

# HIRING OPTIONS GUIDE





# INTERNAL HIRING OPTIONS

## *Applies to Current Federal Employees*

The following pages provide a brief description of various ways that a vacant position can be filled within your organization with current federal employees. There may be additional requirements for positions subject to local bargaining agreements. Contact your HR professional for more information on these options.

## **DETAIL**

A temporary assignment to a set of duties or to a position at the same, lower or higher grade. There is no change in pay, and employees do not need to be qualified to be detailed. However, they must meet positive education requirements, professional certification, and licensure requirements where applicable. Under the General Schedule (GS) and the Federal Wage System (FWS), details may be done in 120-day increments up to one year. Details to higher-graded duties may be made without competition up to 120 days (under GS and FWS). Certain rules may apply pertaining to your local collective bargaining agreement for details to a position at a higher grade. If you plan on using this option, your HR professional can provide more information.

## **REASSIGNMENT**

An assignment to a position at the same grade. When the position has promotion potential to a higher level, competition may be required if the temporary reassignment is longer than 120 days (under GS and FWS) in a 12-month period.

## **CHANGE TO LOWER GRADE**

A permanent assignment to a position at a lower level. Competition may be required if the position has promotion potential to a higher level.

## **TRANSFER**

Movement to your organization from an agency outside your Component. Under GS or FWS, this may or may not involve a grade change.

## **PROMOTION**

A temporary, term or permanent assignment to a position at a higher level. Temporary promotions may be made without competition up to 120 days in a 12-month period.

## **NONCOMPETITIVE PROMOTION**

An employee who has previously held a position on a permanent basis under career or career-conditional appointment at or above the grade level of the position to be filled may be noncompetitively promoted. Since these employees previously competed for positions at the higher grade, they must only meet the basic qualification requirements of the position.

## **CAREER LADDER**

A position that is filled at the entry level to allow an employee to develop, through training, to the full performance level.

## **MERIT PROMOTION**

Merit Promotion refers to the placement, promotion, transfer, reassignment and other movement of competitive service employees. One of the primary objectives is to staff DoD and its Components with the best qualified candidates while enhancing employees' careers by giving all employees a fair chance to compete for advancement. The underlying principle of Merit Promotion Programs is the identification, qualification, evaluation and selection of candidates based solely on job-related criteria with legitimate position requirements.

Positions filled through merit promotion may use an automated recruitment and referral tool for your Component. When an individual announcement is used, applicants apply directly to the specific announcement.

If your Component uses a flyer or an open continuous announcement, candidates must have a résumé on file at the servicing HR office or regional center and apply to inventory announcements to receive consideration. Candidates are matched against the skills of the position being filled. A reasonable number of candidates possessing the greatest number of skills are referred for selection consideration.

## **ALTERNATE CERTIFICATION**

This method of recruitment may be accomplished by (1) the selecting official or (2) the servicing HR office depending upon your Component's or local merit promotion policy. Local procedures may vary depending upon any labor/management agreements and/or merit promotion policies.

(1) If the selecting official uses this method, the selecting official must maintain documentation including the source of employees and list of employees considered, method and assessment criteria used to assess employees, individual employee ratings, identification of what constitutes the highest-quality group and selectee's name.

(2) If the servicing HR office accomplishes the process, the selecting official forwards the recruitment request to the servicing HR office containing the employee's name and social security number, the vacancy information (e.g., PD number) and the request for personnel action checklist to the servicing HR office. The servicing HR office enters the appropriate information into the automated tool to compare the individuals qualifications to pre-established assessment criteria to determine if the name-requested employee is "among the best qualified." If the employee meets the best qualified criteria, the selection of the name-requested candidate may be finalized without a formal referral certificate (with additional candidates) being issued to the selecting official. This process ensures the name-requested candidate has been "alternatively certified" through competitive criteria and is within reach for selection. If the name-requested candidate is certified as among the best qualified, the request for personnel action is annotated, and the selection is processed.

## **MODIFICATION TO QUALIFICATION STANDARDS**

The experience requirements defined in any qualification standard may be modified for certain noncompetitive actions, such as reassignments and changes-to-lower grade, to allow the identification of closely related experience to be qualifying. This flexibility allows managers to select candidates who clearly show the capability to perform the major task requirements of the position being filled based on closely related experience. Requirements for professional certifications and licenses, however, may not be waived.

## EXTERNAL HIRING OPTIONS

*Applies to General Public, Former Military, Former Federal Employee or Spouse of Relocating Military Member or DoD Civilian*

The following pages provide a brief description of various ways that a vacant position can be filled from outside the current federal work force. Each section addresses a different category of External Hiring Option: Special External Hiring Options, Other External Hiring Options and Critical Hiring Options (authorized for severe shortages or critical need programs). Contact your HR professional for more information on these options.

## SPECIAL EXTERNAL HIRING OPTIONS

### MILITARY/CIVILIAN SPOUSES OR FAMILY MEMBERS

#### **FORMER OVERSEAS EMPLOYEES**

##### **HIRED UNDER EXECUTIVE ORDER 12721**

Appointments may be made to eligible employees returning to the Continental United States (CONUS). In order to be eligible, the employee must have worked overseas for a total of 52 weeks as an appropriated fund federal employee while being a family member of a civilian employee, a non-appropriated fund employee or uniformed servicemember serving overseas, and must have received a fully successful (pass) performance rating. Eligibility is limited to three years following the date of return from overseas to the United States to resume residence.

#### **SPOUSE OF RELOCATING DoD CIVILIAN**

A spouse of a relocating active-duty military member or DOD civilian employee, may apply to vacancy announcements regardless of the Area of Consideration, during the 30 days preceding through the six months following his or her sponsor's relocation to the new commuting area.

## MILITARY/CIVILIAN SPOUSES OR FAMILY MEMBERS

### **NONCOMPETITIVE APPOINTMENT OF CERTAIN MILITARY SPOUSES**

Effective 11 September 2009, a military spouse may be noncompetitively appointed to a temporary, term or permanent position providing he or she meets certain eligibility criteria. Eligibility is limited to a maximum of two years from the date of documented eligibility and to the geographical area indicated on the servicemember's PCS orders. However, the geographic restriction does not apply to unmarried widows/widowers. Additionally, the spouse must have been married to the servicemember at the time the servicemember received their orders to relocate, became 100% disabled or was killed. Eligibility for this noncompetitive hiring option falls into these major categories:

- A spouse of a U.S. Armed Forces servicemember serving on Active Duty (not for training) for more than 180 days, provided the spouse relocates to the member's new permanent duty station.
- A spouse of a U.S. Armed Forces servicemember who is retired from Active Duty with a documented Service-connected disability rating of 100%.
- A spouse of a U.S. Armed Forces servicemember who retired or was released or discharged from Active Duty and has a disability rating of 100% as documented by the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- A spouse of a U.S. Armed Forces servicemember killed while on Active Duty.  
In this case, the spouse must be the un-remarried widow/widower of the deceased servicemember to meet eligibility.

Supporting documentation required may include:

- a copy of the marriage or death certificate
- a copy of the PCS Orders
- a copy of the member's DD-214
- Veterans Administration (VA) documentation

## PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

### **PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM**

People with disabilities may be hired through the traditional competitive hiring process or, if they qualify, noncompetitively through the use of excepted service appointing options. Excepted service appointing options for hiring people with disabilities were developed to provide an opportunity to people with disabilities to show that they can do the job and to circumvent the attitudinal barriers that managers and supervisors have concerning people with disabilities. It is emphasized that candidates must be fully qualified and be able to perform the essential functions of the position with or without reasonable accommodation. There are two ways to hire people with disabilities noncompetitively:

- People with disabilities may be certified as eligible by the state vocational rehabilitation agency or Department of Veterans Affairs. Employees may be converted to competitive status after two successful years of job performance.
- People who are severely disabled may also be hired noncompetitively after completion of a 700-hour appointment. This trial appointment allows people with disabilities to demonstrate their ability to do the job. If successful, employees may convert to a continuing Schedule A appointment without certification.

## VETERANS

### **VETERANS' RECRUITMENT APPOINTMENT (VRA)**

The VRA is a special option by which agencies can, if they wish, appoint an eligible veteran without competition. The candidate does not have to be on a list of eligibles, but must meet the basic qualification requirements for the position. The VRA is an excepted appointment to a competitive Service position up to the GS-11 level (or equivalent). After two years of satisfactory service, the veteran is converted to a career-conditional appointment in the competitive Service.

### **VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY ACT (VEOA)**

When an agency accepts applications from outside the Department of Defense, the Veterans' Employment Opportunity Act of 1998 (VEOA) allows eligible veterans to compete for these vacancies under merit promotion procedures. Veterans who are selected may be appointed at any level and are given career or career conditional appointments in the competitive Service.

### **30% OR MORE DISABLED VETERANS**

Veterans who have a current notice of a Service-connected compensable disability of 30% or more from the Veterans Administration may be appointed at any level and without competition. The disabled veteran is appointed to a temporary position lasting longer than 60 days or to a term position. The employee may then be converted without competition to a career or career conditional appointment at any time during his or her temporary or term appointment.

### **WOUNDED WARRIORS**

Wounded warriors may be appointed under the provisions of 30% or more Disabled Veterans, VEOA, VRA or people with disabilities. If you are interested in hiring a wounded warrior, contact your HR professional who will connect you with your Component's Wounded Warriors Program Office.

## STUDENTS

### **STUDENT EDUCATION EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SEEP)**

The Student Education Employment Program (SEEP) serves as a tool to assist in building a diverse work force. The program has two components, the Student Career Experience Program and the Student Temporary Employment Program. Students gain exposure to public service while enhancing their educational goals and shaping their career choices. Well-educated graduates may be brought into the work force and at the same time provide managers the ability to evaluate the student's performance in real-world situations.

### **STUDENT CAREER EXPERIENCE PROGRAM (SCEP)**

College students meeting specific eligibility requirements (such as maintaining a 2.0 Grade Point Average (GPA) and signing an agreement between the student, school and employer) are hired to work in their academic fields. Students under this option may be entitled to health insurance and other federal benefits, and may be noncompetitively converted to a career, career conditional or term appointment following completion of their academic and work experience requirements. Hiring a student under SCEP is an effective way for a manager to bring students into the agency in targeted positions for work force and succession planning, evaluate the student's performance in real work situations and permanently place successful students upon completion of coursework leading to a diploma, certificate or degree and at least 640 hours of work experience.

### **STUDENT TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (STEP)**

Provides flexibility to appoint students on a temporary basis (not to exceed one year) to jobs that may or may not be related to the student's academic field. Appointments under this option may be extended in one-year increments as long as the individual meets the definition of a student and maintains a 2.0 Grade Point Average (GPA). This option does not provide a means of subsequently converting the student to a permanent appointment at a future date.

## **OTHER EXTERNAL HIRING OPTIONS**

### **DELEGATED EXAMINING**

These hiring options allow you to fill temporary, term or permanent vacancies where the source of applicants is generally candidates who are non-federal or not appointable under any other method. The servicing HR office has Delegated Examining Authority for GS and FWS positions to issue individual announcements that are open to the general public. Candidates are certified in score order or by category, with veterans receiving additional points. Generally, a veteran with the same or higher score of a nonveteran or in the same category as a nonveteran must be selected over a nonveteran. Provisions are available for valid requests for passing over of veterans. Your HR advisor will advise you of your recruitment options when the certificate is received from the servicing HR office.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE CAREERS WITH AMERICA (ACWA) OPTION**

ACWA is a recruitment source or examination program available through OPM. ACWA program provides for entry-level hiring at the GS-05 and GS-07 level in a large number of professional and administrative occupations. ACWA is authorized under the terms of a consent decree (Luevano vs. Lachance) and can only be used for specific series and job titles. Consult with your HR professional for more information.

### **OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT (OPM) SHARED CASE EXAMINING**

With prior approval from your DoD Component and when delegated examining or competitive examining does not meet the recruitment needs, you may be able to use OPM services. These services would be paid for by the manager and used to fill temporary, term or permanent positions through vacancy announcements which are open to the general public. The same rules governing veterans that applies to Delegated Examining and Competitive Examining certificates applies to certificates issued from OPM under this method.

### **REINSTATEMENT ELIGIBLES**

Re-employment of former federal government employees. Individuals with reinstatement rights may be noncompetitively placed in positions at grades or pay bands equal to or lower than the grade or pay band previously held. Filling a position with a reinstatement eligible can be a quick method of filling a position, especially when the supervisor is able to name request an individual with previous experience. Reinstatement eligibles may also compete with merit promotion candidates for positions at higher grades or pay bands than they previously held.

### **RE-EMPLOYED ANNUITANTS**

An annuitant under either the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) or Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) may be employed in any position for which he or she is qualified. With prior approval from your DoD Component, re-employed annuitants may be hired on a temporary or indefinite basis. An annuitant whose retirement was not based upon disability will continue to receive his or her full retirement annuity and salary during re-employment. Employment of annuitants is beneficial to management in that it provides a readily available source of highly qualified candidates to meet critical mission needs (e.g., for a position that is hard to fill, a position that is critical to accomplish the organization's mission, when the annuitant has unique or specialized skills or unusual qualifications or to mentor less experienced employees and/or provide continuity during critical organizational transitions). Some restrictions apply to rehiring civilian employees who received Department of Defense (DoD) separation incentives.

## **INTERCHANGE AGREEMENTS**

Agreements exist between agencies to allow employees to move from the excepted Service to the competitive Service. Interchange agreements exist with:

- Department of Defense Non-Appropriated Fund  
*effective 9/20/91; extended indefinitely*
- Defense Civilian Intelligence Personnel System  
*expires 9/30/10*
- Department of Homeland Security, Transportation and Security Administration  
*effective 2/1/05; expires 1/31/13*
- Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs  
*effective 10/16/57; extended indefinitely*
- Federal Aviation Administration  
*effective 11/6/97; expires 12/31/11*
- Tennessee Valley Authority  
*effective 10/16/57; extended indefinitely*
- Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
*effective 5/12/87; extended indefinitely*
- Corporation for National and Community Service  
*effective 7/29/05; expires 7/28/12*

## **TERM APPOINTMENT**

Term appointments are usually for work of a project nature, where there is uncertainty of future funding, or where a function is scheduled for contracting out or abolishment. An individual may be hired to perform work that is expected to last for more than one year, but no longer than four years (under GS and FWS).

## **TEMPORARY APPOINTMENT**

Temporary appointments are usually for meeting a temporary workload peak, completing a project, or meeting a staffing need that is going to be terminated by contracting out or abolishment. An individual may be hired to perform work that is expected to be up to one year, but no longer than two years (under GS and FWS). The initial appointment may be no longer than one year, but may be extended one additional year. Temporary appointments extended beyond a total of two years must be approved by OPM.

# CRITICAL EXTERNAL HIRING OPTIONS

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) may approve specific direct hire options for filling temporary, term or permanent positions in response to a severe shortage of candidates or a critical hiring need. Use of a direct hire option expedites the recruitment process by enabling a job offer to be made to a candidate at a recruitment event, such as a job fair, as long as the servicing HR office has an open vacancy announcement for the occupation and there are no candidates under a mandatory placement program, such as the Priority Placement Program. Depending on the specific direct hire option, veterans' preference may apply.

## DIRECT HIRE OPTION

### **GOVERNMENTWIDE SEVERE SHORTAGE OF CANDIDATES MEDICAL OCCUPATIONS**

The occupations covered under this direct hire option are Diagnostic Radiologic Technologist, GS-647; Medical Officer, GS-602; Nurse, GS-610 and GS-620 and Pharmacist, GS-660.

*effective 6/20/03; no expiration date*

### **GOVERNMENTWIDE CRITICAL HIRING NEED INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT (INFORMATION SECURITY) GS-2210 POSITIONS**

This option is for positions at or above the GS-9 level in support of governmentwide efforts to carry out the requirements of the Government Information Security Reform Act and the Federal Information Security Management Act.

*effective 6/20/03; no expiration date*

### **DIRECT HIRE OPTION UNDER THE DoD FY09 APPROPRIATION ACT MEDICAL OCCUPATIONS**

The occupations covered under this direct hire option are Physicians, Dentists, Podiatrists, Optometrists, Nurses, Physicians Assistants, Expanded-Function Dental Auxiliaries, Chiropractors, Pharmacists, Audiologists, Psychologists, Social Workers, Orthotists, Prothetists, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Rehabilitation Therapists, Respiratory Therapists, Speech Pathologists, Dieticians, Nutritionists, Industrial Hygienists, Psychology Technicians, Social Services Assistants, Practical Nurses, Nursing Assistants and Dental Hygienists.

*effective 10/14/08; no expiration date*

## **DIRECT HIRE OPTION**

### **EXPEDITED HIRING OPTION**

#### **ACQUISITION POSITIONS**

These positions are at the GS-09 through GS-15 and comparable levels in the following Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) career fields: Auditing (AUD); Business, Cost Estimating, Financial Management (BCEFM); Contracting (CON); Facilities Engineering (FE); Information Technology (IT); Life Cycle Logistics (LCL); Production, Quality and Manufacturing (PQM); Program Management (PM); Quality Control and Assurance (QA); Science and Technology Management (S&T); Systems Planning, Research, Development, Engineering and Testing (SPRDE) and Test and Evaluation (T&E).

*effective 12/23/08; expires 9/30/2012*

### **OPM DIRECT HIRE AUTHORITIES**

*[http://www.opm.gov/hr\\_practitioners/lawsregulations/appointingauthorities/index.asp#directhire](http://www.opm.gov/hr_practitioners/lawsregulations/appointingauthorities/index.asp#directhire)*