

## FAST FACTS

# Is the Federal Government a Good Employment Option For People with Disabilities?

There are many advantages to working for the Federal government. Federal employees serve in a wide variety of exciting jobs, earn good wages, receive medical benefits, and make a difference through public service!

**Q:** So, how do I become a Federal employee?

**A:** There are numerous ways to get into the federal service.

- You can serve as an intern first – check out [www.wrp.gov](http://www.wrp.gov)
- You can be hired competitively; or
- You can be hired non-competitively (Schedule A).

**Q:** Where do I find out about federal jobs?

**A:** Most federal vacancies are advertised on the USAJOBS website, found at [www.usajobs.opm.gov](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov). Through this site, you can search for openings in a particular field, or city, or agency, or all three. Note, however, that some agencies do not use USAJOBS to advertise vacancies, so always check specific agency web sites for additional information on employment opportunities. A listing of agency sites can be found at [www.usa.gov](http://www.usa.gov).

**Q:** What is Schedule A and am I eligible to use it?

**A:** Schedule A is a non-competitive hiring authority available for federal agencies to hire and/or promote individuals with disabilities. By utilizing Schedule A to fill a vacancy, an agency can avoid using the traditional, and sometime lengthy, competitive hiring process. You are eligible for a Schedule A appointment if you are a person with a severe physical or mental disability.

**Q:** How do I prove my eligibility for Schedule A?

**A:** In order to receive a Schedule A appointment, you must:



- be qualified for the job you are applying for – *i.e.*, have the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the required duties;
- demonstrate “proof of disability”; and
- be job ready.

Proof of disability can be satisfied with a simple letter stating that you have a severe disability. You can get this letter from your doctor, a licensed medical professional, a licensed rehabilitation professional, or any entity that issues or provides disability benefits. The letter does NOT need to detail your medical history, or your need for an accommodation. The simpler, the better.

Though the Schedule A regulation uses the term “Certification of Job Readiness,” this certification does not need to be a formal *certificate*, in the traditional sense. Indeed, an agency can (and should) review your resumé and references to determine whether you are “ready” for the position you are applying for, to certify job readiness. Additionally, job readiness can be determined by any of the above-listed entities. There are no hard and fast rules when it comes to job readiness, so hiring agencies are free to decide for themselves who is a good fit for its open position(s).

**Q:** I found a job vacancy that I am interested in applying for, and I want to use Schedule A. Now what??

**A:** Once you have your resumé and references in order, and have obtained your proof of disability, you are ready to apply. The best first step, typically, is to contact the Disability Program Manager (DPM) or Selective Placement Coordinator (SPC) at the agency where you wish to work. You can find this person by either using the contact info included in the vacancy announcement itself (all announcements include a phone number or email address to be used for questions), or by searching a directory of SPCs maintained by the Office of Personnel Management. The directory can be found at <http://apps.opm.gov/sppc>, but please note that it is not always



accurate. Additionally, not all agencies have a DPM or SPC, so you may need to speak with an HR professional within the agency instead. Moreover, if you are a veteran, you may want to contact a Veterans Affairs counselor. Be prepared to put in some time and effort to find the correct person that can help you.

Once you do, ask the DPM/SPC for guidance on the best way to proceed with applying for the identified vacancy. They can work with you to make sure your resume/application is considered.

You may also apply online through the USAJOBS Web site or the specific Federal agency's Web site. Make sure you follow the application instructions as given in the job posting. When you fill out the application, indicate you wish to apply under Schedule A.

**Q:** Are agencies required to use Schedule A?

**A:** No. An agency can choose to use the traditional competitive process to fill its job vacancies; or they can choose to use the non-competitive Schedule A hiring authority.

**Q:** If I am eligible for a Schedule A appointment, am I guaranteed a job?

**A:** No.

