

Profession of a FBI Agent

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Becoming an FBI Special Agent is like no other career choice you have ever explored. It is challenging. It is exciting. It is rewarding. And every day you have a chance to serve your country. FBI Special Agents are responsible for conducting sensitive national security investigations and for enforcing over 300 federal statutes. As an FBI Special Agent you may work on matters including terrorism, foreign counterintelligence, cyber crime, organized crime, white-collar crime, public corruption, civil rights violations, financial crime, bribery, bank robbery, extortion, kidnapping, air piracy, interstate criminal activity, fugitive and drug-trafficking matters, and other violations of federal statutes. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is a law enforcement and domestic intelligence agency charged with protecting and defending the United States against terrorist and foreign intelligence threats; upholding and enforcing the criminal laws of the United States; and providing leadership and criminal justice services to federal, state, municipal, and international agencies and partners. The FBI is headed by a Director who is appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. The current Director, Robert S. Mueller, III, became Director on September 4, 2001.

As an FBI Agent, you will uphold the FBI priorities to protect the United States from terrorist attack; protect the United States against foreign intelligence operations and espionage; protect the United States against cyber-based attacks and high-technology crimes; combat public corruption at all levels; protect civil rights; combat transnational and national criminal organizations and enterprises; combat major white-collar crime; combat significant violent crime; support federal, state, county, municipal, and international

partners; and upgrade technology to successfully perform the FBI's mission. The FBI holds Core Values that all must uphold. These include: rigorous obedience to the Constitution of the United States; respect for the dignity of all those they protect; compassion; fairness; uncompromising personal integrity and institutional integrity; accountability by accepting responsibility for their actions and decisions and the consequences of their actions and decisions; and leadership, both personal and professional. These values are taken serious and you can be transferred, suspended, or even dismissed if you fail to uphold your duties to protect the United States and its' citizens.

There are many reasons to become an FBI agent and many reasons why not to become one. First of all, someone might become an agent because it is adventurous and no one knows what to expect. The life of a special agent is not normal. Anything can happen in a day's time. Second, some might think of it as a great way to help others and serve one's country. Agents protect this nation from danger and help keep its citizens safe. Next, it is a decent paying job. FBI agents can make a very good pay. Fourth, great health benefits and stability is included. It is a government job that provides plenty of benefits and career stability. Lastly, there is a lot of physical activity involved. There is of course a lot of running, jumping, and moving around which will keep one in shape. The number one reason to not become an FBI agent is, of course, the risk of death in the line of duty. Then, there is a lot of paperwork and work behind a desk. Additionally, not all cases are challenging and exciting, there are some that might not be of particular interest. Moreover, there is a lot of government red tape involved. Finally, the hours are unpredictable. This

means you can be called into work at three in the morning because there is no such thing as "on-duty," or "off-duty."

The working conditions and employment possibilities vary when looking at the FBI Agent career. Agent can work in their office one day, the lab the next, and then be out doing a raid the following day. Their work is strictly investigative, special agents do not express opinions about the guilt or innocence of suspects. These decisions are left to lawyers employed by the federal government. If agents testify in court, they relay the information they have gathered. Much of their work is confidential, so they are not allowed to discuss it with outsiders, including members of their families. Agents work from field offices located in the United States and Puerto Rico and from the national headquarters in Washington, DC. To uncover facts, they use the crime detection laboratory in Washington, where experts analyze blood, paint, and fragments that agents find at the scenes of crimes. They also use a fingerprint database. Some federal crimes, such as tax evasion and counterfeiting, are investigated by other agencies. However, FBI agents may be called in for assistance. FBI agents also run character and security checks on many employees of the government. When it comes to employment possibilities, Agents are placed in a category group. These groups are Directorate of Intelligence, Counterintelligence Division, Counterterrorism Division, Criminal Investigation Division, Cyber Division, and various other divisions.

Before one decides to apply for the FBI, there is a series of qualifications that they must meet. To become an FBI Special Agent you must be a U.S. citizen or a citizen of the Northern Mariana Islands. You must be at least 23 years of age, but younger than 37 upon your appointment as a Special Agent. You must possess a four-year degree from a college

or university accredited by one of the regional or national institutional associations recognized by the United States Secretary of Education. You must have at least three years of professional work experience. You must also possess a valid driver's license and be completely available for assignment anywhere in the FBI's jurisdiction (this includes other countries). Applicants are disqualified if they took out student loans. The male applicants will be disqualified if they didn't sign up for the Selective Service. Conviction of a felony, use of illegal drugs in violation of the FBI Employment Drug Policy and failure of an FBI-administered urinalysis drug test will also disqualify you. Once application is submitted, you must go through two different phases of testing which includes written, oral, listening, interview, etc. There is also a mandatory Full-scale background check. The investigation includes a polygraph examination; a test for illegal drugs; credit and records checks; and extensive interviews with former and current colleagues, neighbors, friends, professors, etc. There are also certain employment requirements that all candidates must meet in order to be eligible for consideration for employment. After the background test, you will be required to take the full medical physical which will look for any problems, diseases, or other aspects that could affect your health. Vision and hearing tests are included in this. Then once all is complete, with a few other steps left out, you will be shipped off to a top training facility where you will be given the Physical Fitness test upon entry, and begin to learn how to be an FBI agent for twenty to twenty-one weeks.

The education and training needed in order to become an FBI agent is very strict. All applicants must have a four-year college degree, and three years full-time work experience. With their education and experience, all applicants for the Special Agent

position must first qualify under one of five Special Agent Entry Programs. These programs include: Accounting, Computer Science/Information Technology, Language, Law, and Diversified. Applicants will then be prioritized in the hiring process based upon certain Critical Skills for which the FBI is recruiting. The FBI is currently recruiting for Special Agent candidates with one or more of the following Critical Skills: Accounting, Finance, Computer Science/Information Technology Expertise, Engineering Expertise, Foreign Language(s) Proficiency, Intelligence Experience, Law Experience, Law Enforcement/Investigative Experience, Military Experience, Physical Sciences (e.g., physics, chemistry, biology, etc.) Expertise and Diversified Experience. Once you complete all the requirements and hiring process, Special Agent trainees begin their career at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia for approximately 21 weeks of intensive training at one of the world's finest law enforcement training facilities. During their time at the FBI Academy, trainees live on-campus and participate in a broad range of training activities. Classroom hours are spent studying a wide variety of academic and investigative subjects. The FBI Academy curriculum also includes intensive training in physical fitness, defensive tactics, practical application exercises, and the use of firearms. Several tests will be administered in all of these areas to monitor trainees' progress.

The outlook for the career is fantastic. The growing emphasis on homeland security has created an unprecedented demand for criminal justice and security professionals. The U.S. Department of Labor predicted that by 2010 there will be more than a 29% increase in the demand for Homeland Security Officials, FBI Agents, Police Officers, Private Detectives, U.S. Customs Agents and many others. The FBI counts among its ranks

approximately 30,000 employees, including approximately 12,000 Special Agents and 18,000 Professional Staff employees. As an FBI employee, Special Agents are also entitled to a variety of benefits, including group health and life insurance programs, vacation and sick pay, and a full retirement plan. Newly assigned Special Agents are paid as GS-10, step 1 (\$43,441) plus locality pay and availability pay. Locality pay (which ranges from 12.5% to 28.7% of base salary depending upon office assignment) is additional compensation to account for differences in the labor market between different areas. Availability pay is a 25% increase in adjusted salary (base salary + locality pay) for all Special Agents due to their requirement to average a 50-hour work week over the course of the year. Thus, with the locality and availability pay adjustments, new Special Agents in their first Field Offices earn between \$61,100 and \$69,900, depending upon the region of the country to which they are assigned. Agents may also be paid a one-time relocation bonus of approximately \$22,000 to help offset higher real estate and living costs.

In conclusion, the FBI is a really interesting and challenging profession. This law career compares to my future career highlights because I wish to become an FBI agent in the future. I plan to go through the application process, background check, training, and physical endurance in order to pursue this dream. I want to enter into the Criminal Investigation Division. I plan on pursuing this career by getting a Bachelor degree in criminology, and pursuing my work experience through the El Paso County Sheriff's Department. I plan to be in a deputy and join the Vice Narcotics Squad, and then apply into the FBI after there's enough time and experience. From there, I plan to join the FBI, and eventually get into the Federal Internal Affairs and Public Corruption field. If and when I

decide to leave the Bureau. Whether retired or just voluntarily, I plan to open a hotel of my own. Hotels have many aspects of the law involved in building and running them. The law may also be involved when tenets arrive. Therefore, I conclude that the FBI is a great career choice with a broad range of field and division choices to choose from. You also get to carry a gun, badge, and drive really fast with lights and sirens.

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