



EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS



INTRODUCTION

Most positions in the Park Service are filled through the usual employment procedures which are integral merit promotion procedures or certificates of eligibles from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) registers.

This pamphlet is designed to acquaint you with some of the programs available for entry into the Federal Service. While this guidance is not all inclusive, it is intended to serve as a basis for designing innovative and aggressive employment programs to meet the National Park Service skills, needs, affirmative action goals, and other special employment objectives.

Its main purpose is to help you understand and work within the civil service system, and, as a result, develop the skill of using those special programs which best meet your own needs. It is not the intent that all programs be in conjunction with those programs used for regular employment, relying on the advice and detailed information available in the Personnel Offices.

The Regional Special Placement Coordinator is responsible for obtaining all cooperative agreements, certification from Vocational Rehabilitation Centers, referring applicants, planning work periods, and generally coordinating any of the activities involved in special placement.

We hope that this pamphlet is useful in expanding your recruitment perspectives and help you in breaking away from any "business as usual" approach in meeting your staffing needs.

Stay-In-School Program

The Stay-in-School Program is a program designed to benefit students who are in high school or who are continuing their education immediately after high school. Its major objective is to give needy students a chance to work in Federal agencies so that they can resume or continue their educations without interruptions caused by financial pressures. Students are appointed in the excepted service under Schedule A, Section 213.3102(w) and are exempt from ceiling. Spaces are limited; therefore, check with your Regional Personnel Office before making any appointment under the authority.

Eligibility

- Students must be at least 16 years of age at the time of appointment.
- Students must demonstrate a need of income from employment to stay in school.

- All students must be enrolled for substantially full-time attendance (or have been accepted for enrollment) in an accredited school.
- Students must continue to maintain acceptable school standing.

Summer Aid Program

The Summer Aid Program is designed to provide temporary jobs for young people from low income families or for youths who need incomes from summer jobs to return to school in the fall.

Students are placed in positions involving work of a routine nature not regularly covered under the General Schedule and requiring no specific knowledge or skills.

They are given excepted appointments under Section 213.3102(v) of Schedule A not to exceed September 30. Their salary is set at the Federal minimum wage rate established by the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Eligibility

- Prior to appointment, Summer Aids must first meet certain income requirements established by the Office of Personnel Management.
- Applicants must be enrolled in school on a full-time basis.
- Applicants must need the earnings to stay in school.
- Applicants must be at least 16 years of age.

Federal Junior Fellowship Program

The Federal Junior Fellowship Program gives eligible students an opportunity to earn money needed for college, as well as a chance to learn about their chosen careers through related work experiences. Students may work during summers and vacation periods while in college but not while school is in session.

Students are assigned to work with professional, technical, or administrative employees in fields related as closely as possible to their educational objectives. Junior Fellows are appointed under Section 213.3202(F) of Schedule B and are exempt from normal employment ceiling controls.

Eligibility

To be considered for this program, students must:

- Be a graduating senior in an accredited public or private high school.
- Be in the upper 10 percent or in graduating classes of less than 50, rank among the top 5.

- Need earnings from employment to help meet college expenses. (Selections to the program are based on financial need and family income.)
- Be accepted for full-time enrollment in a baccalaureate curriculum at an accredited institution of higher learning.

Spaces are limited; therefore, check with your Regional Personnel Office before making any appointment under the authority.

Junior Fellows who have completed requirements for a bachelor's degree and who have satisfactorily performed work-study assignments may, at the option of the employing agency, be converted to career-conditional appointments.

Presidential Management Intern Program

The Presidential Management Program is designed to attract to the Federal Service individuals of exceptional management potential who have received special training in planning and managing public programs and policies. Selected interns receive two-year internships in Federal agencies. Upon satisfactory completion of the two-year internship, interns are eligible for non-competitive conversion to career or career-conditional appointments within the same agency.

Eligibility

- Applicants must be U.S. citizens who have received or expect to receive during the current academic year a graduate degree with a concentration in public management.
- Students must be nominated by their school Deans and successfully complete a Regional screening process.

Student Volunteer Service

The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, Public Law 94-454, authorized Federal departments and agencies to establish programs designed to provide educationally related work assignments for student volunteers without pay. Volunteer programs are conducted through written agreements with educational institutions or with non-profit organizations officially designated by schools or boards of education to coordinate the placement of students in nonpaid work assignments. To qualify, a student must be enrolled at least half-time in an accredited educational institution. Although student volunteers are not Federal employees, their service is creditable for competitive examination purposes. In addition, some participating schools may reward course credit for the service performed.

Handicapped Program

For the purposes of Federal employment, a handicapped person is any individual who (1) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such persons major life activities, (2) has a record of such an impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment.

The programs are designed to assist qualified handicapped individuals, those who are physically impaired, emotionally restored, or mentally retarded in obtaining and retaining employment consistent with their level of skills and abilities and their capacity for safe and efficient job performance. Emphasis is on ability rather than disability and on rehabilitation efforts and present job readiness.

The excepted appointing authority in Section 213.3102(u) of Schedule A was developed to provide an alternate route for employment of severely physically handicapped individuals.

Mentally Retarded Program

Mental retardation is a chronic and lifelong condition. In most cases, individuals who are mentally retarded do have the capacity, with limitations, to learn, to be educated, and to be trained for useful productive employment. These individuals are usually appointed by use of the Schedule A 213.3102(t) Authority. This authority may also be used for unlimited appointments of mentally retarded persons under an agreement with OPM. In unlimited appointments, the employees have retirement, life insurance and health benefits, in addition to sick and annual leave. These temporary positions have simple repetitive duties. Those employed under this authority may be promoted to any level providing they are properly certified by the State Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors to the higher-graded positions.

Part-Time Career Employment

In passing the Federal-Employees Part-time Career Employment Act of 1978, P.L. 95-437, the Congress held that part-time career (permanent) employment benefits the Government as an employer by providing management with the flexibility to meet work requirements and benefits society by providing an alternative for those who require or prefer shorter hours. The act directs Federal agencies to provide increased part-time opportunities at all grade levels up to GS-16 or equivalent. The tour-of-duty for a part-time employee must be no less than 16 and no more than 32 hours per week. A part-time employee is eligible for annual and sick leave, health benefits, life insurance and retirement.

The Intergovernmental Personnel Act

All levels of Governments are being called upon to provide more and better services for a growing number of citizens. To do this, they must share their resources and cooperate in solving mutual problems. One way in which Governments are already doing this is through the temporary assignment of employees under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) of 1970.

Under the IPA mobility provisions, employees may be assigned to and from States, local Governments, institutions of higher education, Indian tribal Governments and other eligible organizations for periods up to two years without loss of employees' rights and benefits. Each assignment must be made for purposes which are of mutual concern and benefit to the Federal agency and to the participating non-Federal organization.

The Regional Directors and WASO Associate Directors have the authority to enter into mobility agreements with eligible non-Federal organizations subject to prior approval by the Deputy Director. The employee, of course, must agree to the assignment. Mobility assignments are initiated and controlled by agency management. Employees interested in a mobility assignment should inform their immediate supervisor, bringing to his/her attention any specific needs that another jurisdiction might have in which they are qualified to work.

Veterans Readjustment Appointments

A veteran readjustment appointment is a noncompetitive appointment which leads to competitive status and career or career-conditional tenure upon satisfactory completion of service and education or training. The basic eligibility requirements are: (1) the veteran must be a veteran of the Vietnam era; (2) the veteran is a United States citizen; (3) nondisabled veterans must have completed no more than 14 years of education (that is no more than two calendar years of education beyond high school or the equivalent). However, the 14-year education restriction is waived for compensably disabled veterans and veterans discharged because of service connected disabilities. Qualified Vietnam era veterans, who meet the eligibility criteria, can be appointed to grade levels GS-9 or WG-9 and below. Veterans readjustment appointments are for a period of two years during which time the veteran undergoes a defined training plan. A veteran readjustment appointment shall be converted to a career or career-conditional appointment within 30 days after the employee has completed his/her 2-year training program provided that his/her performance has been satisfactory.

Cooperative Education Programs

Cooperative education (co-op) is a long-established program which provides for periods of study interspersed with periods of study-related work in both the public and private sectors.

The blend of academic study and work experience provided by co-op education has many potential benefits. Among them are:

- For the student, cooperative education lends relevancy to learning; provides realistic exposure to career opportunities; allows for early adaptation to the work environment; and helps pay expenses of school year.
- For employers, cooperative education permits selection for career jobs on the basis of proven performance and provides a means of directing students toward occupations that promise career opportunities.

Selections are based upon assessment of an agency's need and the individual's apparent capacity to meet that need.

A written working agreement between the agency and the college is needed for each of the following programs:

A. Graduate Students—Initial appointments under this program are made at the GS-5 or GS-7 level for masters degree candidates and at the GS-9 level for those in a Ph.D. program. Student eligibility for initial appointment will be based upon enrollment as a graduate student in a field of study related to the position to which he or she would be appointed.

Students completing requirements for the advanced degree and who satisfactorily performed work-study assignments may, at the option of the employing agency, be converted to career or career-conditional appointments.

B. Baccalaureate Students—This program provides periods of study-related, fully paid employment in suitable types of work for students in 2-year or 4-year colleges who are pursuing a baccalaureate curriculum in a qualifying educational institution. Students are not required to meet any kind of economic criteria. Students must be in attendance at a qualifying school on a substantially full-time basis, must be recommended for assignment, and must maintain at least a 2.0 overall scholastic average on a 4.0 scale or the equivalent and an average grade of C or above in all major fields of study.

Students may be converted noncompetitively to career-conditional appointments at the GS-5 or GS-7 professional, technical, or administrative position in the field of work for which they received training.

C. Associate Degree Students—This program provides employment of co-op education students who are working towards associate degrees in community and junior colleges or qualifying technical institutes. It also permits Federal agencies to employ students under one of two appointing authorities: Schedule B which allows for noncompetitive conversion to career-conditional and Schedule A which does not allow for conversion.

The Schedule B appointing authority permits agencies to employ in specialized occupational areas students who are studying full-time in pursuit of an associate degree and who are majoring in fields directly related to occupations such as Clerk Stenographer, Secretary, Accounting Technician, and Engineering Technician.

The Schedule A appointing authority allows agencies to employ all 2-year associate degree co-op students who do not qualify for appointment under Schedule B.

D. High School Students—This program provides for students who are in high schools or in other qualifying institutions for the education of students at grades 9 through 12.

Students must be at least 16 years of age, must be enrolled in a qualifying cooperative education program, and must be recommended by appropriate officials at the education institution.

Worker-Trainee Program

The Worker-Trainee program is designed to enhance employment and developmental opportunities for low-skilled and disadvantaged persons. Appointments are to positions at grades GS-1 or WG-1 or 2. The TAPER (Temporary Employment Pending Establishment of a Register) authority is used to fill these positions. Positions are exempt from the ceiling for the first year.

After three years of qualifying service, agencies have the authority to convert a TAPER employee to a career appointment.

For More Information

Please contact your Personnel Office if you would like more information about the topics discussed.

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