
Employment Ideas

- Intent Networks Professionals
(<https://www.echocommunity.org/resources/0b133231-d955-4b9f-89f9-c92484044269#Inte>)
- Economic Development Programs at Eastern College
(<https://www.echocommunity.org/resources/0b133231-d955-4b9f-89f9-c92484044269#Econ>)
- Consulting as a Career Option
(<https://www.echocommunity.org/resources/0b133231-d955-4b9f-89f9-c92484044269#Cons>)
- Volunteers in Cooperative Assistance
(<https://www.echocommunity.org/resources/0b133231-d955-4b9f-89f9-c92484044269#Volu>)

INTENT NETWORKS PROFESSIONALS. Intent (formerly called U.S. Association of Tentmakers) is a membership organization of professionals who work (or are seeking opportunities to work) within their profession in other countries. They are motivated to live and minister overseas by their Christian faith. Write P.O. Box 35, Cascade, CO 80809-0035, USA; phone 800/781-8728 or 719/471-6600; fax 800/829-8728 or 719/684-9391; e-mail 74203.1311@compuserve.com. (https://cdn.ymaws.com/echocommunity.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/a_to_z/azch14sm.htm#Tab1)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AT EASTERN COLLEGE. Eastern is a Christian college which offers graduate M.S. and M.B.A. programs in economic development; students choose a "global" or "urban" focus. Degrees can be combined with an M.Div. from Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary. We have met many satisfied students of this course, and the faculty is excellent. Contact the Graduate Admissions Office, Eastern College, 10 Fairview Drive, St. Davids, PA 19087-3696, USA; phone 610/341-5972; fax 610/341-1466. (https://cdn.ymaws.com/echocommunity.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/a_to_z/azch14sm.htm#Tab1)

CONSULTING AS A CAREER OPTION. Many in ECHO's network have unique combinations of specialized training, work experience, and language proficiency. If you find yourself between jobs, consulting can be an attractive option. Some have even made careers as consultants, using their expertise as professional advisors.

Many firms in the Washington, D.C. area specialize in putting together proposals in response to formal "Requests for Proposals" (called RFPs) by government agencies. Most of these positions are not filled by their own technical staff. Rather, they each have large computerized databases with names and qualifications of potential

consultants with the right combination of skills needed for various projects. I posed the following questions to Walter Price in Washington, D.C., who at one time worked as projects coordinator for one of the major contractors.

Q) Explain how this system works.

A) Let's say that an RFP calls for a team that includes someone with an expertise in sweet potatoes and knowledge of Swahili. The project coordinator would contact those people whom the computer identified as having those skills. If you were that person, he would describe the assignment and ask whether you might be available for a certain time period. If you are interested, your resume will be included with the proposal. You are under no obligation to hold that time open, however, because the grant may not be awarded.

Q) If your work is in a remote overseas location, how is he to get in touch with you?

A) That can be a problem. If he cannot find you quickly, he usually has 10 or 50 other qualified people he can call. If you are in a hard-to-get-to place overseas, have someone in the States take telephone calls/fax for you and have him tell the consulting firm that you will get back to them right away.

Q) This can clearly be a good way to get some interesting assignments. How is the pay?

A) The pay can be very good indeed. However, the government usually has restrictions that do not let your pay exceed your previous salary by more than a modest amount. This can result in some awkward situations for people who have worked sacrificially at very low wages with a non-profit organization. The good news is that with each job you can notch the salary up a bit and eventually catch up.

Q) What about extreme cases? Surely a Peace Corps volunteer or missionary with valuable experience in agroforestry and a master's degree who earned less than US\$1000 a month would not be expected to continue working for so little?

A) There is room to negotiate. But if you really want a consulting job, don't scare them off by stating too rigidly your salary expectations. You are far better off to get them interested in you, then talk salary. Do not say you won't work for less than \$150 per day unless you really mean it--they probably won't call you. Sell them on your qualifications; later argue that you should not be penalized too severely for your volunteer spirit.

Q) It would seem to be difficult to make a career of such assignments because there can be a lot of "down time" between successful proposals that include you. Also, if you are in a remote overseas assignment it may be more difficult to get included in proposals. Is this correct?

A) There can be a lot of down time, but a lot of consultants get hired again and again by the same place(s). For example, I once went to work for the World Bank on a three-month contract and left four years later. Actually the kind of contract you have discussed so far is Chapter One of a two-chapter story. One can sometimes obtain a position quickly through organizations that have won Indefinite Quantity Contracts (IQCs).

Q) What is an IQC?

A) Many government agencies working in development issue "Indefinite Quantity Contracts" for consulting in fields such as agriculture, rural development, urban development, housing, business & accounting, health, education, etc. Their purpose is to enable the government to hire consultants for needs that come up

unexpectedly and require a response too quickly to follow all the channels of making a request for proposal, etc. Also it would not be cost-effective for the government to do all that paperwork for every small project that came up.

When AID, for example, put out an RFP for an IQC, I had to demonstrate that our firm had the ability to handle the contracts. By the time the contract was awarded, very few of the original experts whose resumes were used would still be available. In effect, they were used to show that we had the capability of fielding such a team of experts. The IQC obligated us to give service to AID, but neither we nor they knew for sure how much demand there would be for services. The contract assures at least a minimal level of funding (let's say \$500,000) and a ceiling (perhaps \$2,000,000). So we were on-call, usually with very short notice.

Herein lies the key for those who make a successful career of consulting. If you know which firms have current IQC contracts you don't need to waste your time writing to those who have no money. You need to spend time on the street "marketing" yourself, but it should be to agencies with IQCs who at any moment may receive a call asking them to field a team of experts. Don't limit yourself to IQCs in agriculture. IQCs in other fields such as rural development or training and education may need an agriculturalist too.

Q) How can someone ever learn which companies have these IQCs?

A) The freedom of information law makes this public information (free). Request "a list of contractors with AID IQC contracts," by writing AID, MS/OP/PS/SUP, Rm 1472, SA 14, Washington, D.C. 20523-1418, USA or phone 703/875-1047 (the Office of Procurement).

This next information is less useful, but there may be times when you want to know every agency with an AID contract in your country. The "Yellow Book" is a phone book-sized global listing of all contracts and subcontracts made by AID. Probably the AID office in your country would have a copy.

Q) What are the specialties with IQCs?

A) The latest 17-page listing has the following: accounting and financial management, agriculture, rural development, data processing, development evaluations, development management, energy, foreign language training, health, water supply and sanitation, housing and urban development, macroeconomic analysis, nutrition, and remote sensing.

Q) Is AID the primary source of contract work for agricultural development?

A) Many consider that assignments with the World Bank, International Development Bank, United Nations, International Fund for Agricultural Development are tops in prestige and pay. However, AID is the real "bread and butter" source.

Q) Without naming names, can you give some examples of people who have made a successful career as contractors?

A) I've worked on three assignments with an agronomist from California who is very successful at getting repeat assignments for the World Bank. Several things stand out about him. 1. He is very specialized, i.e. does not claim to be all things to all people. 2. He is extremely productive. Consultants are paid by the day. He makes sure the boss gets his money's worth and that the boss **knows** that. 3. He does not mix pleasure with work. In the field he is no-nonsense: sociable and friendly, but

mainly he talks and thinks business. 4. He never loses sight of the fact that the Bank is primarily interested in the final **product**. His work is always done exactly like the Bank wants it and always ahead of time. 5. He avoids (/resources/a6bff553-63f1-465d-abc1-



6b00bd68a785)controversy. He will discuss anything important to his work, but avoids getting sucked into needless controversies about a project or program and offending colleagues. 6. He is genuinely interested in people. The next time you see him he will ask about your family--by name--and will remember everything you have told him. 7. He stays in contact. He doesn't make a nuisance of himself, but finds ways to let you know he is around and available. 8. He does every assignment like it is his first (i.e. does not get too comfortable and disregard quality). 9. He dresses like agency colleagues; when in doubt he overdresses. 10. He never makes snide comments about the contracting agency (he leaves that to insiders).

Another example is a Peruvian economist who has worked for 20 years with all the "best" agencies. How does he do it? I have observed him over 10 years. He is a clone of the agronomist.

Q) Can only US citizens work under IQC contracts?

A) I have checked with both AID and a contractor. Both say that work done under an IQC in another country can use people who are not U.S. citizens.

Q) Do you have any final comments?

A) You'll have something set up and it may be suddenly cancelled, so don't put all your eggs in one basket. (https://cdn.ymaws.com/echocommunity.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/a_to_z/azch14sm.htm#Tab1)

VOLUNTEERS IN COOPERATIVE ASSISTANCE (VOCA) is a nonprofit organization which recruits volunteer consultants (farmers, executives, and specialists who are US citizens with at least 10 years' field experience) for short-term assignments in developing countries and emerging democracies. Volunteers share technical assistance and business/agricultural expertise. Projects usually (/resources/46f4aed3-69b2-400e-b44b-2c58d5134c50)last 2-12 weeks. VOCA does not pay a consulting fee, but all project-related expenses are covered, including travel. Examples of assignments span from resource conservation to poultry production to tofu processing to expertise with tropical fruits. If you are interested in using your field experience as a volunteer consultant, contact Samuel Driggers, Jr., VOCA, Pacific Regional Office, 1008 "S" Street, Suite B, Sacramento, CA 95814, USA; phone 800/556-1620; fax 916/556-1630; e-mail VOCA-CALIFORNIA@voca.org.

If you are in the field
and believe that a
short-term VOCA
consultant could
assist you in your
work, contact the
VOCA

Headquarters
directly at 50 F
Street, N.W., Suite
1075, Washington,
D.C. 20001; phone
202/383-4961.

Most requests for
volunteers come from foreign national host organizations.
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