

Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP)



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U.S. citizenship is required. An equal opportunity employer.

MISSION STATEMENT

“To administer United States foreign policy and maintain diplomatic relations throughout the world”.

The Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) employs students who can work and attend school at the same time. Participants provide technical, administrative or clerical support to bureaus in the Washington D.C. area and some regional areas.

WHO CAN APPLY?

The program is designed to help students who are enrolled in high school, vocational/technical school, undergraduate or graduate studies.

WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS?

Students must be:

- A U.S. citizen.
- At least 16 years of age.
- Enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a degree or certificate-seeking program with at least a half-time academic, vocational, or technical course load, while maintaining at least a 2.0 GPA.

WHAT IS THE WORK SCHEDULE?

Students typically work part-time while in school and full-time during breaks. A specific work schedule will be submitted that fits with the student’s academic schedule as well as the bureau’s need. The student’s work should not interfere with their education.

HOW ARE STUDENTS PAID?

Students are paid at regular government salary rates (typically GS-1 through GS-5). Pay is dependent on the level of education and experience the candidate may possess, based on the qualification standard of the job the applicant is seeking.

WHAT IS THE APPLICATION PROCESS?

Eligible students interested in participating in the STEP program must submit a COMPLETE APPLICATION during the open application window to the following e-mail address: STEP@state.gov.

NOTE: Incomplete applications will be deleted, and must be re-submitted

WHAT IS A COMPLETE APPLICATION?

Send one (1) e-mail with the subject “Application- [insert last name, first name]”, and containing the Applicant Information, Resume, Cover Letter, and Transcript attached, to STEP@State.gov by the closing of the posted application window:



- a. **Applicant Info:** Fill in the following information on the spread sheet provided, and attach:
- **Name of School/College/University**
 - **State of School/College/University**
 - **Type of Degree**—(BA, BS, MA, MBA, MPP, etc.)
 - **Expected Graduation Date**
 - **Major**—List up to two
 - **Grade Point Average (GPA)**—Or equivalent
 - **Languages Spoken**—List up to two (2).
 - Be honest in your personal assessment. Hiring managers may seek to verify your language ability during a phone interview.
 - **Veterans Preference** (If Applicable)—Indicate veteran’s preference and any veterans preference points. Information will be verified in the event of an employment offer.
 - **Work Location Preference**—The majority of STEP opportunities are offered at the U.S. Department of State headquarters in Foggy Bottom, Washington D.C., and at other facilities in the D.C.-metro area. Unless otherwise indicated, the default work location preference will be Washington D.C.
 - *Department of State Field Offices:* The Department of State has several field offices at locations around the U.S. These locations accept STEP students from time to time, depending on work demand and budgetary considerations. Students interested in STEP opportunities outside of the D.C.-metro area are encouraged to contact the office of interest directly to ask about possible work opportunities in addition to submitting an application—
 - [Diplomatic Security Field Offices](#)
 - [Regional Passport Facilities](#)
- b. **Resume:** Attach a current resume—Contact information in this resume will be used in the event that a hiring manager is interested in speaking with you about a potential position.
- c. **Cover Letter:** Attach a Cover Letter—This will serve as your *Statement of Interest* for participating in the STEP program, and it should be no longer than 1-page. You may use this to highlight:
- i. Why you want to work at the Department of State.
 - ii. Your course of study and how you believe it relates to the work you hope to do with the Department of State.
 - iii. The Bureau, Office, Regional or Functional areas which interest you most.
 - [Department of State](#)
 - [Department of State Interactive Organizational Chart](#)



- [Alphabetical List of Bureaus and Offices](#)
- d. **Transcript/Proof of Enrollment or Acceptance:** A transcript verifying that you are a currently a student, or other proof (Letter of Acceptance or Enrollment) that you will be a student at the time of your appointment, must be included. For application purposes, both unofficial and official transcripts are accepted. If official, you may open the transcript, in order to scan and attach it to your e-mail application.
- Note:** This transcript is used to verify that you are a student at the time of application. Offers for STEP appointments may be made by hiring offices at any time within 8 months from the time you submit your application. Therefore, if selected for a position, you will be required to provide an up-to-date, official transcript prior to being provided an official start date. Failure to provide this document may result in your not being able to participate in the program.

WHEN IS THE APPLICATION DUE?

Applications will be accepted during open application windows throughout the year. Interested applicants must visit www.career.state.gov to see the exact dates and upcoming application windows.

General Application Schedule:

- September (30-day window)
- January (30-day window)
- May (30-day window)

*Application periods are subject to change, depending on the needs of the Department of State.

During the closed application periods, interested students can sign up for [e-mail updates](#) to be notified of the next open application window.

HOW LONG IS MY APPLICATION VALID?

Valid applications will be held for two application cycles (approximately 8 months). If you have not been selected for STEP position within this timeframe, your application will be removed from the database and you will have to reapply.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

Applicants and Students with questions about this program are encouraged to post their questions on the Department of State [Student Programs Forum](#). These questions will be responded to publically so that other students can benefit from the information.

Applicants and candidates can also call 202-261-8888 and ask for the Student Programs Branch.



WHAT TO EXPECT AS A STEP APPLICANT

HOW WILL I KNOW MY APPLICATION HAS BEEN RECEIVED AND ACCEPTED?

Applicants will be notified via e-mail within one-week of their application having been received.

Complete Applications/Eligible Candidates: If complete, your application will be reviewed to verify your eligibility for the program. If eligible, you will be informed via e-mail that your application is accepted.

Incomplete Applications/Ineligible Candidates: If ineligible, or if you have submitted an incomplete application, you will be informed via e-mail and your application will be deleted.

Eligible students notified of an incomplete application can resubmit an application anytime during the open application window.

HOW ARE STUDENTS SELECTED FOR STEP OPPORTUNITIES?

STEP offers and appointments are made based on the staffing needs and budgetary considerations of the individual Bureaus and Offices of the Department of State. Therefore, there is no specific timeframe for selections. Students may be contacted at any time after the closing of the application period about a possible STEP opportunity. **The Department will not provide updates of your application status.**

1. Accepted applications are placed in a database of eligible candidates.
2. Bureaus and hiring managers interested in selecting students for STEP positions will have access to the database to search at their convenience for candidates and view resumes and cover letters.
3. Bureaus/Hiring Managers contact candidates directly to coordinate interviews, and to make informal/verbal offers
4. Formal STEP employment offers are made in writing by the HR/REE Student Programs Branch.

WHAT TO EXPECT IF YOU ARE SELECTED FOR A STEP POSITION

Once a manager or bureau contact makes a verbal/informal offer, the Bureau Student Coordinator or Bureau Executive Office will request additional information to facilitate the employment process. This will include, (but is not limited to):

- An updated resume
- An Official Transcript, or Proof of Enrollment
- Verification of your Date of Birth (DOB)
- Verification of your Place of Birth (POB)
- Verification of your Social Security Number (SSN)
- Expected Completion of Degree Course Requirements



The complete, formal request for a STEP appointment must be submitted by a Bureau Executive Office (typically the Student Coordinator), to the HR/REE Student Programs Branch.

HR/REE Student Programs will work with the bureau to verify all required paperwork, review candidate's eligibility, and to make classification and qualification determinations.

Once all administrative procedures are accomplished between the Bureau and HR/REE Student Programs, HR/REE will make a formal tentative offer of employment. This tentative offer will:

- 1) Inform the candidate of the position, grade, and salary being offered;
- 2) Highlight the terms and requirements of the STEP appointment; and,
- 3) Provide the candidate with information to begin the Security Clearance process.

Security Clearances: The security clearance process takes approximately 90-120 days to complete from the time the forms are received. Investigations may take substantially longer than 120 days if you have had extensive travel, education, residence and/or employment overseas, or if you have dual citizenship, extensive foreign contacts, immediate family or other relatives who are not citizens of the United States and/or a foreign born spouse. Other issues taken into consideration during the clearance process include current or past arrests or legal issues, history of drugs or alcohol abuse, as well as a recent history of credit problems. Although these problems will not necessarily preclude you from receiving a security clearance, they will lengthen the time required to complete the clearance process. **It is important to be completely honest when filling out your security questionnaire.**

Interim Clearance: Students are eligible to begin an appointment based upon an *interim clearance*, which allows students work while the full clearance investigation continues. If a student's interim or full-clearance is revoked at any time during the course of the appointment, the student may be immediately terminated.

Once a candidate has been cleared, they will be contacted by the HR/REE Student Programs Branch with further instructions about a start date and orientation.



FAQ FOR STEP APPLICANTS

Q: Are all the positions in the Washington D.C. area?

A: STEP positions are typically only in the Washington D.C. area.

The Department of State has field offices around the U.S. which occasionally employ STEP students.

Individuals interested in working at a field office should contact those locations directly to discuss any available opportunities.

Department of State Field Offices:

- [Diplomatic Security Field Offices](#)
- [Regional Passport Facilities](#)

Q: What type of work will I be doing?

A: Exact duties and work will vary by Bureau and Office. STEP positions are typically clerical or administrative in nature, while some positions have specific required job skills.

Q: I can't attach an unofficial transcript, what should I do?

A: You must be able to provide some proof of your current or future student status. This must include a current official or unofficial transcript, or a proof of enrollment or acceptance for enrollment in a degree or certificate seeking program. Unofficial transcripts are acceptable, including official transcripts which are opened by the candidate and scanned. An official transcript will be required prior to starting in the position.

Q: What should I do if I want to update my resume?

A: Once an application window is closed, individuals whose applicants have been accepted can submit an updated resume in an e-mail with the subject line "Update: [Insert Last Name, First Name]", to STEP@State.gov.

Q: Do Stay-In-School students receive benefits?

A: STEP Students earn annual and sick leave based on a prorated basis of how many hours worked per pay period. STEPs are not eligible for health or life insurance coverage.

