) will be made if performance is outstanding.*
    - Application deadlines in fall
  - Volunteer Legal Internship Programs
    - Summer, Fall & Spring

# Volunteer Legal Internships: The Way to Go!



- Every agency has a volunteer legal internship program for summer, fall and spring.
  - University of Arizona Government Honors & Internship Handbook 2010-2011
    - <https://www.law.arizona.edu/career/honorshandbook.cfm>
  - Department of Justice – 1800 volunteer internships!
    - ✦ <http://www.justice.gov/oarm/arm/int/internsum11.htm>
  - Department of Transportation, OGC
    - ✦ <http://www.dot.gov/ost/ogc/org/interns.html>
  - Department of Homeland Security
    - ✦ [http://www.dhs.gov/xabout/careers/gc\\_1192223920159.shtm](http://www.dhs.gov/xabout/careers/gc_1192223920159.shtm)
  - Securities & Exchange Commission
    - ✦ [http://www.sec.gov/jobs/jobs\\_students.shtml#lsop](http://www.sec.gov/jobs/jobs_students.shtml#lsop)

# Where to Find Legal & Nonlegal Internships



- Agency Websites
  - <http://hr.commerce.gov/careers/studentcareeropportunities/index.htm>
- University of Arizona Government Honors & Internship Handbook
  - <http://www.usajobs.gov/studentjobs/>
- University of Arizona Public Policy Handbook
  - <http://www.law.arizona.edu/career/PublicPolicy10-11/LoginForm.cfm>
    - ✦ Login: global; Password: warming
- PSLawNet.org
  - ✦ <http://www.pslawnet.org/>
- Learn more about the federal government:
  - US Government Manual
    - ✦ <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/gmanual/browse-gm-09.html>
  - The Plum Book
    - ✦ <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/plumbok/2008/index.html>
  - LSU's Federal Agency Directory
    - ✦ <http://www.lib.lsu.edu/gov/index.html>
  - FedScope
    - ✦ [www.fedscope.opm.gov](http://www.fedscope.opm.gov)
  - Partnership for Public Service
    - ✦ <http://www.ourpublicservice.org/OPS/>
    - ✦ <http://data.bestplacestowork.org/bptw/index>

# Other Routes to an Attorney Position



- **Networking**
  - Attorney hiring is excepted service! Like anywhere else, attorneys get hired into the federal government because they know someone who walks their resume down the hall.
- [www.USAJOBS.gov](http://www.USAJOBS.gov)
  - Law Clerk
    - ✦ Entry-level attorney positions with 8-14 months to pass the bar.
  - Attorney (*less than 20% of attorney jobs are posted on usajobs.gov*)
    - ✦ Entry level is GS-11 or GS-12; requires bar admission (*any jurisdiction*)
      - Trial Attorney
      - Attorney-Advisor
      - General Attorney
- **Fellowship Programs/Career Intern Programs**
  - Can occasionally lead to an attorney position.



# How to Get Hired



## **COMPETITIVE SERVICE POSITIONS**

# Student Educational Employment Program



- **STEP (Student Temporary Employment Program)**
  - STEP provides **paid** part-time federal jobs that can last as little as one summer or as long as the duration of your academic career. The work does not have to be related to your field of study.
    - ✦ *Not required to be posted on USAJOBS.gov*
- **SCEP (Student Career Experience Program)**
  - SCEP provides **paid (with federal benefits)** work experience which is directly related to your academic program and career goals.
  - If you successfully complete 640 hours of work within the SCEP program, **you are eligible to be hired to a permanent position without going through the traditional hiring process.**
    - ✦ Recent additions to the program allow agencies to waive up to half of the required 640 hours for students with certain job-related experience acquired in a structured work-study program, active duty military service or if you have exceptional job performance and academic excellence (3.5 GPA out of a 4.0 scale, standing in the top 10% of the graduating class and/or induction into a nationally recognized scholastic honors society) while enrolled in the program.
    - ✦ *Not required to be posted on USAJOBS.gov*

# Federal Career Intern Program (FCIP)



- The FCIP is a two year entry level appointment designed to bring talented people into the federal government through a streamlined process.
- Agencies design their own FCIP but all FCIP participants receive formal training. After two years, federal career interns can become permanent civil service employees.
- No set hiring schedule . . . need based. Sometimes agencies use FCIP to hire for specific entry-level positions.
- Not required to be posted on USAJOBS.gov.



# Federal Career Intern Program

Two members of UB Law's Class of 2010 were hired as Regulatory Counsel at the FDA through the FCIP.



## SPECIAL RECRUITMENT NOTICE FEDERAL CAREER INTERN PROGRAM A 2-YEAR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Position Title: Regulatory Counsel Announcement Number: FCIP-CTP-03	Grade: GS-301-9 (with promotion potential to GS-11) Salary: \$51,630 - \$67,114
Apply By: May 14, 2010	Location: Rockville, MD (1 or more vacancies)
Center/Office	The Center for Tobacco Products (CTP), Office of Regulations (Compliance)
Federal Career Intern Program	<p>THE FEDERAL CAREER INTERN PROGRAM (FCIP) is a 2-year entry-level, full-time employment and career development training program in the excepted service, designed to prepare individuals for a career in public service. Upon successful completion of the program, FCIP participants may receive a permanent, full-time position with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FCIP is open to students and non-students. You do NOT have to be a student to participate in the FCIP. Refer to job postings for required qualifications.</li> <li>FCIP participants are eligible for <u>federal benefits</u>.</li> </ol> <p>For additional information on FCIP visit <a href="http://www.cdm.gov/careerintern/QandAof12-20-00.asp">www.cdm.gov/careerintern/QandAof12-20-00.asp</a>.</p>
How to Apply	<p>Email your resume to <a href="mailto:angela.ho-chen@fda.hhs.gov">angela.ho-chen@fda.hhs.gov</a>, please include the above Position Title and Announcement Number in the subject line of your email. Veterans receive <u>preference</u> in selection.</p> <p><b>IMPORTANT:</b> You must provide a copy of your resume by email by <b>12:00 p.m. Eastern Time on May 14, 2010</b> to receive consideration for this opportunity.</p>
Position Overview and Duties	As a Federal Career Intern you will participate in developmental assignments designed to train individuals for the full performance level. The primary duties of a Regulatory Counsel include implementation of new policies, systems, procedures, and organizational structures, as directed by the supervisor; reviewing and evaluating evidence for legal and administrative action recommendations and recalls; coordinating and monitoring all administrative and legal aspects of reviews in support of case development and legal and administrative actions; interpreting and evaluating CTP's regulatory efforts; and as directed, establishes regulatory policy and recommends policy to senior Regulatory Counsels and to Center management.
Qualifications	<p><b>QUALIFICATIONS:</b> To be considered for this position, you must meet the minimum qualifications within 60 days of the announcement closing date.</p> <p><b>Minimum qualifications:</b></p> <p>GS-09: One year of specialized experience equivalent to the GS-07 grade; OR Master's or equivalent graduate degree; OR 2 full years of progressively higher level graduate education leading to a master's or equivalent degree; OR A combination of qualifying education and experience as noted above.</p>
Veterans' Preference	<p>You may be eligible for veterans' preference if you served on active duty in the United States military and were separated under honorable or general conditions. FDA adjudicates veteran preference claims based on the documentation you submit (e.g., DD-214) with your resume.</p> <p><b>Code - Description of Preference Category</b></p> <p>CPS - Compensable preference based on a service-connected disability of 30% or more</p> <p>CP - Compensable preference based on a service-connected disability of 10% or more, but less than 30%</p> <p>XP - Other preference granted to recipients of the Purple Heart, persons with a non-compensable service-connected disability (less than 10%), widow/widower or mother of a deceased veteran, or spouse or mother of a disabled veteran.</p> <p>TP - Preference (i.e., other types of qualifying military service)</p> <p>NV - Non-veteran</p> <p>Note: Federal agencies must provide reasonable accommodation to applicants with disabilities where appropriate. Applicants requiring reasonable accommodation for any part of the application and hiring process should contact the hiring agency directly. Determinations on requests for reasonable accommodation will be made on a case-by-case basis.</p>
Assistance	Contact Angela Ho-Chen at <a href="mailto:angela.ho-chen@fda.hhs.gov">angela.ho-chen@fda.hhs.gov</a> (301) 796-5499 or Emil Wang at <a href="mailto:emil.wang@fda.hhs.gov">emil.wang@fda.hhs.gov</a> (301) 796-9244.

# Examples of Federal Career Internship Programs



- HHS “Emerging Leaders Program”
  - ✦ <http://hhsu.learning.hhs.gov/elp/>
- US Department of Agriculture
  - ✦ <http://www.dm.usda.gov/employ/CareerInternWebSite.htm>
- Internal Revenue Service
  - ✦ <http://jobs.irs.gov/student/student-positions.html>
- Defense Logistics Agency
  - ✦ <http://www.hr.dla.mil/prospective/interns/>
- Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
  - ✦ <http://www.fdic.gov/about/jobs/intern/>

# Agencies that have used FCIP



- Dept. of Agriculture
- Dept. of Commerce
- Dept of Health and Human Services
- Dept. of Energy
- Dept. of Justice
- Dept of Interior/USGS
- Dept of Transportation
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Dept. of Housing Development
- Foreign Agricultural Service
- National Agricultural Statistics Service
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Environmental Management
- Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms
- Executive Office for US Attorneys
- Bureau of Labor Statistics
- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Reclamation
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration
- National Labor Relations Board
- Defense Logistics Agency
- United States Coast Guard
- Mine Safety and Health Administration
- Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
- Internal Revenue Service
- Social Security Administration

# Fellowship Programs



- **Presidential Management Fellows Program**
  - The PMF Program is a prestigious federal government fellowship sponsored by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) for graduate students from various academic disciplines who expect to graduate during in the 2010-2011 academic year and who seek a two-year paid fellowship with one or more federal government agencies.
  - Initial PMF appointments are at the GS-9 to GS-12 level depending on qualifications. After successful completion of the second year, PMFs are eligible for conversion to a permanent federal civil service position.
  - Over 100 government organizations participate in the PMF program.
  - Application period opens in early October.
  - <https://www.pmf.opm.gov/HProgramOverview.aspx>
- **National Institutes of Health “Administrative Fellows Program”**
  - ✦ <http://www.jobs.nih.gov/afp/default.htm>

# USAJOBS.gov ~ Federal Resumes



- Only apply for jobs for which you are qualified!
- Follow the instructions.
- Draft federalized resume for that position.
  - Must have all the information requested including social security number.
  - Mirror the language of the announcement.
    - ✦ Identify every skill & ability sought.
  - State your accomplishments.
  - Details, details, details.
  - Look at sample resumes.



# Qualities of Successful Candidates



- **Commitment**

- “It isn’t normal to know what we want. It is a rare and difficult psychological achievement.” ~ Abraham Maslow
  - ✦ You must commit to something anyway – Today!

- **Work Ethic**

- “I will not say with Lord Hale, that "The Law will admit of no rival" ...but I will say that it is a jealous mistress, and requires a long and constant courtship. It is not to be won by trifling favors, but by lavish homage.” ~ Joseph Story

- **Emotional Intelligence**

- Self-awareness – the ability to read one's emotions and recognize their impact
- Self-management – involves controlling one's emotions and impulses and adapting to changing circumstances
- Social awareness – the ability to sense, understand, and react to others' emotions while comprehending social networks
- Relationship management – the ability to inspire, influence, and develop others while managing conflict

- **Academic/Professional Achievement**

- Conventional Wisdom: “Past performance predicts future behavior.”



## Which Path is Right for You?

*Only you can decide.*

- Why did you go to law school?
- What is your personality type?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What do you enjoy?
- Who do you envy?
- What are your long-term goals?
- How hard are you willing to work to get there?
- How important is work/life balance?