

# OUTSIDE ACADEMIA 2011

## Professional Paths after Graduate School

Presented by the College of Arts and Humanities, Office of the Dean

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### TOP FIVE TIPS for applying for government jobs

**Dr. Anne Imamura**, Area Studies Division Director, Foreign Service Institute,  
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Dr. Anne E. Imamura is a sociologist who has taught at Sophia University in Tokyo; the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur; the University of Maryland, College Park; and Georgetown University. Twice a Fulbright Scholar to Japan, Dr. Imamura's academic training includes a Ph.D. in sociology from Columbia University and an M.A. in Asian Studies from the University of Hawaii where she was twice an East West Center Fellow. Among Dr. Imamura's publications are: *Re-Imaging Japanese Women*, University of California Press, 1996; *Urban Japanese Housewives: At Home and in the Community*, University of Hawaii Press, 1987; *Transcending Stereotypes: Discovering Japanese Culture and Education*, co-edited: International Press, 1991; and numerous journal articles and book chapters including "Family Culture" in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Japanese Culture*, Cambridge University Press, 2009. Dr. Imamura is currently the Area Studies Division Director at the Foreign Service Institute (U.S. Department of State) and Adjunct Professor of Sociology at Georgetown University.

1. Look at the web sites of various Government Agencies
2. Familiarize yourself with [www.USAJobs.gov](http://www.USAJobs.gov)
3. Attend lectures at think tanks and take advantage of any social time to introduce yourself to attendees from Government Agencies. Ask them what kinds of jobs are available in their agencies
4. Apply for internships. These may be unpaid, but provide excellent networking possibilities.
5. Be open to jobs that are different from what you would do in academia, but be realistic about what you would be willing to do.

**Dr. Matthew Levinger**, Senior Program Officer  
United States Institute of Peace

**Matthew Levinger** is a Senior Program Officer in the Academy for International Conflict Management and Peacebuilding at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), where he teaches professional education programs on conflict analysis and prevention. Before joining USIP, he was founding director of the Academy for Genocide Prevention at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum from 2005 to 2007. From 1994 to 2005, Matthew taught at Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon, where he was associate professor of Modern European History. His research and teaching have focused on the history of nationalism and revolutionary political theory in modern Europe, as well as the history of genocide during the twentieth century. He is the author of *Enlightened Nationalism: The Transformation of Prussian Political Culture, 1806-1848* (Oxford, 2000) and coauthor of *The Revolutionary Era, 1789-1850* (W. W. Norton, 2002). He received his B.A. from Haverford College and his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Chicago.

## Dr. Sonya Michel, Director of United States Studies Woodrow Wilson Center

Director of United States Studies at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C., where she focuses on the history and contemporary analysis of social policy in the United States and in comparative and transnational perspective, with an emphasis on racial and gender equity. Her current research examines the role of migrant workers in providing care work throughout the developed world. Before coming to the Wilson Center, Michel was a professor of history and director of the Miller Center for Historical Studies at University of Maryland, College Park. She has also taught at the University of Illinois and at Princeton and Harvard. She is a founding co-editor of *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State and Society* (published by Oxford University Press). Her major publications include many articles and books, including *Civil Society and Gender Justice: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, co-edited with Karen Hagemann and Gunilla Budde (Berghahn Books, 2008); *Child Care at the Crossroads: Gender and Welfare State Restructuring*, co-edited with Rianne Mahon (Routledge, 2002); *Children's Interests / Mothers' Rights: The Shaping of America's Child Care Policy* (Yale University Press, 1999); *Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States*, co-edited with Seth Koven (Routledge, 1993); *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*, co-edited with Margaret Higonnet, Jane Jenson and Margaret Weitz (Yale University Press, 1987); and *The Jewish Woman in America*, co-authored with Charlotte Baum and Paula Hyman (Dial Press, 1975). She has a B.A. in philosophy from Barnard College and a Ph.D. in American Civilization from Brown University.

## Dr. Emilia Stein, Director, Office of Evaluation, Inter-American Foundation

Dr. Emilia Rodriguez-Stein serves as the Director of the Evaluation Office at the Inter-American Foundation (IAF), a federally funded agency that promotes democracy and friendship with the people of Latin America and the Caribbean. She has developed a monitoring and evaluation system of all IAF-funded projects. Dr. Rodriguez-Stein has extensive experience in research and evaluation and is an expert in the promotion of gender equity within grassroots development. Dr. Rodriguez-Stein frequently travels throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, and collaborates in the area of development and monitoring and evaluation with the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Organization of American States, the Library of Congress, U.S. Agency for International Development, the State Department, the Wilson Center and other evaluation branches of other development agencies and universities. She holds a doctorate in Sociology (1989) from the University of Arizona.

Any successful job application must contain the following:

1. Before applying for any position with the Inter-American Foundation or any Federal agency do your homework: research their mission, their work methods, their culture, their accomplishment so you can show how you will fit in, and contribute your ideas and skills to that organization.
2. Respond straight forward to the Knowledge Skills and Attitudes (KSA) in the job description.
3. Show concrete work experience related to the job you are applying for. For example, as the Inter-American Foundation works with non-governmental organizations and base groups in Latin America and the Caribbean, a good candidate will have work experience with an NGO or a base group or have interned with Inter-American Foundation or other development agency.
4. Show concrete knowledge acquired through graduate or undergraduate course work related to the job you are applying for. For example, courses in Latin American studies, international development, and exposure to different cultures or travel to different countries and areas where the Inter-American Foundation works will be very appealing.
5. Last but not least, your job application must be written in plain English, using simple words, short sentences, and very straight forward. Have friends and mentors read your application thoroughly. Misspelled words, incomplete sentences, and grammatical errors do not help.

## General Tips (gleaned from OA 2009/2010)

- Look for non-academic jobs in the same place as academic job listings.
- Be prepared for anything. Be open to the possibility of getting a non-academic position, even if it is not something you were considering originally. Non-academic jobs may be very fulfilling!
- Do not say no! Take every opportunity that comes your way within your field.
- Do internships. These create experience, and most importantly, networks that will be very valuable to you when job hunting.
- Expand your computer/technical skills.
- If you have flexibility, consider internships or jobs outside of the DC area or a city you would not have normally considered, even in a non-metropolitan area.
- TRY, TRY AGAIN! - Many of the non-academic positions are extremely coveted, just like academic jobs. So, do not give up. KEEP TRYING!
- BE PATIENT! The application process for government jobs takes a very long time and goes through many people.
- There is no seasonality to when govt. positions are open. Often, positions only become open when someone retires.
- Watch news to see what is happening in govt. climate to prepare for possible increases in activity or budget of a particular dept. This will often result in a hiring phase.

## General Application Tips

- Make it very clear you would work in the position. Be transparent! (not only about what you know, your special expertise in your field, but specifically how you can USE your knowledge in that particular job)
- Write simply, be direct, even dull. Do not be concerned with "impressive" writing.
- With KSAs, there is no need to show how well you write – simply address specifically what they are looking for.
- Literally look at the application listing and directly answer each qualification. Do not be afraid to use the exact verbiage from the listing.

## What are KSAs?

**KSA** stands for Knowledge, Skills and Abilities. These are narrative or **Essay Statements**, which are frequently required along with a resume when applying for **government jobs**. The **KSA** statements must describe your experience in support of specific job-related questions. Your answers are designed to help **federal** hiring agencies select the best-qualified candidates for interviews. Your goal is to receive a high proficiency ranking from the information provided on your **KSA** statements. (see ksawriters.com)

### Helpful Websites for Writing KSAs

[www.ourpublicservice.org/OPS/programs/calltoserve/toolkit/KSAs.pdf](http://www.ourpublicservice.org/OPS/programs/calltoserve/toolkit/KSAs.pdf)

[www.cdc.gov/hrmo/ksahowto.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/hrmo/ksahowto.htm)

<http://www.ksadoctor.com/>

<http://www.usajobs.gov/infocenter/resumetips.asp>

<http://www.ksawriters.com/>

## Book recommendations

### - *So What Are You Going to Do with That?*

Authors- Susan Basalla, Maggie Debelius

### - *Great Jobs for Liberal Arts Majors* (Great Jobs Series)

Author - Blythe Camenson

### - *Federal Resume Guidebook: Strategies for Writing a Winning Federal Electronic Resume, KSAs, and Essays*, 4th Edition

Author - Kathryn K. Troutman

### - *How to Land a Top-Paying Federal Job: Your Complete Guide to Opportunities, Internships, Resumes and Cover Letters, Application Essays (KSAs), Interviews, Salaries, Promotions and More!*

Author - Lily Whiteman

## TIPS FOR APPLYING FOR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT JOBS (provided by Dr. Anne Inamura)

Courtesy of Dr. Nancy Berlage, Senior Historian/Chief Editor  
Historical Office--Office of the Secretary of Defense

On USAJOBS make sure you read and follow the instructions very carefully. Any mistake could lead to your not even being considered for the job. They won't tell you that you made a mistake and they won't give you a chance to correct it.

Make sure you give yourself enough time to get your application finalized - If there is some technology glitch in your last minute application, you may not get considered.

Each agency often uses a different on-line application system. Do not count on them being all the same. With some, you cannot save your work and come back to it another time, so you should have everything ready to go in word documents that you can cut and paste.

You should always tailor your resume and any essays required - usually called KSA's (short for Knowledge, Skills and Abilities) for the specific job you are applying for. Make sure your application lines up clearly with the requirements stated in the job announcement under the "Qualifications and Evaluations" tab. Many government agencies use automated computer scanning programs to screen and rate applications - the US military definitely does. What these programs look for in applications are the "KEY WORDS." A good application is one that uses those words liberally.

Here are the KSA's for a typical federal historian job:

1. Knowledge of professional historical principles, concepts, methodology, and techniques including historical and organizational research.
2. Knowledge and general understanding of federal government history programs and current operations, policies, programs, and activities.
3. Ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing and to use techniques required in conducting oral history interviews.
4. Ability to collect, organize, and interrelate large amounts of diversely formatted data (including digital) drawn from a wide variety of sources.
5. Ability to prepare a narrative that presents a balanced and realistic picture of the subject.
6. Ability to critically evaluate sources of information and establish validity of historical facts.

In your resume and in your individual KSA essays you want to use as many of the actual words from the list above.

## VERY IMPORTANT:

Subtlety and brevity are NOT rewarded. Don't try to be clever - just use the words. In writing the individual KSA essays you want to list specific jobs and assignments where you performed the actual types of things they are looking for. "When I was a fellow at the Center for Applied History I conducted numerous oral history interviews, using established techniques and communicated the results both orally and in writing to my supervisor." Treat each of the KSA's as a totally separate essay that is going to be scored individually. You should absolutely feel free to repeat yourself numerous times. You can use the same example or job as an example in multiple KSA's. Logically you would think that what you say in one KSA need not be repeated 4 more times in the other KSA's. Set logic aside - you're applying for a job in the federal government.

### Resources:

- a. Almost every government agency has a history office. For example, DoD and the military services hire large numbers of historians, as well as archivists, museum specialists, curators, and oral historians. However, some of the command and field offices tend to only hire historians who have military experience. DoD and the military services tend not to limit applicants to people who have status--that is, people who work in a civil service job now or have in the past and meet certain requirements. Other agencies, such as the Corps of Engineers, tend to limit jobs to status candidates.
- b. Ask for informational meetings with Government historians. Contacts are often listed on agency history office websites.
- c. Become a member of or get involved with the Society for History in the Federal Government. SHFG is preparing a new directory that includes federal history offices and contacts. The SHFG Newsletter also describes federal history office projects, so that can give you a sense of what various offices do as well as who is doing what.
- d. Become or get involved with the National Council on Public History. Many of the member practitioners, whether academic or independent, have contracts with federal and state agencies. Talk to them. Contracts can lead to jobs.
- e. Look for contract historian jobs, listed on a variety of websites, often advertised by large companies such as SAIC. SAIC, for example, may have a contract with an agency that requires a historian. Contract historian positions can lead to civil service positions.
- f. Find people who work for the government and talk to them!
- g. Many agencies offer internship programs, although they can be hard to find. Some of the back issues of the SHFG Newsletter have described internship opportunities.