

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

INTERNATIONAL TRADE ADMINISTRATION

Vacancy Announcement Number: **CK136002**

Opening Date: 03/30/2007

Closing Date: ORIGINAL CLOSING DATE: TUESDAY, 5/1/2007, 11:59PM EST
EXTENDED TO TUESDAY, 5/8/2007, 11:59PM EST

Position: FOREIGN COMMERCIAL SERVICE OFFICER (ENTRY-LEVEL)

Series & Grade: FP-1101-05/04

Salary: \$40,118 - \$72,709 per year

Duty Location: Many vacancies WORLDWIDE

THE CAREER OF A FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER:

As a Foreign Service Officer, you will have more than a job. You will have a way of life that requires uncommon commitment and features occasional hardships. The U.S. Commercial Service offers an outstanding platform for personal and professional growth. As members of the United States' diplomatic corps, Commercial Service Officers commonly have access to persons and places that are beyond the reach of most of their peers. A career as a Commercial Service Officer also provides outstanding opportunities to learn new languages and travel internationally. You will need to be able to function both independently and as part of the U.S. Embassy or Consulate team. You must be able to withstand the stress of frequent relocation, and be adaptable and sensitive to new cultures. As an official representative of the U.S. Government in a foreign setting, every Foreign Service Officer must be prepared to support publicly U.S. policy, regardless of possible private reservations.

A Commercial Service Officer career is not for everyone. The demands on one's person and family should not be underestimated. Commercial Service Officers spend the majority of their careers overseas, far from home and often in challenging environments. Spouses and other accompanying dependents may find their careers disrupted. Therefore, the decision to become a Commercial Service Officer is one that should involve all of the members of your household.

ABOUT THE FOREIGN COMMERCIAL SERVICE:

The U.S. & Foreign Commercial Service of the U.S. Department of Commerce is a corps of more than 1,800 American and foreign employees dedicated to helping American companies expand sales in overseas markets through an integrated network. The mission of the Foreign Commercial Service is to place primary emphasis on the promotion of exports of goods and services from the United States, particularly by small and medium-sized businesses, and on the protection of United States business interests abroad. We operate more than 100 Export Assistance Centers throughout the United States and 150 offices worldwide. Commercial service officers assist companies to start exporting or increase their sales to new global markets.

OVERSEAS OPERATIONS – Embassies and Consulates:

Commercial Sections overseas are charged with representing the commercial interests of the United States. Commercial Officers:

- * Advise and assist individual U.S. firms seeking export sales and major project opportunities.
- * Develop marketing and commercial information.
- * Advocate on behalf of U.S. industry and service sectors to foreign governments and businesses.
- * Support U.S. Government/Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee programs and activities.
- * Organize and support trade promotion activities including trade events.

- * Participate in negotiations on general trade and investment issues.
- * Manage U.S. Commercial Service staff, prepare fiscal plans, and oversee daily operations.

DOMESTIC OPERATIONS – U.S. Export Assistance Centers (USEACs):

In the United States, U.S. Commercial Service Officers introduce new-to-export U.S. firms to the basics of overseas marketing. In addition, they provide the following services:

- * Conduct one-on-one business counseling sessions with U.S. firms.
- * Work in partnership with U.S. Commercial Officers overseas to help establish or improve their foreign trade relationships.
- * Sponsor export seminars, conferences and workshops for business people and trade associations.
- * Direct and/or manage contacts with foreign governments and other organizations to influence business activities between U.S. companies and foreign markets in cases where relationships are complex because of factors such as legislative history, economic rivalry, or political instability.
- * Serve as an expert, or supervise others in the analysis of commercial issues requiring trade, economic, or business knowledge of one or more geographic or political regions.

THE SELECTION PROCESS:

The selection process will proceed in two phases. In the first phase, applicants will be rated on their responses to the questions contained in the on-line application. Errors or omissions may affect the score. Approximately 100 of the highest-ranking candidates who pass Phase I as determined by scores on the Occupational Skill Questionnaire, the Accomplishment Record and an evaluation of applications and resumes will be invited, at their own expense, to participate in an Assessment Center in Washington, DC from July 27 – August 3, 2007.

Phase II: The Assessment Center is a daylong testing process consisting of an oral examination on subjects of general and commercial interest, written exercises on trade-related themes, group/project negotiating sessions, and an in-basket test. Candidates will be evaluated on their knowledge and experience on international trade and business related fields; their ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing; their skills in prioritizing and managing time and resources; and their ability to deal effectively with others.

MEDICAL CLEARANCE:

Foreign Service employees must be able to serve at a wide variety of overseas posts, some of which are remote, unhealthy, or have limited medical support. Therefore, each candidate must meet fitness standards that are often more rigorous than those of other professions. Medical disqualification renders a candidate ineligible for Foreign Service selection. While medical clearance for overseas duty is an essential qualification for prospective Foreign Service employees, the Department of Commerce does not consider the medical condition of eligible family members for pre-employment purposes. However, the Department requires medical clearances for family members before they can travel overseas to accompany an employee on assignment at U.S. Government expense. Family members who, for medical reasons, are unable to accompany an employee on an overseas assignment may be eligible for a separate maintenance allowance.

WORLDWIDE AVAILABILITY:

Worldwide availability is an essential qualification for appointment to the Foreign Service. Regardless of who administers the medical exam, the Department of State's Office of Medical Service determines whether a candidate is available for assignment to all Department of Commerce posts worldwide.

SECURITY CLEARANCE:

Because you are applying for a national security position, a comprehensive background investigation will be conducted to develop information to show whether you are reliable, trustworthy, of good conduct and character, and loyal to the United States. Candidates who are found unsuitable for the Foreign Service, or who cannot be granted a security clearance, are ineligible for appointment. It is the policy of the Department of Commerce to test finally selected applicants and employees for illegal drug use prior to employment or appointment to a Testing Designated Position (TDP). The job functions associated with these positions have a direct impact on public health and safety, the protection of life and property, law enforcement and security.

VETERAN'S PREFERENCE:

To receive Veteran's Preference, you must provide a DD214 and SF-15, if applicable with the application. You may obtain the SF15 form at http://www.opm.gov/forms/pdf_fill/SF15.pdf.

If you do not claim veterans' preference, choose the "No Preference" option. You cannot receive veterans' preference if you are retired or plan to retire at or above the rank of major or lieutenant commander, unless you are disabled or retired from the active military Reserve. To receive veterans' preference, your separation from active duty must have been under honorable conditions. This includes honorable and general discharges. A clemency discharge does not meet the requirements of the Veterans' Preference Act. Active duty for training in the military Reserve and National Guard programs is not considered active duty

for purposes of veterans' preference. To qualify for preference, you must meet **ONE** of the following conditions:

1. Served on active duty anytime between December 7, 1941 and July 1, 1955 (If you were a Reservist called to active duty between February 1, 1955 and July 1, 1955, you must meet condition 2, below)
2. Served on active duty any part of which was between July 2, 1955 and October 14, 1976 or a Reservist called to active duty between February 1, 1955 and October 14, 1976 and who served more than 180 days
3. Entered on active duty between October 15, 1976 and September 7, 1980 or a Reservist who entered on active duty between October 15, 1976 and October 13, 1982 and received a Campaign Badge or Expeditionary Medal or are a disabled veteran; or
4. Enlisted in the Armed Forces after September 7, 1980 or entered active duty other than by enlistment on or after October 14, 1982 and:
 - a. Completed 24 months of continuous active duty, or the full period called, or ordered to active duty, or were discharged under 10 U.S.C. 1171, or for hardship under 10 U.S.C. 1173, and received or were entitled to receive a Campaign Badge or Expeditionary Medal; or
 - b. Are a disabled veteran.

If you meet one of the previous four conditions, you qualify for 5-Point Preference. If you want to claim 5-Point Preference and do not meet the requirements for 10-Point Preference, choose the "5-Point Preference" option. If you think you qualify for "10-Point Preference," review the requirements described in Standard Form (SF) 15, Application for 10-Point Veterans' Preference. If you claim "10-Point Preference," choose the "10-Point Preference" option. The 10-Point Preference groups are:

- * Non-Compensably Disabled or Purple Heart Recipient.
- * Compensably Disabled (less than 30%).
- * Compensably Disabled (30% or more).
- * Spouse, Widow(er) or Mother of a deceased or disabled veteran.

CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES:

The Department of Commerce provides reasonable accommodation to Foreign Service candidates with disabilities throughout the pre-employment process. In order to be considered qualified, a candidate must meet all requirements for a medical clearance from the Office of Medical Services, or receive a waiver of the worldwide availability requirement from the Employment Review Committee.

SALARY AND BENEFITS:

Officers earn a competitive salary and receive comprehensive federal benefits, including group life and medical insurance and retirement benefits. There are financial incentives for service abroad. Based on your assignment, you may be eligible to receive additional pay and allowances. At a number of locations in the U.S., employees receive locality pay. Overseas, employees receive housing or a housing allowance. Depending on the overseas post, employees may also receive hardship pay, education, and cost of living allowances.

APPOINTMENT TO THE FOREIGN SERVICE - GRADE:

Starting Foreign Service grade and salary are commensurate with experience. The current salary range for FP-05 is \$40,118 to 58,915 per annum, and for FP-04, \$49,511 to \$72,709 per annum.

TENURE:

Employees entering the Foreign Service will have up to five years to become career officers, according to the provisions of the Foreign Service Act. The Commissioning and Tenure Board will review individuals in accordance with the Commission & Tenuring policy. During the five-year period, the employee will be required to attain proficiency in a foreign language at a level prescribed by and tested at the National Foreign Affairs Training Center. If an employee does not receive tenure, he/she may not continue with the Commercial Service. New career-candidate officers must begin an assignment in an Export Assistance Center position (domestic U.S.) within their first seven years, unless they have had at least one year of previous Export Assistance Center experience in the last five years before entering the Foreign Service of the Commercial Service.

TRAINING/CAREER DEVELOPMENT:

Frequent training is one of the benefits of the Foreign Service. Most officers will become proficient in one or more foreign languages and will receive a variety of professional development courses available at regular intervals throughout their career.

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY:

While not required for initial appointment as a career candidate, applicants proficient in foreign languages, especially Chinese, Japanese, Arabic and Russian are highly desired. Proficiency in foreign languages will enhance an applicant's competitive standing and proof of language proficiency will be required. Additional information will be provided to those invited to take the Assessment.

ELIGIBILITY:

All applicants must meet the following criteria before being offered a career candidate position:

- Be a U.S. citizen,
- Be between the ages of 21 and 59. (The Foreign Service has a mandatory retirement age of 65. To retire under a Foreign Service retirement system, one must have at least five years service credit under the system.)
- Be available for worldwide assignment including, frequent overnight travel, and willing to relocate approximately every 2-4 years.
- Pass a thorough background and security investigation leading to a positive suitability determination and a top-secret clearance.

- Along with accompanying dependents, meet rigorous medical clearance requirements.
- Receive a negative result on a drug test.
- Male applicants born after December 31, 1959 must certify at the time of appointment that they have registered with the Selective Service System, or are exempt from having to do so under Selective Service law.

QUALIFICATIONS:

There are minimum educational requirements to become a Foreign Service Officer. In addition, the questionnaire and other parts of the application process will evaluate whether the applicants' knowledge, skill, and abilities are relevant to the Foreign Commercial Service.

Applicants must:

For FS-05:

- 1) Have 2 years of specialized experience.

Specialized experience is described as experience performing duties such as:

- * Assisting with the production of regional and/or international market analyses that are accepted as accurate and authoritative, and that form the basis of business-related decisions.
- * Assisting with the development or implementation of an international trade and marketing strategy for a U.S. product or service which includes identifying target markets, analyzing the potential of these markets, developing a business plan to successfully establish business operations, and promoting the product or service domestically and internationally.
- * Assisting in the planning and implementation of trade promotion activities.
- * Actively participating in contacts with foreign governments or other organizations to influence the outcome of business activities between U.S. companies and foreign markets.
- * Contributing to the analysis of commercial issues requiring trade, economic, or business knowledge of one or more geographic or political regions.

OR

- 2) Have a Masters or other graduate degree and one year of specialized experience as described above.

Note: For FS-04, applicant must meet the minimum qualifications at the FS-05 level plus one additional year of specialized experience.

Note: No applicant will be considered who has previously been separated from the Foreign Service under sections 607, 608, 610, or 611 of the Foreign Service

Act as amended, or who resigned or retired in lieu of separation under these provisions. In addition, no applicant who has previously been separated for failure to receive a career appointment under section 306 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980 as amended, or who resigned or retired in lieu thereof will be considered.

HOW TO APPLY:

Please read all instructions before you begin. You are solely responsible for the delivery of your materials. We cannot be responsible for incompatible software, illegible fax transmissions, etc.

Applying for this position requires you to submit the following materials:

1. Foreign Commercial Service Officer Application
2. Resume (see application instructions)
3. Veteran's preference documents (if applicable)

Online Applications:

To submit a "New" Online Application:

1. Enter <https://www.hr-services.org/usasonlineapp/usasonlineapp.aspx> (or copy this link and paste it into your internet browser) to access "Application Manager" to start a "New" Online Occupational Questionnaire (or return to a "Saved" Occupational Questionnaire.) To create a "New" account in "Application Manager" click the "Create an Account" button at the bottom of the screen. Fill in the necessary information, and you will be granted access after creating your new account. To access an existing account in "Application Manager" enter your **user name** and **password**.

2. Once you have accessed "Application Manager", to start a "New" Occupational Questionnaire scroll down the Application Manager screen until the "Vacancy Identification Number" box appears under the "Start a New Application for This Job" section on the left hand side. Insert the "Vacancy Identification Number - **CK136002** or "Control Number" into the " USAJOBS Control Number" box located directly below the "Vacancy Identification Number" and click the "**Go**" button.

Note: In order for your answers to be processed and for you to be considered for the position, you must click the "Submit my Answers" button. The on-line questionnaire is available up until midnight Eastern Time of the closing date of the announcement.

How to Properly Save and Return later to complete an Application/Occupational Questionnaire:

3. If you want to "Save" an incomplete Occupational Questionnaire and return later, select the "Save" button at the top or bottom of each application page and click the "Logout" button. Saving does not occur automatically, so it is your responsibility to ensure your work is saved.

4. If you have a "Saved" incomplete Occupational Questionnaire you may finish it by clicking on or inserting this link into your internet browser <https://www.hr-services.org/USASOnlineApp/USASOnlineApp.aspx>. Select the vacancy that you would like to complete by clicking on the "Vacancy ID: CK136002" link listed under "My Application Package". This questionnaire is **CK136002**. After you have completed the questionnaire click on the "Complete Application Package"

For questions pertaining to the online application, please contact the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) via email at kansascity@opm.gov or by phone at 816-426-5706.

Please allow yourself sufficient time to complete your application prior to the deadline in the event of computer malfunction or other delays. We strongly encourage you to apply online since this would allow us to most efficiently process your application.

ONLINE APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY 11:59PM EST ON MAY 8, 2007.

Paper Applications:

In the event that you are unable to apply online, you may request a paper application and fax the completed document to OPM. Contact OPM at kansascity@opm.gov or 816-426-5706 to request a paper application.

REQUESTS FOR PAPER APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY 5:00PM EST ON APRIL 16, 2007. COMPLETED PAPER APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY APRIL 23, 2007.

To fax your application, resume and/or additional materials, you must use the OPM cover page (see link below). The cover page is used to electronically link your documents with your application. The Vacancy ID number **CK136002**, your name and SSN should be written accurately and neatly on the cover page. If the information is inaccurate or incomplete, you may not receive consideration for this position. To print a copy of the cover page, go to <http://staffing.opm.gov/pdf/usascover.pdf>.

After completing the cover page, fax your documents to 478-757-3144. Please feed all documents into your fax machine top first to ensure they are received right side up.

ALL MATERIALS MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE CLOSING DATE OF THIS ANNOUNCEMENT TO BE CONSIDERED.

THIS IS AN ENTRY LEVEL POSITION IN THE FOREIGN SERVICE AS A CAREER-CANDIDATE COMMERCIAL OFFICER LEADING TO CAREER STATUS. SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES WILL BE PLACED ON A RANK-ORDER REGISTER. OFFERS OF APPOINTMENT ARE MADE AS VACANCIES BECOME AVAILABLE BASED ON THE NEEDS OF THE SERVICE. CANDIDATES WILL BE APPOINTED AT THE FP-5/4 GRADE LEVEL. SEE QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS.

ALL PARTS OF THE APPLICATION ARE SUBJECT TO VERIFICATION. DELIBERATE ATTEMPTS TO FALSIFY INFORMATION MAY BE GROUNDS FOR NOT EMPLOYING YOU OR FOR DISMISSING YOU AFTER YOU BEGIN WORK.

THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE IS COMMITTED TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND FAIR AND EQUITABLE TREATMENT FOR ALL WITHOUT REGARD TO RACE, COLOR, NATIONAL ORIGIN, SEX, RELIGION, AGE, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, DISABLING CONDITION, POLITICAL AFFILIATION, MARITAL STATUS, OR PRIOR STATUTORY, CONSTITUTIONALLY PROTECTED ACTIVITY.

THE DEPARTMENT PROVIDES REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION TO APPLICANTS WITH DISABILITIES. APPLICANTS REQUIRING REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION FOR ANY PART OF THE APPLICATION OR HIRING PROCESS SHOULD ADVISE THE DEPARTMENT. ALL DECISIONS FOR GRANTING REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION ARE MADE ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS.