

**School of International and Public Affairs
Columbia University
Office of Career Services**

**CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY/
PROGRAM MANAGEMENT**

Description of Field

The growth of this field stems from the desire to protect the environment and preserve natural resources, both in the U.S. and worldwide. From the greenhouse effect and global warming, to the effects of acid rain and deforestation on the ozone layer, the “environment” has increasingly taken center stage in the international and domestic political debate. It can manifest itself in a variety of ways: solid waste management, hazardous waste management, environmental planning, air quality, water quality, land and water conservation, fishery and wildlife management, parks and outdoor recreation, forestry, environmental education and advocacy, biodiversity and environmental law. Basically, environmental careers can be divided into five areas:

- Environmental Protection
- Conservation
- Green business and services
- Planning
- Education/Advocacy

Career Paths and Entry Salaries

Policy Analyst, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	\$33,650
Analyst, Environmental Lobbying or Education Non-Profit	\$35,000
Natural Resource Specialist, Overseas NGO	\$38,000
Land Use Specialist, State Environmental Department	\$40,000
Solid Waste Analyst, City Environmental Department	\$40,000
Planner, City/State Planning Department	\$40,000
Consultant, Environmental Consulting Firm	\$45,000
Environmental Economist, World Bank (or other international organization)	\$50,000

Career paths vary by organization. In all levels of government, there is a yearly promotion cycle within agencies, or you can switch to another agency or move out of government. In consulting firms, one starts as an associate and usually works one’s way up to partner over a period of years.

Demand

There has been a tremendous growth in the environmental profession over the last 25 years. This field is constantly changing as new sources of pollution and problems unimagined in the past continue to surface. Public and governmental support for environmental protection has never been greater. The challenge is to translate this support into action. This is one field that can only continue to grow over the next few decades. Air quality, water quality, hazardous waste, solid waste, and public health have been “boom” areas in recent years.

Qualifications Necessary to Enter the Field

A master's degree is essential to do the sorts of jobs listed above. Expertise in regional politics and economics are helpful in understanding economic, political, and social consequences of international environmental disputes and the resolution of international environmental problems. In addition, many environmental jobs call for the development of a specialization; e.g., planning, forestry, biology, engineering, etc. Another growing field is environmental law, which would require a J.D. degree.

Sample Group of Employers

City Departments of the Environment
The Conservation Foundation
Environmental Defense Fund
Friends of the Earth
House Energy and Environment Sub-Committee
ICF, Inc.
Industrial Economics, Inc.
National Audubon Society
Natural Resources Defense Council
Senate Environment and Public Works Committee
The Sierra Club

State Departments of the Environment
Union of Concerned Scientists
U.S. Department of Energy
U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Oceans and International
Environmental and Scientific Affairs
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
United Nations Environment Programme
World Resources Institute
World Wildlife Fund

Future Challenges to the Profession

With federal and state budget cuts and the growing influence of industry and manufacturing special interests in Congress, there is a danger that less money will be allocated to the fight to save the environment. This will have a "trickle down" effect on the non-profit/advocacy groups as well. As new and unforeseen threats to the environment develop, the qualifications and specialization needed by those who wish to become players in this field will continue to change.

To Obtain More Information:

Publications:

Carroll's Environmental Directory, Carroll Publishing
Environmental Career Opportunities, Brubach Publications
Gale Environmental Sourcebook, Gale Publications
Peterson's Job Opportunities in the Environment, Peterson's Guides
The Complete Guide to Environmental Careers, The Environmental Careers Organization
The Directory of National Environmental Organizations, U.S. Environmental Directories
The Environmental Career Guide, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
World Guide to Environmental Issues and Organizations, Gale Research Co.
National Environmental Employment Report, National Environmental Employment, Hampton, VA.

*For more information, visit : <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/sipa/OCS/Resources/LINKS/envlinks.html>.