

# ROLL CALL



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## Federal Jobs a Bright Spot in A Depressing Job Market

By Janie Lorber  
CONGRESSNOW STAFF

Help wanted: schoolteachers, dot-commers, Ph.D.s and, yes, hairdressers. The federal government wants you.

The U.S. government may be the last place some people look for a job, but the reality is that if the private sector does it, so do the feds. The CIA hires costume designers. The Army is on the prowl for veterinarians. Stay-at-home parent? The foreign service is actively recruiting.

Almost anyone — regardless of age or expertise — can find a government job, and now is the time to begin the hunt, writes Lily Whiteman in her new book, "How to Land a Top-Paying Federal Job."

Peppered with cartoons and a touch of wit, Whiteman's book is the layman's field guide to a federal job search.

Here's the key, probably well-known to those inside the Beltway: The government is hiring. And it always will be.

While private-sector jobs from Wall Street to Silicon Valley dry up, the federal government is on the brink of a "hiring tsunami," Whiteman writes. Within the next decade, 40 percent of the federal government's 6.1

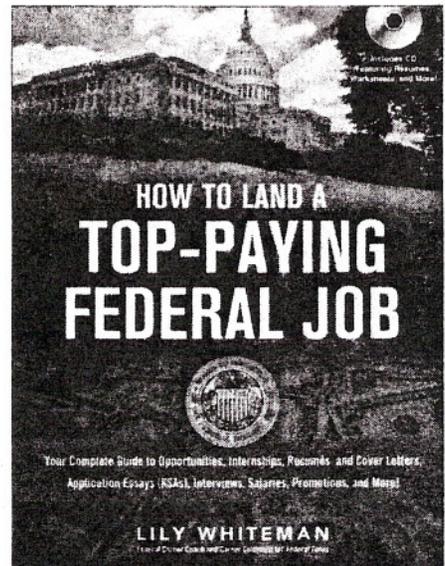
million employees are expected to retire. That's more than 2 million employees.

Insulated from economic maelstrom, the government is the most stable employer in the country, says Whiteman, who has worked and hired in six federal agencies, ranging from the Environmental Protection Agency to the U.S. Mint. In fact, Whiteman calls herself an "accidental career coach."

The book is based on hundreds of interviews with federal hiring managers and job hunters. Unlike other similar guides, it focuses on process rather than just aggregating information about agencies.

The book provides step-by-step instructions on crafting successful résumés, cover letters and essays that get applicants out of the pile and into the interview. As readers gear up for the hot seat, Whiteman lets them in on the do's and don'ts of interviewing for a federal job. And when an offer does roll around, readers can find tips on negotiating salary and climbing the ranks. Yes, she writes, both happen regularly in federal offices.

The book dispels a few other myths about working for the government. For one — news flash — not all federal employees wear pocket protectors. The federal pay gradient (known



as the General Schedule) does not apply to all jobs. Salaries are negotiable, and promotions and bonuses are based on performance. Most jobs offer top-of-the-line health insurance, great vacations and flexible hours.

But what is that top-paying federal gig? Jobs that compete with Wall Street for employees generally come with the highest paychecks. Employees at the Treasury and the Federal Communications Commission can earn bonuses in the tens of thousands.

"Excepted service" positions, such as those at the FBI, the State Department and all attorney positions also pay very well.