

## Participant Profiles

### UNITED STATES

**Foreign Service Structure.** The United State has nine pay ranges in its Foreign Service and four levels in its "senior ranks." Five of the Foreign Service grades are considered professional levels; the four lower grades (6, 7, 8, and 9) comprise secretaries and technicians. Grades 4, 5 and 6 were matched to Job A because all three have the same level of responsibility. Pay differs depending on the academic qualifications and amount of work experience of the individual. Grades 2 and 3 were matched to Job B (Match -) because both grades have the same level of responsibility (but again differ in pay depending on academic degree and work experience). Grade 1 is matched to Job C (Match -). The lowest of the senior ranks (grade OC) was also matched to Job C (Match +), while two additional senior ranks (MC and CM) were matched to Job D.

While Foreign Service salary is linked to the Civil Service, staffing and promotion rules are different. The Foreign Service has an "up or out" approach. Progression to the next level is based on performance appraisals and, for movement to the third, fourth and fifth levels, the existence of an opening at the next level. Most officers spend four years at the Junior Officer level, 5 years as a lower mid-level officer, 7.5 years as a higher mid-level officer, and 8.5 years as a lower senior-level officer. Most officers do not get as far as the Canadian "Job D" equivalent.

Foreign Service Officers are responsible for political/economic affairs, trade, administration, immigration, and aid matters. Officers are recruited into one stream and generally stay there for their entire career. Officers are unionized.

**New Recruits.** There are technically no education, work experience, or language requirements for entry. However, most entrants have a Master's degree and the average age for entry is 32. New recruits attend a training program lasting several months that includes seven weeks of orientation, several months of on-the-job training, and language training. They then have an average of 14 days of training per year. Recruiting is done in mid-career from with the Public Service, where recruits must have at least four years of experience and be at a mid-career grade.

**Assignments.** Foreign postings average three years in length. Foreign Service officers are typically posted to a series of locations and consider an assignment to the home country as another temporary posting. Officers must serve in Washington once every 15 years, for approximately two years. They have some say in where they will be posted, but other factors override personal choice. Foreign Service Officers are not required to go to any hardship posts.

The primary reason for turning down a posting is local conditions (isolation, security, cultural differences, climate, absence of health care facilities). Inadequate schooling for children and the inability of the spouse or partner to work at the posting location are also common reasons. Attrition remains steady, but specific attrition statistics are confidential and are not even provided to the unions.