



# So you want to work in ... the Intelligence Community?

The U.S. government maintains intelligence operations in several agencies that employ officers and analysts in Washington, D.C. and around the world. This fact sheet will cover the major roles in the intelligence community (IC) and steps you can take to join the ranks of intelligence officials. For the most up to date information, visit <http://www.intelligence.gov>.

## AGENCIES

Created in 2005, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) oversees the National Intelligence Program and coordinates the activities of the 17 intelligence agencies; the Director of National Intelligence serves as the primary advisor to the President for intelligence matters.

### Independent Agencies

Office of the Director of National Intelligence  
Central Intelligence Agency

### Department of Defense

Defense Intelligence Agency  
Marine Corps Intelligence Activity  
National Air and Space Intelligence Center  
National Geospatial Intelligence Agency  
National Reconnaissance Office  
National Security Agency  
Office of Naval Intelligence  
U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command

### Department of Energy

Office of Intelligence and Counterintelligence

### Department of Homeland Security

Office of Intelligence and Analysis  
Coast Guard Intelligence

### Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Drug Enforcement Administration

### Department of State

Bureau of Intelligence and Research

### Department of Treasury

Office of Intelligence and Analysis

## WHAT IS THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY?

The U.S. intelligence community is comprised of 17 offices and agencies charged with the collection and analysis of information concerning national security and U.S. domestic and international interests. The President, policymakers, law enforcement and the military use this information to create and execute policy.

## TYPES OF INTELLIGENCE WORK

Each agency offers a variety of career tracks. Major positions within the intelligence community include:

- **Intelligence Operations** drives the work of the IC. Operations officers (i.e., spies) work around the world covertly recruiting and handling sources of foreign human intelligence (agents). The clandestine lifestyle of operations officers is not for everyone; assignments are undercover and require secrecy, even with family members.
- **Collection Management** manages and evaluates covert information provided by case officers as well as open source information. Collection officers prepare the information for analysis by organizing the volumes of data and prioritizing the information in level of importance to US interests. Collection officer positions are also clandestine due to the sensitivity of information processing. Collection officers generally work in the US, but may have short stays abroad.
- **Analysis** work processes and transforms raw information into meaningful assessments for policy makers. Analysts must be able to think critically, recognize patterns and concisely interpret data. They may be experts on a particular country or region, or may understand a particular issue in-depth. Analysts are likely to spend most of their career in the U.S.



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- **Language** work performs research; provides translation or transcription services; and assists with reporting and analysis. Language specialists also teach foreign languages to colleagues in the IC. This sector of work is in very high demand, especially for “mission critical” languages including Arabic, Chinese, Dari, Korean, Pashtu, Farsi, Russian, Turkish, and Urdu. Agencies often look for native speaking abilities, language aptitude or a bachelor’s degree in a foreign language.
- **Intelligence agencies offer a variety of other career tracks**, including science and technology, criminal justice, information technology, security, and acquisitions and financial management.

### QUALIFICATIONS

Intelligence agencies typically look for candidates with the following background and qualifications.

- Bachelor’s degree in any major.
- Qualifications vary by position, but there are several common requirements for all IC jobs: strong oral, written and interpersonal communication skills; as well as critical thinking and analytical skills
- United States citizenship
- Security clearance—this entails a background check of your life history, including where you have lived, studied, and worked since age 18 or the past ten years if you are over the age of 25.
- Mental, medical and physical fitness examination
- Clean background – no criminal record; no use of illegal drugs within 12 months of your application; and no out of the ordinary financial irregularities (gambling, poor credit).

### APPLYING

IC agencies share some coordinated recruiting efforts through the ODNI and [USAjobs.gov](https://www.usajobs.gov); however, each agency manages its own hiring process and posts job openings on their individual websites. For this reason, you should be familiar with the vast network that comprises the intelligence community and the many opportunities it affords.

Because of background checks and the security clearance process, applying to a job in the IC can take up to a year and sometimes more. The website <http://www.intelligence.gov> allows you to upload your resume for use by recruiters from all IC agencies, but it is still advised to seek out positions and apply to them individually. To connect to each of the 17 agencies, explore [MakingtheDifference.org](https://www.makingthedifference.org) and/or visit <http://intelligence.gov/how-to-apply/career-search/>.

### INTERNSHIPS

Several IC agencies offer college internship programs, which provide an excellent way to gain experience and learn more about the field of intelligence. For example, the CIA hosts an Undergraduate Internship Program that requires students to work either a combination of one semester and one summer internship, or two 90-day summer internships. The internship program is open to all majors. Plan ahead for this and other internships: the CIA summer programs have an application deadline in October. To find internships, explore the Federal Internships section of [MakingtheDifference.org](https://www.makingthedifference.org) or go to the job site for the agency you are interested in and look for links like “Student Opportunities.”

### SO...WHAT CAN YOU DO TO BREAK INTO INTELLIGENCE?

1. Take **courses** in relevant fields. If you are interested in language work, take coursework to become fluent. If you are interested in intelligence analysis, focus on international economics, world geography, area studies, comparative politics, history, and related fields. Begin thinking early about your career and plan accordingly.
2. Research specific **types of careers** available in all of the IC agencies. Make sure you know about all the types of work that are available and which of them would best suit your skills and interests.
3. Connect with **recruiters** when they come to campus. Keep up to date with LACS announcements for campus visits by CIA, FBI, and NSA especially. Recruiters can help you answer questions you have and can point you to more resources and opportunities available. Use BTT Gateway and LACS career coaches to help you in the process.