

Intern Workbook



Welcome to your federal internship!

With just under 7% of the full-time federal workforce under the age of 30, it is critical that diverse young talent enter government.

In addition to serving your country and improving the lives of others, the federal government offers many great benefits. While you will learn a lot about federal careers through your internship, you will also engage in “Government 101” pre-work to set yourself up for success. The objectives of this curriculum is to:

1. Provide interns with a shared foundational knowledge of federal service.
2. Introduce interns to Partnership for Public Service resources, which can be incredibly valuable when navigating careers in government.
3. Equip interns with the necessary context and understanding as they begin their federal internships, enabling them to connect the mission of their internship to their broader agency and to the institution of government.

Instructions

Complete each activity and the reflection questions. You will not be asked to submit the entire workbook back to us but completing it will help you maximize your experience as an intern. You will revisit topics from these activities and be asked to occasionally share some of your reflections related to them throughout your internship.

We hope you are as excited as we are!

Welcome again!



Activity one: The federal government and you!

Read "[Gen Z really wants to work for the federal government, or maybe Big Tech](#)" (about one minute)

Listen to our "Profiles in Public Service" podcast episode, "[Government's Next Generation](#)" (41 minutes; transcript at the bottom of the website page).

Reflection

1. What are your reactions to the Gen Z article? Do the results surprise you? Why or why not?
2. As a federal intern, you clearly have some interest in government careers. Why?
3. If you had five minutes to pitch Kiran Ahuja, director of the Office of Personnel Management, the government's chief human resources agency, on what OPM needs to do to recruit and retain more young public servants, what would you say to her?
4. What was something new you learned from this activity and how will you act on this new knowledge?



Activity two: Meet the feds

You get a choice for this activity: Watch one of two videos from a Partnership event in Washington, D.C., that featured Dr. Anthony Fauci and an audience of more than 200 students and interns.

- **Option 1: Feds Under 30.** Learn from three young federal employees:
 - Gabe Jackson, Department of Agriculture.
 - Jordan Amann, Federal Emergency Management Agency.
 - Stephany Guachamin Cuyago, Peace Corps.
- **Option 2: Discussion on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility at Federal Agencies**
 - Christina Cruz-Hubbard, Peace Corps.
 - Junish A. Arora, Department of Commerce.
 - Janice Underwood, Office of Personnel Management.

Reflection

1. Which video did you select and why? What did you learn?
2. What was new and surprising?
3. How did watching the video prepare you for your federal internship? Did the insights shared by the panelists raise questions that you will ask your supervisor and/or colleagues?



Activity three: Best Places to Work in the Federal Government®

Has your career advisor ever told you to do your research before accepting a job? There are many ways to do this research: You could intern to really get an idea of what it is like to work somewhere, you could conduct informational interviews or you could take to the internet to search for employee reviews.

Each year, the Partnership and Boston Consulting Group rank the workplaces of federal agencies and agency subcomponents to give government leaders insights into how their employees view various aspects of their jobs and organizations. These rankings alert leaders to signs of trouble, provide a roadmap to better manage their workforce and shed light on success stories that help strengthen the federal workplace. For potential job seekers, the rankings offer key insights into the employee experience at hundreds of federal agencies across government.

Explore our [2022 Best Places to Work in the Federal Government Rankings®](#)

Reflection

1. What did you learn by exploring the rankings?
2. Why do you think researching potential employers is important?



Activity four: The Service to America Medals®

Each year, the Service to America Medals®—long considered the “Oscars” of public service—honor outstanding public servants who improve our lives for the better. By shining a spotlight on excellence in the federal workforce, the Service to America Medals®, or “Sammies,” seek to build trust in government and inspire more people to consider careers in public service.

Read about our [2022 honorees](#).

Reflection

1. Which Sammies honorees did you read about? What are your reflections on their work and impact?
2. If you could bring one Sammies honoree to your campus for an event, who would you select and why? Why do you think this honoree’s story or accomplishment would resonate on your campus?



Activity five: GoGovernment

The Partnership's [GoGovernment.org](https://www.gogovernment.org) website is a unique guide that will help you consider, apply for and secure federal employment. Explore the page, focusing on the [career guides](#), and take the quiz, "[Find the Right Federal Agency for You.](#)" Review our resources on [how to use USAJOBS](#) and on [writing a federal resume](#).

Reflection

1. What is the right federal agency for you? Were you surprised? Why or why not?
2. How familiar are you with the federal hiring process? With USAJOBS and writing a federal resume? What questions do you have after reviewing the resources?
3. How will you use [GoGovernment.org](https://www.gogovernment.org) throughout your internship (and beyond!)? What are your goals for this internship, and how might these resources help you reach them?



Activity six: USAJOBS

Most jobs in executive branch federal agencies can be found on USAJOBS, the government's official website for civil service opportunities. USAJOBS includes postings for cabinet agencies, subcomponents, bureaus, commissions, boards and independent agencies. While some jobs are “excepted,” or involve a hiring process that does not involve USAJOBS, the site is where most job seekers interested in a federal career look for opportunities.

To get acclimated to USAJOBS, the [Help Center](#) is a great place to start. We particularly recommend you review:

- [How to create a login.gov account.](#)
- [What is login.gov and why do I have to create an account?](#)
- [How to create a profile.](#)
- [How to view job applications.](#)
- [How to check the status of an application.](#)

Fun Fact! USAJOBS also offers a [Federal Internship Portal](#). While you should still search for opportunities on the main USAJOBS site, the portal is a great resource for internships in government.

Action

1. Create a USAJOBS profile if you do not currently have one.
2. Bonus: Start building a federal resume using the resume builder in USAJOBS. Explore these helpful links:
 - [How to create a resume.](#)
 - [What should I include in my federal resume?](#)
 - [What should I leave out of my resume?](#)
 - [How to supply work experience.](#)



Activity seven: Your goals and priorities for your federal internship

Before starting your internship, draft three to five professional goals you would like to achieve and discuss them with your internship supervisor. Goals can be related to professional development, skills development and/or mentorship opportunities. Your supervisor will provide feedback on the feasibility of the goals and how you can accomplish them. You should also ask your supervisor for guidance in seeking professional development opportunities in your office and at your agency, when possible. Remember to revisit these goals throughout the semester.

- Goal/objective #1:
- Goal/objective #2:
- Goal/objective #3:
- Goal/objective #4:
- Goal/objective #5:

Additional Resources

HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR DAY

Send a confirmation email three business days before your first day to:

- Confirm arrival (or login) procedures, schedule and first day expectations.
- Confirm dress code.
- Ensure you have a laptop, a Personal Identity Verification card and anything else you need to gain online access.
- Ask if there are any materials or websites to review before your first day.

If your first day is in person, arrive no more than 10 minutes early. If your first day is online, sign on around five minutes early.

HOW TO APPROACH THE FIRST MEETING WITH YOUR SUPERVISOR

- Review the internship role description together. Ask clarifying questions.
- What is the communication structure? Considering the environment (virtual, in-person, or hybrid), what is important for you to know and understand when communicating with your supervisor and others on the team? What should you do when you have questions?
- What is expected of you and what defines “success” as an intern in your office? What goals and expectations does your supervisor and your internship agency have for you, and how will your performance be assessed?
- What skills are important to develop during your internship to support the office or team?
- How will you receive feedback on your performance throughout the semester, and what is the structure for accountability? How often will you check in with your supervisor one on one, and how formal will these meetings be? What should you prepare ahead of these meetings to make the most of them? Is there a template or preferred agenda?

A FEW WEEKS AFTER THE INTERNSHIP BEGINS

- **Week three or four:** Is there anyone outside your team who you want to get to know better? Why? Check out [this Harvard Business Review article](#) for suggestions on how to prepare for an informational interview or read [this piece](#) for five tips to conduct one effectively. If your internship is remote, please do not hesitate to set up virtual informational interviews!
- **Week five:** Request a midpoint check in with your supervisor. This meeting can be informal and should be used to discuss where you are thriving and where you need to improve. Bring your initial goals to this meeting so you can revise as needed. Make sure to seek feedback by asking questions such as:

- What have I been doing well since I started this internship?
- What unique perspectives or skills am I bringing to the team or to specific projects?
- Are there any stretch assignments I could take on to hone my skills or to develop new ones?
- **Weeks eight to 10** (or 10-12 depending on length of your internship): Request a close-out meeting with your supervisor. Make sure to capture feedback on the areas where you excelled—your internship accomplishments— and your areas for growth so you can continue to strengthen your skill set.

IN CLOSING

Starting a new professional journey like an internship takes planning, motivation and intentionality! These activities are designed to set you up for success. We will continue to build on our knowledge of the federal hiring system throughout the internship and look forward to growing together.