

Lesson 1: Introduction to the Basic Federal Hiring Process for Competitive Service Positions

Course Overview

Welcome to The Federal Hiring Process for Staffing Specialists!

In this course, you will be introduced to the stages of the basic federal hiring process, including the roles and responsibilities of Staffing Specialists and other personnel involved.

Lesson Overview

In this lesson, you will be introduced to the seven steps in the basic federal hiring process and how the Staffing Specialist is involved in this process. Later lessons will provide more information about each step.

In this lesson, you will learn to:

- Identify each of the seven steps in the basic federal hiring process
- Identify the steps of the process that have variations when filling an open position in the federal government using various hiring authorities
- Recognize key touchpoints with the hiring manager and applicants

Basic Federal Hiring Process

The federal hiring process presented in this course is the basic process used by Staffing Specialists, like yourself, to hire/appoint employees to competitive service positions when hiring through delegated examining or merit promotion procedures.

Excepted service positions are excluded from the competitive civil service procedures and follow an agency's specific hiring policies and procedures. Senior Executive Service (SES) positions follow a different process for hiring that is usually handled by a specific group outside of normal human resources operations.

The seven basic steps of the federal hiring process are:

1. Identify Job and Assessment Tools
2. Recruit and Announce Job
3. Accept and Review Applications
4. Assess Applicants
5. Certify Eligibles

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6. Make Job Offer
7. Conduct Onboarding

Step 1: Identify Job and Assessment Tools

During Step 1, the Staffing Specialist coordinates with the hiring manager on several items to ensure that the hiring need is fully understood and to prepare for the rest of the hiring process.

The tasks within this step are to:

- Conduct a recruitment consultation meeting
- Identify associated existing Position Description(s) (PDs)
- Conduct/review a job analysis to identify competencies/KSAs for the position
- Identify/develop assessment tools to use during the application process

This step is performed in the same way when using delegated examining (DE) or merit promotion (MP) procedures.

Conduct a Recruitment Consultation Meeting

It is important to note that it is the Specialist's job to guide the process and set the tone in the first meeting with the hiring manager. The Specialist needs to leave the meeting understanding the role that is being filled and any specialized experience needed to go along with it. If the Specialist can gain this information from the meeting, it will help them to create a better certificate. This meeting and what it entails is described more in a later lesson of the course.

Step 2: Recruit and Announce Job

During Step 2, the Staffing Specialist creates and posts the job opportunity announcement (JOA) for the position. To begin, you will review previous JOAs used for the same, or similar, positions. You and the hiring manager will review the prior announcements to determine applicability to the current hiring situation.

You can revise an existing JOA to meet the needs of the current position or create a new JOA if needed. Be sure that the hiring manager reviews the work that you do on the JOA so that he or she is in agreement with the requirements included. Once the hiring manager reviews and accepts the JOA, you post the JOA.

It is important to note that when using some hiring authorities, public notice is not required and this step can be eliminated. The guidelines around when public notice is required are explained in more detail in later lessons of the course.

Step 3: Accept and Review Applications

During this step, you will first notify the applicants that their application was received.

Then, you review applications to determine who meets the eligibility requirements and can continue through the process. In conjunction with this step, priority placement lists are "cleared" – meaning that you look at priority placement lists to see if there are people on those lists who potentially qualify for

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the vacancy and should be put into the applicant pool. During this process, you are also identifying those applicants who claim eligibility under priority placement programs, such as those for displaced federal employees.

(Note that while the clearing of priority placement lists is included as a sub-step here, that process can happen prior to receiving applications and in some cases before a posting would occur.)

You will conduct qualification reviews, on those applications that were deemed eligible, to screen out unqualified candidates, and then you notify applicants of the qualifications review findings.

Eligibility Requirements

When conducting the initial review of applications you are simply determining if an applicant meets the eligibility requirements such as citizenship, veterans' preference if that preference is claimed, MP status, and age when age restriction is a consideration.

Specific eligibility requirements differ slightly between DE and MP. You will learn more about the various eligibility requirements when using DE and MP later in the course.

Priority Placement Lists

The priority placement programs are mandatory placement programs used to match eligible well-qualified employees, most of whom are subjects of displacement, with vacant positions. Individuals may be hired through one of the following programs:

- Reemployment priority list (RPL)
- Career Transition Assistance Plan (CTAP)
- Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan (ICTAP)
- Department of Defense's Priority Placement Program (PPP)

Step 4: Assess Applicants

During Step 4, applicants are rated and ranked so you can determine who moves on in the hiring process.

When using the delegated examining process, you rank based on the category rating process. You will learn more about this in Lesson 5.

When using the merit promotion process, you follow agency-specific policies to determine the best-qualified candidates (e.g., top ten qualified, everyone at 95 or above, natural break in score).

Step 5: Certify Eligibles

Once the applicants are ranked, you place the eligible candidate in order of selection to create a certificate of eligibles based on either DE or MP rules. You then send the list to the hiring manager. At this point, you will notify applicants regarding whether or not they were referred on the list of eligibles.

The hiring manager conducts the interview process and makes a selection. Generally, the Staffing Specialist is not involved in the interview process but may assist the hiring manager by training personnel on conducting structured interviews or providing guidance as needed.

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Prior to notifying a selected candidate, the HR office will conduct an audit of the hiring case to verify that regulations were followed appropriately and to ensure that all necessary information is present.

The successful candidate will be notified after the audit is completed, which leads to the next step in the hiring process.

Step 6: Make Job Offer

Step 6, making the job offer, is the same process when using DE or MP procedures.

During this step, if the selected applicant is reluctant to accept the job offer, the hiring manager and Staffing Specialist work together to determine if compensation flexibilities can be used to enhance the offer.

Once he or she accepts the offer, you will initiate the background check and notify unsuccessful applicants of the result. (Some agencies notify the applicants who were not selected at the time the audit is conducted.)

OPM requires that you notify candidates, who were referred but not selected, that another candidate was selected for the position. This ensures candidates know where they are in the hiring process.

Step 7: Conduct Onboarding

To begin the orientation and onboarding processes, you coordinate with the hiring manager to determine the entry on duty date and prepare for the selectee's arrival to their new job.

Lesson Summary

In this lesson, you learned about the seven steps in the basic federal hiring process and how the Staffing Specialist is involved in this process.

Now that you have completed this lesson, you should be able to:

- Identify each of the seven steps in the basic federal hiring process
- Identify the steps of the process that have variations when filling an open position in the federal government using various hiring authorities
- Recognize key touchpoints with the hiring manager and applicants