



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

About the United States Secret Service

- [What is the origin of the Secret Service?](#)
- [Who is the Secret Service authorized to protect?](#)
- [How long do former presidents receive Secret Service protection after they leave office?](#)
- [How does the Secret Service "protect" the president?](#)
- [Which candidates for President does the Secret Service protect?](#)
- [How can I report a threat towards a protectee?](#)
- [What legal authority and powers do Secret Service agents have?](#)
- [What are the rules for the printing, publishing and illustrations of U.S. currency?](#)
- [How many people are employed by the Secret Service?](#)
- [Does the Secret Service auction equipment and vehicles that it no longer uses?](#)

Protecting Yourself

- [How can I detect counterfeit currency?](#)
- [How can I protect myself against credit card fraud?](#)
- [What should I do if I think I have been victimized by credit card fraud or identity theft?](#)
- [How do I report a case of advance fee fraud \(also known as "4-1-9 fraud"\)?](#)
- [How can I protect myself against check fraud?](#)
- [How can I protect myself against telemarketing fraud?](#)
- [How can I protect my privacy?](#)

Employment Opportunities

- [How can I obtain further employment information from the Secret Service?](#)
- [How do I apply for a job with the Secret Service?](#)
- [Do you have to be a U.S. Citizen to apply to work for the Secret Service?](#)
- [How would I apply for a Special Agent position?](#)
- [How long does it take to get hired?](#)
- [Will my military time count towards retirement?](#)
- [What kind of training do Secret Service agents receive?](#)
- [What kind of training do Uniformed Division officers receive?](#)
- [What is the difference between special agents and Uniformed Division officers and what are the qualifications for those positions?](#)
- [What is the career path for a special agent?](#)
- [Do I need a college degree to work with the Secret Service?](#)
- [If I don't have a college degree, will my experience count?](#)
- [Can I still apply for Special Agent or Uniformed Division if I've had corrective eye surgery?](#)
- [Will I receive compensation for speaking a foreign language?](#)
- [Does the Secret Service hire students?](#)
- [I have a top secret security clearance with my agency. Will the Secret Service use that information instead of doing a complete background check? Will that help speed up the background process?](#)
- [Do I still have to take the Treasury Enforcement Agent \(TEA\) exam even if I have taken the exam for another agency?](#)
- [What if I don't have a computer?](#)
- [Will the Secret Service provide housing during training?](#)
- [Will the Secret Service pay relocation expenses?](#)
- [Does past illegal drug usage automatically disqualify me for a position with the Secret Service?](#)
- [Which positions require completion of a polygraph examination?](#)
- [I am eligible for a Veterans Recruitment Act \(VRA\) appointment. Am I required to pass a written test to qualify for a Special Agent or Uniformed Division officer position?](#)
- [Who qualifies under the Veterans Employment Opportunity Act?](#)
- [Does the Secret Service hire people with disabilities?](#)

About the United States Secret Service

- **What is the origin of the Secret Service?**

The United States Secret Service, one of the nation's oldest federal investigative law enforcement agencies, was founded in 1865 as a branch of the U.S. Treasury Department. It was originally created to combat the counterfeiting of U.S. currency - a serious problem at the time. In fact, following the Civil War, it was estimated that one-third to one-half of the currency in circulation was counterfeit.

In 1901, following the assassination of President William McKinley in Buffalo, New York, the Secret Service was first tasked with its second mission: the protection of the president. Today, the Secret Service's mission is two-fold: protection of the president, vice president and others; and investigations into crimes against the financial infrastructure of the United States.

- **Who is the Secret Service authorized to protect?**

By law, the Secret Service is authorized to protect:

- The president, the vice president, (or other individuals next in order of succession to the Office of the President), the president-elect and vice president-elect
- The immediate families of the above individuals
- Former presidents, their spouses, except when the spouse re-marries

Search

» [Search the website](#)

Powered by [USA.gov](#)

About

» [Home](#)

» [Who We Are](#)
- [Director](#)
- [Deputy Director](#)
- [Special Agents](#)
- [Uniformed Division](#)
- [Support Personnel](#)

» [Our Dual Mission](#)

» [Rowley Training Center](#)

» [History](#)

» [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

» [Student Q&A](#)

Contact Us

» [Contact Information](#)

» [Field Offices](#)

Investigations

» [Investigative Mission](#)

» [Criminal Investigations](#)

» [Forensic Services](#)

» [Investigative Support](#)

» [Know Your Money](#)

» [Electronic Crimes Task Force](#)

» [Law Enforcement Resources](#)

Protection

» [Protective Mission](#)

» [How Protection Works](#)

» [National Special Security Events](#)

» [National Threat Assessment Center](#)

Press Room

» [Most Wanted](#)

» [Photo Gallery](#)

» [Press Releases](#)

» [Annual Report](#)

» [FOIA](#)

» [Downloads](#)

» [Information Quality](#)

Employment

» [Employment Opportunities](#)

- Former presidents, their spouses, except when the spouse remarries
- Children of former presidents until age 16
- Visiting heads of foreign states or governments and their spouses traveling with them, other distinguished foreign visitors to the United States, and official representatives of the United States performing special missions abroad
- Major presidential and vice presidential candidates, and their spouses within 120 days of a general presidential election
- Other individuals as designated per Executive Order of the President and
- National Special Security Events, when designated as such by the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security

- » [Application Forms](#)
- » [Equal Employment Opportunity](#)
- » [EEO Data Posted Pursuant to the No FEAR Act](#)
- » [Reasonable Accommodation](#)

• **How long do former presidents receive Secret Service protection after they leave office?**

- Business Opportunities**
- » [Procurement Division \(For Vendors\)](#)

In 1965, Congress authorized the Secret Service (Public Law 89-186) to protect a former president and his/her spouse during their lifetime, unless they decline protection. In 1997, Congress enacted legislation (Public Law 103-329) that limits Secret Service protection for former presidents to 10 years after leaving office. Under this new law, individuals who are in office before January 1, 1997, will continue to receive Secret Service protection for their lifetime. Individuals elected to office after that time will receive protection for 10 years after leaving office. Therefore, President Clinton will be the last president to receive lifetime protection.

- Partnerships**
- » [Boys and Girls Club Partnership](#)
- » [Center for Missing and Exploited Children Partnership](#)

• **How does the Secret Service "protect" the president?**

In order to maintain a safe environment for the president and other protectees, the Secret Service calls upon other federal, state and local agencies to assist on a daily basis. The Secret Service Uniformed Division, the Metropolitan Police Department, and the U.S. Park Police patrol the streets and parks nearby the White House. The Secret Service regularly consults with experts from other agencies in utilizing the most advanced security techniques. The military supports the Secret Service through the use of Explosive Ordnance Disposal teams and communications resources. When the president travels, an advance team of Secret Service agents works with host city, state and local law enforcement, as well as public safety officials, to jointly implement the necessary security measures.

• **Which candidates for President does the Secret Service protect?**

In regard to presidential campaign, the Secret Service is authorized by law (18 United States Code § 3056) to protect:

- Major presidential and vice presidential candidates and their spouses within 120 days of a general presidential election. As defined in statute, the term "major presidential and vice presidential candidates" means those individuals identified as such by the Secretary of Homeland Security after consultation with an advisory committee.

The Secret Service provides protection for major candidates, unless declined.

The Secret Service has no role in determining who is to be considered a major candidate. The Secretary of the Homeland Security determines who qualifies as a major candidate and when such protection should commence under the authority of Title 18, United States Code, Section 3056. This determination is made in consultation with an advisory committee comprised of the following individuals:

- Speaker of the House
- House Minority Whip
- Senate Majority Leader
- Senate Minority Leader
- One additional member chosen by the committee

• **How can I report a threat towards a protectee?**

Contact your nearest [U.S. Secret Service field office](#) which is listed in the "Emergency Numbers" section in the front of most phone books.

The Secret Service is interested in legitimate information relating to threats, plans or attempts by individuals, groups or organizations to harm Secret Service protectees. However, the agency does not desire or solicit information pertaining to individuals or groups expressing legitimate criticism of, or political opposition to, the policies and decisions of the government or government officials.

• **What types of crimes does the Secret Service investigate?**

The Secret Service has primary jurisdiction to investigate threats against Secret Service protectees as well as financial crimes, which include counterfeiting of U.S. currency or other U.S. Government obligations; forgery or theft of U.S. Treasury checks, bonds or other securities; credit card fraud; telecommunications fraud; computer fraud, identify fraud and certain other crimes affecting federally insured financial institutions.

• **What legal authority and powers do Secret Service agents have?**

Under Title 18, Section 3056, of the United States Code, agents and officers of the United States Secret Service can:

- Carry firearms
- Execute warrants issued under the laws of the United States
- Make arrests without warrants for any offense against the United States committed in their presence, or for any felony recognizable under the laws of the United States if they have reasonable grounds to believe that the person to be arrested has committed such felony
- Offer and pay rewards for services and information leading to the apprehension of persons involved in the violation of the law that the Secret Service is authorized to enforce

- Investigate fraud in connection with identification documents, fraudulent commerce, fictitious instruments and foreign securities and
- Perform other functions and duties authorized by law

The Secret Service works closely with the United States Attorney's Office in both protective and investigative matters.

• **What are the rules for the printing, publishing and illustration of U.S. currency?**

The Counterfeit Detection Act of 1992, Public Law 102-550, in Section 411 of Title 31 of the Code of Federal Regulations, permits color illustrations of U.S. currency, provided:

- The illustration is of a size less than three-fourths or more than one and one-half, in linear dimension, of each part of the item illustrated
- The illustration is one-sided and
- All negatives, plates, positives, digitized storage medium, graphic files, magnetic medium, optical storage devices, and any other thing used in the making of the illustration that contain an image of the illustration or any part thereof are destroyed and/or deleted or erased after their final use

Title 18, United States Code, Section 504 permits black and white reproductions of currency and other obligations, provided such reproductions meet the size requirement. See the section on this website entitled [Know Your Money](#) for more information.

• **How many people are employed by the Secret Service?**

The Secret Service employs approximately 3,200 special agents, 1,300 Uniformed Division officers, and more than 2,000 other technical, professional and administrative support personnel.

• **Does the Secret Service auction equipment and vehicles that it no longer uses?**

The Secret Service does not conduct government auctions. The General Services Administration handles auctions of government property. You can contact them at the following address:

General Services Administration
Office of Public Affairs
18th & F Streets, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20405
www.gsa.gov

Protecting Yourself

• **How can I detect counterfeit currency?**

Visit the [Know Your Money](#) page on this website for more information on detecting counterfeit currency

• **How can I protect myself against credit card fraud?**

- It is critical that you notify your bank or credit card company immediately if you lose your card. It may prevent someone else from using it illegally. Remember to get your card back after purchasing goods or services. Do not leave the card in hotel rooms or unnecessarily exposed for long periods of time. The number can be copied even if the card is not taken.
- Retain all carbon copies of your receipts when making a purchase and retain receipts from ATM withdrawals. If you don't get a billing statement on time, notify the credit card issuer immediately. Check billing statements carefully upon receipt to make sure all charges are yours. Errors or charges that don't belong should be reported as soon as possible.
- Do not put your credit card account number on checks used to pay your monthly bills. The credit card agency can always trace your check through your name/address information on the check.
- Retain copies of receipts to check against billing statement. Be careful when disposing of materials and correspondence relating to your finances. Shred all receipt carbon copies to make sure your credit card number is unrecognizable. Do not throw away canceled checks, financial statements or letters offering pre-approved credit cards where others can easily find them.
- Promptly destroy all old cards or cards you no longer use. Dispose of them in a manner ensuring the card number is unrecognizable.
- Secure your mailbox. Obtain a lock, if necessary. If you receive mail through an apartment house clusterbox arrangement, make sure the locks for the panel and your box lock correctly.
- When applying for a credit card, check the return address. If there is a sticker with a return address placed on the application, contact the card issuing company to verify the correct address.
- Do not give your card number to anyone calling on the telephone offering you prizes or gifts.
- Do not write your card number on a postcard notifying you that you have won a prize or gift and requesting the number as part of the award arrangements.
- Do not leave gasoline credit card receipts at the pump. They may contain your credit card number.
- Do not provide your credit card number to unsolicited e-mail messages or on suspicious Internet web sites.

• **What should I do if I think I have been victimized by credit card fraud or identity theft?**

If your complaint is essentially a non-criminal dispute with a retailer or other business, you must immediately dispute the charge(s) in writing with the customer relations office of your credit card company.

If you have been the victim of credit card fraud or identity theft, the following tips will

assist you:

- Report the crime to the police immediately. Get a copy of your police report or case number. Credit card companies, your bank, and the insurance company may ask you to reference the report to verify the crime.
- Immediately contact your credit card issuers. Get replacement cards with new account numbers and ask that the old account be processed as "account closed at consumer's request" for credit record purposes. You should also follow up this telephone conversation with a letter to the credit card company that summarizes your requests in writing.
- Call the fraud units of the three credit reporting bureaus. Report the theft of your credit cards and/or numbers. Ask that your accounts be flagged. Also, add a victim's statement to your report requesting they contact you to verify future credit applications. The following is a list of addresses and numbers to the three credit bureaus:

Equifax Credit Information Services - Consumer Fraud Division
P.O. Box 105496
Atlanta, Georgia 30348-5496
Tel: (800) 997-2493
www.equifax.com

Experian
P.O. Box 2104
Allen, Texas 75013-2104
Tel: (888) EXPERIAN (397-3742)
www.experian.com

Trans Union Fraud Victim Assistance Dept.
P.O. Box 390
Springfield, PA 19064-0390
Tel: (800) 680-7289
www.transunion.com

- Keep a log of all conversations with authorities and financial entities.
- As with any personal information, only provide your credit card number to merchants you know. Also, remember to protect your social security number. You have to give your social security number for employment and tax purposes, but it is not necessary for many businesses. Notify the Social Security Administration if you suspect your Social Security number has been used fraudulently.
- The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is the federal clearinghouse for complaints by victims of identity theft. Although the FTC does not have the authority to bring criminal cases, the Commission assists victims of identity theft by providing them with information to help them resolve the financial and other problems that can result from identity theft. The FTC also may refer victim complaints to other appropriate government agencies and private organizations for further action. If you have been a victim of ID theft, you can file a complaint with the FTC by contacting the FTC's Consumer Response Center.

By phone:
Toll Free 877-FTC-HELP (382-4357)
TDD: 202-326-2502

By mail:
Consumer Response Center
Federal Trade Commission
600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20580

On the Internet:
www.ftc.gov/ftc/complaint.htm

For consumer information:
www.ftc.gov/ftc/consumer.htm

- **How do I report a case of advance fee fraud (also known as "4-1-9 fraud")?**

The perpetrators of advance fee fraud, known internationally as "4-1-9 fraud" (after the section of the Nigerian penal code which addresses these schemes), are often very creative and innovative. A large number of victims are enticed into believing they have been singled out from the masses to share in multi-million dollar windfall profits for no apparent reason.

If you have suffered a significant financial loss related to advance fee fraud, please contact your local Secret Service field office. Telephone numbers are available in the [Field Office Directory](#) on this website or may also be found on the inside cover of your local telephone directory. Any investigation regarding this type of fraud will be conducted on a case by case basis at the discretion of the local Secret Service and U.S. Attorney's Office.

If you ever receive an e-mail or fax from someone you do not know requesting your assistance in a financial transaction, such as the transfer of a large sum of money into an account, or claiming you are the next of kin to a wealthy person who has died, or the winner of some obscure lottery, **DO NOT** respond. These requests are typically sent through public servers via a generic "spammed" e-mail message. Usually, the sender does not yet know your personal e-mail address and is depending on you to respond. Once you reply, whether you intend to string them along or tell them you are not interested, they will often continue to e-mail you in an attempt to harass or intimidate you. If you receive an unsolicited e-mail of this nature, the best course is to simply delete the message.

Due to a number of aggravating circumstances, such as the use of false names, addresses, stolen/cloned/prepaid cell phones and remote email addresses, verifying the location of and subsequent prosecution of these persons or groups is difficult. The act of

sending an email soliciting strangers' assistance in a financial transaction is not, in itself, a crime. The installation of a credible spam filter and contacting your Internet Service Provider may help deter these unsolicited emails. However, there is currently no available program to completely block these types of messages.

- **How can I protect myself against check fraud?**

- Don't give your checking account number to people you don't know, even if they claim they are from your bank.
- Reveal checking account information only to businesses you know to be reputable.
- Report lost or stolen checks immediately.
- Properly store or dispose of canceled checks and guard new checks.
- Report any inquiries or suspicious behavior to your bank, who will take measures to protect your account and notify proper authorities.
- Do not leave your automated teller machine receipt at the ATM; it may contain account information.
- Check your bank statements carefully and often.
- Use direct deposit.

Tips for Businesses - Internal Procedures:

- Review your bank statements regularly to ensure that the authorized signers are not the same people who reconcile the account.
- Have Social Security and as many other checks as possible deposited directly into your bank account rather than mailed to you.
- Review all hiring procedures. Know your employees.
- Make sure two people are responsible for accounts payable and ensure that mailroom personnel and procedures are sound.
- Keep all check stock or cash equivalents in a secure and locked facility.
- Change keys or entry codes periodically to prevent routine access to storage areas.
- Consider surprise audits.
- Consider moving check disbursement activity to electronic payment.
- Read and understand your bank contracts regarding liability for fraud under the Uniform Commercial Code.

Tips for Businesses - External Procedures:

- Maintain contact with other businesses in your area so you can receive timely information on fraud occurrences. Keep a record of when, what and how a fraud may have hurt your business so you can prevent it the next time.
- Use bank services like positive pay, expedited return information and signature verification systems to protect your accounts payable and accounts receivable areas.
- Purchase check stock from well-established vendors. Use safety paper. If you process your payables through a service bureau, make sure you have a copy of its security procedures.
- Reconcile your check disbursements and deposits regularly.
- If a payment account is fraudulently used, close the account as soon as possible.
- Be cautious when using refund accounts, such as rebates for subscriptions. This is another target for check fraud. The checks are relatively easy to obtain and can be used for counterfeits.
- Evaluate the use of negative check file databases, especially if you accept a large number of payments by check.
- Find ways to replace paper documents with electronic payment devices.
- Know your customers.

- **How can I protect myself against telemarketing fraud?**

Ways to Avoid Becoming a Victim:

- Don't allow yourself to be pushed into a hurried decision.
- Always request written information, by mail, about the product, service, investment or charity and about the organization that's offering it.
- Don't make any investment or purchase you don't fully understand.
- Ask with what state or federal agencies the firm is registered.
- Check out the company or organization.
- If an investment or major purchase is involved, request that information also be sent to your accountant, financial adviser, banker or attorney for evaluation and an opinion.
- Ask what recourse you would have if you make a purchase and aren't satisfied.
- Beware of testimonials that you may have no way of verifying.
- Never provide personal financial information over the phone unless you are absolutely certain the caller has a bona fide need to know.
- If necessary, hang up the phone.

Tips for Determining Telemarketing Fraud:

- High-pressure sales tactics.
- Insistence on an immediate decision.
- The offer sounds too good to be true.
- A request for your credit card number for any purpose other than to make a purchase.
- An offer to send someone to your home or office to pick up the money or some other method such as overnight mail to get your funds more quickly.
- A statement that something is "free," followed by a requirement that you pay for something.
- An investment that is "without risk."
- Unwillingness to provide written information or references (such as a bank or names of satisfied customers in your area) that you can contact.
- A suggestion that you should make a purchase or investment on the basis of "trust."

- **How can I protect my privacy?**

- Get a copy of your credit report from more than one credit bureau. Check for inaccuracies.

- Don't share personal information with anyone who doesn't have the right to know. Among other things, that means you shouldn't write down your Social Security, credit card or telephone numbers on checks if it's not appropriate to do so. Don't offer this information to store clerks and unknown telephone marketers.
- To avoid junk mail and telemarketing calls, write to direct marketing associations and request that your name be removed from any junk mail lists.
- Be aware that almost every time you call an 800, 888 or 900 number, your name and address are captured by the company you dialed. This information becomes part of your electronic profile.
- Ask your bank to notify you in writing when someone requests your records. Examine your automated teller receipts to make sure that the balance is correct and that nobody is tapping your account electronically.
- Invest in a paper shredder for documents you no longer need such as old bank statements, receipts and junk mail (including unsolicited credit card applications) to avoid being victimized by "dumpster divers" looking to steal your identity.

Employment Opportunities

- **How can I obtain further employment information from the Secret Service?**

Visit our [Employment Opportunities](#) page.

- **How do I apply for a job with the Secret Service?**

To view and apply for our vacancies please follow this [link](#). For instructions on how to apply online, please visit our [application procedures page](#).

You may also call 888-813-8777 for a listing of our current vacancies.

- **Do you have to be a U.S. Citizen to apply to work for the Secret Service?**

Yes. A person must be a United States citizen to apply for positions with the Secret Service.

- **How would I apply for a Special Agent position?**

Follow this [link](#). The special agent position can be found by conducting a search by series (1811) or title (Criminal Investigator). Once you have located the vacancy, click on the title to view the vacancy announcement.

To apply, click on the "Apply Online" button located at the bottom of the vacancy announcement.

- **How long does it take to get hired?**

All Secret Service positions require completion of a full background investigation before appointment. The time frame for completion of a background investigation varies depending on the history of the applicant. Typically, a full background investigation takes approximately six to nine months to complete. During this period, various information is verified, including employment history, police records, credit history, school transcripts, neighborhood references and military records.

Applicants must be able to obtain a Top Secret clearance. Applicants must pass an extensive pre-employment background investigation. Completion of a full investigation is required before appointment. Follow this [link](#) to learn more about the background investigation.

- **Will my military time count towards retirement?**

Employees covered under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) may receive credit for post 1956 military service only if he or she deposits with the employing agency a sum equal to three percent (3%) of the military basic pay he or she earned during the period of military service, plus interest. Interest begins two years after appointment. Active duty in the military service is counted for annual leave accrual purposes. However, if an applicant has retired from the military service, only time served in a war or campaign is credible for annual leave accrual purposes.

- **What kind of training do Secret Service agents receive?**

New agent trainees are initially sent to the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Glynco, Georgia, where they are enrolled in the Criminal Investigator Training Program (CITP). This 10-week course, designed to train new federal investigators in such areas as criminal law and investigative techniques, provides a general foundation for the agency-specific training that follows.

Upon successful completion of CITP, new agent trainees attend the 17-week Special Agent Training Course at the Secret Service training academy, outside of Washington, D.C. This course focuses on specific Secret Service policies and procedures associated with the dual responsibilities of investigations and protection. Trainees are provided with basic knowledge and advanced application training in combating counterfeiting, access device fraud and other financial criminal activity, protective intelligence investigations, physical protection techniques, protective advances and emergency medicine. The core curriculum is augmented with extensive training in marksmanship, control tactics, water survival skills and physical fitness.

Secret Service agents receive continuous advanced training throughout their careers. In part, this training consists of regular firearms requalification and emergency medicine refresher courses. Agents assigned to protective assignments also participate in unique simulated crisis training scenarios that present agents with a variety of "real world" emergency situations involving Secret Service protectees. These training simulations are designed to provide agents with immediate feedback concerning their response to a variety of emergency response scenarios.

Agents assigned to offices in the field have the opportunity to acquire advanced training

in the area of criminal investigations and are also encouraged to attend training sessions sponsored by other law enforcement agencies.

All Secret Service agents participate in a wide variety of management and individual development courses. Ethics, Diversity, Interpersonal Awareness, Practical Leadership and Introduction to Supervision are among the topics currently offered to all personnel at the Secret Service.

- **What kind of training do Uniformed Division officers receive?**

New appointees receive an intensive training program, which is 12 weeks in duration, at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glynco, Georgia, followed by a 12-week specialized training at the Secret Service's training facilities outside Washington, D.C. Training includes coursework in police procedures, firearms, physical fitness, psychology, police-community relations, criminal law, first aid, laws of arrest, search and seizure, physical defense techniques, diplomatic immunity, international treaties and protocol. On-the-job training and advanced in-service training programs complement classroom studies.

- **What is the difference between special agents and Uniformed Division officers and, what are the qualifications for those positions?**

Secret Service special agents' duties include both investigations and protection. Special agents investigate financial crimes such as counterfeiting of currency, false identification, credit and debit card fraud, computer fraud, forgery or theft of U.S. Government checks, bonds or other securities, telecommunications fraud, and certain other crimes affecting federally insured financial institutions.

The protective responsibilities of special agents include protecting the President, the Vice President, (or other individuals next in order of succession to the Office of the President); the President-Elect and Vice President-Elect; the immediate families of the above individuals; former presidents, their spouses for their lifetimes, except when the spouse re-marries. (In 1997, Congressional legislation became effective limiting Secret Service protection to former presidents for a period of not more than 10 years from the date the former president leaves office); children of former presidents until age 16; visiting heads of foreign states or governments and their spouses traveling with them, other distinguished foreign visitors to the United States, and official representatives of the United States performing special missions abroad; major presidential and vice presidential candidates, and their spouses within 120 days of a general presidential election; other individuals as designated per Executive Order of the President; and National Special Security Events, when designated as such by the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

To learn more about the [special agent position, please follow this link](#)

. The Secret Service Uniformed Division is often compared to a specialized police force. Uniformed Division officers provide protection for the White House Complex, the Main Treasury Building and Annex and other protected facilities; the official residence of the Vice President; and foreign diplomatic missions in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Uniformed Division officers carry out their protective responsibilities through special support units (including Countersniper, Canine Explosive Detection Team, Emergency Response Team, Crime Scene Search Technicians, Special Operations Section, and Magnetometers), a network of fixed security posts and foot, bicycle, vehicular and motorcycle patrols.

To learn more about the [Uniformed Division officer position, please follow this link.](#)

- **What is the career path for a special agent?**

While the following general description may represent a typical career track, promotions will affect individual careers and assignments.

Secret Service special agents spend their first six to eight years on the job assigned to a [field office](#). After their field experience, agents usually are transferred to a protective detail where they will stay for three to five years. Following their protective assignment, many agents return to the field, transfer to a headquarters office, a training office or other Washington, D.C.-based assignment. During their careers, agents also have the opportunity to work overseas in one of the agency's international field offices. This typically requires foreign language training to ensure language proficiency when working alongside the agency's foreign law enforcement counterparts.

- **Do I need a college degree to work with the Secret Service?**

Each position has different entry level qualifications and/or education requirements. Specific requirements are listed in individual vacancy announcements.

- **If I don't have a college degree, will my experience count?**

The Secret Service applies the Office of Personnel Management's "Qualification Standards for General Schedule Positions" when reviewing applications. Each position has different entry level qualifications and/or education requirements. Specific requirements are listed in individual vacancy announcements.

- **Can I still apply for Special Agent or Uniformed Division if I've had corrective eye surgery?**

Yes. Lasik, ALK, RK and PRK corrective eye surgeries are acceptable eye surgeries for special agent or Uniformed Division applicants provided specific visual tests are passed. The following are the waiting periods before visual tests are conducted after the surgery: Lasik surgery – three months; PRK – six months; and ALK and RK – one year. The waiting periods are required to ensure the surgery has healed without complications. Specific tests for visual acuity, disability glare and contrast sensitivity are also administered.

- **Will I receive compensation for speaking a foreign language?**

A one time recruitment bonus, 25 percent of basic annual pay, will be paid to newly hired special agents, who are identified as having a foreign language skill and can test at the S-3 level, general professional proficiency (able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social and professional topics). All potential applicants in this program are tested in the foreign language for which they claim a proficiency using the Federal Interagency Language Roundtable (FILR) level description system. The recruitment bonus will be paid as a lump sum, upon successful completion of all required training and graduation from the Secret Service's James J. Rowley Training Center.

The Secret Service also has a Foreign Language Cash Award Program. This program pays a cash award of up to five percent of basic pay to individuals who possess and make substantial use of one or more foreign languages in the performance of official duties.

- **Does the Secret Service hire students?**

Yes:

- **The Secret Service Student Temporary Education Employment Program (STEP)** provides federal employment opportunities to students who are enrolled or accepted for enrollment as degree-seeking students taking at least a half-time academic, technical or vocational course load in an accredited high school, technical, vocational, two or four-year college or university, graduate or professional school.
- **The Student Career Experience Program** combines classroom training with a participatory work environment. The selectee(s) will participate in a two-year work-study program consistent with their field of study. Positions are limited and students may choose from numerous occupations related to their field. Baccalaureate Degree students must complete 640 hours of study-related work requirements.
- **The Student Volunteer Service Program (Internship)** provides an unpaid academically related work assignment that allows the student to explore career options as well as develop personal and professional skills. Students are expected to work a minimum of 12 hours per week, and not less than one semester, two quarters or summer session, and may not have already graduated.

- **I have a Top Secret security clearance with my agency. Will the Secret Service use that information instead of doing a complete background check? Will that help speed up the background process?**

Regardless of the clearance level of the applicant, the Secret Service will complete its own full background investigation prior to the appointment of all applicants. The time frame for completion of a background investigation varies depending on the history of the applicant. Typically, a full background investigation takes approximately six to nine months to complete. During this period, various information is verified including employment history, police records, credit history, school transcripts, neighborhood references and military records. Applicants must be able to obtain a Top Secret clearance. Applicants must pass an extensive pre-employment background investigation. Completion of a full investigation is required before appointment. Follow this [link](#) to learn more about the background investigation.

- **Do I still have to take the Treasury Enforcement Agent (TEA) exam even if I have taken the exam for another agency?**

If you have previously taken the Treasury Enforcement Agent exam (TEA) with another agency, you may submit a copy of your results to the Secret Service, and a determination will be made as to whether the rating score is valid and up-to-date.

- **What if I don't have a computer?**

We encourage all applicants to apply for positions with the Secret Service electronically by submitting an application online. If you are unable to submit your application electronically, you may contact the Personnel Division at (202) 406-6090 or, for hearing impaired applicants, TTY (202) 406-5390, for assistance. Applicants must contact the Personnel Division prior to the closing date of the specific vacancy announcement in order to receive assistance.

- **Will the Secret Service provide housing during training?**

Newly appointed special agents and Uniformed Division officers both receive housing at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Glynco, Georgia, which is provided on the training compound. However, only special agent trainees whose permanent duty station is outside of the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area are provided housing while in basic training held near Washington, D.C.

- **Will the Secret Service pay relocation expenses?**

Current Secret Service policy may allow only the payment of relocation expenses for current civilian federal government employees who transfer to the Secret Service, unless stated otherwise in a vacancy announcement. However, reasonable moving expenses are paid for non-federal government applicants who accept a Uniformed Division officer position and relocate to the Washington, D.C., area.

- **Does past illegal drug usage automatically disqualify me for a position with the Secret Service?**

No. However the Secret Service follows stringent guidelines relating to illegal drug usage. An applicant's history is reviewed and a determination for employment is made according to our guidelines.

You can easily determine whether you meet the U.S. Secret Service's illegal drug policy by answering the following questions.

1. Have you used marijuana at all within the last three years?
2. Have you used any illegal drug, including anabolic steroids since attaining the age

of 23?

3. Have you ever been involved in the cultivation, manufacture, distribution, processing or sale of any illegal drug for profit?
4. Have you ever used an illegal drug (no matter how many times or how long ago) while in a law enforcement or prosecutorial position, or in a position of public trust, or while employed in a position requiring a U.S. Government security clearance?

If you answered "Yes" to any of these questions, you are not eligible for employment with the U.S. Secret Service.

- **Which positions require completion of a polygraph examination?**

Currently, the following positions require successful completion of a polygraph examination prior to appointment: Special Agent, Uniformed Division Officer, Physical Security Specialist, Special Officer, Operations Support Technician, Intelligence Research Specialist, Intelligence Research Analyst, Protective Support Technician, Civil Engineer, Detection Systems Specialist, Electrical Engineer, Materials Engineer, Chemical Engineer, Engineering Technician, Electronics Technician and Telecommunications Specialist.

- **I am eligible for a Veterans Recruitment Act (VRA) appointment. Am I required to pass a written test to qualify for a Special Agent or Uniformed Division officer position?**

Yes. The Secret Service does not grant waivers to the written test requirement for the special agent or Uniformed Division officer positions. However, veteran's preference points are considered when making employment decisions. Additionally, the Secret Service has a unique hiring authority for filling special agent and Uniformed Division officer positions and does not use VRA appointments for these positions.

- **Who qualifies under the Veterans Employment Opportunity Act (VEOA)?**

To be eligible for a VEOA appointment, a veteran must be honorably separated and either a preference eligible or have substantially completed three or more years of active service. A veteran who is released under honorable conditions shortly before completing a three-year tour also is eligible.

- **Does the Secret Service hire people with disabilities?**

Yes. Equal Employment Opportunity is a fundamental right of all employees and applicants for employment. Employees and applicants are to be provided a full and fair opportunity at employment, career advancement and access to programs without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, disability (physical or mental), gender, age, reprisal, sexual orientation, genetic information or parental status.

Copyright © 2012 United States Secret Service. All rights reserved.
<http://www.secretservice.gov>

[Home](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Security Notice](#) | [Section 508](#) | [Department of Homeland Security](#) | [USA.gov](#)