

Mapping Your Future

Public Service: Careers in Government

Who Works in Public Service?

If someone asked you to name someone who works in government, the first person that might come to mind is the Mayor, the Governor, or the President. There are a lot more people involved in making the city, state and federal government run and all of those people are in public service. The government has just about any job you can think of, from accountants, cooks, and engineers, to lawyers, mechanics, and web developers. Other jobs, like firefighters and public health inspectors, are only found within the government.



The big difference between working for the government and working for other employers is that, in the government, the money to pay the salaries comes from taxes and fees that are collected from individuals and businesses. When you work in public service, you are expected to use resources wisely.

- **Benefits.** Public service jobs have great benefits, including health and other types of insurance, retirement plans, and sometimes tuition reimbursement.
- **Security.** People who work in civil service positions usually have stable, long-term employment.
- **Variety.** There are jobs for people with all kinds of interests.
- **Fairness.** A unique hiring and promotion process called the civil service system is used to promote fairness.
- **Lifestyle.** Hours, days and responsibilities are usually more defined and therefore there may be a better balance between work and life in the public sector than there is when you work for a private employer.
- **Opportunity.** Skills you learn in the public sector can be transferred to the private sector.

Why Do People Work in Public Service?

- **Purpose.** You can make your city, state, or country a better place to live, work and visit.

City, State, and Federal Government: Who Does What?

Most people in public service in New York City work for the City of New York. But did you know that you can stay right here in New York City and work for New York State or the Federal government? Each level of government has some unique and some shared functions. As a result, the types of jobs may vary from level to level.

City	State	Federal
Operate public schools	Issue drivers' licenses	Establish a military
Establish police and fire departments	Conduct elections	Manage relationships with other nations
Build and maintain public works		Operate the Postal Service
Shared by Two or More Levels		
Operate colleges	Create and operate parks	Ensure public health and safety
Make laws and regulations	Build and maintain roads and highways	Operate hospitals
Provide social services	Provide public transportation	Protect the environment

Tech & Telecom

Governments can't run without computers, networks, and phones. All of the agencies that make up the government must use computers — and sometimes mobile devices like smartphones and tablets — so that they can develop documents, communicate between agencies and with the public, store and analyze data, and manage finances, among other functions. Wherever computers are used, there is a need for technicians to install and fix them, and programmers to create applications to run on them. Just like in the private sector, the more knowledge, skill, and experience you have, the more likely you will be better paid. Software and hardware tech jobs can be found in almost every government agency or department and some departments specialize entirely in tech.

	ENTRY-LEVEL	MORE EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE		SENIOR-LEVEL
Typical Yearly Pay	\$35,000 to \$45,000	\$45,000 to \$60,000	\$60,000 to \$80,000	\$80,000+
Sample Pathways	Help Desk Level 1	Desktop Support Technician	Quality Assurance Analyst	Senior Systems Analyst
	Network Services Specialist	Network Administrator	Network Manager	Director, Network and Cybersecurity Operations
	Web Content Specialist	Web Developer	Applications Developer	Senior Applications Developer

PLACES YOU MIGHT WORK INCLUDE:

City of New York	Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications, Human Resources Administration, Department of Investigation, and the Department of Education
New York State	Office of Information Technology Services, Department of Health, the Attorney General's Office, the State Insurance Fund, and the State Police Department
U.S. Government	National Telecommunications and Information Administration (Department of Commerce), Treasury Department, Department of Energy, and the Library of Congress

Public Safety & Health

Protecting the people is a major function of the government. That means there are plenty of public service jobs for people who prevent and investigate crime, enforce the law, put out fires, make sure that living conditions and food are safe, manage emergencies, and recover from disasters. Many people who go into this line of work consider it a "calling," not a career. They want to protect and serve people or enjoy serving such an important function in society. Public safety employees are often carefully screened for drug use, criminal justice history, and character. Public safety agencies operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Everyone knows that the police and fire departments employ officers and firefighters, but these departments also employ people in hundreds of other titles related to investigation, inspection, rescue, and unit dispatch. There are dozens of agencies at the city, state, and federal levels that are responsible for public health and safety, and each employs many workers in a variety of job types, too.

	ENTRY-LEVEL	MORE EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE		SENIOR-LEVEL
Typical Yearly Pay	\$30,000 to \$44,000	\$45,000 to \$89,000		\$90,000+
Sample Pathways	Transportation Security Officer	Transportation Security Supervisor	Transportation Security Manager	Federal Security Director
	Public Health Inspector	Occupational Health and Safety Specialist	Senior Occupational Health Specialist	Occupational Health and Safety Manager
	Emergency Management Technician (EMT)	Emergency Response Assistant	Emergency Response Specialist	Senior Emergency Response and Preparedness Specialist

PLACES YOU MIGHT WORK INCLUDE:

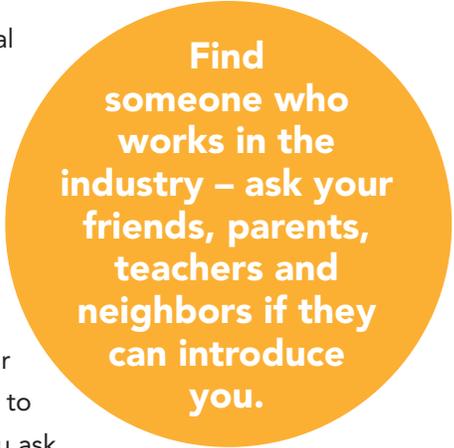
City of New York	Department of Buildings, Police Department, Fire Department, Office of Emergency Management, Department of Corrections, and Department of Probation, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
New York State	New York State Police, Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, Department of Criminal Justice Services, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services.
U.S. Government	Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Homeland Security (including U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the Transportation Security Administration), the Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Agency, the U.S. Marshal Service, the Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Put Yourself on the Map: How to Use This Brochure

Like any map, this Career Map helps you find your way to new places – in this case, government. As you read, ask yourself: what different kinds of jobs are there? How does one job lead to the next? Which ones will I like? How much money can I earn, and how long will it take me to get there? What kind of training do I need?

One of the best ways to find a satisfying career is to get clear about your personal interests and strengths. What do you most enjoy doing? What do your friends, teachers, parents say you do best? Do you prefer to work with people, ideas or things? Do you want to be in charge, or work alongside your peers? Which of these jobs will let you be your best?

Once you've found a path that sounds like a good fit, it's time to test it out. Find someone who works in that type of job – ask your friends, parents, teachers and neighbors if they can introduce you. Ask if they are willing to talk with you for a few minutes. This is called an "informational interview." You're not asking them to find you a job; you're only asking to listen and learn about their experience. If you ask in a professional manner, many people are happy to speak with you. (If you're nervous about this, ask a teacher, guidance counselor or parent to help.)



Find someone who works in the industry – ask your friends, parents, teachers and neighbors if they can introduce you.

Before you meet with the person, reread the brochure and write down any questions you have, for example:

- What do you spend your day doing in this job?
- How did you get started in this field?
- How much reading, writing or math do you do in your job?
- How do people dress at the work place?
- Do you have a routine set of tasks you do every day or do you do something different every day?
- Do you work the same schedule every week, or does it change?
- What courses would I take in high school or college to prepare for this job?
- What is my next step after high school if I am interested in this field?
- Where can I find people who can help me learn more about this field?

Make sure to send a thank you note, and in no time you'll be on your way. For more information about this industry and many others, you can visit www.careerzone.ny.gov

Design & Build

The government owns many buildings, including colleges, courts, hospitals, motor vehicle inspection sites, office buildings, and public housing and schools. Government workers often design and build these buildings, operate and preserve them, and make sure they are energy efficient and safe to inhabit. While much of the design and construction is contracted out to private firms, there are still a range of public service jobs for people who enjoy this work. Some jobs — like engineers, architects, and construction managers — require a four-year college degree to get “a foot in the door,” while others — like building superintendents and carpenters — require hands-on experience and skills.

	ENTRY-LEVEL	MORE EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE		SENIOR-LEVEL
Typical Yearly Pay	\$18,000 to \$38,000	\$40,000 to \$65,000	\$65,000 to \$100,000	\$100,000+
Sample Pathways	Drafting Assistant	Engineering Assistant	Civil Engineer	Assistant Chief Civil Engineer
	Apprentice Carpenter	Journeyman Carpenter	Carpenter Foreman	Construction Project Manager
	Building Services Aide	Assistant Buildings Inspector	Construction Inspector	Senior Construction Inspector

PLACES YOU MIGHT WORK INCLUDE:

City of New York	Department of Buildings, Department of Design and Construction, Landmark Preservation Commission, School Construction Authority, New York City Housing Authority
New York State	Department of Homes and Community Renewal, Dormitory Authority, Office of General Services
U.S. Government	Department of Housing and Urban Development, General Services Administration, National Capital Planning Commission

Elected Officials

New York City is home to many elected officials, including its Mayor, 51 Council Members, the Comptroller, five Borough Presidents, five District Attorneys, and the Public Advocate. State “electeds” include the Governor and Lieutenant Governor, the Comptroller, the Attorney General, 150 Members of the Assembly, and 63 State Senators (though this number varies). The two Senators who represent New York State in the U.S. Senate have offices in New York City, as do the 27 Members of Congress that represent New York City residents in the U.S. House of Representatives. All of the offices of these elected officials employ staffers to assist them in their many government duties. Many jobs in this field require a four-year college degree even at the entry level, and a postgraduate degree — in law, policy, business, and other areas — if you want to advance.

	ENTRY-LEVEL	MORE EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE		SENIOR-LEVEL
Typical Yearly Pay	\$28,000 to \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$55,000	\$55,000 to \$90,000	\$100,000+
Sample Pathways	Constituent Services Liaison	Community Coordinator	Community Affairs Liaison	Director of Community Affairs
	Councilmanic Aide	Policy Aide	Legislative Policy Analyst	Policy Director
	Paralegal Aide	Paralegal	Legal Aide	Assistant District Attorney

PLACES YOU MIGHT WORK INCLUDE:

City of New York	Council Speaker, Council Finance, Office of the Mayor, Office of the Comptroller, Public Advocate’s Office, Brooklyn Borough President’s Office, Bronx District Attorney
New York State	Office of Legislative Affairs, Assembly Speaker’s Office, Attorney General’s Office
U.S. Government	Congressional Offices

Did you know?

- **The City of New York is the largest single employer in New York City.**
- **More than half a million people work for the City of New York. That’s more people than live in the borough of Staten Island!**
- **Just about every federal agency has at least one office in New York City.**
- **Celebrities who worked for the government before they became famous include comedians Wanda Sykes and Steve Carrell, rap musician Rick Ross, and soul singer Sharon Jones.**

Landing the Job: The Civil Service System

In the early days of the United States many unqualified people were hired for government jobs because of who they knew. An exam system was created to make sure that the government hired qualified people and that capable people had a fair chance of getting a job. The system of exams and hiring is called the *civil service system*.

This civil service process is designed to make hiring and promotions fair. For most jobs in City and State government, you must take an exam. The process looks something like this:

First you:

- Register for the exam
- Take the exam, submit your resume and other requirements depending on the job

Then the City or State:

- Scores the test and rates your qualifications
- Creates a list of people who passed the exam; the highest scoring person is at the top of the list
- Contacts candidates in the order of their score on the test starting from the highest score
- Interviews candidates until they find the one that is right for the job

Some City and State government jobs are not subject to the civil service system, so there is no exam, just an application, a resume, and usually a cover letter. These jobs are usually temporary or require very special skills. Very few federal government civil service jobs require an exam. Instead, when you apply for the job online, the agency rates your qualifications from your application, resume, and questionnaire, and gives you a score.

The rest is just like New York City or State. You are placed on a list, the agency contacts and interviews the highest scoring candidates until they find the right one. All federal jobs are posted at <https://www.usajobs.gov/>.

You can find City and State exam schedules at these websites:

<http://www1.nyc.gov/jobs/exams.page>

<http://www.cs.ny.gov/jobseeker/public/stateexam.cfm>

This brochure highlights career paths in six of the many fields within public service.

For more information, see:

New York City Civil Service Jobs <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcas/html/work/work.shtml>

How to Get a State Job <https://statejobsny.com/public/howitworks.cfm>

Federal Office of Personnel Management <http://www.opm.gov/>

“Working for the Federal Government” report

<http://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2014/article/federal-work-part-1.htm>

Job Boards

New York City: <http://www1.nyc.gov/jobs>

New York State: <https://www.statejobsny.com/>

Federal Government: [www.usajobs](http://www.usajobs.gov/)

Sources

All titles and pay ranges are from real-world examples either posted on one of the government job boards listed above, or on “SeeThroughNY” which shows 2014 pay rates for all titles within the New York City and New York State governments

Office of Postsecondary Readiness (OPSR)
New York City Department of Education
52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

Transportation

Governments operate all types of transportation. On the ground they operate trains and subways, trucks, buses, vans, and cars, as well as the rails, roads, bridges and tunnels. There are City-owned ferries and boats owned by all levels of government (fire, police, and Coast Guard). JFK and LaGuardia Airports are owned by the City and operated by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. There are jobs for people who can operate, organize and schedule, help people board and disembark, and repair and take care of the vehicles. These jobs are found in many agencies or departments. Coordinating vehicle purchasing and servicing across multiple agencies proved to be so complicated that the City created a “virtual fleet” to streamline the system. Many jobs in transportation operations do not require a four-year degree. However, you will need the degree if you want to move into most management positions.

	ENTRY-LEVEL	MORE EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE		SENIOR-LEVEL
Typical Yearly Pay	\$35,000 to \$45,000	\$40,000 to \$55,000	\$55,000 to \$80,000	\$80,000+
Sample Pathways	Transit Electrical Helper-Signals	Signal Maintainer	Signal Maintenance Supervisor	Assistant Director of Signal Maintenance
	Automotive Service Worker	Shop Floor Technician	Lead Shop Floor Technician	Automotive Shop Manager
	Ordinary Seaman	Able Seaman	Mate	Ferry Captain

PLACES YOU MIGHT WORK INCLUDE:

City of New York	Department of Transportation
New York State	Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (regional), Department of Transportation, MTA (Metro North, Long Island Railroad, New York City Transit to name a few)
U.S. Government	Department of Transportation (including the Federal Aviation, Highway, Transit and Maritime Administrations, among others)

The Environment

Over the years, population growth and rapid advances in technology have had negative effects on the air, land, and water, which people, plants, and animals depend on for survival. All levels of government are involved in the practice of conservation (protecting the environment from further damage) and remediation (restoring the environment to its natural state). Some of the biggest issues confronting New York City include reducing air pollution, handling storm water, removing toxic waste, and protecting native trees and plants. Most environmental jobs require excellent science and math skills. With the possible exception of people working “on the ground,” a Bachelor’s degree is required to enter the field, and you may need a Master’s or a Doctoral degree to advance.

	ENTRY-LEVEL	MORE EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE		SENIOR-LEVEL
Typical Yearly Pay	\$20,000 to \$45,000	\$46,000 to \$56,000	\$57,000 to \$90,000	\$90,000+
Sample Pathways	Wildlife Preservationist Aide	Wildlife Biological Preservationist	Wildlife Biologist	Senior Ecologist
	Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT) Abatement Technician	HAZMAT Abatement Inspector	Field Abatement Coordinator	HAZMAT Abatement Manager
	Environmental Trainee	Watershed Maintainer	Watershed Program Coordinator	Watershed Management Program Manager

PLACES YOU MIGHT WORK INCLUDE:

City of New York	Department of Environmental Protection, Mayor’s Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability, Department of Parks and Recreation, and Department of Sanitation
New York State	New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, Department of Environmental Conservation, Environmental Facilities Corporation, Hudson River Park Trust, Hudson River Valley Greenway
U.S. Government	Environmental Protection Agency, Chemical Safety Board, National Park Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration