



## Guide to Non-Competitive Eligibility for Gilman Alumni

The Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program is a program of the U.S. Department of State with funding provided by the U.S. Government and supported in its implementation by the Institute of International Education (IIE).



## I. What Is Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE)?

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[Executive Order 13750](#), signed November 2016, grants alumni of the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program 12 months of Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE) hiring status within the federal government. NCE is a benefit available to Gilman alumni who completed their Gilman Program after November 2015. The Gilman International Scholarship Program is a program of the U.S. Department of State.

NCE allows U.S. federal government agencies to hire eligible exchange program alumni outside the formal competitive job announcement process. With NCE, exchange alumni can also compete for certain federal employment jobs that are open only to federal employees. In other words, a Gilman alumna/us can receive a job offer with as little as an open position and a resume that reflects the necessary experience and education for an agency. Broadly advertising the position, interviewing candidates and other common hiring

procedures are NOT required for an agency to hire an applicant with NCE status, though they are often still used. Whether you are fast-tracked without the formal hiring process or just compete against a limited NCE applicant roster, being a Gilman alumna/us with NCE can help you make a quick transition from job seeker to federal employee when selected for a position.

It's important to remember that NCE does not guarantee an applicant federal employment. The applicant must meet qualifications standards and additional requirements for the job, such as a background investigation. The decision to hire eligible candidates is at the discretion of the hiring agency.

NCE hiring status applies to civil service jobs across the federal government. NCE status cannot be applied toward positions with state/local governments or the United States Foreign Service.

## II. How Can I Extend My NCE?

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Upon successfully completing their program, Gilman alumni receive 12 months of NCE status. This 12-month period begins on the last day of the study or intern abroad program. Federal agencies may extend the period of eligibility for as many as two additional years, or a total duration of up to three years, if after your completed program, you:

- Served in the military
- Studied at a recognized institution of higher education\*
- Were involved in another activity that, in the agency's view, warrants an extension

\*This means that alumni who return to their undergraduate studies after completing their Gilman Program are eligible for an extension in NCE status.

All extension decisions are at the discretion of the hiring official, so if you have applied or intend to apply for a U.S. government position, the human resources representative at that agency determines whether to extend your NCE beyond the 12-month limit stated in Executive Order 13750. Gilman team members cannot grant NCE extensions.

### III. Proving Your NCE

As an alumna/us of the Gilman Scholarship, you have access to a Certificate of Achievement that verifies your NCE status. Your Certificate of Achievement is available in the [Gilman Alumni Portal](#). After you have logged in to the portal, click Certificate Request to download your Certificate of Achievement at any time:

The screenshot shows the Gilman Alumni Portal interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for APPLICANT, RECIPIENT, ABROAD, ALUMNI, and a search bar labeled "Question? Ask Gilman". Below the navigation bar, there are three small profile pictures with country names: Australia (a person with curly hair), Ghana (a man with a mustache), and Spain (a woman smiling). To the right of these images is a large red button labeled "Request Certificate of Achievement". Above this button, there's a section titled "Certificate Request" with the following text: "Certificate Request: If you are interested in receiving a Certificate of Achievement from the U.S. Department of State's Gilman Scholarship Program, click the button below. This certificate serves as verification that you completed your study abroad program/internship with the support of the Gilman Scholarship and can be used for Non-Competitive Eligibility. If you have questions about Non-Competitive Eligibility, please consult the FAQs on the Department of State's Alumni website, or contact ExchangeNCE@state.gov." To the right of this main content area is a sidebar titled "My Account" which includes links for Home, Account, and Log Out. Below that are sections for "ABROAD STATUS" (with checkboxes for Confirmation of Arrival and Onsite Contact Info) and "ALUMNI STATUS" (with checkboxes for Update Gilman, Evaluation, Follow-On Project, and Goals). At the bottom of the sidebar is a section titled "IMPORTANT DATES".

Keep in mind that your Certificate of Achievement will not be available to you until your study abroad advisor at your home institution has confirmed your program completion. Members of the Gilman team are not able to confirm that you successfully completed your program; this must be done at your home college or university.

If your study abroad advisor has not confirmed that you completed your program, reach out to them directly to remind them. Program completion is certified in the Gilman Advisor Portal, and if they have any questions, they can contact [gilmansadvisors@iie.org](mailto:gilmansadvisors@iie.org). Any advisor at your home institution can confirm your program completion for you.

## IV. Indicating NCE Status in Job Applications

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To demonstrate your NCE status to potential employers, you should include it at every part of the application process and upload your Gilman Certificate of Achievement as a supplemental application document.

NCE is a benefit for not only Gilman alumni but also federal employers! Gilman alumni possess skills such as intercultural communication, resourcefulness, critical thinking, problem-solving, and foreign languages that are highly sought after by hiring managers. The Gilman alumni network is a diverse pool of talented, highly motivated candidates who bring strong potential to federal government positions. In addition, hiring a candidate with NCE is much simpler than moving a candidate through the normal federal hiring process. Some federal hiring managers are not aware of NCE, so highlighting these benefits to employers is an important step in the application process.

Don't assume that hiring personnel will know about NCE! Be prepared to explain in one or two sentences what NCE is and that you have it. Include your NCE status at every point in your job search, including your resume, cover letters, qualifying questions on USAJOBS, emails to prospective employers and your LinkedIn profile. If you are requesting an extension, provide the circumstances of the extension request wherever you mention NCE.

### A. Including NCE Status on a Resume

Include your NCE status near the top of your resume, where it will be easily visible to employers. Sample bullet points include:

- Per Executive Order 13750, holds Non-Competitive Eligibility hiring status for federal jobs.
- Non-Competitive Eligibility hiring status for federal jobs beginning September 1, 2019.
- Non-Competitive Eligibility hiring status for federal jobs until September 1, 2020.
- Non-Competitive Eligibility hiring status for federal jobs until September 1, 2019, with the possibility of extension until September 1, 2021, at the discretion of the federal hiring manager.

### B. Including NCE Status in a Cover Letter

In a cover letter, take one or two sentences to explain your NCE status. If you are requesting an extension, include the circumstances of your extension request. The following examples provide sample language for cover letters:

*"As an alumna/us of the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program, I hold Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE) hiring status for federal jobs. NCE reduces the time needed to find and hire qualified candidates by allowing a candidate to be hired outside the formal competitive application process."*

*"I studied abroad in China in 2018 with support from the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program. Per Executive Order 13750, I was granted Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE) hiring status for federal jobs until September 1, 2019, with the possibility of extension until September 1, 2021, at the discretion of the federal hiring manager. Please find more information on NCE in my supplemental application documentation."*

## C. Demonstrating NCE Status with Gilman Certificate of Achievement

As you are applying to federal jobs, upload your Gilman Certificate of Achievement and the memo to employers on NCE as supplemental documents to indicate to employers that you have NCE status. For most jobs, you'll do this in the Select Documents step in the USAJOBS application process:

The screenshot shows the USAJOBS application process. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the USAJOBS logo, user profile (Taylor), help icon, and search bar. Below the navigation, a blue header bar displays the job title: "Foreign Service Attorney" under "Applying to:", "U.S. Agency for International..." under "U.S. Government Agency", and "Closes 3/1/2021" under "Closes". There's also a link "Who may apply". The main process flow consists of five numbered steps: 1. Select Resume, 2. Select Documents (which is highlighted with a red box), 3. Review Package, 4. Include Personal Info, and 5. Continue Application with Agency.

**Select Documents**

**Instructions**

Select the document(s) that you want to submit as part of your application. You can review the required document(s) for this job by selecting the "Documents" button.

If the document you want to submit is not available you can upload it by selecting "Add Document". Any documents added or deleted on this step will be reflected in your account. USAJOBS stores up to ten documents, so you may need to delete an existing document to upload a new one.

**Your Documents**

A dashed box area with a blue plus sign icon and a link "Add Document".

**Required Documents** +

**Acceptable Formats** -

Uploaded resumes must be less than 3MB and in one of the following document formats: GIF, JPG, JPEG, PNG, RTF, TXT, PDF or Word (DOC or DOCX).

**Do Not Include in Resume**

- Classified information
- Social Security Number (SSN)
- Photos of yourself
- Personal or sensitive information
- Encrypted and digitally signed documents

**Helpful Links**

- [What should I include in my resume?](#)
- [How to upload documents](#)

## D. Including NCE Status on LinkedIn

On LinkedIn, you can indicate your NCE status in the About section near the top of your profile. The following sample text has been included for your reference:

*"As an alumna/us of the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program, I hold Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE) status for federal jobs. NCE reduces the time needed to find and hire qualified candidates by allowing a candidate to be hired outside the formal competitive job announcement process. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly with any questions about NCE or my professional experience."*

## V. The Power of Networking

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Networking is invaluable in any career search, regardless of whether you hold NCE status. When speaking with a federal employee or hiring manager, your NCE status can give you a leg up over other prospective candidates and help you stand out from the rest of the pool. Hiring a candidate with NCE status benefits employers because it allows them to bypass some of the administrative burden in the hiring process. Highlight this benefit in your networking conversations and activities!

Also, keep an eye out for federal government representatives at on-campus or community career fairs.

These representatives are looking for qualified candidates and may already have some information about NCE. Mentioning your NCE status in these conversations can assist in securing a first-round interview.

Be prepared to answer questions about what NCE is, why you have it and how employers benefit from hiring a candidate with NCE. If you are asked a question about NCE that you don't know how to answer, direct the person with whom you are speaking to your supporting documentation.

## VI. Finding an NCE Job

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Now that you know what NCE is and how to demonstrate to employers that you have it, it's time to find a job!

Log in to [USAJOBS](#), the U.S. government's website for federal jobs. One of the first steps you'll take after making an account on USAJOBS is to create a profile. In your profile, indicate all of the hiring paths that apply to you. This will include the category Peace Corps & AmeriCorps VISTA. Although you might not be a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer or an AmeriCorps alumna/us, you have the same NCE that is granted to participants in these programs and are eligible to apply for any of the jobs under this category. As an alumna/us of the Gilman Scholarship, you should indicate Peace Corps & AmeriCorps VISTA as a hiring path on USAJOBS.



After you set up your profile on USAJOBS, scroll down to the section titled Explore Hiring Paths. Jobs categorized as Peace Corps & AmeriCorps VISTA are available to applicants with NCE. Again, even if you are not a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer or an alumna/us of AmeriCorps, you have NCE and are thus eligible to apply for any of the jobs categorized under this hiring path.

Federal employers who are recruiting applicants for jobs under the Peace Corps & AmeriCorps VISTA hiring path may be more familiar with NCE than those in other hiring paths. That makes this hiring path a great place to start your job search!



## Explore Hiring Paths

The Federal Government offers unique hiring paths to help hire individuals that represent our diverse society. Learn more about each hiring path and your eligibility.



### Open to the Public

U.S. citizens, nationals or those who owe allegiance to the U.S.



### Veterans



### National Guard & Reserves

Current or prospective members



### Senior Executives



### Family of overseas employees



### Peace Corps & AmeriCorps VISTA



### Federal Employees

Current or former, includes the competitive and excepted services



### Military Spouses



### Students & recent graduates



### Individuals with a disability



### Native Americans

American Indian or Alaskan Native



### Special authorities

Another place to look for NCE jobs is on the [careers webpage for Returned Peace Corps Volunteers](#). Again, you have NCE status, so even if you are not a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer, you are eligible to apply for these jobs. On that page, select the Only Show Noncompetitive Eligibility Jobs checkbox to see open positions where the applicant pool will be limited to candidates with NCE.

In addition, you can search the phrase “non-competitive eligibility” on LinkedIn to find positions that are open to candidates with NCE status. Most NCE positions on LinkedIn will direct you back to USAJOBS, but staying active on LinkedIn is another way to keep an eye on available opportunities.



**Peace Corps** VOLUNTEER STORIES COUNTRIES ABOUT MENU

SEARCH  DONATE **APPLY**

## RPCV Career Link

Employers value the skills and experiences Peace Corps Volunteers bring to their organizations. Search job postings just for returned Peace Corps Volunteers.

[Submit a Job >](#)

1-10 of 204 results SORT LIST BY:  Posting Date (newest)  ONLY SHOW NONCOMPETITIVE ELIGIBILITY JOBS

in  non-competitive eligibility Home My Network

**FLO Regional Global Employment Advisor, Washington, DC, US**  
Cherokee Nation Businesses  
Washington, D.C., DC, US 2w

**Information Technology (IT) Specialist (IT Program Manager)**  
Department of Commerce  
Washington, D.C., DC, US 3d

**Instructional Systems Specialist**  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C., DC, US new

The Gilman team will also periodically post NCE positions on LinkedIn, the [Job Board](#) in the Gilman Scholar Network, or in the [alumni newsletter](#). If you haven't already done so, we recommend joining the [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) groups for Gilman Scholars and Alumni, and the [Gilman Scholar Network](#). In these groups, you can network with other alumni, share job opportunities and learn tips from alumni who have successfully leveraged their NCE status into a federal job.

In addition, representatives from federal government agencies often attend career fairs. With your NCE, making a connection through a career fair or campus resource means that you can be hired immediately (provided that you meet the minimum requirements for the job). Bring copies of your NCE documentation along with your resume, and be prepared to explain NCE and its benefit to employers. If employers have questions about NCE, or would like to confirm your NCE status, please refer them to the U.S. Department of State's Help Desk at [ExchangeNCE@state.gov](mailto:ExchangeNCE@state.gov).

## VII. Writing a Federal Resume

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If you are applying to federal jobs, you'll need a federal resume!

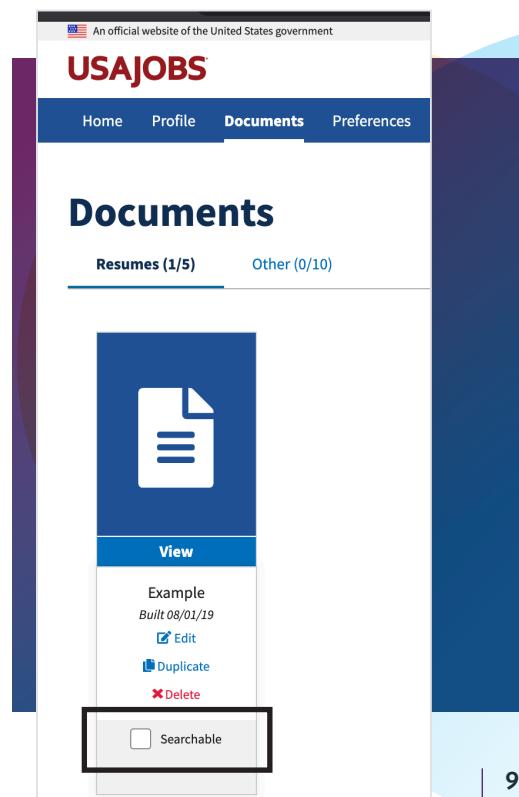
You might be accustomed to writing private sector resumes, in which you summarize your work experience and education in a one-page document. For federal jobs, even at the entry level, your resume needs to be more detailed and should be much longer than one page.

We strongly recommend that you take advantage of the Resume Builder tool on USAJOBS. The Resume Builder prompts you to add all of your education, experience, skills, references, job-related training, language skills, organizations/affiliations, publications and any other relevant information; using the Resume Builder can help ensure you don't leave out anything important. You can also use it to customize your resume to each job or agency you're applying to and create a master resume that is searchable by federal employers.

As you are working on your resume, list your skills and professional experiences in a way that demonstrates how you meet the qualifications for the position. Wherever possible, use the exact language from the position description in your resume rather than rephrasing in your own words. For most jobs, the first review of applicants is a digital resume scan on USAJOBS, so if your resume doesn't include certain

keywords from the position description, your application won't be reviewed.

Remember to make your master resume searchable on USAJOBS. Hiring personnel often search for qualified candidates to meet vacancies they are trying to fill. To make a resume searchable, click the Documents tab in USAJOBS and select the Searchable checkbox:



## Appendix 1: Government Vocabulary

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**Competitive service** — Competitive service positions are positions subject to the civil service laws passed by Congress to ensure that applicants and employees receive fair and equal treatment in the hiring process. In the competitive service, individuals must go through a competitive hiring process (i.e., competitive examining) before being appointed. This process may consist of a written test, an evaluation of the individual's education and experience, or an evaluation of other attributes necessary for successful performance in the position to be filled. NCE hiring status can allow candidates to skip some parts of the competitive hiring process.

**Excepted service** — Excepted service positions are any federal or civil service positions that are not in the competitive service or the senior executive service. Excepted service agencies set their own qualification requirements and are not subject to the appointment, pay and classification rules in Title 5, United States Code. However, they are subject to veterans' preference.

**General Schedule (GS) pay** — The GS classification and pay system covers the majority of civilian white-collar federal employees (about 1.5 million worldwide) in professional, technical, administrative and clerical positions. The GS has 15 grades from GS-1 (lowest) to

GS-15 (highest). Agencies establish (classify) the grade of each job based on the level of difficulty, responsibility and qualifications required. Individuals with a high school diploma and no additional experience typically qualify for GS-2 positions; those with a bachelor's degree typically qualify for GS-5 positions; and those with a master's degree usually qualify for GS-9 positions.

**Federal civil service** — The U.S. federal civil service is the civilian workforce within all the departments and agencies of the federal government. It includes “all appointive positions in the executive, judicial and legislative branches of the Government of the United States, except positions in the uniformed services” (5 U.S. Code § 2101). NCE hiring status applies to positions in the federal civil service.

**State civil service** — Each state has its own civil service, which often is modeled on the federal system. NCE hiring status does not apply to positions in the state civil service.

**United States Foreign Service** — The United States Foreign Service promotes peace, supports prosperity and protects American citizens while advancing the interests of the U.S. abroad. NCE hiring status does not apply to positions in the foreign service.

## Appendix 2: Explaining NCE to Employers

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See attached.





TO: Federal Employers

FROM: Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program

RE: Non-Competitive Eligibility

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### **What is the Gilman Scholarship?**

The Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program is a grant program that enables students of limited financial means to study or intern abroad, thereby gaining skills critical to our national security and economic prosperity.

### **What is Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE)?**

Executive Order 13750, signed in November 2016, grants alumni of the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program 12 months of Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE) hiring status within the federal government. Federal agencies may extend the period of eligibility for up to two additional years, or a total duration of up to three years in all, if after the program, the candidate:

- Served in the military.
- Studied at a recognized institution of higher education.
- Was involved in another activity, which in the agency's view, warrants an extension.

Non-Competitive Eligibility allows U.S. federal government agencies to hire eligible exchange program alumni outside of the formal competitive job announcement process and to compete for certain federal employment jobs that are only open to federal employees. In other words, a Gilman alumna/us can receive a job offer with as little as an open position and a resume that reflects the necessary experience and education for an agency. Broadly advertising the position, interviewing candidates, and other common hiring procedures are NOT required for an agency to hire an applicant with NCE status, though they are often still used.

### **Why hire Gilman alumni using NCE?**

Gilman scholars and alumni represent a diverse network of talented go-getters with skills in intercultural communication, resourcefulness, critical-thinking, problem-solving, and foreign languages.

In addition, hiring a candidate with NCE status is hassle-free – if the candidate meets the necessary experience and education for a position, they can be hired without the formal job announcement or interview processes.

### **Who can I contact with questions about NCE?**

If you have any questions about NCE, or would like to confirm a candidate's NCE status, please do not hesitate to contact the Gilman team. You can reach us at [gilmanscholars@iie.org](mailto:gilmanscholars@iie.org) or (800) 852-2141 ext. 4. You can also contact the U.S. Department of State's Help Desk at [ExchangeNCE@state.gov](mailto:ExchangeNCE@state.gov).