

UNDERSTANDING HOW TO READ A JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

This resource was created by current Presidential Management Fellows (PMFs) to help Finalists understand how to read a typical PMF appointment opportunity (otherwise referred to as job announcements) that are posted on the Apply Site of the PMF TMS (Talent Management System) and describing the key terms that appear throughout.

Federal job announcements, including the ones that you will encounter on the PMF TMS, are generally written by Supervisors and Human Resources (HR) staff who have been in the Federal Government for a while. Accordingly, the language used is generally unique to the Federal Government, if not the specific hiring office! This is a quick primer to translate the “gov-speak” that job announcements often include. Below is an example of the table and text included in all PMF appointment opportunities. Each item will give some important insight into what the PMF position entails.

Announcement Details		(SAMPLE)		Apply Now
Last Updated: [date/time]				
Announcement Number	PMF-AO-2020-0001	Type of Opportunity	Appointment Opportunity	
Position Title	Program Analyst	Agency/Sub-Agency	Office of Personnel Management	
Opening Date	04/20/2020	Hosting Office (if applicable)	PMF Program Office	
Closing Date	05/08/2020	Website Address	https://www.pmf.gov	
Number of Positions and Location(s)	1 in Washington, DC 20415	Job Series and Occupational Group	0343 – Management and Program Analysis	
Agency Contact	Name: [First and Last Name] Phone: ###-###-#### Email: first.last@agency.gov	Background Investigation/Security Clearance Required	Public Trust	
Recruitment Incentive	Yes	Travel Required	Occasionally	
Pay Plan, Grade Level, and Salary Range	GS-09 \$59,534 to \$77,396	Promotion Potential	GS-13	
Description of Organization:				
This is where the agency will describe the organization (e.g., agency/sub-agency/hosting office).				
Description of Position:				
This is where the agency will describe the duties of the position, information on recruitment incentives (if any), is location negotiable, any travel, and background investigation requirements.				
Qualifications for the Position:				
This is where the agency will describe the qualifications for the position.				
Virtual/Telework Option				
This is where the agency will describe the virtual/telework options for a given position (if any).				
How to Apply Instructions:				
This is where the agency informs the Finalist on how to express an interest in the position. The PMF Program Office has already adjudicated any claims for veterans’ preference and any such documents can be viewed from the Finalists’ documents in the PMF TMS. Finalists MUST apply via the Apply Now button appearing on the screen. Some agencies may ask you to apply via a link to a USAJOBS announce, which is allowed. However, Finalists MUST also apply via Apply Now to be processed within the PMF TMS.				
<p>NOTE: Contact the Agency Contact identified above for any questions. If you have specific agency questions, contact the Agency PMF Coordinator. Finalists are not guaranteed a PMF appointment. Fellows must complete program requirements for potential non-competitive conversion to a term or permanent position at the end of their fellowship. This opportunity may be used to fill additional similar appointments. The closing time of this opportunity is 11:59pm (ET) if not otherwise posted or removed earlier.</p>				

KEY TERMS

Position Title: There are many job titles advertised on USAJOBS, but as a PMF, you will likely see the following job titles most often:

- **Program/Management/Policy Analyst:** These job titles will likely be the most commonly advertised for PMFs and in reality could entail a variety of responsibilities. All of these positions are ideal for those with strong written/speaking/analytical skills.
- **Budget/Financial Analyst:** There are many budget and finance positions advertised to PMFs.
- **Subject Matter Expert:** This will include position titles such as Biologist, Economist, or any other position that requires a specialized degree. The degree requirements will be included in the announcement.
- **Human Resources:** The Federal Government faces many challenges in building a workforce for the future, and many agencies are frequently looking for talented professionals.
- **Information Technology:** Every year, the Finalist pool is partly determined by Agency needs, and those with IT skills are always in demand. Positions related to Cybersecurity are on the rise.

Note that the types of positions available in a given PMF year vary according to agencies' needs and fluctuate.

Job Series and Occupational Groups:

Positions are classified into a 4-digit Job Series and related to an Occupational Group. To see a list of those commonly available, see OPM's Handbook of Occupational Groups and Families at <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/classification-qualifications/classifying-general-schedule-positions/occupationalhandbook.pdf>.

Pay Plan, Grade Level, Salary Range, and Promotion Potential:

This essentially describes the role's category and how much you will be paid. For more information, see the "Understanding Job Series and the General Schedule (GS) Pay Scale", posted under the "Become a PMF\Resources" webpage on the PMF website at www.pmf.gov. The salary is based on the Grade Level and Geographic Location of the position.

Background Investigation/Security Clearance Required:

This indicates the level of a background investigation or security clearance required for a position. All PMF positions require a Public Trust at a minimum, which takes the shortest amount of time to complete. Many positions also require a Secret clearance, particularly those that may deal with sensitive security matters and may handle proprietary business data. Most defense and diplomatic positions will require a Top Secret (TS) clearance, which can take upwards of 6-9 months to complete. Positions within the intelligence community will require an additional TS/with access to Sensitive Compartmentalized Information (SCI) clearance level. Some agencies allow employees to start work with an interim clearance after an initial screening process, and complete the clearance procedures on the job. These levels are specific to the position and the agency. You should direct any questions to the Agency PMF Coordinator or HR staff. The hiring agency will provide you detailed instructions upon making a job offer.

Position Description/Duties:

This section gives you a sense of what you may do in this position. Position descriptions are often collaborative documents between HR professionals and Supervisors and may be widely used to advertise several different positions. Therefore, some language, particularly for "program" or "management" analyst positions, will be vague. Be sure to read the description carefully and take notes of anything that is unclear – if you score an interview or attend a hiring fair, that would be an ideal time to ask additional questions about the position to make sure it will be a good fit for your skillset and interests.

Qualifications:

This section is widely considered the most important part of the announcement. It will likely include keywords and proficiencies that your resume will be measured against and the information included here will be critical as you personalize your resume for a particular position. Nearly universal qualifications for positions advertised to PMFs will include "strong oral and written communication skills," plus analytical or research experience in a given field or region. Some positions require specialized skills or a degree. For example, any Engineer position will require a degree in Engineering.

Some of these are negotiable with the agency and you should ask the agency (e.g., during the interview, or contact the Agency Contact or HR Specialist associated to the announcement).