

So, You Want to Be a . . . Criminal Profiler

Introduction

A criminal profiler is a national agent who works in the Behavioral Analysis Unit (BAU) of the National Center for Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC) in Quantico, Virginia. The FBI does not use the popular term "profiler" but instead refers to this position as a "supervisory special agent." These highly trained agents use their knowledge of criminal psychology and crime-solving experience to lead investigations with other government organizations and law enforcement in cases that affect national security. These agents use evidence and research to investigate and analyze criminal behavior.

The most common responsibilities of an FBI profiler are to:

- Use historical evidence and technical analysis tools to explain and predict serial criminal activity;
- Utilize research and analytical skills to determine patterns in violent behavior from the individuals who conduct crimes;
- Conduct interviews with suspects, witnesses, and other industry professionals;
- Assess human behavior in groups and individuals to identify patterns and indicators;
- Draw conclusions about criminal activities using prior field experience, statistical data, and probabilities;
- Write reports on interviews, research, and analysis to document findings and share insights with others; and
- Work with multiple branches of the FBI and law enforcement and offer insight to help review the evidence and apprehend violent offenders.

Education

A bachelor's degree is required for all aspiring FBI agents. Although one in criminal justice is not required, many agents have a background in this field. However, agents come from all backgrounds, including engineering, accounting, computer science, psychology, and education. Applicants with degrees in these fields are often sought after for their knowledge in areas that aren't typically associated with law enforcement. The BAU prefers a background in psychology.

Other Requirements/Information

The BAU is a small division within the FBI with less than 30 agents. You must become an FBI agent before being assigned to BAU.