

**QUESTIONS FROM PARTICIPANTS IN THE 11/13/07  
CONFERENCE CALL:  
KEYS TO BUILDING EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH FEDERAL  
AGENCIES**

**QUESTIONS ARE GROUPED BY TOPIC:**

**What federal agencies are most interested in hiring GRADUATE students (master's and doctoral students in all disciplines)?**

**What are agency hiring trends?**

**Where are the vacancies?**

**How are mid-career positions advertised and filled?**

*Where the Jobs Are* is a GREAT source of information. It describes agency by agency what their hiring needs and plans are for the next two years, and also groups hiring needs by professional field or discipline. You can download the report at:

<http://www.ourpublicservice.org/OPS/publications/viewcontentdetails.php?id=118>.

The vast majority of federal jobs are listed on [www.USAJobs.gov](http://www.USAJobs.gov) ...over 50,000 such jobs currently. This includes entry level, mid-career, and senior positions.

**Where to find internship announcements (for actual positions, not just info on broad internship categories)?**

**What is the best way to identify student program opportunities (SCEP and FCIP, to name a few)?**

**How can I find who handles student programs vs. permanent hires?**

The best sources are [www.studentjobs.gov](http://www.studentjobs.gov) and the new internship directory that the Partnership has just assembled. That can be found at

[www.MakingTheDifference.org](http://www.MakingTheDifference.org).

Contacts for student programs at each agency is unique to the agency, but a number of agencies with which we work closely have provided contact names in the Directory of Agency Contacts, which can be found in the new Call to Serve Toolkit, found at [www.CalltoServe.org](http://www.CalltoServe.org).

**What role or position in federal agencies, typically, is responsible for university relationships? What is the best strategy for contacting hiring managers?**

This varies from agency to agency, but typically the focal point is the person responsible for the agency's recruiting program – such as the Director for Recruiting.

The term “hiring manager” usually refers to the individual who is seeking to fill a position on his or her team...the line supervisor, in other words. Many agencies are unlikely to release this individual’s name, although the hiring manager may contact outsiders in the course of conducting interviews, corralling resumes, doing reference checks, etc. It is more likely that a university recruiting coordinator would contact either an agency’s recruiting director to discuss relevant matters or the individual recruiter who visited the university.

**What is the best way to approach agencies for participation in our career fair?**

**What does it take to get federal agencies to be more active/present on our campuses for events like job fairs?**

**Would agencies be more inclined to attend job fair events if these were sponsored by more than one college (i.e., consortium events) where greater student attendance would be guaranteed?**

**How far in advance should we send details on our career fair?**

**How to get federal representatives/Partnership representatives to come to our campus? ...We have been unable to get any of you to come to our campus for speaking engagements or for career fairs.**

- Most federal agencies have very limited funds for travel to and registration at career fairs. This means that they generally have to be quite selective in where they choose to go. Hence, they are most likely to go to a relatively few schools where there is
  - 1) a good fit for the kinds of skills they need,
  - 2) good diversity within the student body,
  - 3) a large enough number of potential applicants to make it worth their while,
  - 4) a track record of success there.
- Thus, federal agencies cannot generally attend large numbers of career fairs, although some agencies (such as the CIA) do go to many.
- The question for you in planning a career fair is: what would make a federal agency KNOW that they should attend yours? Often, just sending an email invitation is not going to be convincing.
- What might you do:
  - Research which agencies are hiring students like the ones you are trying to place (look at *Where the Jobs Are* for lots of information along this line)
  - In the spring (ideally) of the **year before** your career fair, contact that agency, start talking to them about why they should come to your school. Market to them so they can see the benefit. (Remember that most agency recruiters have to request travel and registration money for the next school year many months ahead of time...to try to get those funds allocated to them. Often they have no last minute funds available.)
  - Plan their visit so they get into classrooms, meet with key faculty, hold information sessions, etc. This builds a relationship and also increases the likelihood that their visit will be successful...!

- And then there is a better chance that they will come back next year!

**How can we get the agencies to our campuses who tend to hire the most general business/liberal arts students? These are the students we all need to serve the most.**

Look at *Where the Jobs Are*, which is organized by professional field and shows which agencies are hiring individuals in each field. Recognize that federal agencies have many jobs, but they need more individuals for certain kinds of jobs (e.g., medical and public health – 35,350 jobs) in the next two years than others (Program Management/Analysis and Administration (14,305 jobs). You can then target agencies and departments that are hiring the most liberal arts students. Although the main federal needs fall under medical, sciences, engineering and business/accounting, there are plenty of positions where a liberal arts degree would be the appropriate background.

1. **Security, Protection, Compliance and Enforcement (62,863 new hires)**  
Criminal and non-criminal investigators, inspectors, customs and border agents, intelligence Agents and **Program Management/Analysis and Administration (14,345 new hires)** Broad category ranging from project managers and skilled analysts to administrative staff. The Social Security Administration alone is looking for more than 3,000 people with liberal arts backgrounds.
2. Make sure to check out Red, White and Blue book: [Liberal Arts](#) and [Business](#) .

**How can we encourage more departments/agencies to sponsor their own recruitment events...and if this were to occur, how could we all learn about these types of events?**

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) works with selected universities (in 2007 -2008, they are Louisiana State, Ohio State, the Pittsburgh Consortium, University of New Mexico, New Mexico State, and Northern Virginia Community College) to host federal career fairs. Typically 40 or more federal agencies participate in these career fairs. OPM has limited funds for career fairs such as this, and agencies typically cannot afford to sponsor their own events. We are suggesting that some agencies/departments consider collaborating on events to try to control their costs, and also that universities and colleges that are in close proximity to each consider banding together to attract agencies to their events by scheduling them at one location ideally, or at least at different times within a day to reduce travel costs. The Partnership posts to our Web site the information we have about upcoming career fairs and events (see [www.makingthedifference.org](http://www.makingthedifference.org) for the full list).

**Is there a way to have access to Federal employee directory to identify college alumni?**

There is no single source. Sometimes the best source for identifying alums who are current or former federal employees is to go to your university's alumni

office. Some alumni offices have invited grads including federal employees to become informal mentors for student job seekers, and these volunteers can be a great source of information and assistance for you and for your students. Most agencies cannot release the names of their employees without getting their permission to do so, and many are reluctant to do that.

Sometimes it is easy to identify which faculty members have or have had federal grants or contracts, and these individuals can be powerful allies for you in educating students and other faculty about federal opportunities.

**How can we get federal speakers to come to our campus?**

The Partnership runs the Annenberg Speakers Bureau. You can learn more about the program at and apply for a speaker at <http://www.ourpublicservice.org/OPS/programs/calltoserve/annenbergspeakersbureau.shtml>.