



OPENING DOORS, BUILDING LADDERS

HOW FEDERAL AGENCIES CAN HIRE AND RETAIN
CALIFORNIANS WHO DO NOT HAVE A FOUR-YEAR DEGREE

FEBRUARY 2021



PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

 The **James Irvine** Foundation

The Partnership for Public Service is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that works to revitalize the federal government by inspiring a new generation to serve and by transforming the way government works. The Partnership teams up with federal agencies and other stakeholders to make our government more effective and efficient. We pursue this goal by:

- Providing assistance to federal agencies to improve their management and operations, and to strengthen their leadership capacity.
- Conducting outreach to college campuses and job seekers to promote public service.
- Identifying and celebrating government's successes so they can be replicated across government.
- Advocating for needed legislative and regulatory reforms to strengthen the civil service.
- Generating research on, and effective responses to, the workforce challenges facing our federal government.
- Enhancing public understanding of the valuable work civil servants perform.

The James Irvine Foundation is a private, nonprofit grantmaking foundation dedicated to expanding opportunity for the people of California. The Foundation's current focus is a California where all low-income workers have the power to advance economically. Since 1937 the Foundation has provided more than \$2.09 billion in grants to organizations throughout California. The Foundation ended 2020 with more than \$3 billion in assets and provided \$109 million in grants. For more, please visit www.irvine.org.

Executive Summary

In California, the state with the highest number of federal employees outside the Washington, D.C., area, federal agencies face challenges in recruiting, hiring and retaining skilled federal employees. Talent pipelines for these jobs are important, considering half the federal workforce in the state will be eligible to retire by 2028. With an aging workforce, a lack of funding and barriers to recruiting and hiring new employees, federal agencies in the state need to find solutions quickly. Although anyone in the country may apply and be hired for a federal job in California, this report focuses on California job seekers specifically to more fully understand their challenges and the opportunities at play.

The report explores how federal agencies in California can do a better job of attracting, hiring and retaining job seekers who either have an associate degree from a community college or no degree at all—people who qualify for many federal roles, such as administrative and entry-level positions, but whom federal agencies are less likely to seek as potential candidates. Employers often view four-year degrees, typically bachelor's degrees, as indicating a certain level of competency. They tend to hire applicants with four-year degrees over those without, even when their skill sets are the same or the role does not explicitly require a degree.¹

As federal agencies in California tackle pressing national issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic, they also struggle with the longer-term and ongoing challenge of hiring people into government, particularly individuals younger than 30. The barriers to bringing people into the federal government include lengthy and complicated hiring processes and difficulty raising awareness about federal jobs and the benefits of public service. Agencies also face issues with retaining employees who do not have four-year degrees, including less competitive compensation and fewer professional development opportunities to offer than organizations in nonfederal sectors.

The government can strengthen its talent pipelines for jobs that do not require a four-year degree by demystifying the hiring process and using a more skills-based hiring assessment; building relationships with community colleges and workforce development organizations; and removing barriers to professional development and advancement. Doing so would benefit both federal agencies and potential applicants who too often are overlooked in the talent search.

¹ Fuller, J. and Raman, M. et al., "Dismissed by Degrees: How degree inflation is undermining U.S. competitiveness and hurting America's middle class," Harvard Business School, October 2017. Retrieved from <https://hbs.me/3o6KnWx>

Introduction

California is home to about 150,000 federal employees—the highest number in any state outside the Washington, D.C., area.² Federal offices in the Golden State face the same human capital issues as the federal government nationwide: tight budgets, an aging workforce and myriad recruiting and hiring challenges.³ Federal leaders in California must identify new applicants to strengthen talent pipelines and maintain a robust talent pool for federal agencies in the state.

This report focuses on how to broaden the talent pool for federal jobs in California by including individuals who have an associate degree or no degree at all. (hereafter referred to as “job seekers”). Supported by a grant from The James Irvine Foundation, the Partnership for Public Service held a series of interviews

and focus groups with representatives from federal agencies, community colleges and workforce boards in the state. The report presents findings from these discussions on what prevents job seekers from entering the federal workforce. Barriers include cumbersome federal hiring procedures and agencies’ use of federal jargon, which can bewilder people outside of government.

The report also highlights the challenges federal employees without four-year degrees face in advancement and career development. Throughout the report, we include recommendations officials can use to make changes at their agencies and help federal offices in California become a model for the rest of the federal government.

THE OPPORTUNITY AND THE CHALLENGE

The federal government faces significant hiring challenges in California, where half of the federal workforce will be eligible to retire by 2028.⁴ The need for new talent is urgent, but federal agencies have not fully explored all the possible sources. Two-thirds of Californians do not have a four-year degree. Yet, employees without a four-year degree only make up a quarter of the federal workforce nationwide—even though the vast majority of federal positions do not mandate that employees possess a four-year degree, according to a recent Office of Personnel Management report.⁵ Anyone who has the proper skills can perform these positions.

In light of this, the federal government would benefit from establishing a stronger pipeline for job seekers to join the civil service. Federal agencies in California could turn to this typically underused pool of employees, many of whom are highly capable.

Yet, too often, the federal hiring system prevents managers from bringing members of this group into government. Position descriptions often require degrees when it is unnecessary, and agencies create protocols to

assess candidates that emphasize on-paper qualifications that are not always needed on the job. These factors introduce bias into the hiring process, unnecessarily limiting the pool of qualified candidates. This bias also impacts the diversity of perspectives in government and further impairs agencies’ ability to serve their constituents effectively.

In addition, many people are unaware of the variety of federal jobs that exist, and large swaths of potential applicants do not know how to apply for government jobs and can be deterred by jargon-filled job announcements—barriers that diminish the agencies’ chances of finding applicants for their open positions.

This report presents steps agencies can take to address these barriers.

² Office of Personnel Management, “FedScope September 2020 employment data.” Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3pMvQAf>

³ Partnership for Public Service, “A Time for Talent: Improving Federal Recruiting and Hiring,” August 2020, 2-3. Available at <https://bit.ly/37PWBwO>

⁴ Office of Personnel Management. For the full-time workforce on board at the beginning of fiscal year 2019.

⁵ Office of Personnel Management, “Draft General Schedule Qualifications Policy – E.O. 13932; Modernizing and Reforming the Assessment and Hiring of Federal Job Candidates,” Sept. 25, 2020. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2MycZn>

Californians Without Four-year Degrees

PORTRAIT OF JOB SEEKERS IN CALIFORNIA

Federal hiring managers have a unique opportunity while expanding their talent pool to make it more diverse in the process. Targeting job seekers in California means targeting a community that is underrepresented in the federal workforce and overrepresented in low-wage work. According to the most recently available data, only 24% of federal employees nationwide have an associate degree or no degree,⁶ whereas 88% of Californians in low-wage jobs do not have a four-year degree.^{7, 8, 9}

These Californians are more racially diverse than the rest of the state, as well as the overall federal workforce.¹⁰ Many are multilingual, at a time when there is “a huge demand for language diversity in government,” according to Nicholas Shafer of the Global Community College Transfer Network. Community college and workforce development board representatives in California reported that a majority of job seekers are socioeconomically disadvantaged. Many are also balancing job seeking, and perhaps education, with supporting families and developing their own skills; and may need to find jobs more quickly than other communities.¹¹

Federal hiring managers should use this report to better understand the challenges and opportunities associated with recruiting, hiring and retaining this community. Doing so could diversify the federal workforce to better reflect the communities it serves, provide the federal government with a fresh source of talent and increase opportunities for job seekers in California.

6 Partnership for Public Service, “Fed Figures 2019: Federal Workforce,” Aug. 13, 2019. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2L57bJO>

7 UC Berkeley Labor Center, “Low-Wage Work in California Data Explorer,” 2017. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3gFKaHN>

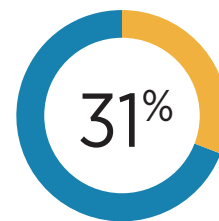
8 “Low-wage work” as defined by the UC Berkeley Labor Center is two-thirds of the median full-time hourly wage, which was \$14.35 in 2017. For more information on how the hourly wage was calculated, see the previous footnote.

9 According to the UC Berkeley Labor Center as cited above, 63% of all Californians have a four-year degree.

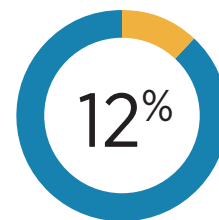
10 U.S. Census Bureau, “2011-13 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Public Use Microdata Sample,” 2013. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2W0DBWH>

11 New York Fed, “Survey of Consumer Expectations,” Oct. 2020. Retrieved from <https://nyfed.org/2Wi9Rw>

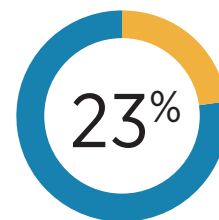
Percentage of California population between 25 and 64 years old with a four-year degree, 2013*



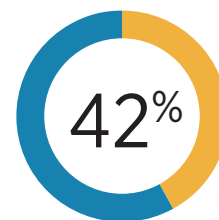
Entire California population



Latino



Black



White

*U.S. Census Bureau: please see footnote 10.

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Federal hiring managers have another consideration when engaging this population: the COVID-19 pandemic. Understanding the additional stressors that the pandemic has put on job seekers will help hiring managers better tailor their recruiting, hiring and retention efforts.

The pandemic exacerbated the barriers faced by these job seekers, including existing racial inequities in public health outcomes and employment. Jobs that do not require four-year degrees were hit especially hard by the pandemic, according to representatives from California community colleges and workforce development organizations.¹² Furthermore, community college enrollment in California has dropped drastically this year because of the pandemic, making it more difficult for students to find jobs without the support of those institutions.¹³

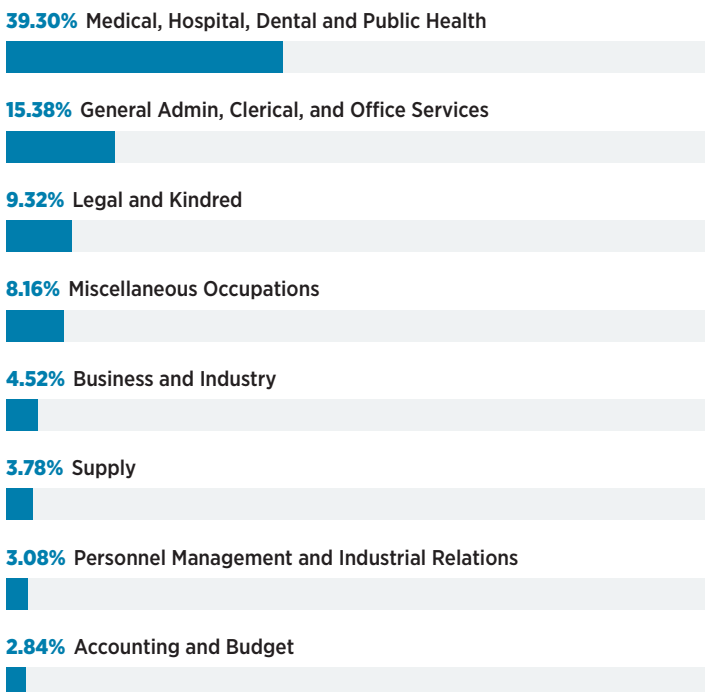
Federal hiring managers should recognize the opportunity this situation presents. Skilled job seekers are looking for ways to support themselves and their families, and the federal government has a need for fresh talent to diversify its workforce. Finding ways to act on the opportunities and overcome the challenges outlined in this report would be mutually beneficial for job seekers and the federal government.

¹² Community College Focus Group, Oct. 15, 2020, p 6

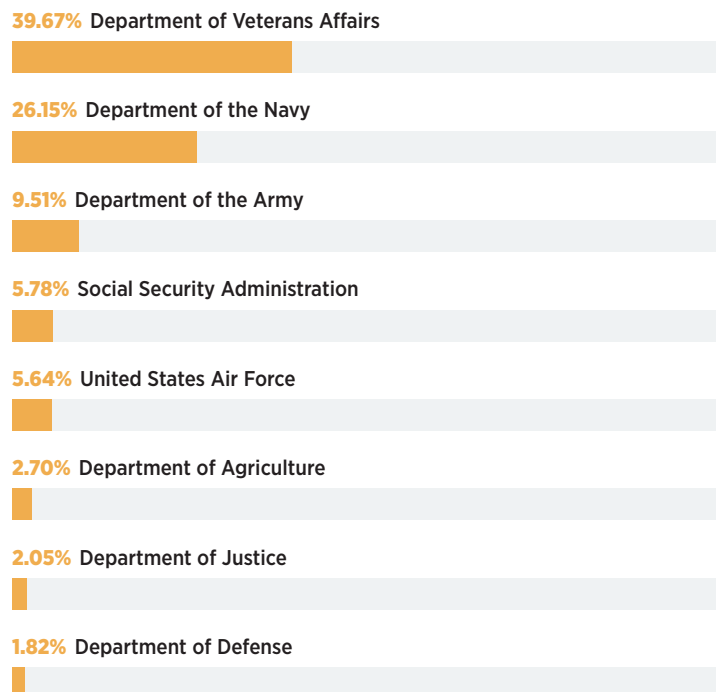
¹³ Smith, A., "Fewer students attending California community colleges, early fall numbers show," EdSource, Sept. 21, 2020. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3a0lfwa>

BREAKDOWN OF ENTRY-LEVEL FEDERAL JOBS IN CALIFORNIA

Top occupational areas for new entry-level hires without a four-year degree in California, fiscal 2018*



Top agency locations of new entry-level hires without a four-year degree in California, fiscal 2018†



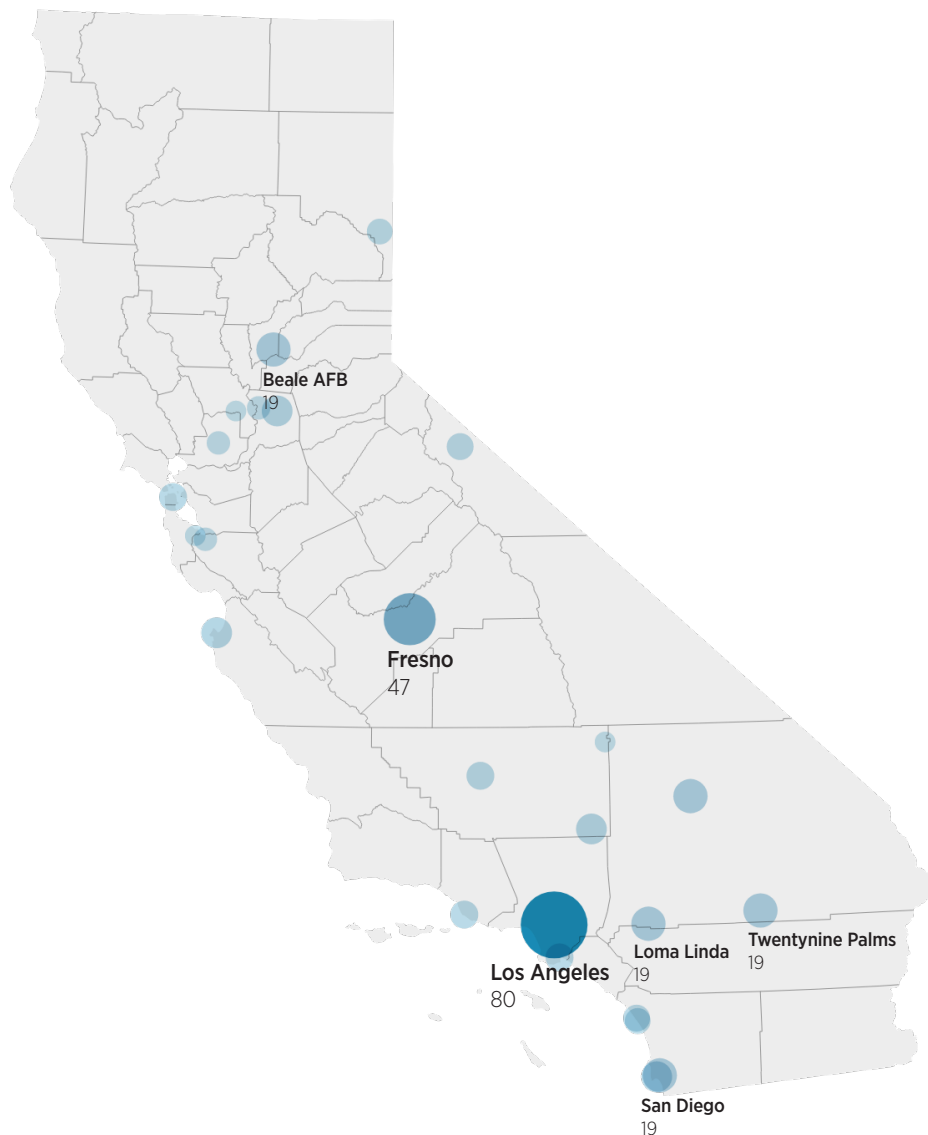
*Office of Personnel Management, "FedScope 2018 employment data." Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2MiVC1n>

†Office of Personnel Management, "FedScope 2018 employment data." Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3dGdAWY>

General Schedule* Grade Levels

GS-3 to GS-4	Internships, student jobs and some entry-level positions
GS-5 to GS-7	Most entry-level positions
GS-8 to GS-12	Mid-level positions
GS-13 to GS-15	Top-level supervisory positions
SES	Senior executive service

Top locations of entry-level job announcements in California†



*While most federal jobs are on the GS scale, there are also alternative pay schedules for certain jobs, such as the foreign service, or hourly blue-collar workers under the Federal Wage System.

†Office of Personnel Management, "USAJOBS.gov." Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3aRe5vz>

Getting a Foot in the Door

HIRING APPLICANTS WHO DO NOT HAVE A FOUR-YEAR DEGREE

The competitive hiring process tends to disadvantage those without degrees, according to individuals we interviewed. Often, hiring processes incorporate college degrees into assessments of candidates, even when the position description does not require one.

Christal Murray, deputy director for talent management at the Los Angeles Air Force Base, offered an example based on the “Total Person Score,” a rating assessment (see below) that assigns points to different components of an application. “When we start ranking people and looking at Total Person Scores...you can get zero points for education if you don’t have a degree, so the likelihood of getting an interview is lower because those that have degrees get the interview. That’s what we’ve been telling people: Get your degree so you’re more competitive.”

The rigidity of hiring structures like the Total Person Score system leave few options for applicants without degrees, making it unlikely they would receive an interview even if they have the skills and experience to succeed in those roles.

Not all candidate assessments are affected this way, however. Many positions depend on skill sets applicants can obtain without attending a four-year college or university. According to Danielle Nakamaru, an HR liaison for the Veterans Benefits Administration’s Los Angeles branch, her office does not rely on degrees to hire people. “In my experience...[degrees] are not something that they evaluate in the review process for the best qualified candidate. It’s about the overall competencies of the position, the resumé format, their interview technique and their writing style,” she said. “They don’t get an extra point if they have a four-year degree.”

Trump administration officials were aware of how frequently job postings included unnecessary degree requirements. On June 26, 2020, the administration released the “[Executive Order on Modernizing and Reforming the Assessment and Hiring of Federal Job Candidates](#)” guidance, designed to remove unnecessary degree requirements and assessment strategies that create such barriers for job seekers. While the order does not expand agencies’ abilities, it attempts to bring greater awareness to the issue.

Example Rating Assessment (simplified)*

Quality Groups	Score (out of 100)	Factors may include, but are not limited to:
Best Qualified	90 or above	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work experience• Educational attainment• Certifications• Performance ratings• Interview
Fully Qualified	80-89	
Basically Qualified	70-79	
Not Qualified	Below 70	

*This is a simplified visual and may not be representative of all agencies or job types.

The directive seeks to achieve its goal via two primary avenues:

1. Requiring a review of all job classifications and qualification standards to remove all educational requirements except where educational qualification is required to perform the duties of the position.
2. Asking agencies to alter the candidate assessment process such that candidates must demonstrate they possess relevant knowledge and skills, rather than using a degree or self-evaluation as a proxy for having those skills.

The changes that result from a comprehensive review of position descriptions and candidate assessment strategies may lead to the hiring of more job seekers without four-year degrees. An OPM review of hundreds of job classifications following the release of the executive order found that for 350 of 400 occupations—nearly 90%—federal law does not mandate that hiring managers include degree requirements in the position description.¹⁴

What does this framing of federal jobs look like in practice? In the face of the COVID-19 crisis, the passage of the CARES Act in March 2020 delegated a massive disbursement responsibility to the Small Business

¹⁴ Office of Personnel Management, “List of Occupational Series with Positive Education Requirements,” Sept. 25, 2020. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3qP1fDx>

Administration through the Paycheck Protection Program: up to \$659 billion for small business relief.¹⁵ “[For] the first round of PPP loans, we did 14 years’ worth of lending in 14 days,” said Julie Clowes, district director of SBA’s San Francisco office.

In response, the SBA scaled up its hiring of outreach and marketing specialists in regional offices around the country. These positions were designed to attract a specific skill set, and many of these positions were open to applicants without a four-year degree. The agency recruited at the GS-9 level “in hopes of attracting an entry level workforce, as well as a workforce that may not have a college degree,” said Victor Parker, deputy associate administrator at the Los Angeles office. “It’s an outreach position, so it’s more about your interpersonal or communication skills and less about your degree. It’s about being able to market and advertise SBA programs and services.”

¹⁵ Department of the Treasury, “The CARES Act Provides Assistance to Small Businesses.” Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3gAmaWV>

Recommendation

When writing position descriptions and evaluating candidates, hiring managers should consider the following questions:

1. What are the specific skills and experience required to succeed in this position?
2. What skills can be learned on the job? If any skills are listed as “required,” consider changing to “preferred” or removing altogether.
3. What qualifications are “nice to have,” not “need to have”? If any of the former are listed as required, consider changing to “preferred” or removing altogether.

AWARENESS AND ATTAINABILITY OF FEDERAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR CALIFORNIANS

Lack of awareness of federal jobs, the benefits that come with those jobs, and the variety of federal opportunities available is a major problem for government agencies hoping to hire qualified employees. In addition, a confusing and lengthy hiring process for many federal opportunities is a barrier to entry for job seekers, even those with four-year degrees.

Many of these job seekers are unfamiliar with the federal job opportunities available, according to representatives from California community colleges and workforce development organizations. When searching for work, people tend to look at their immediate community, as Audrey Childers and Ruth Amanuel, two workforce development representatives in the LA region, reported. If family members are employed with federal agencies, it can create an awareness of the process and the available opportunities. Jack Simes, acting area manager at the Bureau of Reclamation, hopes to create sim-

ilar early awareness among young people who do not have family members in government, by reaching out to them about the types of jobs available at his agency.

Beyond awareness, Simes said he would like to get younger people excited about the types of work the agency does. State community college representatives echoed similar sentiments: “It’s what folks see on TV, and within their families and communities,” said Melissa Infusino, director of workforce development at Long Beach City College. “I can’t think of any students who have come into the career center saying, ‘I’m interested in working for the federal government.’” She confirmed that the job opportunities students are interested in are the ones they are exposed to regularly. According to Simes, this visibility must go beyond the better-known agencies in the federal government such as the U.S. Postal Service, Transportation Security Administration or NASA, and extend to all federal opportunities.

Recommendation

Federal agencies should offer more paid internships in California to increase awareness of and pathways to full-time federal jobs. Federal internships could expose job seekers without four-year degrees to opportunities outside of their existing networks, expanding talent pools for hiring managers. Although some federal internships such as the Pathways Programs are paid, they tend to be concentrated in the D.C. area rather than in regional offices. The costs of moving to the nation’s capital can be untenable, making those opportunities less attainable for job seekers who cannot afford those costs. Other possibilities, especially in a telework environment, include remote internships.

In addition to a lack of awareness of opportunities, potential applicants are also unclear about how to apply for federal positions. Yolanda Castro and Janel Bailey, two workforce development representatives in California, said that even when their constituents are interested in public service, they see federal jobs as out of their reach, requiring knowledge and experience they do not believe they have. Childers said, “It’s a matter of...demy-

stifying the application process, because those websites are overwhelming even to me. It’s a lot to apply for a federal job, and they need help.”

USAJOBS is notoriously difficult to navigate, and federal resumes are structured differently than those in other sectors, so it can be confusing for job seekers to land jobs that suit them. Hiring managers can overcome this barrier in two ways.

Recommendations

1. Federal hiring managers should work with representatives from community colleges and workforce development boards. Those institutions engage most often with job seekers who do not have four-year degrees. Liaisons from those organizations could connect job seekers with federal agencies and provide training sessions on applications, job titles, language use and resume building. This demystification could help give job seekers a step up when applying.
2. Agencies, in collaboration with community colleges and workforce development boards, should create resources for job seekers that can help them navigate the federal hiring process, such as online how-to guides, examples of federal resume language and recorded training sessions. Creating more permanent resources in addition to the relationship building and training sessions described above would help circulate this knowledge to a wider audience and support job seekers who may not already be connected to a workforce development organization or community college.

Climbing the Federal Ladder

ADVANCEMENT AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYEES WITHOUT FOUR-YEAR DEGREES

Facilitating entry into the government workforce is only the first step towards creating sustainable career opportunities. It is also crucial to provide avenues for advancement and career development for federal employees who do not have four-year degrees. Without such investment, these employees may quickly reach the ceiling of their government careers, leading to an exodus to other sectors and damaging agencies' cultivation of a strong civil workforce.

Agencies often face budgetary constraints, and limited funds are generally tied to mission-oriented work. "Non-mission [critical] administrative positions are rarely given a lot of opportunities for personal development and advancement," said Daniel Veale, deputy director of the San Francisco Federal Executive Board,¹⁶ "which ends up hurting retention with early to mid-career employees." Though sufficient funding for training and development is hard to come by throughout government, leaving non-mission critical positions even further behind affects both the sustainability of those careers and agencies' ability to operate efficiently.

¹⁶ Federal Executive Boards provide a way for employees in federal offices outside the Washington, D.C., area to gather, communicate and collaborate.

Advancement

Once employees begin their federal careers, it is typically easier to move to other positions within the government than it might have been to land that first job. The collective bargaining agreement used at the Veterans Benefits Administration is one example—all open positions must be posted internally throughout the agency before the hiring process can move to accept external applications, according to Danielle Nakamaru, the HR liaison for the VBA in Los Angeles.

Barriers to movement within and between agencies still exist, however. For example, while Small Business Administration employees have many chances to move into higher positions, these opportunities often require relocation. The high costs of relocation render this kind of career change infeasible for many—particularly those at lower GS levels. "When I had my deputy position available, I'm sure there were plenty of qualified people from around the country," said Julie Clowes with SBA's San Francisco office. "But because we wouldn't pay relocation costs, they didn't even apply. They didn't want to pay to move to California on their own dime." Given California's size and high cost of living, this is almost certainly true for in-state moves as well, closing off many advancement opportunities for federal employees in the state.

Without the possibility of relocation, the main way employees can advance is if their manager formally posts

an opening for the promotion, such that the employee can apply and be “rehired” into the next GS level. This process poses an administrative burden on managers and an additional barrier to employees without a four-year degree, given the hiring process’ bias towards degree-holders. One model agencies can use to avoid this

issue is the career ladder position, which allows for an employee to advance within a certain range of GS levels without reapplying for each promotion. A manager may choose to promote career ladder employees to the next GS level in the range one year after their hire or previous promotion, if their performance meets job expectations.

Recommendation

Advocate for the use of career ladder positions at the entry level. These positions alleviate the administrative burden for managers looking to promote their high-performing employees, while providing a skills-based path towards advancement for employees without a four-year degree.

It is important to note that career ladder positions come with their own challenges. Because they potentially lead to more frequent promotions, they have a higher cost to agencies than standard positions. In addition, career ladder position descriptions must include built-in growth opportunities to remain relevant for each level an employee could reach, and they are better suited to certain occupations. Hiring managers and job seekers both stand to benefit from taking advantage of career ladder positions at the entry level, although they should keep the caveats in mind.

Career Development

Structural opportunities for advancement—such as career ladder positions—are not enough, however. An agency’s culture must contribute to its employees’ career development, starting with team management. “It is incumbent on managers and supervisors—to the extent that they’re able—to cultivate teams,” said Clowes with the SBA in San Francisco. Every employee has a specific set of strengths that may only surface with careful attention and cultivation from their supervisor.

Keeping employees informed and supported outside of their immediate team is another crucial component for their success. Affinity groups for federal employees, such as Federally Employed Women and Blacks in Government, provide employees with valuable perspectives and expertise they may not receive otherwise. They may be mentored by someone from outside their agency and receive information from these groups that can increase their awareness of other federal agencies and opportunities for career development. This kind of comprehensive, wide-ranging support system offers employees without four-year degrees pathways for advancement and career development.

Recommendation

Advocate for agency-level support for, and access to, affinity groups. This can include providing affinity group resources to new employees as part of the onboarding process, and funding employee participation in affinity group events and services where legally permissible.

CHALLENGES IN RETAINING FEDERAL WORKERS WITHOUT FOUR-YEAR DEGREES

Even when federal agencies are successful in hiring job seekers, it can be difficult to retain them long term. In California, the cost of living is so high that federal compensation packages are often not competitive when compared with private—or even state and local government—packages. “Administrative or entry-level federal jobs are really tough to recruit and retain throughout the Western area,” said Daniel Veale of the San Francisco Federal Executive Board. “The compensation is not keeping up in any real way.”

To illustrate the severity of the gap: Two-parent families with one income need anywhere from about \$21 an hour to \$42 an hour, or about \$44,000 to \$88,000 annually, to support themselves in various California counties.¹⁷ A GS-5 position, however, starts at salaries below \$40,000 in all the major Californian metropolitan regions. Even in the San Francisco area, the region with the highest cost of living in California, GS-7 positions start at about \$49,000 a year.¹⁸

17 California Budget and Policy Center, “Making Ends Meet: How Much Does It Cost to Support a Family in California?” Dec. 2017. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3qKgTQV>

18 Office of Personnel Management, “2017 General Schedule (GS) Locality Pay Tables,” 2017. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/37kFXWm>

Comparing wages on the GS scale to California living wages, 2017*

\$39,441 San Francisco GS-5 step 1



\$48,856 San Francisco GS-7 step 1



\$59,338 California living wage



\$87,594 San Francisco living wage



This challenge may be especially difficult for federal hiring managers to tackle because they do not have the power to unilaterally change compensation packages. However, there may be non-salary benefits such as flexible work schedules or student loan forgiveness programs, that hiring managers have the authority to offer to stay competitive with private, state and local jobs.

*See footnotes 17 and 18 for data sources.

Recommendation

Agencies should consider strategies to make compensation packages more attractive that might be more achievable than increasing salary. For example, Danielle Nakamaru, an HR liaison from the VA, said expanding student loan forgiveness programs for regional offices is one way of making agencies more competitive in relation to state, local and private employers and more attractive to job seekers.

Conclusion

With an aging workforce and evolving talent needs, federal agencies must be prepared for significant hiring challenges in the future. The recommendations and resources outlined in this report provide steps for federal offices in California to model inclusive talent practices for the rest of the federal government while cultivating a talent pool that will help meet future hiring needs, both predictable and unforeseen. To supplement this report, the Partnership for Public Service is releasing a series of resources that stakeholders across California—agencies, community colleges, workforce boards and more—can share with constituents to empower job seekers with the knowledge and tools to attain federal jobs.

Making hiring processes more equitable for people without a four-year degree can help federal hiring managers find more of the highly qualified job applicants they seek. At the same time, they could provide unique, meaningful and sustainable career opportunities for job seekers who want to contribute to the public good and help their communities. Every Californian with skills to contribute and a desire to serve should have an opportunity to pursue a career in civil service, and federal agencies stand to benefit from enabling those opportunities.

Methodology

To gather qualitative data on federal opportunities for Californians without four-year degrees, the Partnership for Public Service conducted interviews and focus groups with 18 representatives from the federal government, community colleges and workforce development organization. The Partnership generated quantitative data through FedScope and USAJOBS.

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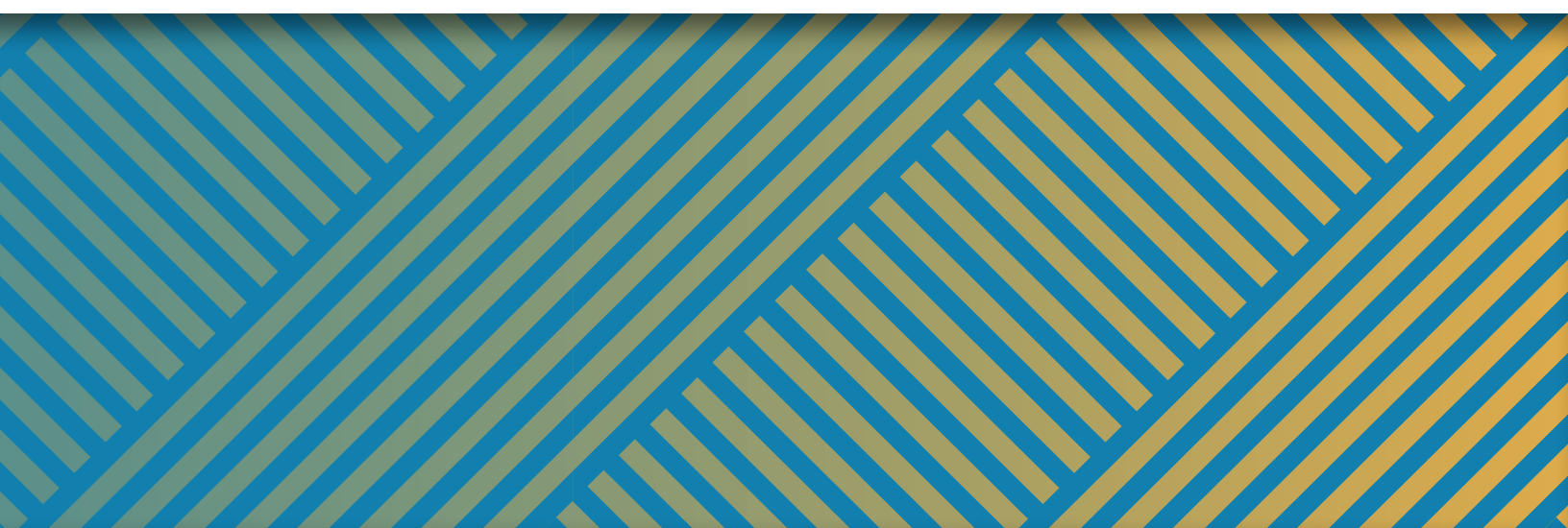
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Appendix: Resources for Job Seekers

- [GoGovernment.org](#): A free online resource provided by the Partnership for Public Service and the go-to site to learn about how to more effectively navigate the federal hiring process.
- [USAJOBS](#): The online job board for federal government openings.
- [2020 Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medals](#): Get inspired by stories of exceptional public servants in this virtual edition of the annual Sammies award ceremony.
- [Best Places to Work in the Federal Government®](#) Rankings: The most comprehensive assessment of how federal employees view their jobs and workplaces compiled by the Partnership for Public Service in collaboration with Boston Consulting Group.



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