

Civilian Agent FAQ

How can I obtain an application package?

There is no "application package" to obtain. You can apply by submitting the documents required in the vacancy announcement during the open period. You can find open vacancy announcements by clicking on the link directly below the statement "the following are positions currently available" on our website. Application instructions are detailed within each of the posted vacancy announcements. A "recommended" resume format is also provided there. All information you need to know to apply can be found in the announcement. When applying, be sure to submit all documents required in the announcement.

Do I have to be a U.S. citizen to apply?

Yes. U.S. citizenship is required to apply for all federal civil service positions.

Do I need a bachelor's degree in order to qualify?

OSI requires new entry-level civilians to have a bachelor's degree with a cumulative GPA 2.95 or higher or qualifying specialized experience. Applicants for journeyman positions can qualify based on their specialized experience as an agent. Entry level vacancies are normally at the GL-7 level, but can be higher for applicants with an advanced degree (GL-9 for master's, GS-11 for a PhD). Journeymen level vacancies start at GS 13.

If I am close to completing a bachelor's degree but have no specialized experience, can I apply prior to finishing the degree program?

Yes. You may apply up to 9 months prior to graduation, but you will need to provide proof of graduation and transcripts before being hired.

Will I qualify if I have experience as a uniformed law enforcement officer?

Not for a journeyman (GS-13) position. Non-qualifying experience includes work as a uniformed law enforcement officer, where the principal duties consist of investigations and arrests involving traffic violations, minor felonies, misdemeanors and comparable offenses; or duties involving guarding and protecting property; preventing crimes, and/or legal research without the application of investigative techniques. However, experience is usually not required for entry level positions.

What other factors are considered?

Any degree above the bachelor's level is considered a positive factor. Others are foreign-area specialty; foreign language abilities; exposure to foreign cultures; training or experience in forensic sciences; training or experience in computer sciences; training or experience in polygraph administration; fraud related specialties such as accounting and finance, and training or experience in the technical services specialty.

Does fluency in a foreign language give me any priority over applicants without a language skill?

It depends on the position. Fluency in a foreign language is considered a positive factor but it may or may not be used to make the hiring decision, based on the position being filled. However, we value foreign language skills and consider them in our selection process.

Is there an age restriction to apply for a civilian position?

Yes and no. Yes for primary positions. No for secondary positions. The maximum age for a "primary" position is 37. These positions qualify a person for coverage under the special retirement provisions for law enforcement officers in the Federal Employees Retirement System. Applicants must start their civilian employment by the last day of the month in which they turn 37.

Exception: In certain cases, an age waiver may be requested from the appropriate approval authority for persons over the age of 37 who are uniquely qualified for primary positions and for applicants who are eligible for Veterans preference.

For "secondary" positions there is no age requirement. Applicants selected for secondary positions are ineligible for coverage under the special retirement provisions for law enforcement officers and are covered under the standard Federal Employees Retirement System. It is important to note OSI does not hire new agents directly into secondary positions very often and we do not plan to run any vacancies for secondary positions in the foreseeable future.

If I'm younger than 37, can I apply for both primary and secondary positions?

Yes.

Can I apply for multiple positions on the vacancies list?

Yes.

Can I apply for one announcement and be considered for all available vacancy announcements?

No. You must submit a separate application for each announcement for which you wish to be considered. However, most vacancy announcements are used to fill multiple vacancies.

After my application is received, will I automatically be notified?

No, not right away. As we progress through the selection process, we will notify you if you're selected for an interview. After the selection process is completed, we will notify each applicant of their status (selected or not selected)

Will anyone be able to tell me whether or not my application looks promising or how it is faring against other applications in the evaluation process?

No. We are prohibited from making value judgments on an application to an applicant.

How does the selection process work?

First, a human resources specialist reviews all applications for completeness and minimum qualifications. Next, all qualifying applications are evaluated, scored, and rank-ordered by a Review Board comprised of OSI special agents. From those applicants, some or all may be referred for interviews. The names of the highest-ranking applicants are provided to the OSI Executive Director who approves the list. The applicants who are selected are notified that he or she has been identified for further evaluation, and must undergo and pass a pre-employment medical examination. If the medical examination is favorable, the applicant must undergo a pre-employment suitability investigation. After successful completion of the suitability investigation, employment related documents (e.g., condition of employment agreements, etc.) are sent to the selectee for completion and an enter-on-duty date is established.

Important note: if face-to-face interviews are conducted, applicants are expected to travel to the interview location at their own expense.

Will I be notified if I am not chosen for a position?

Yes, if you are not selected for a position, OSI will notify you in writing (normally via email) and the file is closed.

At what point is a background investigation conducted? Do I need one to apply?

The pre-employment background suitability investigation is not initiated until an applicant is approved to move onto the final phase of the selection process and successfully completes the medical screening. No background investigation is needed prior to that. The suitability investigation is completed even for applicants who have a valid security clearance. Once the suitability investigation provides a positive outcome, the applicant is considered for open vacancies.

Who does the pre-employment suitability investigation, and how long does it take?

Pre-employment suitability investigations are normally conducted by the OSI unit closest to the selectee. The investigation takes approximately 45 - 60 days. A key factor in the time it takes is the applicant's responsiveness. Applicants should act quickly to return the correct and accurate information in a timely manner.

Are there any other security requirements?

Yes. Each selectee will undergo a thorough background security investigation to obtain a top secret security clearance, which is a condition of employment for OSI special agents. If you do not qualify for a top secret clearance, your employment will be terminated. Also, OSI special agents may be required to take a counterintelligence polygraph examination.

How long does the hiring process take?

From application to start date, the process takes between six months and a year.

If I am not hired into a specific position, does my application stay on file?

It depends on which type of vacancy you apply for. Your application stays on file for 12 - 18 months if you apply for a worldwide vacancy announcement that is targeting multiple vacancies. During that time, your application will be continually considered for worldwide vacancies covered by that announcement. After that time, the applicant pool expires and you must apply to another announcement to be considered for employment. If you apply for a specific vacancy - one that states a particular location - your application stays on file only until that position is filled. If not selected, we will notify you and your application will not be considered for new vacancies unless you apply for those announcements.

Do I have a choice of location if selected under a worldwide announcement?

You will have the opportunity to provide your preferences, but OSI management decides where your skills can be best utilized based on the needs of the organization. You are also required to sign a mobility agreement stating you will accept assignment to other positions and locations when selected for reassignment or promotion. Please make an honest self-assessment before applying. If you are not willing to go where the Air Force needs you, you should not apply.

How often are new positions announced?

New announcements are posted to the website as we have vacant requirements to fill.

What are the physical requirements?

A basic premise of federal employment is that employees must be fully qualified to safely and efficiently perform the essential duties and responsibilities of their positions without undue risk to themselves or others. Law enforcement duties in OSI include federal criminal law enforcement activities that can be physically demanding and dangerous. Accordingly, OSI is responsible for assessing whether employees are physically and medically qualified for the position they hold.

All applicants who have successfully completed the OSI's evaluation process for criminal investigator positions are required to undergo a pre-employment medical examination by a licensed physician to determine if they are physically and medically qualified to perform the full duties of the position. Any physical condition that would hinder an individual's full, efficient and safe performance of his/her duties, or failure to meet any of the required medical or physical qualifications for employment is disqualifying.

An applicant must possess the following general physical attributes: arms, hands, legs, and feet intact and functioning; range of motion of all joints, limbs and trunk; average manual dexterity and hand-eye coordination; average strength; acceptable eyesight; acceptable hearing; normal vocal abilities; emotional and mental stability.

- Specific vision requirements: the ability to see and be free of visual problems. Any condition that significantly

interferes with visual acuity or puts the eye at risk is disqualifying. The applicant must have depth perception, normal color vision, and correctable vision. Glasses are permitted but must be sufficient to read printed words the size of typewritten material.

- Specific hearing requirements: the ability to discriminate sounds and speech must be demonstrated, as measured by an audiometer.
- An EKG is required with the physical and a licensed physician must provide determination the applicant is healthy and has no duty limiting restrictions.
- Psychiatric conditions: any disorder that significantly affects normal perception, judgment, or safe and acceptable behavior, or evidence of serious mental impairment, is disqualifying.
- Others: distinct speech, odor detection, unimpaired sight, free breathing and ability to hear and maintain equilibrium. Any abnormalities of the eyes, ears, nose, mouth or throat that permanently and significantly interfere with breathing, distinct speech, sight or loss of sense of smell are disqualifying. Mobility, stability, flexibility and strength to perform physical job tasks efficiently with minimum risk of injury are required.

Will I be required to remain physically fit and undergo routine medical examinations periodically?

Yes. The duties of these positions require moderate to arduous physical exertion involving walking, running, standing, use of firearms, and exposure to inclement weather. Employees are required to be physically fit throughout their career and may be subject to periodic medical examinations and physical fitness evaluations. Failure to meet an established medical or physical requirement means the individual is not qualified for the position unless there is sufficient evidence that he or she can perform the duties of the position safely and efficiently despite a condition that would normally be disqualifying.

Are newly hired agents required to attend formal training?

Yes. All new special agents must attend the Criminal Investigator Training Program (CITP) at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Glynco, Georgia. The CITP includes physical requirements--Physical Battery Efficiency (PBE) exercises. The PBE includes a 1.5 mile run, flexibility, bench press, and agility run. The CITP is followed by seven weeks of OSI agency specific course work. If a newly hired special agent has previously completed the CITP with another agency, they will not be required to attend again. However, the OSI course will be required.

How can I physically prepare myself before arriving at FLETC?

Start an exercise program based on your current fitness level, general health, and age. Consult a physician for medical clearance and general guidance. Special care should be taken by people who have primary risk factors for coronary artery disease such as smoking, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol. If you have a sedentary lifestyle, start improving your cardiovascular conditioning by walking, biking, and swimming. These activities should be performed for at least 15 minutes, twice a week, increasing to 20 minutes, three times per week by the third week. Try including jogging by the third week. Find a workout partner and motivate each other to adhere to a fitness plan, but avoid over training.

Are there any other conditions of employment?

Yes. The selectee must sign a geographic mobility agreement to accept relocation throughout the U.S. and abroad as organizational needs dictate; must sign notices acknowledging he/she is in an Emergency-Essential position (if applicable) and the requirement to participate in the Air Force immunization program; may work long hours in undesirable conditions on short notice; must travel away from home for short and/or long periods to include deployments abroad; must be proficient in the use of firearms and cannot have been convicted of a misdemeanor or felony crime of domestic violence; will be required to submit to random drug testing; must have a valid driver's license and be able to operate a government owned or leased vehicle; must pass initial and periodic suitability determinations and polygraph examinations.

Are OSI agent positions affected by the Lautenberg Amendment?

Yes. The amendment prohibits the use of firearms by individuals convicted of misdemeanor domestic violence for domestic abuse in all 50 states. Applicants with such a conviction are disqualified from being an OSI agent.

I'm interested in getting into a specialty such as polygraph, fraud, computer crime, etc. Can I apply just for a particular specialty?

People with experience in a specialized field may apply for posted vacancies related specifically to that field or they may apply for a more general vacancy announcement. All other applicants are considered for generalist agent positions. If hired, you may be assigned to a specialty position or you can apply for specialty positions later in your career. As mentioned earlier, you will have the opportunity to provide your assignment preferences and that includes the specific type of job you are interested in.

Will I be entitled to Law Enforcement Availability Pay (LEAP) if selected for a GS-1811 position?

Yes, OSI agents are entitled to LEAP.