

The United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) calls itself “the world's leading drug enforcement agency” and tasks itself with upholding the controlled substance laws and regulations passed through federal law. This includes “bringing to justice organizations — including those with ties to terrorism — and their principal members who are involved in the growing, manufacture or distribution of controlled substances,” according to its website.

Special Agent

A DEA special agent has an “essential and exclusive role” in “working to dismantle drug trafficking organizations, prosecute drug traffickers and destroy the financial infrastructure of these organizations.” Special agents can work in the U.S. or other countries. Their main task is to execute criminal and financial investigations, frequently undercover, with the intention of acquiring intelligence and evidence to arrest criminals and confiscate drugs. Special agents usually have to testify in court after these investigations. They work with other local, federal and state agencies to coordinate intelligence.

Diversion Investigators (DI)

Diversion investigators (DI) work for the DEA to prevent the use and sale of drugs before the substances are distributed. They particularly focus now on “rogue internet pharmacies” that sell illegal drugs when pretending to sell legal drugs.

Evidence Specialists

Forensic chemists can find careers with the Drug Enforcement Administration due to their encyclopedic knowledge of chemical elements. Many unusual chemicals are used to make illegal drugs and forensic chemists help to identify and analyze them in efforts to stop the substances before they are produced and sold. Chemists are also asked to testify on behalf of the DEA in trials, giving supporting evidence on trends in the drug production. Fingerprint specialists with the agency examine and identify fingerprints, develop latent prints, train law enforcement on fingerprinting techniques, write lab reports on investigations, assist in investigations and may be asked to testify in court. Computer forensic examiners in the field perform many of these same functions in regards to digital evidence about a drug investigation. They are also expected to communicate with non-technical DEA personnel regarding technical issues.

Intelligence Research Specialists

DEA intelligence research specialists work throughout the U.S. and in other countries to generate and complete research projects related to the agency's work. These reports can be “in areas such as drug cultivation and production, methods of transportation, trafficking routes, and the structure and analysis of trafficker organizations,” the DEA website explains.

Other Careers

The DEA also has careers in the administrative and support, legal, facilities maintenance, finance and acquisition and human resources sectors. The DEA has student and entry-level positions as well.

Requirements

DEA requires employees to have at least an undergraduate degree and prefers a higher degree with coursework in a related field, but in some cases will hire applicants with a combination of education and relevant work experience. Each career discussed here has additional requirements for employment consideration. New DEA employees are required to undergo in-house training on the agency's policies on what the DEA website calls “ethics, integrity, evidence handling procedures, analytical procedures, instrumental techniques, drug identification and court procedures.”

Key Concepts

- drug enforcement careers
- dea careers drugs
- drug enforcement dea

References

- [Drug Enforcement Administration: Careers](http://www.justice.gov/dea/resources/job_applicants.html)
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