



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

Wednesday, June 18, 2003

Hiring 2003

MEMORANDUM FOR: Heads Of Executive Departments And Agencies

FROM: Kay Coles James, Director

Subject: Hiring Students and Recent College Graduates

I have received a number of inquiries from colleagues asking how we can take advantage of a renewed interest in public service on the part of America's young people, especially college students and recent graduates. The myth is that it is difficult to hire these young people - they think so, and so do many of you. The fact is that nothing could be further from the truth. As is so often the case, the tools are already there, just waiting to be used. For example, there are a number of existing programs expressly designed to introduce students and new graduates to the Federal civil service; these include:

- **Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP).** This program offers temporary full- or part- time employment to students who are enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a degree seeking program at an accredited college or university. Students are hired non-competitively, but must be taking at least a halftime course load. STEP is also open to students attending high school, as well as accredited technical/vocational schools and community colleges.
- **Student Career Experience Program (SCEP).** Also known as the student cooperative education (or Co-Op) program, SCEP offers temporary, full- or part-time employment to students seeking to gain work experience directly related to their academic field of study. As with STEP, SCEP is available to students enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a degree-seeking program at an accredited college or university who are taking at least a half-time course load. Students are hired non-competitively and upon completion of their academic and work requirements (a minimum of 640-hours of work experience) may be converted to a term, career, or career-conditional appointment. As with STEP, this program is also open to students attending high school, or accredited technical/vocational schools and community colleges. SCEP gives students a 'jump start' in their chosen career field. For this reason, it is a great tool for addressing your future Human Capital needs.
- **Federal Career Intern Program (FCIP).** Agencies may develop intern programs for recent college undergraduates with degrees or experience relevant to an agency's hiring needs. Individuals receive a non-competitive "excepted" appointment; there are no grade point average (GPA) requirements. If the individual successfully completes the program's required two-year internship, he or she may be non-competitively converted to a permanent career appointment.

- **Outstanding Scholar Program.** This program is open to any recent undergraduate with a 3.5 GPA or better, or who is in the top 10% of his or her graduating class, with a Bachelor's or equivalent degree relevant to an agency's hiring needs. Those who qualify for this program may be appointed non-competitively to a permanent, career position. Agencies must use this program to supplement regular competitive hiring.

Additional Information about student employment is available at studentjobs.gov. Taken together, these tools assure our ability to reach out to those who want to serve, especially minorities and women. For those who do, the Federal Government offers almost limitless opportunity. And for those of you that are looking to hire the best and brightest, I hope this explodes the myth that because of "the rules," it cannot be done.