



Department: Department Of Homeland Security

Agency: Customs and Border Protection

Job Announcement Number:

**BPA 09-1**

Overview

DETAILED VERSION

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## BORDER PATROL AGENT

**Salary Range:** 36,658.00 - 46,542.00 USD per year

**Series & Grade:** GL-1896-05/09

**Promotion Potential:** 11

### Who May Be Considered:

United States Citizens

### Job Summary:

**RESTRICTION: If you took the Border Patrol Agent examination and received an ineligible (IA) rating, you must wait three months from the date on your Notice of Results before you can register for the Border Patrol Agent examination.**

### [BPA Online Application](#)

**AGE REQUIREMENT – Candidates must be referred for selection before reaching their 40th birthday unless they presently serve or have previously served in a federal civilian law enforcement retirement position.**

**Online registrations close at midnight Eastern Standard Time on 9/30/2009.**

**Organizational Location:** Positions are located in South Texas, West Texas/New Mexico, Arizona and California.

**Relocation Expenses:** Relocation expenses will not be paid.

**Open Period:** Wednesday, October 01, 2008 to Wednesday, September 30, 2009

**Position Information:** Full Time Excepted Service Permanent

**Duty Locations:** Many vacancies - Arizona, AZ Many vacancies - West Texas New Mexico, NM Many vacancies - California, CA Many vacancies - South Texas, TX

**Note:** Many positions may be filled using this vacancy announcement.

### **What types of positions are being filled?**

Border Patrol Agent positions are full-time positions filled under the Federal Career Intern Program (FCIP). The Federal Career Intern Program is a program that helps federal agencies recruit talented individuals for entry-level government positions. Federal Career Intern Program appointments are designed with a 2-year internship, during which time you will be learning the job and the organization, attending formal training programs and developing your skills. If your performance and conduct are satisfactory, your appointment will be made permanent after the 2-year internship. The Federal Career Intern Program is an "excepted service" appointing authority.

### **Key Requirements:**

- US Citizenship
- Conviction of Domestic Violence cannot be employed as BPA
- Medical Exam, Physical Fitness
- Background Security Investigation
- Residency in the US for the last three years
- Drug Test is required

### Duties

#### **Major Duties:**

#### **CBP Securing America's Borders**

Whether on the frontlines or serving behind the scenes supporting our mission, the men and women of CBP are dedicated to keeping America safe. CBP counts on them. Our Nation counts on them. Can we count on you?

**CBP Mission Statement:** We are the guardians of our nation's borders. We are America's frontline. We safeguard the American homeland at and beyond our borders. We protect the American public against terrorists and the instruments of terror. We steadfastly enforce the laws of the United States while fostering our nation's economic security through lawful international trade and travel. We serve the American public with vigilance, integrity, and professionalism.

Discover a challenging and rewarding career in CBP, the sole organization responsible for securing the nation's borders. As part of our carefully selected, highly trained team, you'll leverage state-of-the-art technology, innovative strategies and world-wide partnerships to protect our communities and defend our frontier.

At U.S. Customs and Border Protection, we:

- Screen passengers, vehicles, and shipments entering our country
- Seize illegal narcotics, vehicles, and agricultural products
- Prevent unauthorized entry into the country
- Rescue individuals who fall into dangerous conditions traversing our border

For more information about CBP's mission, activities, and careers, visit our web site, [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov).

One of the most important activities of a Border Patrol Agent is line-watch. This involves the detection, prevention, and apprehension of undocumented aliens and smugglers of aliens at or near the land border by maintaining surveillance from a covert position, following up leads, responding to electronic sensor alarms, infrared scopes during night operations, low light level television systems, aircraft sightings, and interpreting and following tracks, marks and other physical evidence. Some of the other major activities are farm and ranch checks, traffic check, traffic observation, city patrol, transportation check, administrative, intelligence, and anti-smuggling activities.

### Qualifications and Evaluation

#### **Qualifications:**

You may qualify for the BPA position based on education, experience, or a combination of both.

**Experience Requirements for a GL-5 level:** Applicants must have a substantial background of work experience of which at least one year must have been comparable in level of difficulty and responsibility to grade GL-4 in the Federal service. This type of experience must demonstrate the ability to do all three of the following:

1. Take charge, make sound decisions, and maintain composure in stressful situations;
2. Learn law enforcement regulations, methods and techniques through classroom training and/or on-the-job instruction;
3. Gather factual information through questioning, observation, and examination of documents and records.

**Experience Requirements for a GL-7 level:** Applicants must have one year of law enforcement experience comparable in level of difficulty and responsibility to GL-5 in the Federal service. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to do all four of the following:

1. Make arrests and exercise sound judgment in the use of firearms;
2. Deal effectively with individuals or groups of persons in a courteous, tactful manner in connection with law enforcement matters;
3. Analyze information rapidly and make prompt decisions or take prompt and appropriate law enforcement action in light of applicable laws, court decisions and sound law enforcement matters;
4. Develop and maintain contact with a network of informants.

#### **Experience Requirements for the GL-9 Level:**

1. Develop cases, conduct interviews or interrogations, apprehensions, and arrests in order to further the process or cease development.
2. Prepare cases and appear as a professional witness in court.
3. Exercise sound judgment in the use of firearms and conduct training, qualification exercises, or courses in the proper care and use of firearms.
4. Deal effectively with individuals or groups of persons in a courteous and tactful manner

- in their detention, control or interrogation, and work to promote effective community outreach programs and public relations.
5. Analyze and disseminate intelligence information and data rapidly; and apply a practical knowledge of the laws, concepts, operational practices and law enforcement methods and techniques in order to independently perform duties typically encountered in law enforcement.
  6. Develop and maintain contact with a network of informants, social and political organizations, state and local enforcement agencies, and private citizens, to ensure continuity of enforcement work and to carry out enforcement responsibilities.
  7. Use a variety of law enforcement databases and information retrieval systems, such as TECS, NCIC, and NEXUS.
  8. Prepare reports and write other documents that deal with the collection, protection, and recording of evidence, the presentation of testimony, and the retention of informational materials concerning illegal activities and practices encountered during daily activities.

The grade level will be determined based on the information provided in your application. If you are offered and accept a position as a BPA at the GL-5 or GL-7 level, the grade level cannot be changed after you have entered on duty.

**Education:** If applicants do not have the work experience described above, 4 academic years above high school leading to a bachelor's degree, or a bachelor's degree from an accredited college can be substituted and is fully qualifying for the GL-5 level. For the GL-7 level, one full year of graduate education in law or in field related to law enforcement (e.g. criminal justice, police science, etc.) is qualifying, or meeting the provisions of Superior Academic Achievement (SAA). (See <http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/SEC-II/s2-e5.asp> for information on SAA.) Education obtained from a foreign university or college is not creditable for qualification requirements unless it has been evaluated by a private foreign educational credential evaluation service. (See <http://www.naces.org/members.htm> for a list of organizations that provide this evaluation service).

**Combining qualifying experience and education:**

If you do not qualify based on experience or education alone, you may be able to qualify based on a combination of your experience and education.

**For more information on BPA Qualification Requirements, please see**

[http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/careers/customs\\_careers/border\\_careers/application\\_process/basic\\_requirements\\_for\\_bp.xml](http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/careers/customs_careers/border_careers/application_process/basic_requirements_for_bp.xml)

**U.S. Citizenship:** Candidates must be United States citizens and present proof of citizenship, if selected.

**Residency:** U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) also has a residency requirement that applies to all applicants other than current CBP employees. If you are not currently a CBP employee, CBP requires that for the three (3) years prior to applying for this position, individuals must have: physically resided in the United States or its protectorates or territories (excluding short trips abroad, such as vacations), worked for the U.S. government as an employee overseas in a Federal or military capacity; and/or been a dependent of a U.S. Federal or military employee serving overseas.

Exceptions may be granted to applicants if they can provide complete state-side coverage information required to make a suitability/security determination. Examples of state-side coverage information include: the U.S. address of the company headquarters where the applicant's personnel file is located, the state-side address of the Professor in charge of the applicant's "Study Abroad" program, the church records for the applicant's overseas church

missions, and/or the U.S. addresses of anyone who worked or studied with the applicant while overseas. If selected for a position, applicants must provide this information when filing their application for employment.

**Background Security Investigation:** Prior to appointment, tentative selectees must undergo and satisfactorily complete a background investigation, which includes but is not limited to a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) name and fingerprint check and a 10-year background investigation. As part of the investigation you will be asked to complete and submit a security questionnaire (SF-86). The questionnaire will ask you questions regarding education, residences, past and current employers, police records, financial situation, drug and alcohol use, etc. The background investigation will consist of, among other things, a personal interview, a check for past arrest records, a credit check, and interviews of employers and personal references. A history of problems in any of these areas may result in your disqualification for this position. Keep in mind that because we have a law enforcement mission, we set a very high standard for our employees.

**Motor Vehicle Operation:** Border Patrol Agents must possess a valid state's driver's license at the time of appointment.

**Selective Service Registration:** If you are a male applicant born after December 31, 1959, you must certify that you have registered with the Selective Service System, or are exempt from having to do so under Selective Service law.

**Firearms:** Firearm proficiency is required for Border Patrol Agents and is part of the training provided.

**Mandatory Completion of Basic Training:** Soon after entering on duty, Border Patrol Agent interns are detailed to the U.S. Border Patrol Academy in Artesia, New Mexico for approximately 11 weeks of intensive instruction in immigration and nationality laws, law enforcement and Border Patrol-specific operations, drivers training, physical techniques, firearms, and other courses. Soon after arriving for the 11-week basic training, all students are tested in their language abilities. Those who score below an established benchmark are assigned to an additional 8-week Spanish class at the Border Patrol Academy which will extend their stay to 19 weeks, while the fluent Spanish speakers who successfully complete the 11-week program report back to their duty stations. Upon successful completion of the Academy training, all interns begin the Field Training Program (FTP) and the Post Academy Training program (PATP) at their stations and sectors. The FTP will consist of on-the-job, hands-on training with an experienced agent. The PATP is a combination of web-based training and instructor led training and will require the intern to successfully pass seven unit exams. The intern's progress through both programs and job performance is evaluated by review panels at 12 months and 20 months after entering on duty. If the intern's progress remains satisfactory through the 24th month, s/he is no longer an intern and is converted to a permanent appointment. Failure to successfully complete the 24-month internship will result in termination of employment.

**Physical and Environmental Conditions:** BPA applicants must be physically able to perform strenuous duties, under rigorous environmental conditions. Duties require physical stamina in running long distances, climbing, jumping, etc., withstanding exposure to extreme weather conditions for extended periods; and standing/stooping for long periods of time. Irregular and protracted hours of work are also required.

**Overtime and Shift Work:** This position requires regular and recurring overtime and shift work. You must be willing and available to work overtime and rotating shifts. You may also be rotated between assignments and duty locations.

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

**Age Requirement:** In accordance with Public Law 100-238, this position is covered under law enforcement retirement provisions. Candidates must be referred for selection before reaching their 40th birthday unless they presently or have previously served in a Federal civilian law enforcement retirement-covered position.

**Misdemeanor Crime of Domestic Violence:** If you have ever been convicted of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence, it is a felony for you to possess any firearm or ammunition. A misdemeanor crime of domestic violence is defined as any offense, which has an element, the use or attempted use of physical force or the threatened use of a deadly weapon, committed by a current or former domestic partner, parent, or guardian of the victim. The term "convicted" does not include anyone whose conviction has been expunged or set aside or who has received a pardon. As a condition of employment, individuals selected for Border Patrol Agent positions are required to carry weapons and ammunition as part of their official duties. Therefore, an individual with a conviction of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence may not be employed in a Border Patrol Agent position.

**How You Will Be Evaluated:**

**Proof of Veteran's Preference:** Applicants claiming veteran's preference will be required to provide proof of preference after they are tentatively selected for the position of BPA. Applicants who are still on active duty and therefore cannot obtain a DD Form 214 can provide a statement of active service dates and a list of medals and awards they have received in lieu of their DD Form 214. Additional information on veteran's preference may be found at the following website <http://www.opm.gov/veterans/>. Do not submit your proof of veteran's preference (DD-214's) until they are requested after you have been tentatively selected.

**Written Test:** You must pass a written test. The written test consists of general abilities and language testing. Since Border Patrol Agents must speak and read Spanish, applicants are required to take either an artificial language test designed to predict ability to learn a foreign language, or a Spanish proficiency test designed to test their Spanish language ability.

**Basis of Rating:** To be eligible, applicants must have a score of at least 70 (excluding veteran's preference points) on the written test.

**Structured Oral Interview:** As part of the basic qualifications determination, candidates must appear before an oral interview panel and demonstrate that they possess the abilities and other characteristics important to Border Patrol Agent positions. Among these are the competencies of judgment/decision-making, emotional maturity, interpersonal skills, and cooperativeness/sensitivity to the needs of others. The interview will be rated on a pass/fail basis. Candidates must receive a "pass" in all areas in order to continue in the hiring process. During the registration process for the written test, applicants will be asked to choose one of 51 cities where they would like to take the structured oral interview.

**Drug Testing:** All applicants for this position will be required to submit to urinalysis to screen for illegal drug use prior to appointment. This position is designated for testing for illegal drug use; incumbents are subject to random testing.

**Physical Requirements:** You must be physically able to perform strenuous duties, under rigorous environmental conditions. For example, duties require physical stamina in running long distances, climbing, jumping, etc., withstanding exposure to extreme weather conditions for extended periods; and standing/stooping for long periods of time. Irregular and protracted hours of work are also required. Prior to an offer of employment, you must undergo a pre-employment medical examination and be medically suitable to perform the full range of duties

of the position efficiently and without hazard to yourself or others.

**Medical Requirements:** Common medical problems relate to the standards for vision and hearing. Uncorrected distant vision (without glasses or contacts) must be equal to or better than 20/100 in each eye. Binocular vision must be correctable to 20/20 with glasses or contact lenses. Peripheral vision, depth perception and color vision must be normal. Refractive surgical procedures (such as LASIK surgery) are considered acceptable provided the individual's vision meets the above standards post-operatively, and an acceptable recovery time period has occurred. The individual must be free of post-operative complications. For refractive surgery, the results of an additional evaluation by an Optometrist or Ophthalmologist will be required to insure that vision is not impeded due to post-operative complications such as glare and contrast-sensitivity, and the individual must be cleared for rigorous law enforcement training including exposure to pepper spray. Normal hearing is required; the use of any hearing aid to comply with the medical standards is unacceptable.

Any disease or condition that interferes with the safe, efficient, and expected performance of the job duties or required training may constitute grounds for medical disqualification. Individualized assessments of each person's medical history, current condition, and medical qualifications will be made on a case-by-case basis. Final consideration and medical determination may require additional information and/or testing. If medical information is required beyond the pre-placement examination, it is provided at the applicant's expense.

**The use of any hearing aid to comply with the medical standards is unacceptable.**

**For additional information on medical requirements, please see**

[http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/careers/customs\\_careers/border\\_careers/basic\\_requirements\\_for\\_bp.xml](http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/careers/customs_careers/border_careers/basic_requirements_for_bp.xml)

**Physical Fitness Screening:** Due to the strenuous nature of Border Patrol Agent duties and associated training programs, fitness tests have been developed and will be used to screen candidates for entry-level BPA positions. The fitness tests include a: (1) push-up test, (2) sit-up test, and (3) 5-minute cardiovascular endurance step test.

**For additional information on the Fitness Screening, please see**

[http://cbp.gov/xp/cgov/careers/customs\\_careers/border\\_careers/fitness\\_requirements/](http://cbp.gov/xp/cgov/careers/customs_careers/border_careers/fitness_requirements/)

**This position may be subject to a pre-employment polygraph examination.**

#### Benefits and Other Information

#### **Benefits:**

#### **Annual Increases in Salary**

#### **Attractive Overtime Compensation**

**Federal Law Enforcement Retirement Coverage (12(d))** - Border Patrol Agents are covered under the provisions of both the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) and the "12 (d)" law enforcement retirement benefit. Law enforcement employees may voluntarily retire at any age after completing 25 years of service or at age 50 or older with 20 years of service. The mandatory retirement age is 57 with 20 years of service, however, employees could work beyond 57 until they meet the combination of age and service requirements to retire under law enforcement provisions.

**Uniform Allowance** - Border Patrol Agents receive a uniform allowance to offset the cost of

purchasing the required BPA uniform.

**Generous benefits package** - Included are personal leave days for vacation, illness and family care; a wide range of health insurance programs, life insurance; long term care insurance; flexible spending accounts for out-of-pocket medical expenses or the dependent care costs of a child or parent; and a fully portable retirement program that includes a Thrift Savings Plan (401k). For more information, go to <http://www.opm.gov/>.

**Other Information:**

**Starting Salary and Career Progression** - As a Border Patrol Agent, entry level is either at grade GL-5, GL-7, or GL-9 depending on qualifications. The GL-5 annual salary is \$36,658 or higher, depending on the location of the position. The GL-7 annual salary is \$41,729 or higher, depending on the location of the position. The GL-9 annual salary is \$46,542 or higher, depending on location of the position. You can advance from a GL-5 (\$36,658), or a GL-7 (\$41,729), or a GL-9 (\$46,542) entry-level position up to the GL-11 full performance level (\$54,494) without having to reapply. Generally, Border Patrol Agents receive these promotions after performing satisfactorily for 1 year at each grade level.

**Accelerated Promotion Plan** - The Border Patrol Agent position has an accelerated promotion plan, which means after 6 months, individuals hired at the GL-5 level are eligible for promotion to the GL-7, and individuals hired at the GL-7 are eligible for promotion to GL-9.

**Probationary Period** - The two years spent in the intern program serve as your probationary period.

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

**Equal Employment Opportunity** - The agency is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All candidates will be considered regardless of their race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, sexual orientation, protected genetic information, status as a parent, lawful political affiliation, marital status, physical/mental disability (if not a job factor), membership or non-membership in an employee organization, or any other nonmerit factor.

**Reasonable Accommodations** - Applicants requiring reasonable accommodations for any part of the application and hiring process should contact the Human Resources Office Representative on this announcement. Determinations on requests or reasonable accommodation will be made on a case-by-case basis.

How to Apply

**How To Apply:**

## The Hiring Process

**Step 1 – Apply by Internet.** You must register for the written test for the Border Patrol Agent position during the open period. You must register for the written test online on the Internet at <https://cbpmhc.hr-services.org/BPA/> . The website address is available 24 hours per day, 7 days a week during the open period. Based on your responses to the questions, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) will determine if you meet the basic qualifications for the BPA position. If you meet the minimum qualifications, you will be scheduled for the written test.

**Step 2 – Written Test.** Scheduling of the written test is done during the on-line registration

process. As soon as you have registered and been scheduled for the written test, you will be able to print your test admission notice which will contain the date, location, and time for the written test. You will be given a UserID and password after you have successfully registered for the written test. If you need to reprint your test admission notice, print a study guide, or reschedule yourself into another test session, you will need to go to <https://usatetestmanager.gov/>, log in using your UserID and password, click on "Border Patrol Agent" (listed below "Application") and select the appropriate choice (Contact Information or Study Guide or Reschedule My Exam), to obtain this information and print it. Additionally, for those who forgot their UserID/password, they would need to go to <https://usatetestmanager.gov/> and click on "forgot UserID and password".

We believe that proper test preparation is essential for the successful candidate and suggest that you take time to carefully read the study guide. If you want to get started, you may download the guide from our website at: [http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/careers/study\\_guides/guides\\_bp/](http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/careers/study_guides/guides_bp/) .

**Step 3 - Selection Process.** In cooperation with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), some test locations have been identified as a test location where the applicant will receive their Notice of Results (NOR) immediately. **The locations identified will require the applicant to spend approximately 8 hours of their time on the day of the test.** Those locations are: Tucson, Arizona; Ontario, California; Holtville, California; San Diego, California; Denver, Colorado; Orlando, Florida; Atlanta, Georgia; Buffalo, New York; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; San Antonio, Texas; El Paso, Texas; Pharr (Rio Grande Valley), Texas; Chicago, Illinois; Detroit, Michigan; Dallas, Texas; Houston, Texas; Phoenix, Arizona; Bellevue, Washington; San Juan, Puerto Rico.

If you successfully pass the written exam, you will be given a tentative selection packet of forms to complete. Depending on the test location you may also be immediately scheduled for the Oral Board Interview to occur within the following 2 weeks or scheduled for your Oral Board interview to take place in approximately 6 weeks.

**Step 4 - Structured Oral Interview.** The Oral Board is a structured interview given by three Border Patrol Agents. The interview consists of situational questions that do not require technical knowledge. The structured interview assesses a candidate's judgment/decision making, emotional maturity, interpersonal skills, and cooperativeness/sensitivity to the needs of others. These qualities are key to successful performance as a Border Patrol Agent. The oral board is a pass/fail interview. Candidates must receive a "pass" in all areas in order to continue in the hiring process.

**Required Documents:**

You **ARE** required to bring the BPA test admission notice and a government-issued photo ID with you to the written test.

**Contact Information:**

STARS BPA  
Phone: (612)467-7027x1  
Fax: (612)727-2222  
Email: deu.bpa.nhc@dhs.gov

Or write:  
Customs and Border Protection CBP  
Minneapolis Hiring Center  
1 Federal Drive

Fort Snelling, MN 55111  
Fax: (612)727-2222

**What To Expect Next:**

Not applicable.

**EEO Policy Statement**

The United States Government does not discriminate in employment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, political affiliation, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, membership in an employee organization, or other non-merit factor.

**Reasonable Accommodation Policy Statement**

Federal agencies must provide reasonable accommodation to applicants with disabilities where appropriate. Applicants requiring reasonable accommodation for any part of the application and hiring process should contact the hiring agency directly. Determinations on requests for reasonable accommodation will be made on a case-by-case basis.

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Customs and Border Protection CBP  
Minneapolis Hiring Center  
1 Federal Drive  
Fort Snelling, MN 55111  
Fax: (612)727-2222

**Questions?****For questions about this job:**

STARS BPA  
Phone: (612)467-7027x1  
Fax: (612)727-2222  
Email: deu.bpa.nhc@dhs.gov

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