

# Careers and the Study of Political Science



Sixth edition

American Political Science Association



# **Careers and the Study of Political Science**

**A Guide for Undergraduates**

Revised and expanded 6th edition



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Ted Mann

# Preface

One of APSA's most important functions is the identification of career opportunities for political science students. Ours is a diverse and dynamic discipline, through which one may become a teacher, researcher, practitioner, scholar, pundit, professor, public servant, elected official, political staffer, journalist, lawyer, businessperson, advocate, and good citizen. I hope that this career guide encourages you to enter political science as a field of study and, once you have finished your studies, helps you to find a career that fulfills your aspirations.

Political science majors enjoy a versatility of skills and a marvelous range of exciting careers. This guide should provide the direction you need to craft for yourself an imaginative and rewarding life course.

The careers featured in this monograph were selected because of their direct connection to the study of political science. All of the possible variations and combinations of career opportunities could not be covered in a monograph, but the career sectors highlighted are the most prominent and most likely options for undergraduates with political science majors and minors. The sections deal with law, positions in federal, state, and local governments; business; international organizations; nonprofit associations and organizations; campaign management and polling; journalism; precollegiate education; and electoral politics. There is also a section on pursuing an academic career in political science for those students with a scholarly bent.

In addition to this guide, APSA has two other career resources for students and advisors: a video, *Career Encounters: Political Science*, and the brochure, "Political Science: An Ideal Liberal Arts Major." Information on ordering these resources and selections from them may be found on

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the APSA's web site: <[www.apsanet.org](http://www.apsanet.org)>. All of these career materials are sponsored by the APSA's Departmental Services Program and the Committee on Education and Professional Development, and all are designed to lead you in the right direction.

Michael Brintnall  
Executive Director  
July 2003

# Acknowledgements

*Careers and the Study of Political Science* was conceived and designed for the American Political Science Association in 1974 by Mary H. Curzan, Ph.D. *Careers* was the first publication for students and their advisors of the then newly established “Division of Educational Affairs,” made possible by a grant from the National Science Foundation. Since then, more than 325,000 copies of the first five editions have been distributed. This sixth edition adapts and augments the content of the previous editions. The first two chapters are expansions of the foreword and introduction that served as the first chapters in past editions. A new chapter has been added on careers in electoral politics. The discussion of the importance of political science to civic knowledge and engagement is incorporated into the second chapter. The sixth edition also provides web sites and other updated references with information about specific training and employment opportunities. Moreover, this new edition—in a new century—recognizes the far greater mobility across career sectors and flexibility in work settings in the United States and the rest of the world.

Several of the chapters in this edition rely on the work of contributors to the fifth edition put together by Sheilah Mann. Michael Brintnall again provided most of the information on careers in the federal government. Joseph La Palombara contributed to the international chapter. Candice Nelson contributed to the campaign management chapter. Robert Salisbury also contributed to the chapter on interest groups. A notable portion of Mary Hepburn’s examination of the connection between political science and pre-college education careers is retained from the fifth edition. The wise advice from Albert R. Hunt,



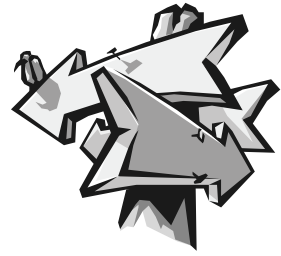
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*Wall Street Journal*, and Stephen Hess, the Brookings Institution, about the importance of political science undergraduate degrees to journalism continues to be applicable to electronic as well as print journalism. Mike Davis, WBNS10TV in Columbus, Ohio, helped us update the sections on broadcast journalism. Alan Rosenthal's analysis of the importance of recognizing the connection between elected representatives and their constituents also remains important.

Several people worked on the new edition of this booklet. Catherine E. Rudder, former APSA Executive Director, recognized the need to move quickly to publish a new edition and invited Allison Porter to consult with APSA, using references from APSA staff to experts in the field, to assure reaching this objective. Allison Porter prepared the revised chapters on careers in law, government, nonprofit associations, and journalism. She drew upon exchanges with APSA staff and interviews and material contributed by Lynne Weil for journalism; Gisela Rots, Director of Member Services, Women in International Security (WIIS) at the University of Maryland, for international nonprofit associations (thanks to Elizabeth Loy, WIIS, for the referral to Gisela); and Jim Thurber and Sarah Brewer both of American University, who offered information about campaign management. Also as noted, Michael Brintnall's new, detailed information about public service careers in the federal government expanded this chapter. Allison Porter amplified these interviews with her own research.

Sheilah Mann revised the first two chapters on career planning and the transferable skills associated with studying political science and the chapter on careers in precollege education. Sue Davis revised the chapters on international careers and campaign management and polling. Sue Davis and Sheilah Mann provided references for Allison Porter and updated the chapters on careers for students with graduate degrees in political science and electoral politics and reviewed and made additions to all of the chapters. Other APSA staff members contributed to assuring the quality of and timely publication of the new guide. Jeff Biggs, Director, APSA's Congressional Fellowship Program, reviewed the chapters on careers in electoral politics and in the federal government. Blake Brunner copyedited this sixth edition of *Careers and the Study of Political Science*. Polly Leonard Karpowicz managed its production, pricing, and advertising. Undergraduate student interns at APSA also reviewed the manuscript.

Pamela S. Cubberly of Cubberly and Associates designed and executed the layout, while Polly Karpowicz designed the cover for this edition. The APSA logo was designed by Hung Nuygen. The cartoon on the inside cover is provided by permission of the *Williams College Record* and was drawn by Ted Mann.



# Choosing a Career

How you develop and apply your skills and for what purposes you do so are issues that you are likely to question not only when you are a student, but throughout your life. Over time you will discover different interests and goals and perhaps find yourself in jobs that, as a student, you did not anticipate. Nonetheless, this is the right time to think about what you value, what you do well, what interests you, and in what situations you are productive—all in the context of employment opportunities in the United States and, increasingly, around the world. You should look forward to acquiring new skills and finding new opportunities and anticipate holding several different jobs and even changing careers. You may begin to plan for attractive career options by analyzing yourself and the characteristics of different types of careers.

## ANALYZING YOURSELF

Consider these questions about your aptitudes and preferences:

- Am I happy working with other people? Do I work best by myself?
- Am I skillful at organizing people? Do I explain things well?
- Do I enjoy research? Examining and solving problems?
- Do I write well?
- Do I enjoy statistics and mathematical analyses?

Questions about your preferred lifestyle are equally important:

- What standard of living is important to me? What level of income do I seek in the long run?
- Would I rather work a specified number of hours a day, or do I prefer the indefinite hour commitments and irregular schedules of some professions?

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- What commitment to family life and community service is important to me?
- How would this affect my choice of jobs?
- Do I have geographical preferences for where I will work? Am I prepared to move to follow opportunities or my family?
- How important is social companionship from the people I would work with and meet on my job?
- Is job security important to me?
- What kind of benefits package do I need to make me feel comfortable? (i.e., health care, vacations, pension plan, paid family leave, etc.)

### CHARACTERISTICS OF CAREERS

Consider these questions as you seek professions suited to your personal needs and values:

- Is this a good profession for a loner? Does this profession require people to work with others? What is the size of the organization, and what is the distribution of authority?
- Is this a profession that offers opportunities to control or change work hours?
- Is this a profession where you will acquire new skills and knowledge? Are there opportunities for professional advancement?
- Can this profession be pursued in different types and sizes of organizations?
- Is this a profession that requires research skills? Quantitative skills?
- And, *most important*, does this interest me? Will I find the work challenging, rewarding, and meaningful?

These questions are a guide to knowing yourself and what you want out of life and your career. It may take you some time to answer all of these questions in full. Our advice to you is that you read the questions and keep them in mind as you read through this booklet.

Your teachers and counselors will have resources and advice to assist you. You will learn a great deal from your peers by exchanging insights and ideas about career goals and opportunities, and the friendships and networks you formed as an undergraduate will be personally and professionally important throughout your life. Seek information from people in the professions that attract you, as most people who value their work are pleased to talk about it with students and recent graduates. In addition, there are associations that offer career advice and services. Finally, the Internet gives you direct access to information from professional associations, as well as advice about preparing for and conducting a job search.

## Choosing a Career

*Careers and the Study of Political Science* gives a brief overview of major types of careers. The chapter for each career describes why political science is a valuable background for the career, what additional education and skills are prerequisites, and the outlook for jobs. Selected web sites with excellent additional information are listed in each chapter. You will be able to use this guide generally to compare careers and specifically to identify one or more appealing careers. As you read, you will find the following advice relevant to all careers for graduates of liberal arts and sciences programs:

- Experience reinforces formal education. You should seek internships and volunteer activities to explore the careers that interest you. You should regard each work experience you have, at whatever level, as an opportunity to develop “people skills” and to demonstrate your abilities. Many part-time or summer jobs will also give you some specific training and knowledge about an enterprise.
- There is considerable mobility across categories of economic sectors—profit, nonprofit, and public. You will be able to transfer training and experience from one sector to another.
- Fluctuations occur in the rate of economic growth. Nonetheless, there will be jobs for college graduates and for people with postgraduate training in a postindustrial society. An “educated workforce” will always be a necessity, due to generational and demographic changes. When you graduate with an education, good work habits, and discipline, you will have opportunities.
- Your liberal arts and sciences education prepares you for lifelong learning and gives you core communication and adaptation skills that will be valuable in any career.
- In the modern workplace, most jobs require interpersonal skills and, even those, such as research analyst, that entail less interaction with others, demand that you be able to work in teams. Equally, even jobs that place a premium on working effectively and continuously with others, such as legislative aide or lobbyist, require a high degree of self-direction and considerable autonomy. It is important to keep in mind these and other skills that you will acquire as a political science major and be able to use them in writing cover letters and resumes that will help you get the job you want.

**Experience reinforces formal education. You should seek internships and volunteer activities to explore the careers that interest you.**

You should keep in mind that education alone is not enough in today’s job market. You also need experience. Experience can come from volunteering, from

### USEFUL SKILLS

Skills that a political science major helps you to develop that are applicable to any job:

**Ability to Communicate:**

- Present ideas clearly in writing and orally
- Turn data into useable information
- Argue and debate effectively
- Negotiate and mediate conflicts
- Listen critically.

**Methods and Research:**

- Interpret and analyze data
- Discern good information from bad
- Perform basic quantitative analysis
- Use summary statistics
- Understand the basics of a reliable sample survey
- Employ effectively a variety of research sources, including the Internet
- Use computers with facility
- Design research
- Summarize findings
- Test theories and hypotheses.

**Analytical ability:**

- Interpret data
- Understand components of complex problems
- See problems from a variety of perspectives
- Synthesize themes from complex issues
- Think “outside the box”
- Think internationally
- Assess policy and propose options
- Analyze and solve problems systematically and logically.

**Planning and Development:**

- Organize information
- Conceptualize problems
- Implement strategies
- Make effective decisions
- Demonstrate leadership.

**Group skills:**

- Work in a team and individually
- Develop consensus
- Interact effectively within a diverse environment.

working, and from a variety of extracurricular activities. Get involved in leadership roles on campus so that you can show potential employers that you have leadership skills; work on a major research project to show your analytical ability; manage a sports team to show your abilities to coordinate and interpersonal skills; volunteer at a crisis center to show you can handle stress and emergencies; give oral presentations on campus about a study abroad experience to exemplify your skills as a public speaker.

You should also know that a broad undergraduate education is more than preparation for obtaining and succeeding in a job. Learning is also the foundation for enhancing the satisfaction gained from work. The greater the understanding of the dynamics of the governmental and political process, the more interesting and rewarding your work experience will be. Thus, you should not overlook the importance of history, philosophy, psychology, and various elective courses in your studies.

The American Political Science Association, on behalf of political science faculties and practitioners, encourages students to read *Careers and the Study of Political Science* to learn why political science is such a significant and popular major and why the study of political science is associated with training for a broad range of careers. We hope this guide helps you to choose an appropriate career that will satisfy you and enrich your life.

**Learning is also the foundation for enhancing the satisfaction gained from work.**

### WHY POLITICAL SCIENCE?

Political science is both a classical discipline and one of the most recently developed social sciences. The origins of the study of politics reach back to the beginnings of human society. Inquiries about the nature of governments, their leaders and publics, what shapes public policies, and international interactions among nations have always been important.

Aristotle characterized politics as the “queen of the sciences,” and he classified governments according to their various structures, the power of their leaders, and the involvement of their people. Throughout history, philosophers have addressed the same issues. Machiavelli was an astute student of political power. St. Thomas Aquinas analyzed the origins and legitimacy of political order. Among the many other political theorists are Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, John Stuart Mill, Karl Marx, and Simone de Beauvoir.

Political theory and practice were joined in the crafting of the United States Constitution in Philadelphia in 1787. The authors of the constitution, particularly

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James Madison, were political theoreticians of the first magnitude. They endeavored to mold political theories into a constitutional design for political institutions responsive to a country with diverse populations and regions. Constitutional amendments and interpretations as well as social, economic, and political events contribute to the evolution of American government.

Much of contemporary political science encompasses a wide range of topics and methods of inquiry. In the twentieth century, the evolution and growth of political science scholarship has taken place primarily in the United States. It is also important to recognize the contributions to political theory and analysis made by European scholars who left Europe in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, such as Hannah Arendt and Paul Lazarsfeld. At the end of the twentieth century, the study of political science is conducted throughout the world.

In the past century, political science scholarship, although continuing to embrace philosophy, law, and history, has expanded to scientific inquiry and analytical theory about political behavior and political decisions. Data collections—for example, to examine questions based upon the theories of cognate social sciences such as psychology and sociology—and hypothesis testing, as well as economic and mathematical modeling and policy analysis are significant approaches to the study of politics and governments, domestic and international. Political science continues to include new methods of analysis and to pursue the goal of describing and explaining political phenomena with greater accuracy. Political science today seeks constantly to become more rigorous in its standards of inquiry and proof. It is also a far more diverse discipline than in the past with a growing number of women and minorities, both majoring in political science and teaching it.

### What do Political Scientists Study?

Political science is a broad discipline in both content and methods. Political science includes philosophical, historical, and analytical studies of governments, politics, and policies. Political scientists may focus on political behavior, decision making, processes, organizations, and public policies. Inquiry in political science addresses the domestic and international politics of the United States and all other countries and regions. Political scientists study the political values, attachments, and activities of people, individually and in groups. Political science examines both what preferences people share and how they differ according to their personal attributes and positions in the economy and society. Political science also studies how people regard and trust each other as well as their leaders and governments. Consequently, political science has many facets and offers opportunities for many different concentrations (see box to right).

### TOPICS OF INTEREST TO POLITICAL SCIENTISTS

Political scientists study topics through specific fields and numerous subfields:

#### *Major Fields*

American government and politics  
Comparative politics  
International politics  
Methodology

Political philosophy  
Law and courts  
Public policy  
Public administration

#### *Subfields*

Advanced industrial societies  
Africa  
Asia  
Asian-American politics  
Australia  
Bureaucracy  
Canadian politics  
Caribbean  
Central America  
Central Asia  
Civil rights and liberties  
Conflict processes  
Congress  
Constitutional law  
Criminal justice  
Defense  
Developing nations  
East and Central Europe  
Economic policy  
Education policy  
Electoral behavior  
Electoral systems  
Energy policy  
Environmental policy  
Ethnic politics  
Europe  
Evaluation research  
Federalism  
Feminist theory  
Foreign policy  
Gay and Lesbian politics  
Gender politics and policy  
Health care policy  
Historical political thought  
History and politics  
Housing policy  
Immigration policy

International law  
International organizations  
International political economy  
International security  
Judicial politics  
Labor policy  
Latin America  
Latino politics  
Leadership studies  
Life sciences and politics  
Literature and politics  
Middle East  
Native American politics  
Normative political theory  
North America  
Political behavior  
Political communication  
Political development  
Political economy  
Political parties and organizations  
Political psychology  
Positive political theory  
Post-Soviet region  
Presidency  
Public finance and budget  
Public opinion  
Regulatory policy  
Religion and politics  
Science and technology  
Social movements  
Social welfare policy  
South America  
State politics  
Trade policy  
Urban politics  
Western  
Women and politics



## Careers in Political Science

### The Personal and Civic Value of the Study of Political Science

Today, no less than in the past, people need to learn about the political system in which they live and know how the system relates to other governments and international issues. You ought to know about political processes, institutions, and policies in order to participate in these on behalf of your values and preferences. Political science research shows that higher levels of education and knowledge about politics are positively associated with interest and participation in politics and government.

Knowledge of political systems and public policies is critical to those who expect to have careers in the public sector. Knowledge of political processes and the connections among the polity, economy, and society ought to be acquired by those who seek careers in all sectors.

Political science gives you the specific information and skills to become an effective member of your community and participant in civic life. Students attracted to political science frequently have an interest in politics and public issues. You may be fascinated by the struggle for power and the benefits of public policies. Often, students have strong preferences about politics and government. Usually students of political science retain these interests throughout their lives. And, you have opportunities to participate in community and public affairs where your interests and skills will be valued. You should realize that your political science training can open doors for you into activities that can be rewarding on a voluntary or part-time basis. And, you should realize that your participation is important to the discourse on public problems and the allocation of public resources.

Among the specific arenas for these avocational applications of political science training are political parties and interest groups, particularly at the grass roots level. “People power” in the form of working on campaigns for issues and candidates is an important resource and often can counter the leverage of money in politics. Political science students may find satisfaction by volunteering in community organizations and organizing local political expression. Current politics, with the attention to education, health, and the environment, is shaped considerably by local and state actions as much as and frequently more so than national policies.

In this century, many people will have full-time jobs with flexible hours and locations. This allows you to find a place for civic involvement in your lives. Such engagement adds a fulfilling dimension to your life and contributes to the well-being of families and communities—which is vital to sustaining democracy.

**. . . your political science training can open doors for you into activities that can be rewarding on a voluntary or part-time basis.**



# Federal Government

## POSSIBLE CAREERS\*

*White House advisor; civilian consultant to the Department of Defense; assistant secretary of state for Latin American Affairs; deputy undersecretary of affairs for women in the labor force; officer, Federal Bureau of Investigations; secretary, Department of Health and Human Services; teacher, overseas school for military and diplomatic children; program analyst, Environmental Protection Agency; management auditor, field office, Department of Labor; tax inspector, Treasury Department; researcher, Congressional Research Service; foreign service officer; ambassador; archivist; budget analyst; historian; GAO evaluator; foreign affairs specialist; public affairs specialist; intelligence specialist, CIA; staff aide, congressional committee; information technology manager, Department of Veteran's Affairs; program officer, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education; Vice President of the United States.*

## THE NATURE OF THE CAREER

The federal government is so large and varied that it is impossible to catalog briefly the types of job opportunities available. The political science graduate may find a job in nearly any agency or branch of the U.S. Government. The majority of federal jobs are located outside of Washington, D.C., thereby providing numerous employment opportunities throughout the nation and even throughout the world.

Federal service offers stimulating work, the rewards of public service, good entry-level salaries, comprehensive benefit packages, an excellent retirement program for the long-term employee, and outstanding opportunity to advance.

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\* All of the illustrative positions listed at the beginning of each chapter are or have recently been held by political science majors, many of whom pursued further graduate or professional training in preparation for these positions. Some of the positions are entry level, while others illustrate later stages in a career.

## Careers in Political Science

“Competitive with the private sector” and “looking for talent” describe the current and future employment needs of federal public service. Like the private sector, organizations throughout government have undergone streamlining and restructuring to become more efficient and less costly to operate. However, federal agencies are still recruiting, and the prospects for a career in federal service have rarely been more promising.

Movement among private sector, nonprofit, and public sector jobs has been increasing. It is no longer true that a 30-year career in government is the only way to have an impact on national issues. Many people are switching back and forth during their careers. This means that you need to be more self-directed in your learning and flexible in both learning and considering career options.

There are many ways to enter federal employment. Some agencies—the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) will usually know which ones at any given time—run systematic intern or trainee programs for classes of new junior employees. These programs rotate the trainees throughout an agency for six months to a year to offer a full perspective on the agency’s operations. Employees may then make informed job choices at the end of the training period. Careers working for Congress may also begin with an internship.

Advancement within the federal service may be very promising. Employees may move up a career ladder to increasingly responsible (and higher paying) positions within a department. Many federal employees advance by moving up from one position to another within an agency or to another agency. A common career path begins with work in program management assignments in field agencies in the major regional centers outside of Washington, D.C., followed by a move to a more responsible policy position and then to a policy leadership assignment in Washington.

### EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT

The federal government employs people in every conceivable occupation and with every possible variety of educational background. For a political science graduate looking for a first job, employment may be based on such qualities as motivation and potential for future development as a government employee. The government will expect a new junior professional to learn, by observation, practice, and future training, the specific knowledge and information required to fulfill the particular job assignment. It does not usually expect said employee to enter the government with a wide range of information about the specific job being undertaken.

Political science undergraduates who are interested in federal employment are advised to acquire analytical skills and the ability to write clearly and quickly. Analytical skills include the ability to diagnose a problem and contribute to its solution—along with knowledge of problem-solving tools such as statistics, library

research, legal research, mathematics, logic, and evaluation design. If you are interested in a career with the federal government, your educational program should include some formal training in mathematics and statistics, as well as written and oral communication.

Although federal agencies will not expect the new employee with a bachelor's degree to arrive with in-depth knowledge of the subject matter at hand, it will be useful for a prospective employee to show some knowledge of the job's policy area and the mechanics and operation of the national government. Coursework in the executive and legislative processes; budgeting and policymaking; the workings of political parties, interest groups, and the media; and the law and courts will be valuable. Every federal agency currently has an international component of some kind, so a sound knowledge of geography, international affairs, and a foreign language are other desirable qualifications.

Virtually every position with the government requires the ability to work with a team and the willingness to share in the responsibilities of office work. Frequently the best way to acquire and demonstrate these skills is through internship experience. An internship teaches office and work group skills, and will make you known to some prospective employers. A positive reference letter from an internship supervisor can make a difference in a hiring decision. The Peace Corps, and its domestic equivalents such as AmeriCorps and other domestic volunteer service programs, can also provide invaluable experience, both in public service and in career development.

### CAREERS IN PUBLIC POLICY AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

You may be interested in obtaining an advanced degree before seeking federal employment. If you wish to pursue this course of action, an advanced degree in the fields of public policy or public administration is a reasonable route to follow. There are graduate schools or institutes of public policy and public administration attached to many American universities. Most of these programs operate government internship programs that provide in-service experience to the graduate student. The National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration's web site <[www.naspaa.org](http://www.naspaa.org)> has a good overview.

If you earn a master's degree you may qualify for a competitive and prestigious internship program called the Presidential Management Internship (PMI). In the PMI, an intern rotates among different agencies within the executive branch, as well as on Capitol Hill, and then selects a permanent position within the government.

Another option is to obtain a graduate degree after you become a federal government employee. Often the government will pay for part or all of the expenses for coursework if the courses are job related.

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### AMERICORPS

AmeriCorps <[www.americorps.org](http://www.americorps.org)> is a national service movement administered by the Corporation for National Service that engages thousands of Americans of all ages and backgrounds in a domestic Peace Corps, working throughout urban and rural communities. In exchange for one or two years of results-driven service, you receive education awards to help finance your college education or vocational training or to pay back your student loans.

Building on the work ethic of the Depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps, AmeriCorps strives for real results from real work. Embracing the educational advancement of the G.I. Bill, the program rewards commitment and responsibility with educational opportunity. And in the spirit of the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps offers life-changing experiences that extend to lifetime legacies of service and citizenship. AmeriCorps also charts its own course to ensure results, civic responsibility, and a lasting legacy of change.

The AmeriCorps objective of providing educational opportunity for community-based service has created a new national service movement of predominantly young adults, although AmeriCorps comprises men and women of all ages (over age 16), economic backgrounds, racial and ethnic groups, regions and religions, and physical capabilities.

Although AmeriCorps is community based and community driven, all programs and all members work within the national priority areas of education, public safety, human needs, and the environment.

In exchange for one or two years of service, participants receive a living allowance averaging \$9,300 per year, health care, child care when needed, and an education award of \$4,725 per year to finance higher education or to pay back student loans.

AmeriCorps offers a variety of time options for service. You may serve after high school, or during or after college, graduate school, or vocational training. And you can serve at home right in your own community—or in any other part of the country.

The Corporation for National Service selects community-based programs for participation in the AmeriCorps National Service network. Local programs do much of the recruitment themselves. They seek persons with a commitment to community service and leadership potential.

*Special note:* You may apply directly to the Corporation for National Service for two nationally operated AmeriCorps programs that are part of the National Service Network. These programs are the National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) and the VISTA program. As with all programs in the AmeriCorps National Service Network, AmeriCorps members with both the NCCC and VISTA will serve their communities in exchange for living allowances, health- and child-care benefits, and awards to finance their higher education or to pay back their student loans. To request applications for either NCCC or VISTA, call the Hotline at 1-800-942-2677.

### THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT JOB MARKET

Who is the typical federal employee? There were approximately 2.7 million federal civilian workers in 2001, down somewhat from the peak in 1990. Only 11 percent lived and worked in the Washington, D.C., area. The average age for full-time employees was 45.9 years, and the average length of service was 16.9 years. Forty percent had bachelor's degrees or higher, 55 percent were male, and 30 percent were minorities—17 percent black, 6.5 percent Hispanic, 4.4 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, and 2.1 percent American Indian/Alaskan Native.

Federal employment opportunities are very promising. With more than one-third of federal employees eligible to retire by 2006, many young people will be recruited and will move up quickly, even if the size of the government does not grow significantly. For instance, *Government Executive Magazine* reported that Congress's watchdog agency, the General Accounting Office,

had a recruitment campaign in 2001 to attract graduates with public policy, information technology, and accounting degrees. The agency actively sought to fill 200 positions with a diverse group of entry-level employees by visiting approximately fifty campuses, participating in career fairs, and promoting its summer internship program—hoping to offer jobs to interns who performed well.

The sheer size of the federal government and the tremendous number of persons necessary to staff its agencies and departments mean that great numbers are hired every year.

**With more than one-third of federal employees eligible to retire by 2006, many young people will be recruited and will move up quickly . . .**

### JOB PLACEMENT IN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

The federal government is so vast that you will want information about specific agencies and their activities. If you are uncertain about what type of government work you might be interested in, the U.S. Government Printing Office publishes annually the *U.S. Government Manual*. It is available online by section <[www.gpoaccess.gov/gmanual/index.html](http://www.gpoaccess.gov/gmanual/index.html)> and in most libraries. The manual names and describes the functions of the federal government's departments, agencies, and offices and gives telephone numbers. Also it identifies the national, regional, and field offices of each agency. Other publications—such as the *Federal Yellow Book* or Congressional Quarterly's *Washington Information Directory*—describe federal organizations and list names and numbers and provide additional useful information. A reference librarian can assist in locating these publications.

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The campus recruiting or career placement office can also help. Federal agency recruiters have stepped up their efforts to visit college campuses and to supply recruiting materials to college placement offices. You may want to ask your advisors to identify specific federal agencies to contact about placement. It is important to start looking for a federal job early in the senior year and not to wait until spring.

There are six basic entrance points for jobs in the executive branch of the federal government: the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), independent agencies and commissions, the intelligence community, the defense agencies, the foreign service, and political appointments. Check each agency's web site for additional information.

### The Office of Personnel Management

Most of the hiring for federal agencies occurs through the civil service in a process managed by OPM. In the civil service, jobs are classified by "grades." In general, the higher the grade, the higher the qualifications needed in terms of education, experience, and technical training. Students with B.A. degrees are usually eligible for positions in grades 5 and 7 (in 2001, \$21,947 and \$27,185, respectively [depending on geographic location, it may be higher]); grades 9 through 14 (which begin from \$33,254 to \$67,765) generally require advanced degrees or substantial experience.

Civil service positions are classified by job titles representing the detailed description of the qualifications. The best rule for an applicant is to apply for any job in which one may be remotely interested and qualified. OPM is the major agency to contact about openings in the federal executive branch. There are OPM offices in all major cities, and its web site <[www.usajobs.opm.gov](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov)> has listings of available positions. This web site not only allows you to search for federal jobs, but to save up to three categories of search-and-receive automatic e-mail updates if any new jobs are posted for someone with your qualifications.

Most agencies have their own personnel office and web site that lists vacancies and helps to coordinate an application with OPM. Contacting agencies directly and/or searching their web sites offers additional information for applicants on how to present their particular qualifications for a position. You need not rely exclusively on job listings, especially if you have some personal contact with a federal office, such as prior internship experience or a referral from personal networking.

Something to remember when applying with OPM is veterans' preference, which recognizes the economic loss suffered by citizens who have served in the military in times of strife, restores veterans to a favorable competitive position for government employment, and acknowledges the larger obligation owed to disabled veterans. Historically, Congress has reserved preference for those who were either disabled, who served in combat areas, or during certain periods of time. If you are a veteran, you should check to see if you are eligible.

### Independent Agencies and Commissions

Most federal civilian positions in the executive branch are part of the competitive civil service. To obtain a federal job, you must compete with other applicants. However, some agencies have their own hiring systems that establish the evaluation criteria used in filling their internal vacancies.

These so-called excepted service agencies include the Federal Reserve System, Board of Governors; Central Intelligence Agency; Defense Intelligence Agency; U.S. Department of State (foreign service positions); Federal Bureau of Investigation; Agency for International Development; National Security Agency; U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission; Postal Rate Commission; U.S. Postal Service (contact your local postmaster); Tennessee Valley Authority; and U.S. Mission to the United Nations. For information on job openings in these agencies, go to [http://jobsearch.usajobs.opm.gov/agency\\_search.asp](http://jobsearch.usajobs.opm.gov/agency_search.asp).

Another category of quasi-independent agencies and government corporations are under OPM jurisdiction, but may be overlooked. These include the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms; Bureau of Labor Statistics; Bureau of the Census; Commodity Futures Trading Commission; Consumer Product Safety Commission; Drug Enforcement Administration; Environmental Protection Agency; Export-Import Bank; Federal Aviation Administration; Federal Communications Commission; Federal Election Commission; Federal Trade Commission; Food and Drug Administration; National Aeronautics and Space Administration; National Archives and Records Administration; National Institutes of Health; National Park Service; Amtrak (National Railroad Passenger Corporation); National Science Foundation; Peace Corps; Securities and Exchange Commission; Small Business Administration; and Social Security Administration.

### The Intelligence Community

As mentioned above, the intelligence community hires many entry-level employees each year outside the civil service. These persons may become analysts working at desks in Washington, D.C., and elsewhere analyzing political, economic, social, and military conditions in countries across the world. Indeed, many intelligence employees carry out political and related analysis similar to that elsewhere in government and the private sector. The Central Intelligence Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the National Security Agency have their own selection procedures. Students interested in applying for such jobs should contact these agencies directly.

### The Defense Agencies

The military has been a major employer of civilians in the federal government—in



## Careers in Political Science

the Defense Department generally and in the Army, Navy, and Air Force particularly. In fact, the variety of employment in defense agencies in the United States and overseas is extensive, because the management of military bases is akin to running modest-sized cities. The military has personnel in teaching and management as well as in political, social, and strategic analysis.

Defense-related organizations include the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, Ballistic Missile Defense Organization, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, Defense Information Systems Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency, Defense Logistics Agency, Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, Defense Security Service, Defense Threat Reduction Agency, and National Imagery and Mapping Agency. Check their web sites to determine hiring procedures.

Military service itself also offers opportunities for political scientists—probably best realized through the officer ranks. You may obtain information about Officer Candidate School and career opportunities from the applicable web sites, from military recruiters, and from ROTC officials on campus. However, closings of military bases in the United States and abroad have caused reductions in this work force and there are fewer new career opportunities in this sector.

### Careers in Foreign Countries

If you are interested in international affairs you should investigate career opportunities in the State Department. Such careers usually require passing the entrance examination for the Foreign Service, which is very competitive. The number of openings in any given year is small. Information about the examination and Foreign Service selection procedures can be obtained from the Department of State and its web site, <[www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov)>.

The federal government has technical, administrative, and supervisory employment opportunities overseas. These positions are usually in the competitive federal service, and, as vacancies occur, positions may be filled by transferring career federal employees from the United States. Only when federal employees are not available for transfer overseas, and qualified United States citizens cannot be recruited locally, are these vacancies filled from outside.

You may also apply directly to federal agencies for excepted service positions such as attaché office clerk-translator, translator, interpreter, and foreign service positions at the Department of State. Federal agencies that employ individuals overseas include, but are not limited to the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, State, the Air Force, the Army, the Navy, the Agency for International Development, and the Peace Corps.

Generally, the qualification requirements are the same as those established for positions in the United States. You may, however, be required to meet certain

additional or higher standards. For example, a foreign language capability, although not required in all federal jobs overseas, would obviously be a valuable qualification.

Overseas employees are paid the same base salaries as federal employees in the continental United States. Where warranted by conditions at the post, employees may receive a post differential or cost-of-living allowance.

For political science graduates with teaching backgrounds, the Department of Defense (DoD) operates dependents' schools, kindergarten through grade 12, in overseas areas for the purpose of providing American, public school-type education for minor dependents of active duty military and civilian personnel of DoD who are stationed overseas.

Normally, applications for teaching positions are accepted from September through January 15 for employment for the following school year. For further information about DoD Dependents' Schools opportunities, contact Department of Defense, Education Activity, 4040 N. Fairfax Drive, Arlington, Virginia 22203, or visit its website at <[www.odedodea.edu](http://www.odedodea.edu)>.

### Political Appointments

There is one final category of positions in the federal government that is not regulated by the civil service: political appointments. These jobs may involve serving as staff assistant to the secretaries or assistant secretaries of the cabinet agencies, serving as legislative liaison between agencies and Congress, or working in the White House. If you have been active in a political party, perhaps working on a winning campaign either for the presidency or for a senator or representative of the president's party, or have had internship experience with someone appointed by a political party to a top government position, this experience may help to secure an appointment in an executive agency. However, almost all appointees require White House approval, and many require Senate confirmation, before commencing employment and are not based exclusively on merit.

### Applying for a Job in the Executive Branch

Many federal agencies fill their jobs like private industry by allowing applicants to contact the agency directly for job information and application processing. Previously, OPM maintained large standing registers of eligibles and required applicants to take standardized written tests. In addition, applicants completed a standard application form, the SF-171, to apply for all jobs. However, OPM no longer maintains registers of eligibles and only a few positions require a written test. The SF-171 is obsolete and is not accepted by most federal agencies. The new federal application form is Optional Application for Federal Employment, OF-612. In lieu of submit-

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ting an OF-612, applicants may submit a resume. Also, job seekers do not need a rating from OPM to enable them to apply for nonclerical vacancies. Although the process is now very similar to that in private industry, there are still significant differences due to the many laws, executive orders, and regulations that govern federal employment.

USAJOBS, the federal government's employment information system, provides worldwide job vacancy information, employment information fact sheets, and job applications and forms online, as well as online resume development and electronic transmission capabilities. USAJOBS is updated every business day from a data base of more than 12,000 worldwide job opportunities and is available to job seekers in a variety of formats to ensure access for customers with differing physical and technological capabilities. It is convenient, user-friendly, accessible through the computer or telephone, and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. USAJOBS also offers an e-mail notification service. You complete a profile of the type of job you want, and they will save it for six months and e-mail you any new listing that comes up.

USAJOBS consists of:

- **Internet.** The official web site for jobs and employment information is <[www.usajobs.opm.gov](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov)>. The Online Resume Builder feature allows job seekers to create online resumes specifically designed for applying for federal jobs. Many of the hiring agencies will accept electronic submissions of resumes created through USAJOBS for vacancies listed on the web site.
- **Touch-Screen Computer Kiosk.** OPM has a network of self-service information kiosks in OPM offices and many federal buildings nationwide. Using the kiosk, job seekers can access a wide range of employment and job information or complete job announcements.
- **Automated Telephone System.** An interactive voice response telephone system can be reached at (478) 757-3000 or TDD (478) 744-2299 or at seventeen OPM Service Centers located nationwide (for local numbers consult the blue pages of your telephone book). By telephone, job seekers can access current job vacancies, employment information fact sheets, applications, forms, and apply for some jobs.

Once you have found an opportunity that interests you, you will need more information on the specific job and appropriate application forms. Use USAJOBS to obtain a copy of the vacancy announcement, which is an important source of information. Most of the questions you may have will be answered as you read through the announcement. The vacancy announcement will include, for example, closing/deadline dates for applications, specific duties of the position, whether or not a written test is required, educational requirements, duty location, and salary.

You may apply for most jobs with a resume. However, it is essential that you follow the instructions for applying that are given in the vacancy announcement and that your application contain the following:

- **Job information.** Announcement number, title, and grade
- **Personal information.** Full name, mailing address (with zip code), day and evening phone numbers (with area code), Social Security number, country of citizenship, veterans' preference, reinstatement eligibility, and highest federal civilian grade held
- **Education.** High school name, city, and state; colleges or universities with name, city, and state; majors and type and year of any degrees received (if no degree, show total credits earned and indicate whether they were semester or quarter hours)
- **Work experience.** Job title, duties, and accomplishments; employer's name and address; supervisor's name and phone number; starting and ending dates (month and year); hours per week; salary. Also indicate whether or not your current supervisor may be contacted. Prepare a separate entry for each job.
- **Other qualifications.** Job-related training courses (title and year), skills, certificates and licenses, and honors, awards, and special accomplishments.

Remember, a general background may be sufficient for a first federal job. If you have little job experience, substitute skills and other experiences related to the job being sought, if possible. In the resume, you should keep in mind the qualifications of the job being sought and be prepared to describe how your education and past work experience are related to this job. If the job description has two requirements (e.g., good analytical skills and knowledge of environmental policy), you should be explicit. In this case, it is useful to describe the analytical skills acquired and the source of knowledge about environmental policy, both in coursework and any actual experience, such as an internship. If the description of the job has six elements, you should try to describe six qualifications and work experiences. Also, you should not forget to list internships as job experience and even work as a paid or unpaid research assistant to a faculty member or as a student representative to the Board of Trustees of your school. The application should make clear that your qualifications match the job requirements.

A newly hired federal employee may need a security clearance, depending on the position. An investigation prior to security clearance can be quite a long process.

### THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

There are good opportunities for recent college graduates to work in Congress, on the staff of an individual member of Congress, or for a committee. *The Congressional Staff Directory* and the web sites of the House <[www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)> and Senate <[www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)> identify members of Congress and their key office staff as well as the congressional committees and their staffs. This hiring is handled individually by each congressional office. Members prefer to hire from their own states and districts, from their campaign staff, and from among those suggested by their friends and contributors. Most members prefer applicants who profess to be of the same political party and who would be comfortable with the substantive positions taken by the member. Undergraduates who think that they may be interested in working on the Hill should try to obtain an internship position with a congressional staff in Washington, D.C., or in a local district prior to graduating from college. Developing personal contacts is almost a necessity for finding permanent employment with Congress. Although you should not overlook the placement offices in both the House and Senate, contact with individual members' offices and committees will be most effective. Job placement resources include:

- House of Representatives Job Line: 202-225-2450, press option 4, then option 2. See <[www.house.gov/cao-hr](http://www.house.gov/cao-hr)> for other contact information.
- Senate Job Line (recording of Senate Employment Bulletin): 202-228-JOBS
- House Human Resources Vacancy Announcement Lists: 263 Cannon House Office Building
- Senate Placement Office: Room SH-142, Hart Senate Office Building, 202-224-9167.

The number of job hires by Congress remains fairly steady, rising slowly over time. These jobs are not easy to obtain, but political science majors with a real interest in this type of work should not be discouraged from seeking these positions. Publications such as *The Hill*, *Congressional Quarterly*, *Roll Call*, and *National Journal* may also list positions that are vacant or provide leads on staff who are leaving or have left their positions.

A number of party organizations exist in Congress. Democratic congressional organizations include the Senate Democratic Policy Committee, House Democratic Caucus, Blue Dog Coalition, and issue caucuses (which may also cross party lines). Republican congressional organizations include the Senate Republican Policy Committee, Senate Republican Conference, House Republican Policy Committee, and House Republican Conference. All of these organizations can be accessed through the House and Senate web sites.

Political science majors looking for jobs on Capitol Hill should keep in mind that there are other organizations, including the Republican and Democratic National Committees, and web sites where job seekers can search for political jobs, such as <[www.hillzoo.com/jobs.htm](http://www.hillzoo.com/jobs.htm)>.

In addition, there may be jobs available at the National Republican Senatorial Committee, the National Republican Congressional Committee, and their Democratic counterparts.

The Library of Congress <[www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov)> and <<http://thomas.loc.gov>> and particularly the Congressional Research Service <[www.loc.gov/crsinfo/](http://www.loc.gov/crsinfo/)>, Government Printing Office <[www.gpo.gov](http://www.gpo.gov)>, General Accounting Office <[www.gao.gov](http://www.gao.gov)>, Architect of the Capitol <[www.aoc.gov](http://www.aoc.gov)>, and Congressional Budget Office <[www.cbo.gov](http://www.cbo.gov)> are large support agencies for Congress that have many positions for which political science graduates are qualified. For the auxiliary and research support agencies, regular job openings are posted and a set procedure is followed in filling the positions. The details of these processes may be obtained directly from each office and agency. As many of these jobs are for subject matter experts and highly specialized technicians, students with graduate training and/or experience are the most likely to be considered for these positions.

### THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

Many political science graduates work in the judicial branch of government <[www.uscourts.gov/employment.html](http://www.uscourts.gov/employment.html)>, often in the “executive offices” that service the federal courts. These include the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, the federal Judicial Center, the U.S. Sentencing Commission, the U.S. Tax Court, the Court of Federal Claims, the district courts, the courts of appeal, and the Supreme Court. Although many positions require law degrees, these jobs may be suitable for those political science graduates who are thinking about going to law school or are already enrolled. Hiring for these positions is under the purview of the judicial branch offices.

### FEDERAL JOBS INTENDED FOR STUDENTS

Opportunities abound for students to work in the federal government. They include the Student Educational Employment Program, summer employment through USAJOBS, various women and minority student internship programs, the Presidential Management Intern Program, and volunteer service.

**Student Educational Employment.** The federal government has several programs aimed at high school, college, and graduate students. The U.S. Office of

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Personnel Management has consolidated the previous programs (e.g., Cooperative Education, Stay-in-School, Federal Junior Fellowship, and Summer Aid Programs) into the new Student Educational Employment Program (SEEP), which combines key features of the old programs with added flexibility, thus, producing a more effective and streamlined program.

The federal government has always looked to educational institutions to attract talented students to federal public service. It is an opportunity to earn money and continue your education, to train with people who manage the day-to-day business of the national government, and to combine your academic study with on-the-job experience.

Most federal agencies use this program. Some develop additional student, intern, or fellowship programs to meet their specific business needs. No matter what agency you choose, SEEP will introduce you to the advantages and challenges of working for the United States government.

The program has two components—student temporary employment and student career experience. It is available to all levels of students: high school, vocational and technical, associate degree, baccalaureate degree, graduate degree, and professional degree.

Job opportunities under the student temporary employment component can range from summer jobs to positions that will last for as long as you are a student. These employment opportunities need not necessarily relate to your academic field of study.

The student career experience component offers you valuable work experience directly related to your academic field of study, as it provides formal periods of work and study while you attend school. It requires a commitment by you, your school, and the employing federal agency. You may be eligible for permanent employment under this component after successfully completing your education and meeting work requirements.

Under both components, students may be employed year-round and have flexible work schedules. The components are open to all students—high school, undergraduate, graduate, and vocational/technical. You are eligible under the SEEP if you are enrolled or accepted for enrollment as a degree-seeking student (diploma, certificate, etc.); are at least the minimum age required by federal, state, or local laws and standards governing the employment of minors; taking at least a half-time academic or vocational and technical course load in an accredited high school, technical or vocational school, 2- or 4-year college or university, graduate or professional school; and are a U.S. citizen or national. Noncitizens may be eligible for employment, but U.S. citizenship is required for conversion to permanent employment under the student career experience component.

You may contact your school guidance office, career planning and placement

office, teachers, or federal agency employment office where they are interested in working. They may also visit <[www.opm.gov/employ/students](http://www.opm.gov/employ/students)>.

**Summer Employment.** Summer job opportunities are available in federal agencies throughout the United States, and cover a wide variety of positions. Use the Office of Personnel Management’s USAJOBS system to locate summer job opportunities. They may be found on the web site by searching under the heading “Summer” or by searching by series “9999.”

Once you have located the summer job you want and are sure that you meet the work experience and/or education requirements, you should complete the requested application form(s), making sure to specify the title of the job and the vacancy announcement number, as well as any additional information, on your application. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

You should submit a separate application for each job for which you are interested and qualified. It is important to start your job search early! Application filing dates vary with each agency, so you should be sure to check vacancy announcement deadlines.

“Competitive” describes the outlook for summer jobs. The number of jobs available is relatively small in comparison to the large number of applicants for summer employment with the federal government. Only a small percentage of applicants who apply are hired. Therefore, don’t limit your efforts solely to obtaining summer work with the federal government.

For summer employees, pay depends on education and/or work experience. Male applicants between the ages of 18 and 25 are eligible for appointment only after registering with the Selective Service System. Some State laws require persons under the age of 18 to obtain a work permit before being employed. Applicants who are under 18 should check with State or local authorities for specific requirements. Under some circumstances, persons who worked for a federal agency during a previous summer may be re-employed by the same agency without having to compete with other applicants. To find out about re-employment possibilities, contact the agency where you previously worked.

**Women and Minority Student Internship Programs.** The federal government is interested in finding people from diverse backgrounds who have the skills needed to meet its future employment needs. Although some federal agencies have developed agency-specific programs, this internship listing is limited to special programs that may be used for hiring in all federal agencies. The following organizations offer internships: Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities’ National Internship Program (HNIP); Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute’s Fellowship Program (CHCI); Presidential Management Intern Program (PMIP); Minority Leaders



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Fellowship Program (MLFP); Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students With Disabilities (WRP); White House Fellows Program; Asian-Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies' Summer Internship Program; Organization of Chinese Americans' Congressional and Government Internships; Washington Internships for Native Students (WINS); INROADS/Greater Washington Internships; NAFEO Services, Inc. Summer Intern Program; AISES Student Summer Work Experience Program; and the Women in Public Policy Internship Program (WIPP). Check <[www.studentjobs.gov/d\\_internship.asp](http://www.studentjobs.gov/d_internship.asp)> for contact information.

The Outstanding Scholar Program is a special hiring authority that supplements competitive examinations for some entry-level positions in order to increase the number of African American and Latino/a workers in the government. The program is only applicable to the specific series and job titles listed on the web site. This special hiring authority is restricted to grade levels GS-5 and GS-7. Positions in the following occupational fields are not covered by the Outstanding Scholar Program: Accounting and Auditing, Engineering, Physical Sciences, Biological Sciences, and Mathematics.

Applicants for the program must be college graduates and have maintained a grade point average (GPA) of 3.5 or better on a 4.0 scale for all undergraduate coursework or have graduated in the upper 10 percent of their graduating class or major university subdivision, such as the School of Arts and Sciences. A college degree in any major is qualifying for most of the career fields covered by the Outstanding Scholar Program. However, some positions require specific courses in subjects related to the job.

You may apply nine months before completing all the requirements of the program, including GPA or class standing. However, you must produce appropriate documentation (e.g., a copy of your college transcript) at the time of appointment.

The career fields for the Outstanding Scholar Program span many positions in the federal government. See <[www.usajobs.opm.gov/ei22.asp](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/ei22.asp)> for a position list.

**Presidential Management Intern Program (PMI).** This program is designed to attract to federal service outstanding graduate students (master's and doctoral) from a wide variety of academic disciplines who have an interest in and commitment to a career in the analysis and management of public policies and programs.

PMI assignments involve domestic and international issues, technological changes, criminal justice, health research, financial management, and many other fields in support of public service programs. Federal departments and agencies strive to provide interns with challenging and rewarding assignments. All cabinet departments and more than fifty federal agencies have hired such interns.

Individuals eligible to be nominated for the PMI Program are graduate students from a variety of academic disciplines completing a master's or doctoral degree from

an accredited college or university. They must also have a clear interest in and commitment to a career in the analysis and management of public policies and programs.

You must be nominated for the PMI Program by the appropriate dean, director, or chairperson of your graduate academic program. Your educational institution devises a competitive nomination process, which ensures fair and open competition among all interested and eligible graduate-level students.

Selection as a PMI finalist is based on a candidate's participation and performance in a structured assessment center process that includes evaluation of a candidate's oral and writing skills. PMIs receive an initial two-year appointment of rotational assignments, which expose them to additional parts of their agency, another agency, or another branch of the federal government. After successfully completing the two-year program, PMIs may be eligible for conversion to a permanent government position and further promotional opportunities.

The PMI Program places a strong emphasis on career development. OPM provides structured orientation and graduation training programs. Additionally, federal agencies arrange for seminars, briefings, and conferences, as well as on-the-job training and other developmental opportunities. See <[www.usajobs.opm.gov/ei18.asp](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/ei18.asp)> and <[www.pmi.opm.gov/pmimain.htm](http://www.pmi.opm.gov/pmimain.htm)> for more information.

**Student Volunteer Service.** Federal agencies and departments offer unpaid training to students in high school and college. These opportunities provide work experience related to academic programs and allow students to explore career options as well as develop personal and professional skills. Student volunteers learn about the federal work environment and the missions and responsibilities of various federal agencies and departments.

Volunteer service with the federal government can enrich your future. Some of the benefits include:

- Career exploration early in your academic studies
- Exposure to new and emerging occupations and professions
- Academic credit for work you perform (if your academic institution allows it)
- Work experience that will enhance your ability to get paying jobs in the future.

You are eligible to participate as a student volunteer if you are enrolled, at least half-time, in an accredited high school or trade school; a technical or vocational school; a junior or community college; a four-year college or university; or any other accredited educational institution.

As a student volunteer, you are involved in professional projects and work activities related to your academic studies. These activities run the gamut from

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developing computer skills to policy or research-oriented projects involving such diverse topics as wildlife initiatives, environmental concerns, or congressional issues. Depending upon your academic pursuits and the employing federal agency or department, assignments will differ, but all promise to be stimulating and rewarding.

The government recommends that you develop a work agreement in collaboration with your school and host federal agency. The agreement should outline the responsibilities of each partner. It may also identify the type(s) of assignment(s) and the conditions under which you will work.

Most student volunteers work for a federal agency or department for three to four months. Your work may be performed during the school year and/or during summer or school vacation periods. The nature of your volunteer assignment as well as your weekly work schedule should be part of your work agreement.

If you are interested in becoming a student volunteer with the federal government, contact the Personnel Office at the federal agency or department for which you wish to work. The Departments of Defense (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard), Commerce, Health and Human Services, Interior, Justice, State, Treasury, and Veterans Affairs have used the largest number of student volunteers. Telephone numbers for federal agencies are found in the telephone directory under "U.S. Government." Further information may also be found in schools' offices of guidance, career counseling, placement, or internship.

## RESOURCES

- **FedWorld or Federal Jobs Around the USA.** This data base allows you to search abstracts of open U.S. federal government jobs. This data base is updated every Tuesday through Saturday at about 9:30 A.M. Eastern U.S. time. Log on to their web site at <[www.fedworld.gov/jobs/jobsearch.html](http://www.fedworld.gov/jobs/jobsearch.html)>.
- **Federal Jobs Net.** Informative web site on federal jobs including useful links, job hunting tips, and current job vacancies. Log on to their web site at <[www.federaljobs.net](http://www.federaljobs.net)>.
- **Govtjobs.com.** Online job service providing assistance and job openings with the federal, state, and local branches of government. Log on to their web site at <[www.govtjobs.com](http://www.govtjobs.com)>.
- **United States Government Office of Personnel Management.** The U.S. Government's official site for jobs and employment information provided by OPM. Log on to their web site at <[www.usajobs.opm.gov](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov)>.
- **United States Government Printing Office.** The USGPO has a general portal for information on all federal agencies. Log on to their web site at <[www.gpoaccess.gov](http://www.gpoaccess.gov)>.



## State/Local Government

### POSSIBLE CAREERS

*County treasurer; advisor to the chairman, state energy agency; county council member; chief of staff; Senate appropriations committee; deputy secretary, state department of natural resources; assistant chief of police; director, state welfare-to-work program; legislative coordinator, mayor's office; state personnel officer; director, county economic development office; juvenile justice specialist, state justice department; chief, state general government services office; state chief purchasing officer; city planner; labor relations specialist; commissioner, state department of human resources; city project coordinator; senior criminologist; assistant budget examiner; city housing administrator; deputy secretary to the governor; city's coordinator of federal and state aid; supervisor, state department of education.*

### THE NATURE OF THE CAREER

State and local governments function in almost every area that has an impact on the lives of citizens. States have taken increased responsibility for equal opportunity, consumer protection, highway safety, water pollution, soil conservation, the rehabilitation of drug addicts, industrial development and manpower training, licensing, education, welfare, and transportation, among other public concerns.

Patronage appointments have decreased greatly, and most of the new positions created at the state government level are now based on merit or civil service positions. As both the legislative and executive branches of state government have become professionalized, jobs in state government depend more on specific training.

Counties, cities, boroughs, and townships have shown a parallel growth both in the scope of their responsibilities and in the size of their staffs. Most local jurisdictions solve challenging problems related to housing, zoning, public safety, welfare, and traffic control. The complex nature of many of these issues has led to the increase in staffs in even relatively small towns and cities. As the above list of

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occupations demonstrates, political science graduates usually have the broad range of knowledge and skills to hold many jobs at the state and local levels. There is such a diverse range of occupations available that the recent graduate can pursue a career in his or her particular area of interest.

### PREPARATION FOR A CAREER IN STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

It is difficult to generalize about the relationship of specific courses to specific jobs in state and local government. If you are interested in a career in this sector, you will benefit from courses in state and local government, public policy, and public administration. In addition, state and local public finance, budgeting, and intergovernmental relations are often recommended.

Beyond this, it is obvious that some courses will enhance your background for specific jobs. The student seeking employment in a state department of education, for example, would be advised to take one or two courses in the field of state and local education policy. Similarly, anyone interested in working on the staff of a state legislature ought to take a course on the state legislative process.

It should be noted that the ability to handle quantifiable data is increasingly important, no matter what the job. You must be able to make sense out of statistics, because they are almost always at the heart of information used in policymaking. Most departments of political science offer at least one or two undergraduate courses that will allow you to become familiar with the use of statistics and the relevant computer software. Students who shy away from these courses on the grounds that they “do not like math” are likely to be at a disadvantage in both the

short and long run. In addition, the ability to perform online research is a real asset. With the vast amount of data available on the Internet, skill in doing comparative research with other jurisdictions is a plus on any employment application.

Wherever possible, a student aspiring to a career in state and local government ought to intern as part of his or her undergraduate program. An internship is a valuable learning experience for any

political science major, regardless of career choice. It also may help in making a decision on a career, and it will strengthen one’s candidacy for a position in government. In a number of cases, students have been offered employment after they graduated from college in the offices in which they have interned. The University of Texas has developed a data base of city, county, state, and Federal intern programs at [www.utexas.edu/lbj/osap/career/students/links/mip.html](http://www.utexas.edu/lbj/osap/career/students/links/mip.html), and the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) web site has a

**An internship is a valuable learning experience for any political science major, regardless of career choice.**

list of internship data bases <[www.naspaa.org/students/careers/internships.asp](http://www.naspaa.org/students/careers/internships.asp)>.

It is also useful to identify and contact the “institute of government” or public policy center in your state. These are usually attached to at least one public university, especially those located in state capitals. The centers typically have connections through research and internships with state legislative and executive agencies. Check with the faculty member who teaches state and local government at your school for more information.

Undergraduates planning to seek careers in state and local government might also seriously consider obtaining a master’s degree in politics and public policy, public administration, or in a specific policy area. Some of these master’s programs are offered by public policy schools, some by political science departments, and others by several departments in interdisciplinary programs. Whatever the particular program, a master’s degree is usually valuable in the marketplace, helping in one’s quest for an initial job and in the progression through the ranks.

### THE STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT JOB MARKET

There are approximately 87,500 local governments in America. Employment in state and local governments has generally been rising. Entry-level jobs are available, and governments are major employers for political science graduates.

Most positions, with civil-servant status or the equivalent, are located in the departments and agencies of state and city government. A limited number of jobs are available with chief executives at the state, county, and local levels. A variety of positions are also available with state legislatures or county and local councils. Legislatures in over half the states hire nonpartisan staffs engaged in bill drafting, research, fiscal analysis, and post-audit duties. In almost 50 percent of the states, partisan staff are employed by the Democratic and Republican parties in the legislature. In about one-third of the states, individual members hire an aide or two to serve in their district and/or capital offices.

It is always the case, of course, that being a resident of the state or local community or having attended college in the state improves the chances of any job applicant.

Fascinating opportunities for the student interested in public policy and administration also exist in the many quasi-public authorities and agencies that have become so prevalent, such as regional transportation authorities, metropolitan planning agencies, and even, surprisingly, waterworks and sanitation districts. Anyone who has lived in a community facing a water shortage or struggling with where to build a new landfill knows that this is politics at its most vigorous. Often these authorities and agencies will manage their own hiring separate from city or state personnel agencies.

Experience in state and local government is often transferable to other jurisdictions or the federal government. For example, managers from transit authorities

## Careers in Political Science

frequently climb up the career ladder by moving from state to state. Contacts made at the state and local levels may be helpful in obtaining a federal job. Many trade associations and interest groups have state or regional offices that are stepping-stones to the national organization. Movement between the public and private sectors may be common practice in your state. See the chapter on nonprofits for further discussion.

### THE MECHANICS OF JOB PLACEMENT

There are many strategies that you may use to find a job in state and local government. You should consult a government's web site using the portals listed in this book, or you should visit the career office on campus for a variety of brochures published by a state's civil service commission or department of personnel. Recruitment announcements may also be posted on the bulletin board of the political science department. Many state and city personnel agencies actively recruit on campus, and you can often meet with agency representatives there. Write both to the department in which you seek employment and to the central personnel agency. Most states distribute periodic career opportunities bulletins, and you may request that your name be put on a mailing list. Finally, a trip to the state capital to meet with the staff of a departmental or central personnel office may be worthwhile.

Some states will recruit on the basis of a general aptitude test and also require a bachelor's degree. Other states will require a specific examination for a particular agency. The general rule is that the more technical the job, the greater the likelihood of a special examination.

If you want a position with the executive branch of state government, you should contact a state senator and state representative. One of the roles of legislators is to help constituents with information on job opportunities and the procedures that have to be followed. Some legislators are also willing to write a referral letter, which may aid your job search.

If you are interested in working for the legislature, you should become familiar with the organization of the legislative staff. In the majority of states, a central unit—called a legislative council, legislative services agency, or the like—does most of the hiring. The office of a senator or representative is a good place to begin the search.

It is important for you to acquire as much understanding as possible about the role and operation of the individual or unit with whom you seek employment, especially for positions with executive officials or in legislatures. The more knowledgeable you becomes, the more likely you will be able to demonstrate abilities to the interviewer that match the employer's needs. Thus, it is worth the effort to locate sources of information that pertain to the specific job being sought.

### RESOURCES

There are a number of relatively new groups that have sprung up as a result of the information technology revolution. One is Public Technology, Inc. <<http://pti.nw.dc.us>>, a nonprofit technology organization for all cities and counties in America (sponsored by the National League of Cities, the National Association of Counties, and the International City/County Management Association). Another is the National Association of State Information Resource Executives <[www.nascio.org](http://www.nascio.org)>.

The Washington Area State Relations Group <[www.wasrg.com](http://www.wasrg.com)> provides educational and networking opportunities to state government affairs professionals, officials, lobbyists, association staff, and vendor/services representatives in the Washington, D.C., area.

The Internet has made state and local job searches much easier. In the past, applicants were advised to scour the government agency listings in the phone book (usually the “blue” pages) and ask their contacts. Although you should still do this, there are now web sites that contain information on government jobs nationwide and in every subject.

Several portals have a wide range of state and local resources:

- <[lcweb.loc.gov/global/state/stategov.html](http://lcweb.loc.gov/global/state/stategov.html)>
- <[www.statelocal.gov](http://www.statelocal.gov)>
- <[www.govspot.com](http://www.govspot.com)>
- <[www.piperinfo.com/state/index.cfm](http://www.piperinfo.com/state/index.cfm)>
- <[www.naspaa.org/students/careers/service.asp](http://www.naspaa.org/students/careers/service.asp)>.

GovtJobs at <[www.govjobs.net](http://www.govjobs.net)> lists jobs available in state and local government such as public works director, Fayetteville, Arkansas; senior transportation planner, Alameda County, California; and city administrator, Hiawatha, Kansas. NASPAA and several other web sites have links to jobs in each state.

The Piper Resources web site <[www.statelocalgov.net](http://www.statelocalgov.net)> lists some regional links such as the Appalachian Regional Commission, Great Lakes Commission, Multistate Tax Commission, and Southern States Energy Board. In addition, this site lists national organizations—for example, the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators, Association of Local Air Pollution Control Officials, National Association of Insurance Commissioners, and the National Association of State Personnel Executives—that are useful for research and locating jobs.

Many of these sites list job vacancies for their organization and vacancies in the profession. The major organizations of state and local officials include:



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- Council of State Governments <[www.statesnews.org](http://www.statesnews.org)>
- National Conference of State Legislatures <[www.ncsl.org](http://www.ncsl.org)>
- National Association of Counties <[www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org)>
- Local Government Institute <[www.lgi.org](http://www.lgi.org)>
- International City/County Management Association <[www.icma.org](http://www.icma.org)>
- National Governors Association <[www.nga.org](http://www.nga.org)>
- National League of Cities <[www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org)>
- U.S. Conference of Mayors <[www.usmayors.org](http://www.usmayors.org)>.



# Nonprofits

## POSSIBLE CAREERS

*Director, federal government relations; executive director, Research Atlanta; vice president, political affairs, Telecommunications Industry Association; director, regulatory affairs; field officer, Human Rights Campaign; research analyst, Institute for Women's Policy Research, George Washington University; manager, grassroots division, National Rifle Association; political director, AFL-CIO; director, federal environmental affairs; senior vice president, policy development, American Public Transit Association; director, political action committee, Associated Builders and Contractors; manager, international trade policy; senior research analyst, budget analyst, Center for Budget and Policy Priorities; program manager, Natural Resources Defense Council; senior Washington representative, Detroit Edison Company.*

## THE NATURE OF THE CAREER

Since about 1960, building on an American tradition of political activism by voluntary associations, there has been an explosion in the number and variety of groups taking an active role at every level of government. This translates into thousands of jobs for political science graduates. Citizens' groups—broadly based and wide-ranging organizations, such as Common Cause, and more narrowly focused groups concerned about issues such as aiding the handicapped or ending capital punishment—have grown impressively in number and influence. And as the impact of government is felt far and wide in society, many organizations that once hardly noticed political affairs now pay close attention.

This vast expansion of attention to the policymaking process has resulted in the need for employees who understand how governments function in the United States, and whose skills include the ability to analyze and assess public policy as well as to plan ways to affect favorably the outcomes of political processes. Many of these people are lobbyists—they advocate for particular policy choices on behalf of their

## Careers in Political Science

employer or client and try to persuade public officials to see the situation their way.

There are approximately 25,000 national associations and about 65,000 state, local, regional, and international associations headquartered in the United States. The highest concentration of associations is in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, followed by New York and Chicago. In fact, associations rank as the third-largest industry in Washington, behind only the federal government and tourism.

There are a lot of terms used for those who work in this broadly defined sector. “Nongovernmental organization” (NGO) usually refers to a nonprofit group that works in a policy area. There are NGOs at all levels of government and in virtually all public issues and policy areas, from neighborhood housing and environmental renewal to food banks and youth development to national policy areas such as health, education, civil rights, and criminal justice. NGOs are associations or nonprofit groups that may perform a number of tasks such as fund programs, conduct research, advocate policy positions, and provide assistance. They may apply and receive government funds for projects. They may be local, statewide, national, or international. The American Red Cross, Friends of the Earth, and the National Council on the Aging are examples. Some NGOs defy definition by working on a full range of issues across the liberal/conservative political spectrum, but they generally are not membership or professional organizations. (See the separate chapter on international careers in this guide for more information on international NGOs.)

The American Nurses Association, Handgun Control, and the American Political Science Association are examples of individual membership associations that hire political science majors. On the other hand, a trade association comprises business competitors, not individuals—for instance, the Direct Marketing Association, the National Grocers Association, and the National Independent Automobile Dealers Association. People join because they want up-to-date information on their profession or issue, to share problems, and to influence public policy. Member companies rely on their association for lobbying Congress on issues that affect their businesses, information on new products, research and statistics about their industry, and business ethics. These groups are nonprofit, but generally do not fall under the NGO rubric. In each policy area there are some associations, interest groups, and NGOs that are nonpartisan, but others are identified with party and ideological leanings. It is best to identify those that share your viewpoint and not to waste time or energy on groups that would make you politically uncomfortable.

Whatever the label of these thousands of organizations of like-minded citizens—associations of business firms, financial institutions, interest groups, think tanks, individual corporations, churches, political action committees, universities, health care groups, local governments, and labor unions—they represent themselves in Washington, D.C. Some have their permanent headquarters in the nation’s capital, whereas others maintain only a Washington branch office. Still other groups retain

some of the numerous Washington-based attorneys, lobbying firms, or public relations firms to look after their interests. In addition to NGOs and associations, many companies have created government affairs divisions to monitor public policy developments and, when necessary, to try to influence the policy process.

Interest group employees and representatives undertake many other tasks. Simply keeping track of what government agencies are doing and how your own organization might be affected is a demanding and complex job. It is often of enormous importance to learn in a timely way about what new administrative regulations are proposed, what a congressional committee is planning to do, or whether a dependable supporter in the Senate has decided to seek reelection. The act of putting together a persuasive case for a policy proposal designed to serve the group's interest requires careful preparation, with extensive research and analysis. Accordingly, many interest groups employ people with skills in policy analysis.

## EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION FOR CAREERS WITH NONPROFITS

The assumption that Washington lobbyists are invariably either lawyers or former government officials or both is not true; there are many entry-level lobbying positions and quite a few senior jobs for those with the right preparation. Some require advanced degrees but many more do not, and strong backgrounds in the social sciences are certainly valuable. Political science skills are highly prized, especially clear writing, cogent analysis, and statistical skills. Courses on the legislative and regulatory processes will provide a good foundation for the procedures with which you will deal.

Good writing skills are necessary to prepare testimony, association policy statements, regulatory comments, friends of the court briefs, and lobbying materials. Excellent verbal skills aid in making contacts, meeting with government officials, and conveying policy positions. Perhaps most valuable is the ability to translate legislative and regulatory "bureaucrat-ese" into plain English for constituents of your organization.

Experience in government often serves as a useful preparation, and many interest groups' representatives in Washington have held a government position. Some have been elected officials, but many more have been executive and legislative staff. Often, moving "downtown" to work with an interest group comes later in life, after you have exhausted a government career. Experience on Capitol Hill or with an executive agency may act as a kind of postgraduate training that will enrich your understanding of the policy process and enable you to do a better job in representing the interests of your organization.

Government employment may serve two purposes: expanding your knowledge of how government works and providing a grounding in the substance of some areas

## Careers in Political Science

of public policy. For example, a good way to learn about the intricacies of agriculture policy is to serve on the staff of the House or Senate Agriculture Committee, or to work for an elected officeholder whose constituents include substantial numbers of farmers. In addition to substance, experience may provide contacts and working relationships. Inevitably, you will learn who are the significant people in a policy domain and how they may best be approached.

What and whom you know are perhaps the most valuable commodities to an interest group or trade association. In preparing for this kind of position, therefore, it is desirable to pursue opportunities to gain government experience, either as an intern or in a permanent job. Many organizations provide internship opportunities (see the lists below).

NGOs, especially, are often understaffed and anxious to employ people with education in political science and policy analysis. It is sometimes possible to move quite quickly into positions with important responsibility and influence, and careers in the interest group community are often exciting.

Movement among jobs in government and trade associations, public interest groups, and think tanks has become fairly fluid, especially when there is a change of administration—and political party—in the White House. In addition to the government–interest group career path, there is mobility between NGOs and trade associations. Skills are portable across a range of perspectives. Salaries vary greatly between groups—for example, nonprofit organizations and trade associations—and among positions, depending on experience. Salaries also vary greatly between interest groups and government; government usually pays less, but offers more job security and a better benefits package, especially pension plans.

Within this field are a number of positions ranging from federal, state, and local government relations and international activities to membership, education, marketing, communications, and administration. Here, subject area knowledge combined with a background in marketing, for instance, will expand your ability to move laterally when you want a change of duties.

**Set up informational interviews; they are useful both to expand your knowledge and make contacts.**

### RESOURCES

The American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) advises that networking is the best way to find out what positions are available. Ask everyone you know if they know someone who works for an interest group. Set up informational interviews; they are useful both to expand your knowledge and make contacts. In every state there is a Society of Association Executives that you can contact if you are interested in finding a

local position. They often list jobs and may help in researching the associations in your area. Consider joining a professional association in order to make contacts and to access their job listings.

You will find information about positions with interest groups by surfing the web or perusing a library's reference volumes on NGOs and trade associations. For example, the current year's issue of *Washington Representatives* lists several thousand organizations represented in Washington, as well as their addresses, e-mail addresses, and URLs. *Washington Representatives*, published by Columbia Books, Inc., may be ordered from <[www.columbiabooks.com/books.cfm](http://www.columbiabooks.com/books.cfm)> and is also found in many libraries and career centers. The same publisher also puts out *National Trade and Professional Associations of the United States*, *State and Regional Associations of the United States*, and *National Directory of Corporate Public Affairs*. The *Yellow Book* series <[www.leadershipdirectories.com](http://www.leadershipdirectories.com)>—especially the *Government Affairs Yellow Book* and *Associations Yellow Book*, published by Leadership Directories, Inc.—is also good. All of these publications are expensive, so check to see if your library has them. The *Encyclopedia of Associations* by Gale Research has been a standard reference tool for 40 years. Your library may carry it or have access to the online version, <[www.galenet.com/servlet/AU](http://www.galenet.com/servlet/AU)>.

The ASAE maintains the Career Headquarters Resume Data Base <[www.asaenet.org/career/resumedatabase/](http://www.asaenet.org/career/resumedatabase/)> in which you can post your resume for free and access job openings. Check out the nonprofit jobs data base of Idealist, a project of Action Without Borders <[www.idealists.org/career](http://www.idealists.org/career)>. Look for notices of job openings in publications such as *Congressional Quarterly*, *National Journal*, *Roll Call*, and *The Hill*.

Internships in interest groups are listed in several different publications and web sites. To assist students, APSA has prepared *Studying in Washington: A Guide to Academic Internships in the Nation's Capital*. You should also check with your department chair, and the university's career services or internship office and their web sites, because many departments, colleges, and universities have substantial amounts of information and personal contacts that can help you get an internship. Among other sources on internships are:

- Internship Programs, <[www.internshipprograms.com/home.asp](http://www.internshipprograms.com/home.asp)>
- Intern Web, <[www.internweb.com](http://www.internweb.com)>
- Intern Jobs, <<http://web.clas.ufl.edu/users/dhedge/internshipmainpage.htm>>
- The Washington Center, <[www.twc.edu](http://www.twc.edu)>.





# Law

## POSSIBLE CAREERS

*A law degree is one route to: deputy secretary to the governor; online research consultant; assistant chief of police; public interest / consumer advocate; broadcast or newspaper reporter; nonprofit interest group public policy analyst; university president; state legislator; political commentator; mediator; executive director, Presidential library foundation; judge; CIA inspector general; senior criminologist; commissioner, state department of human resources; legislative director, education association; juvenile justice specialist, state justice department; corporate manager of environmental/regulatory affairs; lobbyist; labor relations specialist; chief of staff, committee, U.S. House of Representatives; assistant budget examiner; administration and policy development; politician; labor union official.*

*A law degree is required for: corporate, criminal, or civil attorney; administrative law judge, Social Security Administration; assistant district attorney; corporate legal counsel; government attorney; law professor.*

## THE NATURE OF THE CAREER

Arguably, a political science major provides the best background for applying to law school and becoming an attorney, but it is not mandatory. Over the years, political science has been the most popular major of choice for applicants to the most select law schools. Nevertheless, law schools value a wide range of skills, educational backgrounds, and life experiences when considering applicants.

Too often, the legal profession is understood only in narrow terms. A majority of all lawyers engage in private practice, either alone or associated with firms of two to several hundred lawyers. Many lawyers, however, are not in private practice. Rather, they are salaried employees of corporations, labor unions, trade associations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and governments. Equally important are the numerous law-schooled individuals who apply their skills to nontraditional law



## Careers in Political Science

practices, many of which are in corporate management, public administration, nonprofit associations, or politics. Although a law degree is not required for most of the occupations listed above, many attorneys have chosen to enter those careers and may have a hiring advantage. Political science graduates may find that they may pursue law-related careers without a law school diploma. However, this chapter is aimed at students who are thinking about law school in their futures.

According to the National Association for Law Placement (NALP), the so-called “gentlemanly profession” has been transformed by an influx of a substantial number of women and, to a lesser degree, of a variety of ethnicities. The expectation is that law schools and the legal profession will continue to become more diverse over time.

For additional information on law school, see:

- Kenneth Graham, *Understanding Law School* <[www.casenotes.com/uls.html](http://www.casenotes.com/uls.html)>
- Getting into Law School from the perspective of a Rice University student <[www.ruf.rice.edu/~legaleas/getting\\_in.html](http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~legaleas/getting_in.html)>
- America’s Law Links <[http://resource.lawlinks.com/Content/Law\\_Students/Intro\\_to\\_Law/getting\\_into\\_law\\_school.htm](http://resource.lawlinks.com/Content/Law_Students/Intro_to_Law/getting_into_law_school.htm)>.

**. . . a lawyer must be able to communicate effectively in presentations and in writing.**

### PREPARATION FOR A LEGAL CAREER: UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

When you choose your undergraduate courses, you should keep certain goals in mind. First, a lawyer must be able to communicate effectively in presentations and in writing. In a real sense, words are the tools of the lawyer’s trade. Training for communication skills obviously must include mastery of the English language. Above all, a lawyer must be able to write well.

Any course, in any discipline, in which students know that they will be required to commit ideas or research to writing, submit the writing to rigorous criticism by a faculty member who will take the time to criticize, and then laboriously rewrite to meet the criticism, is a course that will help prepare students for law school.

Second, you need critical understanding of human institutions and values. Here, political science, economics, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, and history come to mind. You should also note that undergraduate “law” courses should not be taken for the purpose of learning “the law” and certainly are not necessary for law school admission. Such courses are helpful, however, in providing an understanding of the place of law in society and providing a better basis for students to estimate their potential interest in law schools. Many political science departments recognize that their students are interested in legal careers and provide special pre-law counseling.

Third, you must develop creative critical thinking. A lawyer must be able to reason closely from given premises and propositions to tenable conclusions. The analysis of a legal problem almost always involves more than persuasive prose based on superficial reasoning. Training for this type of close reasoning may be sought in courses in mathematics, physical science, logic, and advanced political and economic theory, among others.

## PREPARATION FOR A LEGAL CAREER: ADMISSION TO LAW SCHOOL

In recent years, the number of law school applicants has increased. Students planning to go to law school will need to know about admission requirements and the application process in general. The Law School Admission Council <[www.lsac.org](http://www.lsac.org)> annually publishes *The Official Guide to U.S. Law Schools*, which provides up-to-date admission profiles and program descriptions for the 183 accredited law schools in the United States. Each profile contains admission requirements and facts about tuition and financial aid. The *Guide* is available from pre-law advisors, some college bookstores, or the LSAC web site. Anyone seriously interested in studying law should read this book carefully.

The two most important law school admission criteria are undergraduate grade point average and Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) score. The LSAT is a half-day standardized test given four times a year, which helps law schools make sound decisions by giving them a standard measure of reasoning skills that cannot be obtained by only looking at grade point averages. The test measures the ability to read and understand complex texts with accuracy and insight; organize and manage information and draw reasonable inferences from it; think critically; and analyze and evaluate the reasoning and arguments of others. There is no specific curriculum that will lead to high LSAT scores. You should choose courses that will sharpen analytical reasoning and writing skills and that will give you some understanding of what shapes human experience.

The test consists of five 35-minute multiple-choice sections and one 30-minute writing sample, which is unscored. The LSAT is an admission prerequisite at all American law schools approved by the American Bar Association. Many law schools advise that the LSAT should be taken in June or October (and they require testing by December) for admission for the next fall semester. Approximately 104,000 LSATs were administered in 2000. The primary official source of information on the LSAT is the *LSAT/LSDAS Registration and Information Book*, available for free at most colleges and law schools or from the LSAC web site. LSAC also sells a variety of other publications, software, and videos that may be ordered online or by telephone (215-968-1001).

Most law school admission authorities, although placing substantial weight on

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college grades and LSAT scores, are interested in other factors as well. The quality of an applicant's college or university, the trend of grades, and the amount of outside work or extracurricular activities undertaken while in college might make for greater understanding of the bare numerical record. In addition, it may be important that the applicant be a state resident, member of a minority or disadvantaged group, a legacy, or has an interesting background of graduate study or nonacademic experience. Letters of recommendation and an applicant's statement about his or her purpose for entering law school may also make a difference.

Many political science departments offer pre-law advice. You should contact the political science department at your college or university to learn if it has a pre-law advisor or special pre-law program. Placement departments and career advising offices in undergraduate colleges may be helpful in providing information to those who want to go to law school, but at most colleges the initiative in applying and in preparing an application and supporting papers rests on the individual applicant. The time to start thinking seriously about law school is as a college freshman—when the first steps are taken toward building a distinguished academic record. The American Bar Association has some valuable information for students thinking of law school on its web site, <[www.abanet.org](http://www.abanet.org)>. The National Association for Law Placement <[www.nalp.org](http://www.nalp.org)> has published *Degrees of Difference: A How-To Guide to Choosing a Law School*.

### THE LEGAL JOB MARKET

According to the National Association for Law Placement, the legal employment market is somewhat cyclical, responding to economic conditions in much the same way as other professions. In the early 1990s, for example, economic recession affected the employment of recent law school graduates. The number of law school graduates has increased whereas the number acquiring jobs in private practice has decreased. Only about half of new lawyers enter private practice. Entry-level hiring in business and industry is also cyclical.

In contrast, anecdotal information from NALP suggests that the number of attorneys leaving law practice to pursue nonlegal entrepreneurial or business careers has increased dramatically in recent years. Law graduates also pursue public service careers and seek electoral office. Furthermore, NALP data show that more graduates are working in nonlegal jobs initially after law school and that there is a lot of movement by graduates among different sectors of the economy.

## LEGAL ASSISTANTS

Many large law firms now employ substantial numbers of persons as “legal assistants,” or paralegals. Legal assistants research legal matters, perform online and manual research/document searches, monitor legislation, and so forth. In some instances legal assistants specialize in one particular area of legal activity; in others they take on differing responsibilities on a case-by-case basis.

Some college graduates with an interest in the law will find these jobs attractive. Legal assistants usually take a six-month postgraduate training program, but they are not required to have law degrees. Unlike beginning lawyers, legal assistants usually work fixed hours. Salaries compare favorably with other starting salaries for those holding undergraduate degrees. Some persons choose jobs as paralegals in order to sample the field of law, leaving open the option of going to law school at a later date.

## RESOURCES

More information is available on these web sites:

- American Bar Association <[www.abanet.org](http://www.abanet.org)>
- National Association for Law Placement <[www.nalp.org](http://www.nalp.org)>
- National Federation of Paralegal Associations <[www.paralegals.org](http://www.paralegals.org)>
- National Bar Association <[www.nationalbar.org](http://www.nationalbar.org)>.





# Business

## POSSIBLE CAREERS

*International business analyst; corporate manager of environmental/regulatory affairs; health care benefits administrator; information manager, corporate planning department; corporate public affairs advisor; corporate proposal manager for federal government contracts; vice president, market research; corporate government affairs director; public affairs research analyst; research director, advertising firm; director, political action committee; investment banking; import–export manager; corporate legislative issues manager; director, cost containment, insurance company; issues analyst; corporate social policy division; manager, political risk division, bank.*

## THE NATURE OF THE CAREER

A large number of political science graduates have traditionally found employment in the business sector. You may begin a business career with a bachelor’s degree, and many graduates have chosen careers in marketing, personnel, advertising, public relations, banking, and finance. Others have obtained management training positions with public and private corporations. More nontraditional positions—such as working on proposals for federal government contracts, or health care benefits administrator—might not immediately come to mind. Although a lot of high technology and e-commerce businesses are in their infancy, many have wonderful opportunities for those just beginning their careers.

Private sector businesses can be large-scale, complex, bureaucratic organizations or they can be small “mom and pop” operations that are less formally structured. When these enterprises interact with government through contracts or regulations, they often need employees or consultants who understand the complexities and the nuances of economic and regulatory policies as well as public administration.

Entrepreneurship is alive and thriving, even though most new jobs are currently

## Careers in Political Science

found in existing firms. There are a lot of opportunities for the business-minded political science graduate to start or join small businesses in many fields. A few examples of positions are computer consultant for government agencies, compliance officer overseeing government regulations for a biotech company, or content provider for a web site.

Often employment and advancement in these enterprises are based, in large part, on achievement criteria. It is also advantageous when a business is involved in a wide range of activities and is able to provide an employee with exposure to a number of different types of job opportunities. You might find that many large businesses are interested in hiring bright students with general educations—and that they provide on-the-job training and may pay for continuing education.

### EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION FOR A CAREER IN BUSINESS

If you want a career in business you must realize that you will compete with a very large number of college graduates with diverse undergraduate educations. You should, therefore, take some steps to ensure that you have the appropriate skills and know how to convince the employer that you are the person for the job. First, all graduates interested in business careers should be able to communicate easily in written English. Second, it is important that you have some familiarity with mathematical and economic concepts; at the least, it is important to be able to analyze elementary statistical data and to be able to read a balance sheet. Third, you should be able to make oral presentations in a competent manner.

The political science graduate offers potential employers in the business world a trained understanding of the intricate institutions and processes of the different levels of governments—local, state, national, and international agencies—as well as research analysis and other such skills. Governments, after all, most immediately affect business, financial, and commercial organizations. Long before products and services are marketed, they come under government scrutiny. Interacting with the Food and Drug Administration, the Federal Trade Commission, or the Environmental Protection Agency often requires specific governmental knowledge. Some products require government licensing; others might be subject to severe import controls or export incentives.

If you have studied state and local governments, you may take a job advising corporations on state and local regulatory issues. If you have focused on international relations or country/area studies, you may find opportunities in international business or trade. Employees who can analyze domestic and/or foreign investment environments—not just for the risks to the businesses they represent, but also for the opportunities that governments abroad provide the entrepreneur—are in relatively short supply and thus sought after. Fluency in a foreign language and an

understanding of a foreign culture are increasingly valuable skills.

Some examples of strategies for those seeking a satisfying business career are:

- You may plan an undergraduate degree in political science with the goal of being accepted by a graduate school of business. Those with graduate degrees (MBAs) in management, for example, are in demand even when there is a somewhat restricted job market. An undergraduate degree in political science, particularly when it is bolstered by minors or concentrations in economics (micro- and macro-), and by courses in calculus, accounting, statistics, and/or computer science, is a good qualification for professional business schools. We should note, however, that many business graduate schools today seek students who have some job experience, so taking some time off between undergraduate and graduate education may be a good option.
- You may plan an undergraduate degree in political science around the concept of becoming a miniexpert in the interrelationship between government and business. Because all American businesses have extensive contacts with governments on local, state, and national levels, you may benefit from courses in governmental organizations, public administration, public finance, comparative government, decision making, organizational behavior, and the process by which political decisions are made about economic policy. An internship either in some aspect of governmental service or with a public or private interest group may be especially valuable.
- You may be interested in specializing in a field of policy or analysis, some examples of which are environmental protection, statistical analysis, budgetary policy, and consumer affairs. If you are interested in taking this route, you ought to plan seriously to obtain a master's degree in your chosen policy area. Internships or entry-level jobs in organizations will provide exposure to a specialty and may be useful in preparing you for graduate education and informing your career choice.
- An undergraduate degree in political science, coupled with appropriate internship and work experience, can make a job seeker right out of college very appealing to a business. The skills you gain as a political science major—writing, analysis, argumentation, and knowledge about governments, institutions, and individual behavior—are extremely useful in business. As a matter of fact, a recent study shows that many businesses are hiring well-rounded liberal arts graduates instead of undergraduate business majors because of their skills, flexibility, and ability to profit from on-the-job training opportunities, which are myriad in the business world. Businesses not only provide their own training, but many provide tuition or tuition reimbursement for continuing education to valued employees.



## Careers in Political Science

There are many ways that a political science undergraduate can transform a strong social science background into a competitive advantage in the business job market. If the option you choose includes graduate schools of business, the best sources of information on MBA programs are the International Association for Management Education <[www.aacsb.edu](http://www.aacsb.edu)> and MBA Info <[www.mbainfo.com](http://www.mbainfo.com)>.

### THE JOB MARKET

The job market in the business community is as good as the state of the American economy. Hiring patterns fluctuate as businesses expand and contract. The U.S. economy sank into recession in the early 1990s, but bounced back into the longest running expansion in the country's history followed by an economic slowdown and adjustments in the technology and telecommunications sectors. Business cycles will continue to occur in market-based economies. Nonetheless, the job outlook for well trained college graduates remains positive. Entrepreneurial activity continues to be important to job growth, but there are still more jobs in existing firms. You should also note that education and continual training are becoming even more important for job placement and economic well-being in our ever more interdependent world. Knowledge of foreign languages and cultures as well as intercultural experiences at home and abroad are also increasingly valued by all sectors of the economy.

### THE MECHANICS OF JOB PLACEMENT

**The job placement office of each college and university is the best source of information concerning specific hiring patterns and procedures.**

American businesses interview hundreds of thousands of students every year on their college campuses. The job placement office of each college and university is the best source of information concerning specific hiring patterns and procedures. Early contact with the placement office will provide you with the best analysis of the job placement situation. These offices often offer guides to writing a resume or preparing for interviews,

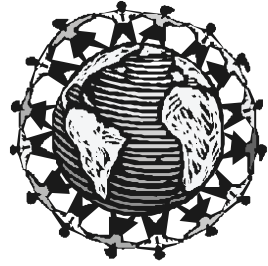
as well as courses on these and other topics. Placement offices often coordinate recruitment visits and on-campus interviewing opportunities, so you should stay alert for these opportunities at your school. Remember to search your college or university's web site for placement help as well as those of other schools in your state or region. Among the many good examples of college or university job placement offerings that you might want to try on the web are the following:

- University of Kansas <[www.ukans.edu/~uces](http://www.ukans.edu/~uces)>
- University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill <<http://careers.unc.edu>>
- Purdue University <[www.cco.purdue.edu](http://www.cco.purdue.edu)>
- University of Utah <[http://careers.utah.edu/main/students/Career\\_Services/students.htm](http://careers.utah.edu/main/students/Career_Services/students.htm)>

## RESOURCES

- Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business <[www.aacsb.edu](http://www.aacsb.edu)>
- Careers-in-Business <[www.careers-in-business.com](http://www.careers-in-business.com)>
- Career Builder <[www.careerbuilder.com](http://www.careerbuilder.com)>
- America's Job Bank <[www.ajb.dni.us](http://www.ajb.dni.us)>
- For executive jobs or information about future promotions, the *Wall Street Journal* offers CareerJournal at <[www.careerjournal.com](http://www.careerjournal.com)>.





# International Careers

## POSSIBLE CAREERS

*Staff director, Senate Foreign Relations Committee; Peace Corps volunteer; broadcaster, Voice of America; assistant U.S. Trade Representative for congressional affairs; minister for development; bank vice president, international division; analyst, Central Intelligence Agency; assistant secretary for consular affairs, U.S. State Department; international research specialist; foreign service officer; principal secretary to prime minister; press officer, U.S. embassy; strategic planning specialist, U.S. Army; translator, United Nations; teacher, Department of Defense school; vice president, international marketing, Microsoft; senior director, African Affairs, National Security Council; policy analyst, International Trade Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce; director, international affairs, AFL-CIO; policy analyst, Center for Strategic and International Studies; lobbyist, International Automobile Manufacturers Association; Washington bureau chief, La Nación; field staff, Save the Children; chief, research division, Export-Import Bank; agent, international bureau, FBI; consultant to multinational corporations; international correspondent, Los Angeles Times; public affairs, International Monetary Fund; budget analyst, World Health Organization; Internet content writer or editor.*

## THE NATURE OF THE CAREER

In recent years, both the opportunities and the demand have grown enormously for qualified people who wish to work in international business, banking, international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs). The range of careers available within international corporations and organizations is quite large. There are growing international employment opportunities for persons trained in political science, because so many social and economic problems require political intervention in the forms of public policies, outlays of public funds, and regulations enacted and enforced by political and governmental bodies. In addition, the skills you may learn as a political science graduate—particularly if you

## Careers in Political Science

have had some methodological training—are in high demand by companies and organizations working in the international sphere.

Worldwide demands for assistance are increasing on government-supported international bodies such as the United Nations Organization (and its subsidiary agencies such as UNESCO, WHO, and UNICEF), the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the Export-Import Bank. This means that they need more employees. (A list of NGOs affiliated with the United Nations can be found at <[www.ngo.org/index2.htm](http://www.ngo.org/index2.htm)>.)

Private organizations operate internationally in areas such as health, education, social services, cultural affairs, and community development. Private nonprofit organizations, which are funded by individual donors, foundations, corporations, and government agencies, offer a variety of opportunities, both paid and unpaid, for the specialist and the generalist. Jobs run the gamut from management and finance to writing and community organization. Examples of large, private, nonprofit organizations with international components include The Academy for Educational Development, the AFL-CIO, the American Field Service, the American Friends Service Committee, CARE, Catholic Relief Services, East-West Center, Red Cross, Experiment in International Living, Save the Children Federation, Sierra Club, Greenpeace, U.S. Committee for UNICEF, and Youth for Understanding. (Many NGOs working on health issues may be found at: <[www.ngonetworks.org](http://www.ngonetworks.org)>, and see <[www.uia.org](http://www.uia.org)> for a list of more than 12,000 INGOs and IGOs.)

International business, banking, and finance offer a great diversity of opportunities to those with undergraduate and graduate degrees in political science. Business and banking enterprises have become so globalized that the successes of their ventures are vitally dependent on a better understanding of the international political, regulatory, and economic environments in which they operate. Graduates should investigate careers with investment banks and the international departments of commercial banks; American businesses that either deal with imports and exports, or that have established overseas operations; foundations with foreign components; the international departments of trade unions; colleges and universities that have overseas branches; the federal government, and state and local governments with economic development programs to attract foreign investors and promote local exports; contractors that provide services to the federal government in foreign countries; international governmental agencies that have offices and operations in the United States; and consulting firms that are called upon by national and overseas clients to deal with problems of economic and political development. There are positions for those with the most specialized backgrounds, as well as openings for generalists. Indeed, lack of experience is not necessarily a drawback. Some corporations and many banks prefer to do their own training.

### PREPARATION FOR A CAREER IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

A liberal arts education is still the single best preparation for most international jobs. Undergraduate training in political science, combined with courses or degrees in areas such as law, economics, public health, engineering, area studies, and business administration will produce the kind of “profile” that agencies in both the public and the private sectors will find attractive. Students who major in political science should include some courses in comparative politics, international relations and organizations, political development, and interest group politics. Also, students should take some courses in basic economics, statistics, calculus, computer science, and international trade.

Compared to the United States, many foreign countries are highly “mercantilist,” which means that the nexus between government and business is very close. The existence, for example, of national, regional, or local industrial and economic development policies brings public authorities into continuous relationships with the world of business—not just as regulators or as taxing authorities, but actually as partners. An understanding of how these systems work is increasingly essential to those who promote investment in countries as dissimilar as Japan and India, Germany and Brazil, and Malaysia and Poland. Consequently, studies in comparative politics with a focus on specific regions or countries may be very useful for careers with international businesses or organizations.

Many, if not most jobs in this highly competitive market, however, go to candidates with graduate degrees—particularly the master’s degree. Graduate degrees—especially with foci in subjects such as economic development, comparative governments, regional studies, and political analysis—are useful in international business. Those with backgrounds in engineering, computer sciences, and business administration are also in high demand. Foreign-language proficiency is a requirement for most overseas jobs and an advantage for obtaining U.S.-based jobs with international organizations. Fluency in lesser known languages such as Chinese or Russian, as well as widely spoken languages such as Spanish and French, are highly marketable skills. Nonetheless, graduate programs welcome applications from college graduates who have a record with work and/or service experience. You also may want to consider pursuing a graduate degree after working for a few years or performing service such as with the Peace Corps or CARE.

**Fluency in lesser known languages such as Chinese or Russian, as well as widely spoken languages such as Spanish and French, are highly marketable skills.**

## Careers in Political Science

Among your extracurricular activities, you should become involved in international clubs, perhaps live in an international house or dormitory, attend lunch time language tables where everyone agrees to speak a specific language over lunch once a week, participate in the model United Nations or model Arab League, and you should definitely spend a summer or semester abroad. If you are a work-study student, you ought to seek out a job on campus that has international overtones such as working in the study abroad office, working for international programs, tutoring students whose first language is not English, or working in a language lab on campus.

A good internship will strengthen the resume of a political science graduate seeking an entry-level job in an international organization. It is important to choose an internship with the same care that you would use in choosing full-time employment. Ideally, the internship should allow you to explore your interests, while gaining some specialized experience. In many instances, banks, volunteer associations, nonprofit enterprises, international relief organizations, and intergovernmental organizations themselves will provide internships for potential employees. Internship programs allow these groups to peruse potential candidates; they also provide in-house training in the mission and the work ways of each of these organizations. Check the web sites of the organizations for which you would like to work to see if they have internships. Other international internship programs may be found at CDS International (for mostly German-based internships) <[www.cdsintl.org/interns.html](http://www.cdsintl.org/interns.html)>; Intern Abroad <[www.internabroad.com](http://www.internabroad.com)>; the Global Services Corps (for internships in Africa and Latin America) <[www.globalservicecorps.org](http://www.globalservicecorps.org)>; and many others.

Some experiences analogous to organizational internships include:

- Participation in organizations such as Amnesty International, the League of Women Voters, or the Foreign Policy Association's *Great Decisions* program
- The Peace Corps <[www.peacecorps.gov](http://www.peacecorps.gov)> and a number of religious groups that provide opportunities for qualified persons to live and work abroad
- The YMCA <[www.ymca.net](http://www.ymca.net)> and <[www.ymcaworldservice.org](http://www.ymcaworldservice.org)>, which sponsors a program that allows college students and others to serve as camp counselors around the world
- The Rotary Foundation, which offers many opportunities and funding for travel and humanitarian or educational work abroad <[www.rotary.org/foundation](http://www.rotary.org/foundation)>
- Study-abroad programs, which may lay a good foundation for future international careers, especially if they aid in the development of language skills. Most colleges and universities have access to these programs, so ask your professors, dean, or international programs office.

### THE JOB MARKET IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The U.S. government employs a large number of Americans through the Agency for International Development, the Peace Corps, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Departments of Agriculture and Commerce, the International Trade Commission, and other agencies. Government contractors, which are often large domestic or international businesses, may provide an indirect way to work overseas for the government as two-thirds of U.S. foreign aid is funneled through U.S.-based organizations, both for profit and not for profit. Of course, you should consider becoming a foreign service officer at the State Department. Alternatively, U.S. industries, banks, and financing institutions employ many more people overseas than does the U.S. government. The number of persons working internationally for the private sector of the national economy has been growing steadily in the past decade, although the growth rates vary considerably by occupation. It is reasonable to expect that in the next decade this trend will continue. Persons willing to make the commitment to learn or to be trained in the special skills necessary for these careers should be reasonably optimistic about their prospects for finding jobs.

In the last few years, Congress has greatly expanded its role in foreign relations and international trade. This translates into job opportunities on congressional committees and the staffs of members of the House and Senate for political science graduates who are familiar with international politics, defense, and trade issues. States, counties, and local governments have become highly active in courting international trade and international ties ranging from “sister city” agreements to local political exchanges. They need to hire more people for jobs related to international issues. There are opportunities for extensive international travel, although most of these jobs are based in the United States.

### THE MECHANICS OF JOB PLACEMENT

Because of the range of private nonprofit groups, international businesses, banking and financial institutions, international organizations, and governmental agencies, it is difficult to make generalizations about the job placement process. Nonetheless, there are strategies for locating a job. It is important to contact your college placement office early in your senior year or as you enter the last year of a graduate program. A student interested in the business world should become informed about the standard practice that brings dozens of recruiters from banking and other industries to conduct on-campus interviews.

You may learn about opportunities in the American Federal Government by checking the web sites of the Departments of State, Agriculture, Commerce, and Treasury; the International Trade Commission; the Central Intelligence Agency, etc.



## Careers in Political Science

(See the chapter on “The Federal Government.”) In addition, you should look into the economic development programs of state and local governments in the United States, especially those programs that are designed to attract investors from abroad or to open up foreign markets to local product exports. Local and national Chambers of Commerce are good starting points.

An interested student can consult the most recent issue of *Fortune Magazine*’s “Fortune 500” for a list of large multinational businesses. In particular, for U.S. companies, examine the proportion of sales or profits registered overseas. Anything approaching 20 percent may indicate that they are companies in need of persons who can help them operate in foreign environments. In the case of foreign corporations, you should learn if they have branches in the United States. For those businesses, it is the United States that represents a foreign environment whose nuances they must learn.

In brief, here are some additional web sites that might be useful in your job search:

- Strategies for finding jobs with NGOs <<http://caster.ssw.upenn.edu/%7Erestes/isw/chapter52.html>>
- Finding an overseas jobs <[www.overseasjobs.com](http://www.overseasjobs.com)>
- Jobs in Europe through JobPilot <[www.jobpilot.net](http://www.jobpilot.net)>
- International Jobs Center <[www.internationaljobs.org](http://www.internationaljobs.org)>
- Monster.com Work Abroad <<http://workabroad.monster.com>>
- Foreign Policy Association jobs list <[www.fpa.org](http://www.fpa.org)>.

In addition, communities of Americans in the location in which you would like to work may be excellent resources. Using any search engine on the web, you may find many “listservs” and web sites particular to a given region of the world—such as NISJobs <<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/nisjobs>> for jobs in the former Soviet sphere.



# Journalism

## POSSIBLE CAREERS

*Newspaper writer/editor/columnist; executive producer, local television news; producer, science news, PBS; director of corporate public affairs; editor, online political journal; freelance writer; information manager, corporate planning department; television reporter; press officer, U.S. Embassy; public affairs research analyst; publisher; research director, advertising firm; television network director of surveys; corporate information manager; trade association newsletter editor; web content writer; webzine reporter.*

## THE NATURE OF THE CAREER

Today's "global village" has an insatiable appetite for news. Good stories on every aspect of human behavior will always find audiences. A modern journalist has a challenging job and awesome responsibility: What a journalist reports defines the environment of a large number of people, and the way journalists analyze what they report shapes our understanding of the world.

There are many different types of media in which you could work, ranging from radio and network television to cable TV and the Internet. Each has its own challenges and rewards. Careers in media generally involve a lot of uncertainty and moving among "markets." You go where the jobs are and get your foot in the door. For example, in network television (usually local affiliates), you start as an intern in a small market and gradually move up into a full-time job and larger market. The same is true in radio, but to a lesser extent. The Internet does not usually require as much moving around, but still offers numerous opportunities, although some of them are short lived. A note of caution: the ethic in journalism is one of "paying your dues"; in other words, you should expect to start in a small market, and entry-level salaries are quite low.

## Careers in Political Science

### EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION FOR CAREERS IN JOURNALISM

A political science major gives you the substantive and analytical expertise necessary for a career in journalism. Seasoned journalists claim that employers value a liberal arts education with a major in the humanities or a social science discipline and that a political science major prepares a journalist to cover public affairs, politics, political institutions, and more. Typically, political science courses place heavy emphasis on developing fluid, clear writing and speaking skills. Journalistic requirements include a bachelor's degree in a discipline that develops appropriate skills, or a graduate degree in journalism. If you are interested in international journalism—either working for the international portions of American media or for a foreign media company—a degree in international affairs at the undergraduate or master's level may be quite useful.

The basis of good reporting lies in the ability to write, the ability to comprehend the significance of events, and the ability to express that comprehension quickly and clearly. The ability to write is somewhat intuitive, but the basics of good writing may be taught, and training will improve anyone's writing. Comprehension of events often requires broad contextual knowledge, and the ability to translate into words a mind's-eye picture of what has happened is a learned skill. Political science programs provide context, writing practice, and analytical skills.

If you seek to hone your writing skills, you should first turn to basic courses in the English department, but other departments as well may offer courses that emphasize written work; it pays to seek out such classes and take advantage of opportunities to write essays and papers. Many colleges and universities offer writing workshops on campus or through continuing education. In addition, community centers and some for-profit centers offer writing and editing workshops. Completion of such a workshop, either collegiate or commercial, adds to your credentials. And of course, basic reporting courses offered by journalism departments will build up a student's abilities in journalistic writing.

A good journalist understands the context of events and has a broad familiarity with both history and current events. Understanding contemporary society requires a broad liberal arts education with an emphasis on courses in political science, history, economics, sociology, psychology, and even philosophy. Within the field of political science, a student interested in journalism might focus on classes that address domestic affairs, such as American national, state, and local government; public administration; public finance; and campaigns and elections. Conversely, you might place more emphasis on foreign affairs with courses in comparative governments and international politics.

College newspapers offer opportunities to obtain practical journalistic experience, which you should not overlook. Similarly, local daily newspapers, when

reporting campus news, often use student “stringers,” who are paid on a per-story basis. For a student-reporter seeking a quick and realistic education in newspaper writing, working part-time with professionals may be an excellent learning experience as well as a source of income. Some webzines and reporting-based web sites also take freelance or contract work. All of these opportunities allow you to build skills and a portfolio of your work.

Students seeking jobs in broadcast journalism need to focus their education in the same way as those interested in the written word. They also need to learn how to operate radio and television equipment and to edit audio or videotape packages. Many universities have broadcast journalism programs that teach these technologies. Local community and continuing education centers may also offer courses on editing.

Experience with college radio or television stations is valuable preparation for a broadcast career. Often these facilities have excellent equipment and provide hands-on training. Working in an actual station enables a student to obtain a clear understanding of the specific assignments associated with broadcast journalism and the production of programs in news and public affairs.

If you are interested in web-based work, your best bet may be to volunteer on campus at one of the numerous offices that have web sites. It could be your department, the dean’s office, the alumni office, or any other organization that needs help with content, editing, layout, and so on. Take classes or campus workshops on HTML, XML, Java, and other programming languages. You may also want to consider learning Adobe Photoshop and other such programs, as graphics skills are important.

Practical experience is vital if you want a job in journalism. Internships and freelance work are important ways of gaining experience and often may lead to a job offer. Volunteer to create and maintain a web site for a local nonprofit group so you can point to experience in this area. Submit freelance articles to community newspapers, work on public access cable channels, write a newsletter for your community or a local politician, write an op-ed piece for your school newspaper, or volunteer to write a column on a favorite hobby for a magazine or webzine. All of these activities will help you document your skills and abilities. You should create a portfolio of your work with clips, tapes, web sites, and so on to chronicle your experiences and skills. To find an internship, check with human resources and community affairs departments of stations, magazines, newspapers, and businesses who do publishing of any kind. Ask friends and colleagues. Ask your professors for referrals. Check with your alumni association to see if any alums work in your chosen field and contact them.

In addition, if you are interested in becoming a foreign correspondent, language skills are very useful, although they are not usually a prerequisite for the job. Job candidates with foreign language training may easily differentiate themselves from the competition, and these skills, especially when coupled with cultural knowledge, are extremely useful to a journalist.

## Careers in Political Science

**Those who succeed are able to keep their eyes open for opportunities and are prepared to take risks.**

### THE JOB MARKET

The job market in journalism today is tight and highly competitive. That being said, it has been tight for years, yet people find new jobs all the time. Those who succeed are able to keep their eyes open for opportunities and are prepared to take risks.

As we begin the twenty-first century, opportunities in Internet-based journalism are expanding. Campaign web sites and webzines need journalists with political and government backgrounds. However, as quickly as some sites go online, others disappear. Stable jobs in online journalism are most often found with the web sites of large, established media, such as CNN and major U.S. newspapers. Recently, those same organizations have cut staff in nonweb-based departments. Meanwhile, new jobs have become available at CNN's main competitors, MSNBC and the Fox News Channel. Mergers or other economic restructuring, as well as technological changes, may affect news organizations in the future and, thus, have an impact on hiring trends. Cable television channels such as Court-TV (legal), CNBC (financial), and C-SPAN (government) offer programming with a narrower focus. Working at a niche news channel may provide a natural fit for a political science graduate. Several well-respected hard copy publications, such as *Congressional Quarterly* and *National Journal*, cover government and also have web sites that employ writers with political knowledge. Trade associations, lobbying organizations, and nonprofit groups need writers and editors for newsletters and other publications.

### THE MECHANICS OF JOB PLACEMENT

Finding a job in the field of journalism is often a matter of ingenuity and persistence. State press associations and journalism departments provide assistance in placing college graduates in the profession. It is sometimes equally effective to seek employment personally by requesting an interview with the human resources department of the publication or station. You might also want to schedule an informational interview with a local editor or producer.

It also helps to start small. Beginning a career with a small or moderate-sized station or newspaper in a small or middle-sized community provides good experience and excellent opportunities for advancement or movement to other publications or stations. At stations and papers of modest size, every employee is expected to do almost every job and every employee is given almost every type of opportunity. Thus, smaller news organizations are excellent training grounds.

As well, a student interested in journalism should spend at least a summer or a semester working as an intern. These three-month stints, although they pay far less than many summer jobs (if they are paid at all), are more educationally and professionally rewarding. Internships may lead to one's first entry-level position, and often it is with that same newspaper or radio or television station where the student has interned. Information about such programs is generally available from campus journalism departments and career placement offices.

Also, newspapers and press associations conduct summer workshops designed to introduce students to careers in journalism. Participation in a workshop may provide you with insight into the profession, as well as contacts that may be useful in landing internships or even a first job.

Your college's alumni association should provide you with contacts in the journalism world—some schools make their alumni directories available to students seeking career advice. Such contacts might not lead directly to an internship or a job, but it never hurts to call or e-mail an alumnus with an open-ended request for information about the field of journalism.

There are a number of good web sites for finding jobs in journalism. Some of them also have special sections for internships and freelance opportunities. One of the most comprehensive sites is <[www.journalismjobs.com](http://www.journalismjobs.com)>, which is run in cooperation with the *Columbia Journalism Review*. The *American Journalism Review* offers <[www.ajr.org/employment](http://www.ajr.org/employment)>. And the University of California at Berkeley has a good, up-to-date site <[www.journalism.berkeley.edu/jobs](http://www.journalism.berkeley.edu/jobs)>. Finally, if you have in mind an “ideal” place to work, go to that organization's web site—often, the human resources department will post new openings, so it is good to check frequently. However, you should remember the culture of journalism—your first job is not likely to be at the *New York Times* or with ABC News. Career tracks are more likely to start in small cities and towns with jobs that build your skills and networks.

## OTHER RESOURCES

More journalism/communications web sites include:

- Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication <[www.aejmc.org](http://www.aejmc.org)>
- Broadcast Education Association <[www.beaweb.org](http://www.beaweb.org)>
- National Diversity Newspaper Job Bank <[www.newsjobs.com](http://www.newsjobs.com)>
- Television jobs and internships <[www.tvjobs.com](http://www.tvjobs.com)>
- Newspapers Jobs Page <[www.freep.com/jobspage](http://www.freep.com/jobspage)>.

There are also agencies that, for modest fees or for free, will post the resumes of

## Careers in Political Science

journalism job seekers on their web sites for exclusive viewing by employers, who supply most of the funding for these sites. A good search engine such as <www.alltheweb.com>, Altavista, or Google will turn up numerous such sites and agencies. But be wary of any site that requires a substantial fee either for information on jobs or for posting your resume. Ask for references and check these sites out before paying for their services.

Trade magazines such as the *Columbia Journalism Review* offer leads on internships, fellowships, and even jobs, but expect the competition to be especially tight for anything advertised there. Your college career center and the faculty member in charge of internships in your department will also be valuable resources in your search for internships and jobs.

Finally, there are student branches of professional organizations such as Sigma Delta Chi. These offer opportunities to network with professionals and to explore issues such as ethics and privacy beyond the theoretical setting of the classroom.

### SOME FINAL WORDS

Good journalism demands persistence. Consider this time in your life to be a period of training in job-related skills and talents—one of which is knowing how to try and try again. Your first job in journalism will probably not be highly paid or in your ideal location, but, once you have “paid your dues,” the sky’s the limit.

As in many fields, networking is key. Make contacts early in your college career with local news organizations and media outlets; volunteer, intern, take part-time work, and stay in touch with the people you meet. These networks will help keep you in tune with the job market and may help you to obtain an interview or even a job.



# Campaigns and Polling

## POSSIBLE CAREERS

*Campaign manager; political director, campaign finance reform, Common Cause; midwest regional coordinator, DNC; survey research; political reporter, CNN; pollster; fundraiser, EMILY's List; executive director, political action committee; press officer for candidate; writer, Campaigns and Elections Magazine; telemarketing; TV and radio production and placement; vice president, direct mail marketing firm; issue analyst, Heritage Foundation; commissioner, Federal Elections Commission.*

## THE NATURE OF THE CAREER

When seeking a job in politics, a political science graduate may first consider political parties, individual campaigns, and campaign consulting firms. But looking beyond the scope of traditional campaign jobs will lead you to other positions that may not be as cyclical in nature—such as political writing, directing a political action committee, or issue analysis for a policy organization.

**Traditional campaign jobs.** Each candidate running for political office in the United States today—be it at the local, state, or federal level—must put together his or her own campaign organization, with little help from the political parties, and often with few paid staff members. Indeed, a candidate for local office may run a nonpartisan campaign in an all-volunteer effort. Usually, the higher the office, the more professional the staff involved and the more partisan the politics. In recent years, party affiliation has become increasingly important, and it may be the first qualification a campaign considers. It is rare that a campaign will hire an employee who has affiliation with another political party; Democrats tend to work for Democrats and Republicans for Republicans. There are, however, some exceptions; for example, independents who will work for centrists/moderates from either party.



## Careers in Political Science

There are also some variations in philosophy and strategy among candidates within the same party.

As candidates seek higher offices, polling and campaign techniques usually become more sophisticated, with the inclusion of election professionals such as media consultants, professional fund raisers, and pollsters. *Campaigns and Elections* magazine recently listed more than fifty-six separate job categories for political professionals.

According to the American Association of Political Consultants (AAPC), more than 50,000 public elections are held each year. “Add to that number the selection of elected leaders for private, professional, academic, business, labor, public interest, and other organized bodies, as well as public votes on local and state referenda, initiatives, and constitutional amendments,” and there are more than a half-million elections annually in the United States. The AAPC estimates that more than one billion dollars is spent each year on campaign communication. Because campaigns, political consultants, and political parties have one goal—victory for their candidates—careers in campaign management are cyclical. Unlike other professions, election day cannot be postponed, rescheduled, or canceled. Positions on individual campaigns, as opposed to many jobs with polling and consulting firms, begin sometime during the campaign and end on election day or shortly thereafter. Campaigns require people who are willing to work long hours, often for little or no pay (particularly at entry-level positions) and often who are willing to travel. This profession is not for someone who wants regular, stable office hours, but rather seeks the excitement of electoral politics. It is worth noting that political and public opinion polling is a profession with substantial past and continuing ties to political science. The American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) <[www.aapor.org](http://www.aapor.org)> includes many scholars who helped to establish or refine the study of voting behavior, elections, and public opinion research in political science.

A typical career pattern in this field begins with a young person volunteering on a campaign at the local or congressional level, progressing to a paid position, moving to a statewide or national campaign, and then ending at a consulting firm. Flexibility and openness to new opportunities are important, especially for those just starting their careers. Local campaigns tend to offer a broad variety of experiences and substantial responsibilities to junior staff who prove themselves to be good workers. In national campaign organizations, the work tends to be more specialized and, therefore, there are fewer opportunities to perform a wide variety of campaign tasks.

More and more, you can work on campaigns with the goal of becoming a campaign consultant. A campaign consultant may be a general advisor to a campaign, who puts together the entire campaign plan or may be hired to provide advice on a specific aspect of a campaign, such as polling, direct mail fund raising, or paid media advertising. In addition, the political parties provide opportunities for those inter-

ested in electoral politics to work on get-out-the-vote campaigns, phone banks, research, fund raising, advertising, and more.

Another option is simply to volunteer on one or more campaigns, while working professionally outside of politics—the pursuit of politics as an avocation.

**Nonelectoral politics.** As mentioned above, one may take a political job, yet not be directly involved with politics. You may choose to work in electoral politics as a campaign or party professional, but then move into a more stable career as a staff member for an elected official or political action committee, or become a lobbyist at a trade association or policy analyst for a nonprofit organization or think tank. You could also do polling for a public opinion research firm or marketing research company.

There are many groups that define political agendas and hire staff with campaign and other political experience. For example, EMILY's List <[www.emilyslist.org](http://www.emilyslist.org)> is a financial and political resource for pro-choice Democratic women. The group identifies viable candidates for federal and statewide offices and supports them by raising campaign contributions; conducts candidate recruitment, strategic research, and campaign staff training and referral; and offers technical assistance from their political, fund raising, and communications staff; and works to turn out women voters. In addition, there are many other groups such as WISH List <[www.thewishlist.org](http://www.thewishlist.org)>, which is a comparable group for pro-choice Republican women, the Conservative Political Action Committee <[www.cpac.org](http://www.cpac.org)> that advocates on conservative issues, the entire gamut of labor unions, and many, many more.

Political Action Committees (PACs) are sponsored by corporations and trade or issue groups to gather contributions from members or employees to give to political candidates. Via their donations, PACs are highly effective in influencing officeholders. Over time, some PACs have changed their focus. For instance, GOPAC became the largest Republican PAC, making direct contributions to promising candidates in competitive state legislative and municipal elections. In the mid-1980s, GOPAC transformed itself into a Republican education and training institute, teaching proven campaign-winning tactics to candidates, office holders, activists, and campaign workers.

At both the state and national levels, there are many nonprofit groups called think tanks, some of which have an issue orientation particular to a party's philosophy—such as the American Enterprise Institute, Brookings Institute, Hudson Institute, East West Institute, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Manhattan Institute, Center for Tax Justice, Concord Coalition, Joint Center for Political Economic Studies, Urban Institute, and Citizens for a Sound Economy.

Do not overlook polling organizations that do more than political polling. Media groups such as ABC, CBS, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times*, *USA Today*,

## Careers in Political Science

and *The Wall Street Journal*/NBC conduct issue polls, along with well-known polling firms such as Gallup, Roper, the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, and Zogby International. Polling firms hire people to write questions, format polls for the Internet or print, analyze data, and more. There are also thousands of marketing research firms and web-based polling operations that value opinion polling, in which methodological and analytical skills may be put to good use.

There has also been an explosion of political web sites, some of which are attached to polling agencies, PACs, political parties, news agencies, or companies; others of which are independent and aim to provide a variety of political information. Some of the Internet's employment opportunities have been covered in other sections of this booklet. However, there are also web sites, such as the Center for Responsive Politics <[www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org)>, which discusses campaign finance issues; Freedom Channel <[www.freedomchannel.com](http://www.freedomchannel.com)>, which offers campaign information and videos on a nonpartisan basis; and Politics1.com <[www.politics1.com](http://www.politics1.com)>, which offers a wide variety of current and historical information on politics and campaigns. In addition, some web sites—such as Minnesota Politics <[www.mn-politics.com](http://www.mn-politics.com)>—are devoted to state politics. These sites and others like them need employees who are well-versed in politics and government to oversee their development and provide appropriate content and services to their customers.

### EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION FOR A CAREER IN POLITICS

If you are interested in a career in campaigns, polling, and elections, you should have a solid understanding of how the American political system works. Basic courses in American government and American history, as well as more specific courses on political parties, elections, and public opinion and voting behavior are very useful. Additionally, an ability to write quickly and well is a requirement for many aspects of campaign management. Courses in research methods, statistics, and data analysis are useful if you want a career in political polling or research or as a political consultant.

Several universities offer specialized seminars, institutes, and degrees in campaign management. Such programs are not limited to students with little or no practical campaign experience—frequently campaign professionals will enroll for further training. These programs are also useful, because they often have internships or provide job placement for their students. Here is a list of some of these programs:

- The American University's Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies offers the two-week Campaign Management Institute and other courses <[www.american.edu/spa/ccps/institutes.html](http://www.american.edu/spa/ccps/institutes.html)>.
- The Women's Campaign School at Yale University conducts annual four-and-a-half-day comprehensive sessions, <[www.wcsyale.org](http://www.wcsyale.org)>.

- The John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard's Institute of Politics provides internships, speakers, fellows, study groups, and conferences <[www.ksg.harvard.edu/iop](http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/iop)>.
- The Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics, University of Akron, offers a Master of Applied Politics and Certificate of Applied Politics <[www.uakron.edu/polisci/bliss.html](http://www.uakron.edu/polisci/bliss.html)>.
- The Graduate Program in Political Campaigning at University of Florida has a Master's in Political Science with a certificate in political campaigning <[www.polisci.ufl.edu/campaign](http://www.polisci.ufl.edu/campaign)>.
- The Graduate School of Political Management at the George Washington University offers a Master's in Political Management, Master's in Legislative Affairs, and the Semester in Washington programs, as well as short-term certificate programs <[www.gwu.edu/~gspm](http://www.gwu.edu/~gspm)>.

In addition, conferences and information about political consulting, polling, and campaign management may be found through the bipartisan association of 600 political professionals, the American Association of Political Consultants <[www.theaapc.org](http://www.theaapc.org)>. Their membership consists of political consultants, media consultants, pollsters, campaign managers, corporate public affairs officers, professors, fundraisers, lobbyists, congressional staff members, and vendors. AAPC maintains a Code of Professional Ethics and has begun a professional mentoring program for undergraduate and graduate students.

### THE POLITICAL AND CAMPAIGN JOB MARKET

In light of the number of elections in the United States, and the fact that campaigns are not indefinite, candidates need to hire new campaign workers for each campaign. Consequently, campaign jobs are always available. Also keep in mind the importance of state, local, and regional firms. There is considerable demand for state polls and for specialists on state and regional practices. Finding jobs with consulting and polling firms is more difficult and generally requires firsthand campaign experience. In general, you must also be aware that career paths in campaigns tend to be highly partisan; only rarely will a consultant or campaign worker be able to build a career working in more than one political camp. As indicated above, those interested in a career in campaign management generally must be willing to start at relatively low-paying jobs or as volunteers, be prepared for periods of unemployment, and work their way up the campaign management hierarchy. Those wanting to make the transition into the political policy job market should use the same techniques discussed in the chapter on nonprofits.

### THE MECHANICS OF JOB PLACEMENT

The best way to get a job on a campaign is to demonstrate campaign experience, and the best way to get experience, apart from taking one of the specialized seminars mentioned above, is to volunteer on a campaign. Volunteering is an excellent way both to obtain campaign experience and to make connections. Volunteers do not

**Volunteering is an excellent way both to obtain campaign experience and to make connections.**

necessarily have to put in a lot of time; their contribution to the campaign can be putting up yard signs, handing out fliers on a weekend, or making phone calls one evening a week. You may also join organizations, such as the Young Republicans or Young Democrats; get involved in student governance, campus-based campaigning, or local, state, or national party organizations; or work for Rock the Vote <[www.rockthevote.org](http://www.rockthevote.org)>.

In addition, working in interest groups that promote issues relevant to your party affiliation may also be a path to political consulting and campaign management and vice versa. For example, Republican consultants have emerged from religious-right or anti-abortion interest groups, and Democratic consultants have emerged from organized labor and pro-choice groups (see the chapter on interest groups for hints on finding these jobs).

The profession of political polling and campaign management is one that people tend to stay in, so, once initial connections are made, it becomes easier to find subsequent jobs. The party campaign committees may be sources of information on specific campaigns' needs for workers. Jobs in consulting firms usually come after an individual has worked on one or more campaigns, although some consulting firms, particularly polling firms, hire people without campaign experience, particularly if they have statistical skills.

There are a number of national web sites that can help you in your job search including:

- Democratic National Committee <[www.democrats.org](http://www.democrats.org)>
- Republican National Committee <[www.rnc.org](http://www.rnc.org)>
- Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee <[www.dccc.org](http://www.dccc.org)>
- National Republican Congressional Campaign Committee <[www.nrcc.org](http://www.nrcc.org)>
- PollingReport.com job bank <[www.pollingreport.com/jobbank](http://www.pollingreport.com/jobbank)>.



## Precollegiate Education

### POSSIBLE CAREERS

*Government and politics teacher in public, private, or faith-based school; curriculum developer or supervisor; educational researcher; public high school principal; private school headmaster or dean; content specialist for school systems and web collections; education reporter; textbook writer or editor; county or state social studies curriculum supervisor; chief state school officer; superintendent of schools.*

### THE NATURE OF THE CAREER

A career in precollegiate education is not confined to classroom teaching. The range of career opportunities in education is expanding, as is the demand for skilled teachers, educational administrators, educational researchers, and writers. Many public agencies, nonprofit associations, and businesses value the skills associated with knowledge and experience in education and in working with young people. Political science provides the content knowledge and skills for a career in education, and many political scientists consider precollege teaching to be a worthwhile profession, early or late in their careers.

In high school and middle school, political science shares its place with other social studies courses. Civics, law, and social studies courses are offered in middle schools and high school, and most high schools require a course in American Government. An increasing number of high schools offer advanced placement political science classes, which are the equivalent of introductory college courses in either or both U.S. Politics and Government, and Comparative Politics and Government. Private schools and larger high schools offer more elective courses in public and world affairs. Political science majors are well-trained to teach all of these courses, as are other social science majors who have taken political science courses. Education research evaluation and administration also accommodate the research and analytical

## Careers in Political Science

skills of political science, whose coverage of institutions, processes, law, behavior, and democratic theory is valuable.

In addition, there is a fundamental need for education about democracy. Knowledge of civic engagement and public affairs prepares younger Americans to pursue their own interests and participate in a technologically advanced and globally linked society. Students interested in contributing to society and working with young people should seriously consider careers in precollege education.

**Students interested in contributing to society and working with young people should seriously consider careers in precollege education.**

The qualifications of teachers are increasingly important. Educators must have “field-specific” training and skills, and their students must be able to use new technologies. Both of these objectives contribute to the greater attention being paid to hiring liberal arts undergraduates who major in a discipline and are experienced using the Internet for research and communication.

Also, precollegiate education encompasses a variety of schools—public, private nonsectarian, and religious-affiliated—each of which may seek different combinations of training and skills.

Teaching and educational administration are demanding professions. However, teaching commitments typically extend for only 10 months of the year, offering annual opportunities to pursue additional education or other interests or to spend time with family and community. Also such jobs offer tenure and job stability, pensions, and flexibility in the late afternoon to attend to family obligations. Although teachers are licensed for a specific state, there are degrees of flexibility and mobility that allow educators to seek jobs throughout the United States. There are also opportunities in other countries. The U.S. Department of Defense schools—affiliated with military bases abroad—constitute a large school system. In addition, there are private schools throughout the world that offer attractive opportunities for students interested in living and traveling in other countries and experiencing other cultures. Political science students with language skills and knowledge of another country or region should consider international teaching positions useful to enhancing and building skills in other languages and in working in a global context.

### PREPARATION FOR A PRECOLLEGIATE EDUCATION CAREER

Teachers are typically hired to teach more than one course, except in a very large school. Government, politics, and civics specialists might be asked to teach other social studies courses such as economics, geography, law and society, or history. Graduates with computer skills might be attractive job candidates as they could

conceivably teach computer classes. Although the dual responsibilities of teaching social studies and coaching an athletic team may be mocked, activities and sports are important contributors to civic skills, and the ability to take a coaching position as well as use expertise in politics and government may increase job offers, especially at smaller private schools.

Certifying agencies require public educators to have taken professional education courses. When well-designed and well-taught, such courses give the new teacher an understanding of the philosophy, context, and objectives of teaching, as well as the learning styles of younger students and expose them to alternative teaching strategies and experienced educators. An internship or practice in education is another preprofessional requirement for public school certification. There has been a recent movement by many public universities to offer master's degrees in education or in an educational specialty. School administrators are attentive to the professional development of teachers, and many school systems offer summer programs and in-service workshops during the school year.

Private and religion-affiliated schools often do not require their teachers to have educational practice courses. Nonetheless, these schools are very attentive to teaching ability and evidence of previous experience working with youth.

Because there is such a great demand for qualified teachers, several states have programs that assist new teachers to obtain the training needed for public school certification. Political science majors and minors interested in teaching should inquire about such opportunities. A prominent competitive program for recent college graduates interested in teaching in underresourced schools is Teach for America <[www.teachforamerica.org/](http://www.teachforamerica.org/)>.

Information about teaching resources and professional associations and the many nonprofit organizations that work on behalf of precollege education in government, law, and civic engagement may be found on the APSA's web sites for teaching <[www.apsanet.org/teach/index.cfm](http://www.apsanet.org/teach/index.cfm)> and for civic education <[www.apsanet.org/CENnet](http://www.apsanet.org/CENnet)>. Look at the statement for the National Alliance for Civic Education <[www.apsanet.org/teach/nace.cfm](http://www.apsanet.org/teach/nace.cfm)>, which is devoted to enhancing civic education in schools, youth groups, and communities.

There are specialized undergraduate courses in educational administration, curricular development, and research on education programs and outcomes. Graduate degrees are required now for most administrative positions in education. Contact the universities that interest you to learn whether they offer specialized education degrees, and be careful not to select any professional program strictly on the basis of the rankings given it by outside organizations (such as *U.S. News and World Report*). Students have to find the right program for themselves. Moreover, as specialization increases, many low-profile universities have become highly regarded in professional circles for specific programs.



## Careers in Political Science

### THE EDUCATION JOB MARKET

The market for qualified teachers and education administrators, researchers, and curriculum specialists will continue to grow in the first decade of the twenty-first century. The U.S. needs over one million new teachers. Moreover, as all political science students know, education is one of the top issues in America, with the public demanding better schools and more educational opportunities. Education is the most important factor associated with mobility and equality of opportunity.

The demand for teachers now and in the next several years varies by state and region, following population growth and demographic changes. Check out data from the 2000 census as well as from the National Center for Educational Statistics for projections on the rate of growth (or decline) in state and urban populations, numbers of households, and numbers of precollege students and schools.

**The market for qualified teachers and education administrators, researchers, and curriculum specialists will continue to grow . . .**

Precollege teachers' salaries are not as high as those offered to other professionals or to bachelor's degree graduates entering business. However, signing bonuses from several states and school systems, support for continuing professional education, and education loan forgiveness programs are growing with the keen competition for qualified new teachers. Also, look not only

at salaries, but also at benefits packages. State and local governments are initiating programs to supplement teachers' salaries with housing allowances or even special housing in affluent neighborhoods. In many well-to-do districts, the salary ranges for well-trained high school teachers are competitive with those for faculty in colleges and for recent graduates hired by nonprofit associations. Graduate credentials, which may be acquired while working, qualify teachers and administrators for higher salaries. In large part, principals, school superintendents, and other educational administrators are recruited from among the ranks of teachers and receive subsequent training.

It is also possible to get international jobs teaching in English at Department of Defense or private schools abroad. The State Department maintains a list of schools and recruiters for DoD schools and private ones for the convenience of people looking for such jobs, but international schools are not run by the State Department and do their own hiring. For more information, see: <[www.state.gov/www/about\\_state/schools/oteaching.html](http://www.state.gov/www/about_state/schools/oteaching.html)>. In addition, there are many programs through which you can teach abroad as a volunteer, although some of them pay. Among many programs are World Teach at Harvard <[www.worldteach.org/](http://www.worldteach.org/)>.

### THE MECHANICS OF JOB PLACEMENT

Many school systems organize recruitment fairs and publicize vacant positions. You should check web sites of boards of education, certifying offices, and public school human resource departments. Address e-mail and postal inquiries to private schools. Of course, some web site portals for schools are organized by location. Some schools and nearly all school districts have home pages describing objectives and programs. Always read these and find additional information about a school, so that you are prepared to address their mission and course offerings. You should also contact your own former teachers and teachers recommended by family and friends to learn more about the specific placement procedures of a school system and how to prepare an application, target a resume, and anticipate interview questions. Often, students will be asked to demonstrate their skills and enthusiasm by teaching a class in the school.

### RESOURCES

- Moffatt, Courtney W. and Thomas L. Moffat. 2000. *How to Get a Teaching Job*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- APSA Teaching Page <[www.apsanet.org/teach/](http://www.apsanet.org/teach/)>
- APSA Civic Education Page <[www.apsanet.org/CENnet/](http://www.apsanet.org/CENnet/)>
- National Alliance for Civic Education <[www.apsanet.org/teach/nace.cfm](http://www.apsanet.org/teach/nace.cfm)>
- American Federation of Teachers <[www.aft.org/](http://www.aft.org/)>
- National Council for the Social Studies <[www.ncss.org/](http://www.ncss.org/)>
- National Center on Education and the Economy <[www.ncee.org/](http://www.ncee.org/)>
- ERIC Clearinghouse on Social Studies/Social Sciences Education <[www.indiana.edu/~ssdc/eric\\_chess.htm](http://www.indiana.edu/~ssdc/eric_chess.htm)>
- Social Sciences Education Consortium <[www.ssecinc.org](http://www.ssecinc.org)>
- American Bar Associations-Law Student Division <[www.abanet.org/lstd](http://www.abanet.org/lstd)>
- Center for Civic Education <[www.civiced.org](http://www.civiced.org)>
- Close-Up Foundation <[www.closeup.org](http://www.closeup.org)>
- Constitutional Rights Foundation <[www.crf-usa.org](http://www.crf-usa.org)>
- The American Educational Research Association <[www.aera.net](http://www.aera.net)>
- Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development <[www.ascd.org/](http://www.ascd.org/)>
- National Association of State Boards of Education <[www.nasbe.org](http://www.nasbe.org)>
- National Association of Independent Schools <[www.nais.org](http://www.nais.org)>
- Overseas teaching: <[www.state.gov/www/about\\_state/schools/oteaching.html](http://www.state.gov/www/about_state/schools/oteaching.html)>.





## MA/Ph.D. Careers

### POSSIBLE CAREERS

*Professor; researcher; analyst; management position at the Educational Testing Service; National Security Advisor, White House; marketing research manager; State Department Bureau of Intelligence and Research; program director for the Ford Foundation or Washington Center; legislative assistant for a senator; political polling and campaign management; university administration; program director at the American Political Science Association; analyst with the RAND Corporation; program officer for the International Research and Exchanges Board; director of the National Association of State Legislatures; fellow of the Brookings Institution; statistical analyst in the General Accounting Office; political columnist.*

### THE NATURE OF THE CAREER

Many political science scholars started out the same way you probably have. They did not begin undergraduate programs with eyes toward earning a Ph.D. or becoming a political scientist. Instead, they gradually discovered that they had a love of learning, a knack for intellectual pursuits, and a special interest in government, politics, theory, the international community, or public policy.

In political science, there are job opportunities as college or university professors as well as many other opportunities, some of which are mentioned above. A Ph.D. is necessary for some positions, whereas a master's is sufficient for others. For more detailed information on the opportunities and advantages of a career in political science, the American Political Science Association also has a brochure entitled "Earning a Ph.D. in Political Science."

Graduate degrees in political science are valued by all employment sectors discussed in earlier chapters. The Ph.D. is the most advanced degree and is awarded in a variety of fields, among them, government and politics, public administration,

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public affairs, international relations, international studies, and political science. A Ph.D. is a prerequisite for a career in higher education as a college or university professor or administrator, and many provosts and university presidents also have doctorates. People with doctorates in political science also have rewarding careers in government at all levels, nonprofit associations, business, law, and the international arena. There are many political scientists who also hold a J.D. (juris doctor–law degree) who practice law, teach in a law school, teach political science at a college or university, or work in business. Some graduate programs allow you to pursue both degrees at the same time.

**Master’s degrees in political science. . . are valued by public and private agencies alike and by a growing number of nonprofit associations or NGOs.**

Master’s degrees in political science and especially its specialized subfields of public administration, public policy, and international affairs are valued by public and private agencies alike and by a growing number of nonprofit associations or NGOs. A master’s degree is excellent training for public policy analysis, county or city manager work, program direction at

NGOs and interest groups, campaign management, and various jobs at the management level in all sectors.

Many people enter graduate school immediately after they finish their undergraduate degree. But some people choose to work and gain job experience; others volunteer through the Peace Corps, CARE, or other programs; and some travel. These experiences can be valuable in deciding whether to earn another degree and in making career decisions. Trying different things and figuring out your aptitudes and preferences is rarely time wasted.

### PREPARATION FOR A POLITICAL SCIENCE CAREER

You should carefully research graduate programs on the web and through campus visits, if possible. There are many different types of programs that offer graduate work in political science and related fields so it is also highly advisable to check out each program’s web site for the most current information. Web addresses may be found through APSA’s Department Search on the web <[www.apsanet.org](http://www.apsanet.org)> or through any search engine. Beyond this, if you are seriously considering application to graduate school you should seek extensive faculty counseling and do so by the second semester of your junior year. You need to learn how to apply to graduate school and what sources of financial support exist. In addition, before applying, you will want advice about which graduate political science department is particularly well regarded in the subfields of the discipline of interest to you or which programs

are most appropriate given your interests and situation. You will also need to know how each graduate school may influence your chances of future employment. A faculty advisor whom you trust is the best source of aid and comfort as you contemplate the next stage of your career.

For funding, many Ph.D. programs provide tuition waivers and stipends. Most master's programs do not. Your college or university library or career office should have copies of the many useful guides on finding funding for graduate school. There are many grants, scholarships, and fellowships out there, but you often have to invest a lot of time looking and applying for them. The APSA web site has current information on many issues related to graduate school and the job market <[www.apsanet.org](http://www.apsanet.org)>.

Students interested in learning more about master's and doctoral programs in the fields of public administration, public policy, international relations, and international policy should contact the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) <[www.naspaa.org](http://www.naspaa.org)> and the Association of Schools of International and Public Affairs (ASPIA) <[www.apsia.org](http://www.apsia.org)> for information on these programs.

### THE JOB MARKET IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

The job outlook for professional political scientists has been mixed in the past few years. There has been a trend in academe, although not yet in political science, toward hiring part-time and nontenure track faculty; the retirements predicted in the 1990s have failed to fully materialize, so jobs have not been as plentiful as once anticipated. Overall, about 65 percent of Ph.D. holders on the market find employment within a year, although some of these jobs are temporary positions; almost half of job seekers spend more than one year on the market. It is important to note that employment opportunities vary by field of specialization, so graduate students should keep an eye on job trends as they choose their field of specialization and as they come closer to receiving their degrees. For those who persist, however, the unemployment rate is quite low and the rewards are considerable.

### THE REWARDS OF AN ACADEMIC CAREER

Many people who earn a Ph.D. in political science work as professors in colleges and universities—teaching and writing about politics. These positions often lead to important service in schools, communities, the nation, and the international community as advisors, theorists, commentators, and decision makers. The political science faculty in your undergraduate institution have already opted for this career, and you should ask them to describe it to you in detail.

## Careers in Political Science

Political scientists, like people in any other profession, have their own private reasons for choosing their career. But there are shared reasons as well that single out an academic career from other professions, such as law. Consider, for example, how research on the theory of political representation has advanced voting rights and legislative districting; how research about the courts and who uses them has transformed legal services and legal education; or how theory building about international conflict underpins national security policy. The general public's understanding of their political world—for example, ideas about what issues are on the public agenda, what programs to finance, or how to respond to international conflicts—is continuously shaped by the work of political scientists. Academic achievements have significant impacts.

### CAREERS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE OUTSIDE ACADEME

For people with a Ph.D. in political science, there are many rewarding careers outside academe, such as in government, research institutes addressing public policy and foreign affairs, survey research centers, congressional staff, state and local government, and the media. Campaign management and electoral polling in the United States and around the world are fascinating and rapidly growing careers for political scientists. Business, international banking, nonprofit and international organizations, foundations, nongovernmental organizations, and independent consulting also offer exciting opportunities.

Pursuing these careers with a Ph.D. allows a special status and independence that will lead to important roles in policymaking and public affairs. Your career could also span both academic and nonacademic positions, although in this case it is usually advisable that you establish your credentials in an academic position early in your career.

To learn more about what political scientists do, you might attend political science conferences as an undergraduate to hear about the most recent scholarship in political science and to see an important way in which political scientists develop and share their work. APSA hosts the largest national political science conference, which is held on the Thursday through Sunday before Labor Day each year. Students are most welcome to attend. You may find out about upcoming APSA conferences by consulting APSA's web site <[www.apsanet.org/mtgs](http://www.apsanet.org/mtgs)>. The July issue of *PS* provides the preliminary program of the APSA meeting. The APSA website <[www.apsanet.org/ps/conferences](http://www.apsanet.org/ps/conferences)> also reports the date and location of other political science conventions. Many regional and state political science meetings held throughout the year also encourage student attendance. It is not unusual for students to accompany professors to these conferences.

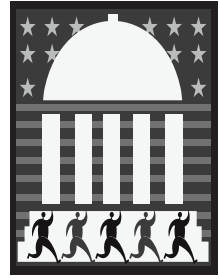
### THE MECHANICS OF JOB PLACEMENT

There are many resources for your job search. *eJobs*, APSA's online job database, provides a complete listing of academic positions in political science in the United States and abroad at the assistant and associate professor level, as well as some positions outside academe. APSA members can access the *eJobs* database at [www.apsanet.org/ejobs](http://www.apsanet.org/ejobs), where they can also post their resumes so potential employers will know their interest in seeking employment. APSA hosts, during its annual meetings, the *Professional Placement Service*, in which job seekers meet with potential employers to interview for job openings. APSA members also have access to the database of employers interviewing at the Annual Meeting through *eJobs* at [www.apsanet.org/mtgs/placement.cfm](http://www.apsanet.org/mtgs/placement.cfm). In addition, APSA maintains a special section of its web site devoted to professional development and graduate student issues at [www.apsanet.org/opps/grad/](http://www.apsanet.org/opps/grad/).

In most cases both the professor who directs your dissertation and your department's placement director will work to help you find an appropriate placement.







# Public Service

## POSSIBLE CAREERS

*School Board member; justice of the peace; county supervisor; member, U.S. House of Representatives; state legislator; city council; town mayor; state judge; township official; senator; delegate to a national party convention; alderman; governor; community activist; political volunteer; member, League of Women Voters; U.S. President.*

## THE NATURE OF THE CAREER

In the past, many children would say that when they grew up, they wanted to be president of the United States. That may be true today, but if it is not, it ought to be. Elective public service is an important part of who Americans are. If citizens take the time, they can run the school boards, city governments, state governments, and ultimately, the national government. The government is full of people who chose a life of public service in order to overturn injustice, reform bad public policies, and make a difference. The vast majority of people in public office are common citizens. Majoring in political science gives you the knowledge and skills to enter public service and to make a positive contribution to society. Careers in public service may be very rewarding. Most people who enter politics as a career or avocation do so because they feel strongly about public service or because they want to change a policy or problem they see in the community. This chapter looks at elective office and volunteer opportunities.

**Elective public service is an important part of who Americans are.**

Elective offices and voluntary positions in localities and states are often part-time. You may do the job in your spare time and continue to pursue another career. This is politics as an avocation. Avocational politics may be very enjoyable and may

## Careers in Political Science

provide great personal satisfaction. These types of positions range from small-town mayor to school board member, from stuffing envelopes to stop the local factory from dumping chemicals in the groundwater to get-out-the-vote campaigns during an election.

In vocational elective office, the hours may be quite long and the duties quite wide ranging, but most people who choose this career say that they get immense satisfaction from their work. Running for office may be expensive and is always time consuming; however, it can be lots of fun and very exciting. You need to raise money, encourage others to work on a voluntary basis, and actually campaign—make speeches, give talks, discuss a campaign platform with voters, and so on. Once you get into office, the work may be hard, but is generally very rewarding.

**Civic education is extremely important to a democracy.**

### EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION FOR CAREERS IN PUBLIC SERVICE

Civic education is extremely important to a democracy. In order to thrive, democracies must have knowledgeable citizens who take an active role in government. Twenty-first century democracies need

to be open, representative of the populace, responsive, accountable, and subject to reform and change. Political science students know that it is these attributes, rather than any one arrangement of governing institutions that characterize democracies. Political science students also know that democratic forms of government need to recruit informed and skilled people to run for elected positions and need informed and skilled citizens to maintain democracy. Also, students of political science are well trained in the theories and practice of governance and thus make excellent politicians, activists, public servants, and political volunteers.

### THE JOB MARKET

There are literally countless political jobs and tasks to be done. We have a democracy that is also a federal system of government—power is divided between the state and national governments—so there are hundreds of thousands of governmental positions filled by popular elections.

Local offices—those in township, village, city, county or parish, etc.—are by far the most numerous and quite varied as to jurisdiction and power. State positions also vary widely. Many of these positions, especially at the local level, are part-time positions that may be coupled with full-time employment of another sort.

Although many local and, to a lesser degree, state offices are low paying, they provide direct access to the political system and can help you acquire political skills

and networks for further political influence and advancement. However, some pay quite well; others are on a strictly voluntary basis.

Representative democracy in the United States has been strengthened, and people from diverse backgrounds and communities are shaping public policies differently because of the active pursuit of elective offices. The growth of women in electoral offices in the United States is associated with recent generations of women becoming involved in politics through issues that concern their families and communities, as well as increasing equality and opportunities. The civil rights movement and increasing immigration are important reasons for the growing numbers of African Americans, Latinos/Latinas, Asian Americans, Lesbians and Gays, and the disabled who are competing in and winning elections.

## THE MECHANICS OF JOB PLACEMENT

If elective office is your goal, you should be active in university and college politics: running for class president or student government, sitting on a university committee or volunteering with the local school board, asking the local branches of political parties for volunteer opportunities, and talking with elective officials to find out what they do, how they do it, and how you might follow in their footsteps.

Earlier chapters of *Careers and the Study of Political Science* cited the increasing flexibility of work hours and locations. The new context for work and for building careers offers even more opportunities for electoral office—at a point in your life, as a stage of your career, or as committed professional work—to people interested in politics and in shaping public policies.

The key to a future in elective office may be a valuable internship, in which one may combine the professional study of politics and public office. David E. Price, U.S. Representative from North Carolina's Fourth Congressional District and former professor of political science and public policy at Duke University, started his political career in just this way. In *The Congressional Experience*, second edition, he writes:

“By the time I ran for Congress, I had amassed a good deal of political experience. Senator E. L. “Bob” Bartlett (D-Alaska) hired me as a summer intern in 1963, and I returned to his staff as a legislative aide for the four succeeding summers, eventually doing interviews out of his office for a doctoral dissertation on the Senate.” He later became chair of the Democratic Party of North Carolina and then ran successfully for U.S. Congress.

## RESOURCES

Getting elected is a complicated process and beyond the scope of this book. There

## Careers in Political Science

are numerous books and web sites that will help one figure out how to run for office. Among them are:

- “How to run for local office and get elected” <[www.winelect.com](http://www.winelect.com)>
- Democratic National Committee or your local party committee <[www.democrats.org](http://www.democrats.org)>
- Republican National Committee or your local party committee <[www.rnc.org](http://www.rnc.org)>
- *How to Run for Local Office: A Complete, Step-By-Step Guide That Will Take You through the Entire Process of Running and Winning a Local Election* by Robert J. Thomas, Doug Gowen
- *How to Win Your 1st Election: The Candidate's Handbook* by Susan Guber.

Volunteering opportunities are huge and varied. You may volunteer while in school; as a matter of fact, many high schools now require some volunteer or service activities prior to graduation. A few places to start looking include:

- Volunteer Match <[www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org)>
- The Corporation for National Service <[www.cns.gov](http://www.cns.gov)>
- Women in Community Service <[www.wics.org](http://www.wics.org)>
- The Center for Civic Renewal <[www.civicrenewal.org](http://www.civicrenewal.org)>
- Yahoo Community Service and Volunteering <[dir.yahoo.com/Society\\_and\\_Culture/Issues\\_and\\_Causes/Philanthropy/Community\\_Service\\_and\\_Volunteerism](http://dir.yahoo.com/Society_and_Culture/Issues_and_Causes/Philanthropy/Community_Service_and_Volunteerism)>
- League of Women Voters <[www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)>.

# Careers and the Study of Political Science, 6th edition

*Careers and the Study of Political Science* is a crucial resource for today's undergraduate. This updated career guide explores the many career options available to political science students and emphasizes the value of political science training. In addition to providing specific information about various career sectors, this guide will help students examine their own career preferences in the context of new technologies and global networks.



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