



Guide To Career Ladders For Extramural Resources Management Project Officers

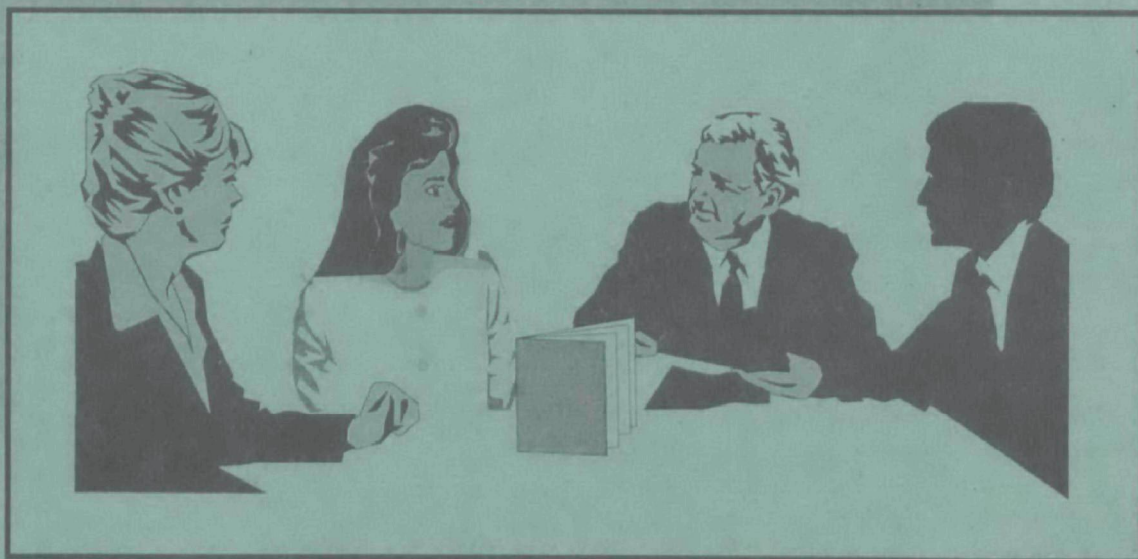


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GUIDE TO CAREER LADDERS FOR EXTRAMURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PROJECT OFFICERS

I. INTRODUCTION

As a result of a recommendation in the report of the Standing Committee on Contracts, the Agency is encouraging EPA organizations to establish career tracks for employees with significant contracts management responsibilities. This recommendation has been expanded to include all forms of extramural resources management. This guide provides information on establishing career ladders for Project Officers engaged in managing extramural resources, whether through procurement (contracts) or assistance management (grants and cooperative agreements) or interagency agreements. The report's recommendation and this guide recognize the central importance of extramural resources management to EPA's success in meeting its many mission-related goals and achieving a broad variety of program objectives.

This guidance is intended to promote equity between career ladders for Project Officers in scientific/technical occupations and those for Project Officers in nonscientific/technical series, as well as equity between career ladders for Project Officer work and those for other types of administrative and professional work. It will also assist managers in designing Project Officer positions and deciding which career ladder is appropriate in their organizations, given the nature and extent of their use of extramural resources.

II. COVERAGE

This guide focuses on Project Officers. Although Delivery Order Project Officers, Work Assignment Managers, and other employees play important roles in managing extramural resources, their extramural resources management work is often collateral to their primary duties. The extramural resources management work in these positions does not usually impact their classification and career ladders. When positions are established primarily to perform the work of Delivery Order Project Officers or Work Assignment Managers, and when such work occupies the majority of time in these positions, however, this guide may be used as a reference in establishing or classifying these types of positions.

Many employees in EPA perform Project Officer functions for less than half of their job time, in some cases as little as 10 percent of job time. These positions have been established primarily to perform some other function, from secretarial to professional engineering work. Such positions are "mixed" positions; that is, the grade level of the various categories of work assigned to the position may be different. They are normally classified on the basis of the non-extramural resources management duties occupying the majority of time and which represent the primary purpose of the position.

This guide is intended for use in identifying the appropriate career ladders for positions that devote the majority or all of their time to Project Officer work, including any combination of contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, and interagency agreements. It is not

appropriate for positions that have been established primarily to perform other types of work. When Deputy Project Officers devote the majority or all of their time to Deputy Project Officer work, it may also be applied to those positions.

This guide does not supersede OPM classification standards and guides used in determining the appropriate grade level for individual Project Officer positions. It should be used as a supplement to classification standards applicable to individual positions. Most subject-matter standards used to classify positions do not address their extramural resources management component. This guide is intended to fill that gap.

This guidance is not applicable to Contract Specialist, Grants Management Specialist, Contract Officer, or Grants Management Officer positions.

III. SOURCES

This guidance is based on applicable classification standards, including the GS-1102, Contracting Series; Research Grants Grade Evaluation Guide; Program Specialist Grade Evaluation Guide; Administrative Analysis Grade Evaluation Guide; as well as the EPA Position Classification Guideline for Environmental Protection Specialist Positions, GS-028. For cross reference purposes, the classification standard for the GS-1720, Education Program Series and the draft classification standard (May 7, 1993) for the proposed Grants Management Series were also consulted. It is also based on extensive surveys of Project Officers and their managers throughout the Agency engaged in a broad range of extramural resources management duties, the findings from focus groups of managers, and review of numerous position descriptions.

IV. PROJECT OFFICER FUNCTIONS

EPA depends on such "extramural resources" as states, local governments, universities and other research organizations, non-profit groups, other Federal agencies, and contractors in the public and private sectors to meet some of its mission objectives. The extent of use of extramural resources varies. Some programs contract only for support services, while others depend on a number of extramural resources to carry out mission-related activities. Project Officers have different levels of responsibility for managing extramural resources, from ensuring that procedural and administrative requirements are met, to identifying program needs, and conceiving, designing, implementing, and managing complex projects. Some Project Officers manage one type of extramural resource; others manage multiple contracts or both contracts and grants and/or cooperative agreements or interagency agreements.

Project Officers managing contracts serve as the Contracting Officer's representative. In the pre-award phase, they typically define the Government's requirements, estimate costs, secure funding, prepare the procurement request, write the statement of work (or provide guidance to Work Assignment Managers in preparing it and approve it), and evaluate proposals from contractors. During this phase, they may also serve as chair of a technical evaluation panel reviewing potential awardees' proposals. During the life of the contract, they provide guidance

to others involved in managing the contract; prepare work assignments or delivery orders; review procurement packages prepared by Work Assignment Managers or Delivery Order Project Officers and recommend changes or additions; monitor contract management activities of Work Assignment Managers; track costs and expenditures; approve invoices; monitor progress and performance; approve deliverables; and advise the Contracting Officer on all technical matters related to determining compliance with terms and conditions to protect the Government's interest. They may also provide services and guidance to contractors, such as by developing procedural guidance and vulnerability controls and arranging contractor access to sites and facilities. During contract close-out, they evaluate the contractor's performance and approve final payments.

Project Officers engaged in assistance management (managing grants or cooperative agreements) usually identify funding availability, evaluate and approve proposals and work plans and advise applicants in correcting programmatic deficiencies, assess applicants' capabilities, ensure all programmatic conditions are included in the agreement, recommend approval, and prepare the Decision Memorandum recommending award of the grant or agreement. They track costs and verify appropriateness of expenditures, monitor progress and compliance with conditions, conduct on-site visits, provide technical and administrative assistance to recipients, recommend corrective actions, work with recipients to resolve problems, and recommend approval of modifications or extensions. They review and certify satisfactory completion of deliverables. Throughout the process, they coordinate extensively with the Grants Management office, which is responsible for administrative support.

Project Officers managing interagency agreements decide whether the agreement is appropriate for a particular objective, determine funding availability, provide information to other agencies, review work plans and budgets, conduct site visits to assess capabilities, negotiate funding levels, prepare the Decision Memorandum, and obtain concurrences within the Agency. They monitor activities of participants, both within and outside the Agency, and progress against expenditures; review progress reports and deliverables to ensure compliance with terms; provide technical assistance; participate in decisions on corrective actions needed; and recommend modifications, extensions, or funding changes. They review and certify final deliverables.

V. TYPES OF PROJECT OFFICER POSITIONS

Users of this guide should carefully identify the overall type of Project Officer position to be established or evaluated to ensure the appropriate guidance is applied to the position. Three types of Project Officer positions are generally found in EPA Regions, Laboratories, Field Offices, and Headquarters organizations.

A description of the three types of Project Officer positions is provided in the table on pages 4 and 5.

Administrative Support Project Officer	Program Management Project Officer	Scientific/Technical Project Officer
<p>Note: These positions usually perform work related to contract administration rather than to supporting management of assistance agreements or interagency agreements. These positions are sometimes titled "Project Officer," although their responsibilities are limited to applying administrative and regulatory rules. Their focus is on the <u>procedural</u> steps entailed in establishing contracts, monitoring and reporting progress, and closing out or terminating contracts. They apply a knowledge of the rules, sequence, and procedures involved in accomplishing administrative support, and follow established procedures in conducting such tasks as ensuring the timeliness, completeness and accuracy of reports and invoices. The substantive and technical acceptability of the deliverables or services is the responsibility of other participants in the process.</p>	<p>Responsible for both the administrative aspects of a contract or agreement and the technical acceptability of the products, services, or programs provided through extramural resources. They sometimes manage a program component through extramural resources. Must apply (not just possess) an in-depth knowledge of the program component for which they have responsibility to initiate, design, negotiate, and monitor contracts, assistance agreements, and/or interagency agreements. Knowledgeable of the mission, goals, and objectives of the program, and are responsible for ensuring that contracts, assistance agreements, or interagency agreements meet program objectives and that resources are expended consistent with these objectives. Assess progress and products for quality. Initiate corrective action. WAMs or other participants may be involved in determining technical acceptability, but Project Officer has overall responsibility for both the technical/substantive and administrative success of the contract, grant, cooperative agreement, or interagency agreement. Some Project Officers in this category also apply journey-level knowledge of engineering, chemistry, or other professional or technical knowledge.</p>	<p>Responsibility for managing a component of the program through extramural resources and for ensuring the appropriateness of the substantive as well as administrative aspects of contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, or interagency agreements; however, they must also apply a high level of professional scientific or technical knowledge because of the complexity, sophistication, or degree of innovation of the products, services, or activities involved. This knowledge is essential to conceiving and structuring projects or program components, developing an accurate and comprehensive scope of work, and ensuring the scientific or technical soundness and feasibility of work plans and budgets. It is also necessary to provide technical guidance to the contractor, assistance recipients, or other agency, and to certify the technical acceptability of products, services, or activities. In carrying out these technical responsibilities, the Project Officer must apply a high order of professional knowledge and experience-based judgement.</p>

Administrative Support Project Officer	Program Management Project Officer	Scientific/Technical Project Officer
<p>The career ladder for this type of Project Officer position may lead to GS-11 if extensive contract administration knowledge is required.</p>	<p>The career ladder can lead to GS-12 or GS-13, depending on the complexity, scope, and impact of the program component and the nature of the contracts, assistance agreements, or interagency agreements managed. At the GS-12 level, the Project Officer manages a component of a program for which the direction, goals, and objectives are determined by others. At the GS-13 level, the Project Officer participates in determining the direction, goals, and objectives of the program component for which he/she is responsible. The grade level of individual positions, however, must be determined by application of classification standards appropriate for the series of the position.</p>	<p>The career ladder may reach the GS-13 level, depending on the level of scientific/technical knowledge required to manage the extramural resources involved, as well as the complexity and impact of the extramural resources management work. The grade level for individual positions, however, must be determined by application of the appropriate classification standard for the series of the position (e.g., standards for various scientific disciplines).</p>

VI. SERIES OF PROJECT OFFICER POSITIONS

The series of Project Officer positions is determined by identifying the primary knowledge required, recruiting sources, and career patterns in the organization. Project Officer work requires administrative skills and knowledge in managing contracts, assistance agreements, and interagency agreements, e.g., skill in planning, budgeting, convening evaluation panels, priority-setting, monitoring, and evaluation. In addition, Project Officers usually must possess and apply substantive knowledge of specific programs and/or professional knowledge in managing extramural resources.

When knowledge of administrative procedures and requirements is primary, the position should be classified in an administrative series, such as the GS-301, Miscellaneous Administrative and Program Series. For some positions, the primary knowledge is substantive knowledge of a program or programs, applied in reviewing proposals; structuring specific contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, or interagency agreements to meet program objectives; evaluating the technical merit of proposals; and providing technical input to contractors or recipients of assistance. The series for these positions varies, depending on the extent of technical or substantive program knowledge required. For example, a generalist series, the GS-343, Management or Program Analyst, or a more specialized series, the GS-028, Environmental Protection Specialist, might be appropriate. Some Project Officer positions in this category may be classified in a general administrative series (GS-301) to broaden recruiting sources, and when the program knowledge required can be gained on the job. For other Project Officer positions, the primary knowledge required is professional scientific or technical knowledge, applied in describing the technical specifications in the scope of work and in providing valid qualitative judgements on the scientific or technical soundness, feasibility, and value of proposals, work plans, budgets, and deliverables. These positions are classified in a professional or technical series.

VII. CAREER LADDERS

A career ladder is a position's grade progression to a target full performance level. The career ladder established in an organization reflects the full performance level of the majority of the work for which the organization is responsible. Thus, the full performance level is the grade level to which all the employees performing a particular type of work can expect to be promoted non-competitively, provided their performance is satisfactory.

The full performance level of Project Officer positions that devote the majority or all of their time to extramural resources management is typically GS-11, 12 or 13. The GS-11 level is appropriate for positions performing only contract administration; these positions have, as their primary requirement, administrative knowledge. The GS-12 and 13 levels require, in **addition**, significant program knowledge, applied in analytical and program management work, and/or scientific or professional knowledge, applied in performing the substantive scientific and technical aspects of managing extramural resources.

Organizations may create Project Officer positions with full performance levels at lower grades, for example, at the GS-9 level. The full performance level will depend on the nature of the work assigned, the type and extent of knowledge required, and other factors.

Similarly, organizations may establish a career ladder with a full performance level of GS-14 if the majority of the work for which the organization is responsible must be performed at the GS-14 level, that is, if all employees engaged in this type of work could expect to be non-competitively promoted to the GS-14 level. For most EPA organizations, however, it is appropriate to reserve the GS-14 level for senior level positions and fill them through competitive procedures. (See Part VIII below.)

Many Project Officers serve in positions at grades below the full performance level while in an entry-level or developmental status. For example, an employee may enter a Project Officer career ladder at the GS-9 level and be assigned the full range of Project Officer tasks, but work initially under the close guidance of a supervisor or more senior Project Officer; the guidance decreases as experience and knowledge increase. Establishing a career ladder for Project Officers will provide an opportunity for organizations to fill these positions at an entry or developmental level while offering defined promotion potential.

VIII. POSITIONS ABOVE THE FULL PERFORMANCE LEVEL

In many organizations, there is work for which the organization is responsible that is above the full performance level of the office's career ladder. Such work is normally assigned to "senior" positions classified at a higher grade level. These positions are not considered to be part of the career ladder as there is not enough of this level of work to require assigning it to all employees in the organization. Thus, not all employees can anticipate noncompetitive promotion to the senior grade level. For example, in an organization in which the career ladder for the majority of the work is GS-12, there may also be senior positions at the GS-13 level. Similarly, in an office in which the career ladder for most of the work is GS-13, there may be some senior GS-14 positions. These senior positions are normally filled through the competitive merit promotion process.

Senior positions performing extramural resources management responsibilities are classified on a case-by-case basis, reflecting such factors, for example, as the level of knowledge required to perform the work, level of independence at which they operate, or the extent of program management responsibility delegated to these positions. For example, positions of GS-14 senior specialists in Headquarters program offices who manage extramural resources are generally classified on the basis of their significant, Agency-wide program management and policy responsibilities and the very general supervisory controls over their work; their work is not normally technically reviewed, and they operate within broad policy guidelines.

In some instances, senior Project Officer positions may be established at the GS-15 level. A Project Officer at the GS-15 level must be a master of a professional field or have knowledge of comparable breadth and depth, such as comprehensive knowledge of broad Agency programs,

as he/she is responsible for developing new concepts or theories in his/her area of expertise. He/she is responsible for leading other employees or representatives of other Federal or international agencies in defining and investigating ill-defined and complex issues, such as those arising from new legislation that changes or broadens the Agency's mission or responsibilities in a key scientific research area or a program (such as a regulatory or enforcement program), and deciding how to proceed in establishing or redirecting the program. The Project Officer then plans, develops, and manages the new program. As part of his/her program management responsibilities, the Project Officer also plans, designs, and implements the program's extramural resources strategy, then manages major contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, or interagency agreements through which the program is carried out.

IX. DETERMINING THE CAREER LADDER

A. Factors to Consider

In determining the appropriate full performance level of a Project Officer career ladder, many factors of the positions and characteristics of the assignment should be identified and weighed. These include, for example:

- Type of contract, grant, cooperative agreement, or interagency agreement.
- The sensitivity and vulnerability of the services, activities, or program.
- The scientific, technical, or programmatic expertise required owing to the complexity of the services or activities.
- The complexity and scope of the assignment as reflected in the number and variety of work assignments or program activities or the number and variety of parties involved in the contract, grant, cooperative agreement, or interagency agreement.
- The nature of the market through which contracted services will be provided, including the degree of difficulty in obtaining competition.
- The importance to, and impact on, the program of the contract, grant, cooperative agreement, or interagency agreement.
- The newness of the program and the extent to which its mission, scope, direction, and goals remain to be identified.

In distinguishing grade levels of full performance level or senior level positions, several key factors in the Factor Evaluation System are used to look at a position as a whole.

In differentiating between positions at the GS-12 and GS-13 levels, Factors 1 (Knowledge Required), 4 (Complexity), and 5 (Scope and Effect) are usually the key.

A GS-14 position is normally distinguished from the GS-13 level by a high degree of independence (operating under only administrative and policy guidance rather than technical supervision) and responsibilities for formulating new policies and guidelines for the major

Agency program component for which the Project Officer has responsibility. These distinguishing characteristics are reflected in Factor 2, Supervisory Controls, and Factor 3, Guidelines.

GS-15 positions are usually differentiated from GS-14 level positions under three factors: Factor 1, Knowledge Required; Factor 4, Complexity; and Factor 5, Scope and Effect.

B. Table of Comparison - GS-12 through GS-15 Project Officer Positions

In the charts on the following pages, the factors to consider in designing or identifying GS-12, GS-13, GS-14, and GS-15 Project Officer positions are explained in detail.

Factor 1 - Knowledge Required			
GS-12 Level 7	GS-13 Level 8	GS-14 Level 8	GS-15 Level 9
<p>Professional Scientific/ Technical Knowledge</p> <p>Professional/technical knowledge applicable to a wide range of duties in a broad functional area or in a specialization. The knowledge is applied to managing a variety of difficult and complex extramural resources management instruments, calling for extended professional experience or graduate study.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professional/scientific knowledge to determine scientific data or products needed, as well as the best approaches and methods to obtain them using extramural resources. - Ability to adapt, modify and deviate from precedents, methods, and procedures to solve unusual or unique problems using extramural resources. - Ability to make technical judgements on proposals, products, or services presented by contractors, grantees, or other extramural organizations on such matters as the adequacy of data, methods, and stated objectives of scientific research or comparable projects. - Ability to relate general principles and practices in the field to 	<p>Professional Scientific/ Technical Knowledge</p> <p>In addition to knowledge at Level 7, the following knowledge or its equivalent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mastery of a professional/scientific body of knowledge to apply new developments and theories to critical and novel problems, or to extend and modify approaches and methods to solve a variety of problems with unprecedented and obscure aspects and to make recommendations or decisions that significantly affect the content, interpretation, or development of major policies or programs concerned with critical or major scientific/professional issues. - Ability to work with a high level of professional independence and to serve as technical authority in a professional/scientific subject matter. - Ability to seek out research or demonstration project needs and determine the best approach to fulfilling them by identifying potential contractors, assistance agreement applicants, or other agencies. 	<p>Professional Scientific/ Technical Knowledge</p> <p>See description for Level 8 in GS-13 column.</p>	<p>Professional Scientific/ Technical Knowledge</p> <p>In addition to knowledge typical of Level 8, at this level the Project Officer is a master of a professional field or equivalent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This level of expertise is applied in dealing with the most complex scientific or technical issues in the Agency and developing new hypotheses and theories. It is also applied in developing new scientific or technical efforts resulting from legislation. - The Project Officer is faced with unique scientific/technical, contractual, or assistance issues stemming from the newness or complexity of the effort, requiring the development of innovative strategies for extramural resources programs to carry out the effort. Contracting or assistance issues potentially affect the economic health of a major industry or several states or the health of large populations.

In addition to knowledge of the regulatory, administrative, and procedural requirements for managing contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, or interagency agreements, Project Officers at GS-12 and above have professional scientific or technical knowledge (described on pages 10 - 14) and/or substantive knowledge of programs (described on pages 15 - 18), which they apply to managing extramural resources. Not all types of knowledge listed will be present in a single position. The various types of knowledge listed are intended to convey the overall type and extent of knowledge that is characteristic of the various levels.

Factor 1 - Knowledge Required (continued)

GS-12 Level 7	GS-13 Level 8	GS-14 Level 8	GS-15 Level 9
<p>Professional Scientific/Technical Knowledge (continued)</p> <p>individual contracts, assistance agreements, or interagency agreements for which there are no closely-related precedents, but that are generally within the "state-of-the-art."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to provide a wide range of information to contractors or advice to assistance recipients or other agencies, including identification of appropriate corrective action, to ensure the success of the product, service, project/program component. - Ability to conduct on-site reviews to assess the internal operations of contractors, assistance recipients, or other agencies to determine compliance with conditions, negotiate changes in operations or procedures, or recommend solutions to problems. 	<p>Professional Scientific/Technical Knowledge (continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to analyze, evaluate, plan, organize, coordinate, and approve research, development, or highly complex scientific work products or services provided through use of extramural resources. - Ability to make technical judgements about a variety of intangible and complex issues in scientific research or comparable projects, such as assessing the competency of a research, the effect of conditions under which research is being conducted, and the relative and likely value of the research to the program. <p>If managing contracts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to manage contracts where little or no precedent exists, including skill in interpreting policies (in cooperation with the Contracting Officer) to solve unprecedented problems, applied to all aspects of contract management 	<p>Professional Scientific/Technical Knowledge (continued)</p> <p>See description of Level 8 in GS-13 column.</p>	

Factor 1 - Knowledge Required (continued)

GS-12 Level 7	GS-13 Level 8	GS-14 Level 8	GS-15 Level 9
<p>Professional Scientific/Technical Knowledge (continued)</p> <p>If managing contracts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge of policies/regulations governing contracting, including the FAR and the EPAAR, and understanding of contracting methods and types to procure scientific/technical products or services, including ability to plan and carry out pre-award and/or post-award contracts management responsibilities, or in-depth knowledge of an area of specialization in contracts to identify alternative courses of action and to depart significantly from previous methods. - Ability to describe and negotiate scientific/technical requirements entailed in contracting for complex and/or diversified supplies, services, or products. - Ability to monitor technical progress against expenditures for a number of contracts, such as fixed-price with redetermination, cost reimbursement, or contracts with incentive provisions. 	<p>Professional Scientific/Technical Knowledge (continued)</p> <p>for major systems, extensive technical services, or contracts of similar scope, characterized by numerous sub-contractual arrangements and continuous contractual changes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to manage all contractual aspects for a major scientific or technical program area, involving coordination of a number of contracts. This entails long-range planning, a thorough knowledge of program objectives, and interrelationships with other programs. Also entails leading and coordinating the work of Deputy or other Project Officers in other organizational echelons who are managing a portion of the contracts. 	<p>Professional Scientific/Technical Knowledge (continued)</p> <p>See description of Level 8 in GS-13 column.</p>	

Factor 1 - Knowledge Required (continued)

GS-12 Level 7	GS-13 Level 8	GS-14 Level 8	GS-15 Level 9
<p>Professional Scientific/Technical Knowledge (continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to perform scientific or technical analysis of settlement proposals and negotiate settlements. - Ability to analyze complex scientific/technical issues, identify options, and recommend a specific course of action for accomplishing technical/scientific objectives through use of contractors. <p>If managing assistance or interagency agreements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge of statutes, regulations, principles, processes, and methods for grants, cooperative agreements, or interagency agreements and their application to scientific/technical aspects of programs to perform scientific/technical review and evaluation of proposals and budgets, to monitor progress against expenditures, and provide technical assistance to recipients or other agencies. - Ability to analyze diverse activities and scientific/technical capabilities of assistance applicants and other agencies to assess strengths and prospects for effective accomplishment of research or 	<p>Professional Scientific/Technical Knowledge (continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to monitor large systems contracts that extend over several years, covering research, development, testing, and/or production of complex systems; this includes monitoring a prime contractor with numerous subcontractors, complex changes, and terminations/close-outs. <p>If managing assistance or interagency agreements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to manage novel, complex agreements in a major scientific or technical program. - Ability to apply new developments in managing grants, cooperative agreements, or interagency agreements to scientific or technical problems not susceptible to accepted methods and practices. 	<p>Professional Scientific/Technical Knowledge (continued)</p> <p>See description of Level 8 in GS-13 column.</p>	

Factor 1 - Knowledge Required (continued)

GS-12 Level 7	GS-13 Level 8	GS-14 Level 8	GS-15 Level 9
<p>Professional Scientific/Technical Knowledge (continued)</p> <p>other objectives, to develop or assess work plans and schedules, and to formulate recommendations or decisions on funding proposals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to identify appropriate technical corrective actions. - Ability to conduct on-site reviews to assess operations, recommend solutions to technical problems, determine technical compliance with conditions, negotiate changes in operations or procedures or recommend solutions to problems. 	<p>Professional Scientific/Technical Knowledge (continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to extend assistance management or interagency agreement management methods to new and unusual circumstances, such as new grant programs entailing a new Government initiative, high-risk grantees, large grants with sub-grants, contracts-under-grants, or other highly complicated arrangements, or to new and unusual types of agreements or legal relationships. - Ability to conduct long-range planning, develop budgets, negotiate joint funding, and develop policies for managing grants or other agreements. 	<p>Professional Scientific/Technical Knowledge (continued)</p> <p>See description of Level 8 in GS-13 column.</p>	

Factor 1 - Knowledge Required (continued)

GS-12 Level 7	GS-13 Level 8	GS-14 Level 8	GS-15 Level 9
<p align="center">Program Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Broad knowledge of the program's mission, goals, objectives, major issues, policies, practices, and methods, applied in managing a variety of difficult and complex extramural resources instruments and in adapting program principles and methods to significant extramural resources projects or program efforts and problems. - Knowledge of the pertinent statutes, regulations, policies and precedents that affect the program's operations. - Ability to conceive, design, and plan projects for which extramural resources are the appropriate vehicle, and to assist assistance applicants or recipients or other agencies in the preparation of proposals and work plans that will effectively meet program objectives. - Ability to identify the impact of provisions in legislation governing the program on funding levels, requirements, and Agency responsibilities. 	<p align="center">Program Knowledge</p> <p>In addition to knowledge at Level 7, the following knowledge or its equivalent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Master of a significant segment of a program, such as a broad subject area, applied in managing the program component through extramural resources and in providing authoritative guidance on program content; this includes thorough knowledge of the relationship of the program component to other parts of the program. - Comprehensive knowledge of the range of statutes, regulations, policies, precedents, and major issues affecting the program. - Ability to identify program needs for new projects and potential contractors, assistance agreement applicants, or other agencies to fulfill these program needs. - Skill and experienced judgement in applying criteria or requirements to evaluating new approaches and concepts to achieving program objectives through extramural resources. 	<p align="center">Program Knowledge</p> <p>See description of Level 8 in GS-13 column.</p>	<p align="center">Program Knowledge</p> <p>In addition to knowledge typical of Level 8, at this level the Project Officer must have mastery of a professional field or its equivalent, such as mastery of a broad body of subject-matter knowledge related to major national programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This extremely high level of expertise is applied in dealing with the most complex issues in the Agency and generating and developing new hypotheses and theories. It is also applied in developing new programs resulting from legislation amid an atmosphere of high Congressional or public interest. - The Project Officer is faced with unique program, contractual, or assistance issues stemming from the newness or complexity of the program, requiring the development of innovative strategies for extramural resources management program support. Contracting or assistance issues and activities involved require this high level of expertise as they potentially affect the economic health of a major industry or several states or the health of large populations.

Factor 1 - Knowledge Required (continued)			
GS-12 Level 7	GS-13 Level 8	GS-14 Level 8	GS-15 Level 9
<p>Program Knowledge (continued)</p> <p>If managing contracts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge of policies and regulations governing contracting, including the FAR and the EPAAR, as well as of the administrative and procedural requirements for contracting. - Ability to use a wide range of contracting methods and types to procure products or services, including ability to plan and carry out pre-award and/or post-award contracts management responsibilities, or in-depth knowledge of an area of specialization in contracting to identify alternative courses of action, including significant departures from previous methods. - Ability to describe and participate in negotiation on program requirements entailed in contracting for complex and/or diverse supplies, services, or products. - Ability to monitor progress against expenditures for a number of contracts, such as fixed-price with redetermination, cost reimbursement, or contracts with incentive provisions. 	<p>Program Knowledge (continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to assess proposals from contractors, assistance applicants, or other agencies for innovative alternative approaches, where the boundaries of projects are difficult to determine in advance, from the standpoint of soundness, likelihood of success, feasibility, cost, priority, and consistency with overall program objectives. <p>If managing contracts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to manage contracts where little or no precedent exists, including skill in interpreting policies to solve unprecedented problems, applied to all aspects of contract management for major system, extensive technical service, design and construction of large facilities, or contracts of similar scope, characterized by numerous sub-contractual arrangements and continuous contractual changes. - Ability to manage all contractual aspects for a major program area, involving coordination of a number of contracts. 	<p>Program Knowledge (continued)</p> <p>See description of Level 8 in GS-13 column.</p>	

Factor 1 - Knowledge Required (continued)

GS-12 Level 7	GS-13 Level 8	GS-14 Level 8	GS-15 Level 9
<p>Program Knowledge (continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to perform substantive analysis of settlement proposals, determine allowable costs, and negotiate settlements. - Ability to analyze complex issues, identify options, and recommend a specific course of action for accomplishing program objectives through use of contractors. <p>If managing assistance or interagency agreements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge of statutes, regulations, principles, processes, and methods for grants, cooperative agreements, or interagency agreements to perform the full range of programmatic review and evaluation of proposals and budgets, to monitor progress against expenditures, and to provide technical assistance to recipients or other agencies. - Ability to coordinate programmatic functions with the administrative functions performed by the Grants Management organization. 	<p>Program Knowledge (continued)</p> <p>This entails long-range planning and thorough knowledge of program objectives and inter-relationships with other programs. Also entails leading and coordinating work of Assistant Project Officers managing a portion of the contracts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to monitor large systems contracts that extend over several years, covering research, development, testing, and/or production of complex systems; this includes monitoring both prime contractors and numerous subcontractors, complex changes, and terminations/close-outs. <p>If managing assistance or interagency agreements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to provide the full range of programmatic assistance and program evaluation to assistance applicants, recipients, or other agencies working in novel projects and programs. - Ability to provide substantive and authoritative guidance to recipients or other agencies in establishing new programs in areas where no precedents are available. 	<p>Program Knowledge (continued)</p> <p>See description of Level 8 in GS-13 column.</p>	

Factor 1 - Knowledge Required (continued)			
GS-12 Level 7	GS-13 Level 8	GS-14 Level 8	GS-15 Level 9
<p>Program Knowledge (continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to analyze diverse activities and capabilities of assistance applicants or recipients or other agencies to assess their capabilities and prospects for effective accomplishment of project or program objectives, to develop or assess workplans and schedules, and to formulate recommendations on funding proposals. - Ability to provide a variety of types of programmatic assistance to applicants, recipients, or other agencies including identification of appropriate corrective action. - Ability to conduct on-site program reviews to assess the internal operations and capabilities of applicants, recipients, or other agencies to determine compliance with conditions, negotiate changes in operations or procedures, or recommend solutions to programmatic problems. 	<p>Program Knowledge (continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to manage novel, complex, or high-risk agreements in a major program area. diverse range of recipient organizations or other agencies--their management, capabilities, and operations. - Ability to apply new developments in managing grants, cooperative agreements, or interagency agreements to program needs or problems not susceptible to accepted methods; ability to extend methods to cover new and unusual circumstances, for example, new grant programs entailing a new Government initiative, high-risk grantees, large grants with sub-grants, contracts-under-grants, or other highly complicated arrangements, or to new and unusual types of agreements or legal relationships. - Ability to lead work of Assistant Project Officers managing a portion of an agreement. - Ability to conduct long-range planning, develop budget submissions, negotiate joint funding provisions, and develop policies for managing grants or agreements. 	<p>Program Knowledge (continued)</p> <p>See description of Level 8 in GS-13 column.</p>	

Factor 2 - Supervisory Controls

GS-12 Level 4	GS-13 Level 4	GS-14 Level 5	GS-15 Level 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Project Officer's supervisor establishes the overall objectives and the funding level for the contract, grant, or agreement. - The Project Officer and the supervisor jointly identify overall scope and mutually acceptable priorities and schedules. - The Project Officer manages the contract, grant, cooperative agreement, or interagency agreement with considerable latitude. He/she independently plans and carries out the approach and methods, coordinates the work with other parties involved, negotiates with other parties, and resolves most disagreements that arise. - The Project Officer interprets policy and applies it in managing the individual contract, grant, or agreement. - He/she keeps the supervisor informed of the status of the contract, grant, cooperative agreement, or interagency agreement and of controversies and developments that may substantially impact the program. - The Project Officer's work is reviewed primarily for effectiveness in meeting objectives and for conformance with regulatory and statutory requirements. 	<p>See description of Level 4 in GS-12 column.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The supervisor provides only policy and administrative guidance, presenting new assignments in terms of broad mission or program goals rather than technical direction. - The Project Officer is responsible for managing a major program component, analyzing mission or program needs. - Has independent responsibility for planning, determining scope, designing, and carrying out a major program component through extramural resources. Initiates or recommends initiation of new contracts, grants, or agreements. These recommendations are subject only to review for availability of funds and degree to which they are consistent with major program objectives. - As the Project Officer is an authority for a major program component or scientific/technical subject area, his/her management of the contract, grant, or agreement is accepted as technically accurate and is normally not subject to review. The Project Officer's performance is reviewed only in terms of the degree to which it fulfills mission or program objectives. 	<p>See description of Level 5 in GS-14 column.</p>

Factor 3 - Guidelines			
GS-12 Level 4	GS-13 Level 4	GS-14 Level 5	GS-15 Level 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guidelines, in terms of policies and precedents, statutes and regulations covering Government procurement and assistance are applicable but require considerable interpretation and application to the individual contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, or interagency agreements being managed. - Guidelines covering many aspects of the work are not available, or are of limited use. Intensive search to find the appropriate regulation, precedent, or other guideline is necessary. - The Project Officer is expected to use judgement and initiative in departing from past practices when necessary to ensure successful completion of the contract, grant, cooperative agreement, or interagency agreement. - Within governing statutes and regulations, the Project Officer develops new methods to achieve the results desired from the contract, grant, cooperative agreement, or interagency agreement. - Devises new policies to cover assignments when necessary, which are recommended to management. 	See description of Level 4 in GS-12 column.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project Officer is a recognized technical authority in the interpretation of guidelines, such as statutory and regulatory requirements. - Is responsible for managing a component of a significant Agency program, for which the guidelines consist of broad policy statements or legislation. - Interprets broad policy or legislation in developing the program segment's direction, policies, goals, and objectives, and in identifying the need for new extramural resources efforts to carry out program mission or goals. - Policies developed by the Project Officer are used by other Agency employees in carrying out their assigned responsibilities in the program. - If responsible for a scientific or technical program component, develops policy and guidelines to provide an integrated Agency approach in a research effort or other scientific/technical program component. Develops criteria, standards, or guidelines to be used by other Agency scientists, engineers or technical specialists working in this field. 	See description of Level 5 in GS-14 column.

Factor 4 - Complexity			
GS-12 Level 4	GS-13 Level 5	GS-14 Level 5	GS-15 Level 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work involves many different processes and methods, including the full range of responsibilities from pre-award activities to post-award monitoring. - Decisions are complicated by a lack of standardization from contract to contract, grant to grant, or agreement to agreement. Many of the instruments managed require the employee to vary approaches to respond to the specific circumstances of individual contractors, recipients, agencies, or projects. - Determines the appropriate approach for carrying out the work, coordinates the completion of various processes, and refines or adjusts methods to fit the specific requirements of the individual extramural instrument. - Coordinates the work of others involved in administering contracts or assistance agreements being managed and resolves conflicts. - Extramural instruments managed are characterized by a variety of complexities, such as sensitive issues of political or public interest, specialized requirements, special conditions, multiple funding sources, short time frames, unfavorable market conditions (such as lack of suppliers), and others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manages a diverse range of extramural instruments, requiring extensive analysis of management systems, organizations, capabilities, and operations of contractors, assistance recipients, or other agencies. - Decisions lack directly applicable precedents and require consideration of program priorities, needs and requirements; technical advances; legal and ethical standards; degree of risk; and others. - Instruments managed often demonstrate new approaches, and are characterized by complexities such as extensive special provisions or subcontracting, frequent changes or conflicts, or unusually sensitive issues. - Contracting efforts are often complicated by such market factors as lack of qualified contractors to perform the work or by limited competition. Efforts to award grants or cooperative agreements may be complicated by a lack of potential recipients capable of performing the type or quality of work needed. - Work often entails coordinating efforts of assistant Project Officers and other participants with conflicting priorities and views. 	<p>See description of Level 5 in GS-13 column.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Performs broad functions and processes, characterized by breadth and intensity of effort, with support of others within or outside the Agency. Influences or determines the direction of a major Agency program, such as pollution prevention, involving planning, developing, and evaluating objectives and priorities for the program. - Decisions entail largely undefined issues and lack of sufficient data or precedent. Leads or performs extensive investigation and analysis to determine the exact nature and scope of the issues. Difficulty may be encountered in determining intent of legislation or broad policy statements and in designing an extramural resources strategy to implement them. - Work involves establishment of a broad, comprehensive extramural resources program, including contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, or interagency agreements requiring the support of a variety of Agency personnel.

Factor 5 - Scope and Effect			
GS-12 Level 4	GS-13 Level 5	GS-14 Level 5	GS-15 Level 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The scope includes planning, advising on, and evaluating the work of contractors or assistance recipients working on a variety of contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, or interagency agreements, as well as monitoring progress and compliance, and tracking and accounting for expenditures against progress to safeguard the interests of the program and of the Government. - The Project Officer's recommendations and decisions are normally accepted; hence, his/her work impacts the quality and effectiveness of a variety of extramural resources instruments, and the conduct, direction, and success of efforts important to achievement of major Agency program objectives. - Recommendations concerning the quality, feasibility, and impact of new and renewal proposals for grants, cooperative agreements, interagency agreements, and contracts have major financial impact on activities of contractors, states, local governments, Tribes, other Federal agencies, and non-governmental institutions and organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work includes full range of management responsibilities for a variety of highly complex contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, or interagency agreements, from project identification through proposal and work plan development, through recommendation for award, through monitoring contracts, grants, or agreements in effect, through taking corrective action, and termination or close-out. - Assesses program needs, plans and carries out the extramural resources management aspects of the program component, and selects the appropriate instrument for achieving program objectives. - Recommendations or commitments are accepted as authoritative. - Significantly impacts the work of other Agency employees, as well as the work and financial condition of contractors, grantees, other agencies and other recipients, and the work of the scientific or professional community involved. - quality and effectiveness of major programs that are dependent on extramural resources to meet objectives and the allocation or expenditure of substantial amounts of Federal funds. 	See description of Level 5 in GS-13 column.	<p>This is an exceptional level of impact where the Project Officer's personal contributions and decisions affect the direction of major programs. The work involves planning, developing, and carrying out key programs, which are vital to the mission of the Agency, recognized by top Agency management as of high priority, or which affect large numbers of people on a long-term basis. The Project Officer's work involves very broad and extensive studies related to establishing or redirecting major programs. Contracts or assistance management entails planning, developing, and managing extensive contracting or assistance upon which critical Agency programs are dependent for mission activities. The program is a major research, regulatory, enforcement, or other program. In a research program, the Project Officer provides leadership and direction for research of national and international scope and impact, and plays a major role in formulating Agency-wide program objectives, plans, policies, and standards.</p>

C. Representative Project Officer Positions

The descriptions of representative positions in this section will provide additional information on the work situation, complexity, scope, and impact of the work, as well as the knowledge required and level of responsibility of Project Officer positions. These examples, being limited in number, do not encompass all varieties of Project Officer positions that may be established in locations throughout EPA. They are intended to illustrate the general level of responsibility, types and extent of knowledge applied to the work, and other characteristics of Project Officer positions from GS-12 through GS-15.

GS-12

1. The Project Officer manages cost reimbursement contracts providing a major research and development laboratory, its Headquarters Office, and other EPA and Federal organizations with technical studies. The contracts are complex and characterized by uncertainties in performance. The Project Officer applies in-depth knowledge of both program and technical requirements in developing statements of work and other essential parts of procurement requests; chairing panels to evaluate technical proposals; evaluating cost proposals; participating in negotiations; monitoring technical performance; approving proposed sub-contracts, work assignments, and technical directives; coordinating with other EPA components who wish to use the contracts; reviewing and approving contractor requests to acquire property at Government expense; evaluating a variety of change proposals, claims, adjustments, overruns, etc.; approving vouchers for payment; monitoring compliance with multiple requirements; ensuring that deliverables are acceptable; and evaluating the procurement to identify problems and develop new procedures and guidelines.

2. The Project Officer manages a number of continuing program grants to several states with differing organizational structures and capacities, or to a very large and complex state. The program includes a diverse number of state activities, such as training, operations, and public outreach. The grants require annual submission and review of proposals and budgets. Annual appropriations legislation sometimes results in new mandates, requirements, and responsibilities. The Project Officer applies an in-depth knowledge of program and technical requirements in carrying out such responsibilities as preparing annual program guidance; providing assistance to states in the preparation of proposals, work plans, and budgets; evaluating the soundness of these submissions; providing technical assistance on methodology and alternative approaches; training state personnel; monitoring state programs to ensure compliance with conditions and to assess performance against the workplan; negotiating changes; and conducting the close-out evaluation. The Project Officer coordinates management of the grants with the Grants Management office, which is responsible for ensuring that administrative requirements are met.

3. The Project Officer manages all research grants for his/her assigned program component. Most of the grants are concerned with relatively noncontroversial, clear-cut research directly related to the program's established activities. Most of the grantees have successful track

records in working with EPA, and thus pose relatively low risk of noncompliance problems. The Project Officer applies extensive program knowledge and journey-level professional scientific knowledge in carrying out such activities as reviewing new and renewal applications, assessing the current body of research to ascertain the value of the proposed research; advising applicants of the preparation of proposals, work plans, and budgets; reviewing these submissions; recommending action on proposals; monitoring research progress and serving as a technical resource to the grantees; suggesting alternative approaches and negotiating changes; and reviewing research products for technical soundness and value to the program.

GS-13

1. The Project Officer, a physical scientist, manages a major research and development laboratory's primary contract for on-site research support. The contract supports research in all divisions in the laboratory, encompassing an extremely wide diversity of technical and scientific disciplines. As the laboratory's expert on a specialized area, he/she represents the laboratory concerning administrative, program, or complex scientific research issues in interactions with scientists and researchers throughout the Agency and in state and local agencies. He/she provides technical and scientific leadership and guidance to the administration of extramural research programs. This entails identifying, evaluating, and recommending solutions to extramural problems of an especially complex, difficult, or sensitive nature. The Project Officer applies professional scientific knowledge in preparing procurement requests, writing statements of work, estimating budgets, developing justifications arising from procurement actions, devising evaluation criteria, delivery schedules, and other requirements. He/she performs technical evaluation of proposals, offers, and cost proposals, and recommends selection for technical evaluation panels, which he/she chairs. He/she monitors cost, management, and technical performance and recommends approval or disapproval of work assignments to ensure work is within contract scope. The Project Officer provides continuing technical direction to the contractor, inspects and recommends acceptance or rejection of deliverables, and evaluates the contractor's performance.

2. The Project Officer manages large research grants to universities for a major Agency program. The research is characterized by exploration of methods, where the outcome cannot be assured, which addresses newly-identified environmental problems or new EPA mandates. The grants are discretionary project grants; each one differs significantly in scope, subject matter, and recipient, requiring the Project Officer to devise and adapt grants management policies and requirements to reflect each project's uniqueness. The Project Officer applies in-depth knowledge of the program and professional scientific knowledge, and experienced judgement in carrying out such responsibilities as identifying the program's needs for research in specific areas; identifying potential grantees; evaluating their technical competence; encouraging their interest in the research; interacting with grantees as a professional peer in discussing scientific issues; developing criteria for new research approaches into highly complex problems that have not yet been solved; assisting applicants in preparing proposals, work plans, and budgets; evaluating proposals for innovative research from the standpoint of scientific

soundness, likelihood of success, feasibility, cost, priority, and probable value to the program; securing peer review; providing technical assistance to grantees in the course of the research; evaluating research findings and products for validity, soundness, and value to the program and the state of research.

3. The Project Officer, a program analyst with Agency-wide responsibility for managing a segment of a major program, initiates and manages competitive cooperative agreements as an innovative approach to accomplishing new objectives, as earlier and other attempts to secure resources to accomplish the objective have been unsuccessful. Under the agreements, the Project Officer assists states/other recipients in setting up new or experimental programs and demonstration projects in areas with which the recipients and EPA have little previous experience and whose outcome and success are uncertain. The Project Officer applies in-depth knowledge of the program in defining project scope and objectives and negotiating the terms of the agreements; identifying and gaining the cooperation of EPA components who will provide extensive and substantive EPA involvement in the effort; identifying special equipment or facilities needed; monitoring progress of the experimental program to evaluate effectiveness and to identify potential problems and issues; negotiating changes; providing leadership in resolving conflicts with multiple participants; recommending termination of agreements that appear unlikely to succeed; assessing program outcomes; and recommending the adoption of significant, new operations or methods resulting from successful demonstration projects.

4. The Project Officer, an Environmental Protection Specialist, serves as both an administrative and technical expert for a Region's Clean Air program, and manages several large continuing program grants to States. This entails "cradle to grave" responsibility for negotiations and final approval of workplans, awarding of grants, oversight, and close-out. He/she is also responsible for sanctions for lack of compliance. The Project Officer also applies mastery of the program and statutory, regulatory, and policy requirements for assistance agreements, as well as of the relation of the Clean Air program to other programs in serving as the program's senior grants manager. In this capacity, he/she provides guidance to other staff engaged in grants management and develops and implements Regional policies, procedures, and internal controls for program management. The Project Officer independently resolves with both technical and administrative staff a variety of controversial issues; these include termination or annulment of grants, resolution of audit issues and disputes, and need for establishment or review of program efforts unique to the Region's air grants program.

5. The Project Officer, an Environmental Protection Specialist in a Regional office, has significant responsibilities for managing a portion of the Hazardous Waste Program. This responsibility is carried out through managing contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements. The employee applies mastery of the program and its technical requirements in carrying out such responsibilities as adapting national policies, goals, and priorities to Regional applications and developing Regional policies and guidelines, developing program requirements, planning procurements, managing the ARCS contracts in a zone consisting of two regions (as well as other contracts), conducting on-site evaluations of contractor performance, and providing final technical program clearance for procurement actions. The Project Officer also directs and

coordinates the work of Remedial Project Managers in managing their portions of contracts, overseeing the preparation of statements of work and monitoring of contractor performance. The nature of the contracts is such that the Project Officer must cope with constant changes, requiring frequent development of innovative approaches to accomplishing work assignments and identification of alternative vehicles or support venues (e.g., site-specific, IAGs, and other means). Successful execution of work assignments under these contracts includes facilitation of a wide range of complex technical, community relations, enforcement, and conflict of interest issues. He/she also performs the full range of responsibilities entailed in managing grants and cooperative agreements associated with the program. These grants and agreements are characterized by multiple NPL sites at varying stages of cleanup. The Project Officer assists counterparts in states and Tribes in establishing Superfund programs. As part of his/her program management responsibility, the Project Officer makes decisions on priorities and implementation schedules based on public health and environmental concerns affecting large populations, taking into consideration public pressures, political sensitivity, and other factors in addition to technical considerations.

GS-14

1. A GS-14 Inorganic Chemist serves as manager of Superfund analytical services and of a laboratory program that uses contracts extensively to carry out analysis of inorganic compounds. The employee's two primary functions are to serve as a national expert in chemical analysis, providing advice to other employees Agency-wide, and as a national inorganics program manager. The employee participates in formulating policies, plans, and programs to ensure all EPA laboratories receive adequate support. The employee provides guidance to Project Officers in all regions on all inorganic contract issues and is the final technical authority on all contract technical issues. The employee monitors and evaluates contractor performance at laboratories to determine the effectiveness and applicability of the protocols being used, and reviews technical data to determine if contractors are performing according to contract terms. The employee ensures the validity of results of analyses conducted by contractors performing this work, as the results must be used by the Agency for a variety of enforcement and legal proceedings.

2. A GS-14 Environmental Engineer in Research and Development is delegated a high level of independence for carrying out program management functions in an organization concerned with research grants. The employee is responsible for planning and developing long-term research and development efforts for a major field of advanced technology, supporting pollution prevention and control for water, air, solid waste, and other Agency programs. The employee provides expert advice on the advanced technology to all Agency programs, private industry, and contractors. As the Agency's expert in this field, the employee is not subject to technical supervision, and serves as the Agency's representative to the academic community and private sector. He/she also develops research objectives for new research grants, translates program offices' needs into solicitations for research proposals, and evaluates research progress of on-going grants. He/she is also responsible for assessing EPA laboratories' progress toward meeting objectives and program requirements.

3. A GS-14 Program Analyst in the Office of Water is assigned responsibility for directing the extramural support of a component of a major Agency water program. He/she adapts broad policy guidelines to the program, identifying how major program objectives could be effectively accomplished through extramural resources. After determining an extramural resources strategy, he/she coordinates pre-award tasks with other Agency staff, including the definition of requirements, development of the budget, preparation of the statement of work, etc. He/she is the Contracting Officer's major point of contact during efforts to award the contract. After award, the Project Officer is charged with central responsibility for managing the contract, with assistance from work assignment managers. He/she develops policies and guidelines for the program and for Agency-wide use in managing the contract, and is responsible for managing a large portion of the program's budget through contracts management. The Project Officer, as the expert in the Office of Water on the assigned program component, operates with broad latitude in managing the program and contract, receiving only general policy guidance from the Branch Chief.

GS-15

A GS-15 Environmental Scientist in the Office of Air and Radiation is responsible for leading a team effort to analyze new legislation and devising an innovative program and approaches for carrying out new authorities given to EPA by the legislation through use of extramural resources. The authorities are in an area in which EPA has limited experience, and the potential technical, political, and other issues facing EPA in implementing its new authority are not yet defined. The employee applies mastery of air and radiation programs and technology and extensive experience in program management in leading the effort to develop recommendations on the nature, scope, and direction of the new program for approval by the Agency's senior management. The employee is assigned responsibility for designing and implementing an extramural resources support system to meet the program's goals. He/she determines the best mix of contracts, assistance agreements, and other instruments and, using his/her extensive expertise in extramural resources, identifies potential contractors, grantees, and partners for cooperative agreements, and works with the Office of Acquisition Management and Grants Administration Division to establish appropriate contracts and assistance agreements to carry out the new program. After contracts and grants are in place, the Project Officer manages several of the key contracts, grants, and other instruments and serves as advisor to Project Officers managing other extramural resources instruments related to the program. He/she is responsible for managing a large program budget through use of extramural resources. Guidance provided to the Project Officer consists only of broad policy direction.

X. SKILLS FOR MOVING UP THE CAREER LADDER

Project Officers who successfully move upward to the full performance level and, in some cases, advance to the senior levels possess certain types and levels of knowledge, management skills, and leadership ability. Effective Project Officers must have a great deal of knowledge and a variety of skills in addition to the ability to carry out of the full range of Project Officer responsibilities in an adequate manner. These are the abilities that managers will look for when filling high level Project Officer positions.

Management and Leadership Skills

Project Officers are managers of tasks, budgets, and people. Effective Project Officers manage all three with a balanced emphasis. They have the ability to identify the tasks necessary to accomplish goals, they conscientiously monitor tasks and progress and identify problems early enough to ensure they are correctable, and they monitor activities and expenditures carefully to protect EPA's interests and funds and to verify that expenditures are within regulations and scope.

As project leaders, Project Officers coordinate and review the work of others involved in managing the contract, grant, cooperative agreement, or interagency agreement. Effective Project Officers foster teamwork to accomplish work through others, often a large number of individuals and organizations with differing objectives. They take steps to successfully resolve conflicts and reach productive conclusions.

As project managers, effective Project Officers master and apply a number of project management techniques to plan tasks and estimate costs, monitor progress, and take corrective action when necessary. They effectively prioritize the myriad of tasks they must perform.

Knowledge

Project Officers who advance achieve a high level of expertise in their programs and/or in a scientific/technical field. They use this knowledge to identify the best uses of extramural resources to carry out the program's work or scientific/technical tasks. Their knowledge is such that they are relied upon as experts in their programs and fields. Their advice, recommendations and decisions are almost always accepted by peers, supervisors, other EPA organizations, academia, other agencies, states, and other organizations outside the Government.

Effective Project Officers attain thorough knowledge, based on extensive experience, of extramural management statutes, regulations, rules, policies, and procedures. They become extremely skilled in preparing and reviewing required documents, statements of work, and workplans. This expertise enables them and those they advise to avoid costly and time-consuming errors when planning and managing a contract, grant, cooperative agreement, or interagency agreement. They serve as resources for other Project Officers in this area of

expertise. Their ever-growing expertise enables them to take on continually more complex extramural resources management assignments.

Successful Project Officers managing contracts are broadly knowledgeable of business and the private sector, such as knowledge of industry-specific practices, markets, business law, and accounting practices. With this knowledge, they can effectively assess the capabilities of potential contractors, evaluate proposals, monitor activities and expenditures, and ensure contractual relationships meet program needs.