

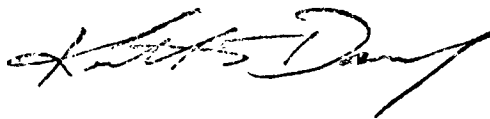
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Your cooperation in assisting the Agency in this important initiative is appreciated.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kenneth F. Dawsey", written in a cursive style.

Kenneth F. Dawsey, Director
Office of Human Resources Management

EPA

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PERSONNEL ACT (IPA) HANDBOOK

A GUIDE FOR SUPERVISORS, MANAGERS AND EMPLOYEES





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The IPA is an integral part of our Agency's outreach program to States and local communities. It gives EPA and the environmental community unique flexibilities in communicating environmental concerns and exchanging information. We intend to expand our use of the IPA program in addressing our nation's environmental problems.



Introduction

This booklet has been developed to provide a general description of the IPA Program and to answer the most frequently asked questions about IPA assignments. As the following pages will show, the IPA Program allows managers considerable flexibility and ingenuity

when participating in the program, so the booklet cannot anticipate all situations and questions which might arise. However, we have attempted to cover all the high points. Your local Human Resources Office can answer additional questions.





IPA ASSIGNMENT



Chapter 1

IPA Assignment

An "IPA assignment" is a shorthand term for a personnel assignment authorized under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (1970) (IPA). This Act permits and encourages the interchange of employees from two broad sectors:

- Federal employees with career or career conditional appointments including career appointments in the SES and excepted service of equivalent tenure, e.g. attorneys.
- Non-Federal employees specifically: employees from state, county, municipal government; Indian tribal governments; and employees from educational institutions and certain nonprofit organizations (e.g., professional societies and nonprofit research organizations).

An IPA assignment occurs when a Federal or non-Federal employee temporarily leaves a "home" organization to work for a "hosting" organization in the



other government sector. The Act stipulates that assignments must be designed for the mutual interest and benefit of the "home" and "hosting" organization.

Mutual benefit is important because the Act is focused on employee interchange as a means of solving common problems and sharing hard-to-find expertise. The Act provides the legal means to temporarily assign skilled people between appropriate organizations whenever there is sufficient need and a common interest.

Historically, EPA is among the most active Federal agencies in the use of IPA assignments, but, this is not surprising. The mutually beneficial character of IPA assignments is clearly in line with EPA's traditional emphasis on maximizing the involvement of state and local governments in the solution of environmental problems. In addition, the kinds of environmental problems faced by EPA clearly require that both EPA employees and their counterparts in the non-Federal sector should be knowledgeable about and sensitive to common interests and concerns.





IPA POLICY AND PROGRAM GOALS



Chapter 2

IPA Policy and Program Goals

In accordance with the Intergovernmental Personnel Act, EPA approves IPA assignments which demonstrate a clear mutual benefit to a particular EPA program or component and to its counterpart in the non-Federal sector. The EPA policy on IPA assignments is to encourage them to the maximum extent possible, consistent with the goals of the EPA IPA Program as follows:

- To improve delivery of government services to the citizen - from all levels of government.
- To foster closer and better intergovernmental relations.
- To strengthen environmental programs and services offered by non-profit organizations and institutions of higher learning.

- To increase and broaden the perspective and expertise of both IPA assignees and hosting organizations.

Examples of IPA Assignments

The different kinds of assignments which are possible under the IPA Program are as varied as the environmental programs administered by EPA and as different as the local governments and institutions affected by those programs. However, IPA assignments do fall into two broad categories.



1) IPA assignments where EPA employees work in the non-Federal sector:

A toxicologist from an EPA laboratory is assigned to the testing facility of a state environmental department to advise on testing procedures and techniques.

An environmental specialist from a Region is assigned to a municipal government to help implement Federal and state environmental standards on hazardous waste.

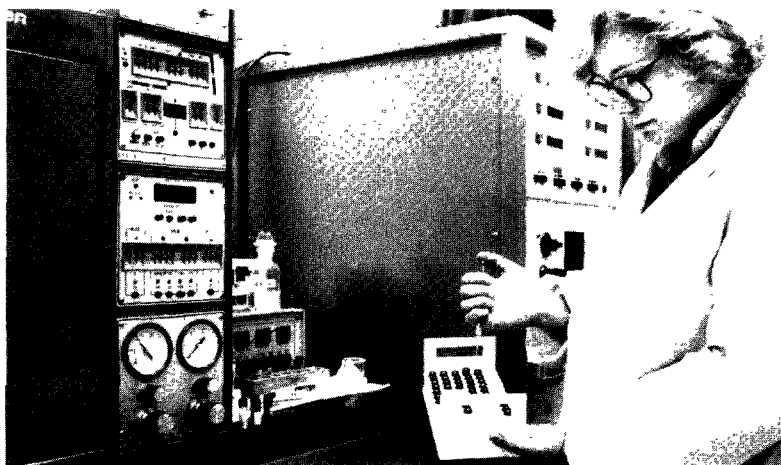
2) IPA assignments where employees from the non-Federal sector work at EPA:

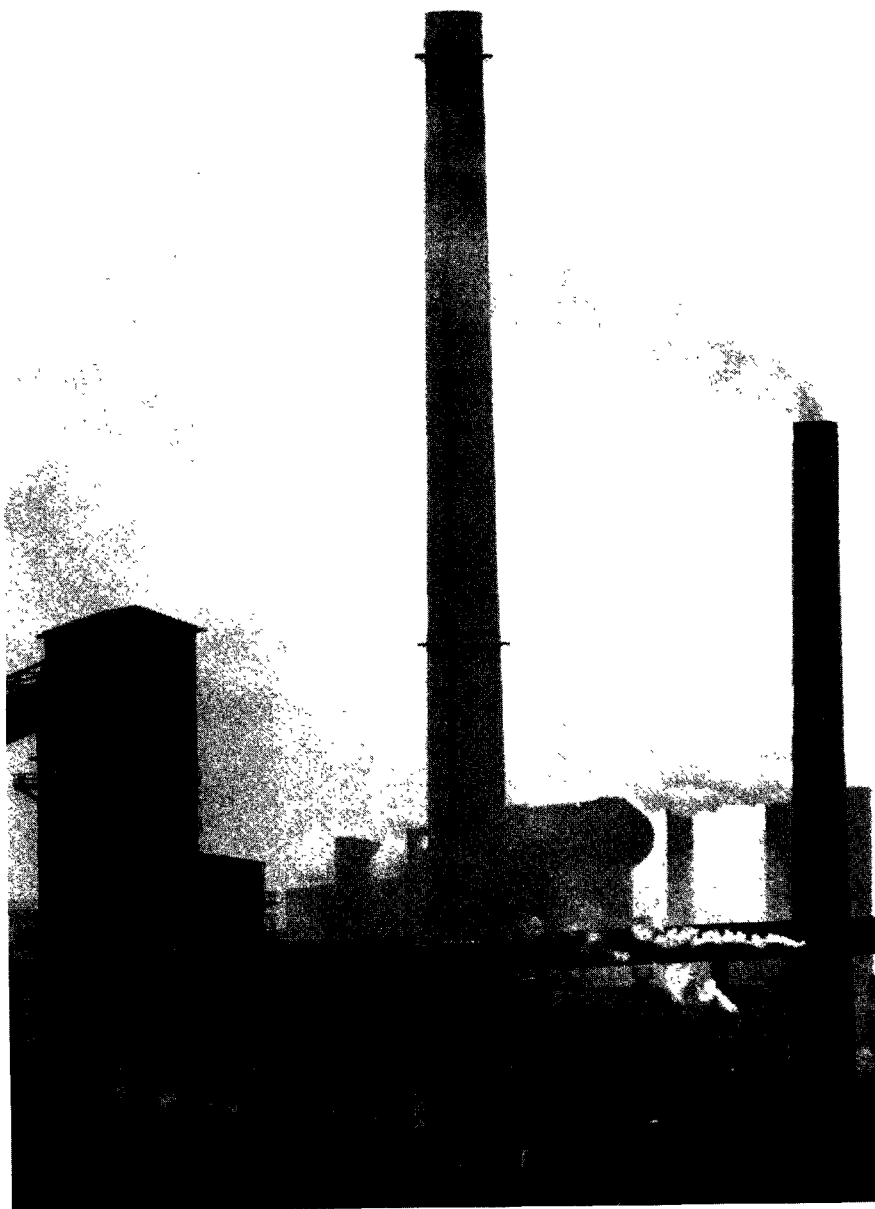
A professor of chemistry is assigned to an EPA laboratory to conduct research and advise on the theories and techniques of testing for air quality.

An advisor to the director of a state environmental protection department is assigned to EPA Headquarters to work on programs to improve EPA's Hazardous Evaluation programs.

As can be seen from the examples above, IPA assignments serve the Agency in two principal ways:

- They are a means of acquiring hard-to-find expertise and skills for the solution of common problems.
- They provide a training ground where EPA employees can experience first-hand the application of environmental programs and regulations at the grass roots level.





RULES OF THE ROAD



Chapter 3

Rules of the Road

Although the IPA Program allows considerable flexibility to managers in designing IPA assignments, there are still rules and procedures to be followed. The discussion below highlights the primary rules and limitations on IPA assignments. For more information see the HQ IPA Coordinator or your Human Resources Office.

Proposing an IPA Assignment

All officials initiating IPA assignments inside and outside of EPA must sign a standard agreement form (OF-69) certifying the accuracy of a job description, fiscal arrangements, employee benefits, rights and obligations. Individual employees are not authorized to initiate discussions with outside organizations about IPA assignments. The most common way that IPA assignments are proposed is through personal

contacts or official correspondence between EPA managers and their non-Federal counterparts.

Criteria for IPA Assignments

As mentioned earlier, mutual benefit is the key test for an IPA assignment. The assignment should provide a clear benefit to EPA either through some direct impact on a program and/or on the IPA assignee, or a clear gain in knowledge, skill or effectiveness. The benefits must be explained in writing on the IPA proposal form.

Length of IPA Assignments

Assignments can be made on a full-time, part-time, or intermittent basis but will be initially limited to two years. A single assignment may be extended not to exceed four years maximum. In

addition, no Federal employee may exceed a personal total of six years on IPA assignments in a career. Assignments should be kept to the minimum time period necessary to complete the assigned task.

Assignments that are extended beyond two years require written justification for the extension, including a description of the additional mutual benefits.

most assignments of EPA employees to other organizations, it is expected that EPA's cost-share should be 50% or less. *At a cost-share of 50% or less, the EPA employee does not count against ceiling.*

Managers have real freedom of action to negotiate on costs and all costs are open to negotiation. For example, if a prospective assignee has a base salary of



Paying the Costs of an IPA Assignment

The organization benefiting the most from an assignment is expected to bear the greater share of costs. Where benefits are primarily on one side, that organization can pay all costs. In

\$30,000, the cost of the salary can be negotiated so that both organizations pay equal shares, or any other proportion. Generally, the costs of an IPA assignment will include salary, fringe benefits (health insurance, life insurance, etc.), travel and moving

expenses. Equal Employment Opportunity

Employees will be selected for IPA assignments without regard to political affiliation, race, color, national origin, age, sex, religious creed or physical handicap.

Approving IPA Assignments

After an IPA agreement is prepared, it must be approved by an authorized official of both organizations. The level of approving official within EPA depends on the proportion of salary costs to be paid by EPA, as follows:

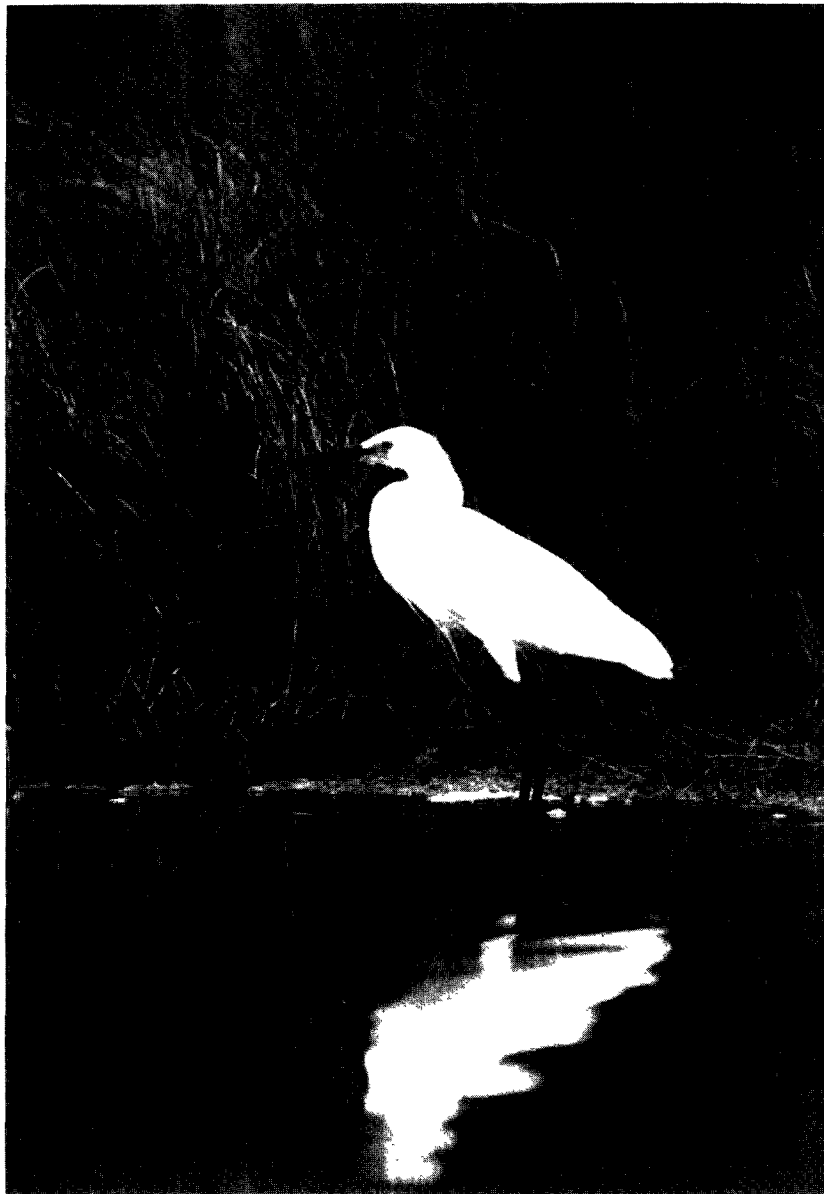
- If EPA pays 30% of salary or less -- the IPA agreement is

approved by an Assistant Administrator, Associate Administrator, Inspector General, General Counsel or Regional Administrator and reviewed by the Headquarters IPA Coordinator.

- If EPA pays more than 30% of salary -- the agreement must be approved by the IPA Coordinator located in the Executive Resources and Special Programs Staff in the Headquarters Office of Human Resources Management.

Copies of all agreements are kept by the Headquarters IPA Coordinator.





MANAGEMENT AND IPA ASSIGNMENTS



Chapter 4

Management and IPA Assignments

The flexibilities built into the IPA Program permit EPA managers to supplement their workforce with assignees from outside organizations, to develop their permanent employees, and to provide assistance to state and local governments, etc. IPA assignments are not large in number compared to the overall EPA workforce. On average, active IPA assignments including both EPA and non-EPA employees total less than 1% of workforce. The IPA Program is not designed to produce large numbers of assignees. Rather,

the Program provides managers with a vehicle for meeting the special needs of the program they direct and the state and local governments that they serve.

This section, in a question and answer format, will provide information on the technical and regulatory aspects of IPA assignments. If you need further information, please contact the Headquarters IPA Coordinator or your local Human Resources Office.

Questions and Answers

Q. How do IPA assignments get started?

A. Officials of non-Federal organizations and Federal agencies may initiate an IPA mobility as-

signment by addressing an assignment proposal directly to a counterpart agency in another jurisdiction that shares a mutual concern in strengthening a program or solving a problem.

Q. What should an assignment proposal contain?

A. In order to give the organization to which the proposal is addressed a basis for evaluating the request and deciding how it can help, an assignment proposal should outline the:

- Purpose of the assignment, including its general priority;
- Benefits of assignment for the organizations and employee involved;
- Employee's skills and background required (position description);
- Estimated length of the assignment; and
- Share of salary and other expenses the requesting organization is willing to assume.

Q. How is an assignment put into effect?

A. Once EPA, the outside organization and the employee have agreed upon the assignment and all terms and conditions for the assignment, it is put into effect by a written assignment agreement. The written agreement is reviewed by the servicing Human Resources Office

(HRO) or the Headquarters IPA Coordinator before final approval.

Q. What is the purpose of the assignment agreement?

A. The assignment agreement is used to:

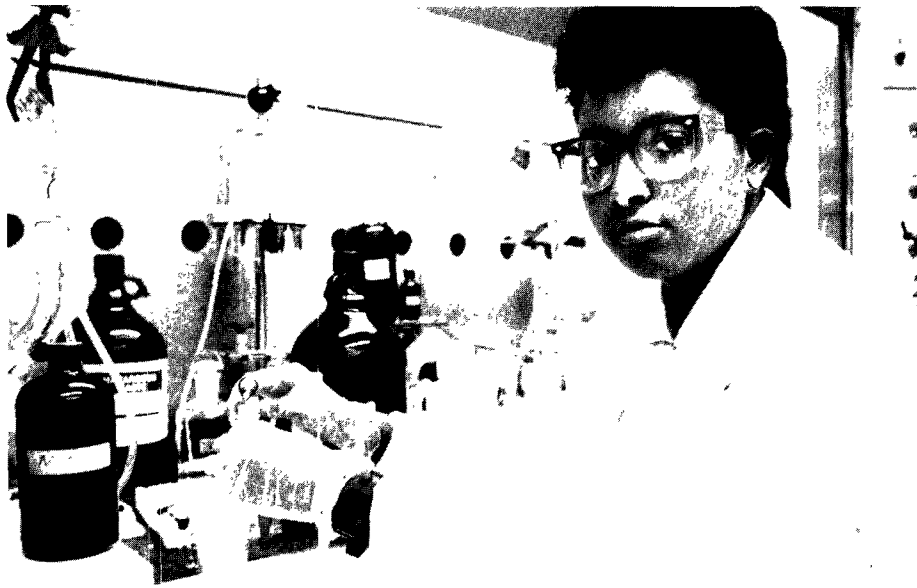
- Document the terms and conditions of the assignment that the two agencies have agreed upon;
- Document the employee's consent to the assignment by his or her signature; and
- Provide a record of the rights and responsibilities of each of the three parties to the agreement.

Q. Can an employee be assigned to another jurisdiction without his or her consent?

A. No. IPA assignments can be made only with the consent of the employee.

Q. How do employees indicate an interest in IPA assignment possibilities?

A. Since assignment proposals are initiated and responded to by Agency managers, employees



should inform the appropriate program and personnel officials in their respective organizations of their interest.

Q. What should the employee do when he or she knows of a need for his or her services in another organization?

A. An employee may bring to the attention of appropriate officials in EPA any specific needs that another jurisdiction might have for which he or she would like to be considered. Proposals will be evaluated by EPA management officials on the basis of the mutual benefit that

the two organizations will derive from the proposed assignment.

Q. How long does the IPA assignment last?

A. The assignment may last for an initial length of time up to two years depending upon the needs of the organizations involved. Assignments may also be part-time, for example 20 hours per week, or intermittent, such as one week per month for six months.

Q. Can an assignment be extended beyond two years?

A. Yes. Under special circumstances, such as when a project takes longer to complete than anticipated, an assignment may be extended for up to an additional two years. Such an extension can be made only if it is for the mutual benefit of the agencies concerned. It should be documented with a letter stating the extended date of termination and signed by all three parties to the agreement.

Q. Under what conditions would an assignment be terminated early?

A. An assignment may be terminated at any time at the option of either organization. Normally, this might occur if a project is completed ahead of schedule or if the desired results are not being achieved. An early termination should be documented with a letter giving the revised termination date.

Q. What is the status of an employee on an IPA mobility assignment?

A. Employees of EPA and non-Federal organizations may be as-

signed either on detail or on a leave-without-pay basis. In either case, the assignee remains an employee of his or her original organization and retains the rights and benefits attached to that status.

Q. What are the rights, benefits, and obligations of an EPA employee?

A. On detail, an EPA employee:

- Retains his or her pay, allowances, privileges, rights, seniority, and other benefits;
- Continues to have employee contributions for retirement, life insurance, and health benefits withheld from his or her pay;
- Continues to earn leave under the Federal system and has appropriate absence from duty with the other jurisdiction charged against that leave;
- Is subject to the 40-hour workweek and 8-hour non-overtime requirement for Federal employees although the employee's workweek and hours of duty are determined by the other jurisdiction; and

- Is entitled to all Federal holidays or overtime pay if required to work on a Federal holiday.

On leave-without-pay from his or her Federal agency, an EPA employee:

- Is given an appointment by the other jurisdiction in accordance with the assignment agreement and is paid by that jurisdiction;
- Is paid a supplemental salary by the Federal agency when the rate of basic pay of the position in the other jurisdiction is less than the rate of basic pay the employee would have received by remaining in the Federal position;
- Has his or her workweek, hours of duty, and holidays established by the other jurisdiction in accordance with its policies;
- May elect to retain his or her Federal leave entitlement subject to Federal leave regulations (leave is earned, credited, charged, and forfeited as though he or she were in pay status);
- May elect to retain his or her coverage under the Federal

life insurance program, retirement system, and health benefits program or participate in comparable programs offered by the other jurisdiction;

- Is subject to the 40-hour workweek and 8-hour non overtime requirement for Federal employees although the employee's workweek and hours of duty are determined by the other jurisdiction; and
- Is entitled to all Federal holidays or overtime pay if required to work on a Federal holiday;
- Is considered for promotion purposes on equal basis with Federal employees in the same agency under the applicable merit promotion plan as if still serving in the Federal agency; and
- Must be returned to the position he or she occupied at the time the assignment began or be reassigned to a position of like pay and grade.

Whether assigned by detail or leave-without-pay, an EPA employee must agree as a condition of accepting an assignment to serve in the civil service upon the completion of the assign-

ment for a period equal to the length of the assignment.

Q. May an EPA employee assigned under the leave-without-pay provisions of the IPA authority, and thus holding an appointment from the "other organization," be promoted within that employer's system?

A. Yes, but the written agreement should provide for any promotions and changes in salary during the assignment, or the agreement may be amended provided all parties agree.

Q. What are the rights, benefits and obligations of a non-Federal employee on mobility assignment?

A. On detail, a non-Federal employee:

- Remains an employee of his or her original employing jurisdiction for most purposes (non-Federal organizations interested in participating are being urged to provide protection for their employees comparable to that which is extended to Federal employees);



- Continues to be paid at his or her regular salary rate. However, the assignee is entitled to supplemental pay to the extent that his or her regular pay is less than the appropriate rate of pay which the duties would warrant under applicable Federal pay provisions;
- Is considered a Federal employee for purposes of applicable conflict of interest laws and standards of conduct.

On leave to a Federal agency, a non-Federal employee may be given an appointment in the Federal service for up to a 2-year period without regard to the provisions governing appointment in the competitive service.

Q. Do non-Federal employees on an IPA appointment get Federal Health Benefits, Life Insurance, Retirement?

A. No, but if the State or local government fails to continue the employee's contribution to State or local government retirement, life insurance or health benefits plan, the Federal Agency may pay the employer's contributions (or any part of them) for the employee's period of assign-

ment. The employee must continue his or her contribution to the applicable benefit program. This can occur only on an appointment to a Federal position.

Q. When a non-Federal IPA employee is given an appointment in the Federal service, is the employee eligible for within-grade increases under the Federal Government's General Schedule?

A. Yes. If the appointment is for more than a year.

Q. Who pays the costs of an assignment?

A. The costs of an assignment may be shared by the two jurisdictions or be paid entirely by one or the other. This is subject to negotiation between the two agencies cooperating on the assignment. In general, an organization's share of costs should relate to the degree to which its interests are carried out under the assignment. The organization which benefits more from the assignment might reasonably expect to pay the larger share of the costs. However, there may be circumstances in which one jurisdiction or the other will want to as-

sume the full costs because it feels it will benefit enough from the assignment to justify such an arrangement.

Q. What do assignment costs include?

A. Such costs may include employee pay, supplemental pay, and certain fringe benefits, travel and relocation costs. Federal agencies may not reimburse non-Federal organizations for tuition credits or for any indirect or administrative overhead costs associated with an assignment.

Q. Are assignees counted against a Federal agency's "ceiling" on the Monthly Report of Civilian Employment (SF 113-A)?

A. EPA employees on detail to non-Federal organizations should not be reported on SF 113-A, if the organization to which an assignment is made reimburses the Federal agency for at least 50 percent of the employee's salary.

EPA employees on detail to IPA assignments should be reported on SF 113-A, if the organization to which an assignment is made does not reimburse the Federal agency for at

least 50 percent of the employee's salary.

EPA employees placed on leave-without-pay while on assignment with non-Federal organizations should not be reported on SF 113-A if their assignments are for more than 30 days; such employees should be reported only if their IPA mobility assignment is for 30 days or less.

Non-Federal employees on detail to IPA mobility assignments with Federal agencies should not be reported on SF 113-A. Non-Federal employees on IPA mobility assignments, who have received Federal appointments, should be reported on SF 113-A, if their assignments are for more than 30 days; they should not be reported if their assignments are for 30 days or less.

Q. Can an EPA assignee receive pay in excess of his or her Federal salary?

A. Yes. A Federal employee who is placed in a leave-without-pay status while on an assignment would ordinarily receive the appropriate rate of pay for the position he or she occupies with the "other organization."

Thus, he or she could receive a higher rate of pay than authorized for his or her Federal position. A Federal employee on detail to an IPA assignment is entitled to his or her Federal rate of pay. However, such an assignee may receive a supplemental salary from a non-Federal organization when the position to which he or she is being assigned has a higher established rate of pay.

Q. Can a non-Federal assignee receive a QSI while on an IPA assignment whether by detail or appointment?

A. No, but they may receive honor awards or if the assignee is given a temporary appointment to a Federal agency he/she may receive a cash award.

Q. What travel and transportation expenses can EPA pay?

Q. Can an EPA assignee receive a QSI while on an IPA assignment?

A. No. EPA employees on an IPA assignment may not receive a QSI because of the temporary nature of the assignment.

Q. Can an EPA assignee receive a cash award while on an IPA assignment?

A. Yes. If the host organization wishes to grant one, with the concurrence of the assignee's agency.

A. Under the IPA one or more of the following expenses may be paid:

- Travel, including a per diem allowance, to and from the assignment location for the employee;
- Travel, including a per diem allowance, for official business away from the duty station during the assignment;
- Change of station allowance for travel and transportation of the employee's immediate family, household goods, and

personal effects to and from the assignment location;

- Subsistence expenses for the employee and his or her immediate family while occupying temporary quarters (up to 30 days) at the assignment location and on return to the former post of duty;
- Temporary storage of household goods (up to 60 days) in connection with the assignment;
- Per diem allowance at the assignment location; and
- Miscellaneous expenses related to change of station where movement or storage of household goods is involved.

An IPA assignee may receive either the per diem allowance at the assignment location or the change of station allowances but not both. Cost to the government is considered in determining which procedure to use.

Pre-assignment house-hunting trips and payment of certain real estate costs allowed in connection with permanent moves are not allowed due to the temporary nature of IPA assign-

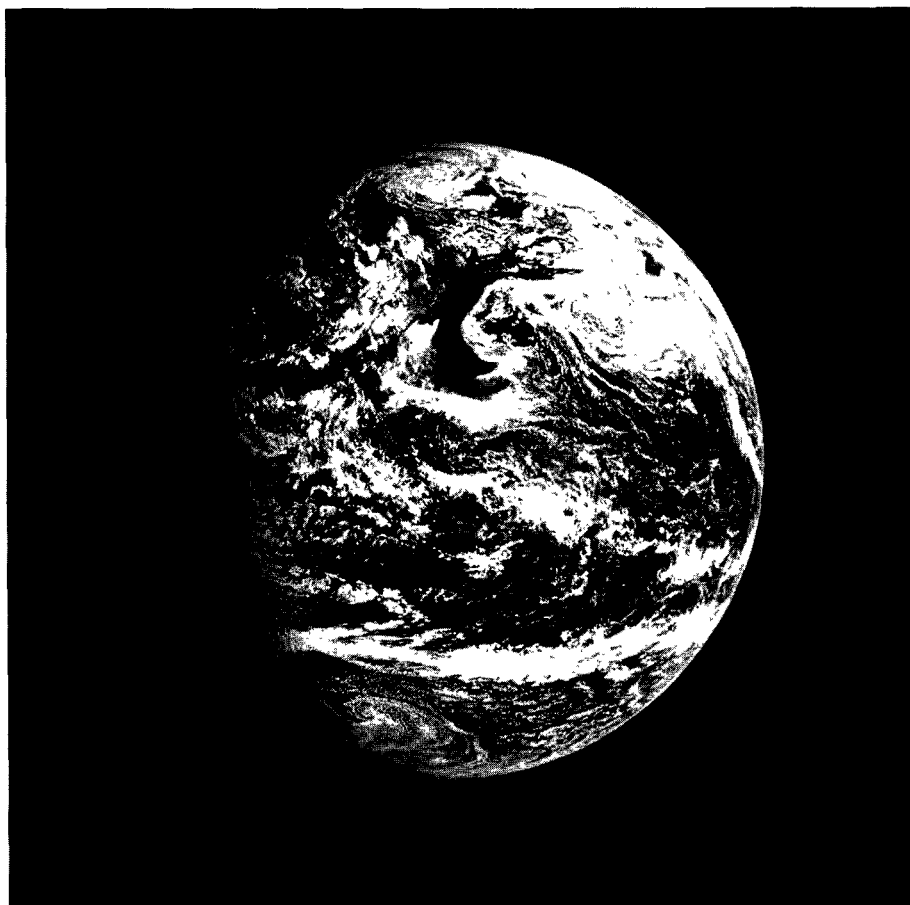
ments and the expectation that employees will return to their original employment locations at the close of their assignments.

Q. What are the responsibilities of an employee while on an IPA assignment?

A. An employee on an IPA assignment:

- Is expected to conduct himself or herself according to conflict of interest laws and standards of conduct provisions applicable to Federal employees and similar standards maintained by non-Federal organizations;
- Is expected to return to his or her original employer upon completion of the assignment; and
- May be held responsible for travel and transportation expenses to and from the assignment location if he or she does not serve the length of the assignment upon return to the Agency, or one year, whichever is less, unless the reasons for early termination of the assignment are beyond the control of the employee.

**We encourage you to participate
in the IPA program as we work
in partnership to...**



Make the world a better place.

**OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
EXECUTIVE RESOURCES
AND SPECIAL PROGRAMS DIVISION**

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