

Foreword

First of all, I would like to thank Dennis Damp for his wonderful work over the years on *The Book of U.S. Government Jobs*, and for asking me to write the foreword for the 11th Edition. I am honored to be a part of this project, and truly appreciate this book's role in keeping the public up to date. As President and CEO of Career Pro Global, Inc., I have been observing and adjusting to federal hiring practices for more than 20 years.

We all know that the past couple of years have been extremely challenging for the American economy and job landscape. During this period, the federal government has changed many hiring practices, and jobseekers have had to adjust accordingly. This updated 11th edition features the many changes that the current Administration implemented since the previous edition was released.

On May 11, 2010, President Barack Obama issued an Executive Order to implement a sweeping reform of the federal hiring process. Perhaps the most obvious (and significant) change is this: federal agencies have been challenged to reduce overall hiring time and improve the way they notify jobseekers of their application status. Effective as of November 1, 2010, hiring reform is still in process and has already created a number of important changes for jobseekers.

For example, applicants should not be required to respond to essay-style questions (frequently known as Knowledge, Skills and Abilities, or KSAs) when submitting their initial application materials. Regardless of what an agency calls them (KSAs, supplemental questions, occupational questionnaires, etc), you still need the tools to provide well-written, relevant examples in response to these types of questions. This issue is discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.

Another major change hiring reform has created involves using a “category rating” rather than the traditional “Rule of 3” approach, which forced managers to select only from among the three highest-scoring applicants. Using category rating, hiring managers can select from among a larger number of qualified applicants.

Amid all of these changes, some things remain constant. You need to know how to write a strong, accomplishment-based résumé, and relevant, concise responses to occupational questions. Moreover, you need to know how to “fit” your

application materials into the various online application systems used throughout the federal government. This book will empower you to do exactly that by providing a wealth of resources and sharing best practices from some of the career industry's best organizations.

Another constant is that the federal government is still a great career choice. For one thing, the U.S. government is the largest employer in the United States, hiring approximately 2 percent of the nation's civilian workforce. From October of 2009 through June 2010, agencies hired 212,188 new employees to fill critical vacancies nationwide. Likewise, federal employment increased dramatically over the past 2 years compared to the private sector where unemployment hovers in the high single digits. The two-year federal pay freeze that was implemented starting in 2011 will have little impact on total compensation growth considering that a federal employee's annual step increases, promotions, and pay for performance incentives are still permitted.

The average annual salary for all pay plans increased from \$67,186 in 2005 to \$82,883 in 2010. Federal employees earned an average annual compensation of \$123,049 including pay and benefits in 2010 compared to just \$61,051 in the private sector according to the United States Bureau of Economic Analysis. New hires in the federal government can receive student loan payoff and relocation assistance plus cash incentives for hard-to-fill positions — and the benefits package is exceptional. Federal workers' average annual benefits alone now exceed \$41,791.

Even amid such challenging economic times, the federal government has remained one of the most reliable options out there for jobseekers. Many additional opportunities will be created as those who are at or beyond retirement age opt to retire. Many retirements are projected as each day 10,000 baby boomers turn age 65 for the next 19 years! Hiring will be driven by retirements and the need to staff over 100 new agencies and regulatory organizations due to the healthcare and banking legislation passed in 2010. Translation: over 40 percent of the total federal workforce is eligible for regular or early retirement!

This bears repeating: the federal government is the largest employer in the United States... and it is not going anywhere. If you are looking for a position with good pay and excellent benefits, you should consider the high-paying and secure federal job market. The federal government offers a wide range of positions in a broad variety of career fields, is currently trying to improve hiring practices and hire more veterans, and offers challenging assignments both stateside and overseas. Remember, the average pay for full-time employees in 2010 was \$82,883!

Finally, I congratulate you on choosing this 11th Edition of *The Book of U.S. Government Jobs*. You obviously want the best information and resources available to aid in your job search, and you have found both in this book. This edition will help you land a high-paying, benefit-loaded, and secure government job.

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