What it Takes to be a Successful Analyst

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WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT STATE GOVERNMENT

In any position in state government, it is important to have a grasp of the scope of authority of state government in general, the responsibilities of each branch of government, and how the executive branch, under which state agencies operate, is organized.

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Our government is made up of different agencies, and each agency has different jurisdictional areas

California State Agencies, Departments, Boards, and Commissions

Constitutional Officers

California State Government Organization Chart (Executive Branch).

In general, every state agency, department, branch, bureau, and commission (to name a few of the most common organization titles) has a set of laws referred to as “enabling authority” which establish the mission and purpose of that organization. In addition, every state organization follows the laws contained in the Government Code for hiring decisions, rules on how to hold meetings, the public records act, and a variety of other operating requirements.

The following video from the California Channel and Legischool Project is a suggested resource that will help explain what government does and how the system works.
Link to access video Checks and Balances: The Three Branches of State Government

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WHAT DO SUCCESSFUL ANALYSTS HAVE IN COMMON

The work of an analyst does not come with a road map. Analysts in California state government perform a variety of duties depending on the department and the program responsibilities. Your job experience and scope of duties determine the level of responsibility and independence expected of you on the job. You may be working in areas where the problems are not well defined or where solutions require new or inventive approaches (and it is your responsibility to define the problem and identify and recommend the solutions).

Analytical work, in addition to the performance of staff work, involves substantial responsibility for:

- problem definition
- developing a unique project plan,
- identifying alternative solutions,
- implementing the desired course of action
- monitoring results.

For example, as a beginning analyst, you may conduct research and identify every approach in existence to address a particular problem. As a more advanced analyst, you might propose new solutions, assess the costs and impacts of implementing that proposal, prepare budget documents to support it, and identify staffing needs.

In sum, good analysts are able to handle, and even thrive in, an environment where change is a constant and ambiguity is a given. Succeeding as an analyst means you continuously learn new subjects and demonstrate your willingness to take on progressively more complicated problems and propose effective solutions. That challenge is what makes analyst jobs attractive, whether you are already a state employee or looking at an analyst position as your first job into state service.

Entry into this series requires that you exercise flexibility and be willing to learn and become familiar with other functions with the organization and control agencies. Most importantly, State Service is a public service conducted with honesty, ethics, and integrity every day.

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HOW TO FIND A CAREER THAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU

If you have wondered if an analyst job is the right fit for you, the Federal Government's Occupational Information Network (O*NET) is a data base that describes hundreds of job occupations and is a wonderful resource to help you map to job occupations that may interest you. When you click onto the self-assessment link,

1. go to the Interest Profiler Instrument (this may take you to a registration page)
2. scroll to the bottom and
3. Click onto the Interest Profile Instrument link.
4. After you are done, taking the assessment the second part is matching your interests to an occupation.
5. You will need to go back to the main page where you found the Interest Profile link,
6. and click onto O*NET Occupations Master List. This manual will give you a list of careers that match your interest.

Here is a link to access the self- assessments. O*NET Resource Center, Interest Profiler

To find out what state civil service job classifications you qualify for with a Bachelor's Degree or particular major, go to Job Classifications Matched to Bachelor Degrees and Majors

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Examples of Analytical Work
• Conducting or coordinating a project to provide a recommendation for management review on a program policy by researching options (For example, reviewing how similar programs operate in other states), and the feasibility in California.
• Providing total (fiscal, organization, staffing, conformance with policy, etc.) program evaluation or audits for a geographic area of the State, a particular statewide program area, and/or grants projects or contracts.
• Proposing and assessing new program models, systems or evaluation tools, or as pilot projects with intent to use on a statewide basis.
• Reviewing new legislation or analyzing proposed law changes and describing the costs and impacts of implementing the legislation on the department
• Researching or developing program analysis methods, management information systems, and planning systems.
• Evaluating a total program area in a major staff services function for a small State department or an organizational or geographical segment of a large State department.

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HOW TO BECOME AN ANALYST

A good place to start is reviewing the online guide on becoming an analyst Become an Analyst for the State of California. In this guide, you will see suggested competencies, an Individual Development Plan (IDP), and a self-assessment. As you go through the guide, discuss any questions or concerns you have about becoming an analyst with your supervisor or mentor. You can either complete this assessment on your own or meet with your supervisor, mentor, or someone you trust.

If you are currently working for the State of California, but not in an analyst position, you may be able to transfer into an analyst position. You may also have to take and pass the Staff Services Analyst (SSA) transfer exam. Each department is responsible for giving their own transfer exam to their employees. Please work with staff in your department's personnel office for help to determine what you need to do to meet the requirements to be eligible for appointment to an analyst position.

If you are not currently working for the State of California, you will need to take an open exam to establish your eligibility for appointment to an analyst class. Open examinations for the classifications of SSA and Associate Governmental Program Analyst (AGPA) are currently available on-line for people who are not currently state employees as well as current state employees. The State Personnel Board website has additional information on The State Hiring Process.

Once you obtain your civil service exam test results (i.e., score), then look at the job vacancy listings for analyst classifications with various departments that interest you. Follow the instructions for applying and apply separately to every state department vacancy in which you are interested, department processes may vary.

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ANALYST CLASSIFICATIONS IN STATE SERVICE

Below are four analyst job classification specifications (known as “class specs”) that are commonly used in State service. While every job in state government has its own job description, the class spec is the more general list of job activities shared by everyone in those jobs. The SSA is an entry-level analyst classification. An entry-level classification is a “learning” level. New employees will not expect to be able to work independently at first, but they can expect to learn the intricacies of their jobs and become independent workers. Associate level classifications are full journey level, employees must work much more independently, and their duties are typically more complex than at the entry level.

In sum, every classification in California civil service has a classification specification that contains the classification concepts, required knowledge, skills, abilities, and minimum requirements for appointment and resides under the State Personnel Board (SPB) Class Specification Search. Read each class specification to see what minimum qualifications you need in order to qualify to take a civil service exam. You must obtain a passing score and be reachable on a list in order to be eligible for Vacant Positions.

Staff Services Analyst (SSA)

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SSA On-line Exam

Associate Government Program Analyst (AGPA)
Associate Budget Analyst (ABA)
Associate Personnel Analyst (APA)

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AGPA On-line exam

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