EVERYTHING YOU'VE EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR NSEP SERVICE OPPORTUN!TY

YOUR QUESTIONS, ANSWERED.
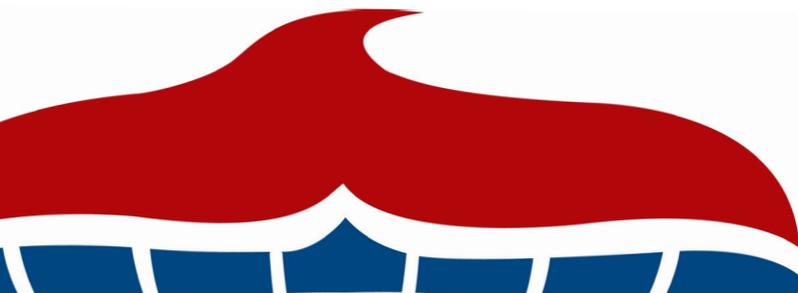
Congrats!
You went Abro
You had an Aw

WHAT'S NEXT?

Now it's time to start thinking about how you plan on making use of your NSEP service opportunity.

All Boren awardees sign a Service Agreement stating that they will work to help uphold national security for a certain period after they complete their Boren-funded degree program. We have developed a how-to guidebook to help you understand the options available to you and to assist you in successfully completing your service requirement.

This guidebook aims to answer frequently asked questions about what NSEP requires of awardees, as well as to provide you with career-building resources. As such, it will cover qualifying jobs, deadlines, NSEPnet, hiring authorities, important vocab, and much more! If you have any questions or concerns that aren't covered inside, you can contact our office at nsep@nsep.gov for help.

We look forward to working with you. Happy job searching!

Sincerely,
The NSEP office

oad!

vesome Time!

what kinds of jobs qualify for service credit?

As a post-2008 awardee, the terms and conditions of your NSEP award stipulate that your search for jobs in fulfillment of your service opportunity take place in three tiers. These are:

1 four priority agencies (DoD, DHS, DoS, and the Intelligence Community)

2 federal positions with national security responsibilities

3 positions in education related to your NSEP-funded study

in des cen ding order of priority

To receive service credit for one of the lower tiers, you will have to show a good-faith effort to find a position in the tiers above it. To show evidence of your good-faith job search efforts in the above tiers, you must record positions for which you have applied in the NSEPnet Job Search History Log. This tool is accessible via a link on the NSEPnet.org homepage.

Although there is no concrete number of job applications that qualifies as a good faith effort, past award recipients who have successfully petitioned to fulfill their service requirement in education have applied for 10 to 20 jobs in each tier.

Here are specifics on how the three tiers break down:

TIER ONE: This tier is pretty self-explanatory. Any job in the Department of Defense, Department of State/USAID, Department of Homeland Security and the Intelligence Community will fulfill your service requirement.

Examples of Tier One jobs include Language Center Analyst at the National Security Agency, Imagery Analyst at the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency, Economic Assistant at a U.S. Embassy, and International Visitor Exchange Specialist at the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs.

TIER TWO: NSEP defines "national security" very broadly. In general, anything with the potential to impact the nation can be considered relevant. This includes not only defense and anti-terrorism efforts but also economic stability, international development, environmental conservation and public health.

Examples of past jobs that have qualified as Tier Two include: Peace Corps Volunteer, Hydrographic Survey Technician at the National Ocean Service in the Department of Commerce, and Intern at the Office of the First Lady.

The above refers to jobs you'd fulfill directly as an employee of the federal government. Another option award recipients frequently make use of is, and one that you should be aware of as a path into government service is:

CONTRACT WORK

You may also fulfill the requirement under Tiers One and Two by working for a federal contractor. Federal contractors are individuals or employers who enter into a contract with the United States (any department or agency) to perform a specific job.

With regard to service, the same rules of a good-faith effort apply; before you can receive service credit as a contractor for the Department of Energy, you will need to show a good-faith effort of finding a position in the first tier. In general, a contractor for the four priority agencies would be considered Tier One.

specifics about contract work

All contract work for service credit is approved on a case-by-case basis, so there is no list of companies that are guaranteed to count toward your service requirement. In general, the NSEP Service Committee approves requests for service credit at a contractor if the company is receiving funding from the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, State/USAID, or from the Intelligence Community.

The contractor's funding for your position must come in the form of a contract or cooperative agreement. Your work will not qualify for service credit if your position is funded by grants. Past awardees have received service credit for work at Concepts and Strategies, SAIC, BAE, SOSi, the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute, and the National Endowment for Democracy. If you think your work would qualify under this standard, once you have started working, you will need to submit a letter on official letterhead signed by your supervisor to certify your work on a federal contract.

If the work is partially funded by the federal government, it can count for partial credit, too. Service for partially-funded work will be prorated in the same way service for part-time work is prorated. Here's where some serious calculating might come in:

Say you're working for federal contractor XYZ. You work 15 hours a week on a contract that's 55% funded by the DoD. Here's an SAT question for you: given nine months working for this contractor, how much service credit could you get for this position, and under which Tier would it qualify for service credit?

    a) 1.86 months; Tier 1
    b) 3.375 months; Tier 2
    c) 4.47 months; Tier 2
    d) Idk I thought I was done with the SAT?!?!

As for the answer…

d) is partially correct. You are done with the SAT, don't you worry. And this is about as difficult as the calculations should get with regard to your service requirement. But you should keep in mind that service credit will be prorated if your service is not full-time or is not fully funded by the federal government.

(The correct answer, for the record, is a.)

TIER THREE: Last, work that you complete at a U.S.-based educational instiution can count toward your service requirement. Past award recipients have reported work in traditional academic positions, such as a Research Assistant or Adjunct Professor at universities, as well as non-traditional education jobs, like a program coordinator with a study abroad organization.

However, before you request that work in education count for your service requirement, you must have applied for vacancies in Tiers One and Two. For instance, following graduation, you could begin working as an assistant professor at a university. At the same time as you are working in that position, you could apply to federal jobs. If you were unsuccessful in your federal job applications, then you could request that all of your education work count toward your service requirement.

If you still have questions about the education provision, you should take a look at the following:

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT...

...EDUCATION AND SERVICE CREDIT

does my work in education have to be directly related to the language and area studied on my NSEP scholarship?

The position must deal directly and substantially with the language, region, or functional area for which NSEP funded your studies.

what kinds of documentation should I be prepared to provide as proof that my work in education is related to my NSEP-funded study or to another language or area in which I have demonstrated competency?

NSEP may request documentation, such as published class descriptions or class syllabi, as proof that your work in education deals directly and substantially with your NSEP-funded studies. You are welcome to attach this information to your Service Agreement Report (SAR) when you are requesting service credit.

what types of education positions will satisfy the education provision?

Work as a professor, associate professor, teacher, volunteer, teaching assistant, research assistant, etc., at an accredited US university, college, or K-12 school may satisfy the service requirement under the conditions set forth above. This work must be distinct from your coursework if you are a student. Additionally, you may receive service credit for administrative positions in education (such as coordinator of a study abroad program related to the geographic area for which you received NSEP funding) if you can demonstrate a sufficiently strong connection to an appropriate language or area. In such cases, NSEP will consider granting service credit on a case-by-case basis depending on specific job duties and responsibilities.

does the educational position I secure have to be a paid position?

A position can be paid or unpaid but must meet all the conditions set forth above.

One question we get a lot (at all tier levels) is ***whether or not qualifying part-time work counts for credit.***

Does it?

Indeed it does!

The only difference with part-time work is that it counts as part-time service. So, if the work you're submitting for credit only involves 20 hours a week, your service will be prorated based on a typical 40 hour workweek.

For example, if an award recipient worked for a qualifying national security position in the FBI for four months on a schedule of approximately 25 hours/week, they could receive credit at a rate of 62.5%, for a total of about 2.5 months of service credit.

The rule about part-time work applies whether you work as a federal employee, contractor, or in an educational positions.

That's about it for which jobs will qualify for the service requirement. For any other job-related inquiries, we at nsep@nsep.gov are here to help!

MAIN TAKE-AWAYS

Internships might count!
Volunteer work might count!
Part-time work might count!
Contract work might count!
Work in education might count!
Work in the DoC, DoE, etc., might count!
Work in the four priority areas definitely counts!

main **main take-away:** You gotta submit SARs to get credit for these activites. You also gotta keep track of your federal job search. First, **make sure to record** how your job search is progressing in the Job Search History Log. That way, if you need to petition for service credit for work in positions outside of the four priority areas, you will have proof of your good-faith effort.

Once you've started your job, you'll need to **submit a service agreement report (SAR)** requesting service credit. Depending on which Tier the job would qualify under, each SAR submission will look a little different.

Are you confused now because you're wondering what the heck a SAR is? Or because you still don't know how to record your job search?

No fear, Shakespeare. The next section's got you covered.

nsep deadlines and requirements

You must keep track of three tasks in order to remain in good standing with the NSEP office. These include submitting SARs, updating your NSEPnet Resume, and updating your NSEPnet Job Search Log.

1: SAR SUBMISSIONS

You're gonna start hearing three words a lot now that you're on the other side of your Boren award.

These words are **_Service Agreement Report._**
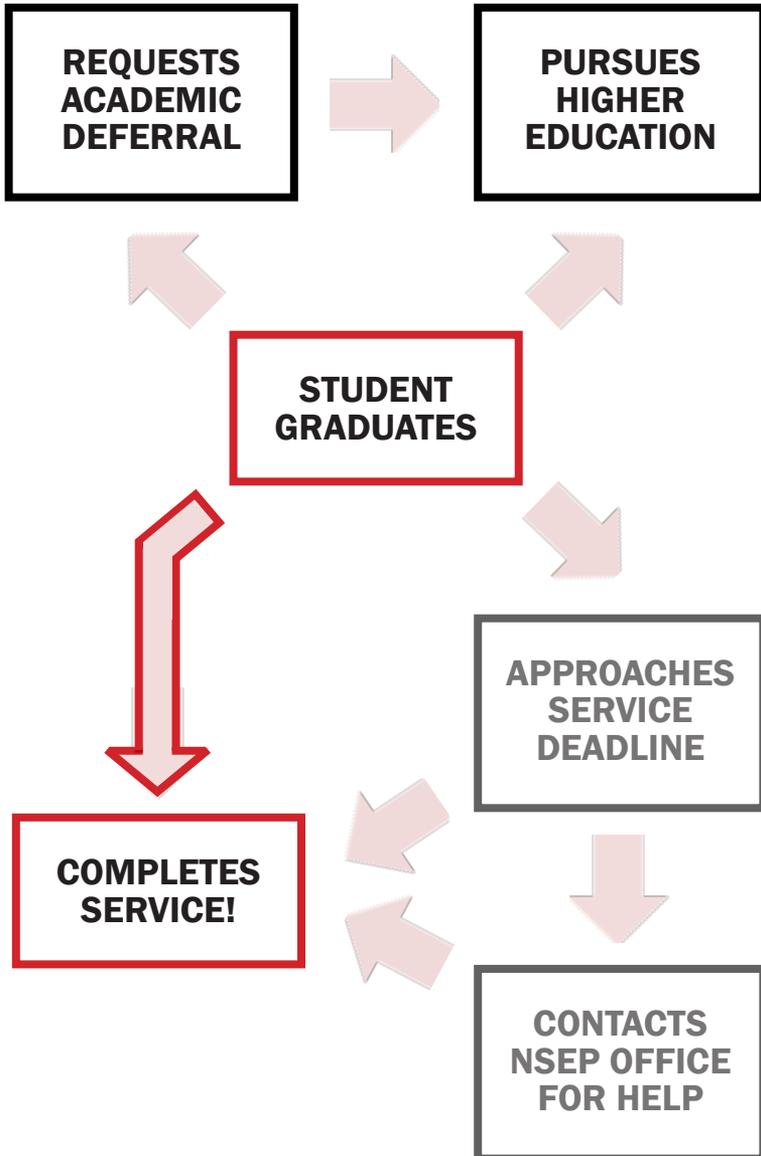Or, alternatively, **_Submit Your SAR._**

Remember these words!!!

NSEP's utmost requirement is that you submit SARs in a timely manner, because they are what we use to keep track of how close you are to fulfilling your service requirement.

The **_Service Agreement Report_** is a digital document that you are required to submit annually through NSEPnet. You can use it to request such updates to your account as service credit, an academic deferral, or an extension to your service deadline.

If you look at the handy-dandy flowchart on the next page, you can get a better idea of the options available to you after you finish the degree program you pursued while receiving NSEP support.

Your Path to Service

REQUESTS ACADEMIC DEFERRAL

PURSUES HIGHER EDUCATION

STUDENT GRADUATES

APPROACHES SERVICE DEADLINE

COMPLETES SERVICE!

CONTACTS NSEP OFFICE FOR HELP

As you can see, first, you will graduate from school.

Then, eventually, you will complete your service requirement. If you're a Scholar, you'll have three years to begin completing your service requirement. If you're a Fellow, you'll have two years to begin fulfilling your service requirement. This deadline may change if you request an academic deferral, which is explained in more detail on the following page.

The way that our office keeps track of where you are in this flowchart—whether you're still a senior in colllege, three months into fulfilling your service requirement, or a month away from your deadline—is with SARs.

Buuuuut, unless **YOU** submit a SAR, we won't know what's going on in your life, or be able to keep consistent records.

Does that all make sense?

Basically, what we're trying to tell you is that there's a digital document you gotta sign through NSEPnet once a year, for our peace of mind, and for yours. If that much sounds alright, flip the page. If it didn't, feel free to reach out to our office with any questions or concerns.

Here are more specifics concerning your path to service:

Graduating is pretty self-explanatory. Completing your service means you have fulfilled your obligations to NSEP; passing your service deadline means you are delinquent on your obligation.

To defer your service means to postpone your deadline while you are furthering your education. To be approved for a deferral, you will need to be enrolled in a degree-seeking program at half-time status or more. You can request an academic deferral by submitting a SAR, indicating the deferral option, and attaching some proof of your enrollment (e.g., unofficial transcripts or a screenshot with an updated graduation date). Similarly, if your graduation date for any of the degree programs you choose to pursue changes, including the one you're currently on, just upload a SAR with similar documentation and a new graduation date indicated in the appropriate field.

You can also opt to repay your award at any time in lieu of fulfilling your service requirement. You can do this the day you graduate or the day before your service deadline passes, whatever suits your fancy. Your repayment amount will be prorated based on any service credit you have already received.

Finally, please note that you can complete your service in parts. For example, you can start off working on a government contract for six months, and, once that contract has ended, fulfill the rest of your service requirement by volunteering part-time for two years in a qualifying teaching position.

Whichever path that it is you end up taking to complete your service, just remember that in order to get credit for a position, you have to submit your SAR(s). For this reason, we've included the following reminder:

SUBMIT
YOUR SAR
SUBMIT
YOUR SAR
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YOUR SAR
SUBMIT

2: RESUME

It is also a requirement that you have to complete an NSEPnet Resume. Using the Resume Builder tool on NSEPnet is pretty self-explanatory, and directions for how to input specific information can be found in the Resume FAQ section as well.

For some exclusive job opportunities posted on NSEPnet, hiring officials will log on to NSEPnet directly and look at candidates' information. Occasionally, hiring officials will search all NSEPnet resumes (when looking for a specific language, area of expertise, etc.) without posting an announcement. For that reason, it's important to have a resume with searchable fields that are consistent across all awardees.

Hiring officials who use NSEPnet make decisions about who they want to contact based on posted resumes, so it's important to make sure that your NSEPnet resume is complete, up-to-date, free of grammar and spelling errors, and generally professional. For all other positions, including those advertised on NSEPnet that require you to send a resume directly to a hiring official, you should use a conventional professional resume formatted in whatever document type is specified. Many federal positions, such as those listed on USAJobs, require you to add further information specific to the federal hiring process.

Another requirement is that you must complete your resume online one year before you're set to graduate. Because federal hiring official also use the NSEPnet resume tool to search for potential job candidates, it's important that you update your resume around the time that you'd ideally be starting your federal job search anyway, since the process can be so time-consuming.

3: JOB SEARCH LOG

The one other way we'll ask you to keep track of your federal job search is by using the Job Search History Log on NSEPnet. On this Log, you'll have the option to enter individual positions you've applied for, along with general comments about how your job search is progessing.

We ask that you keep a record of every job application you submit, as well as those applications' results. Whether a hiring official's final word is a yes, no, or maybe so, we at NSEP would like that information recorded in our database. We encourage you to update this Log regularly!

MAIN TAKE-AWAYS

- Submit your SARs annually no. matter.what.
- If something in your life changes (as it relates to the service requirement), submit a SAR
- Keep in mind the tiers when you are applying for jobs
- You *can't* get pre-approved for credit
- You *can* request deferrals, extensions, and repayment of your service
- Record your job search and update your resume on NSEPnet! This is a must-do in order to document a good-faith effort!!!!!!!
- If you have any further questions, contact the NSEP office.

how to use nsepnet

We admit that NSEPnet is a little funky.

The NSEP office is working on making the website intuitive and easier to use, but in the meantime, here are some basic rules for how to go about completing important functions on the site.

logging in

What is my NSEPnet username?

The activation email we send you before you go abroad will include your NSEPnet username, which you'll then use to activate your account.

What is my NSEPnet password?

If this is your first time logging in, your password will be the last four digits of your Social Security Number. If not, and you cannot remember your password, try using the "Forgot Password" tool.

If you're using Gmail, to ensure that the password resend email reaches your inbox, you can add noreply@nsepnet.org to your Gmail contacts list.

submitting SARs

How do I submit a SAR?

Once logged into NSEPnet, you will find the SAR submission wizard under the "Service Requirement" tab in the top menu bar. All you have to do next is mark the checkbox that applies to you: enrolled in your degree program, engaged in work that fulfills your service requirement, requesting an academic deferral, requesting an extension of your service requirement deadline, or requesting a waiver of your service.

It is sometimes useful to consult a date duration calendar to ensure accuracy when calculating the amount of time you've worked, especially when calculating part-time or partially federally-funded service.

How do I submit a SAR for a job I haven't started yet, but am about to start?

Ya can't. Sorry, bud. You can only receive service credit for work that you have already completed. There is no way to receive pre-approved service credit for a future position. The minimum amount of service that can be reported on a SAR is one week.

How do I know if my supervisor has signed off on my SAR?

When you submitted the form, an email containing a link was automatically send to the supervisor you indicated on the form. Your supervisor was asked to review your employment and follow the link to acknowledge that the information you provided is correct. This acknowledgement serves as their signature.

Once your supervisor has signed, you will automatically get an email confirming that your supervisor has approved your SAR.

If you don't receive this email, first make sure your NSEP emails

aren't being diverted to your spam folder. Then, follow up with your supervisor to ensure the certification email was not diverted to their spam folder. The emails come from noreply@nsepnet.org.

How do I submit contract work for credit?

Remember that for your time with a federal contractor to count toward your service requirement, you must be working on a contract or cooperative agreement (not a grant!) funded by the United States federal government.

You will also need to submit a letter on official letterhead signed by your supervisor to certify your work on a federal contract. This letter must include as much of the following information as possible about the contract(s):

1. Type of funding instrument (e.g., contract or cooperative agreement)
2. Contracting federal department
3. Contract number
4. Contract status
5. Percentage of your position funded by federal dollars
6. Description and confirmation of your role in the contract

If you think you would qualify under these standards, you would first need to submit a SAR indicating you are seeking credit for contract work. Later, if you have a hard time finding the above information, your office's HR representative should be able to help you out.

How do I submit work in education for credit?

To be allowed to receive credit for appropriate work in education, an award recipient must have exhausted all opportunities to fulfill the service requirement in the four priority organizations and in other federal organizations with positions in national security responsibilities—in other words, jobs that qualify as Tier One or Two.

Whether an award recipient has exhausted all opportunities will be measured by:

- a minimum 12 month job search for appropriate federal work
- quality, quantity, and appropriateness of job applications submitted
- variety of job search resources and strategies used
- quality of follow-through on job applications
- flexibility demonstrated (such as a willingness to relocate, willingness to apply to jobs beyond ideal position and to jobs that may not be at ideal level of authority, willingness to apply to positions that are only broadly related to career goals and so on)
- mitigating circumstances

job searches

How do I record a job application submission?

1. Log on, per instructions in question one.
2. Click "Record Job Search" under the "Job Search" tab.
3. Follow instructions given to add a job application or make general comments about your job search efforts.

You can view your Job Search History Log by clicking "View Complete History" on your Homepage or by clicking the "Record Job Search" tab.

Note that any application you submit to a federal contractor can be recorded by selecting the contracting agency and inputting the name of the contractor (or selecting the contractor if it is already in our system) as CTR: [name of company].

other important things

How do I change my graduation date?

Whether you're taking time off or taking a little bit longer to finish

your degree program, for a graduation date change, you must first send in a SAR and documentation of the new (anticipated) graduation date. Verification can take the form of a letter or email from the award recipient's advisor or registrar, a transcript, or any other document that explicitly indicates the updated graduation date. We will then update your service deadline on NSEPnet.

What is a letter of certification?

A letter of certification is your proof that you had a Boren award and have hiring authorities available. You can request a letter of certification to prove in an application that you have the hiring authorities that you say you do, or to verify your excepted service eligibility if a hiring official or a human resources representative requests proof.

How do I get a letter of certification?

Once logged into NSEPnet, click the "Certification Letter" button in the top menu bar to request a certification. When requesting a Letter of Certification, you must provide the following information:

- The name of the department/agency/office to which you are applying
- The name of the contact at that office (to whom the letter should be addressed)
- The mailing address to which the letter could be sent (include a street and street number)
- The announcement closing date
- Where the award recipient found out about the job.

NSEP will send you the letter by email to upload with your application or to forward to your point of contact. Generally, Letters of Certification should be completed within three business days.

how to find a federal job

All that is good and nice, but how are you supposed to find a job, anyway? Your success in a national competition will serve as an asset in scoring a federal job, but the responsibility is yours to find qualifying employment. When applying for jobs, make sure to be professional and concise. Every email or letter that you send should be spell checked and re-read. Your potential employer will meet, talk to, or receive emails from many applicants. If your responses are misspelled or unfocused, the potential employer will move on, and your opportunity will be lost. The first impression you create, whether in writing or on the telephone, should make them want to follow up with you.

While NSEP can't set you up with a job, we do provide career advice and resources that can help you in your search. Here are a few tips to help you direct your applications to the right places in the right way.

what kinds of jobs should I apply for?

You can refer to Section One to determine what kinds of jobs will fulfill your service requirement. As for a job search in the federal government, you should:

1) Know your GS level(s). This is the standard payscale of the federal government, and it is determined by your previous experience. Each agency classifies, appoints, and pays its employees based on this system.

Most graduates with a bachelor's degree will be hired at a GS-07 level. The table below shows how you can qualify for different job levels, either through education or through experience. For instance, you qualify as a GS-11 if you have completed a master's degree or if you have worked in a GS-09 equivalent position for at least one year.

When applying to jobs, make sure to note the GS levels that the agency is hiring for. Get comfortable with what is required of each level so that you're applying for jobs that are within your reach.

Grade	Education	Experience
GS-5	4-year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree	None
GS-7	4-year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree	1 year equivalent to at least GS-5
GS-9	1 full year of graduate level education *or* superior academic achievement	1 year equivalent to at least GS-7
GS-11	master's or equivalent graduate degree *or* 2 full years of progressively higher level graduate education leading to such a degree *or* LL.B. or J.D., if related	1 year equivalent to at least GS-9
GS-12 and above	Ph.D. or equivalent doctoral degree *or* 3 full years of progressively higher level graduate education leading to such a degree *or* LL.M., if related	1 year equivalent to at least next lower grade level

2) Know your occupational series. You can search USAJobs for the specific types of positions you are interested in by narrowing your search by classification codes. For instance, every Intelligence Specialist position listed on USAJobs will be given the occuaptional series code of 0132, and you can do an advanced search in USAJobs for this number to find all jobs currently available in intelligence. For more information on occupational series, check out https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/classification-qualifications/classifying-general-schedule-positions/occupationalhandbook.pdf. Skip to page 122 for a list of all white-collar occupational series codes.

3) Consider applying for positions through the Pathways Program. The Pathways Program includes Internships, the Recent Graduates Program and the Presential Management Fellows Program (PMF). These are exclusively available for individuals who are currently enrolled in a degree-seeking program or who have recently graduated from one. Click to view current opportunities: https://www.usajobs.gov/StudentsAndGrads.

In particular, Recent Graduates positions offer a good opportunity to begin working in the federal government. The program lasts for one to two years, and can result noncompetitive conversion to a permanent position or term appointment upon completion of the program—however, this is not guaranteed, but is based on your performance and on funding.

Note that some Recent Graduate jobs will allow you to apply before you graduate; look on the USAJobs announcement to verify the requirements for each Recent Graduates job.

Additionally, working as a Pathways intern while you are enrolled in a degree program (and after you complete your Boren) can benefit you in many ways. Some internships will require a security clearance, which is a great way to obtain a clearance and become more competitive in the federal job market. Your work in internships may also count towards your service requirement.

4) If you are a Boren Fellow, take advantage of the Diplomacy Fellows Program. Boren Fellows are able to skip the written portion of the Foreign Service Exam with Department of State and go straight to the Oral Assessment. Check out this website (https://careers.state.gov/work/fellowships/diplomacy-fellows) to find more information.

5) Are you a STEM student? Check out the SMART Scholarship Program through the Department of Defense. Through this program, you can receive a full scholarship for an undergraduate, graduate or doctoral degree in the sciences and receive guaranteed employment after graduation in a DoD qualifying agency of your selection. Find out more about the program at https://smart.asee.org/.

6) Apply to a variety of jobs! Aim high, but additionally try for some jobs you know you're qualified for. Also, try to apply for jobs in a variety of agencies. It doesn't take that long to fill out federal job applications, and you might find that you really like a job that you thought you wouldn't.

What if you are absolutely in love with one specific job path (say, Foreign Service Officer or Intelligence Specialist) and want to focus all of your energy on that job application? Well, you have a reasonable chance at success because you are smart and have international experience! But you should definitely apply to other jobs just to have a safety net, and to show your good-faith effort to NSEP if you end up wanting to use a position from a non-priority agency as your service.

I have no security clearance. how do I get one?

Only the government may issue you a security clearance, and generally, you may only get one if you have a federal job or are offered one. If you are offered a job that requires a clearance, you

will submit paperwork that lists your past residences and, in some cases, contains information about your personal history. While you are waiting for the clearance, you may be able to work on material and issues related to your job that do not require a clearance.

NSEP cannot help you obtain or expedite a security clearance.

when should I start applying?

We encourage you to begin looking for a position approximately one year before you plan to begin work. The federal hiring process can be time-consuming and bureaucratic, so be prepared to be patient and persistent. If you're interested in a position that requires a security clearance beyond Secret, it's a good idea to start even earlier, as those clearance processes can take longer than a year. Please be aware that in most cases you cannot undergo a clearance process while overseas; this particularly applies to the clearance process for positions in the intelligence community.

You may begin your job search while overseas, but use common sense about whom you contact. In most countries, for example, it's probably fine to contact the U.S. embassy—but, you should not contact intelligence agencies from overseas.

Also keep in mind that some federal agencies won't want to hire someone for a full-time job before they complete their degree. For example, if you apply to a GS-07 job and haven't yet finished your bachelor's degree, the hiring official might not consider your application. If you need more information about a certain position's requirements, try contacting the hiring official or point of contact listed in the job announcement.

where should i start looking?

Good news: you may fulfill the service requirement by working for the U.S. government in a position that deals with national security issues anywhere in the the world! While the variety of federal jobs

in the DC area tends to be much wider than elsewhere, there are many options available internationally and nationwide. Here are some places to start:

1) NSEP Exclusive Jobs. Our office sends out jobs exclusive to Boren award recipients over email about once a week. These positions are ones we've set up with agencies in order to circumvent traditional hiring processes (using hiring authorities) and allow you all to get your foot in the door of the federal government faster. You'll be automatically enrolled in this listserv once you've returned from your Boren studies abroad. You can set up NSEPnet so that it only sends emails to your NSEPnet account, or also to a personal address that you've specified.

2) USAJobs. We encourage you to continue your job search at USAJobs, a searchable database that includes many open positions in the federal government. You can search for jobs by location, keywords, GS level, department/agency, and pretty much anything else.

Note: If a job on www.usajobs.gov requires "status," you cannot apply through the public announcement on the website. Instead, you should contact the hiring official as soon as possible to explain your eligibility for non-competitive hiring. "Status" means government tenure, so unless you are already a permanent federal employee, you are not eligible to apply for this job through normal procedures. However, you can contact the hiring official (who is different from the HR person) to explain your qualifications and special hiring authority. How it works in this case is that if they do choose to hire you, they can opt not to fill the public announcement and instead create a new announcement to be filled under NDAA'13 or Schedule A(r).

3) Partnership for Public Service. The federal hiring system can be overwhelming at first, so we also recommend that you check out the resources available from the Partnership for Public Service (www.gogovernment.org). Partnership is a non-profit focused on

making government service more accessible to outstanding young professionals, and their website has a lot of useful information on finding a job in the federal government. As you become more familiar with the job opportunities and federal agencies that you might be interested in, you can also go to agencies' websites directly to learn more about particular offices relevant to your background.

4) Want to work in intelligence? Intelligencecareers.gov. The intelligence community consists of 17 different organizations. These are listed on this site under "Federal Agencies." You can begin by looking for an intelligence job on USAJobs, but many intelligence positions may not be listed there. To find more positions, go to www.intelligencecareers.gov, where you can find links to the websites of individual intelligence organizations that currently have job openings.

5) Want to work in development? It might be a bit difficult at first—development jobs are in high demand and are frequently competitive. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) hires very few people directly, so contractors can be a great place to start a career in development. Devex.org lists many development contractor opportunities. You can also ask your professors and advisors overseas if they're familiar with any organizations working on USAID projects in the countries you're interested in. Finally, USAID maintains a searchable database of private voluntary organizations that have worked with them in the past (http://idea.usaid.gov/ls/pvo-definitions), and you can use that database to search for agencies that have worked in a particular country or field. Be aware that an agency that has worked for USAID in the past may not be working for them currently, and that private organizations may be working on projects for both federal and non-federal clients.

6) Finally, network! Talk to your peers, professors, and former supervisors, and above all take advantage of your connection with other alumni by joining the Boren Forum (www.borenforum.org), where you can exchange tips with and learn about interesting jobs

from other NSEP awardees. Once people within the government find out that you can be non-competitively hired, they may contact you if positions come up within their offices that you'd be qualified for.

How to network, you ask? First, know what your goals are. Think about and consciously choose how you wish to use the network. Then identify some relevant people. Contact these people individually. Make sure you include full contact information including your mailing address, phone number, e-mail address. Try to meet each person face-to-face at a professional meeting. If you're not able to travel, write thoughtful emails or plan phone conversations. Exchange information about your goals and your career search. Remember to follow up with your contacts.

Keep a detailed address book, with back-up copies if you're using a computer. For each person you meet who might be of value to you as a network resource, write a few sentences about who they are, where you met them, who introduced you, what they talked about, your impression of their knowledge, etc. Memory is fleeting, and you will be happy you made these notes. This is a lifetime database. Keep your list updated through frequent follow-ups with your contacts, and keep the list in a safe place.

I haven't heard back about my usajobs application. what should I do?

First, don't be discouraged. You still rock. Each position advertised on USAJobs typically attracts a number of well-qualified candidates. Many applications receive no response. If you don't hear back, it isn't necessarily a reflection on your skills or qualifications, but rather on the sheer volume of applications received. Finding a job in the federal government can be a long process, and it requires a lot of initiative on your part. Be persistent and be prepared to submit applications for a variety of positions. If there's a job that you're particularly interested in, it might also help to follow up. Contact the organization where the job is located. You may be able

to talk to the Human Resources department and ask about the status of your application. Make sure that you keep the vacancy announcement number and the date that you filed your application. And don't forget to record your job search activities on the Job Search History Log.

If you don't get a certain job, it can also be a good idea to follow up with hiring officials about why you weren't selected and how you can improve for the future.

how can I write a good federal resume?

For applications on USAJobs, you shouldn't use the same resume for federal jobs that you do for the private sector. When applying for NSEP exclusive jobs, you can submit a federal or private sector resume. Here are some important points to remember when writing a federal resume:

- **Tailor each resume for the specific position you're applying for. Your resume should change based on the skills and qualifications listed in the position description.**

- **have all relevant documents handy** if you are asked for an interview so that you can remember how you answered the questionnaire and what you put on your resume. A good way to keep track of all of your different resumes and applications is to create a folder on your computer for each job application. You can keep a copy of your resume, the job announcement, and the occupational questionnaire (if you had to fill one out) in each folder, and you can use similar resumes for similar applications.

- **there is no page limit** on federal resumes, but you should also be mindful to only include relevant information. If possible, try to limit your resume to no more than two pages, especially for NSEP Exclusive Jobs. Hiring officials are not likely to read verbose resumes. On the other hand, because USAJobs resumes are usually

scanned to determine the most qualified applicants, so you should include as many key words as you can in your resumes for these applications.

- **use precise language**—include numbers, percentages, and the impact of your past work, if possible.

- **include months and years** for all positions you list.

- **demonstrate work experience** by describing the jobs that you have had, emphasizing skills that the job that you're applying for requires. Federal employers will often not look at the skills you list at the beginning of your resume, but want you to show how you developed and used skills within past positions.

- you can **include volunteer work** in your past job experience.

- you should also **include your language skills** and **note your Boren award** on your resume.

- make sure to include the following line (or some variation thereof) in your resume: **"Eligible for exempted service appointment under Schedule A (r) and non-competitive conversion to career status under NDAA FY 13."**

This line can go anywhere in your resume. However, try to put it somewhere near the top, or under a section in which you mention your NSEP award.

- make sure there are **no typos** and that you use standard formatting (Times New Roman, size 11-13).

what do I do at a job fair?

Job fairs can be a great way to gain exposure to federal agencies and contractors, as well as to network with current employees of those organizations.

Before you go, you should understand that representatives of federal agencies at job fairs most likely can't get you an interview for a job that is posted on USAJobs. While private sector organizations (such as contractors) could ask you for an interview if they meet you and like you at a job fair, hiring representatives using USAJobs can only arrange interviews with the applicants who are identified as the most qualified by the system.

However, if you are interested in an NSEP Exclusive position or for working with a contractor, hiring officials have a lot more flexibility in inviting you for an interview or looking at your resume.

Use this opportunity to get information. Ask hiring officials what they look for in good applicants - what skills you should be working on, application tips, and anything else you are curious about. Also ask when they will be hiring and for what kinds of positions. That way, you can be prepared for when positions do open up.

Finally, don't just give your resume and ask what the hiring official can do for you. Try to be unique and make sure to ask the person about their job and what they do - this will help you to stand out from the crowd and will make them more likely to remember you. Above all, be respectful and mindful of the official's time.

help, I have an interview.

You should check out the resources at http://gogovernment.org/ for tips on interviewing with the government. You can also schedule a mock interview with NSEP, if you'd like, to shake those nerves off. Try talking with friends and colleagues, too, who know you well and can help you prepare answers to questions like "what are your best traits?" Think about what kinds of questions you might be asked and have some ideas ready. Minimize vocal fillers like "um" and "like," and go forth with the confidence that this place actually needs the skills that you have. Although it can be hard to feel like you're bragging, realize that you have to talk yourself up to show how valuable you are!

It's also important to give at least 2-3 examples of experiences you have had for every question you are asked in an interview. Even if you don't have extensive experience in a specific responsibility of the position you are interviewing for, talk about some examples of similar experiences to show that you are qualified. Never admit that you don't have any experience in a certain responsibility, but show your potential through similar responsibilities.

And…last but not least, don't forget to dress to impress!

hiring authorities

Boren awardees are intelligent, high-achieving, culturally and linguistically capable individuals—all skills that government hiring officials find valuable. That's why the Boren legislation makes it easier for you to be hired by the federal government!

In digging through your memories of the Boren Convocation, you might remember that in beginning your job search after you finish studying abroad, you'll have two awesome hiring authorities available to you: **NDAA FY 13** *and* **Schedule A (r).** You will have these hiring authorities until you finish the service requirement, but you lose them after completing your service. Both authorities allow hiring managers to **non-competitively appoint NSEP awardees to excepted service positions.** This means that you could potentially get jobs that aren't advertised to the public. You may also benefit from the hiring authorities in the following ways:

 - you may be a more competitive applicant for jobs that are available to the general public
- ***NSEP exclusive jobs*** are emailed out as hiring officials contact us with exclusive openings
- a federal organization can create a position for you or tell you about a position before advertising it to the general public
- the hiring process may be faster than it would be for an applicant who does not have hiring authorities

These advantages are all extremely useful in your job search, and you should advertise them as much as you can when you present yourself to hiring officials! Put it in your resume and cover letter. Request a ***letter of certification*** from the NSEP Service Team via NSEPnet. If application wizards ask you to indicate whether you have any special hiring authorities, answer "yes" to these if they

mention Schedule A (r) or NDAA'13. Even on applications that do not specifically ask about your hiring authorities, you can (and should) attach a Letter of Certification to your application to make sure that hiring officials know you possess these superpowers! See the NSEPnet section of this guidebook for information on how to request a Letter of Certification.
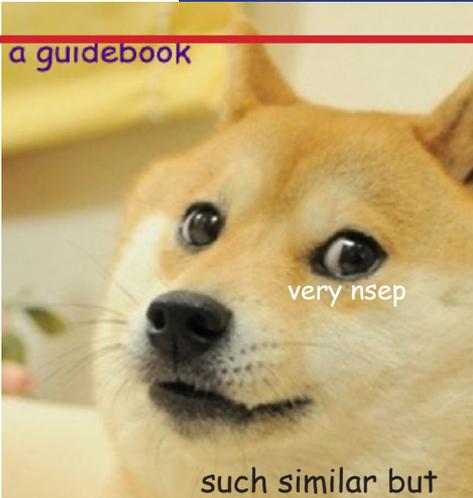
Now, what exactly is the difference between these hiring authorities, anyway?

The next page can help you answer this question!

schedule a (r) versus ndaa '13

NDAA '13

- excepted service appointment.
- after two years of continuous service the hiring manager can non-competitively convert you to career- or career-conditional status if they are satisfied with your work.
- in general, after having worked three years, you can become a permanent employee of the federal government and attain "status."

a guidebook

very nsep

such similar but

different

versus

SCHEDULE A (R)

- leads to a temporary/term appointment, not to exceed four years.
- you are not a permanent employee; once your appointment comes to an end you are required to re-apply for your job through the competitive hiring process.
- can work to your advantage because federal agencies have a ceiling on the number of full-time equivalent employees they may hire, and most federal offices can hire you under Schedule A(r) without having to count you against this ceiling.

As dogs can attest, both NDAA'13 and Schedule A (r) are useful for circumventing the bureaucracies of getting hired by the federal government. As for how the two hiring authorities differ, the main point is that *if you're hired under Schedule A(r) and your boss decides to keep you as a permanent employee, they can do so by using NDAA'13.*

Yay!

NDAA' 13 also allows you to automatically transition into a permanent employee, while Schedule A (r) does not. For this reason, *we recommend that you ask to be appointed by NDAA'13* – however, only some agencies have the ability to hire someone directly through NDAA'13. The next page contains a list of which agencies can appoint directly through NDAA'13. If you are appointed to a government position which does not fall under this list, you can be appointed through Schedule A and ask to transition to NDAA'13 after two years of service.

Department of Defense: all departments, commands, agencies, and activites **Intelligence Community:** all agencies and offices **Department of State:** all agencies and offices, including foreign embassies, regional and functional bureaus, National Foreign Affairs Training, and the Bureau of Intelligence and Research **Department of Homeland Security:** all agencies and offices **Department of Transportation:** all agencies and offices **Department of Veterans Affairs:** all agencies and offices **Department of Commerce:** Bureau of Industry and Security International Trade Administration **Department of Energy:** National Nuclear and Se-

NDA

Direct Appointments Through NDAA'13 Direct Appointments Through NDAA'13

NDA

curity Administration, Office of Nuclear Energy, Science and Technology, Office of Policy and International Affairs, National Laboratories **Department of Justice:** Drug Enforcement Administration; Federal Bureau of Investigation; National Drug Intelligence Center; National Virtual Translation Center **Department of the Treasury:** Office of Foreign Assets Control; Office of International Affairs **Independent Agencies:** United States Agency for International Development (USAID); Export-Import Bank of the United States; Overseas Private In-

vestment Corporation; United States International Trade Commission; Peace Corps; Millennium Challenge Corporation **Executive Office of the President:** National Security Council Staff; Office of Management and Budget: National Security and International Affairs Division; Office of National Drug Control Policy; Office of Science and Technology Policy; Office of the U.S. Trade Representative **United States Congress:** Congressional Budget Office, Defense and International Affairs; Congressional Research Service; United States Congressional Committees **Senate:** Appropriations; Armed Services;

A'13

Direct Appointments Through NDAA'13 Direct Appointments Through NDAA'13

A'13

Commerce, Science, and Transportation; Energy and Natural Resources; Finance; Foreign Relations; Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs; Judiciary; Select Committee on Intelligence **House of Representatives:** Appropriations; Banking and Financial Services; Budget; Commerce; Foreign Affairs; National Security; Resources; Science; Transportation and Infrastructure; Ways and Means; Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence; Select Committee on Homeland Security

MAIN TAKE-AWAYS

ndaa'13 = probz way to go

- For non-competitive appointments, you should try to use NDAA'13 to become a permanent employee (FTE). If not, you can use Schedule A and ask to be converted to an FTE position after two years of service.
- You should request a Letter of Certification from NSEPnet for every federal application you submit to advertise these authorities.
- After finishing your service, you will no longer have your hiring authorities.

So, now that you know how to use your hiring authorities, you can start pumping out those applications!

You might now be asking, "But how can I find a job that I love? Where do I start? There are just so many jobs!"

Go on to the next section, my friend!

what to do after receiving an offer

You got a federal job, yay! We knew you would, you prodigy. What's next?

First, you will usually receive a conditional offer from your agency, which is contingent upon the completion of your security clearance. You will then have to fill out the necessary paperwork for your clearance (make sure you turn these documents in on time!) and after that…you wait.

The amount of time that it takes for a security clearance to process can vary depending on the person and the level of the clearance. Be patient, and be aware of the possibility that something might go wrong in your clearance. You can still apply for other jobs, and you may accept more than one conditional job offer at a time. Proceed carefully when you're trying to decide whether this is appropriate or not. There have been cases before when an awardee accepted more than one conditional offer, which resulted in confusion on the government's side and slowed down the process.

Fill out all forms for your security clearance in a precise and timely manner in order to minimize complications with your clearance. The most common reason security clearances are delayed is incomplete information on the security forms. Make sure you fill in all blanks, and enter N/A if you don't have an answer.

If you keep records of your foreign travel, where you lived while abroad, and the name and contact information of your landlord, that will expedite the security clearance process. Also, if you meet

American citizens who are returning to the United States, take their contact information. The security investigators will contact them to ascertain that you actually were where you said you were, doing what you said you were doing. Whichever country you visit, if your visit is longer than a week or so, register with the American Embassy or consulate. Tell them where you are living and that you are an NSEP-funded Boren Scholar or Fellow. They will make a record, and you can tell the security people that you made such a report. Be able to document what you are doing during breaks in your program. Keep records of the people you visit throughout the host country. These records will be valuable when you apply for a security clearance.

You should also take a look at the resources at http://gogovernment. org to review everything you should know about negotiating your federal benefits, since the government can have some really snazzy benefits (hellooo, student loan repayment)! Although you usually won't be able to negotiate your salary in a federal position, you do sometimes have flexibility to negotiate the step within your grade level. Please note that you may negotiate your salary, benefits, and other incentives for a contracting position.

As for your status here at NSEP, you can submit a SAR for service after you've completed your requirement. There's no need to submit a SAR immediately after starting your job unless you are approaching your service deadline. If you have received a conditional offer and are approaching your service deadline, NSEP can give you an extension (regardless of the amount of extensions you've already gotten), given that you send us the necessary documentation.

language sustainment

After coming back from your Boren, it can be hard to keep up with your language skills. Whether or not you're able to find a position that incorporates your language skills, here are some ideas and resources that can help you keep up your skillz. Note: we do not endorse any of these organizations, they're just here for your reference.

Commercial language websites and apps: these usually focus on vocabulary and grammar, but might not be so helpful for advanced speakers.

National Language Service Corps: a group of service-minded individuals who make themselves available when there is a sudden, short-term need for language skills in support of any US government agency. The NLSC welcomes speakers of all languages. Once enrolled, participants have access to professional-level language sustainment materials. This is a volunteer program, but participants who work on assignments are paid. Learn more about the program and apply at www.nlscorps.org.

The Online Diagnostic Assessment (ODA): a tool developed by the Defense Language Institute, Foreign Language Center to help foreign language learners evaluate and manage their learning. The ODA identifies a learner's strengths and needs in a foreign language and provides the learner with individualized, relevant feedback. All Assessment texts are selected or adapted from authentic sources in accordance with the ILR level descriptions. http://oda.lingnet.org/

Joint Language University: an online language training center available to the general public, with enhanced resources for government employees who register with a .mil or .gov account.

Some benefits for the latter include one-click access (no login required) to licensed resources, such as Rosetta Stone, SCOLA, and Transparent Language.

Language Roadmaps: Check out these guides to online resources for specific languages and dialects. There are specific recommendations for different proficiency levels, based on ILR scores. http://govtilr.org/Roadmaps/index.htm

Language exchanges: Look at local community groups to see if there are any language exchanges in your area. You can also sign up for Skype exchanges with native speakers who want to learn your native language. http://www.language-exchanges.org/

Ask around! See if your current employer or university offers language courses or sustainment. You can also Google search for the specific materials you are looking for; for example, Youtube and Netflix often offer videos and movies in foreign languages. Finally, you can ask friends and colleagues if they know anyone who speaks the language at a high level whom they could introduce you to.

appendix

NSEP VOCABULARY

SAR: Service Agreement Report. Fill out one of these to report to NSEP on the status of your award.

No service: Choose this option on your SAR if you have not passed your service deadline but are not currently engaged in service that will fulfill your service requirement.

Deferral: Choose this option on your SAR if you are furthering your education in an accredited degree program and are enrolled at half-time status or higher (e.g., graduate school, doctoral degree).

Extension: Choose this option on your SAR if you are past your service deadline. All awardees are eligible for two 12-month extensions of their deadlines, but must first petition the NSEP office to receive them. Your request must be approved by the Service Committee, and will only be approved for one year at a time. Awardees on extensions must submit SARs biannually.

Service: Choose this option on your SAR if you are currently engaged in service which you believe could count towards your service requirement.

Service Committee: Group of NSEP officials who decide whether SARs should be approved or denied.

Service Committee Meeting: Monthly meeting in which the Service Committee gets together to review SARs.

Repayment: At any point, you can elect to repay your award in lieu of fulfilling your service requirement. To do so, you can

contact the NSEP staff at nsep@nsep.gov to begin the repayment process. Interest is charged one time (when the individual begins repayment) at a rate of 1%. Therefore, if an awardee decided to repay their award of $20,000, their total repayment amount would be $20,200.

GOV'T VOCABULARY

Career and career-conditional employee: Permanent federal career status is automatically gained upon completion of the mandatory three-year career-conditional period. Career tenure employees have a better shot at surviving downsizing and often have an edge when applying for other federal jobs.

Competitive civil service: Most federal government civil service jobs fall under this category. Positions are filled through a fair, open and merit-based process, unless excepted by statue, Executive Order or OPM action.

Declaration for Federal Employment: This form—provided during the application process or before employment begins—documents a candidate's fulfillment of the two requirements for federal employment: US citizenship and, for men born after December 31, 1959, compliance with US Selective Service registration.

Excepted service: Positions not covered by certain competitive civil service personnel rules and regulations. For example, employees who serve at the discretion of the current presidential administration—commonly referred to as "Schedule C" employees—are excepted because they have policy-determining responsibilities or serve as key administration officials. Some NSEP awardees may be hired as excepted service employees if they are brought on under Schedule A(r) or NDAA '13, which allows them to be hired without a competitive application process.

Federal resume: There is no mandated form, although some vacancy postings will refer to it. It is simply a resume that contains all the information required to apply for a federal job, including personal information, education, work experience, and job-related skills and training.

General Schedule (GS) pay: The general pay scale system for many white-collar jobs in the federal government. Positions are identified by GS level, from GS-1 to GS-15. Higher GS levels mean higher levels of pay and responsibility. New hires are assigned to a GS level based on past professional and academic experience. Within each GS level, you may be placed into one of ten steps, each of which corresponds to a different salary level within the GS level. You may move up to a higher step after you have completed some federal service, or you may be hired at a higher step if the government wants to match your pay from a previous job or offer you other incentives.

Occupational questionnaire: Included in some applications, it assesses a candidate's qualifications through detailed multiple choice or yes-or-no questions.

Optional Application for Federal Employment (OF 612): This OPM form is the closest thing to a federal resume and can be used as part of your application for virtually any federal job.

Public trust designation: A position that requires an applicant to undergo a background check.

Questionnaire for National Security Positions (SF-86): Used for background checks of applicants for national security positions requiring a security clearance, this form includes questions about educational background, past and current employers, police records, financial situation, and drug and alcohol usage.

Superior academic achievement: Graduation from an

accredited four-year college or university will qualify an individual for a GS-5 level position in many occupations. Superior academic achievement, defined as graduation in the upper third of one's college class, a GPA of B or higher or membership in a nationally recognized honor society, like Phi Beta Kappa, will qualify for a GS-7 level position.

Status candidates: Job applicants who currently work for the federal government and certain former federal employees. Boren awards do not grant a person "status," so be wary when applying for jobs that consider only status candidates. It is best in this case to contact the hiring official specific to an application and inquire about who their agency is looking to hire.

Temporary or term position: Appointments used to fill nonpermanent positions. Temporary positions are filled for one year or less; employees do not receive benefits. Term employment may last from one to four years, and employees generally have the same benefits as permanent employees. All Schedule A(r) hires are brought into temporary or term positions.

Upward Mobility Program: Agencies can use this program to groom talent by creating or restructuring positions to be filled by promising entry-level applicants who will then be offered training and other career-development opportunities.

Veterans' preference: In the competitive process, veterans receive preferential consideration, typically by having five or ten points added to their scores during the examination process.