

Career Counseling Handbook



WESTERN REGIONAL OFFICE / NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

CAREER COUNSELING HANDBOOK

Western Regional Office/National Park Service

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information about the National Park Service to help employees make career and life decisions. It is designed specifically for internal use by National Park Service employees.

This handbook could not have materialized without the assistance and cooperation of many people. Special acknowledgement must go to:

Sandra M.J. Wong, U.S. Forest Service; and the following National Park Service employees:

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Since this is the first issue of the handbook, we would like your feedback on how useful it is to you. If you have any suggestions on how this handbook could be improved, please send your comments to:

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CAREER PLANNING

It is ultimately YOU who must decide what your goals are

Each of us is unique because of the different combination of skills, experiences, education, interests, values, needs and personality traits. Although these constantly influence our decisions and action, many of us take them for granted, overlook them, or may not even know what they are. However, you cannot ignore your set of attributes if you want to take charge of your life and career.

Career planning is not an easy task; it is time consuming, often frustrating and there are no guarantees. Other people cannot decide for you, because only you are in a position to define your own "success." Once you have set your own goals, you cannot sit back and wait for them to materialize. You accomplish your goals only through hard work. If the position you are in today is different from and does not lead up to where you want to be, and if you want to move closer to your goals, then you must make plans indicating the various steps it takes to reach your goal. The crucial questions then become: What are you willing to sacrifice? How flexible are you? How much effort are you willing to expend in order to change your situation?

Career and life goals do not make much sense unless they coincide with what is important to you. Therefore, before you can set meaningful goals, you must know your values, skills, interests, and priorities. It is useful to reassess these each time you want to change a career or life goal, because these may change from time to time. Self-assessment is an on-going process. For those of you who would like some assistance in self-assessment, the following suggestions may help you begin the process. (Several self-assessment exercises have been included in this handbook.)

Define your "success" by Identifying:

- Your Personal Values (see page 5)
- Your Work Values (see page 6)
- Your Skills (see page 7)
- Your Interests (see page 8)
- Your Personality Styles (see page 9)
- Your Priorities (see page 11)

Once you have assessed yourself, you will be in a better position to decide on your career and life goals. (A decision-making process has been included on the next page for those who would like some assistance in making decisions.)

THE STEPS IN DECISION-MAKING
(The process of making a choice among alternatives)

1. Recognize and define the decision to be made.
2. Know what is important to you and what you want to attain or accomplish. (This is probably the most important and difficult step. Refer to the front of this page if you want some assistance. Remember: Self-assessment of your values, interests, abilities, priorities, etc., is an ongoing process.)
3. Gather information so as to identify:
 - a. Possible alternative actions. (It is useful to write these down)
 - b. Both good and bad consequences of each alternative.
 - c. The probability that each of these consequences is going to occur.
 - d. How desirable is each consequence to you. (Be able to rank the desirability.)

You should gather information from a wide variety of sources. These include: printed materials; ideas, opinions and feedback from other people; survey, tests, and critiques; what you know about yourself; classes, workshops, courses, etc.
4. Make a choice on the alternative that meets your needs with the minimum acceptable level of risk. (All decisions involve uncertainty and risks, and not all decisions will meet all of your needs.)
5. Lay out a course of action to achieve the goal.
 - a. What are the specific results you want to achieve? Are they stated in such a way that you will know when you have achieved them?
 - b. List the specific steps you need to take to reach the goal.
 - c. Establish target dates for each of these steps.
 - d. What resources (e.g., money, time, people, machines, etc.) do you need in order to carry out the plan?
6. Readjust and re-evaluate each time a new issue or concern arises that affects your plan. (Begin with step #1 again.)

Sample Exercises in Identifying Personal Values

1. Rank the following list in order of importance: close friendship, financial security, intellectual stimulation, love relationship, good health, freedom, family, leisure time, equality, social recognition. (Feel free to expand on this list.)
2. In your lifetime, what world problems do you want to see solved? What do you want to see others do to make this world the way you want it to be?
3. What are your views, expectations, likes and dislikes about the following:
 - a. Family, marriage, children
 - b. Job/career, job change, retirement
 - c. Friendship
 - d. Home -- where, what kind, with whom
 - e. Political/community/professional involvement
 - f. Social/cultural/recreational activities
 - g. Religious beliefs and activities
 - h. Educational and developmental activities

References:

Bolles, Richard N., What Color Is Your Parachute? Berkeley, Calif: Ten Speed Press, 1972.

Crystal, J.C. and R.N. Bolles, Where Do I Go From Here With My Life? New York: The Seabury Press, 1974.

Simon, S., Meeting Yourself Halfway: 31 Values Clarification Strategies for Daily Living. Niles, Ill: Argus Communications, 1974.

Simon S., L. Howe & H. Kirschenbaum, Values Clarification: A Handbook of Practical Strategies for Teachers and Students. New York: Hart, 1972.

Smith, Maury, A Practical Guide to Values Clarification, La Jolla, Calif: University Associates, 1977.

Sample Exercises in Identifying Work Values

1. List ten criteria of a job you would enjoy. These are what you want from a job. Now indicate which five of these ten are most important. These are your needs.
2. Describe any work conditions (e.g., hours, location, indoor/outdoor, noisy/quiet, etc.) that you find distasteful? What types of people do you hope you will never have to work with again? Why? What was the most frustrating job you have had? What made it so frustrating?
3. Rank the following list in order of importance: geographic location, flexible schedule, friendly work environment, mental challenge, independence, job security, good salary, good benefits, creativity, prestige, safety, variety, following direction, taking responsibility, physically active. (Feel free to add to this list.)

References:

Crystal, J.C. and R.N. Bolles, Where Do I Go From Here With My Life? New York: The Seabury Press, 1974.

Hall, L.G., Hall Occupational Orientation Inventory. Available from Scholastic Testing Service, Inc., 480 Meyer Road, Bensenville, Ill. 60106.

Holland, John L., Making Vocational Choices: A Theory of Careers. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc.

Work Values Inventory. Available from Houghton-Mifflin Co., Boston, Massachusetts 02107.

Sample Exercises in Identifying Your Skills

1. List five achievements you are proud of. These do not have to be work related. Describe each in detail: What did you do? What did you accomplish? What steps did you take to accomplish it? What skills did you use? Why did it give you satisfaction?
2. List at least seven roles you play in life (e.g., employee, spouse, parent, etc.). What do you enjoy about each of these roles? What skills are needed in order to perform this role well?
3. List all the things you do well. Which of the following do they involve: using your hands; using numbers; using analytical thinking; using artistic abilities; using words; using intuition; using leadership; using follow-through?

References:

Bolles, Richard N.

1978 The Three Boxes of Life and How to Get Out of Them. Berkeley, Calif: Ten Speed Press.

1972 What Color Is Your Parachute? Berkeley, Calif: Ten Speed Press.

Crystal, J.C. and R.N. Bolles, Where Do I Go From Here With My Life? New York: The Seabury Press, 1974.

Haldane, B., Career Satisfaction and Success, A Guide to Job Freedom. American Management Assoc., Inc., New York, 1974.

System for Identifying Motivated Abilities (SIMA). Contact People Management, Inc., West Simsbury, Connecticut 06092.

The Quick Job-Hunting Map by R.N. Bolles. Available from Ten Speed Press, Box 7123, Berkeley, Calif. 94707.

Sample Exercises in Identifying Your Interests

1. If you could have any kind of job(s), what would they be? Recall your daydreams. (For this question, ignore what you can do, concentrate on what you want to do.)
2. List at least 20 things you enjoy doing. Which of these costs money, involves other people, requires advanced planning, involves some risk?
3. Complete the following:
 - a. If I had three wishes, I would . . .
 - b. If I had a million dollars, I would . . .
 - c. Things I have always wanted to try but have never had the opportunity to include . . .
 - d. I like to think/talk/dream about . . .

References:

Dictionary of Occupational Titles. Washington, D.C., U.S. Department of Labor.

Holland John L., Making Vocational Choices: A Theory of Careers. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1973.

Occupational Outlook Handbook, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The Self-Directed Search by John L. Holland. Available from Consulting Psychologists Press, 577 College Avenue, Palo Alto, Calif. 94306.

The Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory. Available from Consulting Psychologists Press, 577 College Avenue, Palo Alto, Calif. 94306.

X-118 Qualification Standards Manual and Section II of this handbook contain information occupational series within Federal service.

SAMPLE EXERCISE IN ASSESSING YOUR PERSONALITY STYLE

(The following exercise is taken from You Can Make It Happen: A Guide to Self-Actualization and Organizational Change, by Sperry, Len, Douglas J. Mickelson, and Phillip L. Hunsaker, Addison-Wesley Public Publishing Co., 1977.)

Rate yourself on the following scales. Read each description carefully and place an X at the point on the continuum where you think you are at the present time.

Perfectly describes me	Most of the time describes me	Sometimes describes me	Almost never describes me
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Style 1 _____

A _____ B

- Seldom satisfied with one's achievements.
- Always has something to do; often has more than one project going.
- Difficult to relax; takes work home on vacation.
- Always prepared to meet a new challenge.
- Accomplishes more than colleagues and brings it to their attention.

Perfectly describes me	Most of the time describes me	Sometimes describes me	Almost never describes me
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Style 2 _____

C _____ D

- Most projects do not turn out well.
- Important to have others one can depend on.
- Can be a procrastinator when faced with a task.
- Projects generally do not get completed.
- Needs constant supervision.
- Completed projects do not reflect competence of the individual.

Perfectly describes me	Most of the time describes me	Sometimes describes me	Almost never describes me
---------------------------	----------------------------------	---------------------------	------------------------------

Style 3 _____

E _____ F

- Really tries hard but often has ideas rejected.
- Sensitive and vulnerable to criticism.
- Looks for situations where there is a lack of respect for people and brings it to the attention of others.
- Often chooses friends who are strong and protective.

	Perfectly describes me	Most of the time describes me	Sometimes describes me	Almost never describes me
Style 4	<hr/>			
	G			H
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Likes to be "Monday-morning quarterback" and plays it well. - Generally does not lose arguments because he is well informed. - Often says, "I told you so!" - Seldom makes mistakes. - Holds people to their end of the bargain and becomes indignant when they fail. 			

	Perfectly describes me	Most of the time describes me	Sometimes describes me	Almost never describes me
Style 5	<hr/>			
	I			J
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Usually a well-rounded, well-liked person; knows how to get around. - Has an insatiable urge to experience all there is to life. - Feels entitled to the best service, care, products, etc. - An ambitious person destined for bigger and better things. - Knows the ins and outs of social grace; can be the life of the party. - Knows how to get people to do things; can be clever, cute, and cunning. 			

	Perfectly describes me	Most of the time describes me	Sometimes describes me	Almost never describes me
Style 6	<hr/>			
	K			L
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Takes pride in being very knowledgeable. - Doesn't like mistakes made by anyone. - Lets people know who the boss is. - Doesn't usually show emotion; very level-headed. - Often needs to step in to make sure the job is done properly. 			

Now go back and substitute the following words for each of the alphabet placed under each of the six continuum. A = Driver; B = Achiever; C = Inadequate One; D = Adequate One; E = Martyr; F = Courageous One; G = Right One; H = Fair One; I = Getter; J = Helper; K = Controller; L = Leader.

References:

The California Psychological Inventory by Harrison G. Gough, Ph. D. Available from Consulting Psychologists Press, 577 College Avenue, Palo Alto, Calif. 94306.

System for Identifying Motivated Abilities (SIMA). Contact People Management, Inc., West Simsbury, Connecticut 06092.

Strength Deployment Inventory by Elias H. Porter, Ph. D. Available from Personal Strengths Assessment Service, Inc., 571 Muskingum Ave., P.O. Drawer 397, Pacific Palisades, Calif. 90272.

Sample Exercises in Identifying Your Priorities

1. On ten different small sheets of paper, write a separate answer to the question, "Who Am I?" Rearrange the ten answers with the most important on top and least important on the bottom. What "turns you on" about each of these answers? Which can you do without? Are there any common denominators?
2. Complete the following:
 - a. Before I die, I want to have accomplished . . .
 - b. Before I die, I want to have experienced . . .
 - c. Before I die, I want to have learned . . .
 - d. Before I die, I want to have said . . .
3. If your doctor told you that you only had 12 more months to live, and your vitality and responsibilities remain the same as they are today, how would you choose to spend the rest of your time?

References:

YOU yourself are the best reference, because only you are in a position to know what your priorities are at any given time. However, in order to keep up with all the changes both within and outside of yourself, you need to continually reexamine your values, interests, abilities, priorities, etc. Self-assessment is not a one-time task; it is an ongoing process.

Career Opportunities

DEFINITIONS

CAREER LADDER: A career ladder is a series of developmental positions of increasing difficulty in the same line of work, through which an employee may progress to a journeyman level on his/her personal development and performance in that series. In this handbook, information under this heading will include noncompetitive career promotions as well as competitive advancement opportunities within the same series.

PROMOTION: There are two types of promotions that are made in accordance with the Career Development and Placement Plan. They are (1) Career promotion, and (2) Competitive promotion.

A career promotion is a noncompetitive promotion within a position. When a position is filled at a grade level lower than the target grade, the incumbent may be promoted to the target grade without further competition. For example, if a Park Ranger position is advertised at the GS-5/7/9 level, or advertised at the GS-5 level with "known promotion potential" to GS-9, the selectee may be promoted to the GS-9 level without further competition.

A competitive promotion is made when persons "compete" with other applicants for a higher-grade position. This competition is usually the result of a vacancy announcement, advertising a current vacant position.

Both types of promotions are subject to the employee's meeting the X-118 Qualification Requirements as well as the Time-In-Grade requirements.

OCCUPATIONAL SERIES:

Clerical series: These are one-grade interval occupational series. Entry level is usually GS-2, then it progresses to GS-3, GS-4, GS-5, and sometimes, GS-6. These positions involve work such as typing, stenography, mail distribution, filing, and other secretarial duties.

Technical series: These are one-grade interval occupation series. The entry grade is generally GS-4 or GS-5, then it progresses to GS-6, GS-7, and sometimes to GS-8. Technical positions are designed to provide technical support to professional and administrative two-grade interval positions. Examples of technical series are GS-520 Accounting Technician; GS-303 Administrative Technician.

Professional series: These are two-grade interval occupational series. Entry is sometimes at the trainee level, GS-5 or GS-7, depending on one's qualifications. Examples of these positions are GS-025 Park Ranger; GS-201 Personnel Management Specialist. Applicants may qualify on the basis of education and/or experience.

UPWARD MOBILITY: A program that provides training, education and job opportunities for employees in dead ended positions, enabling them to perform at their highest potential. Upward mobility is accomplished in the following manner: (1) a vacancy exists; (2) supervisor restructures the position to enable it to be filled at a lower level; (3) position is advertised, open to career and career-conditional employees of the NPS; (4) persons need not meet X-118 qualification requirements to compete for position at the entry grade; (5) selectee enters position at entry grade, and follows an Individual Development Plan that provides training objectives to enable the incumbent to reach the full performance of the position.

CSC HANDBOOK X-118 AND X-118C (Qualification Standards): These standards are developed by the Office of Personnel Management and are used by all Federal agencies. The standards are broken down by occupational series code number and arranged in numerical order. Each standard contains the experience (both general and specialized), training, and/or education requirements for each grade. An applicant's qualifications are evaluated against the standards which give specific guidance and criteria for evaluating experience, crediting education, using performance and written tests, and for determining the physical requirements, if any, of all positions. The standards are public information, and anyone can look at them. A full set of qualification standards is maintained in the Western Regional Office and most servicing park personnel offices.

CLERICAL/TECHNICIAN SERIES

GS-026	Park Aid and Technician Series
GS-203	Personnel Clerk and Assistance Series
GS-303	Miscellaneous Clerical and Assistance Series
GS-318	Secretary Series
GS-322	Clerk-Typist Series
GS-525	Accounting Technician Series
GS-540	Voucher Examining Series
GS-544	Payroll Series
GS-1105	Purchasing Series
GS-2005	Supply Clerk/Technician Series

1. Career Field: GS-026 Park Technician Series

Park Aids and Park Technicians perform technical and practical work supporting the management, conservation, interpretation, development, and use of park areas and resources. They carry out various operating tasks involved in law enforcement, traffic control, recreation program operation, campground and picnic area operation, accident prevention, fire control, plant disease and insect control, fish and wildlife surveys, soil and water conservation, preservation of historical structures and objects, and comparable aspects of park operations.

2. Official Titles

Park Aid
Park Technician

3. Career Ladder:

Park Aids can start at GS-1, GS-2, or GS-3, but most start at GS-2.

Park Technicians start at GS-4 and may be promoted as high as a GS-9.

(This is a one-grade interval series.)

4. Qualifications:

For GS-2, 1/2 year of general experience is required; for GS-3, 1 year. For GS-4, 1 1/2 years general and 1/2 year specialized experience is required; for GS-5, 2 years general and 1 year specialized; for GS-6, 2 years general and 2 years specialized; for GS-7, 2 years general and 3 years specialized; for GS-8 and above, 2 years general and 4 years specialized.

General experience is experience in park operations or related fields which provided basic knowledges and skills applicable to general park operations and conservation work.

Specialized experience is technical experience gained in actual park operations or in activities which directly support park, fish and wildlife, recreation management, historic preservation, conservation, or park-related work.

(See X-118 Qualification Standards Manual for further information.)

1. Career Field: GS-203 Personnel Clerical and Assistance Series

Personnel Clerks perform a variety of clerical tasks. They process paper work, compile and present data for reports, and give basic information about personnel regulations, procedures, programs, and benefits.

Personnel assistants perform a variety of technical support work that is usually related to one of the recognized personnel management specialties.

2. Official Titles

Working Titles (Examples)

Personnel Clerk (GS-3 to 6)
Personnel Assistant (GS-6 to 10)
Supvry Personnel Assistant

Appointments Clerk
Employee Benefits Clerk/Assistant
Employee Relations Clerk/Assistant
Staffing Clerk/Assistant
Classification Clerk/Assistant
Employee Development Clerk/Assistant

3. Career Ladder: Personnel clerk positions are generally filled at the GS-3 and GS-4 grade levels with some positions advancing to GS-5. Supervisory positions are usually at the GS-6 and GS-7 grade levels.

Personnel assistant positions may start at the GS-5 and GS-6 levels with some positions advancing to GS-7.

4. Qualifications: Positions at all grade levels require one year of general clerical experience. One additional year of specialized experience is required for GS-4; two years for GS-5; three years for GS-6; four years for GS-7 and above. Specialized experience is that in which the applicant acquired and applied knowledge of rules, regulations, procedures and program requirements of one or more areas of a personnel system. For positions GS-5 and above, a minimum of 6 months of the required specialized experience must be directly related experience -- that is, actual experience in the same specialty of personnel work (e.g., classification, staffing) of the position to be filled.

Study above the high school level may be substituted for general experience and for the first year of specialized experience at the rate of one-half an academic year for 6 months of experience. For the second year of specialized experience, education may be substituted at the rate of one academic year for 6 months of experience. Appropriate courses include statistics, business English, English composition, journalism, psychology, sociology, other social sciences, public administration, personnel administration, business mathematics, office machines, filing and indexing, office practices, bookkeeping, accounting, and other subjects related to the personnel field. No credit will be given for basic shorthand, typing, or refresher courses.

(See X-118 Qualification Standards Manual for further information.)

1. Career Field: GS-303 Miscellaneous Clerical and Assistance Series

This is a new series established as of January 1979. Employees who now perform clerical and technical administrative work and are classified in the GS-301 series will eventually be reclassified to this GS-303 series.

This series covers the one-grade interval for clerks, assistants, and technicians who perform administrative work which is not classified elsewhere. Clerks process and maintain the organization's business records, documents and transactions. Assistants carry out specific procedures, use established methods, and apply practical knowledge of regulations and precedent cases.

2. Official Titles Working Titles (Examples)

Clerk (typing)
Business Management Assistant
Supvry Clerk (typing)

Program Technician

3. Career Ladder: Until the new standards are issued by OPM, there is no specific career ladder established for this series. It is possible that positions may be advertised as GS-4/5/6. If the position has a career ladder, it will be identified in the vacancy announcement.

4. Qualifications: (The new GS-303 Qualification Standards have not yet been issued by OPM. Until then, the standards for GS-3000 General Administrative, Clerical, and Office Service Group will be used.)

One year of general clerical experience is required for all positions GS-3 and above. One additional year of specialized experience is required for GS-4; two years for GS-5; two and one-half years for GS-6; three years for GS-7. Specialized experience is actual experience in the duties of the position to be filled.

Study above the high school level may be substituted up to a maximum of 3 years of experience. College education may be substituted at the rate of one-half academic year for 6 months of experience. This is applicable to the one year of general experience and to the first year of specialized experience. For the second year of specialized experience, education is substituted at the rate of one full academic year for 6 months of experience.

1. Career Field: GS-318 Secretary Series

Secretaries are the main personal assistants to designated supervisors and carry out or coordinate all the clerical and day-to-day administrative support activities. They perform telephone and receptionist duties; review and distribute mail; keep the supervisor's calendar and schedule appointments and conferences; make travel arrangements; review outgoing correspondence, reports, etc.; compose non-technical letters; maintain and arrange for the preparation of budget reports; follow-up with staff members on the commitments they made at meetings and conferences; requisite office supplies; and other related duties.

2. Official Title

Secretary

3. Career Ladder: These positions usually begin at the GS-5 grade level with good opportunities to GS-6. The secretary's grade is partly determined by the grade level of the supervisor and by the degree of latitude given in carrying out all of the secretarial responsibilities.

4. Qualifications: For positions GS-5 and above, the applicant must have two and one-half years of clerical or administrative experience which demonstrates one's ability to serve as a principal office assistant at the level of the position to be filled. This experience must include the following: (a) effectively organizing the flow of clerical processes in an office; (b) establishing a filing system; (c) making arrangements for travel, conferences, and meetings; (d) locating and assembling information for various reports, briefings and conferences; and (e) composing non-technical correspondence.

Study above the high school level may be substituted for experience, up to a maximum of 4 academic years. (Completion of 4 academic years qualifies one for GS-5 level.) Education may be combined with experience to meet minimum qualification requirements. No credit is given for shorthand, typing or refresher courses.

(See X-118 Qualification Standards Manual for further information.)

1. Career Field: GS-322 Clerk-Typist Series

Typing is the primary duty of these positions. The employee types from written material or voice recordings, either solely or in combination with other general clerical work (e.g., answering telephone, filing, photocopying, opening and distributing mail). Duties may also include the use of word processing machines.

2. Official Titles

Clerk-Typist
Supvry Clerk-Typist

3. Career Ladder: Positions start at GS-2 with career promotions to GS-4. Supervisory positions are normally GS-5's.

4. Qualifications: Applicants for GS-2 positions must pass a written test and have good typing skills. For GS-3 positions, an additional 6 months of appropriate experience or education is required.

One year of full-time study in an institution above the high school level may be substituted for the six months of experience required for GS-3. Study completed in a business or secretarial school is creditable provided that such subjects as business English, office machines, filing and indexing, office practices, or medical or legal terminology were studied. No credit is given for shorthand, typing, or refresher courses.

(See X-118 Qualification Standards Manual for further information.)

1. Career Field: GS-525 Accounting Technician Series

These employees perform the work necessary to insure that the established accounting systems are operating effectively. Duties typically include: classifying accounting transactions; maintaining, balancing, or reconciling accounting records; examining accounting records to verify accuracy; making appropriate adjustments and special entries; preparing and verifying accounting statements and reports; and performing prescribed analyses of accounting data and reports.

2. Official Titles

Accounts Maintenance Clerk
Accounting Technician

3. Career Ladder: Positions usually begin at GS-4 with probable promotions to GS-5. Positions at GS-6 and above are usually supervisory or highly specialized.

4. Qualifications: Positions at all grade levels require two years of general clerical experience which has demonstrated arithmetic aptitude and ability, accuracy and attention to detail, and the ability to apply established procedures for recording and compiling data. One additional year of specialized experience is required for GS-5; two years for GS-6; three years for GS-7; four years for GS-8 and above. Specialized experience is actual experience in that line of work.

Study above the high school level may be substituted for the required experience. Appropriate courses include bookkeeping, accounting, business English, office machines, filing and indexing, office practices or business mathematics. No credit will be given for typing, shorthand, or refresher courses. Study may be substituted at the rate of one-half academic year for six months of general experience; and one full academic year for six months of specialized experience.

(See X-118 Qualification Standards Manual for further information.)

1. Career Field: GS-540 Voucher Examining Series

These employees examine various kinds of payment documents, (e.g., vouchers, invoices, claims, etc.) for accuracy, legality, compliance with regulations, and justification. These documents are requests for payment for goods and services provided to the Region; for expense reimbursement (i.e., travel, training, transportation, etc.) and other related transactions.

2. Official Titles Working Titles (Example)

Voucher Examiner	Payment Clerk
Suprvy Voucher Examiner	

3. Career Ladder: Trainee positions may start at GS-3, with possible career promotions to GS-5. Supervisory Voucher Examiners are usually GS-5 or 6.

4. Qualifications: Positions at all grade levels require one year of general clerical experience. Starting at GS-4, one additional year of specialized experience is required; two years for GS-5; two and one-half years for GS-6. Specialized experience is actual clerical experience in that line of work. Related clerical experience may be creditable.

Study above the high school level may be substituted for experience in the following ways:

- For general experience, one-half academic year of college education may be substituted for six months of experience. Study in a business, commercial, or comparable institution is applicable provided that this study included subjects such as bookkeeping, commercial law, and business arithmetic. No credit will be given for shorthand, typing or business English.
- For the first year of specialized experience, one academic year may be substituted for six months of experience provided that such study included at least 6 semester hours of accounting or business administration courses.
- For the second year of specialized experience, one full academic year is needed to substitute for six months of experience.

Study may be substituted up to a maximum of three years of the required experience (one year general plus two years specialized), but it may not be used to substitute for the required supervisory experience at any grade level.

1. Career Field: GS-544 Payroll Series

These positions require substantial knowledge of payroll rules, regulation, procedures, programs, and systems requirements. Employees maintain payroll records; compile related reports; maintain, review and dispose of time and leave records.

2. Official Title

Payroll Clerk

3. Career Ladder: Positions start at GS-3 with promotions to GS-4. Only a few positions exist at GS-5 level.

4. Qualifications: All positions require at least one year of general clerical experience. Starting at GS-4 level, one additional year of specialized experience is required; two years for GS-5. Specialized experience is experience in the actual line of work.

College education may be substituted at a rate of one-half academic year for six months of general experience. Study in a business, commercial, or comparable institution is applicable provided that such study included subjects such as bookkeeping, commercial law, and business arithmetic. No credit is given for shorthand, typing or business English. Study may also be substituted for specialized experience.

(See X-118 Qualification Standards Manual for further information.)

1. Career Field: GS-1105 Purchasing Series

These employees support the everyday operational needs of the organization. They purchase, rent or lease supplies, services, and equipment through informal open-market methods and formal competitive bid procedures.

2. Official Title

Purchasing Agent
Purchasing Officer

3. Career Ladder: Positions usually start at GS-4 with career promotions to GS-5. Opportunities above GS-6 are limited.

4. Qualifications: All positions require two years of general work experience which demonstrated a knowledge of purchasing procedures, practices, or regulations; or a demonstrated ability to meet and deal with others.

One year of specialized experience is required for GS-5. This is experience with regular business and trade practices in buying and selling (e.g., selling terms and conditions, discounts, delivery schedules, and packing practices). For positions GS-6 and above, the required specialized experience must have included a knowledge of commercial supply sources, comparative prices, formal procurement methods and contract procedures.

Study above the high school level may be substituted for experience. Two years of study meets all the requirements for GS-4, but for GS-5 positions, four years of study is required.

(See X-118 Qualification Standards Manual for further information.)

1. Career Field: GS-205 Supply Clerical and Technician Series

Supply Clerks and Technicians perform a wide range of substantive clerical and technical support work necessary to insure the effective operation of supply management systems. They perform services in support of inventory control, storage and distribution, cataloging or supply identification systems, property utilization, or other related supply activities.

2. Official Titles

Supply Clerk
Supply Technician

3. Career Ladder: Supply Clerk positions generally start at the GS-4 level and can advance to GS-5.

Supply Technician positions generally start at the GS-6 level and can advance as high as GS-8.

(This is a one-grade interval series.)

4. Qualifications:

Experience requirements are as follows: for GS-4, one year general and one year specialized; for GS-5, one year general and 2 years specialized; for GS-6, one year general and 3 years specialized; for GS-7 and above, one year general and 4 years specialized.

Specialized experience is supply work (a) which has required the applicant to acquire and apply knowledge of the rules, regulations, procedures, and program requirements of one or more areas of a supply system, and (b) which has demonstrated the applicant's ability to perform at the level of the position to be filled.

For the first 2 years of required experience (one general and one specialized), education above the high school level may be substituted for experience at the rate of one-half academic year (i.e., 18 weeks of full-time study or 15 semester hours or the equivalent) for 6 months of experience.

For any experience required in excess of 2 years, education in a school above the high school level may be substituted at the rate of 1 year of education for 6 months of experience. A full 4-year course of study may be substituted for a maximum of 3 years of the required experience (1 year general, 2 years specialized) and is qualifying for GS-5.

(See X-118 Qualification Standards Manual for further information.)

PROFESSIONAL SERIES

GS-025	Park Ranger Series
GS-170	Historian Series
GS-193	Archeology Series
GS-401	General Biological Sciences Series
GS-510	Accounting Series
GS-807	Landscape Architecture Series
GS-808	Architecture Series
GS-810	Civil Engineering Series
GS-1640	Facility Management Series

1. Career Field: GS-025 Park Management Series

Park Rangers plan, develop, advise on, recommend, perform, and supervise programs or activities to meet existing and future needs for one or more park areas. Park programs and activities include resources management, recreation, interpretation, law enforcement, accident prevention, concession management, land use planning, structural restoration, fire control, and others.

Park Managers direct the overall operations of a park, park area, region, or other important organizational unit of a park system. They oversee, control, and guide the use of the personnel, funds, materials, and facilities needed to execute a complex of park programs and carry out especially important public relations work for the park organization.

2. Official Titles

Working Titles

Park Ranger (GS-5 to 9)
Supervisory Park Ranger (GS-11)
Park Manager

District Ranger
Park Ranger (Interpreter)
Park Ranger (LE)
Park Ranger (RM)
Park Ranger (Archeologist)
Park Ranger (Historian)
Park Ranger (Naturalist)
Superintendent

3. Career Ladder: Park Ranger positions are generally filled at the GS-5 level with career promotions to GS-9. Frequent opportunities occur for competitive promotions to GS-11 and above. (This is a 2-grade interval series.)

4. Qualifications: All applicants must meet one of the three basic requirements:

a. Completion of a full four-year course in an accredited college leading to a bachelor's degree with at least 24 semester hours in one, or not more than two, of the following: any field-oriented natural science, history, archeology, police science, or park and recreation management; or closely related subjects applicable to park management, such as sociology, business administration, and the behavioral sciences.

b. Three years of park or conservation experience which provides evidence that the candidate has:

(1) a good general understanding of systems, methods, and administrative machinery for accomplishing work in a park area,

(2) the ability to analyze work problems effectively and apply sound judgement to their solution.

(3) the ability to communicate with others effectively, both orally and in writing,

(4) the capacity to apply these abilities and knowledge to resolving problems in park operations.

c. Any time equivalent combination of education and experience as defined in a and b. In combining education with experience, an academic year of study which comprises 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours will be considered equivalent to 9 months of experience.

For GS-7 and above, park or park management experience and/or graduate education is required in addition to the minimum requirements for GS-5.

(See X-118 Qualification Standards Manual for further information.)

1. Career Field: GS-170 Historian Series

Historians plan and carry out research or other professional historical work. They perform studies that are used (a) as background information for developing or modifying NPS policies and programs, (b) as continuing records of NPS policies and programs, (c) as scholarly narrative or documentary histories for publication, and (d) as a basis for the establishment, conservation, restoration, reconstruction, and interpretation of National Historical Sites.

2. Official Title

Historian

3. Career Ladder:

Historian positions are generally filled at the GS-5 level and can advance as high as GS-15. (This is a two-grade interval series.)

4. Qualifications:

For all grade levels, a minimum of three years of general experience in history or related field is required. For all or part of the required three years of general experience, applicants may substitute study in an accredited college at the rate of one year of study for nine months experience if the study has included an average of 6 semester hours per year in history or a directly related subject.

For GS-7 and above, professional experience and/or graduate education is required in addition to the minimum requirements for GS-5.

(See X-118 Qualification Standards Manual for further information.)

1. Career Field: GS-193 Archeology

Employees advise on, administer, supervise, or perform professional research or other scientific work in the study of historic and prehistoric cultures. They plan and carry basic research including field work; analyze data and materials; devise themes, ideas, and data for exhibit programs; write or publish articles and monographs; consult to colleagues, academic community, and the general public.

2. Official Title	Working Title (Example)
Archeologist	Cultural Resource Specialist

3. Career Ladder: Positions usually start at GS-5 with career promotions to GS-9. The few positions at GS-11 and above are filled competitively.

4. Qualifications: Either a or b is required for the GS-5 level.

- a. Four years of education with at least 20 semester hours in anthropology. This must have included one course in American archeology.
- b. 20 semester hours of anthropology which included one course in American archeology, plus additional appropriate experience which total to four years of combined education and experience. Appropriate experience is serving as a technical assistant on an archeological expedition or in an archeological or anthropological museum, park, or monument.

The requirements as described in a and b above must have included also three months of archeological excavations experience under the direction of a recognized professional archeologist.

Positions at GS-7 and above require either professional experience and/or graduate education in addition to the minimum requirements for GS-5.

1. Career Field: GS-401 General Biological Science Series

Professional Biologists and Scientists perform work in biology, agriculture, or related natural resource management involving either (a) a combination of several professional fields with none predominant or (b) one specialized professional field.

2. Official Title	Working Title
Biologist	Resources Management Specialist

3. Career Ladder:

Biological science positions generally start at the GS-5 level and can advance as high as GS-15.

(This is a 2-grade interval series)

3. Qualifications:

For the GS-5 level, either a or b (or any time equivalent combination) is required:

- a. Completion of four years of education leading to a bachelor's degree from an accredited college with major study in biological sciences, agriculture, natural resource management, or allied disciplines.
- b. Four years of experience in one or more of these disciplines.

For the GS-7 and above, professional experience and/or graduate education is required in addition to the minimum requirements for GS-5.

(See X-118 Qualification Standards Manual for further information.)

1. Career Field: GS-510 Accounting Series

Employees classify and evaluate financial data; record financial transactions; design, develop, install, operate or inspect accounting systems; prescribe accounting requirements;

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| 2. Official Title | Working Titles (Examples) |
| Accountant | Operating Accountant
Staff Accountant
Auditor
Working Capital Fund Accountant
Accounting Officer
Timber Cost Collector
Resource Accountant |

3. Career Ladder: Positions start at GS-5 and GS-7 with career promotions to GS-9. Opportunities are available for competitive promotion to GS-11 and above.

4. Qualifications: Either a or b is required for GS-5.

- a. A bachelor's degree in accounting.
- b. A bachelor's degree that included or is supplemented by at least 24 semester hours in accounting.

(See X-118 Qualification Standards Manual for further information.)

1. Career Field: GS-807 Landscape Architecture Series

Employees seek to obtain the most functional, economical, and esthetic results in physical land planning. They plan, develop, or design land areas and landscape construction; review landscape plans; develop and maintain standards, supervise landscape construction; plan, supervise, inspect and advise on maintenance work including land restoration and site rehabilitation; and assist management in landscape architecture concerns.

2. Official Title

Landscape Architect

3. Career Ladder: Positions start at GS-5 and GS-7 levels with career promotions to GS-9. Opportunities exist for competitive promotion to GS-11 and above.

4. Qualifications: Either a or b is required for GS-5.

- a. A bachelor's degree in landscape architecture or landscape design.
- b. If the applicant does not have the appropriate bachelor's degree, for each year short of graduation, the applicant must have one year of related experience under professional leadership and guidance of such character and diversity as to be a satisfactory substitute for the required education. This experience must have included original landscape design.

(See X-118 Qualification Standards Manual for further information.)

1. Career Field: GS-808 Architecture Series

Architects perform professional work in planning, design, and research, including the design of buildings and other structures to fulfill esthetic and functional needs; and the preparation of working or contract drawings and details of such designs.

2. Official Title

Architect

3. Career Ladder: Architecture positions generally start at the GS-5 level and can advance as high as GS-15. (This is a 2-grade interval series.)

4. Qualifications:

For the GS-5 level, a, b, or c (or any equivalent combination of a and c) is required:

- a. Completion of education leading to a bachelor's degree in architecture or architectural engineering at an accredited college.
- b. A State license to practice architecture.
- c. For each year short of graduation, one year of experience in an architect's office or in architectural work that is a satisfactory substitute for the education. In the absence of college courses, five years of such experience is required.

For GS-7 and above, professional experience and/or graduate education is required in addition to the minimum requirements for GS-5.

(See X-118 Qualification Standards Manual for further information.)

1. Career Field: GS-810 Civil Engineering Series

Employees plan, design, construct, and/or maintain structures and facilities that provide shelter, support transportation systems, and control natural resources. They may also investigate, survey and map the earth's physical features and phenomena. Furthermore, they may conduct related research and development activities.

2. Official Titles Working Title (Example)

Civil Engineer	Environmental Engineer
Highway Engineer	
Structural Engineer	
Hydraulic Engineer	
Supvry Civil Engineer	

3. Career Ladder: Positions start at GS-5 and GS-7 with career promotions to GS-9. Many opportunities exist for competitive promotion to GS-11 and above.

Positions in this series may also be filled on an interdisciplinary basis with employees from other related professional occupational series. Employees in this series may qualify for GS-1640 Facility Management positions such as Chief of Maintenance.

4. Qualifications: Either a or b is required for GS-5.

- a. A bachelor's degree in engineering. To be acceptable, the curriculum must either be in an engineering school with at least one curriculum accredited by Engineer's Council for Professional Development (ECPD) as a professional curriculum; OR it must include differential and integral calculus plus courses in five of the following seven areas of engineering science, or physics: (1) statics, dynamics; (2) strength of materials (stress-strain relationships); (3) fluid mechanics, hydraulics; (4) thermodynamics; (5) electrical fields and circuits; (6) nature and properties of materials; (7) other related areas, i.e., optics, heat transfer, soil mechanics, or electronics. (First year physics and chemistry courses do not count.)
- b. Four years of college education, training, and/or experience that demonstrated a good theoretical and practical knowledge of professional engineering. Adequacy of such experience must be demonstrated by one of the following: (1) current registration as a professional engineer by any state, Guam, Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, or the Canal Zone. (2) Passed the Engineer-in-Training (EIT) exam, or the written test required for professional registration; (3) completed 60 semester hours of courses in engineering, physical, mathematical, and engineering sciences. This must have included courses as specified in a above. (4) A bachelor's degree in engineering technology or in an appropriate professional field (e.g., physics or architecture) plus at least one year of professional engineering experience acquired under professional engineering supervision or guidance.

Many positions at GS-11 and above are specialized and require specific knowledges in that line of work.

(See X-118 Qualification Standards Manual for further information.)

1. Career Field: GS-1640 Facility Management Series

Facility Managers manage, administer, and perform technical staff work concerned with the operation, maintenance, and repair of NPS buildings, grounds, and other types of facilities.

2. Official Title	Working Title
Facility Manager	Chief of Maintenance

3. Career Ladder:

Facility Manager positions generally start at the GS-5 level and can advance as high as GS-15. (This is a 2-grade interval series.)

4. Qualifications:

For the GS-5 level, three years experience is required in any combination of a, b, c:

- a. Work demonstrating knowledge of practices and procedures related to property management.
- b. Experience demonstrating knowledge of general maintenance systems, materials requirements, and scheduling procedures.
- c. Experience in trades, crafts, and maintenance work demonstrating a knowledge of and ability to operate, maintain, and repair a variety of plant operating equipment, buildings, utility systems, etc.

Education and training directly related to the knowledge outlined in a or b may be substituted for the basic experience requirements.

For GS-7 and above, specialized experience is required in addition to the minimum requirements for GS-5.

(See X-118 Qualification Standards Manual for further information.)

ADMINISTRATIVE SERIES

GS-160	Equal Opportunity Series
GS-201	Personnel Management Series (includes 212, 221, 230, 235)
GS-504/560	Budget & Accounting Series/Budget Administration Series
GS-341	Administrative Officer Series
GS-1102	Contract & Procurement Series
GS-1170	Realty Series

1. Career Field: GS-160 Equal Opportunity Series

Employees are concerned with civil rights and equal opportunity for minorities and women in such areas as employment, housing, education, medical services, social services, and business development. They advise and assist others in civil rights or equal opportunity matters; evaluate Federal laws and policies with respect to equal protection of the law; determine if the organization's operating practices comply with the law; investigate and conciliate complaints, etc.

2. Official Titles

Working Titles (Examples)

Equal Opportunity Specialist
Equal Opportunity Officer

Hispanic Employment Program Manager
Federal Women's Program Manager

3. Career Ladder: Positions start at GS-5 grade levels with career promotions to GS-9. Positions at GS-11 and above are filled through competitive basis.

4. Qualifications: Either a or b or c is required for GS-5.

- a. Three years of general experience in work that demonstrated: (1) awareness of social and economic problems created by discrimination; (2) ability to meet and deal effectively with people of different sexes, ages, races, economic and educational background; (3) ability to collect and assemble pertinent facts; and (4) ability to write clearly.
- b. A bachelor's degree in a directly related field, i.e., psychology, sociology, personnel management, education, public administration or business management.
- c. A total of three years of combined education and experience. One academic year is equivalent to 9 months of experience. Education of less than one academic year can be pro-rated.

Four years of general experience or graduate study is required for GS-7. Additional specialized experience and/or graduate education is required for GS-9 and above.

1. Career Field: Personnel Management Series (GS-201, 212, 221, 230, 235)

Employees in these different positions work in the various functions of personnel management, i.e., employment and placement, position classification, employee relations, employee development, etc.

2. Official Titles

Working Titles (Examples)

Personnel Management Specialist
(GS-201)
Personnel Staffing Specialist
(GS-212)
Position Classification Specialist
(GS-221)
Employee Relations Specialist
(GS-230)
Employee Development Specialist
(GS-235)

Personnel Officer
Assistant Personnel Officer
Placement Officer
Employment Officer
Training Officer
Classifier

3. Career Ladder: Positions begin at the GS-5 grade level with career promotions to GS-9. Good opportunities exist for competitive promotions to GS-11 and above.

4. Qualifications: Either a or b or c is required for GS-5 of all positions.

- a. Three years of work experience that demonstrated: (1) a good understanding of systems, methods and administrative machinery for accomplishing the work of an organization; (2) the ability to analyze problems and apply sound judgment in assessing practical alternatives; (3) skills in effective oral and written communications; and (4) the capacity to use these knowledges and abilities in resolving problems. Work experience in trades and crafts and routine clerical work is not applicable.
- b. A bachelor's degree.
- c. A combination of experience and education which is equivalent to three years of general experience. One academic year which has 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours is equivalent to nine months of general experience.

Starting at GS-7 level, additional specialized experience and/or graduate education is required. If an employee wants to switch from one personnel function to another (e.g., from Personnel Staffing Specialist to Position Classification Specialist) at the GS-7 to GS-11 levels, the employee must have at least 6 months of experience in the functional specialization that was at a level of difficulty comparable to the next lower grade or one year at the second lower grade.

(See X-118 Qualification Standards Manual for further information.)

1. Career Field: GS341 Administrative Officer Series

Employees are primarily concerned with providing, securing or negotiating for the resources or services needed to manage and run an organization. Any combination of the following services may be involved: Funds management, personnel management, management analysis, procurement, contract administration, property management, space management, data processing, travel and transportation management, public information, safety, and security.

2. Official Titles:

Administrative Assistant
(GS-5 to 7)
Administrative Officer
(GS-9 to 15)

3. Career Ladder: Positions usually start at GS-5 with career promotion to GS-7. At GS-9 level, employees usually compete and move into other business administrative series, (e.g., management analysis, contracting administration, etc.). Then at the GS-12 level, these employees have two possible career paths: (a) to compete for an Administrative Officer position and thus re-enter the 341 series; or (b) to compete for higher level positions within the speciality they are in.

4. Qualifications: Three years of general experience is required for all grade levels. General experience is nonclerical work which gave the applicant an opportunity to gain a general knowledge of management practices and administrative processes; skills in dealing with people; and ability to exercise mature judgement. Study above the high school level may be substituted for general experience at the rate of one academic year for 9 months of experience.

At the GS-7 level, one additional year of specialized experience is required. Specialized experience is the knowledge of various management principles, practices, methods and techniques. It is also an understanding of the needs and problems of program administration which required the use of all but one or two of the following activities: establishing and maintaining effective work relationships; making oral and written presentations clearly; interpreting complex written material; analyzing administrative work problems; planning, organizing and coordinating work; accomplishing work where numerous "short-range" tasks are involved; adjusting to changes in policies and procedures. One full academic year of graduate education in social science, behavioral science, business, public administration or industrial management meets all the requirements for GS-7.

(See X-118 Qualification Standards Manual for further information.)

1. Career Field: GS-504 Budget & Accounting Series
GS-560 Budget Administration Series

Employees in the Budget and Accounting Series are responsible for the day-to-day supervision over the budget, the accounting operations, and other related functions such as credit and finance, internal audit, contractor accounts, disbursing, etc.

Employees in the Budget Administration Series perform work in one or more phases of budgeting. They formulate budget estimates, present the estimates, execute approved budgets, and exercise management controls over the obligation and expenditure of funds.

2. Official Titles:

Budget & Accounting Officer
Budget Analyst
Budget Officer

3. Career Ladder: For GS-504, positions generally start at GS-5 and GS-7 grade levels with career promotions to GS-9. Some opportunities exist for competitive promotion to GS-11.

4. Qualifications: Applicants for GS-504-7 positions must have three years of general experience plus one year of specialized experience. General experience is experience in which one gained a general knowledge of management principles and practices. Experience in fields which are closely related to budget examining, or excess specialized experience, can be accepted as general experience. Specialized experience must have included the development, evaluation, or revision of budgetary control systems, budget preparation and presentation, or similar duties.

Study above the high school level may be substituted for experience at the rate of one academic year for nine months of general experience. Specialized experience may be substituted by appropriate graduate education at the rate of one academic year for one year of experience. Applicable fields include public administration, business administration, government, political science, economics, industrial engineering, industrial management, or in the administration and organization of public programs (i.e., public welfare, economic regulation, international organization, public health, etc.)

For both GS-504 and 560 series, positions at the GS-9 level require three years of general experience plus two years of specialized experience. A master's degree or two full academic years of graduate education in any of the fields described above meets all the requirements for GS-9.

(See X-118 Qualification Standards Manual for further information.)

1. Career Field: GS-1102 Contract & Procurement Series

Employees negotiate contracts to secure services, supplies, equipment and other materials for the Government; assure contract compliance; examine and evaluate contract proposals; purchase supplies, services, equipment, etc., by formally advertised bid and negotiated procurement procedures; plan, establish or review procurement programs, policies, or procedures, and other related work.

2. Official Titles

Working Titles (Examples)

Contract Specialist
Contract Officer
Procurement Agent
Procurement Officer

Administrative Services Officer
Office Services Section Head
Property Management Officer
Procurement Specialist

3. Career Ladder: Positions start at GS-5 or GS-7 with career promotions to GS-9. Positions at GS-11 and above are filled competitively.

4. Qualifications: All grade levels require three years of general experience. This is nonclerical work which provided the knowledge of contracting or procurement practices and procedures; the skill in dealing with people, and the ability to exercise mature judgement. One year of specialized experience is required at the GS-7 level; two years for GS-9, three years for GS-11 and above. Specialized experience is experience in that line of work.

Study above the high school level may be substituted for experience at the rate of one academic year for 9 months of general experience. Specialized experience may be substituted by graduate education in business administration, marketing, industrial management, engineering, economics, accounting, or other directly related fields. One full academic year (30 semester hours) meets all the requirements for GS-7. A master's degree or two full academic years meets all the requirements for GS-9.

1. Career Field: GS-1170 Realty Series

Employees perform, plan, direct, and/or advise on one or more of the following functions: acquisition of real estate interests; disposal of real estate by sale, lease, grant, or exchange; planning and management of real estate to attain its highest and best use from a realty standpoint.

2. Official Title

Realty Specialist

3. Career Ladder: Positions start at the GS-5 or GS-7 levels with career promotions to GS-9. Positions at GS-11 and above are filled competitively.

4. Qualifications: All grade levels require three years of general experience. This is nonclerical work in which one gained skill in dealing with people, skill in written communication, and a general knowledge of real estate terminology, contractual documents, or other areas related to buying, selling or managing real property.

One year of additional specialized experience is required for GS-7; two years for GS-9, and three years for GS-11 and above. Specialized experience is a demonstrated knowledge of one or more of the following areas: realty practices, laws and values; economic, social, or ecological factors affecting the use of real property, land, and associated natural resources (i.e., conservation, urban renewal, agriculture); management and financing practices of lease and sale of real property; and relocation assistance, payments, and services due to acquisition of real property.

Study above the high school level may be substituted at the rate of one academic year for 9 months of general experience. Specialized experience may be substituted by graduate education in real estate, regional, urban or rural planning, geography, forestry, geology, business administration, industrial management, engineering, economics, architecture, accounting, or other related fields. One full academic year (30 semester hours) of graduate education meets all the requirements for GS-7. A master's degree, or two full academic years of graduate education, meets all the requirements for GS-9.

WAGE GRADE SERIES

WG/WL/WS-3502	Laborer
WG/WL/WS-4749	Maintenance Mechanic
WG/WL/WS-5716	Engineering Equipment Operator

1. Career Field: WG, WL, WS-3502 Laborer

These positions require mainly physical abilities and effort in doing laborer duties such as: loading and unloading trucks and boxcars; moving furniture, supplies, etc., by hand or handtruck; digging ditches; mowing lawns; washing cars; etc.

2. Official Title

Laborer

3. Career Ladder: Positions start at WG-1 and WG-2 with competitive opportunities to WG-3.

4. Qualifications: These positions do not require any specific amount of experience or education. An applicant's knowledges, skills and abilities are evaluated against the following job elements which are necessary to do the job: (a) ability to work without more than normal supervision, (b) work practices including keeping things neat, clean and in order, (c) ability to interpret instructions, specifications, etc. (other than blueprints; (d) ability to use and maintain tools and equipment; (e) dexterity and safety.

(See X-118 Qualification Standards Manual for further information.)

1. Career Field: WG, WL, WS-4749 Maintenance Mechanic

These employees maintain and repair grounds, exterior structures, buildings, and related fixtures and utilities. They use a variety of trade practices associated with occupations such as carpentry, masonry, plumbing, electrical, air conditioning, cement work, painting, and other related trades.

2. Official Titles

Maintenance Worker
Maintenance Mechanic

3. Career Ladder: Positions normally start at GS-5 for Maintenance Worker and WG-7, WG-8, or WG-9 for Maintenance Mechanic.

4. Qualifications: These positions do not require any specific amount of experience or education. An applicant's knowledges, skills and abilities are evaluated against the following job elements which are necessary to do the job: (a) ability to work without more than normal supervision; (b) knowledge of equipment assembly, installation, repair, etc.; (c) technical practices; (d) use of measuring instruments; (e) ability to interpret instructions, specifications, etc. (includes blueprint reading); (f) ability to use and maintain tools and equipment; (g) knowledge of materials.

(See X-118 Qualification Standards Manual for further information.)

1. Career Field: WG, WL, WS-5716 Engineering Equipment Operator

These employees operate gasoline- or diesel-powered engineering and construction equipment with wheeled or crawler type traction, (e.g., graders, tractors with bulldozer or angledozer blades, front-end loaders, backhoes, trench diggers, etc.). This equipment is used to maintain ditches, road shoulders and beds, and firelines.

2. Official Title

Engineering Equipment Operator

3. Career Ladder: Positions start at WG-7 with competitive opportunities to WG-8 and above.

\$. Qualifications: These positions do not require any specific amount of experience or education. An applicant's knowledges, skills and abilities are evaluated against the following job elements which are necessary to do the job: (a) ability to work without more than normal supervision; (b) operate motor vehicles; (c) work practices including keeping things neat, clean and in order; (d) ability to interpret instructions, specifications, etc., related to mobile equipment operations; (e) ability to operate safely; (f) reliability and dependability as an Engineering Equipment Operator.

(See X-118 Qualification Standards Manual for further information.)

Organization Program Policies

THE FEDERAL PERSONNEL MANUAL

A. Federal Personnel Manual (FPM): All Federal agencies are guided by these directives issued by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). The Department of Interior, National Park Service, and Regions issue more specific direction or further information on these issuances.

The FPM may be found in the Administrative Offices and the Regional Branch of Employees Relations. The directives are filed in the following order:

1. Regional Letters from the Regional OPM (white pages): These are local announcement data regarding the local OPM Office.
2. FPM Bulletin (buff pages): OPM issues these to give notices and instructions which will not continue beyond a certain period of time. These always have expiration dates.
3. FPM Letters (salmon pages): These give quick notification of changes made to basic directives. FPM letters are discarded when the new white pages of basic directives are issued.
4. FPM Basic Directives (white pages): The OPM-issued policies, regulations, and directions outline the parameters of an agency's function in personnel matters. All Federal agencies must comply with these directives.
5. Departmental Manual (white pages): Issued by the Department of the Interior (DOI), these sheets offer specific application of the expansion of the FPM basic directives.
6. National Park Service Issuances (green pages): These are issued by the NPS Washington Office to expand on the Department's instructions.
7. DOI Personnel Management Bulletin (white pages): These are issued by the Department to bureaus to keep them informed of changes or upcoming programs.
8. DOI Personnel Management Letter (white pages): These instructions offer specific items for bureaus.
9. NPS Personnel Management Letter (yellow pages): These sheets give specific NPS interpretation of current policies, regulations, and programs.
10. Western Region Directive (white pages): These sheets establish and elaborate on NPS policies, specifically for the Western Region application.

INTERNAL PLACEMENT

Some methods used to place employees within the organization

REASSIGNMENT: An employee moves to another position within the same agency at the same grade. The employee must meet the qualification requirements of the new position. A reassignment is not subject to merit promotion requirements unless the new position has higher promotion potential than the present position. Reassignment can be voluntary or involuntary.

TRANSFER: An employee moves from one Federal agency to another.

PROMOTION: This Region's promotion process is spelled out by the NPS Career Development and Placement Plan. The various Federal agencies have wide latitude in designing their own plans, but the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) requires that all Federal agencies must meet five basic requirements for filling vacancies through competitive promotion (FPM Chapter 335, Subchapter 1-4): (1) Promotions must be based on merit, and the procedure must not be discriminatory; (2) Agencies must recruit broadly enough to assure high quality candidates; (3) Candidates must meet the minimum qualification standards (X-118) prescribed by OPM, and evaluations must be valid and job related; (4) Management has the right to select or not select from any appropriate source; (5) Agencies must keep records of promotion actions and provide necessary information to employees and the public.

Promotions may be noncompetitive when they result from; (1) correcting an error in job classification; (2) applying a new classification standard issued by OPM; (3) Career promotion -- the employee had previously competed for an assignment intended to progress from a trainee to a fully performing level; (4) Repromotion to a grade or position from which an employee was demoted within the Department without personal cause and not at his/her request; (5) a position change required by reduction-in-force regulations; (6) a temporary promotion of 120 days or less; and (7) an action taken as a remedy for failure to receive proper consideration in a competitive promotion action.

REINSTATEMENT: Former Federal employees who held a permanent position in the competitive service may be reemployed either at the same or lower grade without competition, or at a higher grade under the merit promotion system. There is no time limit on reinstatement eligibility for veterans and for persons who have completed at least three years of substantially continuous service. Those who held career-conditional appointments (permanent positions with less than three years of substantially continuous service) may be reinstated only within three years from the last date of separation.

DEMOTION: An employee moves to a lower grade position in the same agency. This is not subject to Merit Promotion requirements, unless it has higher promotion potential than the old position. Demotions may be voluntary (e.g., at employee's request) or

involuntary (e.g., agency initiated). If it is involuntary, the agency must comply with either adverse action or reduction-in-force procedures.

REDUCTION-IN-FORCE (RIF): Because of changes in program, lack of funds, reorganization, decrease in work, or the necessity to place a returning employee with reemployment rights, a Federal agency may have to lay off, furlough for more than 30 days, reassign, or demote employees. Standard reduction-in-force procedures are set up by the Reduction-in-Force Regulations so that such actions are carried out in a fair and orderly way. RIF's cannot be used to deal with performance problems, because one has to follow adverse action procedures to deal with performance.

RIF's seldom occur in this Region. If it does, employees compete for retention on the basis of four factors specified by law: (1) type of appointment (tenure), (2) veteran preference, (3) total length of service, and (4) performance rating. If it should occur, employees would be notified at least 30 days in advance. Employees have the right to appeal in writing to the Merit System Protection Board (MSPB), 525 Market Street, San Francisco, California 94105, if they believe the RIF regulations were not applied correctly in their cases. (See FPM Chapter 351 for more information.)

EXTERNAL RECRUITMENT

Some methods use to hire from the outside

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT REGISTER: This is the principal source for competitive hiring from the outside. Applicants are examined, rated and ranked by Office of Personnel Management, and later certified to Federal agencies. Selection is made from a "certificate of eligibles" which lists the eligibles' names in ranked order, from highest score to lowest. Only top three available candidates on the certificate are eligible for selection. Veterans must be selected before nonveterans who have the same or a lower score.

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION (CO-OP ED): This program provides college students with paid employment in work related in their fields of study. Students/Employees in this program work under a planned schedule of work experience and study as specified in an agreement made between the NPS and the educational institution. (FMP Chapter 308)

- For Baccalaureate Students (4-year program): College students pursuing their bachelor degrees may be competitively recruited for GS-3 or GS-4 trainee positions to perform work directly related to their fields of study. They are required to work a minimum of two nonconsecutive work periods prior to graduation. Upon graduation and satisfactory completion of work experience periods, they may be noncompetitively placed into permanent GS-5 professional or administrative positions for which they qualify. (FPM Chapter 308, Subchapter 2.)
- For Nonbaccalaureate Students (2-year program): Students pursuing associate degrees may be competitively recruited for GS-3 technical or clerical positions to perform work directly related to their fields of study. They are required to complete at least one work experience period (approximately 6 months) prior to graduation. Upon graduation and satisfactory completion of the work experience period, they may be noncompetitively placed into permanent GS-4 technical or clerical positions for which they qualify. (FPM Chapter 308, Subchapter 4.)

SUMMER/SEASONAL EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM: An authority used to competitively recruit temporary employees to fill various park aid and park technician positions at the GS-2 to GS-5 grade levels. All applications for positions are filed with the Seasonal Employment Unit in Washington, D.C. The applications are then forwarded to the two park areas in the Service that the applicant has selected.

Applicants for seasonal Laborer and maintenance positions apply directly to the park area(s) of their choice.

Rehire eligibility is limited to the same park. Rehires are considered before new hires.

WORK-TRAINEE TAPER AUTHORITY: This authority may be used to competitively recruit temporary employees to fill worker-trainee positions at the GS-1, WG-1 and WG-2 grade levels. Employees in worker-trainee positions may be reassigned or promoted to other positions up through GS-3 and WG-4. Temporary employees with TAPER appointments may be noncompetitively converted to permanent career appointments after three years of qualifying service. (FPM Chapter 316, Subchapter 2 and FPM Letter 316-16, dated July 30, 1979.)

EMPLOYMENT OF THE PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED (HANDICAP PROGRAM): A program which allows noncompetitive placement of severely handicapped individuals into positions for which they qualify. Duties may be modified to accommodate the person's handicap. (FPM Chapter 306, Subchapter 4.)

VETERAN'S READJUSTMENT APPOINTMENTS (VRA): Vietnam era veterans with other than a dishonorable discharge may be recruited noncompetitively for positions at GS-7 or below, or WG-7 or below. VRA appointees must have no more than 14 years of education, but this restriction is waived for compensably disabled veterans and veterans discharged because of service-connected disabilities. Appointees for positions GS-4 and above must meet the qualification requirements of the positions for which they are selected. (FPM Chapter 307)

PEACE CORPS/VISTA: Former Peace Corps/Vista volunteers who have satisfactorily completed the required volunteer service may be noncompetitively appointed to positions for which they qualify. (FPM Chapter 215, Subchapter 6, Section 6-7.)

700 HOUR APPOINTMENT: There are temporary, limited appointments which cannot exceed 700 hours of work during a consecutive twelve-month period. Appointees may be placed in positions at GS-7 or below, but all appointees must meet the qualification requirements of the position for which they were appointed. These appointments may not be used to extend some other authority. (FPM Chapter 316, Subchapter 4, Section 4-6(c).)

30-DAY SPECIAL NEED: This authority may be used to meet any legitimate need that cannot be served through appointment under some existing authority. These appointments may not exceed one month and cannot be used more than once for any one person during a period of twelve consecutive months. This authority may not be used to extend an appointment made under some other appointing authority. (FPM Chapter 316, Subchapter 4-8 Section 4-8(b).)

MERIT PROMOTION PROCEDURES

The NPS Career Development and Placement Plan does not guarantee that that you will be promoted nor does it require that any vacancy be filled by promotion. Positions may be filled by reassignment, reinstatement or through OPM registers without using the vacancy announcement system.

You may apply for vacancy announcements by following the "How to Apply" paragraph indicated on the announcement. Most announcements currently open are listed in the Weekly Vacancy Information List (pink sheets). You may call the appropriate telephone number for a copy of the vacancy announcement in which you are interested. The vacancy announcement includes the duties of the position, qualifications required, method of evaluation (knowledges, skills and abilities), how and when to apply, and the opening and closing date.

How to Apply: In general employees should submit an SF-171, latest performance evaluation, and SF-50 indicating status. Employees are also requested to submit Background Survey Questionnaire 79-2. The information from this survey will be used to insure that agency personnel practices meet the requirements of Federal regulations relating to Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures. This information is confidential and will not be released from the servicing personnel office. The form will not be furnished to the selecting official. While completion of the form is voluntary, your assistance would be greatly appreciated.

Methods of Evaluation: With the exception of Upward Mobility announcements, candidates will be evaluated against the X-118 Qualification Standards. Once it has been determined that the applicant qualifies, he/she will be ranked against the knowledges, skills and abilities (KSA's) identified for the position. Only the highly qualified applicants will be referred to the park area for selection. The selecting official may select any one of the highly qualified candidates on the list. If the list contains less than three names, the selecting official has the option to request that the position be re-advertised, or that another method of filling the position be pursued, i.e., OPM registers.

After Selection is Made: The park area where the vacancy is located will notify all candidates on the certificate as to whom was selected. All other candidates who applied for the position but whose names did not appear on the list will also be notified at that time.

ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES

- A. **REASSIGNMENT OF SPOUSES:** When one member of a husband-wife team is transferred, and both have permanent positions with NPS, the Service will make an effort to place the spouse, without promotion, into any appropriate existing vacancy within a reasonable commuting distance of the other spouse's new position.
- B. **TIME-IN-GRADE RESTRICTIONS:** The purpose of the time-in-grade restrictions is to prevent excessively rapid promotions. Generally, the restrictions are: (1) Employees at a GS-5 and above must stay in grade for one year before they are eligible for promotion; (2) Employees below GS-5 may not be promoted more than two times within one year, provided they are qualified. (FPM Chapter 300, Subchapter 6.)
- C. **PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT:** Agencies are required to have programs expanding part-time career employment opportunities. Starting October 1, 1980, part-time employees will be counted toward personnel ceilings based on the number of hours they work. For example, two 20-hour-a-week employees count as one full-time employee. Appointments can be made from competitive registers, conversion from full-time employment, reinstatement, or other means. (FPM Chapter 312, CSC Bulletin 312-6.)

Training & Development

1. What is training?

Training is an activity designed to teach a person how to do something to a specified level of quality. Training can be accomplished in many ways and in many situations, e.g., formal classroom, details, on-the-job training, extension course, college courses, etc.

2. What are the various kinds of training opportunities? How do I get information on them?

Some of the more common opportunities are: National Park Service training programs at Albright, Mather or Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers; other governmental training (e.g., Office of Personnel Management courses, USDA courses, Forest Service courses); community college, universities, private consulting firms, a variety of non-governmental training opportunities, etc. Your local personnel office can give you detail information about the various training opportunities. The Regional Training Branch will also have information about the Service courses.

3. Does training have to be job-related?

If by job-related you mean related to the work of the Service, the answer is an unqualified "yes." If job-related means your current assignment within the organization, the answer is "not necessarily." Training for possible future work in the organization, commonly called developmental training, is a legitimate use of organizational resources. Priority is usually given to training an employee to better perform his/her present job. This includes helping the employee maintain a level of expertise in his/her field. Second priority is usually given to developmental training.

4. How much training are temporary, new, or permanent employees entitled to?

Training is not a right or a benefit of any employee, but a management prerogative. Therefore, training may not be approved in every instance, depending on the availability of funds, need, staffing, etc. However, there is no distinction made in the Federal Personnel Manual between temporary, new, or permanent employees in regards to training regulations. However, there are regulations on how much training one can get in different types of training situations.

Training in non-government Facilities: There are two restrictions.

a. No employee having less than one year of current, continuous civilian service is eligible for training in non-government facilities. This restriction may be waived by the Director, National Park Service. (FPM 410, 5-4.b.)

b. An employee's time in training through non-Government facilities cannot exceed one year in each 10-year period of his/her continuous and noncontinuous civilian service in Government. (FPM 410, 5-4.c.)

Training in Government facilities: No particular limitations are established; however, each situation must be judged on its own merit. There needs to be, as in cases of non-Government training, approval by supervisors prior to consideration of an employee to attend training.

5. I am a supervisor, can I get supervisory training?

Office of Personnel Management through the Civil Service Reform Act requires a minimum of 80 hours of formal training for supervisors during their "Supervisory Probationary Period." The Office of Personnel Management offers a good selection of supervisory courses. Consult your local training officer for further information.

6. What is the procedure to get training?

The appraisal and counseling session offers the employee and supervisor a formal opportunity to discuss the employee's performance as well as any training or skill development needed. Training needs may be recorded on Form 10-182b, Individual Development Plan (IDP). This is not an application form, but a management tool to identify training needs.

An IDP is a "road map" to your career development goal. For example, let's say an employee is interested in becoming a personnel management specialist, what training, experience, or knowledge must the individual have? With these listed, an employee has an idea which steps she must take to get to the final destination -- personnel management specialist. The IDP is the documentation of the necessary skills or education to gain and the appropriate method and time frame.

In addition to a formal counseling session, we encourage employees to discuss their training needs with supervisors at any time informally. Better communication of needs and expectations will facilitate better working relationships and improve the work environment.

If it is agreed that the employee should attend training, specific course nomination procedures should be followed. Contact your local training officer or the Regional Training Branch for further information.

7. My supervisor has never discussed training opportunities or needs with me. What should I do?

You should first take a good look at your own performance: How well am I doing? Should I develop my capabilities on my own time to increase my chances for advancement? After reviewing your own needs, abilities, and performance you should talk to your supervisor or someone in your administrative division about your perceptions.

8. I can't/didn't get the training that was on my development plan, what can I do?

Training listed on your IDP serves two functions. First, it enables the Training Centers to get an idea of the needs of employees when planning their calendars. Second, the IDP facilitates communication between the employee and supervisor to help the employee reach his/her goals. The IDP will serve as a "map" on the career path. Talk to your supervisor and find out why your request was denied.

9. How can I get the training to qualify me for another job or to help me advance?

Rarely will training provide enough experience and/or education needed to qualify you for a job that you do not presently qualify for under the X-118 qualification standards. (Once qualified, training may help you become more selectable in the occupation you are already in.) Long term training and Upward Mobility opportunities are the exceptions, and these involve competitive selection procedures and limited opportunities. Training is provided to help an individual become more proficient in work-related endeavors; therefore it may not be enough time for qualifying for other jobs.

10. What will formal education and/or degree do for me?

They may give you the minimum qualifications required in an occupational series. For professional series, specific education requirements must be met in order to be basically qualified. In clerical, technical and administrative series, formal education may be substituted for the required experience needed to be basically qualified.

11. What training expenses can the Park Service pay for?

The Park Service is authorized to pay all or part of the necessary expenses of approved training. This usually includes costs of travel; tuition; books and materials; and per diem charges. In addition, an employee may attend courses during work hours and receive regular wages.

12. What programs are available to help me attend college courses?

The Western Region has made available some monies for the Upward Mobility Assistance Program. This program was designed to help employees who are in dead-ended positions to meet entry-level qualifications of other positions with more career promise. This can be done by attendance at local colleges and universities. There are restrictions regarding application to this program. For more information, contact the Regional Upward Mobility Coordinator.

Common Questions on SF-171

COMMON QUESTIONS ON SF-171

1. What is the SF-171 used for?

The SF-171 is the primary document used for determining whether an applicant meets qualification and time-in-grade requirements. It is used to review the applicants' education and experience to determine the best qualified applicants to be placed on a certificate of eligibles.

2. If I apply for a vacancy, do I have to submit a SF-171?

Yes. The SF-171, signed in ink, is used by practically all Federal agencies as the basic application for their merit promotion program.

3. Can I fill out the SF-171 on official work time?

Yes, as long as you are filing for a job within the Department of Interior.

4. How often should I update my SF-171? How important is it to keep it updated?

You should update your SF-171 each time you change jobs or have significant changes in your level of education. It is not necessary to completely redo your application each time, as special supplements are available for this purpose. An up-to-date application may be the difference in your getting placed on a certificate or being selected.

5. Can I use "government paid" envelopes to mail my application?

You cannot use government-paid envelopes for mailing your application to other Federal agencies or to NPS positions in other areas.

HINTS FOR PREPARING A STANDARD FORM 171

DO'S

Read carefully the vacancy announcement or the examination announcement for the position for which you are applying. Underline the skills required by the position.

Describe your experience so that you emphasize the work that used the skills required by the vacant position.

Use active verbs to describe what work you actually did. Be specific.

Keep your experience descriptions brief.

Write everything on the 171 itself. Use continuation forms if necessary.

Use your own words in filling out the experience blanks.

Include all experience, whether paid or volunteer.

Arrange your experience in chronological order. Put most recent one first.

Choose references who can remember you, and know how you perform in a work (paid or unpaid) situation.

Have your 171 neatly and accurately typed or write so that each word is legible.

If your 171 is reproduced, be sure every page is easily readable. Make certain the pages are in correct order.

DON'T'S

Don't use the same 171 for jobs in non-related fields.

Don't exaggerate. Don't be humble.

Don't describe the work of the organization generally or the work of others.

Don't use attachments. Take them to the interview.

Don't even use position descriptions.

Don't omit church, community or club work.

Don't use general character references--they usually won't commit themselves on such matters as dependability, initiative, etc.

Don't submit a 171 that is messy, hard to read, or confusing to follow.

Don't make your 171 a "challenge" to the reader. Hard-to-read applications go in the "Out" pile first.

GUIDE TO DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE SF-171

These explanations and suggestions should be considered in addition to the "General Instructions" attached to each SF-171.

Item 1. Indicate areas in which you would want to be considered. This information will probably change, depending on the opportunity available.

Items 2-14. Enter factual data.

Items 15-17. Keep your options open on these checklist questions. Be honest, but don't limit yourself unnecessarily; for example, if a job is attractive enough, you might be willing to travel often, especially if the travel is to nearby places.

Item 19. If you are a veteran, enter factual information on your status. (Ten-point preference is granted to some widows of veterans, to spouses of disabled veterans, and to mothers of deceased or disabled veterans.)

Item 20. Under "Experience" write accurate, concise but complete descriptions of what you have done in past jobs, including required skills, abilities, special assignments, authority and responsibility, relationships to others, accomplishments, and any other factors which help describe your experience.

Use straightforward and precise language. For example, it is more informative to say "Kept time and leave records for 86 employees" than to say, "Was responsible for attendance criteria for entire office." Or, "Managed printing, editing and distribution of weekly newsletter to 120 employees" is better than "Was charged with communications process to field staff."

If you supervise other employees, indicate the number and kind of employees you supervised, and explain your duties as a supervisor under description of duties.

If you worked part-time, indicate estimated number of hours worked per week in the space provided.

Use separate blocks if your duties, responsibilities, or salary level changed materially while working for the same employer. Treat each such change as a separate position.

Make your entries operational, distinct, and quantifiable. State them so the selecting officer can visualize what you did. People will value your ability to recognize job elements and they will know what skills you are offering. Emphasize such things as initiative, decision making, individual responsibility.

Item 21. Include everything that you think pertinent, such as:

- Membership in professional societies or other organization. Be sure to include any offices held or particular responsibilities, e.g., fundraising, workshop leader, president, etc.

- Articles or reports you have written. (They don't necessarily have to be published.)
- Public speaking skills. Mention any public speaking experience.
- Skills with machines. Be specific and include everything: key punch, typewriter, computers, projectors, calculators, cameras, etc.

This is also a good place to highlight some general skills you have developed through your work and outside activities, e.g., counseling, analytical writing, conference coordination, etc.

Item 22. Be sure to show all training you have had. List all courses or training you have taken at your own expense as well as those paid for by the government.

If the courses you have taken have general titles like "communication," you might describe more specifically what you learned. Every effort you have made to develop yourself into a more competent person should be included here.

Item 23. Many people are modest about awards. Honors and awards don't have to be earthshaking to be included. Cite:

- Scholarships
- Letters of commendation (from your boss or your public)
- Safety awards
- Suggestion awards (perhaps briefly describe and indicate results)
- Community and Government awards and nominations
- Election to honorary societies or groups
- Quality Step Increases; other achievement awards

Item 25. List people who know you well enough to really know your work. Make sure your references are accessible--don't give names of people who are overseas unless absolutely necessary. It is helpful if you include the telephone numbers of your references.

DO NOT attach copies of your position description or resume. It is your responsibility to incorporate the essential information into the SF-171. Make it accurate and complete, but concise, so that it can be read easily.

It is advantageous to leave the signature and date spaces blank on the master copy. This enables you to make copies as you need them and add your signature and current date in ink.

NOTE: If the SF-171 is being prepared to apply for a certain job or training program, you should emphasize your education and experience which is most relevant to that job. It is your responsibility to indicate why you are well-suited for the job. Find out what the new job requires by studying:

1. **Vacancy announcement.** This tells what general experience, specialized experience, specific experience and/or education is needed. Also gives you the evaluation criteria.
2. **Position Description.** This explains in more detail what the job involves.
3. **X-118 Qualification Standards Manual.** Describes the kind and amount of experience and/or education required for each grade of each occupational series.
4. **OPM Classification Standards.** This explains the duties of a certain job at a certain grade level.

Commonly Asked Questions

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. **What are Classification Standards and Qualifications Standards? Can employees look at them? Where are they kept?**

Classification Standards and Qualification Standards (X118's and X118C) are often confused with one another. Classification Standards are developed and published by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Agency Classification Specialists are required to apply these standards to all positions to determine the proper title, occupational series, and grade of the position being classified. The Classification Specialist is concerned with the duties and responsibilities of the position, not with the qualification of the employee. Qualification Standards (X118's and X118C) are another set of standards developed and published by OPM for use in determining the appropriate qualifications for each grade level of all occupational series. Agency officials are required to match the qualifications of individual applicants against these standards to determine whether they qualify for the position applied for.

Both sets of Standards are public information and available for review by all employees. You may make photocopies, at government expense, of the pages you wish to retain. At a minimum, both sets of Standards are available in the regional personnel office. Park personnel offices may have copies of commonly used standards.

2. **What determines pay rate?**

Pay for General Schedule (GS) employees is based on the GS grade level and step within the grade. Grade is determined by comparing the duties and responsibilities in your job to the Classification Standards. Pay for GS positions is set by law and is fixed at each grade and step level.

Pay for each position classified as a Federal Wage position (WG, WS, or WL) is established by geographical area and is adjusted periodically so that it maintains comparability with other pay rates (i.e., private industry, state, etc.) within the same geographical area. Grade for Federal Wage positions is also determined by comparing the duties and responsibilities in your job to Classification Standards.

3. **What is a "shortage category"? What are the series?**

A "shortage category" is an occupation (e.g., engineer, accountant, landscape architect) that has been determined, through studies or surveys conducted by OPM, to be difficult to recruit for and fill in a given geographical area. There are various reasons why there may be a shortage of applicants. Frequently the reason is that the private sector pays more for similar work than the government. Therefore two provisions were established which allow the government to recruit more effectively in these "shortage categories" and to compete with the private sector.

Current law allows for: (1) payment of travel and transportation to duty stations. Some of the affected occupations include biologist, accountants, computer specialist (See FPM 572, Appendix A for a complete list); and (2) establishment of a higher than normal pay rate within GS grade levels, but the entry rate cannot exceed the 10th step of that grade. Some of the affected occupations include engineers, clerk-typist in the Bay Area, landscape architects, (See FPM 530, Appendix A for a complete list).

4. How do I get information on jobs in other regions and other Federal agencies?

Positions announced on vacancy announcements in other regions will appear in the Weekly Vacancy Information List (pink sheets). Copies are sent to all parks and to all Regional Office staffs.

You may also file applications with other Federal agencies. Submit your application directly to the other agency, requesting placement in their "voluntary application" file. Since not all Federal agencies maintain such application files, it is best to contact the specific agency for more information. Federal agencies are not required to distribute vacancy announcements to other agencies, and we do not systematically maintain or distribute such information. From time to time, a park or the Regional Office may receive vacancy announcements from other agencies, and these may be posted on the vacancy announcement board.

5. Can I apply for a job that is a lower grade than I am presently in?

Yes, and accepting a job at a lower grade does not adversely affect your chances for future promotions. However, the future promotions are not automatic. You must re compete along with the other qualified applicants. If you accept the lower grade, the agency will try to give you your highest previous salary rate, but this rate cannot exceed the tenth step of the grade you are going into.

6. What is a "non-exempt" versus an "exempt" employee?

A "non-exempt" employee is one who is covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). This act established several variations on pay matters for Federal employees. These include compensation for travel time (more liberal under FLSA); a slightly different method of computing the compensation rate for overtime hours worked; and if an employee works overtime with the knowledge--but not at the direction--of his/her supervisor, the employee must be compensated for the hours worked. An "exempt" employee is one who is not covered by these provisions of FLSA.

In general "non-exempt" employees are clerical and technical or similar support or specialist positions up to grade 9 or 11. "Exempt" employees are those in professional, managerial, administrative, or supervisory positions at grade 9 and above. Professional and administrative two-grade interval positions are considered "exempt" at grade 7 and 9 respectively.

7. If I quit my job, what are my reinstatement rights?

Reinstatement means the noncompetitive reemployment of a former Federal employee who previously occupied a career or career-conditional appointment (FPM Chapter 315, Subchapter 4). There is no time limit on eligibility for reinstatement if you are a veteran with career or career conditional status, or if you are a non-veteran with career status. (Career status means that you have had three years of substantially continuous -- without a break of more than 30 days -- Federal service in a permanent appointment. Career-conditional status means you have had less than three years of substantially continuous Federal service.)

Reinstatement eligibility for non-veterans with career-conditional appointments is good for only three years following the date of separation.

If you leave government service and wish to be reinstated, you apply directly to the personnel office of the agency for which you would like to work. Reinstatement is contingent upon the availability of a position and is at the discretion of the employing agency. If you are seeking reinstatement, the Federal Job Center can be a helpful source for locating vacancies in the various agencies for which you qualify.

8. When can I get my Within-Grade-Increase (WGI)? Are WGI's guaranteed?

Employees must maintain a satisfactory level of performance to earn their WGI's. If performance is passable or unsatisfactory, the WGI can be withheld.

If performance is satisfactory, the WGI is granted when you have completed the required "waiting period." The waiting periods differ for General Schedule (GS) and wage grade employees. The waiting periods for the ten steps within each GS grade are:

To go to steps 2, 3, and 4--one year;

To go to steps 5, 6, and 7--two years;

To go to steps 8, 9, and 10--three years.

The waiting periods for the five steps within each wage grade are;

To go to rate 2-- six months;

To go to rate 3--eighteen months;

To go to rates 4 and 5--two years.

9. How long before I can promote to the next grade level?

Future promotions are based upon whether or not you are in a position with career promotions assured. If you are, you can be promoted if you have successfully performed the duties of your present grade level and have met the time in grade requirements. Generally, employees at GS-5 and above must stay in grade for one year before they are eligible for promotion. Employees below the GS-5 level may not be promoted more than two times within one year, provided they are qualified.

If you are not in a position with career promotion potential or you have reached the last step of your guaranteed career ladder you must compete for promotion under the provisions of the Merit Promotion Plan. In cases of competition, you are not guaranteed a promotion just because you are eligible and qualified or even highly qualified. Selections are made from a group of highly qualified candidates at the discretion of the selecting official.

10. Based on my background and skills, what are best alternatives?

This is a difficult question to answer, because you must decide what is best for you. You may seek opinions from your supervisor, friends, other employees, managers, spouse, etc., but it is ultimately you who must decide what is important to you at any given time and define your own success. It is useful to reassess your values, interest, and priorities each time you want to change a career or life goal, because these may change from time to time. A variety of books, courses, and workbooks are available if you want help in this area. You must also determine the sacrifices and tradeoffs you are willing to make in working toward any goal. Hopefully your decisions will match your interest, skills, desires, values, priorities, and available opportunities as closely as possible for that given period of time. Assistance in making career decisions is available from your supervisor and your local personnel office.

11. How do I change to another series?

Movement to another series depends upon the qualifications for that position and the career potential of that series. Unless it is an Upward Mobility position, you must meet the qualifications of the series you wish to change to. If you are qualified for a vacant position in another series at the same or lower grade level, and the position has no promotion potential, you may request to be reassigned. If the vacant position has promotion potential or is at a higher grade level, you must apply and compete through the Merit Promotion procedures.

12. What do I need to do in order to qualify or advance?

With the exception of Upward Mobility positions, you must possess certain knowledges, skills, and abilities essential to a position in order to qualify for it. Professional positions require a specific educational background, and you must

possess that education before you can qualify. Other positions require a combination of experience and/or education. Therefore, if you want to advance or change to another occupation, you must first identify the position you want. Then check the qualifications needed for that position (use this handbook and the X-118 Qualifications Standards Manual). Compare and determine how your own skills, knowledges, and abilities differ from the required qualifications. Your local personnel office can help you determine the exact required qualifications for a desired position. Then determine the method (i.e., schooling, Upward Mobility, reassignment, etc.) and set up a plan to go after what's missing from your own background. Work related career development must be jointly developed by you and your supervisor, agreed by your supervisor, and approved at the appropriate level.

You can gain the needed qualifications through education, experience, and voluntary activities. Training courses and detail assignments will not help you qualify for occupations you do not already basically qualify for, because these are usually not long enough to give you the experience and education required by X-118; long term details for a minimum of six months are one exception to this, but opportunities are limited. Short-term training only enhances your ability to do your present job, or makes you more "selectable" for occupations for which you already basically qualify, or exposes you to other types of work.

13. What are my options if I think my job is assigned the wrong grade?

There are three ways by which you may question the grade of your position. You have a choice in selecting any one of these methods. Whichever way you choose, you must submit a written request stating the title and grade of the position, the duties performed, and the reason(s) why you believe the position is erroneously classified.

- a. You may request for a position review by the personnel office classification authority for the position in question. The steps of this informal Agency system are:
 - (1) If after a joint review of the position description by you and your supervisor, both of you agree that it accurately describes your work duties but you feel that it has been assigned the wrong grade, you can ask for a review. If you disagree with your supervisor as to the accuracy of your position description, both of you should at least agree on where the differences exist, and write them down. Submit the written request through your immediate supervisor to your administrative or personnel office.
 - (2) Requests for position reviews are then forwarded to the appropriate personnel officer who will review the position description and/or "audit" the position. Auditing means the classifier will visit your work site and discuss the duties of your position. This classifier will also review the position description with your supervisor to determine

if it describes the job as intended. After gathering all the pertinent facts the classifier will compare the position to classification standards as prepared by OPM. Based on this comparison the classifier will determine the proper title, occupational series, and grade of the position. Depending upon the decision, the position will either remain the same, be upgraded, or be downgraded. If the position is upgraded, management usually has the discretion either to promote you or assign you duties which will retain your current grade level. If the position is downgraded, you are entitled to grade and salary retention, and also to be placed on a placement priority list.

- (3) If you or your supervisor disagree with the classifier's decision resulting from a "desk audit," you may file a formal classification appeal. Consult with your supervisor, personnel office, or classifier for proper formal procedures.
- b. You may file a formal classification appeal with the Director of NPS, or the Office of the Secretary, Department of Interior. An employee is limited to one appeal level in the Department, i.e., either Department of Interior or National Park Service.
- c. You may file a formal classification appeal with the appropriate Regional Office of Personnel Management. An employee who appeals to Department of Interior or NPS can later appeal to OPM. An employee who appeals to OPM can not later appeal to Department of Interior or to NPS.

14. What are my rights if I feel I was highly qualified for a position but was not selected?

Employees having a question or complaint about the promotion program or about a specific promotion action should discuss it with their supervisor and, if desired, their personnel office. If the matter is not resolved to the employee's satisfaction, the employee may submit a formal complaint under the Agency's Grievance System. However, nonselection for promotion from among a group of properly ranked and certified candidates (the list of highly qualified) is not a basis for a formal complaint. Management has the right to select any applicant from the list of "highly qualified" candidates.

Employees have a right to request the following information from the recruiting personnel unit if not selected for a position from which they have applied:

- a. If they were considered.
- b. If they were qualified.
- c. If they were grouped among the best qualified.
- d. Who was selected.

- e. How might they improve the chances of future promotion.
- f. Any appraisals of the employee used in the action.

How might they improve the chances of future promotion. If you did not make the final certificate and after analyzing the information available to you you still feel you should have, you can grieve your non-placement on the certificate. A review will then be conducted to determine if you should be included in the final certificate for future consideration.

If you feel you have been discriminated against because of race, color, national origin, political affiliation, creed, age, handicap, or sex you can file an EEO complaint with your EEO Counselor.

15. How can I become more competitive or highly qualified?

In general sense, you must open up your availability to the broadest extent and take advantage of the opportunities when they become available. Talk to all kinds of people (i.e., those already working in the profession you want, supervisors, managers, personnel specialist, those who have recently left the field, etc.) to get their opinions and some information on the jobs you are thinking about. Look at your own interests, skills, and priorities. Ultimately you must know what you want before you can set up a plan to get there. You need to ask yourself all kinds of questions: Do you need to get into other lines of work? Do you need more education? Would reassignment help? Should you try to get a long term detail? Should you apply for an Upward Mobility position?

Once you have decided on your next step, and you meet all the minimum qualification requirements, then find out what are the criteria for "highly qualified." Normally, these criteria are printed on the vacancy announcements. You can also find out the criteria used for similar jobs advertised in the past by talking to the personnel unit(s) which had these vacancies. Furthermore, if you applied for a job and were not selected, you could ask for information about yourself for future development purposes.

16. What are my rights as a probationary employee?

You have the right to be given the opportunity to perform duties of your position. You have the right to expect that your training and development plan is prepared and followed.

Unsatisfactory performers may be separated at any time during the one year probationary period. This is not considered an adverse action, employees have appeal rights to the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) only if they feel their dismissal was based on political affiliation or marital status. If you feel your termination during your probationary period was discriminatory in nature, you have the right to file an EEO complaint.

17. If I move to a new job at another location, what moving expense am I entitled to?

In general, employees transferred from one official station to another for permanent duty may be allowed the following:

- a. Travel and transportation expenses for yourself and your immediate family.
- b. Transportation and temporary storage of your household goods, OR transportation of a mobile home when used as a residence.
- c. Travel and transportation expenses between old and new official stations to seek permanent residence quarters; only one round trip is allowed. This trip may be used by you, or your spouse alone in lieu of you, or both you and your spouse together. No house-hunting trip will be authorized when the old official station is less than 75 miles from the new official station or when moving into government furnished housing.
- d. Subsistence expenses up to 30 days for yourself and your immediate family while occupying temporary quarters.
- e. Allowances for miscellaneous expenses associated with discontinuing residence at the old official station and establishing residence at the new official station.
- f. Allowances for expenses relevant to real estate transactions and unexpired leases.

