



# Manager's Guide to Hiring Under Special Appointing Authorities



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*Office of Administration*

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*Personnel Management Division*

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This Handbook was prepared in the Personnel Management Division, Policies and Programs Branch. The major work was done by Zandra Kern. The Handbook was prepared for printing by Terrlyn Curry.

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**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460**

**OFFICE OF  
ADMINISTRATION  
AND RESOURCES  
MANAGEMENT**

**To: All EPA Managers and Supervisors**

In my role as Director of Personnel, I often hear managers talk about how lengthy and cumbersome the Federal hiring process is. I share your concerns about this, and want you to know that EPA is encouraging OPM to permit agencies more flexibility and streamlining in the hiring process.

However, many of you may be unaware that employees do not always have to be hired through the traditional OPM or merit promotion processes. This handbook will tell you about a number of special hiring flexibilities that already exist. They allow you to hire individuals in less than the four to six weeks it normally takes. In some cases, you can virtually hire someone overnight!

This handbook also gives you information about the different appointing authorities. It describes who is covered by the authority, where you can find applicants, how they are hired, and whether or not they count against your personnel ceiling. We hope it expands your personnel knowledge so that you can make recruiting and hiring decisions easier.

Your personnel office is always available to help you in the hiring process. Talk with them about these special authorities. They will be happy to help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Clarence Hardy".

Clarence Hardy  
Director of Personnel

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## APPOINTMENTS WITHOUT COMPENSATION

Do you realize that many people would work for free just to get work experience? Hiring volunteers, whether they are students or handicapped individuals, are a good way to get work done without charge to your ceiling. Hiring volunteers may also help you meet your organization's affirmative action goals.

TYPE OF HIRE	PURPOSE	HOW CAN I HIRE?	WHERE CAN I FIND THEM?	ELIGIBILITY	FTE CEILING?
<b>STUDENT VOLUNTEERS</b>	To provide an opportunity for students to acquire new skills/ training in a work environment. These individuals provide a service to the public on a voluntary basis.	An agreement must be developed between EPA and the school outlining the responsibilities of all parties. The length of non-paid service is determined as part of the agreement.	Educational institutions, boards of education, placement offices, and direct recruitment.	A student must be enrolled at least half-time in a high school, trade school, technical or vocational school, college or university.	No
<b>UNPAID WORK EXPERIENCE</b>	To provide handicapped individuals the opportunity to receive on-the-job training and actual job experience which is useful for their future careers.	An agreement is developed between EPA and the rehabilitation center/ educational institute. Length of nonpaid service is determined as part of the agreement.	State vocational rehabilitation agencies, Veterans Administration, colleges/ universities, community work/ training programs, and organizations of/for disabled.	The handicapped individual must be a client of a state rehabilitation agency, veterans placement organization, or be referred from an institution that has been state certified.	No

## NONCOMPETITIVE APPOINTMENTS

These are the individuals you have been waiting to hire - those that you can offer the job to today and have them start to work tomorrow! The individuals covered by these special authorities do not have to compete with the general public to be hired. By simply establishing that the individual meets the criteria for the appointment and/or is qualified for the position permits you to offer this individual a job. And you never thought the personnel process could be so easy!

TYPE OF HIRE	PURPOSE	HOW CAN I HIRE?	WHERE CAN I FIND THEM?	ELIGIBILITY	FTE CEILING?
<b>VETERANS READJUSTMENT APPOINTMENTS</b>	Since the Civil War, veterans have been given preference for government jobs. To recognize the loss that is suffered by those who serve their country in the armed forces, Congress enacted laws to assist veterans in Federal employment.	Veterans may be noncompetitively appointed at grades GS/WG-9 and below, for a period of two years. Appointees may be noncompetitively converted to status appointments within 30 days after completing 2 years of service under this appointment.	Veterans' placement offices or the Veterans Administration.	Veterans must <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● be a Vietnam Era veteran,</li> <li>● not have completed more than 14 years of education, and</li> <li>● agree in writing to pursue a training program.</li> </ul>	Yes
<b>DISABLED VETERANS</b>	To provide increased opportunities for veterans with service connected disabilities of 30% or more.	Veterans must have service connected disability which is documented by the VA. Initial appointment is temporary and must last at least 61 days. Appointees may be converted to status appointments at any time.	State vocational rehabilitation offices, veterans outplacement offices, and community organizations for disabled persons.	Veterans must meet the minimum qualifications for the job.	Yes
<b>PEACE CORPS, VISTA, COMMUNITY SERVICE VOLUNTEERS</b>	To provide special opportunities for employment to former volunteers to recognize their contribution to public service.	A present/former Peace Corps, VISTA, or Community Service volunteer may be appointed noncompetitively to a competitive service position. Normally, the former volunteer must be appointed within a year from the end of the volunteer service.	Direct recruitment or through paid advertisement.	The Peace Corps volunteer must provide certification of a full term of satisfactory volunteer service, usually 2 years.  The VISTA/Community Service volunteer must provide certification of a full term of satisfactory volunteer service, usually 1 year.	Yes

## NONCOMPETITIVE APPOINTMENTS (Continued)

TYPE OF HIRE	PURPOSE	HOW CAN I HIRE?	WHERE CAN I FIND THEM?	ELIGIBILITY	FTE CEILING?
<b>PRESENT AND FORMER PEACE CORPS STAFF</b>	To provide opportunities for returning Peace Corps employees	A present/former Peace Corps employee may be appointed noncompetitively to a competitive service position. The appointee is eligible for 3 years after separation from the Peace Corps.	Direct recruitment or through paid advertisement	The Peace Corps appointee must have completed no less than 36 months of service on a continuous basis, meet the qualifications requirements of the job including any written test, and provide certification that a full term of satisfactory volunteer service was completed.	Yes
<b>U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION (NRC) EMPLOYEES</b>	To provide employment opportunities to non-temporary employees of the NRC, in accordance with their agreement with OPM	Non-temporary employees may be noncompetitively appointed to a competitive service position if appointed without a break in service.	Direct recruitment	Candidates must meet the qualification requirements of the job.	Yes

## EXCEPTED SERVICE APPOINTMENTS

This section covers some of the major special emphasis programs in the excepted service. What makes these programs so different is that candidates who meet the eligibility requirements do not have to compete with others in order to be appointed, nor do they have to pass a civil service examination. In addition to being able to hire qualified employees quickly, hiring individuals in some of these programs may help you to meet your affirmative action goals.

TYPE OF HIRE	PURPOSE	HOW CAN I HIRE?	WHERE CAN I FIND THEM?	ELIGIBILITY	FTE CEILING?
<b>PROFESSIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE CAREER (PAC) POSITIONS</b>	Since the abolishment of the PACE examination in 1982, PAC positions have been established to allow agencies to hire professional and administrative staff at the entry levels, GS-5/7	<p>PAC appointments are made in accordance with the EPA/OPM agreement. EPA's agreement covers these positions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental Protection Specialist</li> <li>Personnel Management Specialist</li> <li>General Clerical and Administrative Management Analyst</li> <li>Program Analyst</li> <li>Logistics Management</li> <li>Financial Management</li> <li>Budget Analyst</li> <li>Paralegal Specialist</li> <li>Public Affairs Specialist</li> <li>Writer-Editor</li> <li>Financial Analyst</li> <li>Technical Information Specialist</li> <li>Inventory Management Specialist</li> </ul>	Direct recruitment, particularly through colleges/universities and professional organizations	Candidates are hired at the GS-5/7 levels only. They must meet all qualification requirements for the position, and be rank in accordance with specific job-related criteria.	Yes
<b>PAC SPECIAL HIRING PROGRAM</b>	To eliminate any adverse impact resulting from the abolishment of the PACE examination by establishing the outstanding scholar and the bilingual/bicultural programs	<p><b>OUTSTANDING SCHOLAR</b> college graduates who obtained a 3.5 GPA on a 4.0 scale for all undergraduate courses completed towards a baccalaureate degree, or who stand in the upper 10% of their baccalaureate graduating class.</p> <p><b>BILINGUAL/ BICULTURAL</b> applicants who have the required level of oral Spanish language proficiency and/or the requisite knowledge of hispanic culture, and are qualified for PAC positions in which interaction with the public or job performance would be enhanced by bilingual/bicultural skills.</p>	Direct recruitment through colleges or universities	Candidates may be noncompetitively appointed at the GS-5/7 level. They must meet the minimum qualification requirements.	Yes

## EXCEPTED SERVICE APPOINTMENTS

(Continued)

TYPE OF HIRE	PURPOSE	HOW CAN I HIRE?	WHERE CAN I FIND THEM?	ELIGIBILITY	FTE CEILING?
<b>COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM</b>	To allow students to attend college on a full time basis while engaging in periods of study-related work. This program is designed to be a recruiting mechanism to attract college students to careers in the Federal government.	EPA may noncompetitively appoint associate, baccalaureate, or graduate students who are enrolled in their school's cooperative education program. The school must have a formal agreement with EPA.	Direct recruitment through colleges and universities.	Students must be enrolled in their school's cooperative education program; must meet citizenship requirements, and may not be the children of EPA employees.	Yes
<b>FEDERAL JUNIOR FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM</b>	To provide career-related summer and vacation employment for outstanding high school seniors and handicapped students who need earnings to attend college.	Graduating high school seniors must be nominated by a designated school official, be in the upper 10% of their class, and plan to attend college.	Local high schools.	Students must demonstrate a need for earnings (except severely disabled students) and be US citizens. Students are initially appointed at the GS-2.	No
<b>STUDENTS, AND HIGH SCHOOL SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS TEACHERS</b>	To provide assistance to scientific, professional or technical employees through the temporary employment of high school and college students, and high school science and mathematics teachers.	Students and teachers may be appointed without regard to competitive procedures. Appointments may only be made at the GS-7 or equivalent and below. Total employment may not exceed 1040 working hours a year.	Direct recruitment from colleges and high schools.	Candidates must be bona fide students at high schools/colleges/universities who are pursuing courses related to the field in which employed.	Yes
<b>STAY-IN-SCHOOL PROGRAM</b>	To benefit needy students who are in high school or who are continuing their education immediately after high school and who demonstrate a need for earnings to continue their education.	Students may be appointed without regard to competitive procedures. Students are limited to 20 hours a week while school is in session and may work up to 40 hours a week during vacation periods. Appointments are not made between May 13 and August 31.	Direct recruitment through state employment service, private and public welfare agencies, high school and college counselors, and youth help organizations.	Student must <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● be a US citizen;</li> <li>● be at least 16 years of age,</li> <li>● demonstrate a need for income to stay in school (mentally retarded or severely physically handicapped are exempt),</li> <li>● be enrolled on a full time basis; and</li> <li>● maintain an acceptable school standing.</li> </ul>	No

## EXCEPTED SERVICE APPOINTMENTS

(Continued)

TYPE OF HIRE	PURPOSE	HOW CAN I HIRE?	WHERE CAN I FIND THEM?	ELIGIBILITY	FTE CEILING?
<b>SUMMER AIDES</b>	To provide summer jobs for economically disadvantaged youths. This program is specifically designed to provide temporary jobs for young people from low income families or for youths who need income from summer jobs to return to school.	Appointments are made without regard to competitive procedures. Appointments are only made between May 13 and September 30 each year. Appointments are not-to-exceed 700 actual work hours.	State employment agencies or local high schools.	Youth must be at least 16 years of age and must meet the economic criteria required by OPM.	No
<b>SEVERELY PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED PERSONS</b>	To assist handicapped persons to obtain, retain, and advance in employment consistent with their skills.	Appointments are made without regard to competitive procedures, and are certified by state vocational rehabilitation centers, the Veterans Administration or a university which specializes in training of handicapped persons. Employees may be converted to competitive status after 2 years of successful performance without a break in service of more than 30 days.	State vocational rehabilitation offices, colleges and universities, veterans' outplacement offices, and community organizations of/for the disabled.	Severely handicapped persons must be certified by an authorized handicapped resource.	Yes
<b>READERS, INTERPRETERS, PERSONAL ASSISTANTS</b>	To provide the handicapped individual with the assistance they need to perform their work.	Appointments are made without regard to competitive procedures. However, since readers, interpreters, and personal assistants must be compatible with the handicapped person, the employee should be involved in the selection process.	Services can sometimes be provided by EPA employees on an "as needed" basis. EPA may also employ outside applicants who may be paid by a non-profit organization, the handicapped employee, or by state rehabilitation funds. State employment agencies, vocational rehabilitation offices and educational institutes for the deaf are sources to consider.	Employees may serve on a full-time, part time or intermittent basis but may only perform work which is directly related to providing reading/interpreting/personal assistance to the handicapped employee.	Yes

## EXCEPTED SERVICE APPOINTMENTS (Continued)

TYPE OF HIRE	PURPOSE	HOW CAN I HIRE?	WHERE CAN I FIND THEM?	ELIGIBILITY	FTE CEILING?
<b>MENTALLY RESTORED</b>	To provide the mentally restored person with the opportunity to update skills and to establish a successful performance record	Prior approval of the Office of Personnel Management is required. A trial appointment of up to 700 hours may be given initially. Persons are limited to 2 years of service under this authority.	State vocational rehabilitation agencies, veterans placement offices, community independent living centers	The employee must have OPM approval and meet these conditions: a documented history of mental illness within the past 2 years, be certified by a state or VA vocational rehabilitation counselor; and be unemployed as a result of the illness.	Yes
<b>MENTALLY RETARDED</b>	To promote and ensure full consideration of the mentally retarded for employment in positions where they meet the necessary performance requirements or in positions where requirements can be modified	Appointments can be made noncompetitively without prior approval by OPM. Appointments have no time limitations. Certification from a state vocational rehabilitation center is required.	State vocational rehabilitation agencies or advocacy organizations for the mentally retarded	Employees must be certified as having the ability to perform the duties of the position, be physically qualified to perform the job, and be socially competent for the work environment.	Yes
<b>SUMMER EMPLOYMENT FOR MENTALLY RETARDED AND SEVERELY PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED YOUTHS</b>	To provide handicapped persons with valuable work experience. Many of these youths have a limited perspective about career choices due to lack of exposure to the work environment.	Appointments may be made under the Summer Announcement or under a 700-hour temporary appointment if applicants meet OPM requirements. Severely physically disabled youths who are certified by a state vocational rehabilitation or VA counselor do not have to meet the OPM qualifications requirements.	State vocational rehabilitation agencies, state employment offices, private and public welfare agencies, high school and college counselors, and community organizations for the disabled.	Mentally retarded youths may be appointed upon certification by a state vocational rehabilitation counselor.  Severely handicapped and mentally retarded youths are exempt from the needs criteria and the restrictions on employing sons and daughters.	Yes

## COMPETITIVE SERVICE APPOINTMENTS

Most Federal employees obtain employment through the usual Federal selection procedures. These procedures require applicants to successfully participate in a civil service examination given by the Office of Personnel Management before being eligible to be hired, or they must compete under the Agency's Merit Promotion process.

TYPE OF HIRE	PURPOSE	HOW CAN I HIRE?	WHERE CAN I FIND THEM?	ELIGIBILITY	FTE CEILING?
<b>TEMPORARY LIMITED APPOINTMENT</b>	To provide you with flexibility to deal with workload peaks. It can be very effective in program areas where employment reductions and/or operations are being cut back.	In order for a candidate to be selected for a temporary position, (GS-12 and below) he/she must first compete through EPA's competitive process. Appointments may be made for up to one year and may be extended in increments of one year up to a total of four years.	Civil Service registers and direct recruitment.	Candidates must meet the qualification requirements of the job.	Yes
<b>TEMPORARY TRIAL APPOINTMENT</b>	To facilitate the employment of persons with severe physical handicap, the mentally restored, and the mentally retarded.	<p>Appointments are made without regard to competitive procedures.</p> <p>Total employment may not exceed 700 actual work hours during a consecutive 12 month period. Only the hours the employee actually works are counted (including overtime). Legal holidays and paid or unpaid leave do not count.</p>	Vocational rehabilitation agencies, community organizations and veterans employment programs.	Candidates must either meet the qualification standards or be certified by a state vocational rehabilitation or VA counselor. Appointment of mentally restored individual requires OPM approval.	Yes
<b>TERM EMPLOYMENT</b>	To fill positions that are of a project nature, will last longer than one year but no longer than four, and will terminate upon completion of the project.	<p>In order for work to be considered of a project nature, it must meet the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● it cannot be accomplished by the regular work force,</li> <li>● it is to be completed within a specified time frame that is appropriate for a term appointment,</li> <li>● it is not part of the normal workflow of the organization, and</li> <li>● it is generated by a circumstance or situation which is not continuing.</li> </ul>	Selections are generally made from civil service registers. However, in the absence of eligibles on an appropriate register, OPM can authorize an agency to make appointments without the prior approval of OPM.	Candidates must meet the qualification requirements of the job.	Yes

## COMPETITIVE SERVICE APPOINTMENTS (Continued)

TYPE OF HIRE	PURPOSE	HOW CAN I HIRE?	WHERE CAN I FIND THEM?	ELIGIBILITY	FTE CEILING?
<b>30-DAY SPECIAL NEED</b>	To meet any legitimate need that cannot be served through appointment under some existing authority.	<p>Special need appointments may be made directly without the use of competitive procedures</p> <p>Appointments may not exceed one month. Extensions may be made for one additional month with prior OPM approval. No person can be appointed more than once during any twelve consecutive month period.</p> <p>This authority may not be used for an individual about to complete the examining, referral or other competitive process</p>	Direct recruitment	Candidates must meet the qualification requirements of the job	Yes
<b>WORKER-TRAINEE PROGRAM</b>	To facilitate the recruitment, hiring and development of low-skilled and disadvantaged persons	<p>Appointments under the worker-trainee program may only be made at the GS-1, WG-1, WG-2 or equivalent levels</p> <p>Trainees may be promoted and/or reassigned to other positions up through GS-3 and WG-4 or equivalent grades in the Federal Wage System</p> <p>Worker-trainees who satisfactorily complete 3 years of service may be converted noncompetitively to career status.</p>	State Employment Offices, OPM Job Information Centers, or any other appropriate source	The only qualification requirements are interest in and willingness to do simple, routine work.	Yes