USDA Pathways Programs Fact Sheet

This Fact Sheet provides information on changes to the USDA Student Employment Programs.

Background

On December 27, 2011, President Barack Obama signed Executive Order 13562, Recruiting and Hiring Students and Recent Graduates. The Executive Order created the Internship Program, the Recent Graduates Program, and revised the Presidential Management Fellows Program.

Key Points

- The USDA Pathways Programs replaced the USDA Student Employment Programs (SCEP and STEP)
- The USDA Internship Program targets students enrolled in a wide variety of educational institutions
- The USDA Recent Graduates Program targets recent college graduates and graduates of other OPM approved qualifying institutions
- The USDA Presidential Management Fellows Program (PMF) targets individuals with advance degrees
- The Pathways Programs became effective July 10, 2012
- Eligible STEP and SCEP may be transitioned to the USDA Internship Program
- Eligible SCEP may be converted to career-conditional appointments
- Students graduating from school in less than 180 days are not eligible for the USDA Internship Program
- Available Recent Graduate opportunities will be posted in USAJobs and in the USDA Student Application Portal
- The Pathways regulation requires students and recent graduates to sign a Pathways Participant Agreement
- Mentoring, performance feedback, and training are major components of the USDA Pathways Programs
- All Pathways participants will be appointed under the Schedule D Hiring Authority
- Students will be referred to as “Student Trainees”
- Recent Graduates will be referred to as “Recent Graduates”
- Presidential Management Fellows will be referred to as PMFs
- Veteran’s Preference applies to each Pathways vacancy
- USDA will recruit PMFs from an OPM approved list of finalists
- Agencies may terminate Pathways participants for misconduct, suitability, poor performance, or at the expiration of the Pathways Participation Agreement

**Comparison of former USDA Intern Programs with the USDA Pathways Programs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>STEP</th>
<th>SCEP</th>
<th>Pathways Intern</th>
<th>Pathways Recent Graduate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Temporary</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligibility Requirements</td>
<td>Current Student</td>
<td>Current Student</td>
<td>Current Student</td>
<td>Graduated within the past 2 years*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position must be related to academic field</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No**</td>
<td>No**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible for conversion to the competitive service</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veteran’s Preference Applies</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Notice Requirement</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Two-year requirement may be extended up to six years for veterans who, due to military service obligations, were precluded from applying in the two-year window

** Certain positions require academic field of study to be directly related to position
Where to Find Additional Information

For a list of frequently asked questions pertaining to the Pathways Programs, please visit [https://help.usajobs.gov/index.php/Pathways_FAQs](https://help.usajobs.gov/index.php/Pathways_FAQs).

For information regarding the transition period, please contact your Human Resource Office.

For information regarding the USDA Pathways Programs, please contact Carol Scott, USDA Pathways Programs Officer, Virtual University, Office of Human Resource Management, carol.scott@dm.usda.gov or 202-260-8364.