



A GUIDE TO THE FEDERAL STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM AND OTHER STUDENT PROGRAMS

www.makingthedifference.org

Federal employees are eligible to **receive up to \$60,000** (\$10,000 a year) from participating agencies in this program towards the payment of their education. This program requires the employee to make a 3 year commitment to the agency/department that provided the repayment. If a student transfers to a different agency while benefiting from the program, the new employer is not required to continue financial support. Should the employee become unemployed by the agency during the 3 year timeframe, the recipient is required to pay back the amount in full to the agency.

Some quick facts...

- In FY 2006, **34 federal agencies** provided **5,755 employees** with almost **\$36 million** in student loan repayment.
- Agencies may offer student loan repayment benefits in conjunction with **recruitment and relocation bonuses and retention allowances**.
- Some agencies also have **tuition assistance programs**. Contact an agency representative to find out if their organization participates in such a program.

Who is eligible?

- **Permanent employees** (including part-time employees)
- Employees serving on **excepted appointments** with conversion to term, career, or career conditional appointments (including, but not limited to, Career Intern or Presidential management Fellows appointments)
- **Temporary employees** who are serving on appointments leading to conversion to term or permanent appointments
- **Term employees** with at least 3 years left on their appointments

How do I apply?

Current or potential federal employees may contact their employing agency for further information. Each participating agency must develop a plan that describes how the agency operates its student loan repayment program.

What academic areas can be covered by this program?

There are currently no laws regulating which degrees can and can not be covered by this program. However, agencies are encouraged to tailor their plans to recruit highly qualified candidates for hard to fill positions. Therefore, an agency may specify the types of degrees and levels necessary to participate in the program.

Certain occupational categories are particularly well represented

Criminal Investigator	921
Attorney	441
Intelligence	335
GAO Analyst	217
Mechanical Engineer	204
Information Technology Management	199
Miscellaneous Administration	181

In FY 2006, 18 of the 34 agencies that participated in the Federal Student Loan Repayment Program invested over \$100,000 in their employees; including (in order of amount paid):

- Justice
- Defense
- State
- Securities and Exchange Commission
- Government Accountability Office
- Veterans Affairs
- Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
- Housing and Urban Development
- Health and Human Services
- Energy
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration
- Interior
- Transportation
- Treasury
- Homeland Security
- Agriculture
- Office of Special Counsel
- Environmental Protection Agency

among federal employees who receive student

loan aid. Here are the most-represented occupational categories:

Source: "Federal Student Loan Repayment Program Fiscal Year 2006: Report to the Congress," Office of Personnel Management, April 2007.

For more information, visit the Office of Personnel Management website at

www.opm.gov/oca/pay/StudentLoan/

A GUIDE TO FEDERAL STUDENT PROGRAMS

There are several programs that help students get their foot in the door and receive a valuable experience with a federal agency. These programs range from summer internships to two year commitments.

STUDENT TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (STEP)

The STEP, another name for a temporary internship with a federal agency, is a great way for students to be exposed to the government. STEP positions are paid positions that can range from a summer job to a position that lasts as long as the student is in school. It is not necessary for the work to be related to the student's academic major, which allows the student to gain experience in a variety of fields. Students enrolled in high school, a two-year or four-year college or university, a technical or vocational school or a graduate program are eligible to apply.

The program requires that the student be a U.S. citizen. For more information, view:

<http://www.opm.gov/employ/students/intro.asp>

46,307 students participated in the STEP program in 2004

Agencies hiring the most STEP students:

- Agriculture (10,305)
- Air Force (5,141)
- Interior (4,857)
- Army (4,893)
- Navy (2,349)
- Veterans Affairs (2,033)

SOURCE: OPM Factbook 2005

16,746 students participated in the SCEP program in 2004

- **271** were in high school
- **3,390** earning associates degrees
- **7,978** undergraduates
- **2,339** professional degrees
- **2,768** were other classifications

Top majors recruited were: engineering and architecture, general administration, clerical/office services and biological sciences and physical sciences.

SOURCE: OPM Factbook 2005

STUDENT CAREER EXPERIENCE PROGRAM (SCEP)

SCEP positions, which are for undergraduate and graduate students, are substantive internships in federal agencies. The work must be related to the student's area of study and requires the agency to have a formal commitment with the student's institution. Most positions are paid, and the student may also receive academic credit. If the student successfully completes 640 hours of work, he or she can be appointed to a permanent position without going through the traditional hiring process. This program requires its students to be U.S. citizens. For more information, see:

<http://www.opm.gov/employ/students/intro.asp>

PRESIDENTIAL MANAGEMENT FELLOWS PROGRAM (PMF)

The highly-competitive Presidential Management Fellows Program (PMF) is an excellent way to launch a career in the federal government upon completion of a graduate program. These are two-year positions in which Fellows have the opportunity to complete rotational assignments and receive extensive training. The application deadline is in early fall, and students must be nominated by their school. To find out more,

7,323 FCIP participants were hired by agencies in FY 2004.

Top agencies using the FCIP were:

- Social Security Administration
- Department of Army
- Department of Homeland Security
- Department of Navy
- Department of Defense

view: <http://www.pmf.opm.gov/>

In 2007, **792 students** were selected for the PMF Program.

In the past, **Agencies** hiring the most PMF finalists were:

- Department of Justice
- Department of State
- Department of Health and Human Services
- U.S. Agency for International Development
- Department of Defense
- Department of Commerce

SOURCE: OPM Factbook 2005

FEDERAL CAREER INTERN PROGRAM

The Federal Career Intern Program is designed to help agencies attract outstanding undergraduate and graduate students to a variety

of entry-level positions. These are two-year, full-time commitments, and *are not short-term internships*. Upon successful completion of the program, participants may be eligible for permanent placement within an agency. Individuals interested in Career Intern opportunities should contact the specific agency directly. Agencies control their own FCIP hiring process and may restrict the selection pool to certain schools. See: <http://www.opm.gov/careerintern/>

ABOUT US

The Partnership for Public Service is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that works to educate students about careers in the federal government. We've developed resources to help students navigate the federal job application process. You can access these resources by visiting www.makingthedifference.org. We're always happy to answer questions about navigating the sometimes complicated world of federal jobs and internships, so please feel free to contact calltoserve@ourpublicservice.org with any questions you have about federal public service.