

EDO Principal Correspondence Control

FROM: DUE: / / EDO CONTROL: G20000248
DOC DT: 05/01/00
FINAL REPLY:

Janice R. Lachance
Office of Personnel Management (OPM)

TO:

Agency Heads

FOR SIGNATURE OF : ** GRN ** CRC NO: 00-0320

DESC:

Adding Talent: Hiring and Promoting People with
Disabilities in the Federal Government

ROUTING:

Travers
Paperiello
Miraglia
Norry
Blaha
Burns/Cyr

DATE: 05/12/00

ASSIGNED TO: CONTACT:
HR Bird

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR REMARKS:

For Appropriate Action.

Template: SECY-017

E-RIDS: SECY-01

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
CORRESPONDENCE CONTROL TICKET

Date Printed: May 11, 2000 15:17

PAPER NUMBER: LTR-00-0320
ACTION OFFICE: EDO

LOGGING DATE: 05/11/2000

AUTHOR: JANICE LACHANCE
AFFILIATION: OPM
ADDRESSEE: AGENCY HEADS
SUBJECT: ADDING TALENT: HIRING AND PROMOTING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE
FEDERAL GOVERNEMENT

ACTION: Appropriate
DISTRIBUTION: RF

LETTER DATE: 05/01/2000

ACKNOWLEDGED No

SPECIAL HANDLING:

NOTES:

FILE LOCATION: ADAMS

DATE DUE:

DATE SIGNED:

EDO --G20000248



UNITED STATES
OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
WASHINGTON, DC 20415-0001

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

MAY 1 2000

MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES

FROM:

JANICE R. LACHANCE
DIRECTOR

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Janice R. Lachance", is written over the printed name and title.

Subject: Adding Talent: Hiring and Promoting People with Disabilities in the Federal Government

This is a new era in the quest for talent. Our Government should reflect the rich diversity of America and provide opportunities to persons of all backgrounds, origins, and abilities. It is essential that we use the resources, talents, and skills of one of the country's untapped resources, people with disabilities.

Background

On March 13, 1998, the President issued Executive Order 13078, Increasing Employment of Adults with Disabilities (<http://www.opm.gov/employ/disabilities/html/execord.htm>) which established a Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities. The Task Force's mission is to create a coordinated and aggressive national policy to increase the number of gainfully employed adults with disabilities. To make the Federal Government a model employer of people with disabilities, the President asked Federal agencies to review their programs and policies affecting the employment of people with disabilities and take immediate action.

Last October, the President released a landmark plan, "Accessing Opportunity: The Plan for Employment of People with Disabilities in the Federal Government" and its companion employment guide (<http://www.opm.gov>). OPM developed both documents to provide agencies detailed resources as they recruit, hire, train, and promote people with disabilities. The President directed Federal agencies to implement the plan and use it to both further the representation of people with disabilities and meet their workforce planning needs. We must attract candidates with disabilities from inside and outside the Federal Government. From students to managers and supervisors and senior executives, we must explore ways to recruit from all sources when filling positions.

How to Make It Happen

Many departments and independent agencies are motivated to remove barriers and increase their participation in special recruitment and hiring initiatives as well as developmental opportunities. While we have made substantial progress toward inclusion, we must make better use of hiring authorities, resources for accommodating people with disabilities, and FTE flexibility.

To hire people with disabilities, Federal departments and agencies can use any of the many hiring authorities listed in Attachment 1.

- One authority allows you to convert an employee to the competitive service by using a program designed to help qualified physically impaired persons obtain employment in positions which are consistent with their level of skills and abilities, at grades GS 1-15 or under the Federal wage system (5 CFR 213.3102(u)).
- Another authority allows you to hire a disabled person on a temporary basis for a period longer than two years (5 CFR 213.3102(i)(3)).
- The Student Educational Employment Program allows for hiring of students attending any accredited high school, college, or vocational/technical school year round. Under this flexible hiring program, students can be appointed to temporary positions or a work study (cooperative education) program. The work study program provides eligibility for conversion to permanent employment upon successful completion of educational and program requirements (5 CFR 213.3202).

In addition, OPM recently proposed regulations that will provide individuals with psychiatric disabilities the same opportunity for conversion into the competitive civil service as employees with other disabilities. We plan to issue final regulations in the summer of 2000.

For permanent and summer recruitment purposes, we recommend use of the Workforce Recruitment Program sponsored by the President's Committee for the Employment of People with Disabilities and the Department of Defense. It is a resource for employers nationwide to identify qualified temporary and permanent employees from a variety of fields. Its database contains the resume of more than 1,200 students and recent college graduates with disabilities. Attachment 2 provides more information about the program.

To help accommodate people with disabilities, several Governmentwide resources are available. For instance:

- The Department of Defense's Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program (CAP) provides an extensive resource directory which is accessible on their web site at <http://www.tricare.osd.mil/cap/resources/resources.htm>.

- The President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities offers a free resource of up-to-date information about accommodations networks, devices, and strategies. The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) may be accessed by telephone at 1-800-526-7234 or at <http://janweb.icdi.wvu.edu/english/homeus.htm>.

Agencies should not consider FTE limitations a barrier to hiring people with disabilities. The FTE policy, as published in the President's Budget, is to provide agencies with flexibility to hire the right numbers of staff to meet program requirements. This policy, which was promulgated by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), has been in place for several years. Among other things, it allows agencies to participate in special hiring initiatives, such as those focused on summer jobs and students with disabilities.

As Federal employers, we must ensure that people with disabilities are made aware of, and have an equal opportunity to compete for, managerial and executive training or other career development opportunities. In addition, we must review career development and related programs to ensure that no barriers exist for people with disabilities.

Start This Summer

We applaud those agencies that have already made hiring students with disabilities a priority. OPM's own target is to ensure that at least 10 percent of all our summer hires (regardless of the hiring program) are people with disabilities. We challenge you to do the same.

OPM will continue to provide training, technical assistance, and advice to help you understand the Plan, become familiar with the many options available to you, and carry out your responsibilities. Attachment 3 provides information about our next workshop to help agencies implement the plan, which will take place on May 15, 2000.

As President Clinton said: "If America is to continue to grow and prosper, if we are to lead the challenging global economy of the 21st century, we cannot afford to ignore the talents, energy, and creativity of the 54 million Americans with disabilities." Let us work together to make the Federal Government not just the Nation's largest employer, but its model employer.

If your staff has any questions, they may call OPM's Office of Diversity on (202) 606-1059.

Attachment 1: Hiring Persons with Disabilities

Attachment 2: Workforce Recruitment Program

Attachment 3: Information about OPM Workshop, "Accessing Opportunity: The Plan for Employment of People with Disabilities in the Federal Government"

cc: Directors of Personnel
Directors of EEO/Civil Rights

HIRING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Managers may use the following authorities specifically to hire people with disabilities:

PEOPLE WITH SEVERE PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

This option has two different appointments:

Option 1 - Leading to Continuing Positions: This program is designed to help qualified physically impaired people obtain employment in positions consistent with their level of skills and abilities, at grades GS-1 to GS-15 or under the Federal Wage System. (5 CFR 213.3102(u))

Requirements: Persons may be appointed if (1) they have already demonstrated their ability to perform the position duties satisfactorily on a temporary trial appointment or (2) they have been certified by counselors of State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies or the Department of Veterans Affairs as likely to succeed in the performance of the position duties.

Type of Appointment: Excepted service.

Conversion to Permanent Position: After completing two years of satisfactory performance, employees may be converted to appointments in the competitive service. (5 CFR 315.709)

Option 2 - Time-Limited Positions: This authority is designed to help qualified people with physical disabilities obtain time-limited employment in positions consistent with their level of skills and abilities at grades GS-1 to GS-15 or under the Federal Wage System. (5 CFR 213.3102 (i)(3))

Requirements: Persons may be appointed when OPM has determined that examining is impracticable.

Type of Appointment: Excepted service.

Conversion to Permanent Position: There is no provision under this authority for conversion to a permanent appointment when the time-limited appointment expires. However, conversion to appointments which lead to continuing positions, as described above, is possible.

PEOPLE WITH MENTAL RETARDATION

This program is designed to promote the full consideration of people with mental retardation for employment in positions where they meet the performance requirements or where the performance requirements can be modified to take advantage of their abilities. (5 CFR 213.3102 (t))

Requirements: Persons may be appointed based on certification from the appropriate State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency that they have the ability to perform the position duties, are physically qualified to do the work without risk to themselves or others, and are competent to maintain themselves in a work environment.

Type of Appointment: Excepted service.

Conversion to Permanent Position: After completing two years of successful service, employees may be converted to appointments in the competitive service. (5 CFR 315.709)

PEOPLE WITH PSYCHIATRIC DISABILITIES

This program is designed to help persons who are certified as at a severe disadvantage in obtaining employment because of disrupted employment due to hospitalization or outpatient treatment for psychiatric disabilities. (5 CFR 213.3202(k))

Requirements: Persons may be appointed to positions at grades GS-15 and below if they are individuals who meet two specific criteria. First, that they are placed at a severe disadvantage in obtaining employment because of a psychiatric disability evidenced by hospitalization or outpatient treatment and have had a significant period of substantially disrupted employment because of the disability. Secondly, they must be certified to a specific position by a State vocational rehabilitation counselor or a Veterans Administration counseling psychologist (or psychiatrist) who indicates that they meet the severe disadvantage criteria stated above, that they are capable of functioning in the positions to which they will be appointed, and that any residual disability is not job related.

Type of Appointment: Excepted service.

Conversion to Permanent Position: Employment of any individual under this authority may not exceed 2 years following each significant period of mental illness. There is no provision under this authority for conversion to a permanent appointment.

Note: OPM recently proposed regulations that will provide individuals with psychiatric disabilities the same opportunities for conversion into the competitive civil service as employees with other disabilities. OPM plans to issue final regulations in the summer of 2000. Until the regulations are final, agencies may continue to use 5 CFR 213.3202(k) and any other appropriate excepted service appointing authorities to appoint persons with psychiatric disabilities.

DISABLED VETERANS (30% OR MORE)

Veterans with a compensable service-connected disability of 30 percent or more may be appointed at any grade level for which they are qualified. (5 CFR 316.402(b)(4) and 5 CFR 316.302(b)(4))

Requirements: Veterans who are qualified for the positions must have retired from active military service with a disability rating of 30 percent or more, or be rated by the Department of Veterans Affairs within the last year as having a compensable service-connected disability of 30 percent or more. Under this option, persons may be given noncompetitive temporary (up to 1 year) or term (more than 1 year but not more than 4 years) appointments.

Type of Appointment: Competitive Service

Conversion to Permanent Position: Subject to meeting qualifications requirements, employees hired under this provision may be converted to permanent employment at any time provided the time-limit of their appointment was for more than 60 days. (5 CFR 315.707)

Managers may also use the following hiring authorities to hire people with disabilities:

VETERANS READJUSTMENT APPOINTMENT (VRA)

This law allows the hiring of eligible veterans without competition at the GS-11 grade level and below.

Requirements: Generally, veterans must have served on active duty for more than 180 days, any part of which occurred after August 4, 1964 (or February 28, 1961, for those who served in the Republic of Vietnam), and have received other than a dishonorable discharge. (5 CFR Part 307 (a)(2))

Time Limits: To be eligible for a VRA appointment, an otherwise eligible veteran must be appointed within 10 years of his or her last discharge from active duty. These time limits do not apply to a veteran with a 30 percent or more service-connected disability.

Type of Appointment: Excepted service.

Conversion to Permanent Position: Employees must be converted to the competitive service after two years of satisfactory service. (5 CFR 315.705)

STUDENT EDUCATIONAL EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

The Student Educational Employment Program allows for hiring of students attending any accredited high school, college, or vocational/technical school year round. Under this flexible hiring program, students can be appointed to temporary positions or a work study (cooperative education) program. The work study program provides eligibility for conversion to permanent employment upon successful completion of educational and program requirements. The program has two components:

Component 1 - Student Career Experience Program (SCEP): The SCEP is a component of the Student Educational Employment Program, and is available to all levels of degree-seeking students (who are accepted for enrollment or enrolled, and taking at least a half-time course load) in an accredited academic institution from high school through graduate school. It provides for formal periods of work and study while the student is enrolled in school. SCEP can be used to develop traditional cooperative education programs or other work-study formats. (5 CFR 213.3202 (b))

Requirements: The work performed in the SCEP must be related to the academic course of study. The agency, the school, and the student complete a written agreement which contains information on work assignments, schedule, etc. The grade level at which the student is appointed depends on the qualification requirements of the position, and the employee's experience and academic level.

Type of Appointment: Excepted service.

Conversion to Permanent Position: Students are eligible for conversion to the competitive service for up to 120 days following completion of the requirements (education and work requirements) of the program. (E.O.12015)

Component 2 - Student Temporary Program (STEP): The STEP is a component of the Student Educational Employment Program and is available to all levels of degree-seeking students (who are accepted for enrollment or enrolled, and taking at least half-time course load) in an accredited academic institution from high school through graduate school. (5 CFR 213.3202 (a))

Requirements: The job for which the student is hired need not be related to the academic field of study. The grade level at which the student is appointed depends on the qualification requirements of the position, and the employee's experience and academic levels.

Time Limits: Appointments are made for a period not-to-exceed 1 year, and may be extended if the student remains enrolled in school on at least a half-time basis.

Type of Appointment: Excepted service.

Conversion to Permanent Position: There is no provision for conversion to appointments in the competitive service under this authority. However, employees may be converted to another excepted appointment in the SCEP.

TEMPORARY LIMITED APPOINTMENTS

Temporary appointments are made when the need for the position is short-term and not expected to last for more than one year. Temporary jobs are filled through competitive procedures with a requirement for public notice. Under limited circumstances, agencies may use "outside-the-register" procedures. Agencies may also give noncompetitive temporary appointments to individuals who qualify for positions and have a specific noncompetitive eligibility such as reinstatement or veterans readjustment appointment (VRA) (5 CFR 316.402).

Time Limits: Appointments are not-to-exceed 1 year; a 1-year extension is allowed.

Conversion to Permanent Position: There is no provision under this authority for conversion to a permanent appointment when the temporary appointment expires.

TERM APPOINTMENTS

Term appointments are made when the need for an employee's services will last for a period of more than one year, but no more than four years. Reasons for term appointments may include, but not be limited to, project work, extraordinary workload, and uncertainty of future funding. Term positions are filled through competitive procedures with the requirement for public notice. These positions may also be filled by qualified individuals based on specific noncompetitive eligibility such as reinstatement and veterans readjustment appointment (VRA) (5 CFR Part 316.302).

Time Limits: Appointments are made for more than one year but not more than four years.

Conversion: This authority does not contain a provision for conversion to a permanent appointment when the term expires.

STUDENT VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Agencies may provide educationally-related work assignments for student volunteers on a non-pay basis. (5 CFR 308.103)

Requirements: The student is enrolled at least half-time in a high school, trade school, vocational institute, university, or other accredited educational institution, and the school permits the participation of the student in a program established to provide educational experience.

Time Limits: No time limits have been established for these appointments, as long as the student continues to meet program requirements.

THE WORKFORCE RECRUITMENT PROGRAM FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

What is the Workforce Recruitment Program? The Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students with Disabilities (WRP) is a program co-sponsored by the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities and the Department of Defense. It is a resource for employers nationwide to identify qualified temporary and permanent employees from a variety of fields. Applicants are highly motivated postsecondary students and recent graduates eager to prove their abilities in the workforce.

What Does the Program Offer Employers?

- Job candidates pre-screened through face-to-face interviews
- Information about each applicant's qualifications
- Referral pools tailored to specific job requirements
- Access to candidates across the nation, by state or by school
- Flexibility in hiring for summer internships or permanent positions
- Opportunity to identify outstanding interns for permanent staffing needs
- Freedom to conduct independent interviews after referrals are made

And all of these services are free!

What Can Summer Interns Do for Your Business?

- Undertake special projects postponed for lack of time or resources
- Assist permanent staff with key projects
- Share specialized knowledge and innovative technical skills
- Assume responsibilities of staff on vacation or leave of absence
- Prove that qualified people with disabilities make excellent employees
- Contribute in a wide variety of areas, including business, communications, human resources, engineering, science, computer science, and administrative support

How Does the Program Work? Annually, WRP-trained recruiters conduct personal interviews with interested students on college and university campuses. From these interviews, WRP compiles a database containing information on more than 1,000 college students and recent graduates seeking temporary or permanent jobs.

The database is available on CD-ROM to employers at no cost. Employers may search the database by state or by job category to identify qualified applicants for their job openings. Each search will generate candidate profiles, which include academic and demographic data, contact information, and recruiter comments. Employers are free to conduct independent interviews with candidates, and are under no obligation to hire.

To Access the Database To obtain a complimentary copy of the CD-ROM and instructions for its use, fax a request on official letterhead to "WRP Manager" at (202) 376-6868. Please be sure to indicate clearly the organization's street address and telephone number.

As an alternative, employers may contact the President's Committee's Job Accommodation Network (JAN) toll-free at (800)526-7234 (Voice/TTY) to have a specialist conduct a database search for applicants who meet specific job qualifications.

Employers: For More Information about the Program, contact the WRP Coordinator at the **President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities.**

1331 F Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20004

(202) 376-6200 Voice
(202) 376-6205 TTY

meyer-paul@pcepd.gov E-mail
kravitz-betsy@pcepd.gov E-mail

ANNOUNCING AN OPM WORKSHOP FOR AGENCY HUMAN RESOURCES STAFF ON:

**ACCESSING OPPORTUNITY: THE PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN
THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

For those who missed the first one, OPM will host the second workshop to help agencies in implementing **Accessing Opportunity: The Plan for Employment of People with Disabilities in the Federal Government** on May 15, 2000. This model plan is intended to serve as a framework for Federal departments and agencies to use as they create strategies and initiatives to recruit, hire, develop, and retain more persons with disabilities.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: Departmental and agency representatives responsible for developing and implementing agency human resources policy and programs.

WHEN: May 15, 2000 (Monday)

FROM: 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM

WHERE: U.S. Office of Personnel Management
1900 E St NW, Room 1350

Departments and agencies interested in having representatives attend are requested to confirm attendance no later than Thursday, May 11, 2000.

Please provide the following information for your agency attendees:

AGENCY: _____

NAME: _____

TITLE/OFFICE: _____

PHONE (Work): _____

FAX: _____

EMAIL: _____

Please return your completed registration by FAX to (202) 606-0927.