

## Remote Hiring for Federal Positions

*College of the Environment | Postdoc Remote Panel Discussion | Wednesday, May 20, 2020*

### **When you see a solicitation, how do you reach out to a potential government employer?**

This can be a challenge - start with people you know who are federal employees and get advice about how to reach out. Check Sarah's [Twitter post](#) for more info.

### **Some federal job postings are open for very short windows (e.g., 4 days). Does this mean the position is earmarked for someone, or is this a regular occurrence?**

It is common for government jobs to be open for short periods of time. This does not necessarily mean it they are earmarked for someone. In fact, in general, there are strong rules against earmarking jobs for specific candidates outside of a competitive process.

### **I've seen some federal postings that aren't a perfect fit for my skill set, but I'm really excited about the opportunity – should I apply?**

If you are really excited about the position, there is some benefit to applying, especially if you have a preferred status (e.g., you are a Veteran) or in some cases, if someone sees your application and is planning to fill another position, they might take note and reach out.

### **Are there federal positions for social scientists?**

The [Washington Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit](#) will be hiring a social scientist to work on human dimensions of fish and wildlife management. Look for this job advertisement in July, on the [USGS Co-op Units Twitter account](#).

### **Do you need to be a US citizen to work in a federal position?**

US citizenship is necessary to be a federal employee. However, many labs employ contractors who are not necessarily citizens.

### **What is the process of finding a contractor position? Are there contractor positions at all federal agencies?**

Finding contractor positions is a different process than finding a federal position. Contractor positions will not be advertised on [USAJobs.gov](#), instead they're posted to the System for Award Management, [beta.sam.gov](#). There are contractor positions in all federal agencies.

### **Is there a guide for what the graded position levels (e.g., GS-10) mean, or how should we figure out what level is appropriate for postdocs to apply for?**

These position levels depend on the agency. As a postdoc, you will be generally looking somewhere between GS-11 and GS-13, or Band III and Band IV in NOAA. For research positions, GS-12 or GS-13 is the starting level, sort of the equivalent of an assistant professor. However, if you are looking in non-research agencies, the starting PhD-level position might be GS-9 to GS-11. Whatever the position level, you must meet the education and experience requirements.

NOAA does not use the “GS- system”, they use the “Z- system”, which is totally different. Be sure to talk to someone you know who is a federal employee at that agency for advice.

**How should a postdoc decide whether to do a secondary postdoc at an agency, or just apply for permanent positions?**

Postdocs should simultaneously apply to both postdoc and permanent government positions.