

Career Opportunities Video Series: Connecting Heritage Learners to Federal Careers  
Shane, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office

I work for the U.S. Patent Office as a patent examiner.

Originally, I wanted to go to law school and get into the U.S. patent law.

So that's why

I started working for U.S. Patent Office.

The U.S. federal government are very open for any federal job openings.

You can just go to their jobs website and apply.

I have to be a good chemist, you know.

I examine chemical patent applications and I had a PhD degree in Polymer Science and I had 9 years industrial experience.

I used to be a research scientist, working for DuPont.

So, I think that's why I was qualified for this job.

I used my language skill for my jobs.

As a patent examiner, I do routine search for references and also write office actions, these are considered to be legal documents, and I also interface with counselors or lawyers representing the clients.

Occasionally I communicate with them with foreign languages like Chinese or Japanese, occasionally.

I basically examine patent applications submitted to the U.S. Patent Office, both domestic and international applications.

When you read the claims, which is the invented parts of the application, you try to find the motives,

why they file these applications or update the inventions they file.

Once you find it, you create a legal document called office action and the applicant will amend their claims, modify their inventions accordingly.

So in the end, if everything works out, they'll obtain a patent, it gets issued and I have my name on it as a patent examiner.

So that's basically the nature of my job.

There are some coworkers whose native language is Chinese.

And especially, there are several junior examiners.

They frequently ask me technical questions for the job

and like, I think sometimes, it's the best way to communicate them with Chinese.

There are several heritage speakers in my group.

Even though our group, since everybody works from home

we don't really communicate on a daily basis,

but we have a group meeting every two weeks.

There was one heritage speaker,

I think, he speaks German.

That was 5 years ago, sometimes, we work on some German applications

and we have to cite a lot of German references

and of course, I asked him about, you know, help for German translation.

First of all, I like my job.

It gives me lots of freedom, you know.

And professionally, I think I developed a lot of skills,

particularly in the U.S. patent law.

I get to say I'm an expert, a true expert of U.S. patent law.

I think the greatest thing is, since I can work from home,

I have been able to spend a lot of time with my family, especially with my kids.

The job I'm having, I work from home.

So, I have this work-life balance.

I have more time to spare to contribute to my Chinese community,

especially like annual Chinese cultural festival and also the local Chinese schools

where we volunteer to do a lot of work.

My advice is learn all the skills you need for the job

and keep on speaking your language.

You know, it's just not language,

it's your heritage.

That's the great thing about America.

Preserve your heritage and language is the best way.