

CBP Agriculture Specialist

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
Customs and Border Protection

Summary

CBP Agriculture Specialists from the Office of Field Operations safeguard American agriculture by preventing the introduction of harmful plant pests and foreign animal diseases, and potential agricultural bioterrorism into the United States and intercepting dangerous pests that threaten the health and safety of U.S. agriculture. This is done through the inspection of vessels, vehicles, and baggage for restricted materials and assessing the agricultural risk of entry into the United States.

Overview

Accepting applications

Open & closing dates

 02/26/2024 to 03/01/2024

This job will close when we have received **600 applications** which may be sooner than the closing date. [Learn more](#)

Salary

\$39,576 - \$77,955 per year

Pay scale & grade

GS 5 - 9

Location

Many vacancies in the following location:

AGS Nationwide,

Remote job

No

Telework eligible

No

Travel Required

Occasional travel - Travel may be required based on operational needs.

Relocation expenses reimbursed

No

Appointment type

Permanent -

Work schedule

Full-time - May include rotating shifts, assignments, and overtime on a regular and recurring basis.

Service

Competitive

Promotion potential

12

Job family (Series)

[0401 General Natural Resources Management And Biological Sciences](#)

Supervisory status

No

Security clearance

[Other](#)

Drug test

Yes

Position sensitivity and risk

[Critical-Sensitive \(CS\)/High Risk](#)

Trust determination process

[National security](#)

Announcement number

AGS 24-2

Control number

777603500

This job is open to



[The public](#)

U.S. Citizens, Nationals or those who owe allegiance to the U.S.

Clarification from the agency

United States Citizens may apply. Locations are determined by the needs of the agency after the successful completion of pre-employment.

Duties

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The **CBP Agriculture Specialist** (CBPAS) primary responsibilities are:

- Serve as a consultant in the areas of inspection, analysis, intelligence gathering, examination, and law enforcement activities regarding the importation of agricultural/commercial commodities and conveyances at ports of entry
- Apply laws and regulations when determining the admissibility of agriculture commodities while preventing the introduction of harmful pests, diseases, and potential agro-terrorism into the United States
- Participate in special enforcement, targeting or analysis teams charged with collecting and analyzing information and identifying high-risk targets
- Plan and conduct remedial actions such as treating, disinfecting, and decontaminating prohibited commodities, conveyances, contaminants or agricultural materials

You will be asked to provide your preference for one of the following mission critical locations: Los Angeles, Otay Mesa, San Francisco, and Tecate, CA; New Castle, DE; Chicago, IL; Boston, MA; Baltimore, MD; Detroit, MI; Pembina, ND; Las Vegas, NV; Buffalo, NY; Philadelphia, PA; Dallas, TX; and Seattle, WA.

NOTE: The above preference locations are expected to have vacancies available in the future, however, if the duty locations do not have vacancies at the time of your final offer, you may be offered a duty location in another geographic location within the United States. Locations offered are based on operational and mission requirements, and critical agency hiring needs for entry level Agriculture Specialists as determined by the CBP Office of Field Operations.

If you accept the duty location of San Francisco, you may be eligible to receive an additional 25% of your salary each year for the first 4 years of employment in addition to any overtime pay. These incentives only apply to new federal employees and are dependent upon the availability of funds.

Duty location offering 25% recruitment incentive: San Francisco, CA

If you accept San Francisco, California as your location you will be eligible for the Special Salary Rate based on the [San Francisco Special Salary Rate Table](#)

This is a career ladder position with a grade level progression of GS-5, GS-7, GS-9, GS-11, and GS-12. You will be eligible for a promotion to the next higher grade level (without re-applying) once you successfully complete 52 weeks in each grade level. Promotions are at the discretion of the agency. Pay rates are based on the [2024 OPM Salary Tables](#) and do not take into consideration any potential overtime earnings, recruitment incentives, location incentives or yearly cost of living increases.

For more information on career progression, click [here](#)

Requirements

Conditions of Employment

You must be a U.S. Citizen to apply for this position.

Probationary Period: You must serve a one year probationary period during the first year of your initial permanent federal appointment to determine fitness for continued employment.

CBP Agriculture Specialist Training: You will be required to complete a paid pre-academy orientation for approximately 2 weeks at your home port. You will then attend a 59-day training program conducted at the [Federal Law Enforcement Training Center \(FLETC\)](#) located in Glynco, GA. This training consists of determining the admissibility of agriculture commodities, preventing introduction of harmful pests/diseases, etc. For more information, please visit [CBP Field Operations Academy](#). Successful completion of the academy is required for this position.

Uniforms: This position requires you to wear an officially-approved uniform while in a duty status.

Residency Requirement: CBP has a residency requirement that applies to all applicants not currently employed by CBP. You are required to have physically resided in the United States or its protectorates as (as declared under international law) for at least three (3) of the last five (5) years, before completing an application for CBP employment. If you do not meet the residency requirement as stated above and you have been physically located in a foreign location for more than two (2) of the last five (5) years, you may request an exception to determine if you are eligible for a residency waiver by meeting one or more of the following conditions:

1. Working for the U.S. Government as a federal civilian or as a member of the military
2. A dependent of a federal civilian or member of the military who was working for the U.S. Government
3. Working as a contractor employee, a volunteer, a consultant or an intern for the U.S. Government
4. Participation in a study abroad program sponsored by a U.S. affiliated college or university

If selected for a position, you must provide documentation to support a request for an exception to the residency requirement.

Driver's License: You must possess a valid driver's license.

More requirements for this position are listed in the Additional Information section below.

Qualifications

All applicants must meet the Basic Requirement in order to be considered for this position. Eligibility will be verified based on your submitted transcripts and resume. More information on this requirement can be found in the [CBP Agriculture Specialist Qualification Aid](#) and in the [OPM Qualification Standards](#)

Basic Requirement for the CBP Agriculture Specialist:

1. **Degree:** Bachelor's degree (or higher) in biological sciences, agriculture, natural resource management, chemistry, animal science, plant science, pest management, or related disciplines appropriate to the position.

OR

2. **Combination of Education and Experience:** Completed at least 24 semester hours (36 quarter hours) in a qualifying field of study, as shown above, **PLUS** qualifying experience or additional education. To determine if you meet the combination, divide the months of qualifying experience by 48; divide the number of completed undergraduate semester hours by 120 (or 180 for undergraduate quarter hours); add the two percentages; the total must equal 100% or more.

GS-5 Grade Level: To qualify at the GS-5 grade level, you must meet the Basic Requirement above.

GS-7 Grade Level: In addition to meeting the Basic Requirement, to qualify for the GS-7 applicants must also possess one of the following:

- One year of graduate-level education (equivalent to 18 semester hours or 27 quarter hours) from an accredited college or university leading to a Master's degree in a qualifying field of study; **OR**
- A Bachelor's degree with [Superior Academic Achievement](#) (i.e., GPA 3.0 or higher out of a possible 4.0 scale), from an accredited college or university that includes 24 semester hours or 36 quarter hours in a qualifying field of study; **OR**
- One year of specialized experience equivalent to at least the next lower grade level that includes: effectively dealing with individuals or groups of persons in a courteous / tactful manner in connections with agricultural matters; researching information for reports and providing information to others; analyzing information rapidly and making prompt decisions; enforcing regulations while inspecting vessels, vehicles, aircraft and/or baggage for the presence of restricted plant materials,

pests or diseases; and reviewing and analyzing passengers or commodity documents to assess the agricultural risk of their entry into the United States; **OR**

- A combination of graduate-level education which includes a qualifying field of study from an accredited college or university **AND** specialized work experience. Divide the months of qualifying experience by 12; divide the number of completed graduate semester hours by 18 (or 27 for graduate quarter hours); add the two percentages; the total must equal 100% or more.

GS-9 Grade Level: In addition to meeting the Basic Requirement, to qualify for the GS-9 applicants must also possess one of the following:

- A Master's degree or 2 years of progressively higher level graduate education from an accredited college or university that includes a major in a qualifying field of study; **OR**
- One year of specialized experience equivalent to the next lower grade level that includes: coordinating, planning, and executing inspection assignments, investigating violations, and preparing investigative reports and providing testimony; compiling data and preparing reports in connection with agricultural matters and inspection operations; overseeing treatments such as disinfection, sterilization, and decontamination; **OR**
- A combination of graduate-level education which includes a qualifying field of study from an accredited college or university **AND** specialized work experience listed above. Divide the months of qualifying experience by 12; divide the number of completed graduate semester hours by 36 (or 54 for graduate quarter hours); add the two percentages; the total must equal 100% or more.

Pending Education: Applications can be accepted from students who expect to complete qualifying education within 9 months from the closing date of this job announcement. Transcripts submitted for pending education **MUST** show the student is currently enrolled and in-progress to complete the qualifying education within 9 months from the closing date of this job announcement.

Qualifications must be met by the closing date of this announcement.

National Service Experience (i.e., volunteer experience): refers to paid and unpaid experience, including volunteer work done through National Service programs (e.g., Peace Corps, AmeriCorps) and other organizations (e.g., professional, philanthropic, religious, spiritual, community, student, and social). Volunteer work helps build critical competencies, knowledge, and skills and can provide valuable training and experience that translates directly to paid employment. You will receive credit for all qualifying experience, including volunteer experience.

Political Appointees: The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) must authorize employment offers made to current or former political appointees. If you are currently, or have been within the last 5 years, a political Schedule A, Schedule C, Non-career SES or Presidential Appointee employee in the Executive Branch, you must disclose this information to the Human Resources Office.

Education

This position falls under the General Natural Resources Management and Biological Sciences series, [0401 Individual Occupational Requirements](#)

, which requires a degree in biological sciences, agriculture, natural resource management, chemistry, animal science, plant science, pest management, or related disciplines appropriate to the position, **OR** a combination of qualifying education and experience.

See the *Qualifications* section for more information on the Basic Requirement.

CBP employees demonstrate the highest level of commitment to protect and serve the United States of America and to exemplify the CBP Core Values of Vigilance, Service to Country and Integrity. Learn more about CBP's mission and core values at <https://www.cbp.gov/about>

Additional information

Background Investigation: CBP is a federal law enforcement agency that requires all applicants to undergo a thorough background investigation prior to employment in order to promote the agency's core values of vigilance, service to country, and integrity. During the screening and/or background investigation process, you will be asked questions regarding any felony criminal convictions or current felony charges, the use of illegal drugs (e.g., marijuana, cocaine, heroin, LSD, methamphetamines, ecstasy), and the use of non-prescribed controlled substances including any experimentation, possession, sale, receipt, manufacture, cultivation, production, transfer, shipping, trafficking, or distribution of controlled substances. For more information visit [this link](#) and the [Hiring Process Deep Dive Video: The E-QIP](#)

Medical Examination: You must complete the medical screening process and be found to meet the medical standards for the position. If you do not meet the medical standards for the position, you may request a waiver of the medical standard by demonstrating with non-medical information that, with or without reasonable accommodation, you can safely perform the essential duties of the position. For more information click [here](#)

Drug Testing: Employees are subject to drug testing in compliance with the DHS Drug-Free Workplace Program. You must complete a drug test as a condition of employment. For more information, visit our [Drug Testing FAQs](#) and the [Hiring Process Deep Dive Video: The Drug Test](#)

Interview Process: You will be required to pass a structured interview.

Polygraph Examination: You may be required to take a polygraph exam and have favorable results in order to continue in the pre-employment process. Please see [Polygraph Examination](#)

Bargaining Unit: This position is covered under the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU). For more information, please visit <https://www.nteu.org/i-am-nteu/chapter-websites>

After you successfully complete all the pre-employment steps, you will be at the final offer step. For more information on the final offer, please see the [Hiring Process Deep Dive Video: The Final Offer](#)

If you receive a conditional offer of employment for this position, you will be required to complete an [Optional Form 306, Declaration for Federal Employment](#), and to sign and certify the accuracy of all information in your application. False statements on any part of your application may result in withdrawal of offer of employment, dismissal after beginning work, fine or imprisonment.

Any offers of employment made pursuant to this announcement will be consistent with all applicable authorities, including Presidential Memoranda, Executive Orders, interpretive U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) guidance, and Office of Management and Budget plans and policies concerning hiring. These authorities are subject to change.

All agency employees are required to participate in Direct Deposit/Electronic Funds Transfer for salary payments.

Benefits

A career with the U.S. government provides employees with a comprehensive benefits package. As a federal employee, you and your family will have access to a range of benefits that are designed to make your federal career very rewarding. [Learn more about federal benefits](#)

[Review our benefits](#)

Eligibility for benefits depends on the type of position you hold and whether your position is full-time, part-time or intermittent. Contact the hiring agency for more information on the specific benefits offered.

How You Will Be Evaluated

You will be evaluated for this job based on how well you meet the qualifications above.

You will be evaluated based on how well you meet the qualifications listed in this vacancy announcement. Your qualifications will be evaluated based on your application materials (e.g. resume and supporting documents) and the responses you provide on the application questionnaire. It is your responsibility to verify that any information submitted with your application is accurate. Human Resources will not modify or change any part of your application.

You will be assessed on the following competencies: General Ability Frontline Staffing

If you meet the minimum qualifications, you will be placed in one of the following categories:

1. **Best Qualified:** Applicants possessing experience that substantially exceeds the minimum qualifications of the position and demonstrate high proficiency in all of the critical competencies.
2. **Well-Qualified:** Applicants possessing experience that exceeds the minimum qualifications of the position and demonstrates acceptable proficiency in all of the critical competencies.
3. **Qualified:** Applicants possessing experience that meets the minimum qualifications of the position and demonstrate basic proficiency in most of the critical competencies.

The knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform this job are:

- Knowledge of inspection programs, policies, practices, and methods
- Ability to evaluate, analyze, review and assess prohibited items, pests or diseases
- Ability to communicate orally and in writing

Veterans: Qualified veterans who have a compensable service-connected disability of at least 10% are listed in the best-qualified category, except when the position being filled is scientific or professional at the GS-09 grade level, or higher. This position is considered scientific/professional. Other 10-point preference eligibles and veterans with 5-point preference who meet the eligibility and qualification requirements are placed above non-preference eligibles within the category in which they qualify. Please see [Veterans' Preference](#) for more information.

Required Documents

All applicants must submit a resume **and** qualifying transcripts.

Resume: A resume in English is required. It must contain your full legal name, address, phone number, complete work history, a detailed description of your duties, the dates you performed those duties (MM/DD/YY), as well as your hours worked per week. If you

are a current federal employee, please include your salary, pay scale and pay grade information. **Note: Most applicants are screened out for insufficient information on their resume.**

Transcripts: All applicants are required to submit college transcripts that include the name of the institution, courses, credits earned, GPA, and conferred degree (if applicable). Unofficial transcripts are accepted at the time of application however, official transcripts will be required before a final offer of employment can be extended. Education must be from an accredited college or university by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

Foreign Education Evaluation: Education obtained from a foreign college or university is not creditable unless it has been evaluated by an organization that specializes in interpretation of educational credentials. The evaluation and foreign education transcripts must be submitted with your application. It is your responsibility to provide such evidence with your application. See [Recognition of Foreign Qualifications](#) for more information.

Your online submitted responses to the job questionnaire: <https://apply.usastaffing.gov/ViewQuestionnaire/12315410>

The following documentation may also be submitted:

Are you a veteran? To apply veterans' preference you must submit proof of eligibility as appropriate for your preference type:

- **TP - 5-point Preference:** DD-214 listing the character of service **and** either qualifying medal(s) or service period.
- **CP/CPS - 10-point Disabled Veteran Preference:** DD-214 showing character of service and a VA Disability Award Letter (dated 1991 or later) showing the total percentage of the service-connected disability. Submitting a [Standard Form 15](#) with your application is encouraged.
- **Currently Serving:** If you are currently serving on active duty, you must submit a written statement of service from the armed forces certifying your dates of service, rank, campaign badges and expeditionary medals (if applicable), expected character of service, **and** anticipated date of separation. Prior to entering on duty, you will be required to provide a final DD-214.
- **XP - Derived Preference:** If you are claiming derived preference based upon widow or spouse entitlement, you **MUST** submit a completed [Standard Form 15](#), DD-214, and the required documentation stated on the SF-15.

Please visit [Veterans' Preference](#) for more information.

A you a current or former federal employee? It is recommended that you submit your most recent SF-50 "Notification of Personnel Action" form. (Please do not submit a Performance Award SF-50.) If you do not submit one at the time of application you may be required to submit one prior to entering on duty.

Are you claiming special priority selection rights under the Career Transition Assistance Program (CTAP) or Interagency Career Transition Assistance Program (ICTAP)? To be eligible you must submit:

- a copy of your agency notice;
- a copy of your most recent performance rating; and
- a copy of your most recent SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action, noting your current position, grade level, and duty location.

Are you a current or former political appointee? If you are or have been a political Schedule A, Schedule C, Non-career SES or Presidential appointee employee you must submit a copy of your applicable SF-50, along with a statement that provides the following information regarding your most recent political appointment.

If you are relying on your education to meet qualification requirements:

Education must be accredited by an accrediting institution recognized by the U.S. Department of Education in order for it to be credited towards qualifications. Therefore, provide only the attendance and/or degrees from schools accredited by accrediting institutions recognized by the U.S. Department of Education

Failure to provide all of the required information as stated in this vacancy announcement may result in an ineligible rating or may affect the overall rating.

How to Apply

Apply as soon as possible in order to receive consideration as this announcement will close on 03/01/2024 at 11:59 pm Eastern Time OR on the day we receive 600 applicants (whichever comes first).

To begin your online application, sign into USA Jobs or create a USA Jobs account if you do not already have one. Click **Apply** and follow the online prompts to fill out the questionnaire and submit your application. Your application packet must include a completed assessment questionnaire, a resume, transcripts and any applicable and/or required supporting documentation. Please see the *Required Documents* section for additional information. All application materials must be in English. If you are planning to apply using your phone or tablet, see [Browser Compatibility](#)

Applications and supporting documentation will not be accepted by mail or email. The address below is for inquiries only. **Applicants may not update any part of their application after initial submission.** You must submit your resume, application questionnaire, transcripts and any supporting documents at the time of application.

Interagency Career Transition Assistance Program (ICTAP) Eligibles: If you have never worked for the federal government, you are not ICTAP eligible. View information about [ICTAP eligibility](#) on OPM's Career Transition Resources website. You must submit the supporting documents listed under the *Required Documents* section of this announcement. To be considered under ICTAP, you must be placed in the well-qualified category for this position, as described above.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is committed to ensuring that all of our employees act in a manner that embodies the Department's Mission Statement: With honor and integrity, we will safeguard the American people, our homeland and our values. As an employee of CBP, you will be joining a workforce that is dedicated to accomplishing our mission while maintaining the trust of our Nation by strictly adhering to all government ethics standards. Your conduct will be subject to the ethics rules applicable to all Executive Branch employees, and to CBP employees specifically, as well as the criminal conflict of interest statutes. Once you enter on duty, these rules include obtaining approval for outside employment or business activity, to ensure such employment or business activity is not prohibited and does not interfere or conflict with performance of your official duties. Please review further details [here](#)

DHS offers competitive salaries and an attractive benefits package. For more information, go to the [DHS Careers](#) website and select [Benefits](#)

. [Disabled veteran leave](#)

will be available to any Federal employee hired on or after November 5, 2016, who is a veteran with a service-connected disability rating of 30 percent or more.

Applying to this announcement certifies that you give permission for DHS to share your application with others in DHS for similar positions. View [common definitions](#) of terms found in this announcement. View more information on [applying for federal employment](#).

DHS uses e-Verify, an Internet-based system, to confirm the eligibility of all newly hired employees to work in the United States. Learn more about [E-Verify](#), including your rights and responsibilities.

If you are unable to apply online, you must request an alternative application which may be available from the Human Resources Office. Contact information is listed below.

Agency contact information

CBP Applicant Contact Center

Phone

[855-500-3722](tel:855-500-3722)

Email

CBPApplcmtContactCenter@cbp.dhs.gov

Address

Office of Field Operations
Please read entire announcement
Please apply online
Washington, DC 20229
US

[Learn more about this agency.](#)

Next steps

Your application and supporting documents will be reviewed to determine if you meet the minimum qualifications. If you are among the best qualified, your application will be referred to the selecting official for employment consideration at the highest grade for which you are determined eligible. A valid application does not guarantee selection. Please ensure that all required documents are uploaded at the time of application.

Your status will be updated on USAJOBS throughout the process. To check your status, log on to your USAJOBS account and go to your home page to view active application.

If you are already in the pre-employment process for a CBP Agriculture Specialist position at the grades 5, 7 or 9 and you reapply under this announcement and are subsequently referred for a position, all active pre-employment process statuses will be applied to this application (e.g., medical status, background investigation, etc.).

Fair & Transparent

The Federal hiring process is set up to be fair and transparent. Please read the following guidance.

[Equal Employment Opportunity \(EEO\) Policy](#)

[Financial suitability](#)

[New employee probationary period](#)

[Reasonable accommodation policy](#)

[Selective Service](#)

[Signature and false statements](#)

