



Tips and Tidbits
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Question: How is the hiring of interns changing? What is the proposed Pathways Program? What benefits can be gleaned from the changes?

As part of the Federal reform to improve the recruitment and hiring process, President Obama signed Executive Order (EO) 13562, "Recruiting and Hiring Students and Recent Graduates," on 27 December 2010. This executive order establishes the Pathways Programs and replaces the controversial Federal Career Intern Program (FCIP).

The proposed Pathways Program, which will require the use of merit-based procedures for recruitment, assignment, and progressive career development, will consist of three excepted-service* programs customized to recruit, hire, train, and retain students and recent graduates. Clear paths to Federal internships for students from high school through post-graduate school and recent graduates will be offered, and the Program will provide for training or career development opportunities for individuals who are at the beginning of their Federal service with the hope of ultimate conversion to career civil service positions.

Under the Pathways umbrella, three programs will be introduced: the new Internship Program, the Recent Graduates Program, and a reinvigorated Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Program.

The **Internship Program** would replace the existing Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) and the Student Temporary Employment Programs (STEP). This program is designed for current students while enrolled in a wide variety of different types of educational institutions from high school to graduate level. The internship program would provide students the opportunity to work and consider Federal careers while still attending school. Agencies may convert interns who successfully complete program and academic requirements to any competitive service position for which the intern is qualified, but are not *required* to do so.

The **Recent Graduates Program** would target graduates who have completed, within the past two years, a qualifying associates, bachelors, masters, professional, doctorate, vocational or technical degree or certificate. Veterans unable to apply within two years of receiving their degree due to military service obligation, would have up to six years after degree or certificate completion to apply. Selected candidates will be provided a state of the art two-year career development program.

The **Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Program** has been the Federal Government's leadership development program for advanced degree candidates for the past 30 years and is designed for outstanding men and women from a variety of academic disciplines at the graduate

level who have a clear interest in, and commitment to, the leadership and management of public policies and programs. Finalists for the program are determined by a rigorous assessment process.

The new regulations would make the program more student friendly by aligning it with academic calendars.

Each of the programs share five core principles that advance merit system principles and the policies established by the Executive order: (1) transparency concerning internship needs and the process for applying; (2) limited scope requiring reports to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), who may cap the number of positions converted to permanent positions; (3) fairness to veterans by honoring veterans' preference and providing additional flexibilities to veterans in recognition of their military service; (4) OPM oversight requiring agencies to enter a memorandum of understanding before using the Pathways Programs; and, (5) Agency investment in participants requiring a positive experience to help prepare for successful careers in Government service.

These core principles aid the Federal government when competing with private industry for the best candidates for Federal service, while it honors veterans' preference and protects the normal competitive examining process to the greatest extent practicable. Those interested in these opportunities with the Federal Government may learn of potential opportunities through www.usajobs.gov.

OPM issued proposed regulations to implement the Pathways Programs on 4 August 2011. The period for submitting public comments on the proposed regulations closed on 4 October 2011. OPM is now reviewing the comments that were submitted. After the review is complete, appropriate changes will be made and final implementing regulations published.

The proposed new programs may not be used until final regulations have been issued. Accordingly, agencies may continue to use existing authorities to hire students - [the Student Career Experience Program \(SCEP\)](#) and [the Student Temporary Employment Program \(STEP\)](#) until the new Program takes effect. Agencies can also use the existing [PMF Program](#) to hire people with advanced degrees. Contact your servicing HR Specialist for additional information.

*Excepted service has the meaning given that term by section 2103 of title 5, United States Code, and includes all positions in the executive branch of the Federal Government which are specifically excepted from the competitive service by or pursuant to statute, by the President, or by the Office of Personnel Management, and which are not in the Senior Executive Service. Examples of excepted service organizations are the Central Intelligence Agency, the Foreign Service, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

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