

How I got started with the federal government started back in 2004.

I was an undergrad student at George Mason University.

My professor reached out to me, said one of the seniors is coming to our school to give a briefing.

He had advised me, go talk to him.

I spoke to the person.

He gave me his business card.

He said, send me an email with your resume,

I'll give you the job.

Fast forward, 6 months later, I got a job with it turned out to be Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA).

That's how I started my career in the government.

Currently, I'm an IT program manager in National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA).

So I started in government as an accountant.

So my major is Accounting, back in college.

Throughout my government career, I enjoyed working accounting, but I know I want to do more.

So the agency I was with sent me back to school

to get my Master's degree at George Washington University

and I got my Systems Engineering degree.

After 2 years, when I received my degree,

I got promoted to run construction project in NGA.

And I was able to learn the construction, the project skillset, using various PowerPoint,

Project suite, Microsoft suite.

And after the engineering department,

I was able to go to the IT department, and I was able to utilize all those skills:

the soft skills, how to run a team,

how to hold meetings, how to talk to contractors,

how to get a job done and meet a timeline.

So, I was able to transition from an engineering department to the IT department where I am right now.

Currently, in the IT department, what I do is I solve a lot of IT issues

that's happening around our agency.

But regarding to the language skills,

I get frequent requests on inventories that has Chinese character on it

and I'll provide translation on the spot to help our agency understand what we're looking at.

Currently, in my workplace, there aren't that many heritage speakers.

It's very unfortunate.

I think being a heritage speaker at my job would be extremely helpful

because having them to help in provide translation,

that'll be great effort for the agency.

Working in the federal government has definitely gave me a lot of unique opportunity.

Just an example I can provide is a couple of weeks ago,  
our agency was looking for a person with a Mandarin Chinese skillset  
and one of our foreign delegations is coming over for a visit.

And I got selected to be part of the entourage to greet the foreign delegation  
and I had opportunity to sit right next to a director to provide on the spot  
translation.

Not a lot of people can say they did that. Just being in that room,  
being in that environment made me feel very unique, feel very proud in a sense.  
Being a federal government employee, especially in my field, in Department of  
Defense, DoD,

made me feel a lot more patriotic.

I love what this country has provided to me.

Right now, I am working in a great office with a great group of guys.

I have a meaningful mission and it's very fulfilling.

It's a success story.

It's an immigrant success story.

Government needs diversity. Especially in Department of Defense side,  
there aren't that many Asian Americans.

I mentor some younger Asian Americans who came to the agency.

I want to be a role model. When I first joined,  
there aren't that many Asian Americans.

So I had to figure out the way, I had to learn the rules, learn the environment.

It was very lonely, but I came through.

So, as I see the younger generation of Asian Americans join the workforce, I will volunteer to mentor them, just to give them an understanding of what's it like to be a servant to this great nation.

I think the best way for people who are interested to join the federal government is to apply for internships.

I think that is the key to get into the government sectors.

That will help a person convert from an intern to a full-time employee.

Always be prepared, always have that drive and desire to serve.

I think people should not be afraid.

Don't be scared,

even if you're not fully qualified, to show your passion, show you can be an asset to them.