



Thinking About Government Employment?

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At Legal Authority, we believe that for many attorneys there is no better job than working for the federal or state government. One of our Employment Advocates used to work for the United States Department of Justice, and the way he tells it, after 5:15 p.m. each evening, you could fire a canon down the hall because everyone had gone for the day. In addition, as he tells it, there were several attorneys who would actually show up day after day, month after month and literally do nothing. In all seriousness, though, there are some major advantages to choosing a career with the government.

First, government positions are most often secure. Many government attorneys practice their entire careers with the government and face little prospect of a layoff regardless of bad economic winds. It is also extremely difficult to be fired as a government attorney because government jobs are generally there to stay regardless of the status of the economy.

"Government positions are secure."

Second, government attorneys are often quite collegial with one another, and there is a fraternity of sorts amongst them because they are not competing to bill hours. Government attorneys often become quite close, and it is not uncommon for them to work side by side for two to three decades. Without the massive economic and billing pressures of a law firm or the economic uncertainty of many in-house positions, government attorneys are not competing with each other as aggressively and often become close friends.

Third, the work government attorneys do is often immensely interesting. For example, you may be working on the type of high-profile litigation you might see only once or twice (or perhaps never) in a law firm career. Additionally, many government attorneys often spend at least one day a week in court. Government attorneys who do not do litigation work may be involved in important policy work that has a national impact.

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Fourth, given the importance of the work they do, many government attorneys receive training and get a skill set that actually continues their advancement in private employers' eyes. Throughout the United States, there are numerous partners in important law firms who received a decade or more of training as prosecutors before returning to the private sector.

Fifth, being a government attorney can potentially lead to an excellent career in a higher government post. A large number of federal judges started out as prosecutors at the state and federal levels. Additionally, many important cabinet positions in both federal and state governments are filled by government attorneys each year.



Almost always, the health care and retirement benefits that government attorneys receive often far eclipse what one could expect in private practice. Many government attorneys end their careers with sizable retirement benefits which do not require them to change their lifestyles at all.

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At the end of the day, many attorneys choose not to work for the government. One of the more common reasons attorneys do not choose government work is because of perceived financial concerns. Nevertheless, many government attorneys do make more than \$100,000 a year and live comfortably. There may not be new Porsches in most of their futures, but money is not the major motivation for most government attorneys. Many government attorneys simply enjoy practicing law with like-minded individuals in a relatively secure environment.

Government attorneys often enjoy much better lifestyles than other attorneys. With more time and energy left for family and leisure activities, government attorneys reap the kinds of less tangible benefits that can make a tremendous difference in career satisfaction. In the end, the result is often more happy and fulfilling lives outside of work.

"With more time and energy left for family and leisure activities, government attorneys enjoy life more."

Surprisingly, government opportunities are not often requested by Legal Authority clients. When you consider the lives many government attorneys lead and how interesting the work is, this is surprising. While the searches we generally conduct for government attorneys are often less extensive than the law firm or in-house searches, government searches are often the most satisfying for us because we know the attorney is likely to land a position he/she is happy with—which is what it is all about in the end.