

Ultimate Job-Finding Con-call 2

Federal Government Job Opportunities

Bill Costello

June 1, 2009 6-8 pm EDT

Con-call access information:

Number:1-270-400-1500 (East Coast)

Participant Access Code:447789

To follow slides online you must click on enter SharePlus link in concall registration email. They should be same as sent via e-mail.



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- How to find them
- How to land them
- 1st 2 slides: Bill's background/contact info, and key websites
- Next 5 pages are notes jotted down during the call. Recording will be available in about 1 week on our website at:
- www.deconnection.org/memberconcalls.htm
- Will also be a compilation of the questions/answers that were sent to Bill, along with his presentation

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EMPLOYMENT:

- Western Southern Life – Staff Manager (76 to 79)
- Safecom Info Systems – Territory Mgr (79 to 80)
- Moore Business Systems – Branch Mgr (80 to 84)
- DEC – Sales Exec (84 to 96)
- IBM – Client Rep (96 to 98)
- Ernst & Young – Sales Director (98 to 99)
- Foresight Tech Group – minority owner of IBM Biz Partner (99 to 03)
- US Air Force Reserve – Education Officer (03 to 05)
- PA Air National Guard – Contracting Officer (05 to present)

MILITARY SERVICE:

- Veteran of US Air Force - active duty
- PA Air National Guard & USAF Reserve – traditional

EDUCATION:

- Point Park University – BS in Biz MGT (1980)
- Penn State University – Grad Certificate in HRD & Training (1995)
- Penn State University – Master's in Adult Ed candidate

OTHER:

- Butler County Community College – Part time Instructor: Biz & Tech Division (05 to present)
- Beaver County Community College – Adjunct Instructor: Biz & Tech Division (03 to 05)



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- Site for Federal employment opportunities. It is hosted by monster.com
 - <http://www.usajobs.gov/>
- Site with job descriptions, salary, benefits for ALL Federal jobs
 - <http://www.opm.gov/>
- I got my first job as a civilian with USAF Reserve through this site
 - <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/>
- Sample link for jobs with the Air National Guard and Army National Guard
 - PA: <http://www.milvet.state.pa.us/DMVA/index.htm>

- Bill went into HR Development Training – to prepare for teaching community college at age 47 – and took \$40K pay cut to work for federal gov't. Hard to get in, hard to move up. Take pay cut, get in the door – then can move around. I've been in 3 positions and moved up \$20K.
- Here are steps to take to look for a federal job – can take 3-4 hours to apply for 1 job
- Want to be sure you are qualified for the job you are applying for
- Military veterans – especially Vietnam veterans – that helps
- USAJOBS.GOV – site run by Monster – if you can apply hardcopy I would do so (the system was hacked once).
- Locality – Base Salary plus cost of living upgrade for location like Wash DC. OPM Job site can help determine whether the job qualifies.
- If you see description for job – and you haven't done many of the tasks listed – skip it.
- OPM.GOV – Office of Personnel Management
- How do I find state positions? See example of PA.
- Go to the website first, find out if there are any posted.
- See which agencies are predominant in your area. 10,000 jobs around DC. A small town – not many. There are field positions on the road, e.g., USDA, by district.
- USAJOBS – 46,000 jobs on website – plus 200,000 coming under Obama administration
- Most Federal workforce are baby boomers – several are retiring now after 30 years, can retire.
- Opportunity for growth having higher-level education
- Other sites: Dept of Army, Navy, Air Force – you can get a job as a civilian. Army Corps of Engineers also. Dept. of Mines also.
- Right now economy tight – states, municipals – cutbacks coming – may not be as stable as federal.
- National Guard – listed on State websites, not USAJOBS. Governor's Office, Homeland Security. Bureau of Law Enforcement.

- Question: Cindy Harper – look at Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs – on USA JOBS – you can search on radius of your zip code. Be careful about specifying a certain kind of job.
 - Accounting might be called Controlling, for example.
 - What industries are hiring? FED GOV'T
 - Changing careers: teaching elementary school
- Question: Paul Gonyea: How do you apply your civilian resume with govt job?
 - **Form OF612=Application for Federal Employment** = hard to translate civilian experience with fed gov't. I used this form, not a resume. Only give resume when in personal interview.
- Question: if not U.S. Citizen – impossible to get job directly for US Gov't – try instead Defense industry – look at Gov't contractors and go to work for them
- Graduate Certificate for Teaching – good quick way to change Career Path
- Retraining & Financial Assistance – most agencies
- Question: I have gov't experience from 1972-78. Will that help? Bill: you could possibly have re-employment rights. Won't hurt to ask – they do ask this.
- Look at the job postings – and if you don't follow the instructions EXACTLY forget it. You have to do what they tell you, because they say so, whether it makes sense or not.
- For online application – VERY CAREFUL to comply exactly with what they ask for; anything amiss, it's rejected
- One good thing about Gov't: they DO tell you whether you got job and if not, they tell you why... very unlike industry.
- If there is a job that is posted Open to Internal and External – less likely to get, they prefer internal people.
- OPM Website: Job Series, Job Description.
- Bill's job level is GS1102-11 - 80 pages of stuff. Learned jargon, what it means. If you aren't sure what job on USA Job is – look it up on OPM Job Series. Last time they updated his particular job description was 1983! Definition, coverage (Positions), type of work you do. I'm big believer in doing research up front.

- USA Jobs Example: 01760 - Natick MA Labs
 - I see they added a section search jobs – new section : Jobs by Agency in that area
 - National Park Service – Facility Management – National Park Service
- Grade Levels discussion: GS7 which requires BA degree - \$35K – now I am GS11 (3 jobs later).
 - Locality Pay Adjustment – bigger in Boston.
 - GS7 Starts lower-level management positions
 - Fed. Gov't gives 2 types of raises: automatic and COLA (cost of living increase)
 - GS11 – 10 pay steps for each level. 1st 5 years – COLA – automatic pay raise
 - GS9 – Step 5 – still get COLA but steps automatic every OTHER year. So he looks for another job every 3-5 years
 - When you are hired, you automatically come in at Step 1.
 - Range is good but you start at Step 1.
 - But, Federal Gov't is moving toward “Pay BANDING” instead of GS steps – you can come in – YG Job – not GS – can be Pay Banding job
 - Air Force Reserve HAS gone to Pay BANDING
 - WG = Wage Grade = hourly positions – these are eligible for overtime. GS gets comp time though.
 - 1st week on job – Bill stayed 30 mins. Late to help someone – next day his manager told him he couldn't stay because he gets comp time. Travel for business – you can use as vacation day.
 - Compressed Work schedule – 9.5 hours every day, you get every other week 1 day off.
 - Federal Holiday on weekend – you get Friday off. Every Federal Holiday too.
 - Now, I have predictable schedule.
 - Federal Gov't doesn't let you telecommute though – office grind only. Not bad for separation of work and family.
- Questioner has 6 years of service – what level? GS11 – will help you a lot. Earn re-employment rights.
 - He was probably a Step 6.

- GS11 Facility Mgmt System Specialist for National Park Service 1601 Job Series
- 1601- all these jobs –then drill down.
- EEOC Investigator – bilingual English-Spanish
- Lots of Navy jobs.
- Homeland Security jobs – in Pay BAND. Management Program Analyst, GS13/14. Go in as 13, then you work 6 to 12 months, if you do the job, you automatically get GS14.
- Office of IRS in Boston has jobs – went in by zip code or by city – and pick # miles away
- 263 jobs around Boston – 1st set closes June 10th – runs out July or September
- Before the day the job opportunity closes, you'd better have everything there, else forget it. Bill sends resume/application in hardcopy – Priority Mail with Return Receipt.
- Aerospace Engineering with FAA – Boston Logan – FB Series – Pay Banding position.
- Lot of agencies that need people can't get them now...go to Pay Banding.
- Careful on Job Type
- And look at Field Positions – drop down, front screen – look in PA, or MA – throughout the country.
- USDA, Soil and Agriculture, etc. SBA Jobs too – Field Positions won't show up on regular search.
- Bill.Costello@ang.af.mil and William.Costello@bc3.edu
- Question: I applied to Army – USAJOBS – at Ft. Belva – has own (Resumix) site. One of few he never heard back from. Resumix is a filtering system – you want their keywords and phrases. They'll eliminate you without them. GS – next 4 #s (Job Series) use their terminology.
- Don't apply to a blanket job – find out if the job is open nearby.
- AFPC – Randolph AFB TX – map of the USA – click on State – gives you all the job openings. <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/>
- Navy uses USAJOBS. AF is using own system too.

- Veterans – automatic 5 points for a Federal job. Taking tests – I never took a civil service exam – it's sort of passe these days.
- Any protected class – minority, female – will help
- Programmer-Analyst/Systems Analyst/Information Technology specialist
- Census Bureau – hires temps around time they do census – you can get in that way.
- Judy: YC code – Pay Banding job. Look at OPM.GOV site and look it up.
 - Good news is hiring in at better pay based on civilian experience.
 - Undergrad degree outside of US: do they need any proof? Yes: Bill has been able to qualify using unofficial transcripts, vs. official transcripts. A transcript from another country is fine.
- Closing comments: Bill will reply – Ava will make a FAQ sheet.
- Make sure you know what you're getting into – expect a pay cut relative to private industry – and federal gov't doesn't pay as well but they are STABLE! Automatic raises – PENSION. Defined Benefit Pension Plan. IBM got rid of their pension.
- Also – looks like big pay cut until you figure out net amount of money – don't forget difference in taxes you pay. More hours, travel, weekends in private sector.
 - QUALITY OF LIFE is much nicer. No concalls at night or at home unless I want to.
 - Some friends wish they went to Federal Gov't sooner.
 - Last 3 years I took pay cuts in private industry anyway.
 - Look at whole package... IBM Business partner – did the math – would make more money but no 401K matching 5%, benefits – health insurance fairly reasonably priced. No dental, no eyeglass, no disability insurance -- can buy it on open market – but good for Pension and security. Pension vesting period is 5 years.
- Gov't. Vacation is called Annual Leave. 4 hrs/pay period -26 pay periods – veterans get active duty time added. 4 hours sick leave unlimited on books. Auto accident – he'd get full pay and benefits for as much time as he has on the books.
- Federal Employment Retirement System
- Defined Benefit Pension Plan

Other Websites – Doing Business with the Federal Gov't.

- General Info; loans etc. - Small Business Administration (SBA) www.sba.gov
- SBA's Business Partner Network - www.bpn.gov
- Central Contractor Registration - www.ccr.gov
- General Services Administration - www.gsa.gov