

FAQs

What is the FBI?

The FBI is an intelligence-driven and threat-focused national security organization with both intelligence and law enforcement responsibilities. It is the principal investigative arm of the U.S. Department of Justice and a full member of the U.S. Intelligence Community. The FBI has the authority and responsibility to investigate specific crimes assigned to it and to provide other law enforcement agencies with cooperative services, such as fingerprint identification, laboratory examinations, and training. The FBI also gathers, shares, and analyzes intelligence, both to support its own investigations and those of its partners and to better understand and combat the security threats facing the United States.

What is the mission of the FBI?

The mission of the FBI is to protect the American people and uphold the Constitution of the United States.

What are the primary investigative functions of the FBI?

The FBI's investigative authority is the broadest of all federal law enforcement agencies. The FBI has divided its investigations into several programs, such as domestic and international terrorism, foreign counterintelligence, cyber crime, public corruption, civil rights, organized crime/drugs, white-collar crime, violent crimes and major offenders, and applicant matters. The FBI's investigative philosophy emphasizes close relations and information sharing with other federal, state, local, and international law enforcement and intelligence agencies. A significant number of FBI investigations are conducted in concert with other law enforcement agencies or as part of joint task forces.

What does 'FBI' stand for?

'FBI' stands for Federal Bureau of Investigation. "Federal" refers to the national government of the United States. "Bureau" is another word for department or division of government. "Investigation" is what we do—gathering facts and evidence to solve and prevent crimes.

When was the FBI founded?

On July 26, 1908, Attorney General Charles J. Bonaparte appointed an unnamed force of special agents to be the investigative force of the Department of Justice. The FBI evolved from this small group.

Who is the head of the FBI?

The FBI is led by a Director, who is appointed by the U.S. President and confirmed by the Senate for a term not to exceed 10 years. The current Director is Christopher Wray.

How is the FBI organized?

The FBI is headquartered in Washington, D.C. The offices and divisions at FBI Headquarters provide direction and support to 56 field offices in big cities, more than 350 smaller offices known as resident agencies, several specialized field installations, and more than 60 liaison offices in other countries known as legal attachés.

How many people work for the FBI?

The FBI employs approximately 35,000 people, including special agents and support professionals such as intelligence analysts, language specialists, scientists, and information technology specialists. Learn how you can join us at [FBIJobs.gov](https://www.fbi.gov/jobs).

Is the FBI a type of national police force?

No. The FBI is a national security organization that works closely with many partners around the country and across the globe to address the most serious security threats facing the nation. We are one of many federal agencies with law enforcement responsibilities.

How accurately is the FBI portrayed in books, television shows, and movies?

Any author, television script writer, or producer may consult with the FBI about closed cases or our operations, services, or history. However, there is no requirement that they do so, and the FBI does not edit or approve their work. Some authors, television programs, or motion picture producers offer reasonably accurate presentations of our responsibilities, investigations, and procedures in their story lines, while others present their own interpretations or introduce fictional events, persons, or places for dramatic effect.

Where is the FBI's authority written down?

The FBI has a range of legal authorities that enable it to investigate federal crimes and threats to national security, as well as to gather intelligence and assist other law enforcement agencies.

What does the FBI do with information and evidence gathered during an investigation?

If a possible violation of federal law under the jurisdiction of the FBI has occurred, the Bureau will investigate. The information and evidence gathered in the course of that investigation are then presented to the appropriate U.S. Attorney or Department of Justice official, who will determine whether prosecution or further action is warranted. Depending on the outcome of the investigation, evidence is either returned or retained for court.

What does the FBI do with persons it arrests in the course of an investigation?

A person arrested by the FBI is taken into custody, photographed, and fingerprinted. In addition, an attempt often is made to obtain a voluntary statement from the arrestee. The arrestee remains in FBI custody until the initial court appearance, which must take place without unnecessary delay.

What authority do FBI Special Agents have to make arrests in the United States, its territories, or on foreign soil?

In the U.S. and its territories, FBI special agents may make arrests for any federal offense committed in their presence or when they have reasonable grounds to believe that the person to be arrested has committed, or is committing, a felony violation of U.S. laws. On foreign soil, FBI special agents generally do not have authority to make arrests except in certain cases where, with the consent of the host country, Congress has granted the FBI extraterritorial jurisdiction.

Are FBI Special Agents permitted to install wiretaps at their own discretion?

No. Wiretapping is one of the FBI's most sensitive techniques and is strictly controlled by federal statutes. It is used infrequently and only to combat terrorism and the most serious crimes. Title 18, U.S. Code, Section 2516, contains the protocol requiring all law enforcement officers to establish probable cause that the wiretaps may provide evidence of a felony violation of federal law. After determining if a sufficient showing of probable cause has been made, impartial federal judges approve or disapprove wiretaps. The approving judge then must continue to monitor how the wiretap is being conducted. Wiretapping without meeting these stringent requirements and obtaining the necessary court orders is a serious felony under the law.

What is the FBI's policy on the use of deadly force by its Special Agents?

FBI special agents may use deadly force only when necessary—when the agent has a reasonable belief that the subject of such force poses an imminent danger of death or serious physical injury to the agent or another person. If feasible, a verbal warning to submit to the authority of the special agent is given prior to the use of deadly force.

If a crime is committed that is a violation of local, state, and federal laws, does the FBI "take over" the investigation?

No. State and local law enforcement agencies are not subordinate to the FBI, and the FBI does not supervise or take over their investigations. Instead, the investigative resources of the FBI and state and local agencies are often pooled in a common effort to investigate and solve the cases. In fact, many task forces composed of FBI agents and state and local officers have been formed to locate fugitives and to address serious threats like terrorism and street violence.

If an individual is being sought by local police for committing a crime, what assistance can the FBI render to locate the fugitive?

A "stop" will be placed against the fugitive's fingerprints in the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services Division. Local police will be notified immediately upon the receipt of any additional fingerprints of the fugitive. The fugitive's name and identifying data also will be entered into the National Crime Information Center, a computerized database that is accessible to law enforcement agencies nationwide. Any agency that inquires about this individual will be informed of his or her fugitive status. In addition, the FBI may obtain a federal arrest warrant and attempt to locate an individual who flees prosecution or confinement if there is reason to believe the person has traveled across a state line or left the country.

If a child is missing and possibly kidnapped, but no interstate transportation is known, will the FBI begin an investigation?

Yes. The FBI will initiate a kidnapping investigation involving a missing child "of tender years," even though there is no known interstate aspect. "Tender years" is generally defined as a child 12 years or younger. The FBI will monitor other kidnapping situations when there is no evidence of interstate travel, and it offers assistance from various entities including the FBI Laboratory.

What is the FBI's policy on the use of informants?

The courts have recognized that the government's use of informants is lawful and often essential to the effectiveness of properly authorized law enforcement investigations. However, use of informants to assist in the investigation of criminal activity may involve an element of deception, intrusion into the privacy of individuals, or cooperation with persons whose reliability and motivation may be open to question. Although it is legally permissible for the FBI to use informants in its investigations, special care is taken to carefully evaluate and closely supervise their use so the rights of individuals under investigation are not infringed. The FBI can only use informants consistent with specific guidelines issued by the attorney general that control the use of informants.

Are informants regular employees of the FBI?

No. Informants are individuals who supply information to the FBI on a confidential basis. They are not hired or trained employees of the FBI, although they may receive compensation in some instances for their information and expenses.

If a citizen gives information about a potential crime to the FBI and there is a question on whether a federal violation has occurred, who in the government decides?

The FBI may investigate in order to obtain sufficient facts concerning the allegation. If there is a question as to whether or not a federal violation has occurred, the FBI consults with the U.S. Attorney's office in the district where the alleged offense took place.

Can I obtain detailed information about a current FBI investigation that I see in the news?

No. Such information is protected from public disclosure, in accordance with current law and Department of Justice and FBI policy. This policy preserves the integrity of the investigation and the privacy of individuals involved in the investigation prior to any public charging for violations of the law. It also serves to protect the rights of people not yet charged with a crime.

Does the FBI provide arrest records at the request of private citizens?

Yes. You can obtain a copy of your own "Identification Record"—often referred to as a criminal history record or a "rap sheet"—by submitting a written request to our Criminal Justice Information Services Division. We check various systems for any arrest records, a process that is generally known as a criminal background check. Your request must include proof of identity and payment of an \$18 processing fee by credit card or by money order or cashier's check made payable to the U.S. Treasury. The FBI does not provide copies of arrest records to individuals other than the subject of the record (in other words, you cannot request someone else's records).

Who monitors and oversees the FBI?

The FBI's activities are closely and regularly scrutinized by a variety of entities. Congress—through several oversight committees in the Senate and House—reviews the FBI's budget appropriations, programs, and selected investigations. The results of FBI investigations are often reviewed by the judicial system during court proceedings. Within the U.S. Department of Justice, the FBI is responsible to the attorney general, and it reports its findings to U.S. Attorneys across the country. The FBI's intelligence activities are overseen by the Director of National Intelligence.

What tasks do FBI agents typically perform?

Our agents enforce many different federal laws and perform various roles in the Bureau, so there really is no such thing as a "typical day" for an FBI agent. Agents in our field offices, for example, could be testifying in federal court one day and executing a search warrant and gathering evidence the next. Over the course of a week, they might meet with a source to gather intelligence on illegal activities; make an arrest; and then, back in the office, talk with their squad members and catch up on paperwork. Some agents also work in specialized areas across the FBI such as training, fingerprinting, lab services, and public affairs; many also serve as supervisors or managers. Special agents are always on call to protect their country and may be transferred at any time, based on the needs of the FBI. This is not a nine-to-five career. Although the work is challenging and exciting, special agents still can spend quality time with their families.

What kind of guns do FBI agents use?

Agents carry Bureau-issued or approved handguns and may be issued additional equipment as needed. Those in specialized areas like the Hostage Rescue Teams may also be issued weapons that fit their duties. Agents can carry personal weapons, provided they do not violate the policies regarding firearms. Unless otherwise instructed, agents are always required to be armed.

How old do you have to be to become an agent?

You must be at least 23 years old at the time of your appointment. You must also be younger than 37, unless you qualify for an age waiver available to veterans. See our qualification requirements webpage for more information on what it takes to become a special agent.

What kind of training does an agent go through?

All special agents begin their career at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia, for 20 weeks of intensive training at one of the world's finest law enforcement training facilities. During their time there, trainees live on campus and participate in a variety of training activities. Classroom hours are spent studying a wide variety of academic and investigative subjects, including the fundamentals of law, behavioral science, report writing, forensic science, and basic and advanced investigative, interviewing, and intelligence techniques. Students also learn the intricacies of counterterrorism, counterintelligence, weapons of mass destruction, cyber, and criminal investigations to prepare them for their chosen career paths. The curriculum also includes intensive training in physical fitness, defensive tactics, practical application exercises, and the use of firearms. For more information, see our New Agent Training webpage. Over the course of their career, agents are also updated on the latest developments in the intelligence and law enforcement communities through additional training opportunities.

How many agents have been killed in the line of duty?

A few FBI agents have been designated as service martyrs—agents killed in the line of duty as the result of a direct adversarial force or at the hand of an adversary. In addition, other FBI agents have lost their lives in the performance of their duty, but not necessarily during an adversarial confrontation (such as in the “hot pursuit” of a criminal).

What type of applicants does the FBI investigate?

We conduct background investigations on all those who apply for jobs with the FBI. We also conduct background investigations on those who have been selected for jobs in certain other government entities, such as the White House, the Department of Justice, the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, and some House and Senate congressional committees.

Who can obtain the results of such background investigations?

You can request the results of your own background investigation through the Freedom of Information/Privacy Acts. See our FBI Records webpage to learn how to make such a request. The results of our background investigations may also be given to requesting government agencies that need to determine if a person is suitable for a job or should be given access to secret government materials.

Does the FBI mail hard copies of wanted posters on fugitives to private citizens?

No. The distribution of FBI fugitive material is limited to authorized law enforcement and government agencies and to legitimate media and public entities where a direct law enforcement purpose is served.

Since the FBI does not send hard copies of wanted posters to the public, is there any way I can see photographs and descriptions of current FBI fugitives?

Yes. As part of its investigative publicity program, the FBI posts photographs and other information regarding fugitives, terrorists, kidnapped and missing persons, bank robbers, and others on our Wanted by the FBI website. The FBI's Ten Most Wanted Fugitives, Most Wanted Terrorists, and Cyber's Most Wanted are included.

Should a citizen verify his or her suspicions about criminal activity before contacting the FBI?

No. Never put yourself in harm's way or conduct your own investigation. Please promptly report to us any suspicious activity involving crimes that we investigate.

How does the FBI differ from the Central Intelligence Agency?

The CIA and FBI are both members of the U.S. Intelligence Community. The CIA, however, has no law enforcement function. Rather, it collects and analyzes information that is vital to the formation of U.S. policy, particularly in areas that impact the security of the nation. The CIA collects information only regarding foreign countries and their citizens. Unlike the FBI, it is prohibited from collecting information regarding "U.S. Persons," a term that includes U.S. citizens, resident aliens, legal immigrants, and U.S. corporations, regardless of where they are located.

How does the FBI differ from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF)?

The FBI is a primary law enforcement agency for the U.S. government, charged with enforcement of more than 200 categories of federal laws. The DEA is a single-mission agency charged with enforcing drug laws. The ATF primarily enforces federal firearms statutes and investigates arsons and bombings. The FBI works closely with both agencies on cases where our jurisdictions overlap.

How does the FBI interact with other federal law enforcement agencies?

The FBI has long believed that cooperation is the backbone of effective law enforcement. The Bureau routinely cooperates and works closely with all federal law enforcement agencies on joint investigations and through formal task forces—both national and local—that address broad crime problems and national security threats. In April 2002, the FBI's Office of Law Enforcement Coordination (now the Office of Partner Engagement) was established to build bridges, create new partnerships, and strengthen and support existing relationships between the FBI and other federal agencies, as well as with state, local, tribal, and campus law enforcement; national and international law enforcement associations; and others within the law enforcement community.

Does the FBI exchange fingerprint or arrest information with domestic and foreign police agencies?

Yes. Identification and criminal history information may be disclosed to federal, state, or local law enforcement agencies or any agency directly engaged in criminal justice activity. Such information also may be disclosed to any foreign or international agency consistent with international treaties, conventions, and executive agreements, where such disclosure may assist the recipient in the performance of a law enforcement function.

What is the FBI's policy on sharing information in its files with domestic or foreign investigative agencies or with other government entities?

Through what is known as the National Name Check Program, limited information from the FBI's central records system is provided in response to requests by other entities lawfully authorized to receive it. These entities include other federal agencies in the Executive Branch, congressional committees, the federal judiciary, and some foreign police and intelligence agencies. The FBI's central records system contains information regarding applicant, personnel, administrative actions, and criminal and security/intelligence

matters. Dissemination of FBI information is made strictly in accordance with provisions of the Privacy Act; Title 5, United States Code, Section 552a; FBI policy and procedures regarding discretionary release of information in accordance with the Privacy Act; and other applicable federal orders and directives.

Do FBI agents work with local, state, or other law enforcement officers on “task forces”?

Absolutely, and we consider it central to our success today. Task forces have proven to be a highly effective way for the FBI and federal, state, and local law enforcement to join to address specific crime problems and national security threats. In law enforcement, “concurrent jurisdiction” may exist, where a crime may be a local, state, and federal violation all at the same time. Task forces typically focus on terrorism, organized crime, narcotics, gangs, bank robberies, kidnapping, and motor vehicle theft. See our Partnerships and Outreach webpage for more information. The FBI also works closely with the Director of National Intelligence and other U.S. intelligence agencies to gather and analyze intelligence on terrorism and other security threats.

What training assistance is afforded local law enforcement officers?

The FBI offers several training opportunities. The FBI National Academy, founded in 1935, provides college-level training to mid-level state, local, and international police officers. The FBI National Academy is in the same facility as the FBI Academy, where the Bureau trains its own employees, at Quantico, Virginia. As part of the FBI’s Field Police Training Program, qualified Bureau police instructors provide training assistance at local, county, and state law enforcement training facilities to improve the investigative, managerial, administrative, and technical skills of local officers. This training program strengthens the cooperative effort between the FBI and local agencies in protecting the public.

What is the Critical Incident Response Group?

The FBI’s Critical Incident Response Group (CIRG) provides rapid assistance to incidents in a crisis. Through CIRG, expert assistance is available in cases involving the abduction or mysterious disappearance of children, crisis management, hostage negotiation, criminal investigative analysis, and special weapons and tactics. CIRG also assists in the assessment, selection, and training of FBI undercover employees.

What is the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Budapest?

The ILEA is a multinational effort organized by the U.S., the government of Hungary, and other international training partners. This initiative teaches cutting-edge leadership and investigative techniques to international police managers in the region through an intensive program like the FBI National Academy and provides specialized classes on everything from corruption to cyber crime. This training not only aids the countries but substantially helps the FBI investigate international crime aimed at U.S. citizens and interests. The FBI heads the facility in Budapest, Hungary, and it supplies instructors to the other International Law Enforcement Academies in Bangkok, Thailand; Gaborone, Botswana; and San Salvador, El Salvador.

Does the FBI Laboratory conduct examinations of evidence for anyone other than the FBI?

Yes. In addition to performing examinations for its own cases, the FBI Laboratory conducts scientific examinations of evidence, free of charge, for any federal, state, and/or local law enforcement organization in the United States. These services also may be made available to international law enforcement agencies under special agreement between the attorney general and the secretary of state.

What is the FBI's role in combating terrorism?

The FBI is the nation's lead federal law enforcement agency for investigating and preventing acts of domestic and international terrorism. It is the lead federal agency for investigating attacks involving weapons of mass destruction—those involving chemical, radiological, or biological agents or nuclear weapons. The FBI is also responsible for specific terrorism-related offenses, such as violence at airports, money laundering, attacks on U.S. officials, and others. The FBI also works closely with the Director of National Intelligence and other U.S. intelligence agencies to gather and analyze intelligence on terrorism and other security threats. It is the number one priority of the FBI to protect the U.S. and U.S. persons and interests around the world from terrorist attack.

What is the FBI's responsibility in bombing cases?

The FBI investigates the malicious damaging or destruction, by means of an explosive, of property used in interstate or foreign commerce. These matters include the bombing or attempted bombing of college or university facilities and incidents that appear to have been perpetrated by terrorist or revolutionary groups. The FBI also investigates bombings in the U.S. and overseas where incidents were acts of terrorism against U.S. persons or interests. Bombings are also under the ATF jurisdiction, so there are often collaborative investigations of large-scale incidents. The FBI collects evidence, interviews witnesses, develops leads, and identifies and apprehends the person or persons responsible. The FBI also assists U.S. Attorneys in preparing evidence or exhibits for trial.

Does the FBI share information on terrorists with other domestic and foreign law enforcement agencies?

Yes. Combating terrorism effectively requires the continuous exchange of information and close, daily coordination among U.S. law enforcement, members of the U.S. Intelligence Community, first responders, international law enforcement agencies, and others. To help ensure the two-way flow of information and intelligence, the FBI participates in numerous national and local joint terrorism task forces and interagency initiatives such as the National Counterterrorism Center.

Does the FBI investigate hate groups in the United States?

The FBI investigates domestic hate groups within guidelines established by the attorney general. Investigations are conducted only when a threat or advocacy of force is made; when the group has the apparent ability to carry out the proclaimed act; and when the act would constitute a potential violation of federal law.

Does the FBI "monitor" any potential terrorist groups in the United States?

The FBI is bound by guidelines issued by the attorney general that establish a consistent policy on when an investigation may be initiated. Through these guidelines, the FBI obtains authorization to collect information. The facts are analyzed and then used to prevent terrorist activity and, whenever possible, to aid in the arrest and prosecution of persons or groups who have violated the law.

What action does the FBI take when a foreign group linked to terrorism abroad has members in the United States?

The approach taken by the FBI in counterterrorism investigations is based on the need both to prevent incidents where possible and to react effectively after incidents occur. Our investigations focus on the unlawful activity of the group, not the ideological orientation of its members. When conducting

investigations, the FBI collects information that not only serves as the basis for prosecution, but also builds an intelligence base to help prevent terrorist acts.

What concerns do the FBI and the law enforcement communities have regarding the growing use of encryption products by the public, both domestically and abroad?

Law enforcement is extremely concerned about the serious threat posed using robust encryption products that do not allow for authorized access or the timely decryption of critical evidence, obtained through lawful electronic surveillance and search and seizure. On one hand, encryption is extremely beneficial when used legitimately to protect commercially sensitive information and communications. On the other hand, the potential use of such products by criminals or terrorists raises a tremendous threat to public safety and national security. In view of this, law enforcement supports a balanced encryption policy that meets both commercial and individual needs as well as law enforcement needs.

What is the FBI's foreign counterintelligence responsibility?

As the country's lead counterintelligence agency, the FBI is responsible for detecting and lawfully countering actions of foreign intelligence services and organizations that employ human and technical means to gather information about the U.S. that adversely affects our national interests. Our investigations include foreign and economic espionage, or "spying" activities, that may involve the acquisition of classified, sensitive, or proprietary information from the U.S. government or U.S. companies. The FBI investigates whenever a foreign entity conducts clandestine intelligence activities in the United States. Our counterintelligence investigations also help combat international terrorist threats, including those involving weapons of mass destruction and attacks on critical infrastructures.

What is "economic espionage"?

Economic espionage is foreign power-sponsored or coordinated intelligence activity directed at the U.S. government or U.S. corporations, establishments, or persons, designed to unlawfully or clandestinely influence sensitive economic policy decisions or to unlawfully obtain sensitive financial, trade, or economic policy information; proprietary economic information; or critical technologies. This theft, through open and clandestine methods, can provide foreign entities with vital proprietary economic information at a fraction of the true cost of its research and development, causing significant economic losses.

What spies always operate undercover?

No. Espionage can be committed by almost anyone. A great deal of technology and sensitive information is lost through insiders within U.S. corporations. Espionage subjects often act on their own to fulfill requests of foreign intelligence services.

Has the use of space satellites, listening devices, and other advanced technology reduced the importance of the human foreign spy?

The human factor in espionage always will remain important. The use of technology gives intelligence officers anonymity, so it enhances the efforts of foreign spies but does not replace them entirely.

Has the ending of the Cold War reduced the amount of espionage?

No. Traditional espionage has changed, with new threats coming from non-traditional countries. In some areas, espionage has increased and has become more difficult to assess and predict.

How can citizens help the FBI protect the United States from foreign intelligence operations?

Citizens can raise their own security awareness and report any suspected espionage activity to the FBI. Apparent espionage activities include attempting to view or steal records or plans without authorization; scavenging through trash; eavesdropping on conversations; asking questions without a need to know certain information; keeping unusual hours; or working outside the normal office areas. Security awareness is vital to our national interests.

Does the FBI investigate computer-related crime?

Yes. The FBI is charged with investigating computer-related crimes involving both criminal acts and national security issues. Examples of criminal acts would be using a computer to commit fraud or using the Internet to transmit obscene material. In the national security area, the FBI investigates criminal matters involving the nation's computerized banking and financial systems; the various 911 emergency networks; and telecommunications systems. See our Cyber Crime webpage for more information.

How does the FBI protect the civil rights of people in the United States?

The FBI investigates violations of federal civil rights statutes and supports the investigations of state and local authorities in certain cases. Federal civil rights violations fall into several categories: hate crimes motivated by bias against such characteristics as race, religion, national origin, and sexual orientation; color of law crimes involving law enforcement and related criminal justice professionals' misuse of their right to discretion, such as use of excessive force or police misconduct; involuntary servitude or slavery; violations of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act; the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act; the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act; and violations of human trafficking statutes included as part of the Trafficking Victims Protection Rights Act. The FBI's civil rights investigations are separate from Equal Employment Opportunity Commission investigations, although EEOC regulations are enforced within the agency.

What are the most typical civil rights violations?

The most common complaint involves allegations of color of law violations. Another common complaint involves racial violence, such as physical assaults, homicides, verbal or written threats, or desecration of property.

Does the FBI keep statistics on criminal offences committed in the United States?

Yes. The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, which began in 1929, collects information on serious crimes reported to law enforcement agencies. The categories are murder, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. The program also collects information on hate crimes and on persons arrested for other less serious crime categories. Hate crime offenses cover incidents motivated by race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or disability.

What is white-collar crime, and how is the FBI combating it?

The term "white-collar crime" was reportedly coined in 1939 and has since become synonymous with the full range of frauds committed by business and government professionals. White-collar crime is generally non-violent in nature and includes public corruption, health care fraud, mortgage fraud, securities fraud, and money laundering, to name a few. White-collar scams can destroy a company, devastate families by wiping out their life savings, or cost investors billions of dollars (or even all three). Today's fraud schemes are more

sophisticated than ever, and the FBI is dedicated to using its skills to track down the culprits and stop scams before they start. See our White-Collar Crime webpage for more information.

How is the FBI fighting organized crime, particularly international organized crime?

The FBI uses a variety of laws, asset forfeiture statutes, and sophisticated investigative techniques in its domestic and international cases. The criminal and civil provisions of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) statute are particularly suited to dismantle criminal organizations. Our organized crime investigations frequently use undercover operations, court-authorized electronic surveillance, informants and cooperating witnesses, and consensual monitoring. Many of these are conducted in concert with domestic and international police agencies. The FBI investigations focus on major international, national, and regional groups that control large segments of the illegal activities.

What is the FBI doing about drug trafficking?

The FBI has determined that the most effective means of combating this crime is to use the enterprise theory of investigation, which focuses investigations and prosecutions on entire criminal enterprises rather than on individuals. Through this process, all aspects of the criminal operation can be identified. The theory supports not only the prosecution of the criminal enterprise, but also the seizure of the enterprise's assets and is intended to disrupt or dismantle entire criminal organizations. In our cases, we typically work closely with the Drug Enforcement Administration and through Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Forces around the country.

Does the FBI investigate graft and corruption in local government and in state and local police departments?

Yes. The FBI uses applicable federal laws, including the Hobbs Act, to investigate violations by public officials in federal, state, and local governments. A public official is any person elected, appointed, employed, or otherwise having a duty to maintain honest and faithful public service. Most violations occur when the official solicits, accepts, receives, or agrees to receive something of value in return for influence in the performance of an official act. The categories of public corruption investigated by the FBI include legislative, judicial, regulatory, contractual, and law enforcement.

How do I apply for a job at the FBI?

Please visit our FBI Jobs website to apply for a job and to find answers to frequently asked questions about careers in the FBI. The site includes information on special agents, professional staff positions, internships, and FBI background investigations.

How can screenwriters, authors, and producers seeking authenticity work with the FBI?

If you are a writer, author, or producer who wants to feature the FBI, we may be able to work with you to create an accurate portrayal of the Bureau. Project assistance is considered on a case-by-case basis.

Are waivers available for applicants 37 and older?

Per Public Law 93-350, enacted July 12, 1974, the Attorney General and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) set the date immediately preceding one's 37th birthday as the last date for original entry on duty as a law enforcement officer in the Department of Justice.

Waivers are available for preference-eligible veterans who have been discharged or released from active duty from the Armed Forces under honorable conditions (honorable or general discharge). The Member 4 copy of

the DD-214 and, in the case of service-connected disabilities, a copy of the SF-15 "Application for 10-Point Veterans' Preference," as well as other applicable documentation to confirm Veterans' Preference eligibility, must be submitted at the time of application.

Military retirees at the rank of Major, Lieutenant Commander or higher are not eligible for preference in appointment unless they are disabled veterans. This does not apply to reservists who will not begin drawing military retired pay until age 60.

Current FBI employees are eligible to apply prior to their 39th birthday and must be appointed and assigned to the FBI Academy no later than the month of their 40th birthday.

Age waivers for preference-eligible veterans will be requested only after they successfully complete all phases of the Special Agent Selection System (SASS) and have been favorably adjudicated/cleared for hire.

Preference-eligible applicants must still pass all other components of the SASS, including the FBI Physical Fitness Test (PFT) and fitness-for-duty requirements.

Is there a waiver of the bachelor's degree if an applicant has military service?

No. All Special Agent applicants must have a minimum of a U.S.-accredited bachelor's degree or advanced degree.

Will having uncorrected vision or laser surgery disqualify me from applying for the Special Agent position?

Special Agent applicants need to have at least 20/20 vision in one eye and not worse than 20/40 vision in the other eye. If an individual has a satisfactory history of wearing soft contact lenses for more than one year and can meet correction to 20/20 in one eye and no worse than 20/40 in the other eye, safety concerns are considered mitigated and applicant processing may continue.

If an applicant has had laser eye corrective surgery, a six-month waiting period is required prior to beginning New Agent Training. Applicants must also provide evidence of complete healing by an ophthalmological clinical evaluation.

The policy for color vision allows continuation of applicant processing if those who fail initial color vision screening can successfully complete the Farnsworth D-15 color vision test.

How long does the FBI Special Agent application process take?

The Special Agent application process generally takes at least one year and often longer, depending upon annual federal funding levels and hiring goals.

The Special Agent Selection System (Phase I and Phase II Testing) is based on an applicant's individual competitiveness.

In addition to the Phase I and II testing process, the PFT, background investigation and medical evaluation will affect the length of the application process. Each of these items can take a considerable amount of time to complete if an applicant has lived in several areas, has extensive foreign travel or has held several jobs.

What kind of training do FBI Special Agents receive?

All Special Agents begin the first 21 weeks of their career at the FBI Academy in Quantico, VA, where they participate in intensive training. During their time at the FBI Academy, trainees live on campus, participate in a variety of training activities and study a wide variety of academic subjects. The FBI Academy curriculum also includes intensive training in physical fitness, defensive tactics, practical application exercises and the use of firearms.

Over the course of an Agent's career, the FBI provides additional training opportunities to keep him/her updated on the latest developments in the respective specialty fields.

Do I need to have law enforcement or military background to apply to become an FBI Special Agent? Are certain degrees more desired by the FBI?

A law enforcement or military background is not required. Because of the breadth and scope of the FBI's mission, the FBI seeks candidates with a wide variety of backgrounds, not just law enforcement or military experience. The FBI seeks Special Agents with degrees/expertise in physical sciences, computer science, engineering, architecture, law, accounting and other disciplines that require logical analysis and critical thinking. We are also actively seeking Special Agents who are fluent in critical foreign languages, as well as those with experience in intelligence and counterterrorism work. Study a field you enjoy and, after that, obtain experiences that will demonstrate your ability to master the Special Agent core competencies, specifically:



Do I have to know how to shoot a gun to apply to be an FBI Special Agent?

No, it is not necessary to have prior experience with firearms. All Special Agent trainees receive extensive training in the use and maintenance of firearms and related equipment. In many cases, the best Agent trainees are those with no prior firearms experience (since they do not have any ingrained habits).

Are there different physical fitness requirements for women and men?

Although female applicants/trainees take the same Physical Fitness Test as their male counterparts, the scoring scale for each event is slightly different in order to account for physiological differences.

How are Special Agents assigned to offices and how often are Special Agents rotated in their assignments?

Flexibility is key at the FBI. You must be prepared and willing to be assigned according to the needs of the Bureau. All Agents must sign and adhere to a mobility agreement, which states that as a Special Agent, you accept the possibility of transfer as a condition of your employment. Once assigned to a Field Office however, new Special Agents are generally not transferred unless they request voluntary transfer, apply for management positions or as a result of an emerging or existing critical need.

Upon graduation from the FBI Academy, you will be assigned to one of the FBI's 56 Field Offices or satellite offices. Roughly one-third of new Agents get their first choice.

What is a typical day like for an FBI Special Agent?

There is no such thing as a typical day for a Special Agent. One day you could be executing a search warrant and making an arrest, while the next you could be testifying in court. Your morning could entail catching up on paperwork in the office, while the afternoon could bring a meeting with a high-level source. No two days are ever the same for an FBI Special Agent.

How does the background investigation process work?

Due to the sensitive nature of the FBI's missions, all FBI positions require a Top-Secret Clearance. Before employees can start work with the FBI, they must undergo an intensive background investigation that includes a polygraph test, a drug test, credit and records checks and extensive interviews with former and current colleagues, neighbors, friends, professors, etc., covering the last 10 years or as of their 18th birthday.

How much are FBI Special Agents paid?

All new FBI Special Agents will earn salaries at the GL-10 Special Base Rate for Law Enforcement Officers (LEOs) pay grade. Applicants with no prior government service will earn a salary at the GL-10, Step 1 pay level. Applicants with prior government service (including FBI professional staff) may be eligible to receive higher steps that are commensurate with their highest previous pay, but they will not enter at higher grades. During the Basic Field Training Course (BFTC), New Agent Trainees (NATs) will earn GL-10 salaries, plus locality pay for the Washington, D.C. area, plus availability pay (AVP), which is 25 percent of their basic pay (base plus locality). Upon graduation from BFTC and assignment to their first Field Offices, new SAs will be paid at the GL-10 pay level, plus the locality pay that applies to their first offices of assignment, plus AVP. The OPM website contains current salary tables to allow employees to determine the locality pay rates for various areas of the country. Part-time Special Agents do not receive availability pay.

As an FBI employee, a Special Agent also receives a variety of benefits, including group health and life insurance programs, vacation and sick pay and a full retirement plan.

How will having a family affect my career as an FBI Special Agent?

The FBI has several programs designed to help employees meet both their family and career goals. In addition to our normal annual and sick leave benefits, the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) permits employees to take up to 12 weeks of leave without pay for medical exigencies, including the birth or adoption of a child.

The FBI also offers a part-time program for Special Agents (Agents must have completed the probationary period). This program allows an Agent to work between 16 and 32 hours a week, providing extra flexibility to parents. In most instances, the part-time Agent's revised work assignment will be determined in such a manner that appropriate consideration is given by the Division Head to the Agent's level of investigative experience, specialized assignments, GS grade, other pertinent skills and the needs of the division.

What are the opportunities for promotions and pay increases?

Special Agents enter as GL-10 employees on the Law Enforcement Government Pay Scale and can advance to the GS-13 grade level in a field, non-supervisory role. Special Agents can thereafter qualify for promotion to supervisory, management and executive positions to grades GS-14 and GS-15, as well as to the FBI Senior Executive Service.