

National Association of Special Education Teachers (NASET)

THE PRACTICAL TEACHER

This Month's Topic:

Schedule A Hiring Authority: Tips for Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities Interested in Starting a Career with the Federal Government

The Schedule A hiring authority (Schedule A) is one of the paths that can greatly benefit youth and young adults with disabilities who have an interest in a career with the Federal government. It can also be a fast track way for Federal agencies to bring in talented individuals with disabilities. When properly implemented, it's a win-win situation for both the student and the hiring Federal agency. This issue of NASET's *Practical Teacher* will explore tips for youth and young adults with disabilities interested in starting a career with the federal government. It is written for teachers to distribute to students so that when the word "you" is stated, it pertains to "the student".

The Schedule A hiring authority (Schedule A) is one of the paths that can greatly benefit youth and young adults with disabilities who have an interest in a career with the Federal government. It can also be a fast track way for Federal agencies to bring in talented individuals with disabilities. When properly implemented, it's a win-win situation for both the student and the hiring Federal agency!

What is Schedule A?

Schedule A is a hiring authority for Federal agencies to use to tap into a diverse and vibrant talent pool without going through the often-lengthy traditional hiring process. Schedule A allows individuals to apply for a Federal appointment through a noncompetitive hiring process. This means that if you meet the eligibility status of the appointment and the minimum qualifications for a position, you may be hired for the position without competing with the general public. Schedule A can be used to hire people in all professions from clerical staff to attorneys.

Who can use Schedule A?

If you have documentation to show your disability status, you may choose to apply for Federal appointments through Schedule A. People with disabilities may apply for Federal appointments either using Schedule A or the traditional competitive hiring process.

Who is considered to be an individual with a disability status?

A youth or young adult who:

- Received Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits
- Identified as needing services through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Received services in elementary or high school through an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a 504 plan in school
- Used Disabled Student Services on your college campus
- Needed a special accommodation
- Received vocational rehabilitation services
- Fits under the Americans with Disabilities Act's (ADA) definition of an individual with a disability

How can youth document that they are Schedule A eligible?

To demonstrate Schedule A eligibility youth need to provide documentation to identify:

- **Disability status** – A letter stating that you have a disability 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 give details of medical history. It should state ability to perform essential functions of the job, as well as any special accommodations needed. The simpler the facts are presented, the better. There are no specific definitions as to what qualifies as disability status under Schedule A, so Federal agencies interpret the requirements broadly.
- **“Job ready”** – The youth or young adult must be able to demonstrate that they are “job ready”. This can be demonstrated through a resume, references, and, if applicable, a recent transcript.

Introduction to Federal Government Employment

Considering a career in Federal government:

The Federal government needs leaders who bring with them a unique perspective and are determined to contribute their strengths to improve and enhance its work. Federal employees are able to make a difference through public service, receive medical benefits, and develop unique skill sets. Here are some other advantages to working for the Federal government:

- Federal employees play an important role in addressing challenging and pressing national issues.
- Federal salaries and benefits are competitive with the private sector.
- Federal employees are given an opportunity to receive cutting-edge training and professional development to advance in the field.
- The Federal government may help employees pursue a graduate degree and/or help them pay back a school loan.
- Most Federal government agencies have policies and programs to improve life in the workplace and to assist employees in balancing their work with life responsibilities (e.g., on-site childcare, dependent care, work schedule flexibilities).

Regardless of academic degree, interest, or even location. There is an opportunity for all who are interested to find a job in the federal government.

How to find a job in the Federal Government:

The Federal government's official Web site for job information is **USAJOBS**. Through this Web site, you can search for openings in a particular field, city, or agency, or all three. You also can sign-up for e-mail alerts about

job openings by type of job, agency, and/or geographic area. If you cannot access the Internet or need additional assistance, you can call 202-606-2525 or 978-461-8404 (TTY).

There are some Federal agencies that have their own hiring system and evaluation criteria. These agencies are called excepted service agencies. Excepted service positions, like Schedule A appointments, are not required to be posted on the USAJOBS Web site. As a result, it is important to look at individual agency Web sites for job announcements. And of course, when it comes to finding a job, networking is essential - talking with friends, family members, teachers, mentors, and acquaintances about your employment goals, interests, and desires.

How to apply for a Federal government position:

Those interested in applying for a federal position using Schedule A must follow the previous steps listed under Learning About Schedule A, and then contact the Hiring Manager, Human Resource (HR) professional, Disability Program Manager (DPM), and/or Selective Placement Coordinator (SPC) within the selected agency. The appropriate person or office can be found by either using the contact information included in the vacancy announcement itself (all announcements include a phone number and/or e-mail address to be used for questions), or by searching a directory of SPCs maintained by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

Applications should be submitted through both the regular job-posting announcement on the USAJOBS Web site and the individual agency Web site to ensure that the application is not overlooked.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I go to learn more about Schedule A?

- To learn more about Schedule A look at the U.S. Office of Personnel Management Federal Hiring Flexibilities Resource Center.

Who else has noncompetitive status?

- Individuals who have served the country through certain programs such as AmeriCorps and the Peace Corps may also be eligible for noncompetitive status.

Where can I go to learn more about excepted service information?

- To learn more information about excepted service information and employment opportunities look at USAJOBS.gov Excepted Service.

Where can I go to get more advice on successfully getting a Federal job?

- Get answers to most of your questions about using Schedule A and the Federal hiring process at The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's ABCs of Schedule A Hiring for Job Applicants Tips for Getting Federal Jobs publication.

Where can I go to learn more about finding and applying for government jobs and internships?

- To learn more about finding and applying for government jobs and internships look at the Makingthedifference.org Federal Internship.

Before I apply for a job, I want to make sure I have employable skills. How can I develop those skills without already having a job?

- To learn more about how to develop employability skills through volunteering, reach out to the Corporation for National and Community Service. Visit or call 202- 606-5000 or TTY 202-565-2799.

I've never had to manage my own money before. Where can I learn how to do that?

- To learn tips on how to learn to take control of your finances look at the MyMoney.gov Youth Web site.

Where can I go to find out about more youth resources?

- To learn information on youth facts, program funding information, and tools to help you assess community assets, generate maps of local and Federal resources, search for evidence-based youth programs, and keep up-to-date on the latest, youth-related news take a look at the FindYouthInfo.gov.

I have a disability, and I want to make sure I have the right resources to succeed in my new job. Where do I go to find out about those resources?

- To learn about comprehensive disability-related information and resources for people with disabilities, their families, employers, veterans and service members, workforce professionals, and many others look at the Disability.gov.

I have a disability and am not sure what skills I need in order to get a job. Where can I go to find out about these skills?

- To learn more about what skills employers want in employees, look at the Essential Skills to Getting a Job, What Young People with Disabilities Need to Know publication.

I want to participate in the Workforce Recruitment Program. Where can I learn more about it?

- To learn more about the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP), a recruitment and referral program that connects Federal sector employers nationwide with highly motivated postsecondary students and recent graduates with disabilities who are eager to prove their abilities in the workplace through summer or permanent jobs, visit the WRP. There you will find eligibility requirements for potential WRP candidates, as well as information about how colleges and universities can participate in the program.

Where can I go to find out about employment and youth with disabilities?

- To learn information about employment and youth with disabilities look at the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD-Youth).

Where can I go to learn about my rights and responsibilities as a job applicant or an employee?

- Federal laws make it illegal to discriminate against a job applicant or an employee because of the person's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information. For further information visit the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) or call 1-800-669-4000 / TTY 1-800-669-6820.

I will need certain accommodations to do my job well. Where can I go to find out about the accommodations available to me?

- To learn more about resources on accommodations, reach out to the Job Accommodation Network (JAN). JAN represents the most comprehensive resource for job accommodations available and is a terrific and easy-to-use resource. This free consulting service is designed to increase the employability of people with disabilities.

I need assistive technology in order to do my best work. Where can I go to find out about the availability of assistive technology for Federal employees?

- To learn about the availability of assistive technology and services to people with disabilities throughout the Federal government look at the Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program (CAP). (Note: Before contacting CAP directly, check with the Disability Program Manager (DPM) or Selective Placement Coordinator (SPC), as they may already have a relationship with CAP.)

Where can I go to find out about the resources that make sure people with disabilities can get good jobs?

- To learn about information on publications, briefs, programs, and events that promote policies and strategies for people with disabilities to have unlimited employment opportunities look at the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy.

I am a veteran and want to make sure that I have employable skills. Where can I go to find out about developing these skills?

- To learn about resources and expertise to assist and prepare veterans to obtain meaningful careers, maximize their employment opportunities, and protect their employment rights look at the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Veterans Employment & Training Service (VETS).

I want to make sure I am prepared to get a job. Where can I go to do that?

- To learn about State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program (VR) services to help youth and young adults prepare for and engage in gainful employment take a look at the U.S. Department of Education's Education Resources Organization's Directory.

