



ClearanceJobs®

CLEARED FOR COLLEGE

6 TIPS FOR MAKING COLLEGE RECRUITING A PART OF YOUR CLEARED HIRING STRATEGY



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Step Up Your Recruiting Pipeline with a College Outreach Program



Move over, millennials. Generation Z is the new demographic taking over the workplace. Millennials are no longer the entry-level employees in your organization — they're the mid-level managers and in some cases young executives managing departments and programs.

Today, it's Generation Z who is graduating from college and launching their professional career. They're tech savvy and they likely possess the skills your company is looking for. According to an annual survey administered by the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles, the number of freshmen planning to major in Science and Engineering rose from 8% in 2000 to 45% in 2016. In fast-growing fields like data analytics and cloud architecture, being able to source entry-level talent isn't optional — it's essential.

Unfortunately, if you're a recruiter, you face a lot of competition for those entry-level professionals — the unemployment rate for those with a bachelor's degree or higher is 2%. That means individuals with a bachelor's degree are unlikely to be out looking for their next opportunity. You need to be looking for them. The days of 'post and pray' are long gone, and today's recruiting strategy demands assertive recruiting practices targeting employees at every stage of their professional journey — including recent college graduates.

“Recruiters today really need to be invested in the long game. Poaching talent will only get you so far. Smart recruiters are growing talent.”

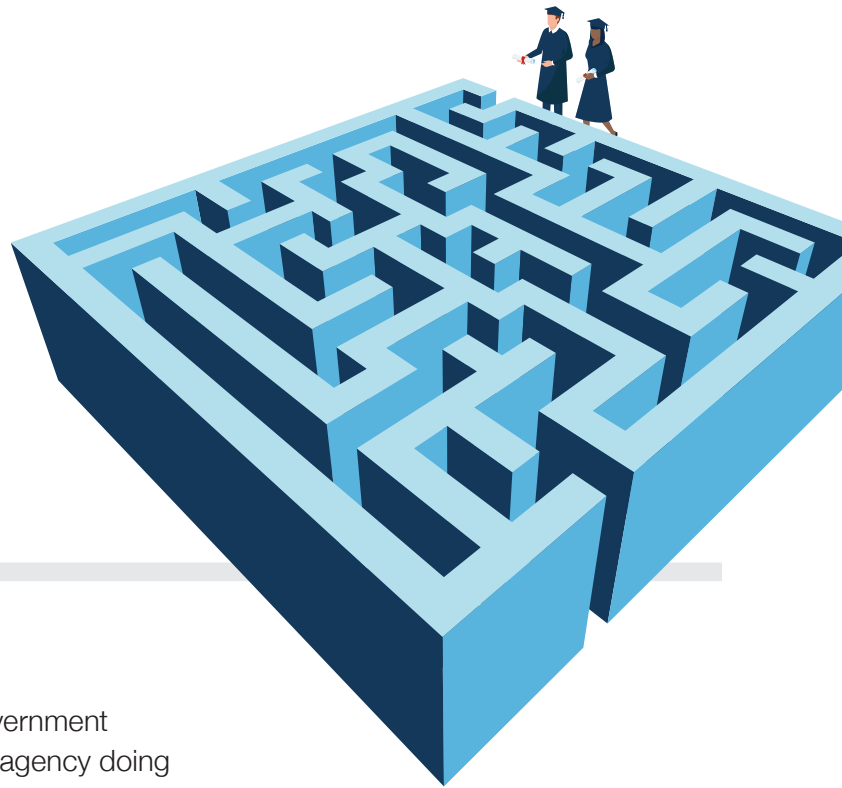
Evan Lesser

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Cleared Careers

Missions that Matter



**More than
2.2 million
individuals
obtained a
bachelor's
degree in 2018.**

**U.S. Bureau of Labor
Statistics**

If you're a government contractor or agency doing national security work, it may be easy to assume you simply can't compete with Silicon Valley or Wall Street. But don't forget — if you work for government or the defense industry, you have missions that matter. And that's very appealing to today's college graduate.

While the unemployment rate of professionals remains low across the board, statistics still show that between 75 to 85% of college grads walk off their campuses without a job — and those who don't have a job lined up will spend an average of 7.4 months looking for one, according to the National Association of Colleges and Employers.

That job search timeline means sourcing college students should be a part of building your talent pipeline.

But wait, you say — you already have a recruiting program, you're building your employer brand, and you're aggressively posting positions online. What more do you need to do?

Entry-level employees — and college students in particular — have different needs. Your recruiting program must be tailored to reflect that. Here are six tips to get your college and entry-level recruiting program on track.



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Recruiting Tip #1: Start Early

Internships are a key way to attract and retain college talent.



The best way to hire a college graduate may be to hire an intern. The benefit of an internship program is it allows both you and the candidate to give the position a trial run — and begin the lengthy security clearance process. Some companies hire interns as early as sophomore year. The benefit of beginning early is it gives you multiple summers or semesters to help the student learn both the hard and soft skills it takes to succeed in your company. Your reward is an entry-level hire who fits your company culture and has real industry experience.

“The best part about intern and entry level talent from a campus is that they have a very strong foundational knowledge — and companies can take that and mold it.”

**Luke Mann, University Relations & Recruiting,
Northrop Grumman**

“Last year ManTech formally rolled out an intern program that we had been managing informally for several years,” says Yvonne Vervaet, Senior Vice President of Growth and Capabilities at ManTech.

“Through this new formal program, we reach out to a handful of colleges as soon as sophomore year and try to get people actively engaged...And then by the time they graduate, they have their clearances and their skills and they’re ready to go to work immediately.”

Recruiting is Better with a Partner

Government cloud, managed services, and cybersecurity provider 1901 Group is a part of an industry consortium with Radford University’s Applied Research Center. The partnership allows tech students from Radford University to get a taste of government careers first-hand.

“Working with students and their colleges and universities is really an essential part of the 1901 Group vision,” said Brendan Walsh, Senior Vice President, Partner Relations at 1901 Group.



“We believe, and we’ve believed for a long time, that we’ve got to grow the talent,” said Walsh. “You can’t just go out and find the talent. You can’t take the talent efficiently enough from competitors.”

Whether it’s a formal consortium or more informal participation in events like career fairs and industry days, partnering with colleges in the local area is a great way to keep your college talent pipeline flowing. It’s a win-win — colleges want their students to graduate with a host of job opportunities, and you need new talent.

QUICK TIP:

MENTORSHIP MATTERS: Professional development and lifelong learning may mean things like tuition assistance programs and paying for professional certifications. But even if these opportunities aren’t in your budget, every company can afford to establish a formal mentorship program. Advertise your mentorship program, and how your company will help give new grads on-the-job training and help them grow their soft skills.



5 Tips to Speed Up the Security Clearance Process

Unless you're hiring a veteran in school using their GI Bill benefits, your college student is not likely to already have a security clearance. The good news? Security clearance processing times are beginning to improve, and interim security clearances are

being issued in an average of 30 days. Looking for other ways to speed up the security clearance process for your college hires? Give them these five tips before starting their clearance applications.

1 Provide complete information.

There shouldn't be gaps in your living or employment histories. Make sure you do the work to find the addresses and references needed.



2 Get a copy of your credit report before you begin.

If there are inaccurate charges on your report, you must address them before you apply. Financial issues remain the number one reason for security clearance denial.



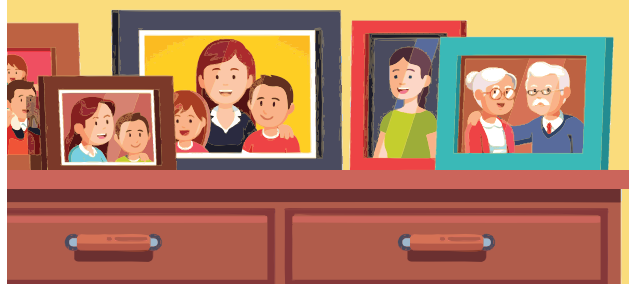
3 Contact your references in advance.

You're going back many years — make sure the references you list are reachable at the numbers you provide. If you give a reference who's unavailable, your investigator may waste weeks chasing the wrong person, which will push back your investigation completion.



4 Don't use family members as references.

Your employment and residence verifiers should not be relatives. Only list relatives where specifically requested.



5 If you were terminated from a job, explain the reason in the comments section.

You don't want to overshare, but the SF-86 asks if you were ever terminated or asked to leave a job. It's better to share the reason up front. If your employer at the time also verifies the same reason when asked, it will save your investigator time.



Recruiting Tip #2: Sell Lifelong Learning

How can you show college students you don't just want to hire them, you want to grow their abilities?



When a college student is considering their first job, joining a company who will help them grow their skills and launch their professional journey is important. Despite reputations for being overly confident or arrogant, most recent grads realize they don't know everything. They know they need to keep learning in order to get where they want to be in their career. And they're looking to their first employer to help them identify their skills gaps and take their career to the next level.

Salary is obviously a key consideration when someone accepts a new job. But company mission and professional development opportunities are typically the very next considerations. In fact, personal growth was the top priority for college grads when committing to a specific position, according to a survey by the LaSalle Network, a staffing and recruiting firm based in Chicago. When faced with a job description before them, entry-level talent wants to know how the position will help them grow their skills.

How Does Generation Z Learn? YouTube is the most visited website by people ages 18-24, and 80% of teens say YouTube has made them more knowledgeable, and 70% say it has helped them learn a new skill, according to research by Google.

If your company does not have a video presence, now is the time to start building a library of content to help college graduates learn about your company and its mission.

Ready or Not: Here They Come

A 2018 study by McGraw-Hill Education found only four in ten college graduates felt very or extremely prepared for their future careers. That's a big confidence gap, and one college graduates know they will need to overcome in order to be successful. Defense employers should remember that when it comes to recent graduates, they not only need to reassure them of the resources available to help them transition into a professional career, but the resources to help them learn a new industry — with its own set of acronyms, social mores, and industry policies.

Did you know? *ClearanceJobs has a YouTube channel with **MORE THAN 4,700 SUBSCRIBERS** and **2 MILLION VIEWS**. If you think no one cares to learn more about your company or industry on YouTube, think again.*





Recruiting Tip #3: Embrace Social Impact

If you work for the government, embrace it. You're helping to make the world a better place.

In many careers, it is difficult to know the social impact of the work that's done. Defense industry and government employers shouldn't struggle with this ambiguity. Your work has social impact because you work in service of the American citizenry. Make sure your job listings display not just the technical aspects of the work you do, but the social good conveyed by the work you do.

You may not consider your social impact a benefit, but for college and entry-level hires, it is. When listing benefits available to employees, consider volunteer efforts, matching gift programs, and company sustainability efforts.

It's easy to assume that young employees will flock to the flashiest new tech company, the

highest salaries, or the office that lets them wear their bathrobe to work. But in this way, entry-level employees are just like you: they want to know that their work matters. Don't hesitate to show them how a job with your company serves something bigger than themselves.

"College students are interested in not just the X's and O's of their job — but they want specifics on the culture, the company, the mission, the community impact."

**Luke Mann, University Relations & Recruiting,
Northrop Grumman**



*Deloitte is an employer that frequently finds itself on lists of companies known for doing social good. And it's not shy about highlighting what those efforts are. A dedicated landing page makes it easy for job candidates to find out information and learn more about what the company is doing to **MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE**, from helping low-income students complete their education to offering skills-based volunteering for employees.*

Recruiting Tip #4: Highlight Mission


Don't assume new graduates don't want to work for the government — they do.



Two in five (42%) of college students were very or fairly interested in working for government, according to a 2018 study conducted on behalf of the Panetta Institute of Public Policy — that's a 5% increase over 2017. College candidates might not be attracted by the same things an older candidate covets, like healthcare benefits and job stability. But they are interested in making a difference and working for an organization with a clear mission — and no one does mission better than a national security career.

A student graduating today with a software engineering degree has a pick of organizations to choose from. Why is the NSA touted as a leader in college recruiting, particularly for in-demand cybersecurity positions? Because it makes it clear — when you work a tech career with the NSA, you'll get to work with the most cutting-edge tools of the data science and cybersecurity industry. And the work you're doing today will shape programs across the government and private sector tomorrow.

Your organization may not be “NSA-cool,” but if you're supporting national security or defense industry missions, somewhere along the chain you are doing work that offers real, tangible impact.



*Are your job descriptions cool, or just a copy and paste of the hiring requirements given to you by the program manager? If you're looking to attract college and entry level talent, **YOUR POSITION DESCRIPTION SHOULD SELL THE EXCITEMENT OF THE WORK BEING DONE.** Bullets still work, but include some narrative paragraphs that help bring the description to life. And to attract the YouTube generation, considering adding links to video job descriptions or video profiles featuring your company.*



Recruiting Tip #5: Promote Your Location

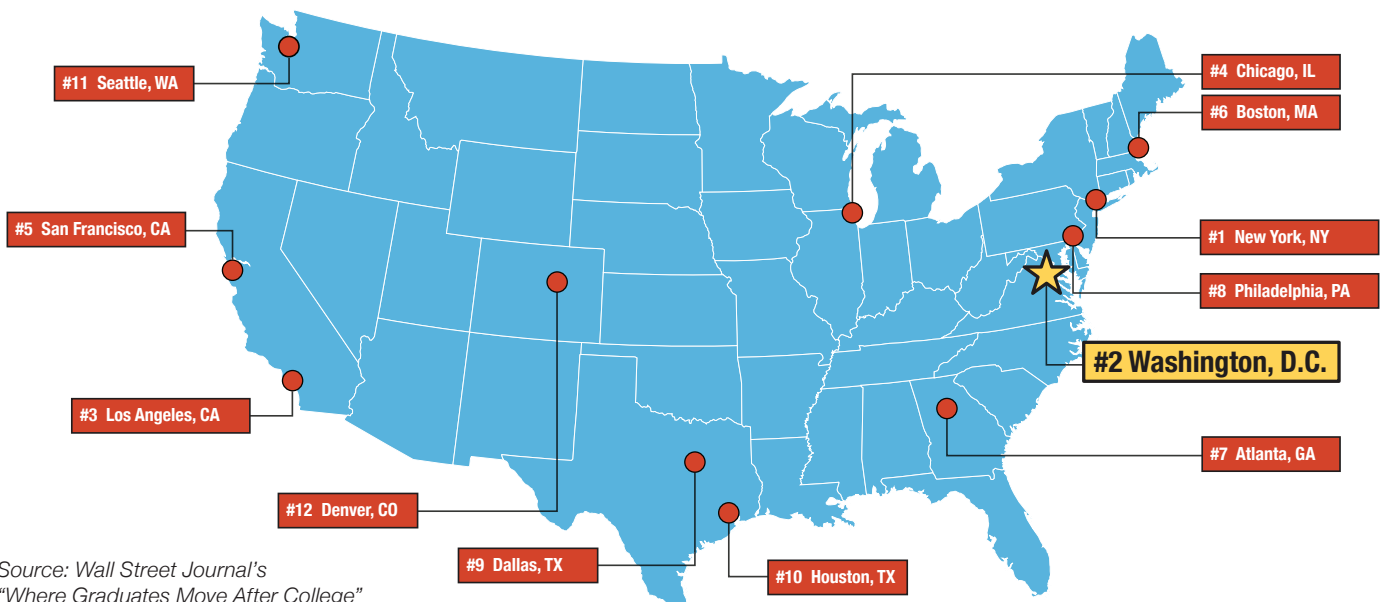
*Where do college grads want to work?
Cool cities and practical cities.*

Tech talent has its pick of job locations, but the good news for defense industry employers is not everyone wants to live in San Francisco or San Jose. A surprising number of them want to live in the mecca of national security careers — Washington, D.C. A Wall Street Journal study found Washington, D.C. attracts the second highest number of college graduates — right behind New York City.

In fact, the diversity of locations means college grads are likely open to a variety of cities, whether you need cleared graphic designers in Boston, or cleared software engineers in Dallas.

Remember, college grads are likely navigating the 'real' world for the first time. Even if you can't offer relocation assistance, sell a relocation package. Include lists of popular things to do in the city where the position is located, great apartments to live in,

Top 12 Cities Where Graduates Relocate After College



Source: Wall Street Journal's
"Where Graduates Move After College"

the best neighborhoods for young people, and other regional amenities in your conversations with college candidates. Similar to a mentor, pair them with a 'relocation buddy' before they start — someone who will help them navigate things like how to factor in cost of living, what commute times will really look like from their preferred neighborhood, and the best restaurants, hiking trails, and gyms near the office.

It might be easy to assume recent college grads aren't concerned about location in their initial job search. But next to salary and an exciting position, location is the critical factor driving college candidates. When it comes to in-demand tech talent, it's actually to your advantage that not every tech grad wants to live in San Jose or Seattle (unless you're hiring in San Jose and Seattle, in which case location isn't your problem — cost of living is).



Recruiting Tip #6: Get Social

You don't need to wonder if recent college grads are looking you up online — they are.



The average security clearance holder gets annual training that cautions about all of the perils and risks of being too active or transparent on social media. The average college student spends 8-10 hours on their smartphone (compared to 3 hours for the average adult). That is a lot of time spent consuming media. Even if your company has a robust social media presence, how connected is it to your recruiting efforts? When college candidates learn about your company for the first time (likely online) what impression will they get about the type of work they'll do, the teams they'll be on, and the missions they'll accomplish?

Too many companies have stove-piped marketing and recruiting efforts. They need to be considered together, and your recruiting plan should factor in how candidates will be able to find and connect with you online. If you have a company Twitter handle, and a college student asks a question, will they get a reply?

Hello? Is it me you're looking for?

The benefit of a college student's hyper-connectivity is they may be more likely to see your job listings, recruiting messages, and connection requests. The downfall? If you're not equally ready to engage candidates the moment they show interest, you may

lose your chance. Speed is paramount, so when you see a college student has submitted their resume, responded to your social media post, or reached out at a campus recruiting event — connect early.

This might seem overwhelming, but ClearanceJobs is here to help. With everything from text alerts and site advertising to video profiles and sponsored content, we can help you take your recruiting messages and make them more relevant to an online, digitally connected college workforce.

You may be asking yourself — to text or not to text? General recruiting etiquette still advises that a recruiter use phone or email as the first line of contact. But it's safe to say the average college graduate will be ignoring your voicemail — given the likelihood that they also ignore the ones from their grandma. A follow-up text is a communication more likely to get noticed.

"Text messages are simple, quick, and open the door to allow both parties more lines of communication," advises Maria Whitney, senior recruiter at Smartronix.



ClearanceJobs: Your Tool for Candidate Engagement



Recruiting Tip #1:
Start Early



Recruiting Tip #2:
Sell Lifelong
Learning



Recruiting Tip #3:
Embrace Social
Impact



Recruiting Tip #4:
Highlight Mission



Recruiting Tip #5:
Promote Your
Location



Recruiting Tip #6:
Get Social

Need to fill contracts and stay competitive?

Then you need to play the field — in addition to hiring already cleared candidates, make sure your recruiting program includes a plan to reach out to college and entry-level candidates.

CLEARANCEJOBS HAS POWERFUL TOOLS AND INSIGHTS TO HELP YOU MASTER THE ART OF RECRUITING.

YOU CAN:



Build your network through the largest online database of cleared talent.



Nurture your new contacts through the best, most secure social recruiting tools on the internet.



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