

Department of Defense

At the [Partnership for Public Service](#), we believe that our future and our democracy depend on the ability to solve big problems—and that we need an effective federal government to do so. As part of the executive branch, federal agencies play a role in enforcing laws and policies to achieve these ends. This series presents a sampling of initiatives at specific agencies to demonstrate the many ways our government affects our lives and communities.

THE PEOPLE OF THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT

Each of the roughly 705,000 career federal employees at the Department of Defense is committed to the mission of the organization: To provide the military forces needed to deter war and to ensure our nation's security. Veterans make up about 45% of the department.¹

EMPLOYEES WITH VETERAN STATUS



TYPE OF WORK

Defense Department staff work within subcomponents, that is, entities within the department. These include:



Service organizations such as the departments of the Army, the Navy (which includes the Marine Corps) and the Air Force (which includes the Space Force)



Ten combatant commands, each with a geographical or programmatic purpose, which provide command and control of all U.S. military forces, regardless of branch of service, during both peace and war

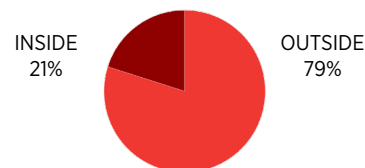


Defense agencies such as the Defense Logistics Agency and the National Security Agency, which provide supplies and services common to multiple military departments. These include supply chain management, signal intelligence, emergent technology research, legal services, and cybersecurity.

WHERE THEY WORK

Defense employees work throughout the United States and around the globe. Nearly 80% of the career staff work outside the Washington, D.C., area.²

DOD CAREER STAFF WORKING INSIDE OR OUTSIDE THE WASHINGTON, D.C., AREA



IN THEIR OWN WORDS

“We’re preventing bad guys from knowing where our national security assets are and what we’re doing, and we’re protecting and creating an environment that will accelerate innovation in the space industry so that America makes huge technological leaps for the next generation.”

David Rader, deputy director for the Office of Foreign Investment Review at the Department of Defense, and [2022 Service to America Medals® Emerging Leaders medal finalist](#).

THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE'S COMMITMENT TO SERVE THE PUBLIC

THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT IN YOUR BACKYARD

The [Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency](#) conducts 95% of all initial federal background investigations during the hiring process for federal employees, military service members and contract employees—totaling more than 2 million people annually. This process ensures the federal government maintains a highly qualified and vetted workforce.



SERVICE SPOTLIGHT

2019 Safety, Security and International Affairs Medal

Kurt Yankaskas

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

Defense employee [Kurt Yankaskas](#) was a finalist for the 2019 Safety, Security and International Affairs medal for his outstanding work. He identified and implemented solutions to combat noise-induced hearing loss, which affects hundreds of thousands of sailors and Marines, and costs taxpayers billions of dollars each year in treatments for veterans.

¹ Employment numbers and demographics at the Department of Defense exclude military personnel as these employees are not included in data collected by the Office of Personnel Management.

Data included in this section represents full-time, nonseasonal, permanent civilian employees of the executive branch as of February 2024. Unless otherwise noted, this includes the career members of the Senior Executive Service. For more up-to-date information, see <https://ourpublicservice.org/performance-measures/agency-performance-dashboard/profile/DOD/>

² The Washington, D.C., area includes the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia. It excludes all other U.S. states and U.S. territories as well as federal employees living in foreign countries. As with the figures above, employment numbers and demographics at the Department of Defense exclude military personnel as these employees are not included in data collected by the Office of Personnel Management.

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