

FEDERAL  
RECRUITING

Comparison of  
Applicants Who  
Accepted or Declined  
Federal Job Offers



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Our work, as well as studies by the Hudson Institute, the National Commission on the Public Service, and the Merit Systems Protection Board, has raised concerns about the government's ability to attract "the best and the brightest" new college graduates to federal service.

In an attempt to gain a better understanding of why eligible candidates do not pursue federal employment, we surveyed persons who applied for entry-level professional and administrative positions but later asked not to be considered for the job openings. For comparison purposes, we also surveyed applicants who accepted those same jobs. Copies of the questionnaires are included as appendixes III and IV.

We obtained hiring data from the Office of Personnel Management for June through November 1990. This data was the most recent available. During this period, 78 people accepted offers and were hired for entry-level professional and administrative positions from OPM job registers; 132 people declined those same jobs.

Because of the limited hiring and time period, the conclusions that can be drawn from our survey data are limited. The data represent only the 52 acceptors and 94 decliners who responded to our survey questionnaires. Nevertheless, we believe the information is important because it sheds light on some of the reasons for the government's recruiting difficulties. We plan to repeat the surveys once hiring activity from the entry-level job registers increases. Appendix II contains a more complete discussion of our methodology.

#### SURVEY RESULTS

Financial considerations dominated the decliners' reasons for their decisions. Two-thirds or more said low salaries or the high cost of living in the job locations caused them to lose interest in federal employment. A comment one of the decliners wrote on her questionnaire reflected a typical concern: "To the best of my knowledge, this job offered below \$20,000 per year. With the cost of living anywhere, much less New York City, I don't know how anyone could make it."

Two-thirds of the 61 decliners who were in permanent jobs or self-employed said they would have suffered pay cuts if they had taken the federal jobs. For 24 decliners (39 percent), the loss would have been more than \$6,000 a year.

In contrast, most of the acceptors said salaries were not the driving force behind their decisions. Over three-fourths said opportunities for career advancement or a chance to apply their education and skills were of great or very great importance in selecting federal employment. Sixteen acceptors (31 percent) said salary was an important factor. The location of the job was influential with about half of the acceptors.

Unlike the decliners, the majority of the 19 acceptors who were self-employed or in permanent jobs said they received pay increases when they joined the government. For five acceptors, the increase was more than \$6,000.

Another important difference between acceptors and decliners related to their employment status. Compared to the decliners, a larger proportion of acceptors were unemployed at the time they were offered a federal job. Thus, the need for a better paying job, or a job of any kind, appears to have been a major factor in many of the acceptors' decisions.

Fewer than one-fourth of acceptors and decliners said they were enrolled as students at the time they applied to the government. While acceptors tended to be slightly younger than decliners, the majority of each group was older than 27, the average age of new college graduates in 1990. Fifty-six decliners (62 percent) and 22 acceptors (44 percent) said they received their highest academic degrees before 1987.

There was little difference in the education levels and grade point averages (GPA) reported by acceptors and decliners. Over 80 percent of each group had at least a bachelor's degree. About two-thirds of each group reported GPAs of 3.0 or better on a 4.0 scale.

Appendix I describes our findings in greater detail.

At the time our questionnaire respondents were offered federal jobs, the Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act (FEPCA), enacted in November 1990, had not been implemented. Among other provisions, this act provides that, beginning in 1994, federal white-collar salaries are to be made more competitive. The goal of the act, which is to be achieved over a 9-year period, is to make federal salary rates equal to at least 95 percent of prevailing nonfederal rates in each locality where federal employees work. To the extent that FEPCA is fully implemented as envisioned in the statute, some of the recruiting problems caused by low salaries eventually will be alleviated.

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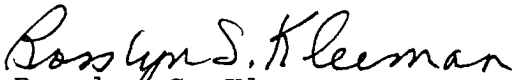
In discussing our findings with OPM officials, they agreed that FEPCA will help make the government a more competitive employer. However, they also noted that persons older than typical new college graduates have traditionally represented a large proportion of the government's entry-level hires.

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As arranged with the Subcommittees, we are sending copies of this report to interested parties and will make copies available to others upon request.

The major contributors to this report are listed in appendix V. If you have any questions about the report, please call me on (202) 275-6204.

Sincerely yours,



Rosslyn S. Kleeman  
Director, Federal Workforce Future  
Issues

## CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
LETTER	1
APPENDIXES	
I	8
SURVEY RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT	
Respondents varied greatly in their reasons for accepting or declining federal employment	9
Comments reflecting decliners' reasons for rejecting federal employment	10
Financial considerations were the most frequent reasons given for declining federal employment	11
Comments reflecting acceptors' reasons for choosing federal employment	12
The nature of federal work was the most important factor in accepting federal employment	13
Most decliners would have suffered pay cuts to accept federal employment whereas most acceptors received pay increases	15
More acceptors were unemployed at the time they were offered federal employment	17
Respondents had considerable work experience	19
Many acceptors and decliners were already working for the federal government	21
The majority of acceptors and decliners were older than typical new college graduates	23
Many respondents had been out of school for several years	25
Acceptors and decliners had similar education levels and college grade point averages	27
II	28
OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY	
III	29
RESPONSES TO GAO SURVEY OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ACCEPTED A FEDERAL JOB	
IV	40
RESPONSES TO GAO SURVEY OF INDIVIDUALS WHO DECLINED A FEDERAL JOB	
V	51
MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS REPORT	

## FIGURES

I.1	Different Factors Influenced Respondents' Decisions to Accept or Decline Federal Employment	8
I.2	Federal Salaries Offered to Most Decliners Were Lower Than What They Were Already Earning; Most Acceptors Received Pay Increases	14
I.3	A Larger Proportion of Acceptors Than Decliners Was Unemployed at the Time They Were Offered A Federal Job	16
I.4	Respondents Had Many Years of White-Collar Work Experience	18
I.5	Many Respondents Were Already Employed by the Federal Government When They Were Offered Federal Jobs	20
I.6	Most Respondents Were Older Than Typical New College Graduates	22
I.7	Many Acceptors and Decliners Received Their Highest Degrees Before 1987	24
I.8	Most Respondents Had at Least a Bachelor's Degree	26

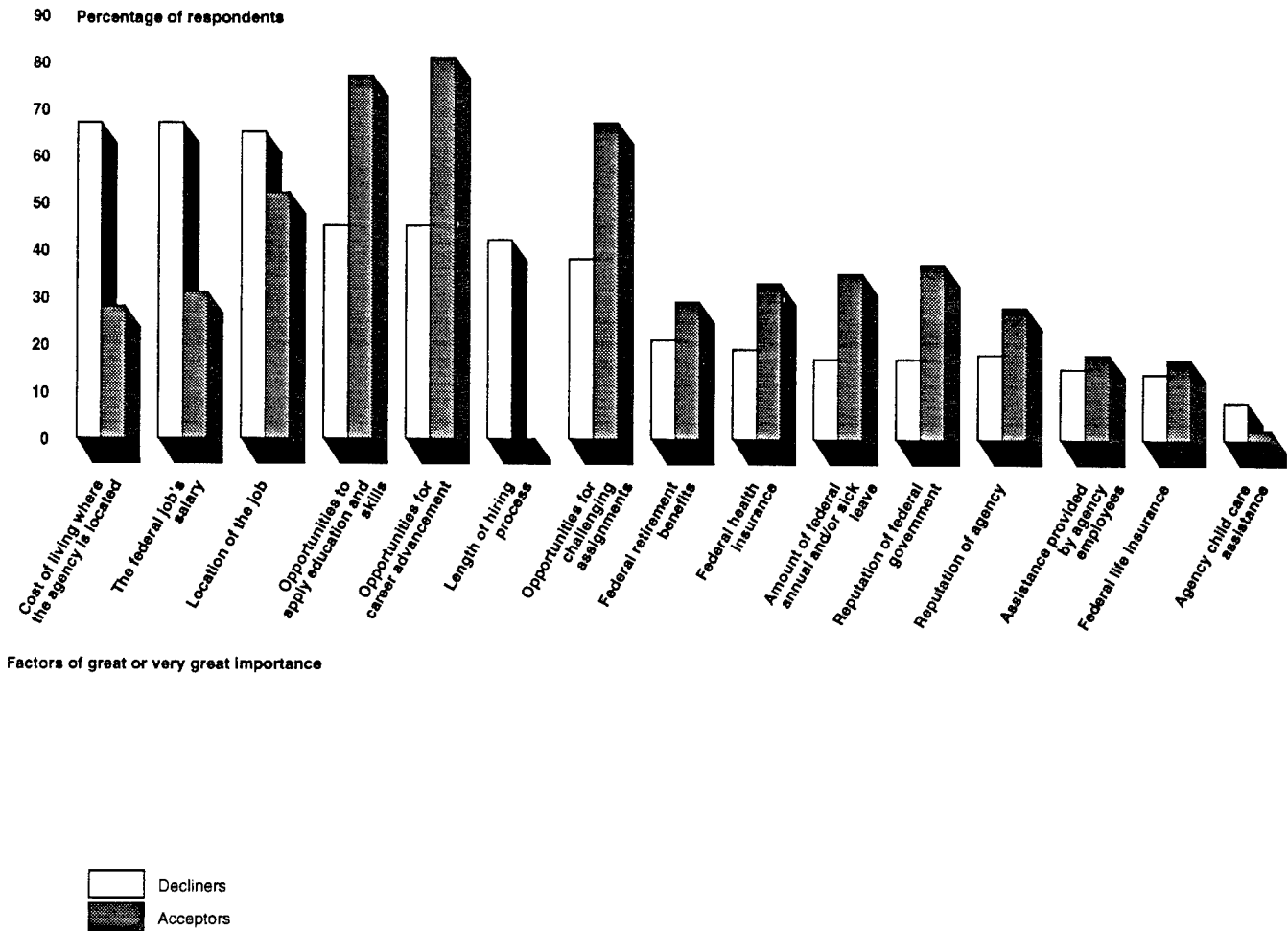
### ABBREVIATIONS

FEPCA	Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act
GPA	Grade Point Average
OPM	Office of Personnel Management



SURVEY RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS  
OF FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT

Figure I.1: Different Factors Influenced Respondents' Decisions  
to Accept or Decline Federal Employment



Factors of great or very great importance

Note: The percentages for each factor are based on the numbers of decliners and acceptors who rated the importance of each factor. The numbers of decliners range from 83 to 89; the numbers of acceptors range from 50 to 52.

RESPONDENTS VARIED GREATLY  
IN THEIR REASONS FOR ACCEPTING OR  
DECLINING FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT

Office of Personnel Management (OPM) data as of November 30, 1990, indicated that since June of that year, 78 people were hired from its registers into entry-level professional and administrative positions.<sup>2</sup> Another 132 people were considered for these jobs but declined. Thus, for every person hired, about two turned down the opportunity.

Why did some applicants accept the federal jobs for which they had applied while many others declined? Our survey questionnaire asked acceptors to assess the importance of 18 factors in their decisions. A companion questionnaire asked decliners a similar question. Figure I.1 lists the 15 factors common to both questionnaires and shows the wide differences in the reasons given by respondents. Financial considerations were cited most frequently by those declining federal employment. In contrast, the nature of the work was the major consideration for those accepting federal jobs.

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<sup>2</sup>These data do not include other new employees hired into these positions through the Outstanding Scholar Provision, in which applicants with superior academic records are not subject to OPM's examination and ranking procedures, or through agency promotions and transfers of federal employees from other positions.

Comments Reflecting Decliners' Reasons  
For Rejecting Federal Employment

Salary

- "If the only way to get into the civil service with my level of experience is to start at poverty level wages, I will remain in the private sector where my talents are recognized and rewarded."
- "In the law enforcement field, federal salaries are nowhere near competitive with state or local salaries.... The Park Ranger position that I declined consideration for had a starting salary of \$7.61 per hour !! How can one be expected to relocate and live on that salary?...."
- "I considered it an insult [that] the grade level/salary [did not match my qualifications]. I now understand...why government service is so poor: 'You get what you pay for'".
- "I declined the job because I cannot support my family on \$20,000 per year."

Cost of Living Where the Agency was Located

- "After studying information about the cost of living in the Bay area, the salary would not even allow me to live at much above the bare necessities...."
- "I was offered jobs in San Francisco and San Ysidro, CA. Unfortunately, the pay was so low, I could not take care of my wife and son and live a somewhat moderate life style."
- "I have declined several job offers because...almost all of the offers were from northern states and were very high cost [of] living areas."
- "I declined the federal job offer because of the cost of living in...Richmond, CA...as compared to where I now live....I could not afford to take the job...even though I wanted it very much."

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS WERE  
THE MOST FREQUENT REASONS GIVEN  
FOR DECLINING FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT

Financial considerations played a major role in most decliners' decisions to reject federal employment. Factors that were of great or very great importance to decliners were the federal job's salary and the cost of living where the agency was located. Both factors were cited by 67 percent of those that responded. Comments reflecting the decliners' financial concerns are shown on page 10.

Fifty-six decliners (65 percent) said the location of the job was a great or very great factor in their decisions to reject federal employment.

The next highest factors related to the decliners' perceptions of the nature and quality of federal work. Thirty-nine decliners (45 percent) thought they would be unable to apply their education and skills, while the same number thought there would be few opportunities for career advancement.

The length of the hiring process was a great or very great consideration to 35 decliners (42 percent). In fact, 47 decliners (56 percent) said they had accepted other jobs while waiting to hear the results of their federal job applications. One candidate wrote the following in her questionnaire:

"...I declined because it was too far to travel for an interview and I had already found a full-time job. However, I have applied for several other federal government jobs and the hiring process is worse than any I have encountered.... In the length of time it takes to start, I imagine that most of the good candidates have already found other jobs."

Thirty-three decliners (38 percent) said they turned down federal employment because they believed the work would not be challenging.

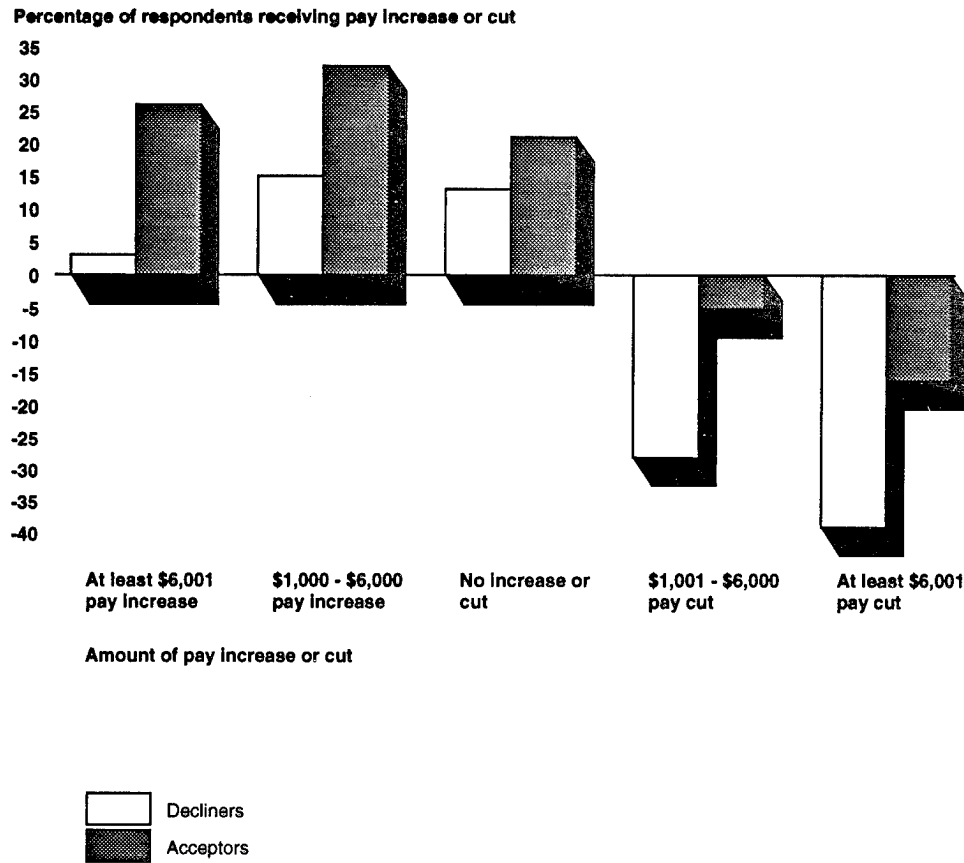
Comments Reflecting Acceptors' Reasons  
For Choosing Federal Employment

- "I accepted federal employment in the interest of seeking a challenging position which took full advantage of my talents."
- "Benefits of job security and excellent relocation opportunities, coupled with career ladder positions and frequent job openings make the government an attractive employer. Lower pay scales scare most people away."
- "I have accepted a federal job because I want to do work that will benefit this country."

THE NATURE OF FEDERAL WORK WAS  
THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR  
IN ACCEPTING FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT

The main reason the acceptors said they took federal jobs related to their perceptions of the nature of government work rather than the financial considerations cited by decliners. Forty-two acceptors (81 percent) said the opportunity for career advancement was of great or very great importance in their decisions to choose federal employment. Forty acceptors (77 percent) said the ability to apply their education and skills was of great or very great importance, while 35 acceptors (67 percent) cited the prospect for challenging assignments. The location of the job was a major influence with 27 acceptors (52 percent). Some of the acceptors' comments regarding their employment decisions are listed on page 12.

Figure I.2: Federal Salaries Offered to Most Decliners Were Lower Than What They Were Already Earning; Most Acceptors Received Pay Increases



Note: The percentages are based on the 61 decliners and 19 acceptors who were self-employed or in permanent jobs and excludes those in seasonal, temporary, or other types of jobs.

MOST DECLINERS WOULD HAVE  
SUFFERED PAY CUTS TO ACCEPT  
FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT WHEREAS  
MOST ACCEPTORS RECEIVED PAY INCREASES

After analyzing the salary information provided by the decliners, we were not surprised that financial factors caused many of them to say no to federal job opportunities. Of the 61 decliners who were employed in permanent full- and part-time jobs at the time they received a federal job offer, more than two-thirds said the federal jobs offered less pay than they were currently receiving. As shown in figure I.2, for 24 decliners (39 percent), the pay cut would have been more than \$6,000. Eleven decliners (18 percent), including 2 who worked part-time, said the federal jobs would have paid more.

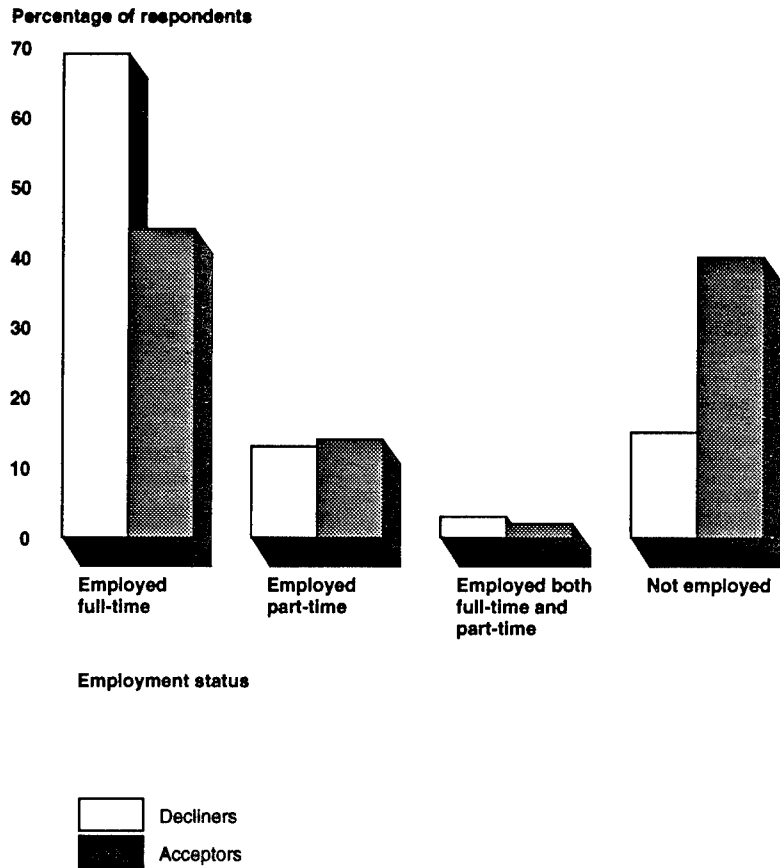
In notable contrast, of the 19 acceptors who were employed in permanent full- and part-time jobs, 11 (58 percent), including 3 who worked part-time, said they received pay increases when they took the federal positions. For 5 of the 19, the increase was more than \$6,000.

Four of the employed acceptors (21 percent) acknowledged taking a pay cut to work for the government. At least one, however, regretted that decision and had to find a second job to make ends meet:

"...I took a cut in pay of close to 50 percent to come to this job with the federal government. I felt it would pay off later because of the opportunities available in a professional position. Had I not been married and therefore able to depend upon 2 salaries, I never could have taken this job at such low pay in [Washington, D.C.]!"

"If I had known how expensive it was to live here I doubt I would have taken the job....The bank has threatened to repossess my car and I'm up to the limit on every one of my credit cards. I've borrowed \$1,000 from family--all they could give me."

Figure I.3: A Larger Proportion of Acceptors Than Decliners Was Unemployed at the Time They Were Offered a Federal Job



Note: The percentages are based on the 92 decliners and 52 acceptors who provided their employment status.

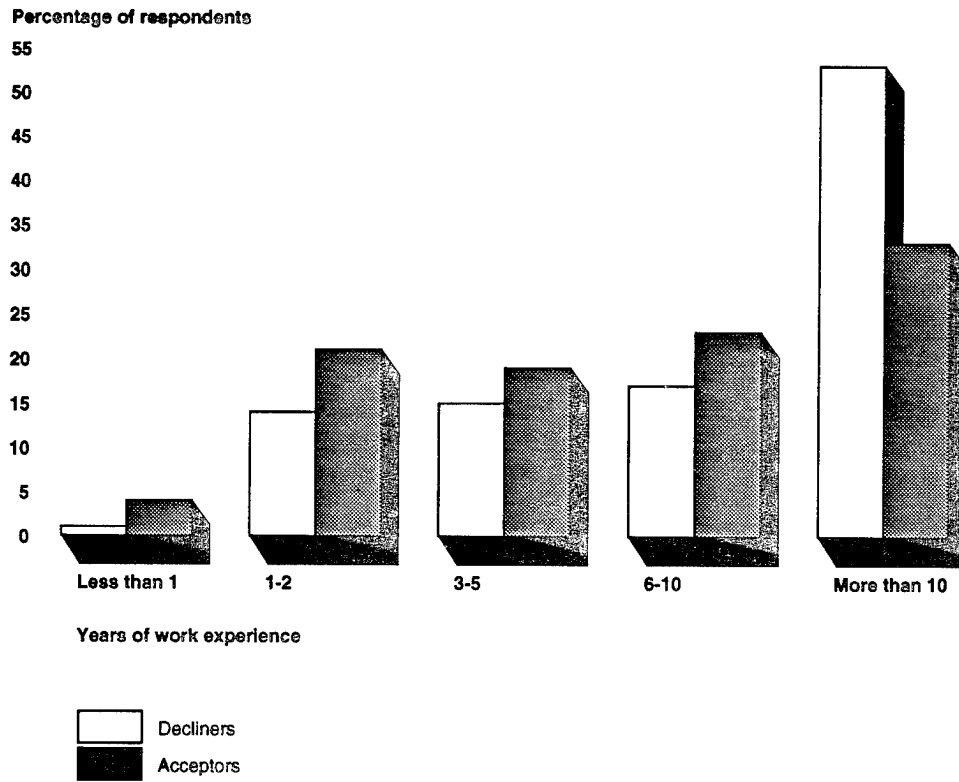
MORE ACCEPTORS WERE UNEMPLOYED  
AT THE TIME THEY WERE OFFERED  
FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT

Most decliners and many acceptors said they were employed at the time they were offered a federal job. However, as shown in figure I.3, the employment rate was higher for decliners than acceptors.

Among decliners, 66 (72 percent) were employed full-time. Just 14 decliners (15 percent) said they were unemployed at the time they rejected federal employment. The most frequent reasons they gave for their unemployment were that they were enrolled in school or had recently moved.

Twenty-four acceptors (46 percent) said they were working full-time when they chose the federal job. However, 21 (40 percent) were unemployed. Of those, six (29 percent) said they were in the midst of changing careers. Others said they were unemployed because they were enrolled in school, were full-time homemakers, or for other reasons.

Figure I.4: Respondents Had Many Years of White-Collar Work Experience



Note: The percentages are based on the 92 decliners and 52 acceptors who provided their years of work experience.

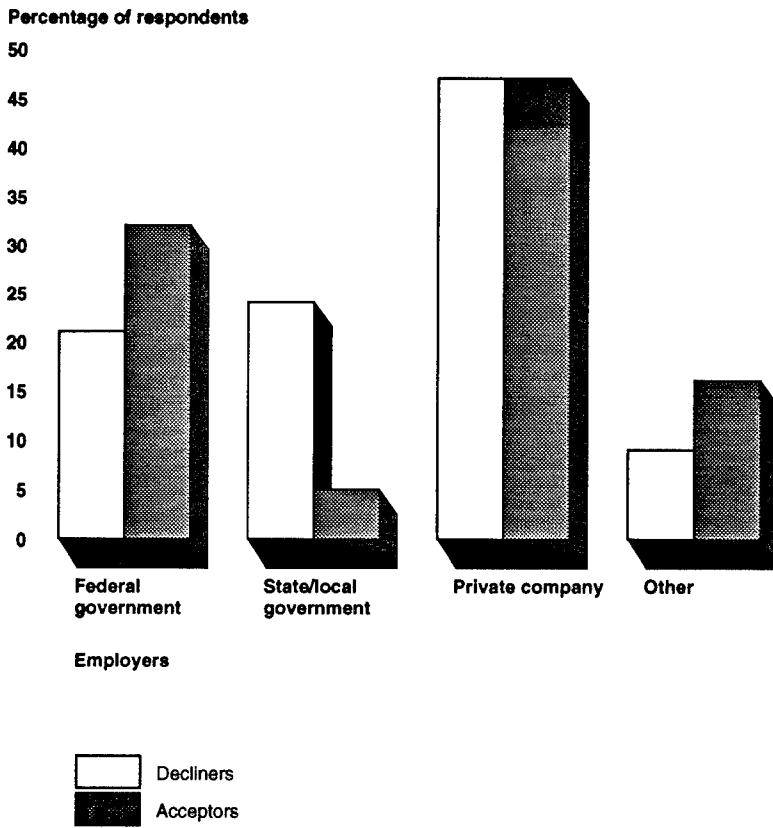
RESPONDENTS HAD CONSIDERABLE  
WORK EXPERIENCE

As shown in figure I.4, a large number of respondents had a substantial amount of work experience when they were offered a federal job.

Twenty-nine acceptors (56 percent) said they had at least 6 years of paid, white-collar work experience, while 17 (33 percent) said they had been working in such positions for more than a decade. Thirteen acceptors (25 percent) said they had less than 3 years of paid, white-collar work experience.

Among all decliners, 65 (71 percent) said they had worked 6 or more years in paid, white-collar positions, while 49 (53 percent) said they had more than a decade's worth of experience. Just 14 decliners (15 percent) had less than 3 years of work experience.

Figure I.5: Many Respondents Were Already Employed by the Federal Government When They Were Offered Federal Jobs



Note: The percentages are based on the 58 decliners and 19 acceptors who indicated where they were employed.

MANY ACCEPTORS AND DECLINERS  
WERE ALREADY WORKING FOR THE  
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

As shown in figure I.5, nearly half of the employed acceptors and decliners were working for private companies at the time they were made federal job offers. Six acceptors (32 percent) and 12 decliners (21 percent) were already employed by the federal government.

Figure I.6: Most Respondents Were Older Than Typical New College Graduates



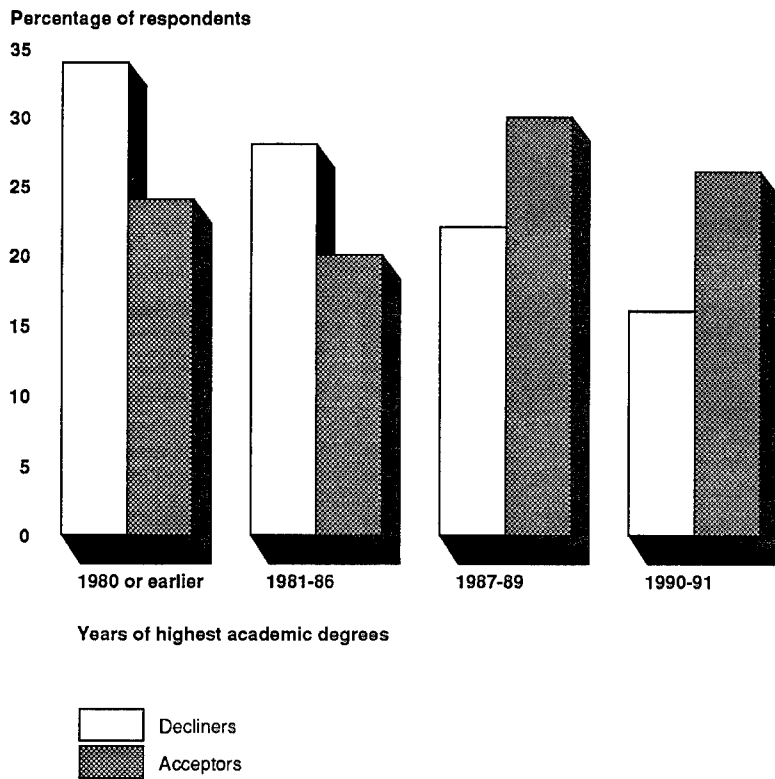
Note: The percentages are based on the 92 decliners and 52 acceptors who provided their ages.

THE MAJORITY OF ACCEPTORS  
AND DECLINERS WERE OLDER  
THAN TYPICAL NEW COLLEGE GRADUATES

Twelve acceptors (23 percent) and 17 decliners (19 percent) were enrolled as students at the time they applied for federal employment. While acceptors tended to be younger than decliners, the majority of each group was older than typical new college graduates.

In 1990, the average age of acceptors was 31, and the average age for decliners was 34. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the average age of new college graduates was 27 in 1990. As shown in figure I.6, 21 acceptors (41 percent) and 48 decliners (52 percent) were age 33 or older.

Figure I.7: Many Acceptors and Decliners Received Their Highest Degrees Before 1987

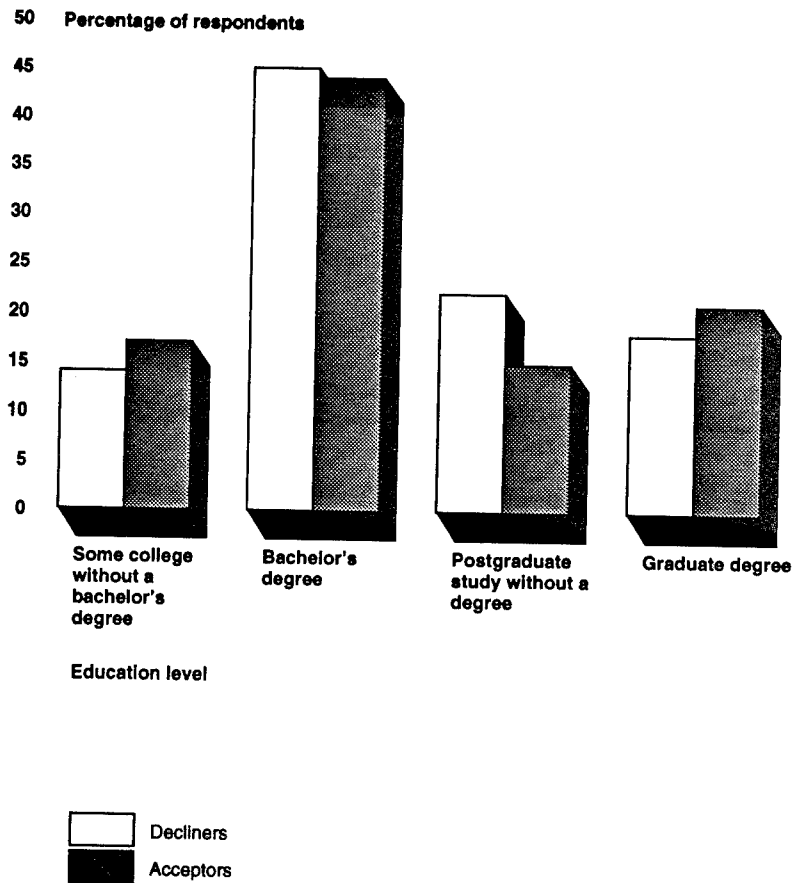


Note: The percentages are based on the 91 decliners and 52 acceptors who provided information on their highest academic degrees.

MANY RESPONDENTS HAD  
BEEN OUT OF SCHOOL FOR  
SEVERAL YEARS

Fifty-six decliners (62 percent) and 22 acceptors (44 percent) said they had received their highest academic degrees before 1987. Thirty-one decliners (34 percent) and 12 acceptors (24 percent) said they had been out of school for a decade or longer (see fig. I.7).

Figure I.8: Most Respondents Had at Least a Bachelor's Degree



Note: The percentages are based on the 91 decliners and 52 acceptors who provided their education levels.

ACCEPTORS AND DECLINERS HAD  
SIMILAR EDUCATION LEVELS AND  
COLLEGE GRADE POINT AVERAGES

As shown in figure I.8, the acceptors and decliners had similar levels of education. All respondents had at least some college training. Forty-two acceptors (81 percent) and 78 decliners (85 percent) had a bachelor's degree or higher education.

Most acceptors and decliners reported fairly high college grade point averages (GPA). When based on a 4-point scale with 4.0 being the highest, over two-thirds of each group said they had GPAs of 3.0 or better.

OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

According to OPM's job applicant registers and Management Summary Reports System as of November 30, 1990, 78 GS-5 and GS-7 professional and administrative positions were filled from OPM job registers during June 1990 through November 1990.

We sent questionnaires to all 78 people the OPM records showed had been hired to fill the positions. From these, we received 64 responses for an 83-percent response rate. However, 12 of the respondents said the OPM information was in error. Thus, 52 usable questionnaires were received from acceptors.

We also sent a companion questionnaire to people who declined those same positions. OPM's records indicated that 132 people declined consideration after being queried about their availability. We received 107 questionnaires from the decliners for a response rate of 81-percent. However, 11 respondents said the OPM information was in error, and 2 respondents returned incomplete questionnaires. This left 94 usable questionnaires from decliners. An additional 77 applicants did not respond to the availability queries at all. We did not send questionnaires to these people.

Because we sent questionnaires to all known acceptors and decliners, statistical sampling was not used; and there is no larger universe to which projections can be made. Moreover, if there had been a larger group of acceptors and decliners, their circumstances and reasons for their employment decisions might have been different. The data obtained are valid only to the extent that they represent the responses of 52 people who accepted federal jobs and 94 people who declined those same jobs.

We did our audit work from October 1990 through December 1991 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. We did not independently verify the information obtained from OPM's databases.

RESPONSES TO GAO SURVEY OF INDIVIDUALS  
WHO ACCEPTED A FEDERAL JOB

United States General Accounting Office



**Survey of Individuals Who Accepted  
A Federal Job**

Introduction

The U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO), a research agency of Congress, is studying ways of making federal employment a more attractive career choice. As part of this effort, we are surveying individuals across the nation who, like you, applied for a federal job.

In this questionnaire, we would like you to tell us about your reasons for seeking federal employment and your experiences during the application and selection process.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary, but your frank and honest answers will help us identify policies and practices to improve the federal government's hiring ability. Your views are therefore critical to our work.

The questionnaire can be easily answered by checking boxes or filling in blanks. It should take about 15 minutes to complete. Your responses will be kept confidential. No individual responses will be identified in any report that we publish. The questionnaire is numbered only to aid us in our follow-up efforts.

Please return your completed questionnaire in the enclosed pre-addressed, postage-paid envelope within 10 days of receipt. In the event the envelope is misplaced, the return address is:

U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE  
Mr. Robert Goldenkoff  
Room 3820  
441 G Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20548

If you have any questions, please call (collect) either Robert Goldenkoff at (202) 275-0757 or Laura Shumway at (202) 275-6145. Thank you very much for your time and assistance in completing this questionnaire.

\* \* \* \* \*

A. Employment History

- 1. According to records provided to us, you recently accepted the following job:

Is this information correct? (Check one.)

n=64

- 1. [ 81.3% ] Yes (Continue to Question 2.)
- 2. [ 18.3% ] No. I did not accept this job. (Please explain below and then return the questionnaire in the enclosed envelope. Thank you.)

Note: Unless otherwise specified, all questions that make reference to a job refer to the position indicated on the label in Question 1.

- 2. Did you actually report to work for this job? (Check one.)

n=52

- 1. [ 100% ] Yes (Continue to Question 3.)
- 2. [ 0% ] No (Please stop here and return the questionnaire in the enclosed envelope. Thank you.)

APPENDIX III

3. Before accepting this job, had you ever been employed as a civilian by the federal government? (Check one.)

n=52

- 1. [ 38.5% ] Yes
- 2. [ 61.5% ] No

4. Were you enrolled as a student at the time you applied for this federal job? (Check one.)

n=52

- 1. [ 23.1% ] Yes
- 2. [ 76.9% ] No

5. What was your employment status at the time you accepted this federal job? (Check one.)

n=52

- 1. [ 44.2% ] Employed full-time
  - 2. [ 13.5% ] Employed part-time
  - 3. [ 1.9% ] Employed both full-time and part-time
  - 4. [ 40.4% ] Not employed (Skip to Question 9.)
- } (Continue to Question 6.)

6. Which of the following best describes your employment status at the time you accepted the federal job? (If you had more than one job, answer for the primary job. Check one.)

n=31

- 1. [ 61.3% ] permanent employment (Continue to Question 7.)
  - 2. [ 0.0% ] self-employed (Skip to Question 8.)
  - 3. [ 6.5% ] seasonal employment (less than year-round work, such as summer employment)
  - 4. [ 29.0% ] temporary employment
  - 5. [ 3.2% ] other employment (Specify.)
- } (Skip to Question 10.)

APPENDIX III

7. Which of the following categories best describes where you were employed when you accepted the federal job? (If you had more than one job, answer for your primary job. Check one.)

n=19

- 1. [ 31.6% ] Federal government (civilian job)
- 2. [ 5.3% ] State/local government
- 3. [ 47.4% ] Private company
- 4. [ 0.0% ] Non-profit organization
- 5. [ 5.3% ] College/university
- 6. [ 0.0% ] Military service
- 7. [ 10.5% ] Other employer (Specify.)

8. At the time you accepted the federal job, how did the annual pay of the federal job you accepted compare with your total annual pay from the job(s) you held?

(If you held more than one job, combine your pay for all positions you held at that time. Include regular pay, overtime, commissions, allowances, tips, bonuses, etc. Check one.)

n=19

The pay of the federal job was...

- 1. [ 26.3% ] at least \$6,001 more than my prior job
  - 2. [ 21.1% ] \$3,001 to \$6,000 more than my prior job
  - 3. [ 10.5% ] \$1,001 to \$3,000 more than my prior job
  - 4. [ 21.1% ] about the same as my prior job (a difference of \$1,000 or less)
  - 5. [ 0.0% ] \$1,001 to \$3,000 less than my prior job
  - 6. [ 5.3% ] \$3,001 to \$6,000 less than my prior job
  - 7. [ 15.8% ] at least \$6,001 less than my prior job
  - 8. [ 0.0% ] unable to judge/ don't remember
- } (Skip to Question 10.)

*If you were not employed at the time you accepted the federal job, continue to Question 9. Otherwise, skip to Question 10.*

9. What was the reason(s) you were not employed? (Check all that apply.)

n=21

- 1. [ 19.0% ] I was enrolled in school
- 2. [ 9.5% ] I could not find a satisfactory job
- 3. [ 9.5% ] I had been working at seasonal and/or temporary jobs that ended
- 4. [ 4.8% ] I had been laid off
- 5. [ 28.6% ] I was changing careers
- 6. [ 0.0% ] I was not interested in being employed at that time
- 7. [ 14.3% ] I was a full-time homemaker
- 8. [ 9.5% ] I had recently moved to a new location
- 9. [ 4.8% ] I was retired
- 10. [ 4.8% ] Family/personal reasons
- 11. [ 19.0% ] Other (Please explain.)

10. Are you still employed at the federal job identified in Question 1? (Check one.)

n=52

- 1. [ 92.3% ] Yes (Skip to Question 13.)
- 2. [ 7.7% ] No (Continue to Question 11.)

11. Currently, what is your employment status? (Check one.)

n=2

- 1. [ 0.0% ] Employed full-time
  - 2. [ 0.0% ] Employed part-time
  - 3. [ 0.0% ] Employed both full-time and part-time
  - 4. [ 100.0% ] Not employed (Skip to Question 13.)
- } (Continue to Question 12.)

12. Which of the following categories best describes where you are currently employed? (Check one.)

n=2

- 1. [ 100.0% ] Federal government (civilian job)
- 2. [ 0.0% ] State/local government
- 3. [ 0.0% ] Private company
- 4. [ 0.0% ] Non-profit organization
- 5. [ 0.0% ] College/university
- 6. [ 0.0% ] Military service
- 7. [ 0.0% ] Other employer (Specify.)

B. Why You Accepted the Federal Job

13. Of how much importance, if any, were the following factors in your decision to ACCEPT the federal job? (Check one box in each row. Note: if a factor is not listed, please add it to the list under "other".)

FACTORS	Very great importance (1)	Great importance (2)	Moderate importance (3)	Some importance (4)	Little or no importance (5)	Not applicable/ Don't know (6)
<b>NATURE OF THE WORK</b>						
1. Assistance/cooperation provided by agency employees n=50	4.0%	14.0%	18.0%	10.0%	42.0%	12.0%
2. Reputation of the agency n=51	9.8%	17.6%	23.5%	5.9%	31.4%	11.8%
3. Reputation of the federal government n=52	13.5%	23.1%	32.7%	15.4%	11.5%	3.8%
4. Opportunities for challenging assignments n=52	34.6%	32.7%	23.1%	5.8%	3.8%	0.0%
5. Opportunities to apply my education and skills n=52	53.8%	23.1%	13.5%	5.8%	1.9%	1.9%
6. Opportunities for career advancement n=52	55.8%	25.0%	13.5%	1.9%	3.8%	0.0%
7. Opportunities for travel n=52	9.6%	9.6%	17.3%	7.7%	48.1%	7.7%
<b>SALARY AND BENEFITS</b>						
8. Amount of federal annual and/or sick leave n=52	11.5%	23.1%	34.6%	15.4%	15.4%	0.0%
9. The federal job's salary n=51	13.7%	17.6%	29.4%	23.5%	13.7%	2.0%
10. Federal retirement benefits n=52	15.4%	13.5%	32.7%	25.0%	11.5%	1.9%
11. Federal health insurance n=52	13.5%	19.2%	30.8%	17.3%	17.3%	1.9%
12. Federal life insurance n=52	9.6%	7.7%	23.1%	21.2%	36.5%	1.9%
<b>PERSONAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>						
13. Location of the job n=52	26.9%	25.0%	19.2%	13.5%	13.5%	1.9%
14. Cost of living where the agency is located n=51	17.6%	9.8%	25.5%	11.8%	31.4%	3.9%
15. Agency child care assistance n=52	0.0%	3.8%	1.9%	0.0%	53.8%	40.4%
16. Agency elder care assistance n=51	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	54.9%	43.1%
17. It was the first job offer I received n=50	14.0%	8.0%	6.0%	4.0%	18.0%	50.0%
18. It was the only job offer I received n=51	9.8%	2.0%	2.0%	5.9%	23.5%	56.9%
19. Other (Specify.) n=14	78.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	21.4%

C. The Job Application Process

14. Of the following factors, which, if any, are very important to you when you APPLY for a job? (Check all that apply.)

n=52

NATURE OF THE WORK

- 1. [ 25.0% ] Physical appearance of the work setting
- 2. [ 67.3% ] Freedom allowed to do my work
- 3. [ 53.8% ] Compatibility with the people I would be working with/for
- 4. [ 36.5% ] Reputation/image of the organization
- 5. [ 50.0% ] Flexible work schedules
- 6. [ 69.2% ] Opportunities for challenging assignments
- 7. [ 84.6% ] Opportunities for career advancement
- 8. [ 55.8% ] Resources available to do the job (support staff, computers, etc.)
- 9. [ 61.5% ] The opportunity to help people or make a difference
- 10. [ 73.1% ] Job security
- 11. [ 76.9% ] Opportunities to apply my education and skills
- 12. [ 17.3% ] Travel opportunities
- 13. [ 63.5% ] Availability of training opportunities

SALARY AND BENEFITS

- 14. [ 63.5% ] Amount of annual leave
- 15. [ 50.0% ] Amount of sick leave
- 16. [ 75.0% ] Amount of pay
- 17. [ 38.5% ] Retirement benefits
- 18. [ 17.3% ] Availability of parental leave
- 19. [ 59.6% ] Health insurance benefits
- 20. [ 30.8% ] Life insurance benefits

PERSONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 21. [ 78.8% ] Location of the job
- 22. [ 42.3% ] Cost of living where the job is located
- 23. [ 15.4% ] Ease of the application procedure
- 24. [ 21.2% ] Length of the hiring process
- 25. [ 7.7% ] Employer-provided child care assistance
- 26. [ 5.8% ] Employer-provided other dependent care assistance
- 27. [ 11.5% ] Other (Specify.)

15. Please review your responses to Question 14 and rank the items that are first, second, and third in importance to you when you apply for a job. (Enter item numbers below.)

	Question 14 Item Number	n=50
1. The <u>most important</u> factor when you apply for a job	_____	<p><b>The factors most frequently selected as being first, second, or third in importance when applying for a job were the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opportunities for career advancement (56.0%)</li> <li>- Amount of pay (42.0%)</li> <li>- Opportunity for challenging assignments (28.0%)</li> <li>- Location of the job (28.0%)</li> </ul>
2. The <u>second most important</u> factor when you apply for a job	_____	
3. The <u>third most important</u> factor when you apply for a job	_____	

16. Did you take the federal Administrative Careers with America (ACWA) exam in applying for the federal job you accepted? (Check one.)

n=52

- 1. [ 67.3% ] Yes (Continue to Question 17.)
  - 2. [ 26.9% ] No
  - 3. [ 5.8% ] Not sure
- } (Skip to Question 21.)

17. In your opinion, to what extent, if at all, did the ACWA exam adequately measure your job skills and abilities? (Check one.)

n=35

- 1. [ 25.7% ] To a very great extent
- 2. [ 17.1% ] To a great extent
- 3. [ 28.6% ] To a moderate extent
- 4. [ 14.3% ] To some extent
- 5. [ 11.4% ] To little or no extent
- 6. [ 2.9% ] No opinion/no basis to judge

18. How convenient or inconvenient was the location of the ACWA exam for you? (Check one.)

n=35

- 1. [ 40.0% ] Very convenient
- 2. [ 40.0% ] Generally convenient
- 3. [ 2.9% ] Neither convenient nor inconvenient
- 4. [ 11.4% ] Generally inconvenient
- 5. [ 5.7% ] Very inconvenient
- 6. [ 0.0% ] No opinion/no basis to judge

19. Did the requirement to take the ACWA exam increase or decrease your desire to pursue federal employment? (Check one.)

n=35

- 1. [ 20.0% ] Greatly increased
- 2. [ 14.3% ] Somewhat increased
- 3. [ 51.4% ] Neither increased nor decreased
- 4. [ 5.7% ] Somewhat decreased
- 5. [ 5.7% ] Greatly decreased
- 6. [ 2.9% ] No opinion

20. Which of the following changes, if any, would you make to the ACWA exam in order to improve it? (Check all that apply.)

n=52

- 1. [ 34.6% ] Offer the exam on weekends
- 2. [ 23.1% ] Offer the exam in the evenings
- 3. [ 21.2% ] Offer the exam more frequently
- 4. [ 13.5% ] Offer the exam in more convenient locations
- 5. [ 9.6% ] Provide more advance notice of the exam date and location
- 6. [ 3.8% ] Provide more opportunities to reschedule the exam
- 7. [ 21.2% ] Make the exam questions more job specific
- 8. [ 13.5% ] Shorten the length of the exam
- 9. [ 0.0% ] Make the exam less difficult
- 10. [ 13.5% ] Other (Please specify.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. [ 5.8% ] No changes needed
- 12. [ 3.8% ] Not sure/No basis to judge

21. In the past 2 years, have any permanent professional (non-clerical) jobs you may have applied for outside the federal government required a written exam to measure your ability to do the job, as part of the application process? (Check one.)

n=52

- 1. [ 42.3% ] Yes
- 2. [ 42.3% ] No
- 3. [ 0.0% ] Not sure
- 4. [ 15.4% ] Have not applied for jobs outside the federal government in the past 2 years

D. The Job Search Process

22. How effective or ineffective were the following sources in supplying you with information on federal employment? (Check one box in each row. If you did not use a particular source, check column 1.)

SOURCES		Did not use/not applicable (1)	Very effective (2)	Generally effective (3)	Neither effective nor ineffective (4)	Generally ineffective (5)	Very ineffective (6)
1. Government recruiting literature	n=51	52.9%	7.8%	13.7%	9.8%	11.8%	3.9%
2. College or university placement office	n=52	57.7%	15.4%	5.8%	5.8%	9.6%	5.8%
3. State or private employment office	n=49	65.3%	2.0%	6.1%	8.2%	12.2%	6.1%
4. The government's recorded telephone message system "College Hotline"	n=52	71.2%	1.9%	5.8%	7.7%	7.7%	5.8%
5. A Federal Job Information Center or other Office of Personnel Management (OPM) facility	n=52	30.8%	21.2%	28.8%	3.8%	9.6%	5.8%
6. A visit or telephone call to a federal agency	n=52	46.2%	15.4%	11.5%	5.8%	7.7%	13.5%
7. A job fair at which federal agencies were present	n=52	76.9%	3.8%	9.6%	3.8%	1.9%	3.8%
8. Federal recruiter	n=50	84.0%	6.0%	2.0%	4.0%	2.0%	2.0%
9. Newspaper, magazine, or journal advertisement	n=52	75.0%	7.7%	3.8%	3.8%	7.7%	1.0%
10. "Federal Career Opportunities" or similar publication listing federal job vacancies	n=52	57.7%	19.2%	9.6%	3.8%	7.7%	1.9%
11. Job vacancy announcement	n=51	58.8%	15.7%	15.7%	0.0%	5.9%	3.9%
12. Professional networking	n=51	72.5%	5.9%	5.9%	3.9%	3.9%	7.8%
13. College faculty member	n=51	80.4%	3.9%	3.9%	3.9%	3.9%	3.9%
14. Family member or friend	n=52	55.8%	21.2%	15.4%	1.9%	0.0%	5.8%
15. Recruiting video	n=52	94.2%	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%
16. Other (Specify.) _____	n=8	62.5%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%

23. When beginning a job search, which of the following do you initially do to obtain information? (Check all that apply.)

n=52

1. [ 57.7% ] Contact potential employer(s) by telephone or mail
2. [ 34.6% ] Visit potential employer(s)
3. [ 40.4% ] Consult family members or acquaintances
4. [ 32.7% ] Examine recruiting literature
5. [ 67.3% ] Scan newspaper classified ads
6. [ 40.4% ] Read professional publications
7. [ 28.8% ] Go to a state or private employment agency
8. [ 32.7% ] Network with members of my profession
9. [ 34.6% ] Visit a college or university placement office
10. [ 7.7% ] Other (Please specify.)

24. After you have applied for a job, at what point does the wait for a job offer become unreasonable? (Check one.)

n=52

The wait becomes unreasonable after...

1. [ 9.6% ] 2 weeks
2. [ 23.1% ] 3 to 4 weeks
3. [ 36.5% ] 5 to 6 weeks
4. [ 7.7% ] 7 to 8 weeks
5. [ 3.8% ] 9 to 10 weeks
6. [ 3.8% ] 11 weeks or more
7. [ 3.8% ] Not sure
8. [ 11.5% ] Other (Please specify.)

25. In the future, if you were looking for another job, would you apply for a job in the same federal agency that had the job you accepted? (Check one.)

n=52

1. [ 28.8% ] Definitely yes
  2. [ 30.8% ] Probably yes
  3. [ 23.1% ] Uncertain
  4. [ 15.4% ] Probably no
  5. [ 1.9% ] Definitely no
- } (Please specify why in the space below.)

26. In the future, if you were looking for another job, would you apply for a job in the federal government? (Check one.)

n=52

1. [ 38.5% ] Definitely yes
  2. [ 36.5% ] Probably yes
  3. [ 19.2% ] Uncertain
  4. [ 5.8% ] Probably no
  5. [ 0.0% ] Definitely no
- } (Please specify why in the space below.)

27. Based on your experiences, would you recommend federal employment to others? (Check one.)

n=52

1. [ 32.7% ] Definitely yes
  2. [ 44.2% ] Probably yes
  3. [ 17.3% ] Uncertain
  4. [ 3.8% ] Probably no
  5. [ 0.0% ] Definitely no
  6. [ 1.9% ] No basis to judge
- } (Please specify why in the space below.)

E. Background

28. Prior to accepting the federal job, how many years of white-collar job experience (including full-time and part-time positions) did you have working for the following types of employers?

*(Report the number of years you have been employed in each category. Round to the nearest year. If less than six months, enter "0".)*

<u>Work experience</u>		<u>Number of years</u>
		<u>(Range)</u>
1. The federal government (civilian job)	n=14	<u>1 - 19</u>
2. State/local government	n=9	<u>1 - 20</u>
3. Private company	n=36	<u>1 - 12</u>
4. Non-profit organization	n=8	<u>1 - 10</u>
5. College/university	n=16	<u>1 - 6</u>
6. Military service	n=9	<u>2 - 20</u>
7. Self employment	n=7	<u>1 - 17</u>
8. Other (Specify.)	n=1	<u>4</u>
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>n=50</u>	<u>1 - 26</u>

29. How would you rate your job-related oral communication skills? (Check one.)

n=52

- 1. [ 28.8% ] Far above average
- 2. [ 50.0% ] Above average
- 3. [ 19.2% ] Average
- 4. [ 1.9% ] Below average
- 5. [ 0.0% ] Far below average
- 6. [ 0.0% ] No basis to judge

30. How would you rate your job-related written communication skills? (Check one.)

n=52

- 1. [ 30.8% ] Far above average
- 2. [ 51.9% ] Above average
- 3. [ 17.3% ] Average
- 4. [ 0.0% ] Below average
- 5. [ 0.0% ] Far below average
- 6. [ 0.0% ] No basis to judge

31. How would you rate your job-related organizational skills? (Check one.)

n=52

- 1. [ 36.5% ] Far above average
- 2. [ 51.9% ] Above average
- 3. [ 7.7% ] Average
- 4. [ 3.8% ] Below average
- 5. [ 0.0% ] Far below average
- 6. [ 0.0% ] No basis to judge

32. What is the highest educational level or degree that you have attained? (Check one.)

n=52

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>1. [ 0.0% ] Less than high school diploma</p> <p>2. [ 0.0% ] High school diploma or equivalent</p> <p>3. [ 0.0% ] High school diploma or equivalent plus technical training or apprenticeship</p> <p>4. [ 11.5% ] Some college without a degree</p> <p>5. [ 5.8% ] Associate's degree</p> <p>6. [ 44.2% ] Bachelor's degree</p> <p>7. [ 15.4% ] Postgraduate study without a degree</p> <p>8. [ 17.3% ] Master's degree</p> <p>9. [ 1.9% ] Doctorate/Ph.D.</p> <p>10. [ 1.9% ] Professional degree (law, medicine, etc.)</p> <p>11. [ 1.9% ] Other (Please specify.)</p> | <p>} (Skip to Question 35.)</p> <p>} (Skip to Question 34.)</p> <p>} (Continue to Question 33.)</p> |
|---|---|

33. To the best of your recollection, what was your college undergraduate grade point average (GPA) for all courses? (Use a scale where A = 4.0, B = 3.0, C = 2.0, D = 1.0, and F = 0. Check one.)

n=52

GPA for All Undergraduate Courses:

1. [ 21.2% ] 3.5 - 4.0
2. [ 48.1% ] 3.0 - 3.4
3. [ 23.1% ] 2.5 - 2.9
4. [ 3.8% ] 2.0 - 2.4
5. [ 0.0% ] Less than 2.0
- 
6. [ 0.0% ] Don't remember
7. [ 3.8% ] Does not apply

34. In what year did you receive your highest academic diploma or degree? (Enter below.)

n=52

19\_\_\_\_\_ Response ranged from 1962 - 1990

35. In what year were you born? (Enter year.)

n=52

19\_\_\_\_\_ Response ranged from 1935 - 1968

36. Are you male or female? (Check one.)

n=52

1. [ 53.8% ] Male
2. [ 46.2% ] Female

37. Which of the following categories best describes your racial/ethnic background? (Check one.)

n=51

1. [ 5.9% ] Hispanic
2. [ 74.5% ] White (non-Hispanic)
3. [ 7.8% ] Black (non-Hispanic)
4. [ 0.0% ] American Indian/Alaskan Native
5. [ 9.8% ] Asian/Pacific Islander
6. [ 2.0% ] Other (Please specify.)

F. Comments

38. If you have any comments on this survey, or on why you accepted a federal job, please use the space provided below.

n=52 34.6%

39. May we contact you to discuss the issues addressed in this survey? (Check one.)

n=52

- 1. [ 30.8% ] No (Thank you. That completes the survey.)
- 2. [ 69.2% ] Yes (Please provide your name and daytime telephone number below.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime telephone number:

(\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

RESPONSES TO GAO SURVEY OF INDIVIDUALS  
WHO DECLINED A FEDERAL JOB

United States General Accounting Office



**Survey of Federal Job Applicants**

Introduction

The U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO), a research agency of Congress, is studying ways of making federal employment a more attractive career choice. As part of this effort, we are surveying individuals across the nation who, like you, applied for a federal job.

In this questionnaire, we would like you to tell us about (1) your reasons for seeking federal employment; (2) your experiences during the application and selection process; and (3) the reasons why you declined the position.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary, but your frank and honest answers will help us identify policies and practices to improve the federal government's hiring ability. Your views are therefore critical to our work.

The questionnaire can be easily answered by checking boxes or filling in blanks. It should take about 15 minutes to complete. Your responses will be kept confidential. No individual responses will be identified in any report that we publish. The questionnaire is numbered only to aid us in our follow-up efforts.

Please return your completed questionnaire in the enclosed pre-addressed, postage-paid envelope within 10 days of receipt. In the event the envelope is misplaced, the return address is:

U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE  
Mr. Robert Goldenkoff  
Room 3820  
441 G Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20548

If you have any questions, please call (collect) either Robert Goldenkoff at (202) 275-0757 or Laura Shumway at (202) 275-6145. Thank you very much for your time and assistance in completing this questionnaire.

\* \* \* \* \*

A. Employment History

1. According to records provided to us, you recently declined the following job:

Is this information correct? (Check one.)

n=105

- 1. [ 89.5% ] Yes (Continue to Question 2.)
- 2. [ 10.5% ] No. I did not decline this job. (Please explain below and then return the questionnaire in the enclosed envelope. Thank you.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Note: Unless otherwise specified, all questions that make reference to a job refer to the position indicated on the label in Question 1.*

APPENDIX IV

2. Before declining this job, had you ever been employed as a civilian by the federal government? (Check one.)

n=91

- 1. [ 37.4% ] Yes
- 2. [ 62.6% ] No

3. Were you enrolled as a student at the time you applied for this federal job? (Check one.)

n=90

- 1. [ 18.9% ] Yes
- 2. [ 81.1% ] No

4. What was your employment status at the time you declined this federal job? (Check one.)

n=92

- 1. [ 68.5% ] Employed full-time
  - 2. [ 13.0% ] Employed part-time
  - 3. [ 3.3% ] Employed both full-time and part-time
- } (Continue to Question 5.)

4. [ 15.2% ] Not employed (Skip to Question 8.)

5. Which of the following best describes your employment status at the time you declined the federal job? (If you had more than one job, answer for the primary job. Check one.)

n=77

- 1. [ 75.3% ] permanent employment (Continue to Question 6.)
  - 2. [ 3.9% ] self-employed (Skip to Question 7.)
  - 3. [ 2.6% ] seasonal employment (less than year-round work, such as summer employment)
  - 4. [ 16.9% ] temporary employment
  - 5. [ 1.3% ] other employment (Specify.)
- } (Skip to Question 9.)

APPENDIX IV

6. Which of the following categories best describes where you were employed when you declined the federal job? (If you had more than one job, answer for your primary job. Check one.)

n=58

- 1. [ 20.7% ] Federal government (civilian job)
- 2. [ 24.1% ] State/local government
- 3. [ 46.6% ] Private company
- 4. [ 6.9% ] Non-profit organization
- 5. [ 1.7% ] College/university
- 6. [ 0.0% ] Military service
- 7. [ 0.0% ] Other employer (Specify.)

7. At the time you declined the federal job, how did the total annual pay from your job(s) compare with the annual pay of the federal job you declined?

(If you held more than one job, combine your pay for all positions you held at that time. Include regular pay, overtime, commissions, allowances, tips, bonuses, etc. Check one.)

n=61

The pay of the job(s) you were already in was...

- 1. [ 39.3% ] at least \$6,001 more than the job you declined
  - 2. [ 18.0% ] \$3,001 to \$6,000 more than the job you declined
  - 3. [ 9.8% ] \$1,001 to \$3,000 more than the job you declined
  - 4. [ 13.1% ] about the same as the job you declined (a difference of \$1,000 or less)
  - 5. [ 8.2% ] \$1,001 to \$3,000 less than the job you declined
  - 6. [ 6.6% ] \$3,001 to \$6,000 less than the job you declined
  - 7. [ 3.3% ] at least \$6,001 less than the job you declined
  - 8. [ 1.6% ] unable to judge/don't remember
- } (Skip to Question 9.)

*If you were not employed at the time you declined the federal job, continue to Question 8. Otherwise, skip to Question 9.*

8. What was the reason(s) you were not employed? (Check all that apply.)

n=14

- 1. [ 28.6% ] I was enrolled in school
- 2. [ 21.4% ] I could not find a satisfactory job
- 3. [ 14.3% ] I had been working at seasonal and/or temporary jobs that ended
- 4. [ 7.1% ] I had been laid off
- 5. [ 14.3% ] I was changing careers
- 6. [ 7.1% ] I was not interested in being employed at that time
- 7. [ 14.3% ] I was a full-time homemaker
- 8. [ 28.6% ] I had recently moved to a new location
- 9. [ 7.1% ] I was retired
- 10. [ 0.0% ] Family/personal reasons
- 11. [ 14.3% ] Other (Please explain.)

9. After you declined this federal job, did you accept another full-time permanent job? (Check one.)

n=91

- 1. [ 28.6% ] Yes (Continue to Question 10.)
- 2. [ 71.4% ] No (Skip to Question 12.)

10. Which of the following categories best describes the full-time job you accepted? (Check one.)

n=26

- 1. [ 34.6% ] Federal government(civilian job)
- 2. [ 19.2% ] State/local government
- 3. [ 34.6% ] Private company
- 4. [ 7.7% ] Non-profit organization
- 5. [ 0.0% ] College/university
- 6. [ 0.0% ] Military service
- 7. [ 3.8% ] Other employer (Specify.)

11. How did your total annual pay from the job you accepted compare with the annual pay of the federal job you declined?

*(If you held more than one job, combine your pay for all positions you held at that time. Include regular pay, overtime, commissions, allowances, tips, bonuses, etc. Check one.)*

n=26

The pay of the job(s) you accepted was...

- 1. [ 34.6% ] at least \$6,001 more than the job you declined
- 2. [ 11.5% ] \$3,001 to \$6,000 more than the job you declined
- 3. [ 7.7% ] \$1,001 to \$3,000 more than the job you declined
- 4. [ 26.9% ] about the same as the job you declined (a difference of \$1,000 or less)
- 5. [ 3.8% ] \$1,001 to \$3,000 less than the job you declined
- 6. [ 7.7% ] \$3,001 to \$6,000 less than the job you declined
- 7. [ 0.0% ] at least \$6,001 less than the job you declined
- 8. [ 7.7% ] unable to judge/don't remember

12. Currently, are you employed by the federal government? (Check one.)

n=91

- 1. [ 22.0% ] Yes
- 2. [ 78.0% ] No

B. Why You Declined the Federal Job

13. Of how much importance, if any, were the following factors in your decision to **DECLINE** the federal job? (Check one box in each row. Note: if a factor is not listed, please add it to the list under "other".)

FACTORS	Very great importance (1)	Great importance (2)	Moderate importance (3)	Some importance (4)	Little or no importance (5)	Not applicable/ Don't know (6)
<b>NATURE OF THE WORK</b>						
1. Assistance/cooperation provided by agency employees n=85	7.1%	8.2%	9.4%	4.7%	35.3%	35.3%
2. Reputation of the agency n=85	5.9%	11.8%	10.6%	11.8%	40.0%	20.0%
3. Reputation of the federal government n=86	10.5%	7.0%	5.8%	15.1%	51.2%	10.5%
4. Opportunities for challenging assignments n=86	18.6%	19.8%	7.0%	12.8%	26.7%	15.1%
5. Opportunities to apply my education and skills n=87	27.6%	17.2%	6.9%	8.0%	29.9%	10.3%
6. Opportunities for career advancement n=87	27.6%	17.2%	8.0%	12.6%	23.0%	11.5%
<b>SALARY AND BENEFITS</b>						
7. Amount of federal annual and/or sick leave n=86	12.8%	4.7%	4.7%	15.1%	48.8%	14.0%
8. The federal job's salary n=87	52.9%	13.8%	10.3%	6.9%	13.8%	2.3%
9. Federal retirement benefits n=86	14.0%	7.0%	8.1%	14.0%	39.5%	17.4%
10. Federal health insurance n=86	11.6%	7.0%	10.5%	11.6%	44.2%	15.1%
11. Federal life insurance n=85	9.4%	4.7%	10.6%	12.9%	44.7%	17.6%
<b>PERSONAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>						
12. Location of the job n=86	50.0%	15.1%	17.4%	1.2%	15.1%	1.2%
13. Length of the hiring process n=83	30.1%	12.0%	8.4%	9.6%	25.3%	14.5%
14. Cost of living where the agency is located n=89	52.8%	14.6%	10.1%	4.5%	13.5%	4.5%
15. Agency child care assistance n=86	7.0%	1.2%	1.2%	0.0%	48.8%	41.9%
16. Agency elder care assistance n=86	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%	0.0%	54.7%	43.0%
17. I decided to enroll in school n=82	3.7%	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%	30.5%	64.6%
18. I had already accepted another job n=84	25.0%	3.6%	3.6%	1.2%	22.6%	44.0%
19. Other (Specify) _____ n=18	72.2%	5.6%	0.0%	0.0%	5.6%	16.7%

C. The Job Application Process

14. Of the following factors, which, if any, are very important to you when you APPLY for a job? (Check all that apply.)

n=94

NATURE OF THE WORK

- 1. [ 34.0% ] Physical appearance of the work setting
- 2. [ 63.8% ] Freedom allowed to do my work
- 3. [ 60.6% ] Compatibility with the people I would be working with/for
- 4. [ 47.9% ] Reputation/image of the organization
- 5. [ 38.3% ] Flexible work schedules
- 6. [ 75.5% ] Opportunities for challenging assignments
- 7. [ 91.5% ] Opportunities for career advancement
- 8. [ 58.5% ] Resources available to do the job (support staff, computers, etc.)
- 9. [ 62.8% ] The opportunity to help people or make a difference
- 10. [ 68.1% ] Job security
- 11. [ 72.3% ] Opportunities to apply my education and skills
- 12. [ 26.6% ] Travel opportunities
- 13. [ 55.3% ] Availability of training opportunities

SALARY AND BENEFITS

- 14. [ 50.0% ] Amount of annual leave
- 15. [ 37.2% ] Amount of sick leave
- 16. [ 90.4% ] Amount of pay
- 17. [ 56.4% ] Retirement benefits
- 18. [ 11.7% ] Availability of parental leave
- 19. [ 74.5% ] Health insurance benefits
- 20. [ 26.6% ] Life insurance benefits

PERSONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 21. [ 78.7% ] Location of the job
- 22. [ 71.3% ] Cost of living where the job is located
- 23. [ 26.6% ] Ease of the application procedure
- 24. [ 39.4% ] Length of the hiring process
- 25. [ 6.4% ] Employer-provided child care assistance
- 26. [ 0.0% ] Employer-provided other dependent care assistance
- 27. [ 5.3% ] Other (Specify.) \_\_\_\_\_

15. Please review your responses to Question 14 and rank the items that are first, second, and third in importance to you when you apply for a job. (Enter item numbers below.)

	Question 14 <u>Item Number</u>
1. The <u>most important</u> factor when you apply for a job	_____
2. The <u>second most important</u> factor when you apply for a job	_____
3. The <u>third most important</u> factor when you apply for a job	_____

n=92

The factors most frequently selected by respondents as being first, second, or third in importance when applying for a job were the following:

- Amount of pay (65.2%)
- Opportunities for career advancement (46.7%)
- Location of the job (35.9%)

16. Did you take the federal Administrative Careers with America (ACWA) exam in applying for the federal job you declined? (Check one.)

n=91

- 1. [ 81.3% ] Yes (Continue to Question 17.)
  - 2. [ 6.6% ] No
  - 3. [ 12.1% ] Not sure
- } (Skip to Question 21.)

17. In your opinion, to what extent, if at all, did the ACWA exam adequately measure your job skills and abilities? (Check one.)

n=77

- 1. [ 9.1% ] To a very great extent
- 2. [ 15.6% ] To a great extent
- 3. [ 36.4% ] To a moderate extent
- 4. [ 16.9% ] To some extent
- 5. [ 14.3% ] To little or no extent
- 6. [ 7.8% ] No opinion/no basis to judge

18. How convenient or inconvenient was the location of the ACWA exam for you? (Check one.)

n=77

- 1. [ 27.3% ] Very convenient
- 2. [ 40.3% ] Generally convenient
- 3. [ 15.6% ] Neither convenient nor inconvenient
- 4. [ 14.3% ] Generally inconvenient
- 5. [ 2.6% ] Very inconvenient
- 6. [ 0.0% ] No opinion/no basis to judge

19. Did the requirement to take the ACWA exam increase or decrease your desire to pursue federal employment? (Check one.)

n=77

- 1. [ 14.3% ] Greatly increased
- 2. [ 18.2% ] Somewhat increased
- 3. [ 54.5% ] Neither increased nor decreased
- 4. [ 9.1% ] Somewhat decreased
- 5. [ 0.0% ] Greatly decreased
- 6. [ 3.9% ] No opinion

20. Which of the following changes, if any, would you make to the ACWA exam in order to improve it? (Check all that apply.)

n=94

- 1. [ 29.8% ] Offer the exam on weekends
- 2. [ 26.6% ] Offer the exam in the evenings
- 3. [ 27.7% ] Offer the exam more frequently
- 4. [ 12.8% ] Offer the exam in more convenient locations
- 5. [ 14.9% ] Provide more advance notice of the exam date and location
- 6. [ 7.4% ] Provide more opportunities to reschedule the exam
- 7. [ 28.7% ] Make the exam questions more job specific
- 8. [ 9.6% ] Shorten the length of the exam
- 9. [ 5.3% ] Make the exam less difficult
- 10. [ 12.8% ] Other (Please specify.)
- 11. [ 4.3% ] No changes needed
- 12. [ 6.4% ] Not sure/No basis to judge

21. In the past 2 years, have any permanent professional (non-clerical) jobs you may have applied for outside the federal government required a written exam to measure your ability to do the job, as part of the application process? (Check one.)

n=90

- 1. [ 36.7% ] Yes
- 2. [ 54.4% ] No
- 3. [ 1.1% ] Not sure
- 4. [ 7.8% ] Have not applied for jobs outside the federal government in the past 2 years

D. The Job Search Process

22. How effective or ineffective were the following sources in supplying you with information on federal employment? (Check one box in each row. If you did not use a particular source, check column 1.)

SOURCES		Did not use/not applicable (1)	Very effective (2)	Generally effective (3)	Neither effective nor ineffective (4)	Generally ineffective (5)	Very ineffective (6)
1.	Government recruiting literature n=90	36.7%	5.6%	23.3%	14.4%	7.8%	12.2%
2.	College or university placement office n=89	56.2%	3.4%	7.9%	9.0%	11.2%	12.4%
3.	State or private employment office n=89	48.3%	5.6%	9.0%	5.6%	13.5%	18.0%
4.	The government's recorded telephone message system "College Hotline" n=87	54.0%	2.3%	5.7%	9.2%	17.2%	11.5%
5.	A Federal Job Information Center or other Office of Personnel Management (OPM) facilit n=89	16.9%	14.6%	22.5%	10.1%	19.1%	16.9%
6.	A visit or telephone call to a federal agency n=88	42.0%	6.8%	23.9%	4.5%	8.0%	14.8%
7.	A job fair at which federal agencies were present n=88	64.8%	4.5%	9.1%	8.0%	5.7%	8.0%
8.	Federal recruiter n=87	74.7%	1.1%	4.6%	9.2%	2.3%	8.0%
9.	Newspaper, magazine, or journal advertisement n=90	44.4%	7.8%	20.0%	10.0%	7.8%	10.0%
10.	"Federal Career Opportunities" or similar publication listing federal job vacancies n=90	35.6%	8.9%	24.4%	13.3%	6.7%	11.1%
11.	Job vacancy announcement n=89	36.0%	13.5%	20.2%	11.2%	7.9%	11.2%
12.	Professional networking n=87	60.9%	9.2%	9.2%	11.5%	4.6%	4.6%
13.	College faculty member n=88	78.4%	0.0%	1.1%	10.2%	3.4%	6.8%
14.	Family member or friend n=88	48.9%	22.7%	17.0%	6.8%	2.3%	2.3%
15.	Recruiting video n=88	80.7%	0.0%	1.1%	6.8%	4.5%	6.8%
16.	Other (Specify) _____ n=8	37.5%	12.5%	12.5%	0.0%	25.0%	12.5%

APPENDIX IV

23. When beginning a job search, which of the following do you initially do to obtain information? (Check all that apply.)

n=94

- 1. [ 60.6% ] Contact potential employer(s) by telephone or mail
- 2. [ 35.1% ] Visit potential employer(s)
- 3. [ 40.4% ] Consult family members or acquaintances
- 4. [ 44.7% ] Examine recruiting literature
- 5. [ 74.5% ] Scan newspaper classified ads
- 6. [ 33.0% ] Read professional publications
- 7. [ 35.1% ] Go to a state or private employment agency
- 8. [ 43.6% ] Network with members of my profession
- 9. [ 24.5% ] Visit a college or university placement office
- 10. [ 5.3% ] Other (Please specify.)

24. After you have applied for a job, at what point does the wait for a job offer become unreasonable? (Check one.)

n=92

The wait becomes unreasonable after...

- 1. [ 7.6% ] 2 weeks
- 2. [ 34.8% ] 3 to 4 weeks
- 3. [ 27.2% ] 5 to 6 weeks
- 4. [ 15.2% ] 7 to 8 weeks
- 5. [ 2.2% ] 9 to 10 weeks
- 6. [ 4.3% ] 11 weeks or more
- 7. [ 3.3% ] Not sure
- 8. [ 5.4% ] Other (Please specify.)

APPENDIX IV

25. In the future, if you were looking for another job, would you apply for a job in the same federal agency that had the job you declined? (Check one.)

n=92

- 1. [ 28.3% ] Definitely yes
  - 2. [ 33.7% ] Probably yes
  - 3. [ 14.1% ] Uncertain
  - 4. [ 12.0% ] Probably no
  - 5. [ 12.0% ] Definitely no
- } (Please specify why in the space below.)

26. In the future, if you were looking for another job, would you apply for a job in the federal government? (Check one.)

n=92

- 1. [ 56.5% ] Definitely yes
  - 2. [ 22.8% ] Probably yes
  - 3. [ 10.9% ] Uncertain
  - 4. [ 7.6% ] Probably no
  - 5. [ 2.2% ] Definitely no
- } (Please specify why in the space below.)

27. Based on your experiences, would you recommend federal employment to others? (Check one.)

n=92

- 1. [ 30.4% ] Definitely yes
  - 2. [ 30.4% ] Probably yes
  - 3. [ 21.7% ] Uncertain
  - 4. [ 7.6% ] Probably no
  - 5. [ 1.1% ] Definitely no
  - 6. [ 8.7% ] No basis to judge
- } (Please specify why in the space below.)

APPENDIX IV

E. Background

28. How many years of paid white-collar job experience (including full-time and part-time positions) do you have working for the following types of employers?

*(Report the number of years you have been employed in each category. Round to the nearest year. If less than six months, enter "0".)*

<u>Work experience</u>		<u>Number of years</u> <u>(Range)</u>
1. The federal government (civilian job)	n=28	<u>1 - 20</u>
2. State/local government	n=25	<u>1 - 23</u>
3. Private company	n=74	<u>1 - 27</u>
4. Non-profit organization	n=19	<u>1 - 35</u>
5. College/university	n=28	<u>1 - 15</u>
6. Military service	n=18	<u>2 - 20</u>
7. Self employment	n=23	<u>1 - 23</u>
8. Other (Specify.) _____	n=2	<u>4 - 7</u>
TOTAL	n=91	<u>1 - 43</u>

29. How would you rate your job-related oral communication skills? (Check one.)

n=92

1. [ 38.0% ] Far above average
2. [ 54.3% ] Above average
3. [ 7.6% ] Average
4. [ 0.0% ] Below average
5. [ 0.0% ] Far below average
6. [ 0.0% ] No basis to judge

APPENDIX IV

30. How would you rate your job-related written communication skills? (Check one.)

n=92

1. [ 42.4% ] Far above average
2. [ 50.0% ] Above average
3. [ 6.5% ] Average
4. [ 1.1% ] Below average
5. [ 0.0% ] Far below average
6. [ 0.0% ] No basis to judge

31. How would you rate your job-related organizational skills? (Check one.)

n=92

1. [ 46.7% ] Far above average
2. [ 50.0% ] Above average
3. [ 3.3% ] Average
4. [ 0.0% ] Below average
5. [ 0.0% ] Far below average
6. [ 0.0% ] No basis to judge

32. What is the highest educational level or degree that you have attained? (Check one.)

n=92

- 1. [ 0.0% ] Less than high school diploma } (Skip to Question 35.)
- 2. [ 0.0% ] High school diploma or equivalent } (Skip to Question 34.)
- 3. [ 0.0% ] High school diploma or equivalent plus technical training or apprenticeship }
- 4. [ 9.8% ] Some college without a degree }
- 5. [ 4.3% ] Associate's degree }
- 6. [ 44.6% ] Bachelor's degree }
- 7. [ 21.7% ] Postgraduate study without a degree } (Continue to Question 33.)
- 8. [ 13.0% ] Master's degree }
- 9. [ 1.1% ] Doctorate/Ph.D. }
- 10. [ 4.3% ] Professional degree (law, medicine, etc.) }
- 11. [ 1.1% ] Other (Please specify.)

33. To the best of your recollection, what was your college undergraduate grade point average (GPA) for all courses? (Use a scale where A = 4.0, B = 3.0, C = 2.0, D = 1.0, and F = 0. Check one.)

n=92

GPA for All Undergraduate Courses:

- 1. [ 16.3% ] 3.5 - 4.0
- 2. [ 50.0% ] 3.0 - 3.4
- 3. [ 21.7% ] 2.5 - 2.9
- 4. [ 12.0% ] 2.0 - 2.4
- 5. [ 0.0% ] Less than 2.0
- 6. [ 0.0% ] Don't remember
- 7. [ 0.0% ] Does not apply

34. In what year did you receive your highest academic diploma or degree? (Enter below.)

n=91

19\_\_\_\_\_ Responses ranged from 1955 - 1991

35. In what year were you born? (Enter year.)

n=92

19\_\_\_\_\_ Responses ranged from 1923 - 1969

36. Are you male or female? (Check one.)

n=92

- 1. [ 63.0% ] Male
- 2. [ 37.0% ] Female

37. Which of the following categories best describes your racial/ethnic background? (Check one.)

n=90

- 1. [ 5.6% ] Hispanic
- 2. [ 84.4% ] White (non-Hispanic)
- 3. [ 2.2% ] Black (non-Hispanic)
- 4. [ 0.0% ] American Indian/Alaskan Native
- 5. [ 5.6% ] Asian/Pacific Islander
- 6. [ 2.2% ] Other (Please specify.)

F. Comments

38. If you have any comments on this survey, or on why you declined a federal job, please use the space provided below.

n=94      68.1%

39. May we contact you to discuss the issues addressed in this survey? (Check one.)

n=92

- 1. [ 18.5% ] No (Thank you. That completes the survey.)
- 2. [ 81.5% ] Yes (Please provide your name and daytime telephone number below.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime telephone number:

(\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

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