Jobs with Uncle Sam

Lori Conlan, PhD
Director, Office of Postdoc Services, OITE, NIH
Agencies needing scientists

- NIH
- NOAA
- NASA
- EPA
- NSF
- USDA
- CDC
- DoD
- DoE
What is the NIH?

- 27 Institutes and Centers (ICs)
- Campuses in MD, NC, MT, AZ, MI and MA
- $28 billion budget in FY08
- Two main divisions: **intramural** and **extramural**
- Biomedical, behavioral, and social science research at all levels - basic, translational and clinical

*The Nation’s Biomedical Research Institution*
Core Components of the NIH Mission

- Research
- Communication
- Training
Why Train or Work at NIH

- A collaborative and interactive community focused on:
  - doing and supporting outstanding research - in all areas
  - science education - at all levels
  - global health partnerships
- Outstanding resources - for science, training, outreach, etc.
- Highly international and diverse community
- Many opportunities for training and career advancement - at NIH and in the surrounding communities
- The Metro DC area is a great place to live and work
Training Opportunities At All Levels

- **Undergraduate Scholarship Program**
- **Summer Internship Program (SIP)**
- **Postbaccalaureate Programs (POSTBAC PROGRAMS)**
- **Graduate Programs (GPP PROGRAMS)**
- **Research Training Programs (CLINICAL RESEARCH TRAINING PROGRAM)**
- **Clinical Electives Programs (CLINICAL ELLICTIVES PROGRAM)**
- **Postdoctoral Programs (POSTDOC PROGRAMS)**
- **Graduate, Medical, or Dental School (GRADUATE, MEDICAL, OR DENTAL SCHOOL)**
- **Research Fellows (RESEARCH FELLOWS)**

- **High School**
  - *Age 16*
- **College (Undergrad)**
  - *BS degree*
- **GAP Years**
- **Graduate, Medical, or Dental School**
  - *PhD or MD/DDS degree*
NIH Postdoctoral Programs

- Positions in basic, translational and clinical research
- For US citizens and foreign nationals
- Must be within 5 yrs of receiving doctoral degree
- A number of competitive fellowships are available:
  - Intramural Fellowship to Promote Diversity
  - Intramural AIDS Research Fellowship
  - National Research Council
  - PRAT Program
- Intramural Loan Repayment program - for research and clinical fellows only

http://www.training.nih.gov/postdoctoral/
OITE Educational Programming

- Workshops and Series
  - Science skills development
  - Science Communication Programs
  - Teaching Skills and Opportunities
  - Leadership and Management Programs
  - Career Advancement Toolkits
  - Going to Graduate School/Going to Medical School Series

- Annual Events
  - Career Symposium
  - Graduate & Professional School Fair
  - Summer Intern/Postbac Poster Days

- Access to
  - OITE Career Services Center
  - Pre-graduate and pre-professional advising
Types of Jobs

- Program
  - Grant officer (Health Science Administrator)
  - Grants Management Specialists
  - Program analysts

- Policy
  - Legislative analyst
  - Strategic
  - Policy analyst

- Education
  - Training programs

- Science
  - Tenure track
  - Postdoc
  - Staff Scientists
  - Technical writer
  - Tech transfer

Great descriptions at the jobs.nih.gov website
NIH Jobs obtained by recent postdocs

- Staff scientist (in research labs and in core facilities)
- Tenure-track PI
- Graduate Program Manager in OITE
- Director of Recruitment in IC Training Office
- Policy Analyst in the NIDDK Office of the Director
- Scientific Review Officer in OER
Federal Hiring Mechanisms

- **Title 5 positions (General Schedule)**
  - Basic classification and compensation system for white collar Federal jobs
  - Federal benefits and retirement
  - Requires US citizenship

- **Title 42 positions (Administratively Determined)**
  - Many science positions and clinical research support positions
  - Federal benefits and retirement
  - No citizenship requirement

- **Contract positions**
  - Using a wide range of companies
  - No citizenship requirement
  - Not eligible for Federal benefits or retirement
Understanding a Federal Job Announcement

GS-0401-11/12, Biologist

- GS = Pay Plan, General Schedule (the most common)
- 0401 = Biologist Job Series
- 11/12 = The grades at which this position can be filled.
- Biologist = Position title
GS Pay Schedule (Metro-DC)

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Pay varies by location
Finding Jobs

- Jobs@NIH website (http://www.jobs.nih.gov/) searches USAJOBS, OITE postings, IC website postings, Science online
- USAJOBS
  - The official job site of the US Federal Government
- Contractor websites
  - Juju (http://www.job-search-engine.com/; keyword = NIH contractor)
  - Websites for Kelly Scientific, Lockheed Martin, SAIC, Discovery Logic, etc.
The Vacancy Announcement

- Read the announcement carefully
- Pay close attention to who may apply
  - MP or status announcements are NIH/Federal employee only
  - Citizenship requirements for GS positions are ‘firm’
- Follow all directions specifically
- Note any special qualifications or job duties
- Note any required documentation
  - They mean it when they request transcripts
NEW TO USAJOBS? » Your career in the U.S. Government starts here!
Explore the 36,798 Federal jobs in the USAJOBS database.

SEARCH JOBS
What: (Job title, keywords)  Where: (City, State OR Zip Code)
SEARCH

CREATE RESUME
Create and store a resume for applying to Federal jobs. It's fast, and makes it easier for an employer to find you!

What did you do at your job today?
Discover an exciting job that makes an impact!

FEATURED JOB
Minerals Management Service
Seeking a leader

FEATURED EMPLOYER
The Department of State
Make a difference
USAJOBS is the official job site of the US Federal Government. It's your one-stop source for Federal jobs and employment information.

Department: Department Of Health And Human Services
Agency: National Institutes of Health
Sub Agency: National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
Job Announcement Number: NIEHS-09-367709-CR-DE

Overview Duties Qualifications & Evaluations Benefits & Other Info How to Apply

Back to Search Results

Education Outreach Specialist- NIEHS- DE

**SALARY RANGE:** 92,000.00 - 107,756.00 USD/year  **OPEN PERIOD:** Tuesday, September 15, 2009 to Friday, October 16, 2009

**SERIES & GRADE:** GS-0301-13/13  **POSITION INFORMATION:** Full-Time Permanent

**DUTY LOCATIONS:** vacancy(s) in one of the following locations: 1 vacancy - Research Triangle Park, NC

**WHO MAY BE CONSIDERED:**

This vacancy is open to all U.S. citizens. The vacancy is being concurrently advertised under merit promotion procedures for status candidates under announcement NIEHS-09-367709-CR-MP. Candidates who wish to be considered under both procedures MUST apply to both vacancies.

**JOB SUMMARY:**

Join us on the edge of discovery. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is the premiere biomedical research center for the Nation and the world. The 27 Institutes and Centers at NIH employ approximately 18,000 scientists and administrative/support staff leading the way toward important medical discoveries that improve people's health and quality of life.
Education Outreach Specialist - NIEHS-DE

Additional Duty Location Info: 1 vacancy - Research Triangle Park, NC

MAJOR DUTIES:
If selected for this position, you will direct the national outreach program for recruitment of scientists on behalf of NIEHS and all its Divisions, with primary responsibility for increasing minority and underrepresented groups in the biomedical/biological sciences. You will supervise two employees in the collection of data regarding minority recruitment efforts, analyzing trends in hiring and making recommendations on ways to improve recruitments. You will attend professional, scientific and society meetings, publicizing and discussing environmental health research at the NIEHS. You will carry out presentations to teachers and students in classroom settings in grades K-12, hosts tours of the NIEHS laboratories and compile science education materials created throughout the NIEHS by different programs, grantees and contractors and create a central repository and distribution plan for NIEHS supported instructional and educational materials. You will maintain the NIEHS education website.
A Job Announcement

Education Outreach Specialist - NIEHS - DE

QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED:
You must have one year of specialized experience equivalent to the GS-12 grade level in the Federal Service. Examples of specialized experience such as, coordinating a national outreach program to recruit employees, giving presentations in a classroom setting; preparing instructional materials; maintaining an educational website.

You must meet U.S. citizenship and all other qualification requirements by the closing date of this announcement in order to be considered for the position.

All male citizens of the United States born after December 31, 1959, must be registered for the Selective Service to be eligible for Federal employment. For more information about registering with the Selective Service visit: http://www.sss.gov/.

This position is subject to a background investigation.

HOW YOU WILL BE EVALUATED:

Your application will be evaluated and rated under Category Rating and Selection procedures. Category rating combines the applicant’s total qualifying experience and education/training into a single quality category. If you meet the basic qualification requirements, we will further evaluate your entire application package to determine the quality and extent of your experience, education, training, etc., for placement in one of the following categories:

1) Best Qualified - Meets the Minimum Qualification Requirements and excels in most requirements of the position;

2) Well Qualified - Meets the Minimum Qualification Requirements and meets most requirements of the position;

3) Qualified - Meets the Minimum Qualification Requirements, but does not possess the relevant
Evaluation

- Questionnaires/assessment tools
  - Multiple choice questions to assess technical abilities
  - Narrative responses to specific questions to assess higher level skills
- Directed **K**nowledges, **S**kills, and **A**bilities (KSA’s) narratives, also called Screening Questions
- Categorical rankings to establish best qualified, well qualified, and qualified applicants
Questionnaires

- Before actually applying, review questions to see if you have the knowledge, skills, and abilities
- Use the questions to guide your resume revisions
- Answer the questions truthfully but don’t underestimate
- Allow adequate time to thoughtfully complete all questions
Your Federal Resume

- Personal info (Name, address, phone numbers, email, & Veteran’s preference)
- Job details for all relevant work experience with start & end dates; also include salary
- Education and relevant Training
- Special Skills, awards, associations
- Include non-science work experience and volunteer experiences
- Other qualifications
Once the vacancy closes

- HR screens for eligibility
- HR assigns a rating/ranking
  - Subject matter experts can be used for technical/scientific jobs
- HR sends top candidates to managers on a “Certificate”
- Managers decide who to interview
- HR communicates status to applicants online
An example - Dr. Shawn Mullen

- Current position: Graduate Program Coordinator, OITE
  - GS12
- First job out of postdoc
  - Contractor in OITE
  - Hired through Kelly Services
  - Pay comparable to GS11
Why he was competitive for the job

- During his postdoc Shawn:
  - Was involved in NIH Fellows Committee
  - Assumed leadership positions during his last year
  - Helped his PI organize the Mid-Atlantic Diabetes Research Symposium
  - Got to know a number of influential NIH administrators

- During his interview, Shawn:
  - Expressed a willingness to take on administrative responsibilities
  - Showed how his “science” would benefit the position
Keep in touch

- Connect with me on Linked-In
- Watch our career workshops (www.training.nih.gov)
- Email me at conlanlo@mail.nih.gov
Executive Order 11935

- Only United States citizens and nationals (residents of American Samoa and Swains Island) may compete for, and be appointed to, competitive service jobs.
- With Office of Personnel Management approval, agencies are permitted to hire non-citizens when there are no qualified citizens available. (highly unusual)
General Definitions

- **Job series**: Determines the requirements of the position and the nature of the work to be done
- **Position title**: A distinguishing name of a position in a job series
- **Grade level**: An indication of the level of job responsibility and the associated pay for a position
- **Promotion Potential**: Indicates the highest potential grade level of a position
- **Qualifications**: Those requirements that must be met to occupy a position
Title 42 positions

- Administratively Determined (AD) pay plan.
- Title 42 positions are advertised on USAJOBS as well as individual Institute/Center (I.C.) web sites.
- To find these positions, search the NIH USAJOBS website for any positions with a pay plan starting with “AD” or browse the individual Institute/Center (I.C.) web site in your field of interest.
KSAs

- A KSA is a statement explaining your current level of competence for specific job qualifications.

- **Knowledge**: an organized body of information obtained through education or previous experience, e.g., biology, accounting, etc.

- **Skills**: a manual, verbal or mental trait that is directly observable, quantifiable and measurable, e.g., typing.

- **Abilities**: the aptitude to perform an observable activity which results in a product or consequence, e.g., ability to communicate orally.
Addressing KSAs Effectively

- Answer each on SEPARATE pages (1/2 pg minimum; in USAJOBS use Additional Information field (up to 20,000 characters))

- Write in first person singular and be specific
  - Focus on Action, Task, Result to explain job experience

- Write as though you’re describing your job to someone who knows very little about it

- Devote the most space and detail to describing your current position
KSA Example

KSA #1: Ability to communicate orally and interact with management, scientists and program staff.

Throughout my career, I have relied on my communication skills and resourcefulness to develop a number of successful collaborations and to utilize the resources available to me. For instance, during my time at the WVU School of Pharmacy (1991-1993), I worked with faculty and scientists at Mylan Pharmaceuticals to create a non-traditional pharmacy internship for pharmacy students to experience opportunities in the pharmaceutical industry.

I have had the opportunity to share my research in small scientific groups as well as on a larger stage. I have given 18 invited presentations during my career. The audiences have varied from lay people to the former director of the NIH. My ability to successfully interact with higher management, peers, as well as with the general public indicates my capabilities in communicating orally. My supervisors have acknowledged this ability, and in turn, I was selected to give a platform presentation at the NCI’s 20th Anniversary of the “Cloning of the Human MDR1 Gene.” In addition, I was asked to represent the NIGMS PRAT Fellowship at a Postdoctoral Research Roundtable Discussion during the NIGMS Chemistry-Biology Interface (CBI) Training.
Mark O. Hatfield Clinical Research Center

The world’s largest hospital devoted exclusively to clinical research, with:

- 240 beds
- 7,000 inpatient admissions a year
- 72,600 outpatient visits a year
- 9,750 new patients a year
- 900 active clinical research protocols

www.clinicaltrials.gov
The Intramural Research Community

- 1100 Tenured/Tenure-track investigators
- 800 Staff Scientists
- 300 Staff Clinicians
- 3800 Postdoctoral Fellows
- 400 Clinical Fellows
- 485 Graduate Students
- 100 Medical Students
- 600 Postbaccalaureates
- 1000+ Summer Students

……. In 1250 intramural labs
Employers want employees who...

- Have the right technical expertise
- Are creative problem solvers
- Can work independently
- Can work in teams
- Communicate ideas effectively
- Understand the value of time (and money)
- Can see the big picture
- Can attend to the details
- Are willing to take educated risks
- Can lead and motivate people
- Have emotional intelligence and social awareness
- Are leaders

From the American Society for Training & Development and US Labor Dept.