

Careers in Federal, State and Local Government

The following information is from a February 8, 2024, webinar by Danny Fisher, Serve Colorado’s Training and Outreach Officer.

In finding a career in federal government you will encounter more rules and complex processes than state government.

Danny will take you through applying to career and political positions, fellowships and internships. Fellowships and internships can be a great way to get your foot in the door somewhere and into a new field or different level of government.

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Applying for a federal job – career or political?

Federal departments and agencies (career positions) <https://www.usajobs.gov/>

- If you want a career position (not tied to a specific administration), then use usajobs.gov which is a complex site. If you don't know what you're looking for you may end up applying for a job you can't get.
- Federal rules and laws require agencies to go through things in a very systematic way.

US Senate <https://www.senate.gov/employment/po/positions.htm>

- The site is updated throughout the day – you will see a time stamp so you'll know when the latest info was posted. This is also for when you're applying to work directly for a senator's office or on a committee. Not all posts include salary info. Some states require salaries be posted, i.e. Colorado does, DC does not.
- **Senate Resume Bank** – If you want to be searchable by a committee, senator, or a staffer, submit your info to the resume bank and it will notify you to update it as it turns over every calendar year. You should update your resume every 6 months.
- They offer webinars on working in the Senate which includes things to consider when applying or posting your resume.

US House of Representatives <https://www.house.gov/employment>

- **Members/Committees**
You can apply for a district or DC, committee or member. And you can sign up for a weekly bulletin – every Monday they send an email with both internship and job opportunities.
- **Headquarters and district offices**
- **Incoming members every two years** – 2024 there will be some new people elected to the House, not everyone is going to run or win again. Immediately following the election you will see a separate group just for hiring for those new offices. If you want to get your foot in the door somewhere, they have to ramp up quickly and hire their entire teams – filling in where needed if not utilizing past advisors and campaigners.

Executive Office of the President

- **White House Fellows:** <https://www.whitehouse.gov/get-involved/fellows/>
 - whitehouse.gov has a form to complete if interested in an appointee position with the current administration. Be thorough. The form includes many interests and skills so complete it only once, not multiple times for different skills, so fill out everything you can. Maybe you don't want to be in DC - - submit your resume and you will see a list of all the different groups across the country that have presidential appointments. There may be come in your state that you didn't know about.
 - Separately though the website you can look at white house fellows which is a one year appointment at a pretty high level. However it's not for "new

professionals” or for people who have been in the workforce for some time. It’s for people in the middle who have shown they have potential for leadership but still need guidance.

- If you don’t qualify for a fellows position, you could try an internship as there are a lot of opportunities on all different types of teams.

Diverse Pathways & Other Considerations

Internships, Fellowships, and Other Work Experience Opp in the Federal Government

(Congressional Research Service, 2020): crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/RL/98-654

CRS is a great nonpartisan resource. They support everyone in the US Congress and provide internships, fellowships and other work experience opportunities in the federal government. It outlines many opportunities that you may not have heard of. It’s updated every few years but as of Feb 2024, the 2020 version was the most recent. Do keyword searches.

Plum Book

Published every four years after presidential election: Posts positions, agencies and salary ranges for appointments within an administration. These range from low level positions up to Senate confirmation position.

General Schedule Locality Pay

<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/2023/general-schedule>

- Be prepared to make a decision. The general schedule, posted annually, shows the most common pay scale bucket in the federal government. You’ll see GS and then different number. This is updated each October, the beginning of the federal fiscal year.
- For the position offered, you can see different location. Transparency of this site is fantastic.

Background Check (*public trust*; confidential information)

- Those of you who participated in AmeriCorps have gone through criminal history checks. Checks are different in state or local government, depending on laws and ordinances in place.
- In general, the lowest level is called a public trust background check. Basically your past work, reference from HR, leadership or co-worker. More extensive checks could involve more info about yourself, where you lived, where you worked, people who knew you (work and outside work).
- You generally only have two weeks to complete the check, which can be intimidating. Start the document, list exact address of where you lived, if there someone there who knew you who can speak to who you are. Sometimes they’ll

send out a brief survey to friends/neighbors asking a few questions about your character.

- Once you have a check, it stays in the system forever so if you work for a year, leave for a few years and come back to a government position, you just have to update the info, not go through a new background check.

Security Clearance (classified information; good for 5 years)

- If you will need security clearance, they will need more classified information. That will be conducted by the FBI (don't be intimidated), they make it fairly easy for you and is good for five years. After that, just update your info for another five years, no new interview is required.
- Again, answer all of their questions honestly and thoroughly. They will find out if you're not truthful about jobs, criminal activity, drug information. Pay attention if a group you're applying to has upfront information that would prohibit you from getting that position. Example: If you go to the FBI website to apply, they are very clear about things that you can and cannot have done. You must be at least 23 and no older than 37 by the time you start training. You can't have a felony conviction (being charged but not convicted is allowed and misdemeanors don't count).
- If the position requires you to carry a weapon, other requirements/restrictions may apply.
- These rules are just for security clearance positions, not general federal jobs.

Student Loans

- If you have public student loans (not private loans such as Wells Fargo) in your name, you can work in the government at any level and build up your time for public service loan forgiveness. After 10 years (they track it by payment so it's 120 payments) in the system, the rest of your public loan, no matter the amount is forgiven and there are no tax consequences for that – it's completely forgiven.
- You do need to sign up for the program and there's a form your employment must complete. It is only for full-time (32 hrs./week+) employment.
- This also applies to non-profits, not only work in government.

Education Requirements

- Many federal government positions will require at least a bachelor's degree. However, some will take work experience into consideration or a combination of education and experience. Be sure to present yourself as a great candidate, balancing your experience and your education.

Applying for Jobs

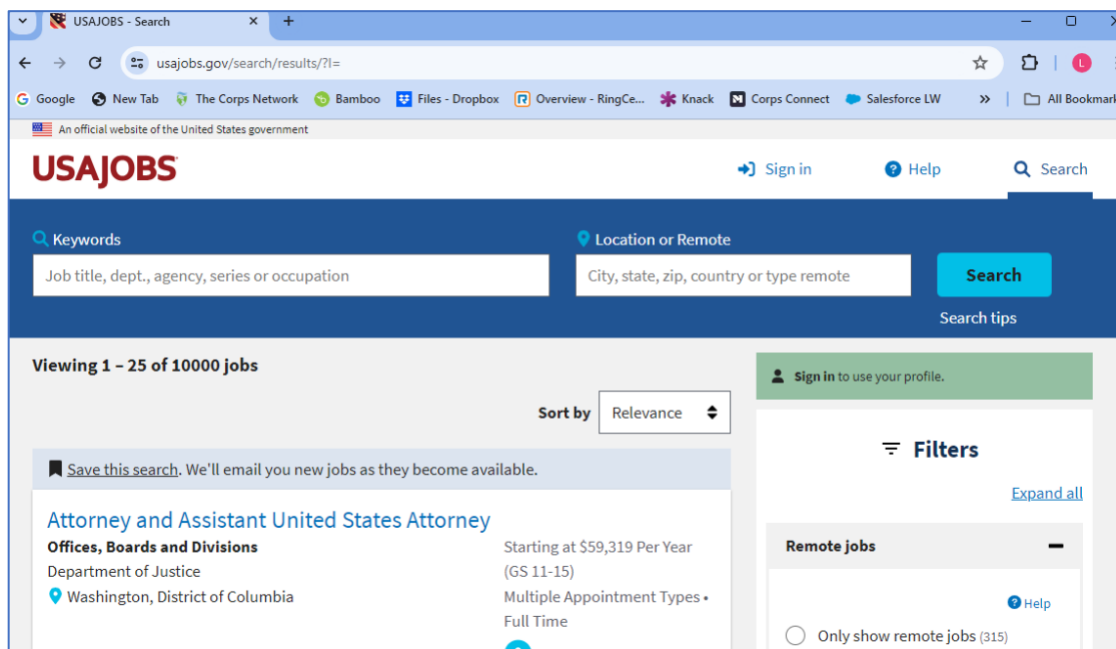
For state and local government jobs, use <https://www.governmentjobs.com/>

USAjobs is a great resource for federal jobs: <https://www.usajobs.gov/>

Navigating USAJobs

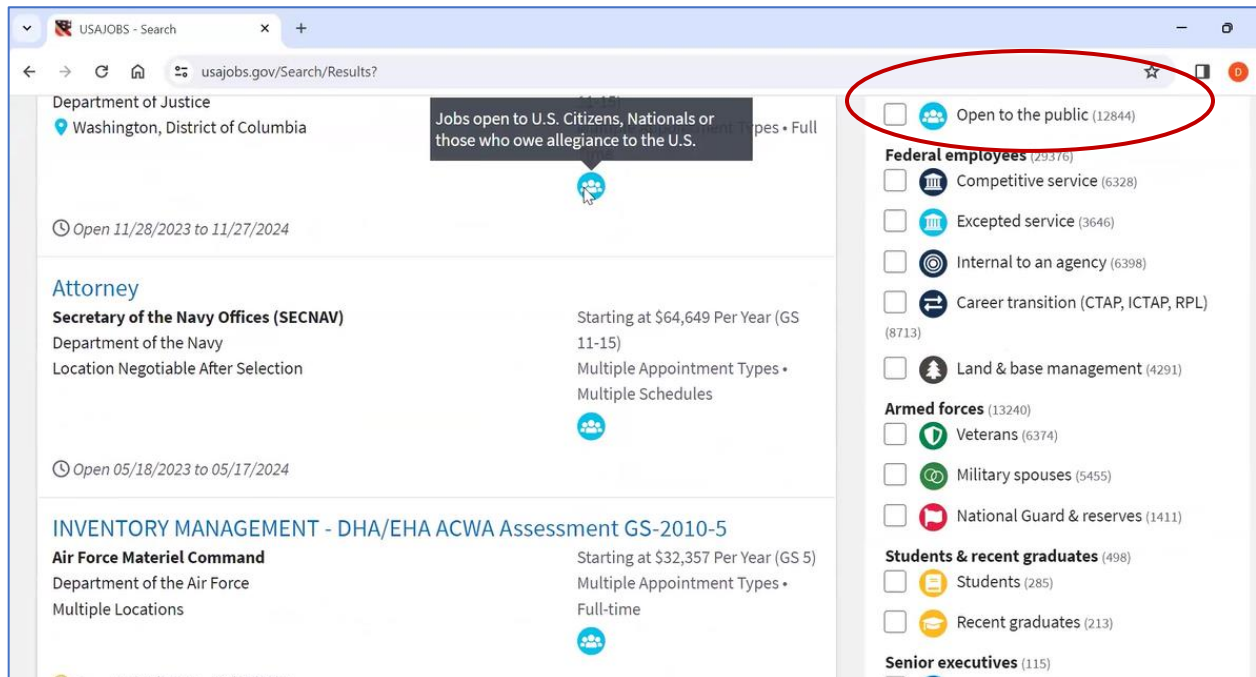
Create your profile – it becomes part of your application package. It pre-fills a lot of information. You may need to update it along the way. *Note:* usajobs.gov will delete your account if it's not used for a long period of time.

- You can conduct several searches and save several resumes. You can make one of them searchable, which is great, especially if you might be open to moving to a different state for a federal position. *Example:* Dept of Homeland Security is hiring. They can do searches and if you checked one of the resumes to be searchable and have certain keywords or experience in that resume, you'll pop up and may be contacted by that Department. Remember, you can only have one, but it can change and you can also post and save things that are needed for any government job such as transcripts. Whatever your highest level of education, have the transcript ready as you will be required to submit it. It's more efficient to already have it in the system.
- There can be up to 10,000 federal positions posted.



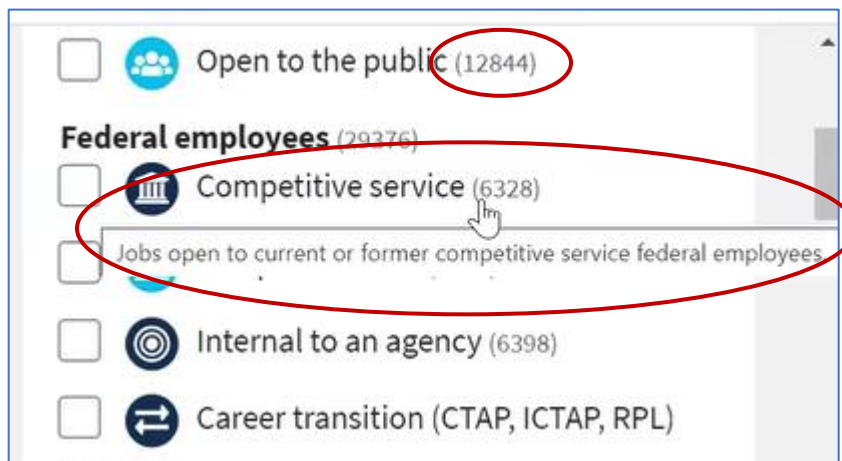
The screenshot shows the USAJOBS search results page. The browser address bar displays "usajobs.gov/search/results/?l=". The page header includes the USAJOBS logo, "Sign in", "Help", and "Search" links. Below the header, there are search filters for "Keywords" (with a text input field) and "Location or Remote" (with a text input field). A "Search" button is located to the right of these filters. The main content area shows "Viewing 1 - 25 of 10000 jobs". A "Sort by" dropdown menu is set to "Relevance". A "Save this search" button is visible. The first job listing is for "Attorney and Assistant United States Attorney" at the Department of Justice in Washington, DC. The listing includes details such as "Starting at \$59,319 Per Year (GS 11-15)" and "Multiple Appointment Types - Full Time". A "Filters" sidebar on the right shows "Remote jobs" with a "Help" link and a radio button option to "Only show remote jobs (315)".

All of the categories are on the right side. They all have an icon. Hover over it to find out what it is. Some will have multiple icons in a posting so you can check all of those.



Open to the Public is probably the clearest. If you have no federal government experience, you will be applying through this most of the time. You will see that there are 12,844 positions available through this filter.

Competitive service means that you have a career status in the federal government or are currently employed. Once you successfully work for three years full-time in the federal government, you have career status, which means you can leave the federal government and later on, you may apply for Open to the Public or Competitive service positions.

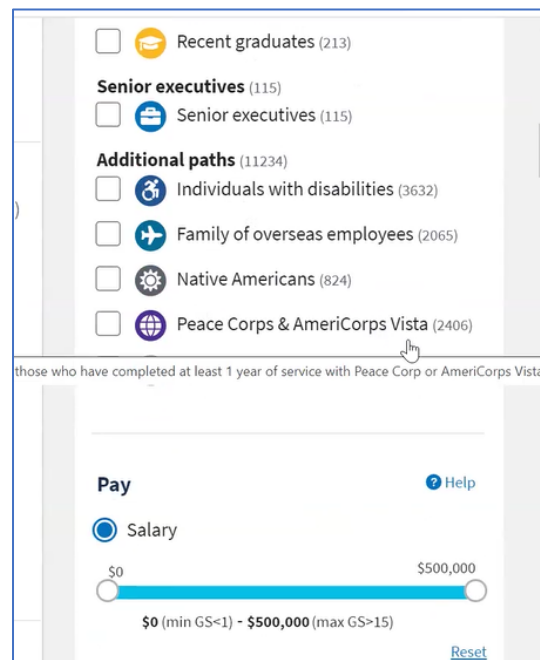


Remember, you can filter by department. Example: if you want to work for the US Department of Education, they will post all requirements on the site. If any certifications are required, it will be posted. It's very straightforward. If something isn't required, you won't see it – transparency is key.

If you're looking for an entry level position, then you need to filter out higher positions by keyword searches. Often in the federal government you will see the term "human capital" which the knowledge, skills and experience is possessed by an individual. You could enter that as a search term.

Salary

The structure is the GS (General Schedule classification and pay system) grade. You can view the locality pay document for the current year, what you want to make and then filter out different levels. i.e. If you put in a few years already, you could search for GS9-GS11.



<p>Technical Operations (AJW) Airway Transportation Systems Specialist Employee Requested Reassignment</p> <p>Federal Aviation Administration Department of Transportation FAA Tech Ops 2101 ERR Duty Locations Throughout the Nation, Technical Operations</p> <p>🕒 Open 08/28/2023 to 08/27/2024</p>	<p>Starting at \$38,560 Per Year (FV F-J)</p> <p>Permanent • Full-time</p> <p>🎯</p>	<p>Grade</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>< GS1</td> <td>GS 1</td> <td>GS 2</td> <td>GS 3</td> <td>GS 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GS 5</td> <td>GS 6</td> <td>GS 7</td> <td>GS 8</td> <td>GS 9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GS 10</td> <td>GS 11</td> <td>GS 12</td> <td>GS 13</td> <td>GS 14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GS 15</td> <td>> GS15</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>General Schedule (GS) equivalent</p> <p>Department & Agency ▼</p> <p>Series ▼</p>	< GS1	GS 1	GS 2	GS 3	GS 4	GS 5	GS 6	GS 7	GS 8	GS 9	GS 10	GS 11	GS 12	GS 13	GS 14	GS 15	> GS15			
< GS1	GS 1	GS 2	GS 3	GS 4																		
GS 5	GS 6	GS 7	GS 8	GS 9																		
GS 10	GS 11	GS 12	GS 13	GS 14																		
GS 15	> GS15																					
<p>Architect</p> <p>Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Department of the Navy 📍 Naval Base Newport, Rhode Island</p> <p>🕒 Open 12/19/2023 to 04/19/2024</p>	<p>Starting at \$93,175 Per Year (GS 12)</p> <p>Permanent • Full-time</p> <p>👥</p>																					

Check any Department

<p>Department of Justice Washington, District of Columbia</p> <p>Open 11/28/2023 to 11/27/2024</p> <p>Attorney Secretary of the Navy Offices (SECNAV) Department of the Navy Location Negotiable After Selection</p> <p>Open 05/18/2023 to 05/17/2024</p>	<p>11-15) Multiple Appointment Types • Full Time</p> <p>Starting at \$64,649 Per Year (GS 11-15) Multiple Appointment Types • Multiple Schedules</p>	<p>Department of Commerce (100)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency for DC (8)</p> <p>D</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Department of Defense (1739)</p> <p>E</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Department of Education (1) <input type="checkbox"/> Department of Energy (58) <input type="checkbox"/> Executive Office of the President (2)</p> <p>G</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> General Services Administration (26)</p> <p>H</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Department of Health and Human Services (100)</p>
<p>Technical Operations (AJW) Airway Transportation Systems Specialist Employee Requested Reassignment Federal Aviation Administration Department of Transportation FAA Tech Ops 2101 ERR Duty Locations Throughout the Nation, Technical Operations</p> <p>Open 08/28/2023 to 08/27/2024</p>	<p>Starting at \$38,560 Per Year (FV F-J) Permanent • Full-time</p>	
<p>SSA HQ (MD/DC/VA) - Accepting Resumes from Individuals with Disabilities Social Security Administration</p>	<p>Starting at \$39,291 Per Year (GS 5-</p>	

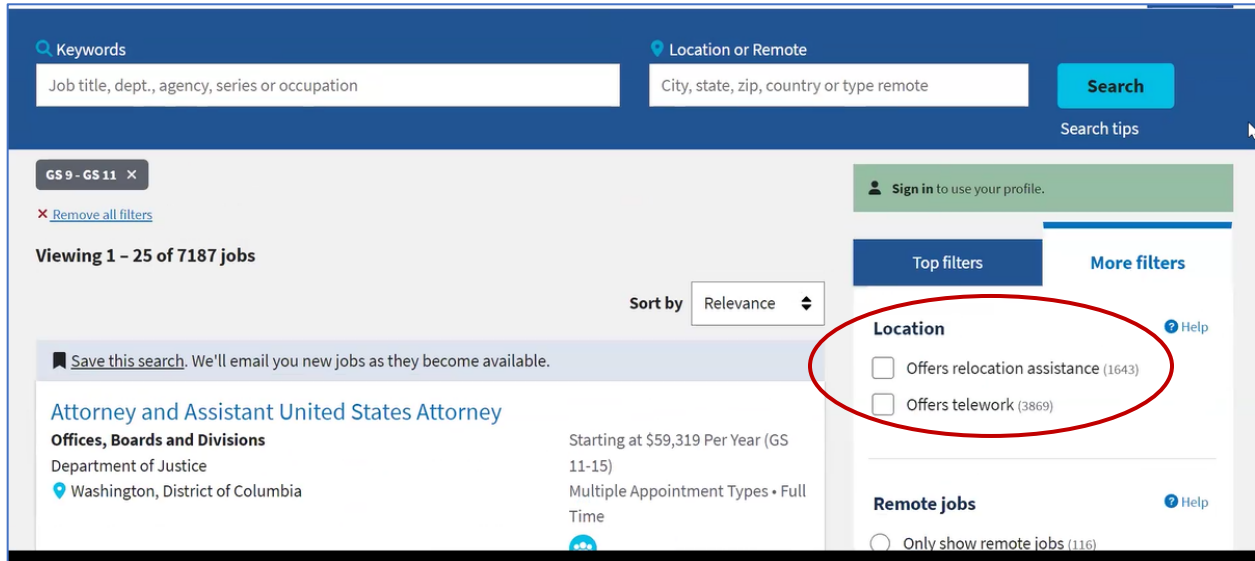
Make it easier by breaking it down by agency. So instead of searching the Department of Agriculture, you can choose agricultural marketing service or research.

There are probably agencies and divisions listed that you didn't know existed. The more knowledge you have, let's say about the Department of Health and Human Services, the better. But this may be overwhelming, so break it down and look at the divisions which can be a more manageable search and help you achieve your goals.

<p>Multiple Schedules</p> <p>Open 05/18/2023 to 05/17/2024</p> <p>Technical Operations (AJW) Airway Transportation Systems Specialist Employee Requested Reassignment Federal Aviation Administration Department of Transportation FAA Tech Ops 2101 ERR Duty Locations Throughout the Nation, Technical Operations</p> <p>Open 08/28/2023 to 08/27/2024</p>	<p>Starting at \$38,560 Per Year (FV F-J) Permanent • Full-time</p>	<p>(1)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts (3) <input type="checkbox"/> Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (1)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural Marketing Service (4) <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural Research Service (29) <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture, Rural Development (11) <input type="checkbox"/> Air Combat Command (31)</p>
<p>SSA HQ (MD/DC/VA) - Accepting Resumes from Individuals with Disabilities Social Security Administration</p>	<p>Starting at \$39,291 Per Year (GS 5-</p>	

Other Searches

You can search for positions that offer relocation assistance or telework.



Keywords: Job title, dept., agency, series or occupation

Location or Remote: City, state, zip, country or type remote

Search

Search tips

GS 9 - GS 11 X

Remove all filters

Viewing 1 - 25 of 7187 jobs

Sort by: Relevance

Save this search. We'll email you new jobs as they become available.

Attorney and Assistant United States Attorney

Offices, Boards and Divisions
Department of Justice
Washington, District of Columbia

Starting at \$59,319 Per Year (GS 11-15)
Multiple Appointment Types • Full Time

Location filters:

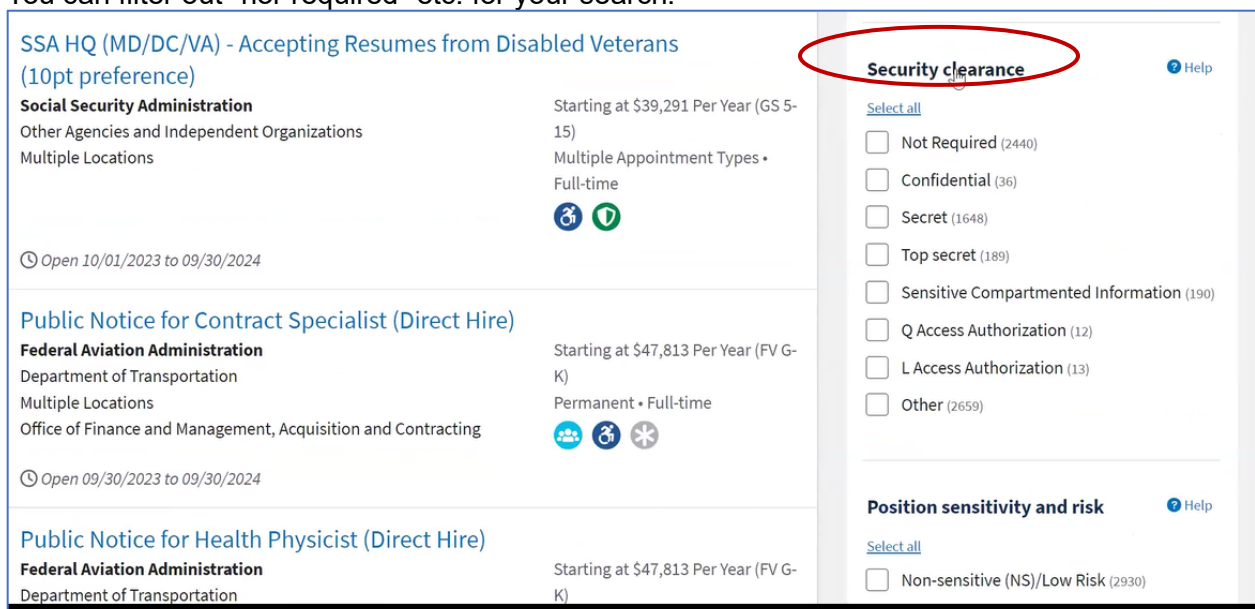
- Offers relocation assistance (1643)
- Offers telework (3869)

Remote jobs:

- Only show remote jobs (116)

Security Clearance

You can filter out “nor required” etc. for your search.



SSA HQ (MD/DC/VA) - Accepting Resumes from Disabled Veterans (10pt preference)

Social Security Administration
Other Agencies and Independent Organizations
Multiple Locations

Starting at \$39,291 Per Year (GS 5-15)
Multiple Appointment Types • Full-time

Open 10/01/2023 to 09/30/2024

Public Notice for Contract Specialist (Direct Hire)

Federal Aviation Administration
Department of Transportation
Multiple Locations
Office of Finance and Management, Acquisition and Contracting

Starting at \$47,813 Per Year (FV G-K)
Permanent • Full-time

Open 09/30/2023 to 09/30/2024

Public Notice for Health Physicist (Direct Hire)

Federal Aviation Administration
Department of Transportation

Starting at \$47,813 Per Year (FV G-K)

Security clearance

Select all

- Not Required (2440)
- Confidential (36)
- Secret (1648)
- Top secret (189)
- Sensitive Compartmented Information (190)
- Q Access Authorization (12)
- L Access Authorization (13)
- Other (2659)

Position sensitivity and risk

Select all

- Non-sensitive (NS)/Low Risk (2930)

State and Local Careers

State legislatures and city councils

- Every state and city will have their own different rules, particularly if you're looking at state legislatures. Take a look when they're in session as they may have a lot of open positions.
- **Many agencies use [governmentjobs.com](https://www.governmentjobs.com), though some cities may have their own system (e.g. Denver, New York City)**
 - Create your profile and check for alignment with each application – you may have forgotten that you filled out your profile previously, but when you submit your application for a new position, it all gets combined so employment date on your resume for instance, must align.
 - Always review references (if saved) and attachments.
 - Answer all prompts which are not optional – many government positions have short answer essays, if you don't answer those your application won't move forward.
 - Include AmeriCorps service s meaningful experience – thoroughly communicate your experience, the service you performed, the program/corps/organization, the community impact, the effect on you and your personal development. That makes it meaningful.