Federal Bureau of Investigation

# Special Agent Selection Process

## All You Need to Know to Apply

FIDELITY / BRAVERY / INTEGRITY

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# General Information

## Welcome

Interviewing a subject for an ongoing investigation in the morning, testifying in court before lunch, planning an operation with Intelligence Analysts and partners in the afternoon and speaking at a community event in the evening — this is just one day in the life of a Special Agent.

As a Special Agent, every day is different. In fact, every career path is different. It's a position that takes unique skills, perspectives and backgrounds. The two things all Special Agents share are a drive to help keep our nation safe and pride in making a difference in the communities they serve.

FBI Special Agents are responsible for conducting sensitive national security investigations and enforcing more than 300 federal statutes. As an FBI Special Agent, you may work on cases involving terrorism, counterintelligence, cybercrime, organized crime, white-collar crime, public corruption, civil rights violations, financial crime, bribery, bank robbery, extortion, kidnapping, air piracy, interstate criminal activity, fugitive and drug-trafficking matters and other violations of federal statutes.

FBI Special Agents must:

- Adhere to the highest standards of conduct, especially in maintaining honesty and integrity.
- Undergo a rigorous background investigation, credit checks and a polygraph test in order to obtain a Top Secret Clearance.
- Maintain a high level of fitness necessary to complete Academy training and throughout their career.
- Pass a medical exam, which includes but is not limited to, meeting visual and hearing standards.
- Successfully complete approximately 21 weeks of employment as a Special Agent trainee while housed at the FBI Academy in Quantico, VA.
- Upon graduation from the FBI Academy and throughout their career, be available for worldwide assignment on either a temporary or long-term basis. Applicants should ensure that their families are prepared for and support this move.
- Work a minimum of 50 hours a week, which may include irregular hours, and be on call 24/7, including holidays and weekends.
- Carry a firearm and be willing to use deadly force, if necessary.
- Be willing and able to participate in arrests, execution of search warrants and other dangerous assignments.

# Mission. Priorities. Values.

**The mission** of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is to protect the American people and uphold the Constitution of the United States.

**The priorities** of the FBI are to:

1. Protect the United States from terrorist attacks.
2. Protect the United States against foreign intelligence operations and espionage.
3. Protect the United States against cyberattacks and high-technology crimes.
4. Combat public corruption at all levels.
5. Protect civil rights.
6. Combat transnational/national criminal organizations and enterprises.
7. Combat major white-collar crime.
8. Combat significant violent crime.

**The core values** of the FBI are:

» Rigorous obedience to the Constitution of the United States.

» Respect for the dignity of all those we protect.

» Compassion

» Fairness

» Uncompromising personal and institutional integrity.

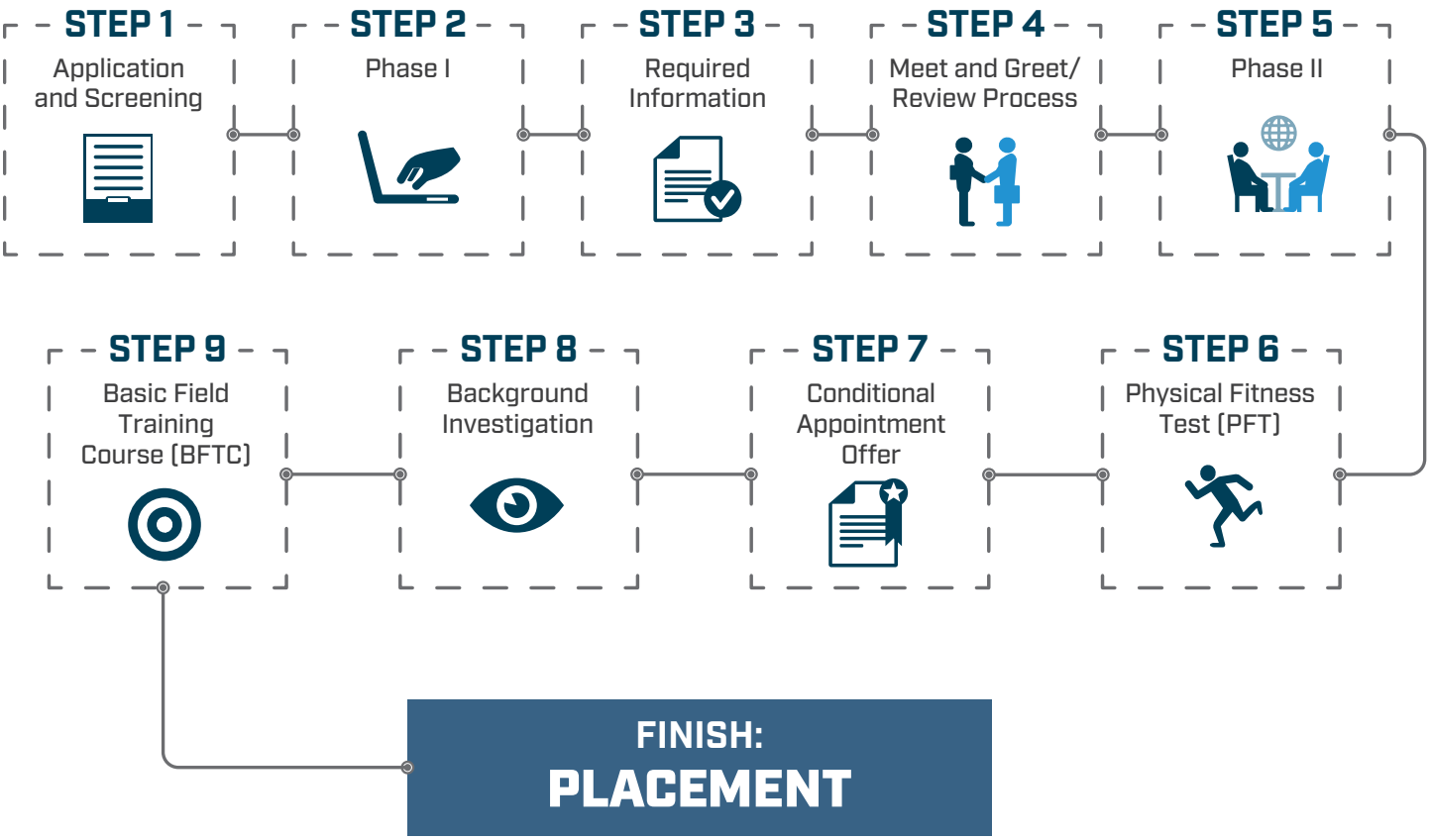
» Accountability by accepting responsibility for our actions and decisions, and the consequences of our actions and decisions.

» Leadership, both personal and professional.

» Diversity

# The Big Picture

The Special Agent Selection System (SASS) is a mentally and physically challenging process designed to identify the most capable applicants. Those who make it through the process become part of an elite team that keeps our country safe. The SASS typically takes one year to complete, often longer. An explanation of the steps in the process to become a Special Agent can be found on the next few pages.



# Special Agent Selection System (SASS)

## Step 1: Application and Screening

You must attach to your application all other necessary forms (your official or unofficial transcripts, a DD-214 for former members of the armed forces or your military enlistment contract for current members of the armed forces). Applications are screened for eligibility and suitability.

Applicants who reside outside the United States should be aware that candidates must be available for travel to the United States for testing. Travel is at the applicant's expense. Candidates may choose whichever Processing Field Office (PFO) is most convenient for them. A list of all 56 Field Offices is on the FBI website at FBI.gov/contact-us/field-offices.

**Timeframe:** The initial screening process varies greatly and is dependent upon the completion of application materials, the overall application volume and the current needs of the FBI as a whole. Following the guidelines in the Special Agent job posting and on FBIJobs.gov will expedite processing.

## Step 2: Phase I Test

Applicants who pass preliminary screening will be invited to take the Phase I computerized test within a proctored environment. The Phase I test is a three-hour exam consisting of five assessments: Logic-Based Reasoning, Figural Reasoning, Personality Assessment, Preferences and Interests and Situational Judgment.

**Timeframe:** Once invited, candidates have 21 days to schedule their Phase I Test and will receive a pass/fail notification within one hour of completing the test.

## Step 3: Required Information

Once you have completed the Special Agent application and received a passing score on Phase 1 Testing, we will send you an email notification to access and complete the Required Information part of your application. This includes the Special Agent Physical Fitness Test (SA PFT) self-evaluation, Critical Skills and Self-Reported Language sections.

**Timeframe:** You must submit the Required Information before you can move forward in the SA Application process.

## Step 4: Meet and Greet Session / Review Process

Next, applicants will be scheduled to attend a Meet and Greet session conducted by their PFO. During the Meet and Greet session, one or more evaluators will conduct an in-person review of your application and validate the information you submitted. Your information will then be evaluated to assess your competitiveness for Phase II.

**Timeframe:** The average timeframe for a candidate to move from Phase I to Phase II is 23 weeks.

## Step 5: Phase II Test

Phase II consists of a writing assessment and a structured interview conducted by a panel of three Special Agents. See Testing Overview Guide for more details.

**Timeframe:** Candidates receive their Phase II results within approximately two weeks of completing the test.

## Step 6: Official Physical Fitness Test (PFT)

Candidates who pass Phase II will be required to pass a Physical Fitness Test (PFT). An official PFT will be conducted at the applicant's local Field Office by trained FBI personnel and scored in the same manner as the PFT self-assessment.

**Timeframe:** Candidates have 14 days after passing Phase II to take their PFT, with exceptions made for inclement weather. Because of this quick turnaround, PFOs often tentatively schedule candidates' PFTs before they take their Phase II.

## Step 7: Conditional Appointment Offer (CAO)

Candidates who pass both Phase II and an official PFT will receive a Conditional Appointment Offer (CAO). Hiring is contingent on the successful completion of the remaining SASS components (medical, background investigation, polygraph test, etc.).

**Timeframe:** Candidates will receive their CAO shortly after passing their PFT and will have five days to accept or reject the offer.

## Step 8: Background Investigation

Candidates who receive a CAO will need to complete a background investigation to get a Top Secret Clearance from the FBI in order to become a Special Agent. The background investigation includes a Personnel Security Interview (PSI), polygraph examination, drug test, fingerprinting and medical examination. It also includes credit and arrest checks, interviews with associates, references and verification of educational achievements.

**Timeframe:** The average background investigation takes approximately six months, but can take up to 18 months or more depending on where an applicant has lived, worked and traveled.

## Step 9: Basic Field Training Course (BFTC)

Candidates who successfully complete the steps as described above must pass a PFT no more than 60 days prior to arriving at the FBI Academy. After passing, candidates are eligible to be scheduled for the Basic Field Training Course (BFTC) at the FBI Academy in Quantico, VA. Assignment to the BFTC is based on the needs of the FBI.

Though New Agent Trainees (NATs) are paid for their time at the FBI Academy, they must successfully complete all portions of the BFTC in order to be fully hired as FBI Special Agents.

**Timeframe:** The BFTC lasts 21 weeks (including orientation) and candidates are typically notified two to four weeks in advance of their class date. Applicants are allowed to request a different BFTC only once, with sufficient cause, after an initial BFTC date is provided.

## Finish: Placement

Upon successful completion of the background investigation and BFTC, candidates officially join the FBI as Special Agents.

**IMPORTANT**

**Applicants must not post information about the application process on social media, message boards, chat rooms, blogs, internet forums or any other public forum. Use discretion when discussing the process with family and friends.**

**Applicants must not solicit help, tips, advice or assistance of ANY kind on social media, message boards, blogs, internet forums or from FBI employees.**

## Physical Requirements

Special Agents are often placed in situations that challenge their physical endurance. Heightened levels of strength, flexibility and endurance are necessary for personal safety in an arrest situation, as well as to help ensure the safety of fellow Agents, other law enforcement officers and civilians. To ensure Special Agents possess the necessary levels of fitness to best complete any duty required of them, the FBI requires that applicants be in excellent physical shape.

Applicants who pass the official Physical Fitness Test (PFT) are considered sufficiently fit to safely and successfully complete the physical training and defensive tactics portion of training at the FBI Academy and are prepared to effectively respond to life-threatening situations on the job.

### Failing the Physical Fitness Test

Applicants are offered three opportunities to pass the official PFT within one year after passing Phase II. If the applicant failed his or her initial post-Phase II PFT, the applicant's remaining PFT opportunities will be scheduled at any time that is mutually agreeable to the applicant, Applicant Coordinator and/or the physical fitness advisor. Applicants who do not pass the PFT within the one-year time limit will be deactivated and are no longer eligible for the Special Agent position. (Read more on page 24.)

All Special Agent applicants must be able to pass several physical tests to be medically cleared to attend the FBI Academy. These include:

- A minimum of one official, field-administered Physical Fitness Test (PFT).
- Vision test.
- Hearing test.
- Medical/health review.

*NOTE: Applicants for the Tactical Recruitment Program (TRP) have additional requirements.* ***(Read TRP section on page 23.)***

### Vision Requirements

- Applicants' distant visual acuity, corrected or uncorrected, must meet FBI standards, which are 20/20 in one eye and no worse than 20/40 in the other eye.
- Applicants with distant visual acuity greater than or equal to 20/100 require medical documentation of successful soft contact lens use for at least one year without significant problems or adverse effects.
- Applicants with recent refractive surgery involving the creation of a corneal flap must wait six months following surgery and complete an ophthalmology evaluation to document complete healing prior to applying for employment.
- Color-vision deficient applicants may be considered if they successfully complete a Farnsworth D-15 color vision test administered at the Field Office. Please note that the use of color-corrective lenses is not allowed.

### Hearing Requirements

Hearing has long been considered a critical and essential job function for the Special Agent position. Special Agents must be able to detect, localize and locate the source of sounds that may indicate danger or risk while entering locations tactically, while pursuing, confronting and arresting subjects and while transporting subjects to custody. Additionally, Agents must be able to hear and understand the speech of subjects and witnesses during interviews and interrogations, which are sometimes conducted in noisy, hectic situations, as well as communicate with team members during raids, arrests and searches when accurate communication without repetition is necessary. Applicants who have an average hearing loss greater than 25 decibels (ANSI standards) at 1,000, 2,000 and 3,000 Hertz should have no single value at 35 decibels. Additionally, no single reading may exceed 35 decibels at 500 Hertz or 45 decibels at 4,000 Hertz.

Candidates who fail the initial pure-tone audiometry screening will be asked to complete additional audiometry testing (at their own expense and conducted by an audiologist of their choosing) to more accurately assess the candidate's hearing ability. For those who fail testing with their audiologist, following the above standards, the FBI Hearing in Noise Test (HINT) will be offered. Only the FBI HINT will be accepted. This test was developed to evaluate one's ability to functionally hear human communication in a noisy environment and is specifically designed to assess the hearing requirements for law enforcement duties.

The HINT uses short sentences instead of pure tones to establish a functional level of hearing using both ears. Passing criteria include the Speech Reception Threshold (SRT) in quiet (27.0 decibels) and Composite SRT in noise (71 decibels) measured in noise at 75 decibels. For those candidates who wear hearing aids, open field testing is available.

## Reasonable Accommodations

The FBI provides reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities. If you believe you have a disability that will require special arrangements during the hiring process, you may request a reasonable accommodation at any time by notifying your Applicant Coordinator.

Every test in the hiring process is evaluated differently. Therefore, you must submit a reasonable accommodation request for each test, if needed. Reasonable accommodations are granted on a case-by-case basis. Your request will receive an individualized assessment; requests will be processed in the order they were received.

According to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, applicants may demonstrate proficiency on essential job tasks with or without reasonable accommodations. To ensure that the PFT is consistent with this legislation, a section is included on the FD-876 "Special Agent Applicant Liability Waiver" form (FBIJobs.gov/files/fd-876-liability-waiverpdf) that asks applicants to indicate whether or not they require reasonable accommodations to complete the PFT.

# FBI Employment Requirements

## Employment Disqualifiers

The mission of the FBI is vital to the safety and security of our nation and its citizens. Often, our work is very sensitive in nature. Therefore, all FBI positions require at least a Top Secret Clearance. How do you obtain such a clearance? Once you have received and accepted a conditional offer of employment, the FBI will initiate an intensive background investigation that you must pass before you can join the FBI.

There are also certain employment requirements that all candidates must meet in order to be eligible for consideration for employment with the FBI. Before applying for any FBI position, check to ensure the FBI Special Agent Employment Disqualifiers do not apply to you.

The FBI Special Agent Employment Disqualifiers are:

- Non-U.S. citizenship.
- Conviction of a felony, sex crime and/or a domestic violence misdemeanor.
- Having knowingly or willfully engaged in acts designed to overthrow the U.S. government.
- Failure to pay court-ordered child support or alimony payments.
- Currently having a federally funded student loan in default.
- Failure to file income tax returns.
- Once holding a security clearance that was revoked.
- Previously failed the FBI polygraph examination or was disqualified for employment with the FBI during a background investigation.
- Being found in violation of the FBI Employment Drug Policy.

**IMPORTANT**
**You are not eligible for employment as a Special Agent with the FBI if you meet any of the disqualifiers listed above.**

## Employment Drug Policy

The FBI is firmly committed to a drug-free society and workplace. Applicants for employment with the FBI who are currently using illegal drugs, misusing or abusing legal drugs or other substances at the time of the application process will be found unsuitable for employment.

While the FBI does not condone any prior unlawful drug use by applicants, the FBI realizes some otherwise qualified applicants may have used illegal drugs at some point in their past. For a complete list of disqualifying criteria, please see: FBIJobs.gov/working-at-FBI/eligibility.

A candidate will be found unsuitable for employment and automatically disqualified if he/she deliberately misrepresents his or her drug history in connection with his or her application for employment.

## Background Investigation Process

After you receive a conditional FBI offer of employment, you must complete the necessary documentation to launch your background investigation. Once your background investigation is cleared, you will receive your Top Secret Clearance. You must be approved for a Top Secret Clearance before beginning employment with the FBI.

The investigation includes:

- A polygraph examination.
- Urinalysis test.
- Fingerprints
- Credit and records checks.
- Extensive interviews with former and current colleagues, neighbors, friends, etc.

You will be contacted by the FBI Field Office processing your background investigation to schedule your interview, urinalysis and polygraph examination.

The polygraph is used as an investigative tool to verify the truthfulness of your responses on the FBI background investigation forms. In the next phase of the process, the FBI will perform extensive records checks (credit checks, police records checks, etc.) and FBI investigators will interview past and present associates.

The background investigation process is very thorough; it can take several months or more to receive your Top Secret Clearance.

# Things to Consider

## Scheduling

If you are currently employed, please be aware that you may be scheduled for testing during your regular working hours (midday/midweek) and sometimes within a short timeframe.

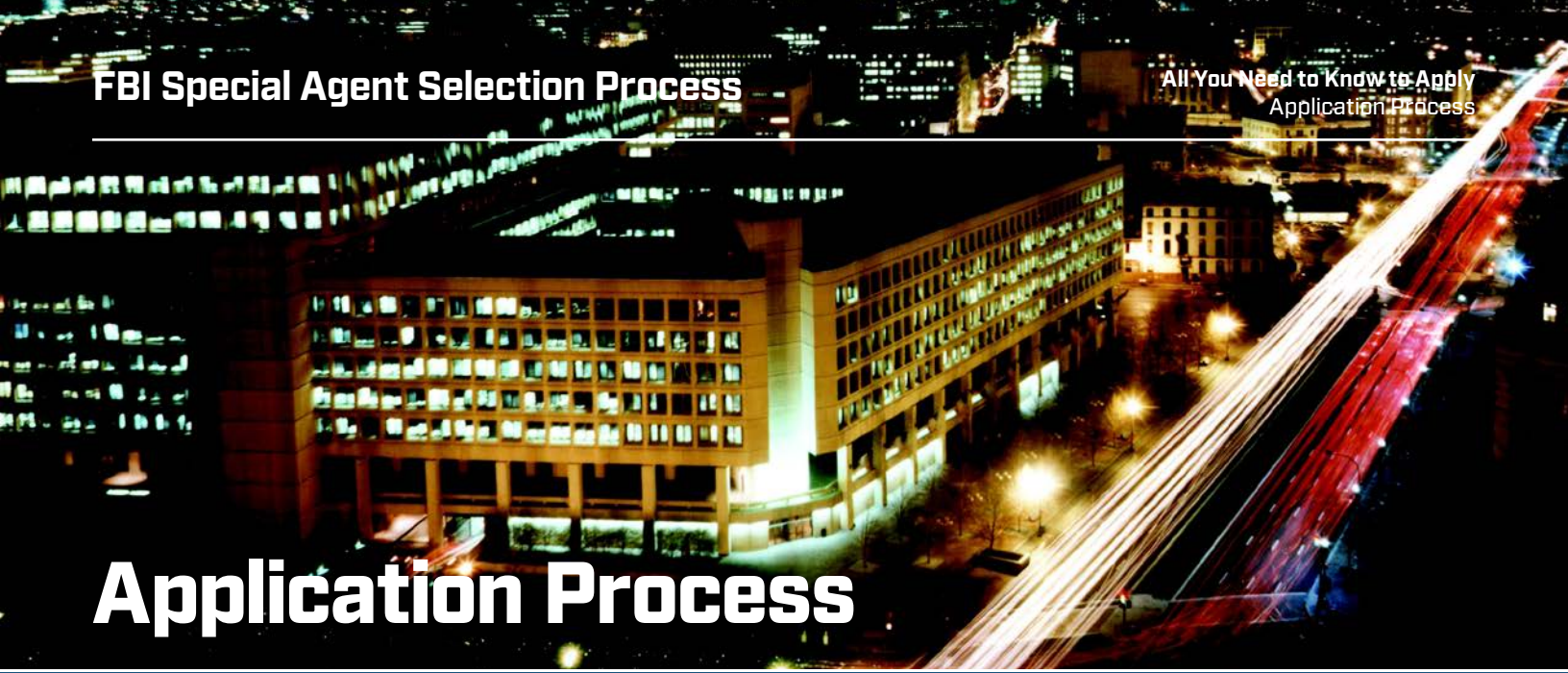
If you are on active duty with the military, you must be within one year of completing your service before applying.

You may receive no more than a two-week notice to report to the Basic Field Training Course (BFTC) and must successfully complete approximately 21 weeks of employment as a Special Agent trainee, while housed at the FBI Academy in Quantico, VA.

## Assignment Locations

Flexibility is key at the FBI. You must be prepared and willing to be assigned according to the needs of the Bureau. All Agents must sign and adhere to a mobility agreement, which states that as a Special Agent, you accept the possibility of transfer as a condition of your employment. Once assigned to a Field Office, new Special Agents are generally not transferred unless they request voluntary transfer, apply for management positions or as a result of an emerging or existing critical need.

Upon graduation from the FBI Academy, you will be assigned to one of the FBI's 56 Field Offices or satellite offices. Roughly one-third of new Agents get their first choice. If you still aren't sure about the transfer process, keep in mind that the mission comes first. Over the past three years, on average, new Agents leaving Quantico have been assigned to one of their top five-ranked offices. Furthermore, the FBI's greatest need is in offices like New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Juan. If that's where you want to be, we'll guarantee that's where you'll end up.



# Application Process

## Application and Required Documents

**DO:**

1. Fill out the Education, Work Experience and Profile Information sections on the application. Include ALL prior work experience.
2. Attach your resume and official or unofficial college transcript(s) in the Attachments section.
   - Current or former federal employees should also attach your SF-50.
3. Military veterans applying for veterans' preference should attach your DD-214 (Member 4 or Service 2 copy), Statement of Service (required if not yet separated from the military), VA Letter dated within one year and/or SF-15 (optional).

Note: When scanning and uploading document(s), make sure that all pages are readable and facing upright in the same direction.

If you are missing any of the items listed above, please attach them to your profile as they become available and notify your Applicant Coordinator upon completion. Your application will not be processed until you have provided all of the required documentation.

**DON'T:**

1. Attach a cover letter in the Attachments section. Instead, fill out the Education, Work Experience and Profile Information sections on the application.
2. Upload any picture files (JPEG, TIFF, PNG, BMP). All uploaded documents to your application should be in PDF format.

# Minimum Qualifications

The following minimum qualifications are required at the time of application:

- Be a U.S. Citizen.
- Be between 23 and 36 years of age.
- Have a bachelor's degree from a U.S.-accredited college or university.
- Have at least two years of full-time professional work experience.
- Have a valid driver's license and six months of driving experience.
- Meet the physical requirements.
- Be able to obtain a Top Secret Clearance.

## Technical Explanations And Exceptions

### Age Requirement

FBI Special Agents have a mandatory retirement age of 57. In order to achieve the required 20 years of service for retirement, Special Agents must enter on duty no later than the day before their 37th birthday. Applicants must apply for the Special Agent position prior to their 36th birthday to allow adequate time to complete the Special Agent Selection System. *The FBI may disqualify applicants at any time during the process if it is determined that they will reach age 37 before appointment.*

Potential Exceptions: Applicants with certain prior federal law enforcement service, applicants who are current FBI employees or preference-eligible veterans may qualify for an age waiver.

- **Non-Preference Eligible Candidates** — Applicants with prior/current service as a federal law enforcement officer (LEO) and other federal positions (must be supported by an SF-50) do not require an age waiver as long as they will have amassed 20 years of service by age 57.
- **Current FBI Employees** — Special Agent candidates who are current FBI employees must submit an application prior to their 39th birthday and be appointed to the FBI Academy no later than one day preceding their 40th birthday. They must successfully complete and pass all phases of the SASS and pass the background investigation to be considered for an age waiver.
- **Preference-Eligible Candidates** — Applicants who are members of the Armed Forces (rank 0-3 or below) and are over the age of 36 at the time of application may apply no sooner than one year prior to their separation from the military. During initial processing, the applicant will be required to submit a Statement of Service from his/her Armed Service branch, with an expected discharge/release date and Character of Discharge (honorable or general). Preference-eligible applicants must successfully complete all phases of the Special Agent Selection System (SASS), pass the background investigation and submit a qualifying DD-214 before requesting an age waiver. Without a qualifying DD-214, an age waiver will not be considered.

Please Note: Veterans who retired at the rank of Major, Lieutenant Commander or higher (0-4 or higher), are not eligible for preference in appointment unless they are disabled veterans. Applicants in this category must submit a DD-214 at the time of application, along with the SF-15 and after appropriate/current Veterans Affairs disability rating letter. This does not apply to Reservists who will not begin drawing military retirement pay until age 60. For more information visit: fedshirevets.gov/job/vetpref/index.aspx.

## Education Requirement

For ANY degree from an overseas institution, applicants must provide a foreign equivalency certification at the time of application. No processing will take place without that documentation.

Potential exceptions: If a bachelor's degree is not from a U.S.-accredited college, but your advanced degree is from a U.S.-accredited college, the FBI will accept the accreditation of your advanced degree and no other documentation is required.

## Work Experience Requirement

For Special Agents, professional work experience is defined as employment in:

- Any occupation that requires a college degree and may include specialized training.
- Any position that includes managerial, supervisory or leadership responsibilities.
- Professional athletics such as a full-time career participating in Major League sports (NFL, NBA, MLB, NHL, etc.) or International Competitions (Olympics).

Summer jobs, internships, seasonal positions, temporary employment and/or volunteer work are generally not considered in the professional work experience category.

In addition to the definition above, the FBI determines if an applicant meets the professional work experience requirement based on the general requirements needed to perform Special Agent duties.

Potential Exceptions:

- Applicants with a master's and/or advanced degree(s) require one year of full-time work experience at the time of application.
- For eligible veterans, part-time work, internships (paid or unpaid) and Reserve/Guard duty count toward total work experience. Volunteer work may be considered.
- For all applicants, volunteer work (such as Peace Corps) that requires full-time participation, paid full-time graduate work programs and full-time fellowships may be considered as professional work experience. All exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis.

# Core Competencies Evaluation

The FBI uses a category rating system and does not evaluate applicants against other applicants. You will be independently evaluated on the competencies listed below. Please ensure that these competencies are evident in your application and provide details on how each competency was demonstrated.

» **Collaboration** — How did you Resolve and Manage Conflict, Demonstrate Political Savvy, Work with Others and/or Liaise with an employee, coworker, team or organization?

» **Communication** — How did you Persuade, Listen and Interpret and/or Share Information with an employee, coworker, team or organization?

» **Flexibility/Adaptability** — How did you Adapt and Manage Change by yourself, with an employee, coworker, team or organization?

» **Initiative** — How were you Proactive, how did you Develop Yourself and/or how did you Serve the Public by yourself, with an employee, coworker, team or organization?

» **Interpersonal Ability** — How did you Establish Rapport with others, Show Sensitivity to Differences, Resolve and Manage Conflict and/or Work with Others to achieve common goals?

» **Leadership** — How did you Mentor, Direct, Inspire and/or Set Strategic Direction for an employee, coworker, team or organization?

» **Organizing and Planning** — How did you Plan, Prioritize and Follow Through by yourself, with an employee, coworker, team or organization?

» **Problem Solving and Judgment** — How did you Identify Problems and Opportunities, Make Decisions, Manage Risks and/or Evaluate and Analyze Problems/Situations by yourself, with an employee, coworker, team or organization?

# Physical Fitness Test (PFT)

## Overview

### Preparing for Your Self-Administered and Official PFT

The FBI Special Agent position requires a commitment to physical fitness as part of daily life. Applicants will take a self-administered PFT (after passing Phase I testing) and take an official standard PFT at least two times during the application period and/or at the FBI Academy. Specifically:

» At your Processing FBI Field Office shortly after passing Phase II.

» No more than 60 days prior to reporting to the Basic Field Training Course (BFTC) at the FBI Academy.

*If an applicant is scheduled to report to a BFTC within 60 days of passing his or her post-Phase II PFT, an additional PFT is not required.*

» At least once while at the FBI Academy during the first week of the BFTC.

*The test, scoring scale and protocol are exactly the same.*

The standard PFT consists of four main events, with a fifth event for candidates in the Tactical Recruitment Program (TRP). These events were chosen because they accurately measure an individual's overall fitness level relative to the essential tasks performed by FBI Special Agents. The events are administered in the following order with no more than five minutes of rest in between each event:

1. Maximum number of continuous situps in one minute.
2. Timed 300-meter sprint.
3. Maximum number of continuous pushups (untimed).
4. Timed 1.5-mile run.
5. Maximum number of pullups (untimed).*

**Note: Only candidates in the TRP will complete this event.*

Each event must be performed precisely according to the strictly defined protocol in order to be scored. In order to pass the standard PFT, applicants must achieve a minimum cumulative score of 12 points in the first four events, with at least one point in each of the first four events; therefore, it is possible for an applicant to receive a score of 12 (or more) and still fail the standard PFT by failing one of the individual events. TRP applicants must achieve a minimum score of 20 points and must score at least one point in each of the five events to pass the TRP PFT.

# Protocol and Scoring Guide

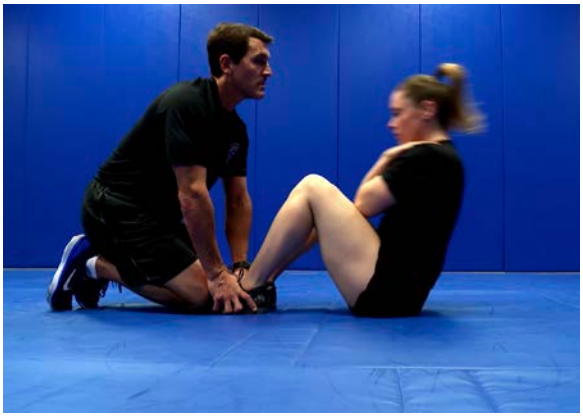
## Situps

The candidate lies on back with tops of shoulder blades touching the floor; arms crossed over chest with fingers in contact with the top of the shoulder (trapezius muscle or seam on some T-shirts). Knees are bent at a 90-degree angle with the feet placed flat on the floor (feet are held in place by a partner with the partner's hands at the tongue of the trainee's shoes and knees on the trainee's toes).

Candidate raises upper body until the elbows touch mid-thigh, then returns to the starting position (the tops of the shoulder blades must touch the floor) to complete the repetition. Hips must remain in contact with the ground throughout the repetition. This is a timed one-minute continuous motion exercise; if a candidate pauses before the minute is up, he or she forfeits the rest of the minute.

**Scoring Scale for One-Minute Situps**

| Score | Female Range | Male Range |
|---|---|---|
| -2 | 29 and below | 31 and below |
| 0 | 30-34 | 32-37 |
| 1 | 35-36 | 38 |
| 2 | 37-40 | 39-42 |
| 3 | 41-42 | 43-44 |
| 4 | 43-46 | 45-47 |
| 5 | 47-48 | 48-49 |
| 6 | 49-50 | 50-51 |
| 7 | 51-52 | 52-53 |
| 8 | 53-54 | 54-55 |
| 9 | 55-56 | 56-57 |
| 10 | 57 and over | 58 and over |



## 300-Meter Sprint

The 300-meter sprint event usually takes place on a quarter-mile oval track (although this may change based on individual circumstances). The candidate will start from a standing position and run 300 meters (3/4 of one lap).

**Scoring Scale for Timed 300-Meter Sprint (in seconds)**

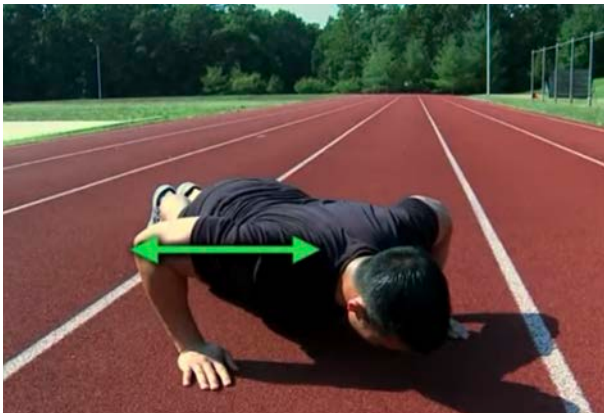
| Score | Female Range | Male Range |
|---|---|---|
| -2 | 67.5 and over | 55.1 and over |
| 0 | 67.4–65.0 | 55.0–52.5 |
| 1 | 64.9–62.5 | 52.4–51.1 |
| 2 | 62.4–60.0 | 51.0–49.5 |
| 3 | 59.9–57.5 | 49.4–48.0 |
| 4 | 57.4–56.0 | 47.9–46.1 |
| 5 | 55.9–54.0 | 46.0–45.0 |
| 6 | 53.9–53.0 | 44.9–44.0 |
| 7 | 52.9–52.0 | 43.9–43.0 |
| 8 | 51.9–51.0 | 42.9–42.0 |
| 9 | 50.9–50.0 | 41.9–41.0 |
| 10 | 49.9 and below | 40.9 and below |

## Pushups

The candidate begins in the front leaning rest position (hands on the floor one to two hand-widths beyond the shoulders and elbows must be away from the body, with arms fully extended, body held straight with the feet no more than three inches apart and the toes touching the floor). As the arms are flexed, the body is lowered toward the floor until the upper arms are parallel to the floor (straight line from center axis of elbow to center axis of shoulder). The candidate completes the exercise after returning to the starting position. This is a continuous-motion exercise.

**Scoring Scale for Pushups (untimed)**

| Score | Female Range | Male Range |
|---|---|---|
| -2 | 4 and below | 19 and below |
| 0 | 5–13 | 20–29 |
| 1 | 14–18 | 30–32 |
| 2 | 19–21 | 33–39 |
| 3 | 22–26 | 40–43 |
| 4 | 27–29 | 44–49 |
| 5 | 30–32 | 50–53 |
| 6 | 33–35 | 54–56 |
| 7 | 36–38 | 57–60 |
| 8 | 39–41 | 61–64 |
| 9 | 42–44 | 65–70 |
| 10 | 45 and over | 71 |



## 1.5-Mile Run

The 1.5-mile run event usually takes place on a quarter-mile oval track (although this may change based on individual circumstances). The candidate will start from a standing position and run six laps around the track.

**Scoring Scale for Timed 1.5-Mile Run (in minutes:seconds)**

| Score | Female Range | Male Range |
|---|---|---|
| -2 | 15:00 and over | 13:30 and over |
| 0 | 14:59–14:00 | 13:29–12:25 |
| 1 | 13:59–13:35 | 12:24–12:15 |
| 2 | 13:34–13:00 | 12:14–11:35 |
| 3 | 12:59–12:30 | 11:34–11:10 |
| 4 | 12:29–11:57 | 11:09–10:35 |
| 5 | 11:56–11:35 | 10:34–10:15 |
| 6 | 11:34–11:15 | 10:14–9:55 |
| 7 | 11:14–11:06 | 9:54–9:35 |
| 8 | 11:05–10:45 | 9:34–9:20 |
| 9 | 10:44–10:35 | 9:19–9:00 |
| 10 | 10:34 and below | 8:59 and below |

## Pullups*

The candidate hangs from a horizontal bar, hands at least shoulder width apart (but no more than 23 inches apart as measured from the outsides of the hands) with palms turned away from the face and arms fully extended. The candidate flexes his or her arms and pulls the body upward until the chin is higher than the bar. There can be no swinging or jerking of the body or use of the legs in an effort to propel the body upward. The candidate then lowers the body back to the hanging position with arms fully extended. This is a continuous-motion exercise.

**Scoring Scale for Pullups (untimed)**

| Score | Female Range | Male Range |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | 0 | 0–1 |
| 1 | 1 | 2–3 |
| 2 | 2 | 4–5 |
| 3 | 3 | 6–7 |
| 4 | 4 | 8–9 |
| 5 | 5 | 10–11 |
| 6 | 6 | 12–13 |
| 7 | 7 | 14–15 |
| 8 | 8 | 16–17 |
| 9 | 9 | 18–19 |
| 10 | 10 and over | 20 and over |

**Note: Only candidates in the Tactical Recruitment Program (TRP) will complete this event.*

# Tactical Recruitment Program

Special Agent applicants with tactical experience interested in pursuing a position with the Hostage Rescue Team (HRT) are considered tactical applicants through the Tactical Recruitment Program (TRP) and should be fully prepared to pass the TRP Physical Fitness Test (PFT).

To qualify for the TRP, applicants must:

- Have at least three years of law enforcement or military experience.
- Pass an interview with Critical Incident Response Group (CIRG) personnel.
- Pass the TRP PFT.

The TRP PFT consists of five mandatory events that are administered in the following order, with no more than five minutes of rest between each event:

1. Maximum number of continuous situps in one minute.
2. Timed 300-meter sprint.
3. Maximum number of continuous pushups (untimed).
4. Timed 1.5-mile run.
5. Maximum number of pullups (untimed).

TRP applicants must achieve a minimum score of 20 points and must score at least one point in each of the five events to pass the TRP PFT. In addition, the scores on individual events achieved by TRP applicants must meet the minimum requirements of the four-event standard PFT. TRP applicants who fail the TRP PFT will not be processed under the TRP. However, TRP applicants who fail the TRP PFT but pass the standard PFT will continue processing under the SASS.

Applicants are reminded that minimum performance is just that — the minimum. Competitive performance at the HRT selection course will require physical fitness well in excess of these minimums.

# Failure and Retest Policies

Throughout the application process, applicants will only be offered three cumulative opportunities to pass the PFT. Upon the third failure, the candidate's application will be terminated and he or she will no longer be eligible for the Special Agent position. Use these three opportunities wisely. Applicants should not test unless they know they are feeling well, in the best possible shape and capable of surpassing minimum standards.

Within 14 days of passing Phase II, a candidate must take a PFT administered by a trained FBI Personal Fitness Advisor (PFA). Often, dates are tentatively assigned prior to Phase II in the event that the candidate passes the test.

Applicants who fail the PFT the first time will have one year from the date they passed Phase II to pass the PFT before being discontinued from the SASS. There is no mandatory waiting time between post-Phase II PFT attempts, but applicants must work with their PFA to schedule retests according to the PFA's schedule and facility availability.

Applicants who fail the pre-Quantico PFT, but who have not yet accumulated a total of three PFT failures, must wait until the next scheduled BFTC before being allowed to retest. All failed pre-Quantico PFTs count toward an applicant's cumulative failures.

# Medical Exceptions

Given the rigorous and demanding requirements associated with training for and taking the PFT, the FBI will excuse an applicant from his or her PFT with sufficient medical documentation.

Illness or injury that occurs **before** the PFT, which prohibits the applicant from showing up for the test, must be supported by medical documentation 72 hours before the scheduled PFT date/time.

> *Example: A candidate fractures her ankle two weeks before a scheduled PFT. The candidate must provide her Field Office with medical documentation clearly stating that she cannot physically complete the PFT. This document must be received within 72 hours prior to the PFT. The candidate will be deactivated if acceptable medical documentation is not provided.*

If an applicant is injured or falls sick less than 72 hours before the scheduled PFT, the applicant must advise his or her PFA as soon as possible and must provide supporting medical documentation within 72 hours.

Illness/injury that occurs **during** the PFT, which prevents the candidate from completing the test, must be supported by medical documentation obtained within 72 hours after the PFT. If the candidate sustains injuries or falls ill during the course of testing, he or she must must stop taking the PFT immediately and seek medical attention. If the candidate continues to take the PFT and fails, no medical excuse will allow that failure to be rescinded.

> *Example: A candidate hurts his wrist during the pushup event and informs the PFT administrator that he cannot continue. The candidate is required to seek medical attention within 72 hours and provide supporting documentation. If the candidate does not submit acceptable documentation to the Field Office, the PFT will be recorded as a failure.*

If an applicant arrives at the PFT and is sick, the PFT will not be administered. The candidate will then have to provide documentation proving that he or she sought medical attention within 72 hours for that specific injury or illness. If acceptable documentation is not provided, the PFT will be recorded as a failure.

If a candidate completes the PFT, the score will stand whether or not the applicant obtains a passing score. No applicant will be granted a retest if he or she completes a PFT with a failing score and then claims that an injury or illness prevented him or her from passing the test.

# Training and Preparation

| TRAINING PRINCIPLES | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **OVERLOAD** | **PROGRESSION** | **SPECIFICITY** | **REVERSIBILITY** |
| To increase physical fitness, one must exercise at a level that challenges the body beyond its current capacity. Overload is often expressed in terms of training frequency (how often), training intensity (how demanding) and training duration (how long). | For continued fitness improvements, the overload must be gradually increased. | To best prepare for the Physical Fitness Test, applicants should devote most of their training time to sprints and sustained runs, as well as situps, pushups and pullups* performed to protocol. Applicants should also avoid training for each event in isolation. | If physical training ceases, fitness levels will return to pre-training levels.<br><br>Use it or lose it. |

**Note: Only candidates in the Tactical Recruitment Program (TRP) will complete this event.*

## Warm Up and Cool Down

Each workout should begin with a dynamic warm-up period of at least five to 10 minutes. This will increase core body temperature, lubricate the joints and prime the nervous system for the workout that follows. The warmup should include moderate-intensity aerobic activities (cycling, jogging) and limited amounts of the specific movements to be trained that day (pushups, situps). You should already be sweating before the workout begins! Once the workout is completed, perform five to 10 minutes of moderate physical activity as a cool down and transition back to rest.

## Reasonable Accommodations

Applicants requesting a reasonable accommodation during the PFT must submit written medical documentation to their Applicant Coordinator from a certified medical provider describing the medical disability and the need for reasonable accommodation during the PFT. The applicant or the health care professional should propose the specific accommodation needed by the applicant to take the PFT. All reasonable accommodation requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

**IMPORTANT**
**While a sample training program is provided for reference purposes, the FBI strongly recommends consulting with a physician to create a personalized fitness plan.**

## Sample Training Program

The FBI recommends that all applicants follow a disciplined workout program in preparation for the PFT. To assist you with this, we have provided a sample Physical Training Planner.

The Physical Training Planner includes four different types of workout programs in addition to the warmup/cool down:

- Muscular Strength and Endurance
- Aerobic Power
- Anaerobic Power
- Circuit Training

### Muscular Strength and Endurance

This type of workout will increase a muscle group's ability to exert force and resist fatigue. Since strength and endurance are specific to certain muscle groups, we strongly recommend that you perform pushups, situps and pullups according to the criteria used to score the FBI Physical Fitness Test (PFT), as your primary strength and endurance exercises.

### Aerobic Power

This type of workout will increase the capacity of the cardiovascular, respiratory and musculoskeletal systems to deliver and utilize oxygen for energy. Sustained running should be your primary mode of aerobic training. Exertion should be heavy throughout the workout (you should be working hard enough that it is impossible to carry on a conversation).

### Anaerobic Power

This type of workout will increase the body's capacity to perform high-intensity work and should consist of short bursts (30–90 seconds) of maximum exertion. We recommend sprint running because this will best prepare you for the 300-meter sprint on the PFT.

### Circuit Training*

Circuit training combines elements of aerobic and anaerobic, as well as muscular strength and endurance exercises with limited rest periods. Rather than always training for these fitness components in isolation, we recommend that applicants perform at least one circuit workout per week to prepare for the multi-stage PFT. Listed below is a sample circuit workout:

1. Run for 90 seconds.
2. Maximum situps in 30 seconds.
3. Run for 90 seconds.
4. Maximum continuous pushups.
5. Run for 90 seconds.
6. Maximum continuous pullups.**
7. Run for 90 seconds.
8. Maximum body weight squats or lunges in 30 seconds.

** Repeat entire circuit three to five times with one minute of rest in between repetitions.*
***Note: Only candidates in the Tactical Recruitment Program (TRP) will complete this event.*

## General Training Guidelines

The general guidelines for training to improve muscular strength and endurance, aerobic power and anaerobic power are provided in the table below. Applicants should use these guidelines to help structure their workouts appropriately. Special consideration should be given to circuit training as this type of workout best replicates the PFT.

| | Muscular Strength and Endurance | Anaerobic Power | Aerobic Power |
|---|---|---|---|
| Frequency | 2–3 days per week; non-consecutive days. | 1–2 days per week. | 3–5 days per week. |
| Intensity | 3–5 sets of max repetitions.<br>Add resistance for situps, pushups. | 3–10 repetitions of 30–90 second sprints; maximum exertion. | Heavy exertion: too difficult to carry on a conversation. |
| Time | 30–60 seconds of rest between sets. | Rest twice as long as exertion. | 20–30 minutes |

## Physical Training Planner

The Physical Training Planner shown below provides applicants with a disciplined workout program in preparation for the PFT. As you increase in strength, endurance and power, you will be able to progressively increase your speed, repetitions or intensity for each workout.

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Warmup | Warmup | Warmup | Rest Day | Warmup | Warmup | Rest Day |
| Muscular Strength and Endurance | Aerobic Exercise (30 min) | Circuit Workout | | Muscular Strength and Endurance | Aerobic Exercise (30 min) | |
| Aerobic Exercise (20 min) | | Anaerobic Exercise (Spints) | | | | |
| Cool Down | Cool Down | Cool Down | | Cool Down | Cool Down | |

## Avoiding Injuries

It is estimated that as many as 50 percent of people starting an exercise program will report an injury within the first six months. These injuries make it difficult, if not impossible, to continue physical fitness training without some period of inactivity. This section identifies the main risk factors that can lead to injury, as well as some risk-reduction strategies.

**Inflexibility and Muscle Imbalances** — Joint mechanics are disrupted when muscles on one side are excessively weak and/or lengthened while muscles on the other side are overdeveloped and/or tight. Train in a way that promotes muscular balance from front to back, side to side and top to bottom. Stretch the tight muscles and strengthen the weak muscles.

**Environmental Considerations** — Running on harsh surfaces (uneven terrain, banked surfaces, concrete) can magnify the stress placed on the musculoskeletal system. Opt for relatively flat, cushioned training surfaces when possible. Harsh climates can also lead to heat or cold illness, so acclimate yourself with 14 days of moderate training in the environment.

**Faulty Equipment** — Choose footwear that is appropriate for your activities and allows for normal mechanics, especially during running. Replace your running shoes after 300 miles or every six months, whichever comes first.

**Overtraining** — Too much physical stress applied too quickly with insufficient recovery can lead to dysfunction. Follow the physical training guidelines addressed here and those set forth by leading fitness and sports medicine organizations. Having regular rest days is important for recovery.

**Improper Technique** — Faulty exercise techniques can place undue stress on joints and soft tissues. Never sacrifice form and technique for more repetitions or faster times.