

How Can I Find Entry-Level Government Attorney Jobs?

The federal government plans to hire nearly **10,000 attorneys by the end of 2009!** In addition to the excellent benefits, compensation and promotion potential, government attorneys get significant responsibilities and hand-on experience extremely early in their careers. To find out how to take advantage of these excellent opportunities, read on!

1.NETWORK. Applying to be a federal government attorney can sometimes feel like you've thrown your resume into a black hole. One of the best ways to get your application noticed is to develop contacts with attorneys who work at the agencies you are interested in. Some great ways to do that are:

- Talk to former employers, professors, friends, and anyone you know about your interest in becoming a federal government attorney and see if they know anyone that would be willing to talk with you about their experience as a federal government attorney.
- Set up informational interviews with government attorneys. Identify your "interviewees" by reviewing agency websites, reading about agency actions and rulemaking, and using the Leadership Directories (accessible via the Portal).
- Join organizations that will bring you into contact with practicing agency lawyers, such as related voluntary bar associations, relevant state bar sections, etc. For example, if you are interested in working at the FCC, you should become a student member of the Federal Communications Bar Association and join the D.C. Bar Computer and Telecommunications Section or the Arts, Entertainment, Media and Sports Law Section. When you go to events these organizations host – dress professionally, read up on the topic ahead of time, and *speak to the panelists!* It is a great way to not only meet practitioners, but also learn more about the practice area, which makes you a great interviewer!
- Read publications that practitioners read. How do you figure out what those are? By talking to practitioners and asking them what they read!

2.Check the websites of the agencies you are interested in on a weekly basis to see if they are hiring attorneys. Some agencies do not post legal openings on USAJobs!

3.Search on USAJobs. Many government agencies will hire recent law graduates, but these positions are mixed in with lateral openings and are hard to find. The best way to identify most of these entry-level opportunities is to:

- Go to "[Advanced Search](#)" on the USAJobs website.
- In the "Occupational Series" box, click on:
 - 0905 – Attorney (for general legal positions)
 - 1222 – Patent Attorney (for patent law positions)
 - Other legal or quasi-legal Occupational Series include:

- 0526 – Tax Law Specialist
 - 0935 – Administrative Law Judge
 - 1102 – Contract Specialist
 - 0998 – Claims Assistant and Examining
 - 0996 – Claims Examining, Veterans
 - 0991 – Claims Examining, Worker’s Compensation
 - 0963 – Legal Instruments Examiner
 - 0347 – GAO Analyst
- Select any other preferences you may want (i.e., “Location Search” or “Agency Search”). For example, you can narrow your search by looking for positions with a “Pay Grade (GS)” of 9, 10 or 11, which is what entry-level attorneys/law clerks usually earn in the federal government.
 - Hit “Search for Jobs.”
 - Note: you can also save this search as a “Job Search Agent” by clicking on the “Save this search and email me jobs!” link in the upper right hand corner of the search results page.

Positions that are open to recent law graduates who are not members of a state bar will include language similar to the following somewhere in the vacancy announcement (usually under the “Qualifications & Evaluations” tab):

RECENT LAW SCHOOL GRADUATES

Recent graduates that plan to take the bar within the current year may be considered for a FG/GS-11 law clerk position and may transition into an attorney position after being admitted to practice before the bar of any U.S. jurisdiction or the District of Columbia.

4. Search on [Avue Central](#). Avue Central is a federal employment service provided free to the public for federal employment. You are able to apply on-line for jobs, which have been posted by subscribers to Avue Digital Services.

- Click the "Search For Jobs" item from the Main Menu. This item is located in the middle of the screen under the Avue Logo. Input search criteria and Click "Search For Jobs". If you have not already done so, you will be asked to provide information to determine your eligibility. Answer the eligibility questions by clicking in the box preceding each question that pertains to you. The boxes you select will show a check mark.
- Select any other preferences you may want (i.e., “Location”). If there are too many positions that populate from a general “Location Search”, you can narrow your search by looking for positions with a “Grade (GS)” of 9, 10 or 11, which is what entry-level attorneys/law clerks usually earn in the federal government.
- Click “All Agencies” or select the individual government agencies that you are interested in.
- Hit “Search”
- All jobs that meet your search criteria and your eligibility will be displayed on the Vacancy List screen.
- Note: you can also save the search in one of the following ways:
 - Select "Create or Update My Profile" from the Main Menu.
 - Select various profile categories from the left-side menu.
 - Enter your profile information in the screens provided.
 - Click Save after each profile category is complete

- Save profile information by checking the "Save This Information" box on input screens while applying for a vacancy. Must Mark "Update Profile" to ensure future vacancies will show pre-populated screens containing your base Personal Information.

5. Follow all application instructions and take the KSAs seriously! For help with your applications, contact Anna Marshall in the CDO. A guide to drafting effective KSAs is available [here](#).

6. Follow Up! Unless the agency indicates otherwise, if you have not heard about the status of your application within four weeks of submission, be sure to follow up with the division you applied to.

For more specific questions or advice, please feel free to contact any of the CDO counselors, including Anna Marshall, the Government Advisor. Anna can be reached at amarshall@law.gwu.edu or (202) 994-7340. Happy hunting!

Federal Government Job Search Resources

- [GS Basic Pay Scale](#) – chart of the basic federal government salary.
- [GS Locality Pay Tables](#) – charts reflecting government salary by GS grade and location.
- [Summary Analysis of Legal Positions in the Federal Government](#) – overview of legal positions and hiring trends for attorneys in the federal government.
- [Projected Attorney Hires By Agency](#) – summary chart at Page 24, agency by agency analysis thereafter.
- [Best Places to Work in the Federal Government 2007](#) – survey of the best federal agencies to work for.
- Makingthedifference.org – site to help applicants navigate the federal job search process – legal career info: <http://www.makingthedifference.org/federalcareers/law.shtml>
- [Corporation for National and Community Service](#)