

Career Opportunities Video Series: Connecting Heritage Learners to Federal Careers
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I learned my heritage language via moving to Russia after being born in the States.

I lived there until I was 13 years old,

then after moving to the States, out of fear of losing my Russian.

I engaged with a lot of Russian spoken media

and I spoke with my family,

which is why I speak Russian today.

I'm really passionate about the mission of the federal government,

particularly because of my military background.

I currently serve as a medic in the Army National Guard.

I found it on Indeed by applying to a massive amount of postings.

I prepared to be a good candidate for this position

by engaging with a lot of Russian spoken news media,

either out of Russia domestically

or out of other Eastern European countries spoken in the Russian language.

I researched a lot of military terminology,

strategic language, and financial and resource-oriented documentation in Russia.

In my job, I use my language skills on a daily basis,

particularly in the form of transcription and translation

as well as consecutive interpretation.

My job day-to-day mostly involves a lot of training.

Either I am transcribing or generating training materials for the staff

or I'm engaging in verbal communication or via phone call.

And then whenever it comes to the job itself,

I am transcribing audio recordings and doing a person-to-person interpretation.

As far as heritage speakers in my workplace, about half of them

I would say are heritage speakers.

The rest are either native or they learned Russian in higher education.

And in dealing with them mostly we just have conversations about trivial topics in between work-related assignments.

I see being a heritage speaker is particularly helpful in my workplace

by virtue of understanding certain cultural markers that people in higher education

who are not native or heritage speakers of Russian simply cannot get or struggle with getting even after years of education.

My professional life changed quite a bit after utilizing my heritage language

by virtue of more career opportunities being present than in my previous career path, which was cyber security.

Also, opportunities for pay went up significantly.

My experience working for the federal government contributed to my professional development

by virtue of offering me significantly more opportunities

to work on the United States government's federal missions abroad.

For instance, I was granted the opportunity to work in Germany over the course of three months on a short-term assignment.

I'm doing work that I was extremely passionate about.

I also benefited significantly from the opportunities in pay.

For instance, prior to beginning my career in this field,

working as a contractor, I got my degree in university in cyber security.

Upon getting this job, working in Germany, I was able to triple my salary.

Working for the federal government has contributed to my personal growth and fulfillment in many ways.

For instance, offering me the opportunity to speak to many other intelligent

and rather interesting Russian heritage, native speakers, as well as learners

who are just as passionate as I am about the cultural and intellectual aspects of the Russian culture and language and relate to them on their hobbies and interests, meet their families.

I believe I can help the Russian community in my role to the extent that there are many Russian speakers who live in Eastern Europe, not exclusively in Russia, let's say, in Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine and a lot of the United States and allies' mission that exist abroad in that region seek to benefit those Russian speakers.

The advice I would give heritage language learners who are interested in pursuing a federal job is going to university, getting some kind of higher education, preferably, master's degree, anything postgraduate related to language studies, broadly linguistics, also finding an opportunity in the military will give them plenty of opportunity to grow in the federal government.