

So, You Want to Be a . . . Secret Service Agent

Introduction

Agents of the United States Secret Service are often anything but secret. A notable presence at any public event attended by a U.S. President, the Secret Service has become synonymous with those black-suited agents in sunglasses, carefully scanning the crowd and speaking gravely into their shirt cuffs. But the agents you might see in films and on television represent only a small portion of the task force that makes up the actual Secret Service and protecting government officials comprises only half of this unique agency's rather weighty responsibilities.

Education

- A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with superior academic achievement (S.A.A.) which is based on class standing, grade-point average, or honor society membership. For more information on S.A.A. please [click here](#).
- At least one full year of graduate level education (i.e. 18 semester hours).
- At least one year of specialized experience in, or related to, the investigative methods, protective methods, and law enforcement techniques that provided the specific competencies to successfully perform the position's duties.
- The ability to partner with or lead others in the accomplishment of mission activities.

Of all the criminal justice jobs available through the federal government, the United States Secret Service probably has one of the most rigorous background checks available. Potential agents need to be able to get Top Secret security clearance before they can even be considered for a position, and this six- to nine-month long process includes everything from credit checks to neighborhood references. Once cleared, new agent trainees will still need to complete their training program, subject themselves to polygraph examinations, and successfully pass the Treasury Enforcement Agent (TEA) exam.

Other Requirements/Information

Training programs for Secret Service employees vary based on the positions within the agency. Once they pass extensive background checks, Secret Service agents are required to complete a number of criminal justice training sessions, including the 10-week Criminal Investigator Training Program (CITP) at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center and the 17-week Special Agent Training Course at the Secret Service Training Academy. Throughout their career, Secret Service agents continue to receive advanced training and re-qualification befitting their position, as well as personal development courses such as Ethics, Interpersonal Awareness, and Practical Leadership. Special agents of the United States Secret Service agency must maintain a high level of physical fitness and demonstrate mental acuity at all times, as special agents' duties include both investigation and protective services.

For More Information

[United States Secret Service](#)