CAREER CLUSTERS—FOCUSING EDUCATION ON THE FUTURE

Government & Public Administration

Preparing for Career Success in Government and Public Administration

CC9007

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Career Clusters Prepare All Students for College, Technical Training, Apprenticeships, and Careers

Career Clusters prepare learners of all ages for the information age as schools, colleges, and employers strive for higher achievement in science, math and communication. One key to improving learner achievement is providing learners with relevant contexts for studying and learning. Career Clusters offer these contexts by linking school-based learning with the knowledge and skills required for continued success.

The Concept of Career Clusters

Career Clusters identify the knowledge and skills learners need as they follow a pathway toward their career goals. The knowledge and skills identified form a strong basis for learner success whether the learners are in high school, college, technical training or in the workplace.

How to Pursue Education and Training in Government and Public Administration

There are thousands of challenging educational and training opportunities within the high-skilled world of Government and Public Administration. Learners need a solid background in social studies, political

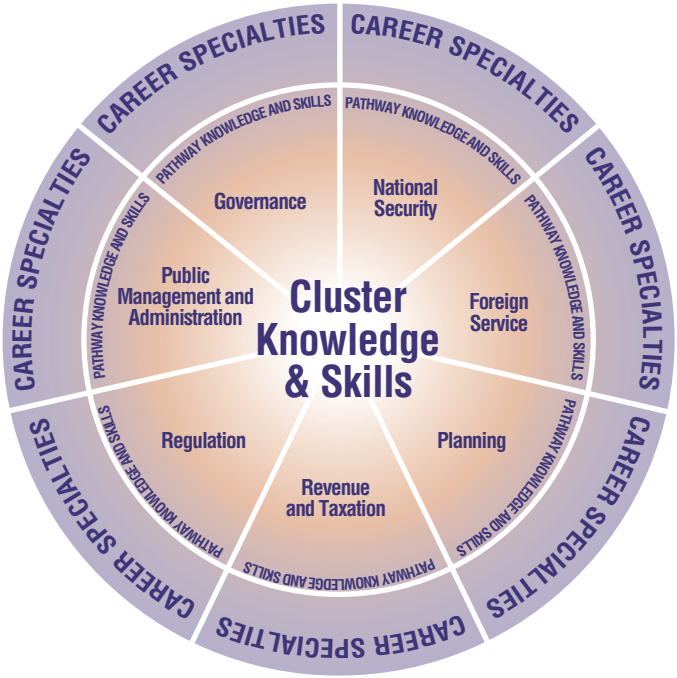
science, foreign language and history. Education and training can be obtained in high schools, technical colleges, two-year community colleges, four-year colleges and career technical schools/institutes.

Along the way, career guidance professionals assist learners in assessing their educational goals, interests, abilities and skills to facilitate a good match to the cluster's many pathway options.

Learners participate in relevant educational opportunities framed in the context of the cluster. They gain knowledge and skills through coordinated workplace learning experiences such as site visits, job shadowing and internships. If they choose, they may achieve valuable skill certifications that lead to employment. Colleges and universities offer advanced degrees that prepare learners for professional and technical careers.

Career Pathways at a Glance

The Government and Public Administration Career Cluster is divided into seven pathways. Pathways are grouped by the knowledge and skills required of occupations in these career fields. Each pathway provides instruction as a basis for success in an array of careers and educational pursuits.

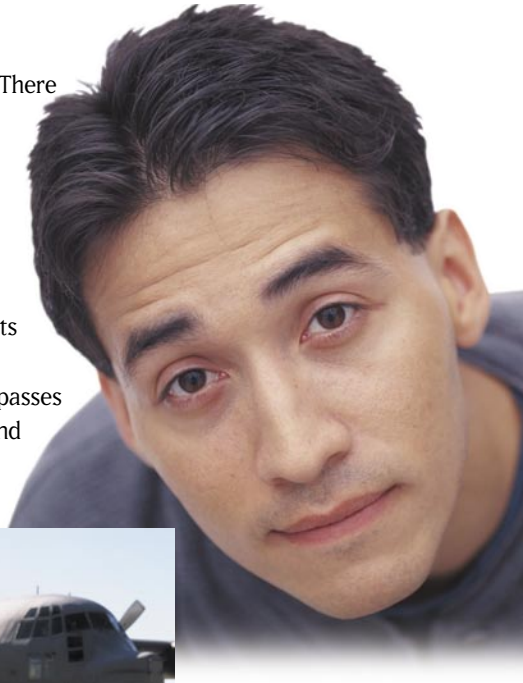


The Seven Pathways

- Governance
- National Security
- Foreign Service
- Planning
- Revenue and Taxation
- Regulation
- Public Management and Administration

What Is the Government and Public Administration Career Cluster?

Government affects Americans in countless ways. In a democratic society, government is the means of expressing the public will. This includes a variety of activities. In fact, virtually every occupation can be found within government. There are, however, some activities that are unique to government. The federal government defends us from foreign aggression; represents American interests abroad; deliberates, passes and enforces laws; and administers many different programs.



State and local governments pass laws or ordinances and provide vital services to constituents. There are many opportunities in government in every career area. The Government and Public Administration Career Cluster focuses on those careers that are unique to government and not contained in another Career Cluster.

Employment Outlook

Because of its public nature, the factors that influence federal government staffing levels are unique. The Congress and President determine the government's payroll budget. Each Presidential Administration and Congress have different public policy priorities, which increase levels of federal employment in some programs and decrease federal employment in others.

State and local government employment is projected to increase approximately 10 percent during the next decade. Employment growth will stem from a rising demand for services at the state and local levels. An increasing population, along with state and local assumption of responsibility for some services previously provided by the federal government, is fueling the growth of these services.

Governance

Overview

People who work in the Governance pathway include the officials elected or appointed to government positions responsible for making and executing public policy. This pathway includes the President and members of Congress, governors and state legislators, and local elected officials such as councilpersons or commissioners. Also included are the staff members that support them. Careers in this pathway often require working with constituents or interest groups with conflicting goals. Leadership, consensus building and conflict resolution are important skills for success.

Sample Occupations

- Legislative Assistant
- Congressional Aide
- Lobbyist
- County Commissioner
- Senator
- Representative
- Mayor
- Governor
- Lieutenant Governor

Credentials

Requirements to seek public office vary and typically include age, period of residence and registration to vote. People from many educational and occupational backgrounds choose careers in governance. Elected officials frequently have studied law and have been practicing attorneys. Staff members often have degrees in government or public administration.

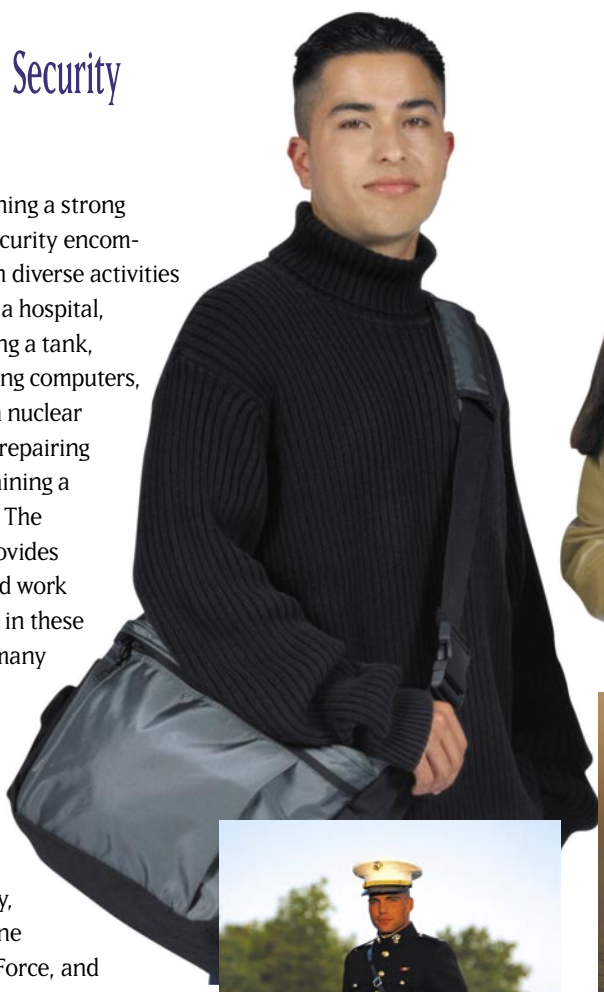
Employment Outlook

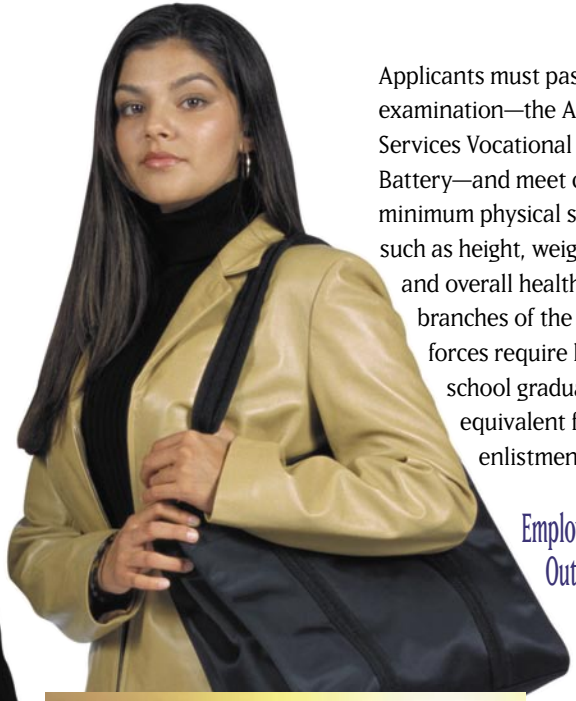
The job situation for careers in this pathway is unique. Elected officials must periodically stand for election, and a trend toward term limits has reduced the long-term prospects for elected positions. Jobs in the administration or on the staff of an elected official or legislative body often are determined by a combination of education, work experience and political affiliation.

National Security

Overview

Maintaining a strong national security encompasses such diverse activities as running a hospital, commanding a tank, programming computers, operating a nuclear reactor, or repairing and maintaining a helicopter. The military provides training and work experience in these fields and many others for more than 2.5 million people who serve in the active Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard, their Reserve components, and the Air and Army National Guard.





Sample Occupations

- Combat Control Officer
- Missile and Space Systems Officer
- Submarine Officer
- Munitions Officer and Specialist
- Infantry Officer and Specialist
- Air Defense Artillery Officer

- Military Intelligence Officer
- Cryptographer
- Intelligence Analyst

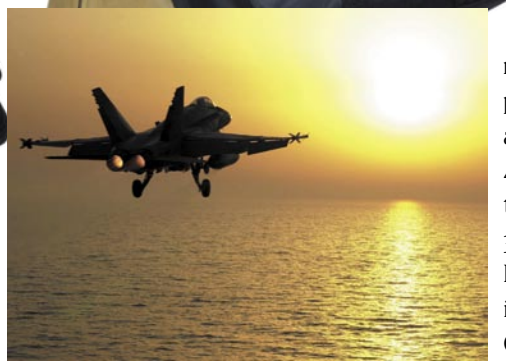


Photo courtesy of United States Department of Defense.

Credentials

Requirements for each service vary, but certain qualifications for enlistment are common to all branches. In order to enlist, one must be between 17 and 35 years old, be a U.S. citizen or immigrant alien holding permanent resident status, not have a felony record, and possess a birth certificate.

Applicants must pass a written examination—the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery—and meet certain minimum physical standards such as height, weight, vision and overall health. All branches of the armed forces require high school graduation or its equivalent for certain enlistment options.

Employment Outlook

There are approximately 1.4 million people in the armed forces: 490,000 in the Army, 377,000 in the Navy, 179,000 in the Marine Corps and 368,000 in the Air Force. Opportunities should be good for qualified individuals in all branches of the armed forces through 2012. Recent conflicts in other countries and the resulting strain on the armed forces may lead to an increasing number of active-duty personnel.

Foreign Service

Overview

People who work in the Foreign Service pathway serve in embassies, consulates and other diplomatic missions and in Washington, D.C. Job responsibilities range from day-to-day operations of a U.S. embassy to analyzing political and economic events or helping American citizens abroad.

Sample Occupations

- Foreign Service Officer
- Diplomatic Officer
- Consular Officer
- Ambassador
- Diplomatic Courier

Credentials

Foreign service members must be able to serve at any overseas post. Facilities are sometimes remote, unhealthy or have limited medical support. Therefore, each candidate must meet medical fitness standards that are often more rigorous than those of other professions. Applicants for appointment to foreign service careers are generally required to undergo a rigorous background investigation and receive a security clearance. While many in the foreign service are generalists with liberal arts degrees, some have advanced degrees in specialized areas. Increasingly, transnational issues such as terrorism, the environment, science and technology; the global struggle against diseases such as AIDS; international law enforcement cooperation and counternarcotics trafficking; and counterproliferation have gained priority among American foreign policy objectives. This situation has created opportunities for applicants with related preparation.

Employment Outlook

Competition for these jobs in foreign service is quite high. Many times there are four viable candidates for every opening, but those specializing in the consular career track face the least competition with 1.5 viable candidates for every opening.

Planning

Overview

People who work in the Planning pathway develop long- and short-term land use plans to provide for growth and revitalization of urban, suburban and rural communities, while helping local officials make decisions concerning social, economic and environmental issues. Planners promote the best use of a community's land and resources for residential, commercial, institutional and recreational purposes.

Credentials

Most entry-level jobs in federal, state and local government agencies require a master's degree in urban or regional planning, urban design, geography or a similar course of study. A bachelor's degree from an accredited planning program, coupled with a master's degree in architecture, landscape architecture or civil engineering is a good preparation for entry-level planning jobs.

Sample Occupations

- Planner
- Census Enumerator
- Census Clerk
- Federal Aid Coordinator
- Economic Development Coordinator
- Chief of Vital Statistics

Employment Outlook

About 7 out of 10 urban and regional planners are employed by local governments. Others are employed in state agencies dealing with housing, transportation or environmental protection, and a small number work for the federal government.

Revenue and Taxation

Overview

People who work in the Revenue and Taxation pathway ensure that governments obtain revenues from businesses and citizens by collecting tax dollars, reviewing tax returns, conducting audits, monitoring taxes payable and collecting overdue tax dollars.

Sample Occupations

- Tax Examiner
- Tax Clerk
- Revenue Agent
- Internal Revenue Investigator
- Assessor
- Auditor

Credentials

- A bachelor's degree in accounting is becoming the standard source of training for tax examiners, although some prospective workers may be able to enter the occupation with only a high school diploma and a few months of general work experience.
- For more advanced entry-level positions, applicants must have a bachelor's degree; demonstrate some specialized experience working with tax records, tax laws and regulations, documents, financial accounts, or similar records; or have some combination of post high school education and specialized experience.
- Additionally, annual employer-provided updates keep tax examiners current with changes in procedures or regulations.

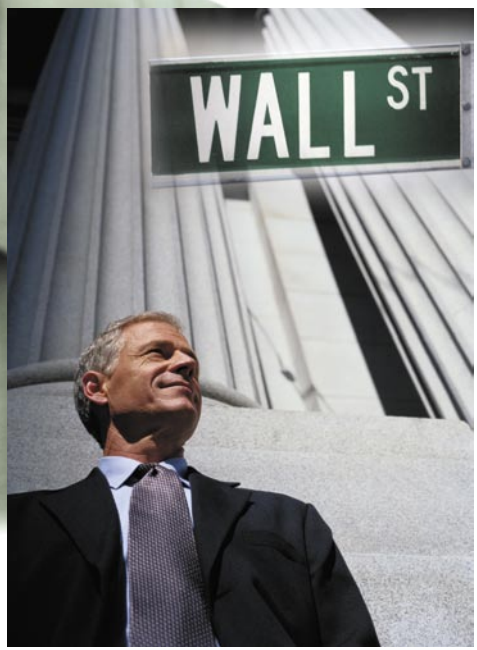
Employment Outlook

About half of all tax examiners, revenue agents and collectors in the U.S. are employed by the federal government. Revenue and taxation is a fairly stable sector and job growth is projected, but it will be slower than the average job growth. The most growth in jobs in revenue and taxation will occur at the federal level.

Regulation

Overview

People who work in the Regulation pathway will typically possess a body of technical knowledge about an industry, the environment or technology. This—coupled with a knowledge of related laws, rules and regulatory systems—permit regulators to protect our health, safety and environment as well as ensure the integrity of our financial, transportation and public utility industries. The work may include physical inspections, audits, investigations and the reports, citations, hearings and courtroom trials required to enforce a myriad of regulatory requirements.



Credentials

Regulators may be required to hold the same licenses, certifications or registries as practitioners in the industries or activities they regulate. Regulators often deal with complex technical, financial or scientific knowledge.

Employment Outlook

Jobs within the regulatory industry—which includes 84,000 building inspectors, 207,000 examiners and investigators, and 41,000 safety specialists—are projected to grow faster than the national average. The best opportunities are for those individuals with a college degree or advanced training.

Sample Occupations

- Investigator/Examiner
- Code Inspector
- Bank Examiner
- Election Supervisor
- Child Support Officer
- Cargo Inspector
- Border Inspector
- Aviation Safety Officer

Public Management and Administration

Overview

Government agencies and public corporations and trusts have specific and rigorous standards for the stewardship of public resources. Public management careers will require technical skills related to budgeting, personnel management, procurement or other activities, and specific knowledge of the regulations and other policies that govern public management.

Sample Occupations

- Court Administrator or Clerk
- City or County Clerk
- City Council Member
- City Manager
- Purchasing Manager

Credentials

All levels of postsecondary degrees and certificates are available, ranging from a two-year associate degree to a doctoral degree to qualify individuals for jobs ranging from a court clerk to city manager.

Employment Outlook

A total of 8.6 million individuals work in the public sector, making it a larger sector than the federal government. Associations are slated for some growth but much slower than the average. Foundations are expected to experience higher rates of growth as increased wealth in the country translates into increased giving.

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The 16 Career Clusters

Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources
Architecture & Construction
Arts, A/V Technology & Communications
Business, Management & Administration
Education & Training
Finance
Government & Public Administration
Health Science
Hospitality & Tourism
Human Services
Information Technology
Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security
Manufacturing
Marketing, Sales & Service
Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics

States' Career Clusters

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September 2005