

# INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Federal international affairs careers fall into two main job series: Foreign Affairs (0130) and International Relations (0131). Both help advance U.S. interests around the world, but they differ in their focus and where they're used across government. Foreign Affairs specialists typically analyze problems and develop policy solutions from headquarters, while International Relations specialists implement policy through direct engagement with foreign counterparts (distributed across agencies based on each agency's international mission).

## 0130: FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Foreign Affairs specialists develop policy, conduct research, and design programs on international issues. About 80% work at the State Department, with others at Defense and other agencies. Most are based in Washington, D.C.

## 0131: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

International Relations specialists engage directly with foreign governments by meeting with officials, negotiating agreements, and managing partnerships. These roles are distributed across agencies with international missions and often require overseas assignments.

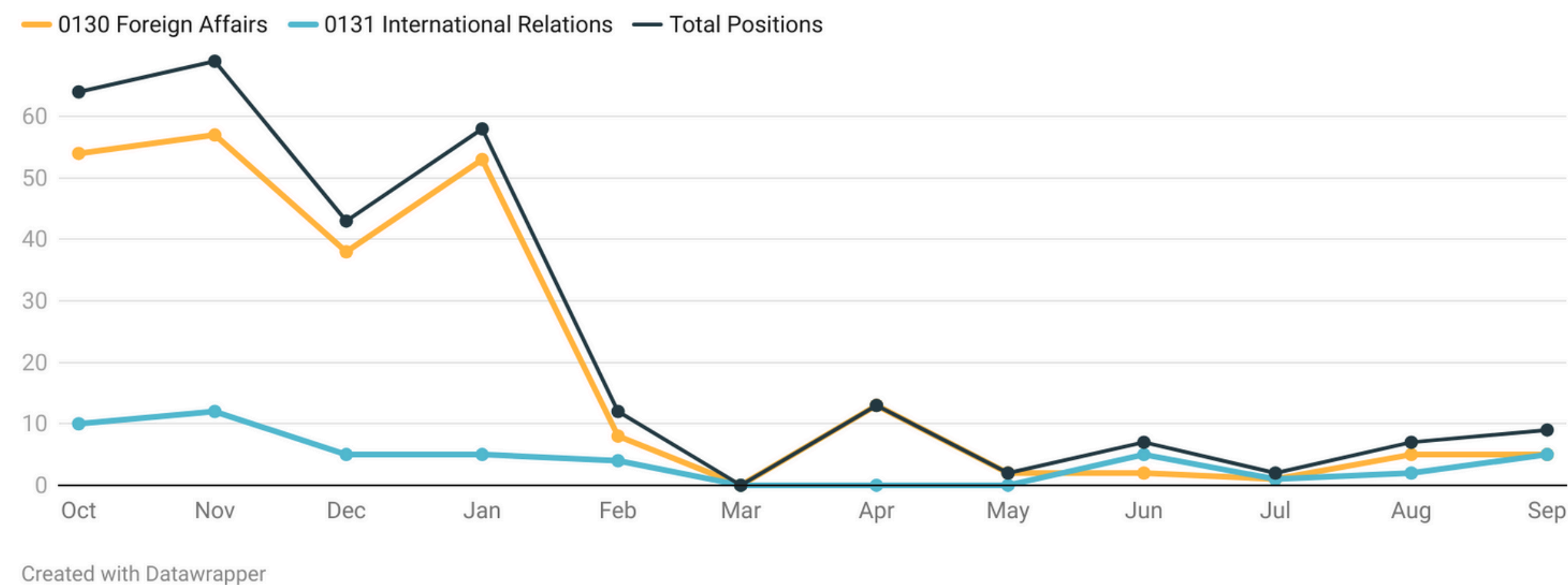
## CAREER PROGRESSION

- **Starting Point (GS-9/11)**  
Entry-level specialists conduct research, support policy development, and learn international affairs processes. Language skills and regional expertise are valued.
- **Mid-Career (GS-12/13)**  
Specialists independently manage portfolios and advise on policy. Foreign Affairs roles focus on designing programs and coordinating policy initiatives. International Relations roles emphasize managing bilateral relationships and negotiations.
- **Senior Level (GS-14/15)**  
Senior specialists lead programs and advise agency leadership. Example duties include "serves as senior action officer for nonproliferation policy" and "advises senior officials on multilateral export control issues."
- **Executive (SES)**  
Directors shape foreign policy, lead bureaus, serve as Ambassadors, and testify before Congress.

## TRANSLATABLE SKILLS

- **Written & Oral Communication:** Reading comprehension, writing, speaking, and active listening are essential. You'll explain complex international issues, draft policy papers, brief senior officials, and present to diverse audiences.
- **Social Perceptiveness & Interpersonal Skills:** Understanding others' reactions, establishing relationships, and coordinating with colleagues is necessary for international work.
- **Problem Solving & Decision Making:** Identify complex problems, evaluate options, and make recommendations with significant implications.
- **Adaptability & Learning:** Updating and using relevant knowledge, active learning, and applying new information to constantly changing global situations.

## FEDERAL JOB POSTINGS BY MONTH



**Key Takeaway:** More Foreign Affairs positions are posted than International Relations roles during typical hiring cycles.

## TOP FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS

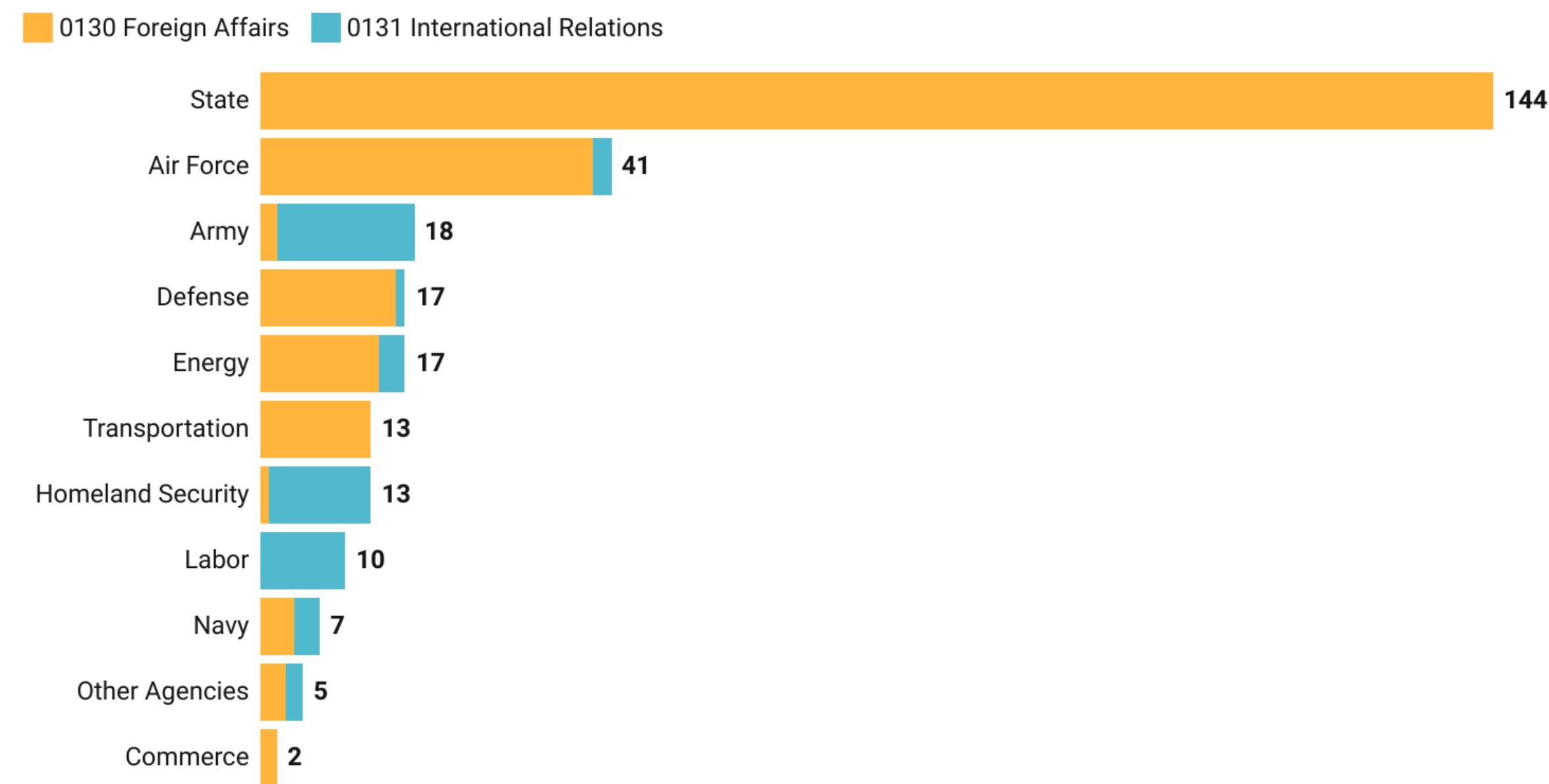


Chart: GovSkills • Source: USAJobs • Created with Datawrapper

**State Department Hiring Hub:** More than 60% of Foreign Affairs positions (144 out of 238) are posted by the Department of State. International Relations roles, by comparison, are more dispersed across agencies.

**Washington-Centric Careers:** International affairs positions are heavily concentrated in the DC metro area. 185 jobs in DC, 42 in Virginia, and 6 in Maryland account for nearly 90% of all openings.