WHAT CAN I EXPECT AFTER I SUBMIT MY USAJOBS APPLICATION?

The position that is now posted on USAJOBS is scheduled to remain open until February of 2017. The hiring timeline varies based on how many Agent Candidate Training (ACT) slots need to be filled. Based on this variable there is not an established amount of time that you can expect to hear something back on your application. Whenever additional recruits are needed to fill a training class, a new batch of applications will be pulled from the applicant pool to begin the selection process.

After initial selections have been made, we will then bring the selected applicants to Albuquerque for a 3-day medical, psychological and physical fitness screening. Applicants who are selected to come to Albuquerque for a screening are no longer competing against other applicants for the available training slots. At this phase of the hiring process applicants will need to pass the 3-day screening before moving on to the clearance investigation required for the Nuclear Courier position.

If everything goes smoothly and there are no complications, an applicant can expect to spend a minimum 1 year from the time they apply until the time they begin an ACT class. It is not uncommon for the process to take longer than one year due to the fact that some clearance investigations take longer than others.

WILL I BE REQUIRED TO ATTEND THE AGENT TRAINING ACADEMY?

All new recruits will be required to attend the Agent Candidate Training (ACT) course. ACT is a 21 week long course that is based out of Ft. Chaffee, AR (near Fort Smith, AR). Candidates will spend roughly 8 of the 21 weeks at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Glynco, GA. Travel and per diem expenses will be provided during ACT. Candidates will reside in a government dormitory while attending ACT. ACT is a structured, professional, law enforcement academy which consists of firearms, tractor-trailer operations, tactics, and intermediate use of force along with daily physical fitness training and other field/classroom instruction.

Candidates will be evaluated during each portion of the training to monitor progress and overall performance. The academy’s firearms program can be challenging which makes prior in-depth weapons experience extremely beneficial. Candidates will be required to qualify on assigned weapons during both day and night range qualifications. Candidates will also train to meet the requirements for a Commercial Driver’s License during ACT. Prior experience driving tractor-trailer and commercial vehicles is not a pre-requisite; the drive instruction portion of ACT is designed for individuals with no previous tractor-trailer experience. Failure to meet any qualifications during ACT will result in termination from the Federal Agent position.
WHAT WOULD MY SALARY LOOK LIKE AS A NUCLEAR MATERIALS COURIER?

The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) began operating under a Pay Banding and Pay for Performance Demonstration Project in which positions will be classified by career path, occupational series, and pay bands (rather than the traditional General Schedule grades in the Federal Service). Pay increases within pay bands will be based on annual performance evaluations (rather than traditional Federal Service step increases based on longevity). The exact salary offered for this position will be confirmed in a Final Offer letter after all requirements have been met. The salary range for a Courier starting in the NV-0084-01 pay band covers the GS-8 to GS -10 on the standard GS pay scale. You will enter the position at the base GS-8 equivalent (along with locality pay) if you are a current federal employee working at a pay level above the base GS-8 equivalent your base pay may be matched so long as your current pay grade falls within the NV-01 band.

Pay Band salary details can be found at:

As a Nuclear Materials Courier there is promotion potential all the way up to the GS-14 equivalent. All positions at the GS-11 equivalent and above will be competitive positions for which you will apply and compete. You will be eligible to apply to a promotion position after 1-year anniversary. The first promotion for which you will apply, Senior Agent, is a considerable raise taking you from the GS-8-10 (NV-01) to GS-11 equivalent (NV-02). There is also overtime that will factor into your annual pay, but the overtime will fluctuate considerably year to year depending on the mission pace. Any hours worked beyond the first 40 will be paid and time and a half. Your overtime has the potential to add $5,000 - $20,000 to your annual salary.

HOW MUCH TIME WOULD I BE AWAY ON TRAVEL AS A NUCLEAR COURIER?

The Nuclear Materials Courier travel schedule is very demanding but not completely unrealistic for those Agents who have families. We do have a large number of current Agents who are married and have a family. A typical month will have you on the road every other week; these are known as mission weeks. The weeks that you are not traveling are known as training weeks. During the training weeks you will train with your unit and have time to take care of any administrative items needed. You will occasionally be gone multiple weeks in a row due to the fact that we occasionally travel out of state to military or government training venues. When the mission pace picks up some mission assignments will take the place of training weeks; this may keep you away for 3 or more weeks straight (you often have weekends at home in between missions).

DOES THE FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT 20-YEAR RETIREMENT APPLY?

If hired as a Nuclear Courier, you will be placed in the 20-year special enhanced retirement. This will allow you to retire at an earlier age than other federal employees in the Federal
Employee Retirement System (FERS). The official retirement age for Nuclear Materials Couriers is age 50. You may retire earlier than age 50 if you complete your 20 years before age 50, but you will not begin collecting your retirement pension until you hit 50. One percent will be added to your pension for each year of Federal Service beyond the initial 20-years, this also applies to each year of military service that you “buy-back”.

**MILITARY BUY-BACK EXPLAINED**

As for your Active Duty military time, once you are in a federal position, you can buy-back your military time and apply it to your federal retirement. The amount of time you buy back from the military will not count toward your initial 20 year retirement requirement, but rather the time will be added to the number of years you spend as a Federal employee.

How it works is you will buy you military time back at 3% of what your pay was for each year of active duty service. For example, if you made $20,000 your first year on Active Duty, you would buy that year back for $600. If you made $25,000 the following year you would buy that year back for $750 and so on and so forth. For each year of military service that you buy back, 1% will be added to the total percentage rate of your retirement pension.

Once you are a full-time federal employee, you will have 2 years to begin buying back your military time before the amount you owe begins accruing interest. You can buy back your military time with a lump sum payment, or you can have an allotment taken out of each paycheck until you pay it off.

**RESUME BUILDING RECOMMENDATIONS**

One area of experience that I would recommend you elaborate on in your resume would be tactical and weapons experience. The primary qualification of 1-year specialized armed experience is more specifically defined below. Focus your resume on any verifiable experience you possess along these lines:

- Experience in performing high-risk armed tactical security work while serving as a member of a tactical team responsible for employing small arms and maneuvering against a hostile adversary to protect property against the hazards of fire, theft, accident, or trespass; maintaining law and order; protecting lives; or similar duties; AND using effective communication skills in person-to-person contacts in order to successfully execute the described work.