One Option For Doctoral Students:

Federal Employment

From Ph.D. to Public Servant:

Tips on obtaining federal employment.
The good news:

- Federal, state and local governments are almost always hiring.
- Job security and benefits are generally good.
- Job applications are usually handled on a single web site.

The not-so-good news:

- Job applications are not evaluated individually.
- You must complete every step of the application process completely and correctly.
Other considerations:

- There may be age or citizenship restrictions on certain positions.
- Background checks (criminal, personal and financial) are usually required.
- Duty location and hours are generally not negotiable.

Let’s start at the top:

http://www.usajobs.opm.gov

and

https://www.applicationmanager.gov

are the most important web sites you will use. For most applicants, they are the only web sites you will use in your applications.
Typical Job Listing:

Job Title: Management & Program Analyst  
Department: Department of Homeland Security  
Agency: Customs and Border Protection  

- SALARY RANGE: 71,674.00 - 110,104.00 USD /year  
- OPEN PERIOD: Friday, February 12, 2010 to Wednesday, August 11, 2010  
- SERIES & GRADE: GS-0343-13/14  
- POSITION INFORMATION: Full Time Career  
- PROMOTION POTENTIAL: 14  
- DUTY LOCATIONS: Multiple duty locations - [click for more info]  
- WHO MAY BE CONSIDERED: United States Citizens

Do you want to apply for this job?

- Focus on the promotion potential -- the highest salary grade you can achieve in the position -- not just the starting salary.

- Most agencies require you to work your way up. There are few opportunities to get an initial appointment above the GS-7 level, although some GS-9 or GS-11 positions are available in specialized or technical positions.
What is GS pay?

Click here for 2010 Salary Table:
http://www.opm.gov/oca/10tables/html/RUS.asp

Remember, salary adjustments are made for various locations. Pay adjustments are also made for night work, weekends and holidays.

GS Pay Scale for 2010:

<table>
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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Step 2</th>
<th>Step 3</th>
<th>Step 4</th>
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<td>68,809</td>
<td>71,102</td>
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</table>
Before you apply, make sure you meet the qualifications:

■ Most jobs call for a general set of skills, such as the following:

“Experience with budget justifications based on staffing, facilities, and equipment.”

■ However, many jobs also require other qualifications. Make sure you take note of these:

“Candidates must be United States citizens and present proof of citizenship, if selected.”

Pay attention to details!

If you don’t meet the required qualifications, or fail to answer the questions on the application correctly, your application will be rejected.

Unfortunately, you cannot amend your application after the deadline has passed.
Think creatively, but always tell the truth.

It is easy to convert academic accomplishments into job qualifications, but don’t exaggerate your claims:

- **Dissertation** = Research project
- **Fellowships** = Grants
- **In-service talks** = Public outreach

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applicationmanager.gov

- You will actually apply for a position through this web site.
- Typically, you will answer a standard set of questions and upload a resume.
- The resume is stored for use on other applications.
Again, pay attention to the details:

- You may be required to take an initial screening exam (i.e., a standardized test). You will be told in advance of its content and format.

- You may have to submit additional documents for a tentative job offer.

- You may have to undergo medical, drug, criminal and security screenings.

- Never forget to meet the deadlines!

Interviews

- The job announcement should specify whether an interview is required.

- Interviews may be pre-scripted telephone interviews, scenario-based personal interviews, or some other format. You will almost certainly know what the format is prior to the interview.

- Typically, interviews for government positions are much more rigid and scripted than interviews in the private sector.
Getting a job offer:

- It is difficult to get feedback during the application process.

- *Remember that job offers depend on budgetary concerns, which often change.*

- If you know someone at the agency, ask for information.

Avoid these common mistakes:

- Make sure you list a current phone numbers and e-mail address in your application.

- Never miss a deadline; always submit *every required* form or document.

- Keep a rolling stock of applications, not just one at a time.
Good luck!

Persistence pays off.