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Pathways Through Apprenticeship (PTA): Apprenticeship in the Federal Government through OPM's Pathways Program April 2016

Pathways Through Apprenticeship (PTA), a pilot program developed by the Department of Labor (DOL) in partnership with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), offers Federal managers across the Federal government the tools to develop high-skilled workers to help meet their missions. For workers, PTA offers opportunities to earn a salary while learning the skills necessary to succeed in high-demand Federal careers while still enrolled in a qualifying educational program under OPM's Pathways Program. PTA exemplifies high standards, instructional rigor and quality training by utilizing a Federal Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) through the DOL Office of Apprenticeship. PTA provides that pathway to a Federal career in a wide variety of mission critical series, both administrative and professional and will greatly assist managers looking to hire, train and retain a diverse, skilled workforce, attracting students looking for a challenging career in the Federal Government.

Pathways Eligibility

Internship Program: Current students in an accredited high school, college (including 4-year colleges/universities, community colleges, and junior colleges); professional, technical, vocational, and trade school; advanced degree programs; or other qualifying educational institution pursuing a qualifying degree or certificate.

PTA utilizes OPM's Pathways Program to solidify relationships between Federal managers, institutions of higher learning [including colleges, universities, community colleges, technical institutes, etc.] and eligible students. The OPM Pathways Program consists of three separate programs for students and recent graduates in Schedule D of the excepted service. These programs include the Internship Program, the Recent Graduates Program, and the PMF Program. PTA takes advantage of the Internship Program. Under PTA, the agency can:

- ✓ Identify mission-critical series for which a 1-year Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) can support current students in entry-level positions [GS-3 to GS-7¹];

¹ Appointments under the OPM Pathways Program are not capped at the GS-7 level. Under the Internship Program, "a student's prior experience may also be taken into account in determining his or her qualifications in connection with an Intern appointment." Under the Recent Graduates Program, "individuals...may qualify for jobs based solely on their education" (Federal Register/Vol. 77, No. 92/Friday, May 11, 2012/Rules and Regulations). Education alone can qualify an individual up to the GS-12 level.



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- ✓ Actively conduct outreach and recruitment at local institutions of higher learning in cooperation with that school's career office;²
- ✓ Enroll students in the agency's Federal RAP for the applicable series and provide a portable credential as the Apprentice successfully completes each level of achievement;
- ✓ Non-competitively convert Apprentices who successfully complete the RAP and graduate from their institution of higher learning.

This approach effectively supports recruiting a diverse workforce, succession planning for an aging workforce, and developing Federal talent in a way that benefits the individual student, the institution of higher learning, Federal managers and their agencies. Successful completion of the RAP will give graduates specialized experience and portable credentials that the Apprentice can use to qualify for Federal positions across government. By supporting recruitment for these Apprenticeship opportunities, institutions of higher learning can encourage continued Agencies can develop robust talent pipelines while benefiting from the hiring flexibility that Pathways provides.

Through the piloting of the PTA, OPM and DOL have partnered in the marketing Federal Apprenticeships for use by Federal Departments and managers:

- ✓ DOL's Office of Apprenticeship is incorporating PTA in its outreach and on its website to support the use of Apprenticeship by Federal managers and further the President's goal of doubling the number of apprenticeships nationwide in five years.
- ✓ OPM will incorporate PTA and the use of the OPM Pathways Internship Program in its outreach through Spotlight and its website information, as well as making available their HRSolutions Office to provide reimbursable training for managers and technical support for RAP development for critical GS-series across the Federal government.

For further information, please contact the Office of Apprenticeship, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20210 or visit www.dol.gov/apprenticeship.

² Agencies may even hold job fairs at targeted campuses or universities provided they post alternative means of applying at the same time they post the event notice. Agencies should aim to recruit from a variety of venues, consistent with good recruitment practices, to the extent practicable.