Federal Advisor Training

PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

CALL TO SERVE
KNOW YOUR CAMPUS | UNIVERSITY PROFILE CHECKLIST

It is important to consider the readiness and alignment of key players on campus before you begin promoting public service. Because you will need to address barriers and build on strengths, a campus profile is an important tool in developing these plans.

Likewise, it is valuable to periodically review your progress. Taking stock of barriers and the support of key players can help identify how far you have come and what additional areas need attention and/or alignment to reach your goals.

Taking Stock of Your Campus

EDUCATING AND ADVISING STUDENTS

1. How do you/can you increase the knowledge of all Career Center staff about Partnership resources?

2. How do you/can you increase the knowledge of all Career Center staff about the federal process and Partnership resources (i.e. Call to Serve toolkit, Makingthedifference.org and Partnership publications)?

3. Who is/can be the “point person” or designated team who works with advisors throughout the university?

4. Does your Career Center highlight federal opportunities prominently in your offices, on your Web sites and in resource guides? How can you improve this?
5. Is raising awareness of public service viewed as a cross-campus endeavor? Do you collaborate with other departments and campus organizations?

6. Have you clearly identified the goals and objectives of your efforts, documented them and gained a consensus from your team?

7. Have you added a federal component to existing events and programming?

8. Does the campaign have active champions who support the effort with their statements, actions and resources?
PROMOTING FEDERAL SERVICE ON CAMPUS | EASY WAYS TO GET STARTED

Executing a plan to promote federal service doesn’t have to be hard. There are many easy and cost-effective ways to get the word out about opportunities for students in the federal government.

SET GOALS
Take time to set goals for each semester and create a general outline for your plan to promote federal service. Goals will vary by campus, but having an outline to work from will give your efforts structure and allow you to keep track of your progress.

BUILD YOUR TEAM
Finding a team of people who are excited about your cause and willing to assist in your effort is critical to your success. Schools have found that it is helpful to create an advisory committee of high level supporters, as well as a working group of faculty and staff members across campus. These groups should meet periodically to check on the progress of the plan.

DON’T REINVENT THE WHEEL
There is no need to spend a lot of time planning new events around federal service. Instead, start by focusing your time on adding a federal service component to existing events and activities.

- Add a federal employee to a panel.
- Include a federal employee in alumni profiles.
- Include information about federal jobs in career handouts for academic areas.
- Bring federal recruiters to career fairs or mock interviews.

UTILIZE COST-EFFECTIVE ONLINE RESOURCES

- Be sure that you’ve signed up for Call to Serve eNews and our weekly Hot Jobs and Cool Internships listservs, and forward them to students or faculty who might be interested in public service opportunities.
- Encourage students to “like” the Partnership Facebook Page to help them stay informed about federal opportunities.
- Create a link from your homepage to the Partnership Facebook page and/or makingthedifference.org.

ENGAGE FACULTY AND ACADEMIC ADVISORS

Faculty and advisors spend most of their time with students and are a valuable resource to help spread the word about federal service. Encourage these groups to participate in Call to Serve webinars and learn more about advising students on federal career and internship opportunities by giving them academic quick guides.

MAKING THE DIFFERENCE PRESENTATION

Download the Making the Difference student presentation at calltoserve.org/toolkit to give to classes or as a stand-alone event. It comes complete with full presenters’ notes. This is also a great resource to use when training your staff to advise about public service.
CAMPUS SUSTAINABILITY | MARKETING AND ON-CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT

Regardless of the individual or office leading *Call to Serve*, it is crucial to involve multiple key players on campus. A cross-campus effort to inspire and educate students will broaden your reach and strengthen your impact.

**CONDUCT STRATEGIC OUTREACH TO STUDENTS**

College students are bombarded with messages and materials, so you will have to work strategically to effectively reach out to them and make an impact.

**Match students’ interest areas to federal opportunities.** College students want materials and programming that will tell them how to match their personal interests with federal opportunities. Focus on reaching students by major or academic area.

**Brand your outreach and events.** Use a consistent message and brand that will resonate with your student body. For example, Stanford used “Transform your World. Change the Face of Government,” while Clark Atlanta found that “Learn, lead, change. Public Service will get you there” matched up well with their school motto. “Making the Difference” also works as a great motto and method of branding your federal promotion efforts.

**Put a face on government.** Profile young alumni so students can picture themselves in government.

**Mix practical information with an inspirational message.** Share stories of the achievements of federal employees while also providing practical resources that break down the federal application process.

**CROSS CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT**

**University Leadership**

Get top level leadership involved to garner financial and staffing support. Invite your president or deans to speak at events to highlight the importance of public service and keep them informed about your *Call to Serve* efforts.

**Faculty**

Faculty members often serve as formal academic advisors and informal career advisors. Provide them with key information and encourage them to participate in your efforts to educate students about federal government. Give them copies of Academic Guides (pg. 41), invite them to participate in *Call to Serve* webinars and help them find ways to incorporate federal speakers into their courses. The Annenberg Speakers Bureau or alumni in government would be great to invite to campus.

**Other Departments and Staff**

Reach out to department-based career centers, service-learning or public service centers, and anyone else on campus that works with students around public service or careers.

- Target academic departments linked to mission-critical occupations.
- Research faculty receiving federal grant support for research.
- Tap into faculty or staff working on service-learning and community service.

For more information, visit calltoserve.org
CAMPUS CASE STUDY | SACRAMENTO STATE

Sacramento State University worked closely with the Partnership from 2008-2010 on promoting federal public service. Here are some highlights of what they learned along the way. Read more about what other campuses are doing on Partnership Connect blogs (pg. 46).

BEST WAYS TO REACH STUDENTS

- **Inspire:** Students can be very discouraged and fearful when they think about job search in general. When they learn that the nation’s largest employer is hiring and that they can find jobs in their area of interest, it is a breath of fresh air. When preparing to present to a targeted group of students, I put in extra effort to print out local openings, data about jobs in their field, academic quick guides, etc. This really helps engage students because it brings it home for them. If I am talking to freshman and sophomores, I am going to show them sample internship opportunities. If I am talking to engineers, I print out an academic quick guide or something from wherethejobsare.org.
- **Educate:** This can be a challenge because students cannot always attend a workshop. I was finding myself doing a lot of 1:1 educating during career counseling sessions. This is great for the student, but not efficient and not always necessary. I started posting resources on our website that I use on a regular basis. Also, I presented online sessions on topics such as “Finding Jobs in Government” and “Resume and Application.” These sessions were recorded and can now be accessed on our Web site. I encourage students to first view the recorded session before they make an appointment with me. The Partnership webinars are also very useful. When webinars were open to students, I would send the recordings out on my listserv a few days later.
- **Reaching mission critical areas:** I have found the best way to draw these students is to put on a targeted event that brings agency representatives from their field of interest to campus. It is also very important to get faculty involved. To involve faculty I have organized classroom presentations by visiting agency representatives, networking meetings, or asked them to play a role in planning the event. Once the faculty is on board, they will be sure to encourage students to attend. Also, professionally focused student clubs are a great way to get in contact with highly motivated and involved students.
- **Using students to help with effort:** We hired a “Student Ambassador”. He scheduled and conducted short classroom presentations. This allowed us to talk to over 335 students in one semester - students who may not otherwise have heard about the program or attended an event. I think this was one of the most productive projects I gave our ambassador.

CROSS CAMPUS COLLABORATION

- **Why is this important?** This is very important in driving students to your events, and in spreading the word about the campaign in general. The more I collaborated with other academic departments and student programs, the more students I saw coming to the career center saying “I heard from my teacher/advisor/friend that you have a program to help students get federal jobs…” Also, collaboration is important because it makes our work lighter and sets the stage for sustainability for the program.
- **Who have you involved?** We worked extensively with the College of Business on a recruitment/panel event. Also, they created a link on their Web site to our Web site for the
Call to Serve initiative and agreed to post announcements and opportunities on their own email lists to business students.

- **Leadership support:** The Career Center Director and Associate Director wrote formal letters and emails on behalf of the program when it was launched and in support of key events. These letters went to department chairs and higher administration at the University.

- **Mission critical areas:** As mentioned above, I worked extensively with the College of Business. I also worked with the College of Engineering and Health and Human Services faculty and staff. Information was distributed to engineering students at the annual Engineering and Computer Science Career Fair and through a career services email list in the department. The College of Health and Human Services faculty were very interested in spreading the word about internship/student opportunities in the federal government. We were able to forge a new partnership with the Veterans Health Administration (“V.A.L.O.R”. - student employment program for nurses) as a result.

### REGIONAL AGENCY RELATIONSHIPS

- **Finding contacts:** The first step is to find out who is already partnering with the university. To do this, I drew upon our job posting system, past career fair attendance and academic department contacts. Next, I systematically built up my contacts through targeted events each semester, primarily in the mission critical areas. The events gave me good leverage when calling agencies and trying to connect with new or “cold” contacts. If agencies attended the event, we made sure they got something out of it and continued to follow up and invite them to be involved in other ways. For example, a TSA representative at the “Sac State Goes Global” event was invited to be the main presenter at a find and apply workshop the following month. He also participated in the “Federal Foot in the Door” job search academy the following semester. The TSA is now a regular attendee of our events and has volunteered on a number of occasions to advise and mentor students in the job search process. To thank them, TSA representatives were recognized and given a token of appreciation along with other key agency contacts at our year end federal service event.

- **Best ways to use agencies:** When you find agency representatives that know a lot about the hiring process and are good speakers – keep them involved! One such agency contact from the Bureau of Reclamation has trained our students on numerous occasions and even offered an “inside look at the federal hiring process” workshop to our staff.

### CREATING A LONG TERM CAMPAIGN

- **How have you created a sustainable campaign?** I have trained our staff to the point that they now feel comfortable advising students and putting on government related events of their own. This did not happen overnight, but persistence finally paid off!

- **Why is this necessary?** I believe that our work on the grant has resulted in substantial and valuable knowledge, programs, contacts, and resources added to our center. Students still need to know about the benefits and many opportunities in federal government and still need help getting these jobs. For me it is important that we do not lose these treasures just because the grant is over. Thankfully, it looks like the Career Center and campus has fully embraced the new program and would be just as sad to see it go as I would! We have been able to launch a new and permanent Career Center program called “Pathways to Public Service” which will continue to provide assistance to students and partner with agencies in all areas of government.
BUILDING AGENCY RELATIONSHIPS | BEST PRACTICES

START SMALL THEN GROW

Rather than casting a wide net, determine a few areas with the most potential to engage students and then focus on building agency relationships to complement those areas. For example, choose a strong academic area on campus where government has a high need, then find out which agencies are hiring in that major and start building relationships with those agencies first.

THINK STRATEGICALLY ABOUT WHO TO CONTACT

Think about the ideal federal contact and what kind of relationship would be most effective for the campus, keeping that person in mind as you start building relationships. Are you looking for a recruiter? Someone to speak to classes? Someone working in a specific field? This strategy will give more focus to your outreach and will result in relationships that are more effective over time.

MAKE THE MOST OF WHAT YOU’VE GOT

Schools that are most successful in building relationships are those that leverage existing contacts.

- Send an email to departmental offices to see if any faculty or staff have federal contacts. These could be former federal employees working at the university, spouses or relatives of employees or friends.
- Check with your grants office to find faculty who have federal grants.
- Speak with Alumni Affairs to search for alumni with federal positions. The easiest way to do this is to get a list of alumni with .gov email addresses. Before you contact the Alumni, remove all state and local government email addresses.
- Look through your employer or job search database for government listings.

SELL THE CAMPUS

Many agency representatives, especially those in human resources, field a large number of calls from universities. Before you get on the phone, think of ways to make your campus stand out.

- Highlight the work being done specifically to promote federal service.
- Find out which areas the agency needs to hire and point out the strong departments on campus that match those hiring needs.
- Promote other venues that would be appealing to agencies; for example, strong student groups that focus on topics that would be useful to agencies.

Finally, don’t forget to have an ask! After selling the person on why the agency should want to work with the university, explain exactly how they can get involved.

BE PERSISTENT

Federal employees are busy people! Try to make contact once and if nothing comes back, don’t be ashamed to try again or find a different contact in that agency. There is also nothing wrong with making a phone call and following it with an email. Your persistence will pay off.
BUILDING AGENCY RELATIONSHIPS | FINDING AGENCY CONTACTS

There are more than 160 federal agencies across the country. Understandably, there is not one place to find the most up to date contact for a specific agency or regional office. Here are some ways to start building a list of contacts and, more importantly, establishing long-term relationships.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER BEFORE STARTING YOUR SEARCH

1. How does your campus currently work with federal agencies?
2. How does your campus decide which agencies to engage in the future? Is it strategic?
3. Do you involve federal reps to interact with faculty and students outside career fairs?
4. Have you established long-term, multifaceted relationships with agencies?

FINDING EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS AND NEW CONTACTS

Cross campus contacts. People across campus have connections to agencies, whether they work in another career services office, were employed in government in the past or have a grant from a federal agency. Build up your agency contacts by reaching out across campus and leveraging existing relationships.

Find alumni contacts. Use your alumni database to search for alumni with a .gov email address.

Collaborate with nearby schools. Combine efforts by sharing contacts and co-sponsoring events. For example, several Rhode Island campuses hold a state-wide Career Fair to increase agency presence that holding an individual event.

Organize your contacts. Create a database to track your contacts and share it with offices across your campus. Nothing looks worse than an uncoordinated outreach from one campus!

WHERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT AGENCIES

Fedscope.opm.gov Federal employee database to search by state, GS-level, occupation and more.

Government blogs Agencies often maintain blogs with news, on-going projects and events that provide insight into the agency. Example: The White House blog, whitehouse.gov/blog.

USA.gov Quickly find information about all levels of government and search for agencies by topic, reach out to government officials and use hyperlinks to visit agency Web sites.

Bestplacestowork.org Strategically build relationships with highly ranked agencies for employee satisfaction.

Wherethejobsare.org Determine which agencies have hiring needs that aligns with the strengths of your campus and student needs. Carefully select agencies to invite to career events.
FIND NEW CONTACTS

Calltoserve.org/toolkit The Directory of Agency Contacts has more than 75 agency contacts.

USAJOBS.gov Set up an email alert for your region to learn more about which agencies have entry-level jobs and internships available close to your campus. These agencies are ideal targets. Use the contact listed at the bottom of the “How to Apply” page to be in touch.

Feb.gov Since 84 percent of the federal workforce is located outside the Washington, D.C. area, use your region’s Federal Executive Board to connect with agencies and invite agencies to get involved with your campus. Specific requests work best.

Google maps search Type in your nearest city and “federal agencies” to find regional federal agencies. Example search: Chicago, federal

Social media Use Web sites like Facebook and LinkedIn to learn more about specific agencies and to find contacts in your area. Example: in LinkedIn, search USDA, filter by location. In Facebook, search for individual agency pages (i.e. Department of State).

The Blue Pages Use your phone book’s blue pages to search for federal government agencies located in your community. Call and ask for Human Resources or, more specifically, someone who works on student programs, internships or college recruitment.

Diplomats in Residence Search for the closest Diplomat in Residence to your school through the U.S. Department of State. They are open to speaking at colleges and universities.