

## PATHWAYS PROMISES YOUTHFUL WORKERS TO FEDERAL WORKFORCE



The much awaited Pathways programs, a brainchild of President Obama, designed to attract young people to federal government jobs are due to start next month. The set of laws regulating these programs for a new generation of federal employees takes effect on July 10. Pathways, opens up a new avenue and it would serve the nation well, for agencies to take advantage of this opportunity. However, to do so you need to ensure that your agency has the essential resources available, that they are organized and ready for it, that they have adequate support backing and are willing to unrelenting pursue the programs and take them to their logical conclusions. Established by a presidential executive order the programs are calculated to assist agencies in opening up employment and internship avenues for the youth. The programs also provide significant training, mentoring and career-development opportunities. The youth that these programs are targeting are recent graduates and interns, who following their internships will be better prepared to become full-time federal employees. Tim McManus, the Vice-President of the Washington-based Partnership for Public Service said that the programs encourage the younger generation to pursue careers in the federal government. In a discussion, he outlined the changes and what it actually meant for the youth, who were keen on a career with the federal government. "These programs are a pathway for students to move from a short-term position into working for the government on a long-term basis," McManus said. He said that it was change from the reliance that the government earlier put on experience for hiring. That, virtually ruled out the chances of the younger generation being hired, fresh out of college for naturally they did not have any direct experience. But this also meant that the government was deprived of fresh skills, ideas and new talent that a diverse youthful community would bring to the federal workplace. The Pathways programs would serve a dual purpose, provide direct exposure to the new grads and also infuse the federal workforce with new blood. Earlier government internships did not lead to a full-time job. It is seen that in the government, fewer than 7 percent of the interns actually go on to work full-time for the government. That compares very poorly with the private and nonprofit sector, where 50 to 60 percent of the interns convert their jobs to full time jobs with the company. By basing their internships on the private model and gauging the interns for their job-worthiness and actually allowing the internship to train and prepare the student, Pathways hopes to change the lopsided equation. McManus advised the prospective job-applicant to gauge what he is best suited for. If you have finance or an accounting background, it makes sense to be looking for a job on the business side. The major advantage of federal jobs is that there range is wide. So think beyond the Treasury jobs or the Securities and Exchange Commission and align with jobs that support your academic degree and something that you are passionate about. The jobs available are all-embracing and it would be strongly recommended that the student does his homework before deciding what he or she wants to do. When asked why the youth of today are showing disinclination towards federal jobs, McManus stated that many a time, the youth are disinclined to federal jobs owing to the rhetoric surrounding them. But the government is doing great things and the government should make the students understand that there is a whole world of opportunity waiting for them to grasp. You can make a difference, the government should be telling them. This will help remove the disconnect and detachment that exists between the government and the youth. The new initiatives are also making the process of getting a federal job less cumbersome and friendlier. The Pathways programs are designed specifically for recent grads. The internships are becoming more streamlined and geared to prepare the student to develop his internship learned knowledge, and skills to convert to full-time employment. McManus said that the prime opportunities are in the STEM field science, technology, engineering and math and the medical and health professions. These areas have large gaps that urgently need to be filled and currently are heavily dependent on high-skilled Asian workers. Virtually any student or recent graduate, irrespective of his major, can look forward to a job with the federal government. McManus says that "there's clearly a need for virtually every occupation and every discipline in government." "Agency leaders will need to adapt in order to survive and get the long-term talent they need," he said. "Not everybody will be on board initially, but take those who are and prove that it works."

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