

# Looking for a Federal Job?

Lily Whiteman, *Get Hired! How to Land the Ideal Federal Job and Negotiate a Top Salary* (Alabama: FPMI Solutions, Inc., 2005). 280 pp., \$19.95 paper, ISBN:1-930542-51-8.

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**B**ooks offering career advice are very common in American society partly because of the importance of career choices. Students (with the support of their family) spend thousands of dollars to obtain an undergraduate degree with the hope that a degree will prepare them for a long and productive career. In undergraduate school, there are some students who change their major repeatedly until they finally decide or settle on a program of study. Unfortunately, some graduates spend a significant portion of their professional career seeking an occupation that will provide both economic mobility and job satisfaction. Williamson, Pemberton, and Lounsbury (2005) found that five major job characteristics must be present in order for an employee to find job satisfaction at his/her workplace. These characteristics include: task identity, task significance, variety of skills, autonomy, and feedback. While it may take an employee several years to find overall job satisfaction, some people find it immediately. One reason for early career job satisfaction could be because some job-seekers know exactly where to look for meaningful employment. Over the last decade or so, employment with the federal government is the one place that provides all the work characteristics that lead to overall job satisfaction.

Now, more than ever, there is a need for the government to attract the best and the brightest into the public sector. According to the Office of Personnel Management, 18.5 percent of the full-time permanent workforce will retire this year (see [www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov)). Based on this retirement estimate, approximately 277,000 federal jobs will become available. For job-seekers, this retirement wave provides evidence that the United States government will likely be the most sought after employer on college campuses across America. People who value job security along with public service are more likely to prefer a government job (Lewis and Frank, 2002); however, for those unfamiliar with the public sector and/or the federal hiring process, securing a government job may not be an easy task. *Get Hired! How to Land the Ideal Federal Job and Negotiate a Top Salary* is a great resource for new career professionals and mid-career professionals who seek a federal career and are interested in “insider” tips to navigate the federal hiring process.

Lily Whiteman is a federal career coach and is the author of *Get Hired!* Whiteman does an outstanding job explaining how to find job openings in the federal government and details the credentials each sector requires. In this book, she begins by discussing 15 common myths job-seekers have about federal employment. These myths explain common misconceptions about federal jobs, starting with myths about salaries,

the employment process, the work environment and ending with a discussion on the net-loss of federal jobs to privatization. Whiteman discusses how and why these myths are untrue and has credible sources to reinforce her comments.

The layout of this book provides for easy reading and a straightforward approach using comic strips and pictures to help illustrate Whiteman's point. This book also offers practical advice about accepting or rejecting a job offer and the glossary that is provided in the back of the book is extremely helpful when navigating the terminology used in federal agencies. This resource guarantees that the reader fully understands the terms used throughout the book. The design of this book is not theoretical – instead, it is a “how to find and secure a federal job” resource. *Get Hired!* is also an excellent resource for undergraduate and graduate students who are interested in securing an internship in the public sector. There are several chapters that provide helpful tips for securing highly sought after student employment opportunities, scholarships for service and competitive internships and fellowships. In addition to identifying online resources (e.g., [usajobs.opm.gov](http://usajobs.opm.gov), [fpmisolutions.com](http://fpmisolutions.com), [ourpublicservice.org](http://ourpublicservice.org)) that provide information about potential career opportunities, the author describes the myriad of diversity programs for women, minorities, and disabled job seekers. Whiteman points out that the following agencies, NASA, the Department of Energy, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Agriculture, and the General Services Administration are reportedly the top promoters of workforce diversity among all federal agencies.

This book is practical and useful for the new career professional and the mid-career professional who seeks to submit a “killer” application. It provides helpful hints and tips on how to write clear and concise application essays. When applying for federal jobs, hiring agencies are likely to require applicants to submit application essays called KSAs, (Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities) or ECQs (Executive Core Qualifications). Whiteman points out that KSAs and ECQs are used as a screening device by hiring agencies – applicants who are intimidated by the federal hiring process are less likely to apply for jobs that require an application essay. To ensure that readers understand how to write “killer” essays, she provides five powerful examples of “before and after” KSAs and ECQs, that when finalized were winning “killer” essays. Her tips on writing “irresistible resumes” and on writing “cover letters that open doors” are supported by a CD-Rom that contains Microsoft Word resume templates that will almost certainly ensure that job-seekers submit an A+ application to the federal government.

Several employment guides, such as the *Federal Jobs: The Ultimate Guide* by Morgan and Goldenkoff (2002) and the *Guide to America's Federal Jobs* by Maxwell (2005) provide the reader with the necessary knowledge needed to locate government employment opportunities but they lack the information required to actually obtain those jobs – a significant detail which makes *Get Hired!* stand out among the best. Anyone looking for a federal job, or any job for that matter, would definitely benefit by reading this book.

**References**

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