It’s not just making a living, it’s making the difference
Security Clearances IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

What do Investigators Look At?
Federal jobs that involve access to sensitive information often require a security clearance.

International Experience and Contacts
“Candidates with dual citizenship, those who have traveled, studied, or lived extensively overseas, or who have foreign contacts, a foreign-born spouse, immediate family members or relatives who are not citizens of the United States” may face a longer clearance process.

www.careers.state.gov/specialist/join/index.html#8

International experience and foreign language skills, for example, are often major assets in applying for federal jobs. The clearance process is only longer because the investigation is taken overseas.

Drug Use
Drug use can affect your chances of getting a security clearance, but it is not an automatic disqualifier. Check the agency website for details on their particular drug policy.

For example, details on the FBI’s drug policy (one of the most stringent): www.fbijobs.gov/52.asp

Financial History
Signs of financial irresponsibility in your past can complicate and prolong the security clearance process. Bankruptcy is an obvious sign, but even things like gambling can cause trouble.

Disciplinary Record
Disciplinary infractions will be viewed in light of your overall record. Investigators are interested in assessing your moral character and trustworthiness. Disciplinary sanctions in college are not an automatic disqualifier for a security clearance.

SECURITY CLEARANCE TIMELINE
The process and time it takes varies for each position and depends on each individual’s background. You may have heard stories from friends about the long security process, but OPM is constantly working to shorten the time. Talk to your agency to better understand how long the total process is likely to take for you.

As of September 2008, OPM estimated it took an average of 120 days to complete the entire security clearance process.

FIND AND APPLY FOR FEDERAL JOBS AND INTERNSHIPS ONLINE
MakingtheDifference.org provides valuable information and resources about job and internship opportunities in the federal government. On the site you’ll find more information about federal agencies, an overview of the benefits of federal service, a directory of federal internships, “hot jobs” and “cool internships,” tips for finding and applying for federal jobs, and much more. Plus, you’ll see how federal employees are making the difference every day.

USAJOBS.gov Jobs is a great place to begin your job search. It is administered by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, the federal government’s human resources agency, and has a regularly updated list of federal job openings. You can also build your resume and learn about the federal jobs that best match your interests.

The Partnership for Public Service is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that works to revitalize the federal government by inspiring a new generation to serve and by transforming the way government works. ourpublicservice.org

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