

Language Pathways Checklist for Steps to a Federal Career

High School

- Study your language
 - Take classes and participate in language activities at your school.
 - Take classes at a community-based language school.
 - Enroll in summer language programs like STARTALK.
 - Participate in a NSLI-Y program.
 - Use language-learning apps.
 - Engage with news and entertainment in the language.
 - Listen to Episode 2 of the Language Pathways Podcast: “Developing Heritage Learner Skills for Government Careers” and Episode 6: “Language Learning, Volunteer, and Work Opportunities to Prepare for a Government Career”.
 - Check out our Language Learning Guide for your language.
- Obtain the Seal of Biliteracy
 - Check for guidelines in your school district.
 - Talk to guidance counselors and language teachers about requirements.
 - Apply to take qualifying language assessments.
 - Listen to Episode 7 of the Language Pathways Podcast: “Testing and Demonstrating Proficiency in Heritage Languages”.
- Get involved in the community
 - Engage in service-learning activities in your community.
 - Participate in a community-based school, faith-based organization, or cultural group.
- Explore careers and build job skills
 - Research careers of interest.
 - Attend career fairs and networking events.
 - Look for mentorship opportunities.
 - Start building skills through part-time jobs.
 - Listen to Episode 9 of the Language Pathways Podcast: “Government Jobs that Use Language Skills”.
- Consider college and the military
 - Research potential schools and their language programs, including Language Flagships.
 - Do they teach your language? Is there a track for heritage learners?
 - Do they offer your language as a major, minor, or certificate track?
 - Are there placement tests or pre-/co-requisites?
 - Is there a foreign language proficiency requirement?
 - Look into study abroad programs.
 - What schools have study abroad opportunities?
 - Will your major or program require you to study abroad?
 - Do programs abroad allow you to take courses in your language or are most courses taught in English?
 - Research military branches and specialties.
 - Apply for private or federal scholarships.
 - Apply for Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) programs and scholarships.

Your exact path to a federal career may vary. Be sure to ask a guidance counselor, academic advisor, career center, recruiter, commanding officer, or other local source for advice about your specific situation.

Military

- Research branches and specialties
 - Think about your service, educational, and career goals.
 - Look for specialties that use your language skills.
 - Consider the language training options, benefits, and service commitments for different military branches and specialties.
 - Meet with recruiters for branches of interest.
 - Listen to Episode 9 of the Language Pathways Podcast: “Government Jobs that Use Language Skills”.
- Enlist
 - Qualify for enlistment, including physical tests and the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB).
 - Request to take the Defense Language Aptitude Battery (DLAB) and/or Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT).
 - Determine Active Duty or Guard/Reserve Service and Military Occupational Specialty.
 - Agree to training path and timeline.
- Complete training
 - Complete basic training.
 - Complete language training.
 - Complete Military Occupational Specialty training.
 - Report to Active Duty Base or return home for Guard/Reserve.
- Continue service
 - Advance through military ranks.
 - Learn additional languages or Military Occupational Specialties.
 - Work with partner government agencies such as the CIA, NSA, or FBI.
 - Volunteer for deployment or mission-specific work.
 - Extend your service contract.
 - Research reenlistment options in terms of training, location assignments, and bonuses.
- Use education benefits
 - Enroll in college benefits after meeting service requirements.
 - Participate in a Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) program and apply for scholarships for domestic, overseas, or online language study through [Project GO](#).
 - Attend Officer Candidate School.
 - Request to take the Defense Language Aptitude Battery (DLAB) and/or Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT).
 - Complete specialized training including language training.

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College

- Take language classes
 - Assess your current proficiency levels in different skills.
 - Set goals for the proficiency levels you want to reach.
 - Meet with an academic advisor to plan your classes.
 - Apply for scholarships and other funding opportunities.
 - Listen to Episode 7 of the Language Pathways Podcast: “Testing and Demonstrating Proficiency in a Heritage Language”.
- Build other skills
 - Choose a major or minor outside of your language.
 - Look for and make connections between your studies and your language skills.
 - Build soft skills like leadership and organization through volunteer service, clubs, sports, or student government.
 - Participate in a Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) program or serve in the National Guard or a Reserve unit.
 - Listen to Episode 9 of the Language Pathways Podcast: “Government Jobs that Use Language Skills”.
- Start networking
 - Talk to classmates, professors, and alumni with experience in your area of interest.
 - Attend career fairs and networking events.
 - Participate in informational interviews.
 - Connect with professionals working in your area of interest on LinkedIn.
 - Add another profile in your language on LinkedIn.
 - Listen to Episode 8 of the Language Pathways Podcast: “Networking and Searching for Government Jobs”.
- Immerse yourself in your language
 - Read, listen to, and watch news and media in the language.
 - Join language-related clubs, student groups, or residential communities.
 - Get involved and volunteer with local language communities and schools.
 - Participate in study abroad and look for scholarships to help with funding.
 - Enroll in U.S.-based summer language programs.
 - Check out our Language Learning Guide for your language.
- Gain work experience and training
 - Build skills through on-campus, part-time, and summer jobs.
 - Take advantage of the resources at your school’s career center.
 - Draft a resume and cover letters that highlight your language skills and work experience.
 - Practice interviewing.
 - Search for jobs and internships.
 - Listen to Episode 6 of the Language Pathways Podcast: “Language Learning, Volunteer, and Work Opportunities to Prepare for a Government Career”.
 - Take our “What federal job is right for me?” quiz.

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Federal Career

- Research agencies and roles
 - Create a USAJOBS account to search for jobs and save them to your profile.
 - Review security clearance requirements and prepare documentation.
 - Search for additional job opportunities via agency-specific websites and [Intelligence Careers](#).
 - Listen to Episode 8 of the Language Pathways Podcast: “Networking and Searching for Government Jobs” and Episode 9: “Government Jobs that Use Language Skills”.
- Write a federal resume
 - Make a list of your previous jobs.
 - Describe your duties and responsibilities for each job.
 - Quantify your job accomplishments using numbers, percentages, and other performance metrics.
 - Reference key words from the job description.
 - Use the resume builder on USAJOBS.
 - Customize your resume for each job to which you apply.
 - Ask a friend to proofread and provide feedback on your resume.
 - Listen to Episode 10 of the Language Pathways Podcast: “Recruiting and Hiring Processes for Government Jobs”.
- Look for related jobs
 - Research jobs at federal contractors that work with your agency of interest.
 - Research related jobs in local or state governments, or with non-governmental organizations (NGOs).
 - Apply to jobs with similar job titles or required skills as your target federal job.
 - Apply to other roles within your agency of interest if your desired role is not available.
 - Explore and consider applying for part-time and temporary jobs with your agency of interest or federal contractors.
 - Continue volunteering and providing service in the community.
- Practice interviewing
 - Think about how you have demonstrated the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities in the job description.
 - Ask a friend, mentor, or career counselor to help you practice responding to interview questions.
 - Research tips and prepare for speaking on camera for a video interview and participating in a recorded digital interview.

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