Government Opportunities for Meteorologists and Atmospheric Scientists

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10th Annual AMS Student Conference, Seattle, Washington
Education:

- B.S., Meteorology-Climatology 2003
- M.S., Geosciences (Meteorology) 2005
- Ph.D., Atmospheric Science 2009

- Participated in two NASA student opportunities:
  - NASA Earth and Space Science Fellowship Program
  - NASA Marshall Space Flight Center Cooperative Education Program
  - The co-op program is similar to a SCEP in the National Weather Service: I alternated between “at work” and “at school” semesters while working as a federal employee.
  - Transitioned to federal employment after graduation.
Bureau of Labor Statistics:
- 34% of atmospheric scientists are employed by the Federal Government
- Most work within the National Weather Service

Federal agencies employing meteorologists:

... and many more, including state and municipal governments.
Federal Employment

**PROS**
- Salary potential is known
- Some positions include additional compensation for holidays, nights, Sundays, and overtime
- Locations across the country
- Career development and training opportunities within each agency
- Job security and annual pay raises
- Cash or leave awards for outstanding performance
- Excellent benefits
- Relocation expenses provided in some cases

**CONS**
- Salary potential is known
  - Salaries greater than $150K rare
- Some positions require rotating shift work – weekends, evenings, overnight, holidays.
- Limited number of jobs available
  - 25-50 hired per year in NWS
- Hiring opportunities sometimes limited to fiscal year constraints
- Change can be slower than within the private sector

*Views and opinions acquired from peers and colleagues.*
NWS Career Ladders

SCEP
→ Intern
   ↓
Forecaster  HAS Forecaster  Hydrologist
   ↓   ↓   ↓
ITO  Sr. Forecaster  SSH  Sr. HAS  Sr. Hydrologist
   ↓   ↓
SOO  WCM  Regional Program Manager  Branch Chief  Regional Director
   ↓
MIC

SCH  DOH  HIC

Slide Courtesy of Trisha Palmer
WFO Peachtree City, GA
In addition to the base salary, add 10-35% as a locality cost living adjustment per location.
Includes military service members and civilian meteorologists or research scientists

- Military service:
  - USAF recruitment/ROTC
  - Requires good physical health and no aversion to physical activity
  - Opportunities as Wing Weather Officers or within Weather Squadrons

- Civilian service:
  - Hired through standard government process
NASA scientists and engineers are hired through the government jobs portal.

The same GS pay scale applies to all agencies.

Each NASA Center includes a variety of activities related to science and engineering.
Some opportunities for students include:

- Department of Defense
  - SMART Scholarship for Service Program
- NOAA/National Weather Service
  - Student Volunteer and Employment Programs (SCEP)
  - NOAA Hollings Scholar Program
- NASA
  - Student Internship Portal
  - [http://intern.nasa.gov](http://intern.nasa.gov)
  - NASA Earth and Space System Science Fellowships

Links provided by the AMS Board for Operational Government Meteorologists:

- [http://www.ametsoc.org/boardpges/bogm/students.html](http://www.ametsoc.org/boardpges/bogm/students.html)
Applications

  • Create a profile and resume.
  • Search jobs for “meteorologist” or “meteorology” as a keyword.

NASA Student Opportunities:  http://intern.nasa.gov
  • Select the following from the drop-down menu:
    • “NASA-Related Internship, Fellowship, or Scholarship SOLAR”
    • Register as a student, complete a profile, search for opportunities
Résumé Guidelines

- *Any* experience you have in the field
  - Can be simple: “recorded forecast on automated public forecast telephone line”
  - Use keywords that match the required skill sets.
  - Example: “Programming experience in Java and Fortran” rather than “Programming experience” or “Computer Science 101”
- Leadership experience
  - Does not have to be meteorology-related, but should include a description of your involvement and activities.
- Awards and accomplishments
- Professional papers and presentations
- Memberships in professional societies
- Use bullets, not paragraphs
- Develop your résumé now and update frequently
Questions?