

The Building the Next Generation of Federal Employees Act

The federal workforce is at an inflection point. Only 6.9% of federal civilian employees are under the age of 30, compared to 23% in the private sector. Nearly 30% of federal employees over the age of 55, at or nearing retirement age. The federal government must enhance and focus its recruitment and hiring policies to build the future federal workforce.

People of color make up 47% of the professional federal workforce, but only 33% of the senior-level positions, and 23% of the Senior Executive Service (SEC). Women make up 58% of the federal workforce, but only 36% of the SEC. In 2010, federal agencies offered roughly 60,000 paid internships, but this dropped to 4,000 in 2020. Naturally, with fewer internships, there are fewer hires.

The Building the Next Generation of Federal Employees Act (NextGen Feds Act) promotes and leverages federal internships and fellowships to attract, prepare, and recruit diverse early-career federal employees – creating a pathway to public service.

The bill would do the following:

- Establish a comprehensive Federal Internship and Fellowship Center (Center) within the Office of Personnel Management to administer, manage, and promote all federal internship and fellowship programs;
- Empower the Director of OPM to appoint an executive director to oversee the Center;
- Authorize the Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCO) Council to provide strategic guidance to and facilitate interagency cooperation with the Center;
- Require the appointment of internship coordinators to serve as the main point of contact at each sponsoring agency;
- Ensure federal interns are paid for their service;
- Direct OPM to establish an online internship and fellowship platform, creating a one-stop-shop for agencies to post and individuals to find internship, fellowship, and scholarship opportunities from across the federal government;
- Authorize the OPM Director to carry out a pilot program to attract individuals from underrepresented demographic populations to internship opportunities;
- Codify the successful Pathways internship program;
- Provide successful federal interns credit when applying for federal positions through the competitive hiring process; and
- Require agencies to report annually to Congress on a variety of metrics related to the administration of their internship programs.

The federal government must streamline the process and make it easier, fairer, and advantageous for early-career Americans to join public service.

The bill has received endorsements from: The National Federation of Federal Employees, the International Federal of Professional & Technical Engineers, and the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association.