



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Administration

Special Attention of:

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1. This Transmits: HUD Handbook 335.1 REV-3, Merit Staffing Policy
2. Significant Changes: This handbook establishes the Departmental Staffing Policy for employees. It incorporates changes in 5 CFR 335 that have taken place since 1986.
3. Cancellation: This cancels HUD Handbook 335.1 REV-2, dated September 1, 1986.
4. Filing Instructions:

Remove:

HUD Handbook 335.1 REV-2
dated, September 1, 1986

Insert:

HUD Handbook 335.1 REV-3
dated, April 21, 2004

Merit Staffing Policy

335.1

The Office of Human Resources, HR Policy, Research and
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1.	GENERAL PROVISIONS	1-1
1-1	Purpose	1-1
1-2	Policy	1-1
1-3	Authority	1-1
1-4	Relationship to Local Supplements	1-1
1-5	Responsibilities	1-2
CHAPTER 2.	COVERAGE OF POLICY	2-1
2-1	Positions Covered	2-1
2-2	Actions Covered	2-1
2-3	Actions not covered	2-2
2-4	Restrictions (5 CFR 300.604)	2-4
2-5	Creditable Service (5 CFR 300.605)	2-5
CHAPTER 3.	FILLING A POSITION THROUGH MERIT STAFFING PROCEDURES	3-1
3-1	Position Management and Classification Considerations	3-1
3-2	Submitting the Merit Staffing Request	3-1
3-3	Developing a Job Analysis and Crediting Plan	3-1
3-3.1	Job Analysis	3-1
3-3.2	Crediting Plan	3-1
3-4	Special Consideration Programs	3-2
3-5	Vacancy Announcement Process	3-2
3-5.1	Announcement	3-2
3-5.2	Posting Period	3-2
3-5.3	Area of Consideration	3-2
3-5.4	Place of Posting	3-3
3-5.5	Reposting, Extension, Or Cancellation	3-4
3-6	Sources of Candidates	3-4
3-6.1	Acceptance of Applications	3-4
3-7	Evaluation of Candidates	3-5
3-7.1	Non-Bargaining Unit Positions	3-5
3-7.2	Determination of Qualified Candidates	3-5
3-7.3	Panels	3-6
3-7.4	Panel Composition	3-6
3-7.5	Role of the Personnel Representative	3-7
3-7.6	Panel Rating Methods	3-7
3-8	Referral of Best Qualified Candidates to Selecting Official	3-8
3-8.1	Highly Qualified Candidates	3-8
3-8.2	Best Qualified Candidates	3-8
3-8.3	Ties	3-8
3-8.4	Multiple Vacancies	3-8
3-8.5	Selection Roster	3-8
3-9	Selection Consideration	3-9
3-9.1	Selecting Official Action	3-9
3-9.2	Interviewing Candidates	3-9
3-9.3	Action by Selecting Official	3-10

3-9.4	Notification to Candidates	3-10
3-9.5	Release of Selected Candidates	3-10
3-10	Merit Staffing Records and Files	3-10
3-10.1	Merit Staffing Case Files	3-10
3-10.2	Documentation in Selected Employee's Official Personnel Folder (OPF)	3-11
3-10.3	Release of Merit Staffing Data	3-11
CHAPTER 4.	RESOLVING MERIT STAFFING RELATED COMPLAINTS	4-1
4-1	Informal Discussion	4-1
4-2	Consultation with Personnel Representative	4-1
4-3	Unresolved Complaints	4-1

APPENDIX A. DEVELOPING A JOB ANALYSIS AND CREDITING PLAN

A-1		
A-1	Job Analysis and Identification of Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs)	A-1
A-1.1	Definition	A-1
A-1.2	Development of Job Analysis	A-1
A-2	Crediting Plan	A-3
A-2.1	Definition	A-3
A-2.2	Development of Crediting Plan	A-3
A-2.3	Points for Quality Ranking Factors	A-4
APPENDIX B.	SPECIAL CONSIDERATION PROGRAM PROCEDURES	B-1
B-1	Priority Consideration Program (PCP)	B-1
B-1.1	Coverage	B-1
B-1.2	Entitlement	B-1
B-1.3	Appropriate Vacancy	B-1
B-1.4	Area of Consideration	B-1
B-1.5	Notification of Eligibles	B-2
B-1.6	Processing	B-2
B-1.7	Disposition of Records	B-2
B-2	Reemployment Priority List (RPL)	B-2
B-2.1	Coverage	B-2
B-2.2	Entitlement	B-3
B-2.3	Appropriate Vacancy (Reference 5 CFR 330.206)	B-4
B-2.4	Area of Consideration	B-4
B-2.5	Notification of Eligibles	B-4
B-2.6	Selection Process	B-5
B-2.7	Records	B-6
B-2.8	Appeals	B-6
B-3	Special Reassignment Plan (SRP)	B-7
B-3.1	Coverage	B-7
B-3.2	Entitlement	B-7
B-3.3	Appropriate Vacancy	B-7
B-3.4	Notification of Eligibles	B-8
B-3.5	Processing	B-8
B-3.6	Consideration for Merit Staffing Vacancy Announcements	
B-9		
B-3.7	Records	B-9
B-4	Career Transition Assistance Program (CTAP)	B-9
B-4.1	Coverage	B-9
B-4.2	HUD Responsibilities	B-10
B-4.3	Employee Responsibilities	B-11
B-4.4	HUD Career Transition Assistance Program (CTAP) for local Displaced and Surplus Employees	B-11
B-4.5	Eligibility for CTAP Special Selection Priority	B-11
B-4.6	Application Process	B-12

B-4.7	Selection	B-13
B-4.8	Actions Covered	B-13
B-4.9	Actions Not Covered	B-13
B-4.10	Special Qualification Reviews	B-15
B-4.11	Records	B-15
B-5	The Interagency Career Transition Assistance Program (ICTAP) for Displaced Employees	B-15
B-5.1	Coverage	B-15
B-5.2	Eligibility for ICTAP Special Selection Priority	B-16
B-5.3	Departmental procedure for considering outside candidates	B-16
B-5.4	Application Process	B-17
B-5.5	Selection	B-17
B-5.6	Actions Covered	B-18
B-5.7	Actions Not Covered	B-18
B-5.8	Acceptance/Declination	B-19
B-5.9	Special Qualification Reviews	B-19
B-6	Career Transition Services	B-19
B-6.1	Eligibility	B-19
B-6.2	Training	B-19
B-6.3	Access to Services	B-20
APPENDIX C.	VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT CONTENT AND UNIFORM NUMBERING SYSTEM	C-1
C-1	Vacancy Announcement Content	C-1
C-2	Vacancy Announcement Numbering System	C-3

Merit Staffing Policy

335.1

CHAPTER 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1-1 Purpose

This handbook governs the administration of a Departmentwide program to systematically place individuals in competitive and excepted service positions on a merit basis. It is a primary goal within the Department to achieve efficiency in the acquisition of human resources necessary to support mission accomplishment through reduction of recruitment lead times. The policies and procedures promulgated by this handbook have been designed to simplify the recruitment process, provide increased management flexibility and program administration, reduce recruitment cost, and foster the confidence of both managers and perspective candidates.

1-2 Policy

All positions covered by this handbook will be filled from among the best qualified individuals available.

All actions to fill positions will be taken without any regard to political, religious, union affiliation or non-affiliation, marital status, race, color, national origin, sex, age, or non-disqualifying handicap. This also applies to all matters relating to the location, evaluation, and selection of candidates.

All standards used, and judgments made, in assigning individuals to positions will be based solely on the requirements of the positions to be filled and the merit and fitness of the candidates in meeting these requirements. This excludes any considerations based on personal relationships or patronage.

This policy does not imply or guarantee either initial selection or subsequent promotion. Rather, it is intended to assure that all qualified applicants receive fair consideration for placement and promotion opportunities.

1-3 Authority

This handbook is authorized by Section 335.103 of Part 335 of Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations. The provisions of this handbook have been approved for Departmentwide application by the Assistant Secretary for Administration.

1-4 Relationship to Local Supplements

This handbook may be used singly or in conjunction with supplements developed by individual servicing personnel offices.

In general, local supplements may fill in or add to the requirements as long as they do not conflict with its provisions. Locally devised minor variations of forms are authorized and, if used, will be included in the local supplement.

Other exceptions cannot be made without approval of the Director, Office of Human Resources. Such exceptions will be included in the local supplement. A copy of all local supplements in effect as of the date of this handbook shall be forwarded to the Office of Human Resources, Policy, Research and Development Division. All proposed supplements after the published date of the handbook will be forwarded to the Office of Human Resources, Policy Research and Development Division for consideration.

1-5 Responsibilities

This handbook is to be administered in accordance with the delegations set forth in the Personnel Administration Authorities, which includes all applicable legal and regulatory guidance contained in 5 CFR and 5 U.S.C. respectively. Significant responsibilities are assigned as follows:

A. Director, Office of Human Resources

The Director, Office of Human Resources, as delegated by the Assistant Secretary for Administration is responsible for the overall day to day administration of the HUD Merit Staffing Policy, not limited to but including:

1. The issuance of revisions and Departmentwide supplements;
2. Periodic evaluation of the policy's effectiveness and delivery systems; and
3. Approval or disapproval of requests for exceptions.

B. Personnel Representatives

The personnel representative is responsible for ensuring that the day-to-day staffing activities are consistent with this handbook, including:

1. Conducting job analyses of positions to be filled and developing crediting plans with subject matter experts;
2. Announcing vacancies, evaluating candidates, conducting panels, and referring best qualified candidates to selecting officials;
3. Providing consultation to employees regarding merit staffing procedures, promotion opportunities, qualification requirements, and results of merit staffing actions for positions being filled; and,
4. Assisting in the resolution of merit staffing related complaints from employees.

C. Selecting Officials

The selecting official as delegated by assigned personnel management authorities makes the final management decision regarding who is selected for placement in a position by any type of personnel action (e.g., promotion, reassignment, transfer, etc.). He/she may designate a subject matter expert or may work personally with the personnel representative in reviewing positions to be filled and developing job analyses and crediting plans for use in merit staffing.

D. Managers

All managers, including the selecting officials, have the following responsibilities:

1. Conforming to this policy when filling positions;
2. Giving fair and objective consideration to all candidates;
3. Practicing sound position management in determining whether a new position should be established, or whether a current position should be filled as is, changed or abolished;
4. Promptly providing appraisals of potential as requested for subordinates who are candidates for merit staffing vacancies;
5. Attempting to resolve employee complaints within the appropriate time frames as required; and
6. Giving advice and providing assistance to employees seeking to improve their promotion potential.

E. Subject Matter Experts

The subject matter expert within a given program area is responsible for working with the personnel representative to conduct the job analysis and to develop the crediting plan for the position to be filled. He/she is designated by the selecting official; is knowledgeable about the job requirements; and is generally at or above the grade of the position to be filled.

F. Administrative Officers

The administrative officer is responsible for working with the manager and the personnel representative to coordinate administrative matters under this handbook as delegated by his/her organization.

G. Employees

Employees should:

1. Be familiar with the provisions of this handbook;
2. Participate on merit systems staffing panels as needed; and,

3. Apply for advertised positions by submitting an updated "Application for Federal Employment" OF-612, Resume, or SF-171, cover sheet of performance appraisals, and any other information required in vacancy announcements.

Merit Staffing Policy

335.1

CHAPTER 2. COVERAGE OF POLICY

2-1 Positions Covered

This policy applies to the staffing all positions in the competitive and excepted service at grade levels GS-15 and below, and supervisory wage system positions in the competitive service. Staffing of bargaining unit positions is covered by collective bargaining agreements.

2-2 Actions Covered

The following actions require competition:

A. Permanent promotions, unless excluded under paragraph 2-3 of this Chapter.

B. Temporary promotions over 120 days; and temporary promotions of less than 120 days, if, by the end of the promotion period an employee will have served more than 120 days of the preceding 12 months in temporary promotions and/or in details to higher graded positions or positions with known promotion potential.

A temporary promotion may be made permanent, provided:

1. the temporary promotion was originally made under competitive procedures;

2. the appropriate minimum area of consideration as determined by application of paragraph 3-5.3 was used to hold competition for the temporary promotion, and

3. the fact that it might lead to a permanent promotion was clearly stated on the vacancy announcement.

C. Details over 120 days to higher graded positions, or positions with known promotion potential; and details of less than 120 days, if, by the end of the detail period an employee will have served more than 120 days of the preceding 12 months in higher graded positions or in positions with known promotional potential. (Prior service during the preceding 12 months under non-competitive details to higher graded positions and non-competitive time-limited promotions counts toward the 120-day total.)

A permanent promotion may be made from a detail without further competition, provided the same three conditions prescribed for making a temporary promotion permanent are met.

D. Selections for training which is part of an authorized agreement, part of a promotion program, or required before employees may be considered for promotion.

E. Reassignments or demotions to positions with more promotion potential than the position previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service (except as permitted by reduction-in-force regulations), or to an action due to reclassification based on new OPM Standards being issued or an accretion of duties promotion.

F. Transfers between Federal agencies to higher graded positions or to positions with greater promotion potential than previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service.

G. Reinstatement to a permanent or temporary position at a higher grade or with higher promotion potential than the last grade previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service.

H. Term promotions.

I. Promotion to a grade or position from which an employee was demoted at his/her request provided if the employee was awarded Highest Previous Rate upon being demoted.

2-3 Actions not covered

The following actions do not require competition:

A. Appointments at GS-5 and below to positions for which the agency has been granted direct hire authority by OPM;

B. Career or career-conditional appointments from a civil service certificate of eligibles issued by OPM or the Delegated Examining Unit (DEU);

C. Reassignments between positions having the same promotion potential;

D. Promotions when earlier competition occurred, e.g., career ladder promotions;

E. Promotion to the full performance level in the career ladder of a position when an employee has been placed in that position as a result of RIF or reclassification;

F. Promotion to the grade level of the position under career or career-conditional appointment, from which the incumbent was not demoted or separated from that grade because of deficiencies in performance or "for cause" reasons;

G. Promotions when an employee's position has been reclassified at a higher grade because of additional duties and responsibilities. Such a promotion may occur whether or not the assumption of higher-level duties and responsibilities resulted from planned management action; however, the supervisor must submit a statement explaining how the additional duties evolved into the new position;

H. The promotion of an incumbent of a position which has been

upgraded, without significant change in duties and responsibilities, on the basis of either the issuance of a new classification standard or the correction of a classification error;

I. Selection of a candidate from the Reemployment Priority List, for a position at the same or lower grade than that last held in the competitive service;

J. Selection of a candidate from the Priority Consideration Program for a position at the same grade level and the same promotion potential as the one for which proper consideration was not given;

K. Selection of a candidate from the Special Reassignment Plan for movement to a position at the same or lower grade from which demoted;

L. Promotions directed by special authorities, such as court decisions, EEO consent decree, OPM decisions, or other appropriate authorities; and,

M. Non-competitive conversions, appointments, and promotions of employees in certain excepted positions.

1. A non-competitive conversion to career or career-conditional appointment, if authorized by OPM policies, is excluded from coverage. This exclusion applies to an employee who, while serving on excepted appointment, has successfully satisfied the specific requirements of a special employment program. Examples of such programs include: Student Educational Employment Program, Veteran's Readjustment, Selective Placement, Career Intern and Presidential Management Intern;

2. Appointments and promotions in excepted positions, such as Attorney, Schedule C, Student Educational Employment Program, Selective Placement, Career Intern and Presidential Management Intern;

3. Promotions to competitive positions following the conversion of employees from certain excepted appointments, such as Student Educational Employment Program and Presidential Management Intern; and,

4. Appointment of candidates under special appointment authorities, such as Peace Corps returnees, Vietnam-Era veterans, or persons with handicapping conditions.

N. Transfers

1. Transfers from another agency to a position at the same grade level with no known promotion potential.

2. Lateral transfers from another agency below the full performance level if, the promotion potential of the position being vacated is the same as or higher than the position being filled at HUD.

3. Transfers under special appointment authorities from other branches of government, such as the legislative branch, Postal Service, and the D.C. Government.

0. Reinstatement up to the highest grade previously held on a permanent basis under career or career-conditional appointment, provided the employee was not demoted or separated from that grade because of deficiencies in performance or "for cause" reasons.

2-4 Restrictions (5 CFR 300.604)

The following time-in-grade restrictions must be met under competitive procedures.

A. Advancement to positions at GS-12 and above

Candidates for advancement to a position at GS-12 and above must have completed a minimum of 52 weeks in positions no more than one grade lower (or equivalent) than the position to be filled.

B. Advancement to positions at GS-6 through GS-11

Candidates for advancement to a position at GS-6 through GS-11 must have completed a minimum of 52 weeks in positions:

1. No more than two grades lower (or equivalent) when the position to be filled is in a line of work properly classified at 2-grade intervals;
2. No more than one-grade lower (or equivalent) when the position to be filled is in a line of work properly classified at 1-grade intervals; or,
3. No more than one or two grades lower (or equivalent), as determined by the Department, when the position to be filled is in a line of work properly classified at 1-grade intervals but has a mixed interval promotion pattern.

C. Advancement to positions up to GS-5

Candidates may be advanced without time restriction to positions up to GS-5 if the position to be filled is no more than two grades above the lowest grade the employee held within the preceding 52 weeks under his or her latest non-temporary competitive appointment.

2-5 Creditable Service (5 CFR 300.605)

A. All service at the required or higher grade (or equivalent) in positions to which appointed in the Federal civilian service is creditable towards the time periods required by 5 CFR 300.604, except as provided in paragraph C of this section.

Creditable service includes competitive and excepted service in positions under the General Schedule (GS) and other pay systems,

including employment with a non-appropriated fund instrumentality. Service while on detail is credited at the grade of the employee's position of record, not the grade of the position to which detailed. Also creditable is service with the District of Columbia Government prior to January 1, 1980 (or prior to September 26, 1980, for those District employees who were converted to the District personnel system on January 1, 1980).

B. Service in positions not subject to the General Schedule is credited at the equivalent GS grade by comparing the candidate's rate of basic pay with the representative rate (as defined in 5 CFR 351.203) of the GS position in effect when the non-GS service was performed. The equivalent GS grade is the GS grade with a representative rate that equals the candidate's rate of basic pay. When the candidate's rate of basic pay falls between the representative rates of two GS grades, the non-GS service is credited at the higher grade.

C. In applying the restrictions in 5 CFR 300.604 of this part, prior service under a temporary appointment at a level above that of a subsequent non-temporary competitive appointment is credited as if the service had been performed at the level of the non-temporary appointment. This provision applies until the employee has served in pay status for 52 weeks under non-temporary competitive appointment; thereafter, the service is credited at its actual grade level (or equivalent).

Merit Staffing Policy

335.1

CHAPTER 3. FILLING A POSITION THROUGH MERIT STAFFING PROCEDURES

3-1 Position Management and Classification Considerations

When a position is to be vacated, managers have the responsibility to determine if the position is still required. If required, the official position description must be reviewed to determine if changes in duties, responsibilities, or organizational placement are needed. It is particularly important that managers consult with the personnel representative if major changes are contemplated in a position or if a new position is to be established. This will enable the personnel representative to coordinate with managers regarding all position management and classification aspects (pay plan, title, series, duties, responsibilities) of the position.

3-2 Submitting the Merit Staffing Request

To initiate the merit staffing process, a manager must electronically submit a Merit Staffing Request, a position description, and a Request for Personnel Action to the servicing Human Resources office. The HR Specialist will review the proposed duties, job analysis and crediting plan in consultation with the requesting manager.

3-3 Developing a Job Analysis and Crediting Plan

3-3.1 Job Analysis

The HUD system for the evaluation of candidate's qualifications uses the concepts of job analysis and the development of a crediting plan based upon knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs), and benchmarks identified in the job analysis. All positions to be merit staffed must include a completed job analysis using the HUD Job Analysis Form 25008 (Appendix 4). This process will delineate the major activities of a job, outline the KSAs required for successful performance of each activity, and provide examples of experience and/or education that demonstrate possession of a KSA. (see Appendix A, for specifics on developing a Job Analysis and Crediting Plan).

3-3.2 Crediting Plan

After the job analysis is completed, the HUD Crediting Plan Form 25007 (Appendix 4), will be developed based upon the KSAs and benchmarks identified in the job analysis. The personnel representative and subject matter expert (SME) may jointly develop the job analysis and crediting plan using the instructions in Appendix A.

3-4 Special Consideration Programs

These programs are the Career Transition Assistance Program (CTAP), Interagency Career Transition Assistance Program (ICTAP), the Special Reassignment Plan (SRP), and Reemployment Priority List (RPL) Priority Consideration Program (PCP). Action to consider eligibles under these programs must be completed prior to the issuance of a merit staffing Selection Roster, which lists the best qualified candidates who applied under the vacancy announcement. A description of each program and its procedures is in Appendix B.

3-5 Vacancy Announcement Process

3-5.1 Announcement

All vacancies to be merit staffed should be announced on a Notice of Position Vacancy. The personnel representative will prepare the vacancy announcement (Appendix C) based on the merit staffing request and the job analysis (Appendix 1).

3-5.2 Posting Period

Vacancy announcements will be posted prior to, or on, the issue date and will remain posted for the duration of the open period. The normal open period for a vacancy with a Departmentwide area of consideration is three weeks. For other vacancies, the minimum period is two weeks. The posting period may be reduced to a minimum of one week when the area of consideration is reduced in accordance with paragraph

3-5.3C. Open continuous vacancy announcements, without specific closing dates, may be used to advertise recurring vacancies.

3-5.3 Area of Consideration

Areas of consideration define the geographical boundaries within which HUD vacancy announcements must be posted.

A. Minimum Areas

The minimum areas of consideration are established as follows:

Grade Level of Vacancy	Minimum Area of Consideration
GS-14 and GS-15	Departmentwide
GS-13	Area-wide (all field establishments within HUD ASC boundaries (or HUD Headquarters)
GS-12 and below, Wage System Supervisors	All field establishments within the local commuting area, or HUD Headquarters

B. Expanding the Minimum Area

The personnel representative may expand the area of consideration

when:

1. Normal staffing efforts fail or are expected to fail to produce a reasonable number of best qualified candidates; or,
2. The selecting official requests a wider area of consideration.

C. Reducing the Minimum Area

If requested by the selecting official, the personnel representative may reduce the minimum area of consideration in certain circumstances, such as:

1. A higher-graded position is established as a result of realignment of duties within an organizational unit with no provision for an increase in the number of employees in the unit.
2. Details to higher-graded positions or temporary promotions are made under circumstances where consideration of employees outside the smaller area is impractical.
 - a. Factors such as ceiling controls or hiring freezes prevent the employing office from adding to its staff.
 - b. In instances where the reduced area of consideration is used, vacancy announcements must include the basis for smaller areas and a statement that applicants from other sources will not be considered.
 - c. In each case, the situation must be documented fully to show why the smaller area is justified, and the documentation must be made a part of the merit staffing case file.

3-5.4 Place of Posting

In addition, headquarters and Departmentwide vacancy announcements will be available at the Job Information Center. Field and Departmentwide vacancy announcements will be available in all appropriate Area and Field offices according to the area of consideration (see paragraph 3-5.3A). Vacancy announcements will also be posted electronically on OPM Web sites, also accessible through the HUD website.

3-5.5 Reposting, Extension, Or Cancellation

- A. If a vacancy announcement has been posted and any significant information is later found to have been omitted or in error, an amended announcement will be reposted citing the change (s) and whether or not the original applicants must refile in order to be considered. Posting periods will be adjusted, if necessary (Appendix D).
- B. Extension of the closing date of an announcement will be done by an amendment to the original announcement.
- C. Cancellation or modification of an announcement will be done by an amendment to the original announcement.

3-6 Sources of Candidates

3-6.1 Acceptance of Applications

All candidates will submit an updated Application for Federal Employment (SF-171, OF-612, Resume, or some other format, as long as it includes the required information listed on the vacancy announcement, copy of the front page of the current performance appraisal, and any other documentation required by the announcement. If applicable, candidates will submit a required narrative description addressing the Selective Placement Factors (SPFs) and Quality Ranking Factors (QRFs). Only applications received in the Human Resources Office by the closing date of the announcement will be accepted, unless other instructions are specified on the vacancy announcement.

A. If recruitment is extended beyond the pool of current HUD employees with status, consideration will be given to candidates who have eligibility for non-competitive appointments, such as those available for 30 percent disabled veterans, Vietnam-Era veterans (GS-1 to GS-11 positions), and handicapped persons. These candidates must provide evidence of their eligibility for non-competitive appointments when submitting their SF-171's, OF-612's, or resume, or other format. A statement which outlines these candidates' eligibility for consideration must be included under "Other Essential Information" on the vacancy announcement. Applications of qualified candidates will be referred to the selecting official before or simultaneously with the Selection Roster, HUD Form 154 (Appendix 4), and their names will be placed on a separate Selection Roster. If one of these applicants is elected, the appointment will be under the appropriate non-competitive regulation.

B. HUD employees on authorized absences, such as for training courses, details, leave, short-term developmental assignments, or military leave may apply. Employees who wish to be considered during their absence will arrange to keep appraised of vacancies. Employees must still submit complete applications in a timely manner.

3-7 Evaluation of Candidates

3-7.1 Non-Bargaining Unit Positions

Referral of applicants eligible for non-competitive reassignment, re-promotion, or reinstatement:

A. The Office of Human Resources will refer applicants to the selecting official without rating and ranking who:

1. are eligible based on documented evidence for non-competitive reassignment, repromotion, or reinstatement, i.e., who are applying for a job with the same promotion potential as their current position or who are applying for a job with no higher promotion potential than the highest grade the applicant previously held. (NOTE: Applicants who were demoted or separated

from the higher graded position because of deficiencies in performance or "for cause" are not eligible for non-competitive referral.) and

2. meet minimum qualification requirements, and

3. meet any selective placement factor(s) specified for the position.

B. Applications of qualified candidates eligible for non-competitive reassignment or repromotion will be referred to the selecting official by grade level simultaneously with the competitive Selection Roster, HUD Form 154, and their names will be placed on a separate Selection Roster annotated as appropriate "NON-COMPETITIVE REASSIGNMENT/ REPROMOTION /TRANSFER/REINSTATEMENT ELIGIBLES." Selecting officials may choose a candidate or candidates from either Selection Roster.

Vacancy Announcements should include under "Basis of Rating" the above information concerning referral of applicants eligible for non-competitive selection.

3-7.2 Determination of Qualified Candidates

The personnel representative will list all candidates on the "Initial Screening Worksheet for Merit Staffing Actions", HUD Form 153 (Appendix D) and/or appropriate Applicant Eligibility form. Each candidate must satisfy minimum qualification requirements, as prescribed by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Qualification Standards Handbook For General Schedule (GS) Positions and any selective placement factors specified for the position.

A. Candidates who do not meet these requirements and any other regulatory requirements specified on the vacancy announcement are not qualified for the position, and the reason will be annotated on the worksheet.

B. Candidates who will meet all the requirements within 30 calendar days after the closing date of the vacancy announcement shall be considered qualified.

C. If required in the vacancy announcement, candidates must list each Selective Placement and Quality Ranking Factor, and underneath each factor write a statement which describes how their background, training, and performance awards satisfy the factor. Candidates who do not submit this additional information will not be considered for the vacancy.

D. The candidates remaining after the criteria in a, b, and c above have been applied are deemed qualified. Candidates eligible for non-competitive reassignment, repromotion, transfer or reinstatement are referred to the selecting official on a separate selection roster. Other qualified candidates are further evaluated against the crediting plan.

3-7.3 Panels

The personnel representative will determine, in consultation with the selecting official, whether applications of qualified candidates will be rated by the personnel representative or by a panel.

A. Panels are optional for all positions.

B. When there are 10 or fewer candidates meeting the minimum qualification requirements (including Selective Placement Factors when applicable), they will be further evaluated to determine Best Qualified status using an abbreviated method of rating. A personnel representative or a subject matter expert designated by the selecting official will rate the candidates against the QRF that has been identified as the critical factor in the vacancy announcement, for successful job performance. Candidates who meet the rating criteria at the "Above Average" benchmark level as specified in the crediting plan will be referred to the Selecting Official as Highly/Best Qualified. (Appendix A)

3-7.4 Panel Composition

The panel, if used, consist of 2 to 4 members who will rate all qualified competitive candidates. These members are designated by the selecting official. The personnel representative is also a required member but will not rate candidates. The selecting official may not serve on the panel. Panel members must meet the following criteria:

A. Hold the same or higher grade level as the position, and

B. A majority of the panel members must be familiar with the position's subject matter.

3-7.5 Role of the Personnel Representative

The personnel representative will convene the panel and provide materials necessary for rating the qualified candidates. He/she will:

A. Explain the minimum qualification requirements and rating procedures;

B. Compute total points received by each candidate as a result of the panel rating process; and

C. Ensure that all necessary documentation is completed and filed.

3-7.6 Panel Rating Methods

Panel members will decide which of the following rating methods will be used. Under either method, both interim and final scores will be recorded on the Rating Worksheet, HUD Form 833 (Appendix D).

A. Consensus

Each panel member will independently review and rate each candidate's application against every quality ranking factor on the crediting plan. Members then will discuss each item and arrive at a consensus as to the rating of the candidate for each item. The panel members and the personnel representative will sign the final rating worksheet, which will remain a permanent part of the merit staffing file.

B. Averaging

Each panel member will independently review and rate each candidate's application against every quality ranking factor and for the awards and performance appraisals on the crediting plan. Total scores for each candidate will be added together and divided by the number of voting panel members to derive at the final score. The final score will be transcribed to the final rating worksheet and will be signed by the Personnel Representative. Panel members will sign their individual worksheets. All worksheets will remain a permanent part of the merit staffing file.

3-8 Referral of Best Qualified Candidates to Selecting Official

3-8.1 Highly Qualified Candidates

Rated candidates who obtain at least 70 percent of the maximum quality ranking factor points which may be awarded under the crediting plan are considered the highly qualified candidates. The merit staffing panel, or the personnel representative if a panel is not used, will determine both the highly qualified candidates for the position and the best qualified candidates to be referred.

3-8.2 Best Qualified Candidates

The best qualified candidates are determined from among the highly qualified candidates who have received the highest possible rating scores. Best qualified candidates will be listed on the competitive Selection Roster. Determination of the number of best qualified candidates to be referred will be based on a natural break between the relative ratings of highly qualified candidates. Generally, a maximum of the five highest rated candidates are referred on a Selection Roster as best qualified.

3-8.3 Ties

In cases of ties, candidates with the same scores will be considered as one referral and all such candidates will be referred.

3-8.4 Multiple Vacancies

When there is more than one vacancy to fill, two additional best qualified candidates names may be added for each vacancy.

3-8.5 Selection Roster

The personnel representative will list the names of best qualified candidates on the Selection Roster, HUD Form 154, in alphabetical order. For positions announced at multiple grade levels, candidates will be grouped by grade level for which qualified and listed alphabetically on separate selection rosters.

A. If a merit staffing panel is used, all members of the panel will sign the Selection Roster to certify that they have not unlawfully discriminated in the evaluation of these candidates.

B. If a panel is not used, the personnel representative will sign and annotate the Selection Roster that, "Rating was done by the personnel representative."

C. If there are ten (10) or fewer candidates, the HR Specialist will identify, in consultation with the manager, the quality ranking factor that distinguishes well qualified candidates from those who only meet minimal qualification requirements. (Refer to paragraph 3-7.2B.)

D. The personnel representative will refer the Selection Roster(s) to the selecting official along with the best qualified candidates SF-171, OF-612, or resume along with the cover sheet of appraisals of performance, and if applicable, appraisals of potential and supplemental narrative statements.

E. Selection Rosters, competitive and non-competitive are valid for 30 days after issuance by the servicing personnel office unless an extension is granted. The selecting official may request an extension in writing from their servicing personnel office. This request is to be included in the merit staffing case file. Rosters are invalid after 90 days.

F. Selection Rosters may be reused within 90 days from the date of selection or of cancellation for additional identical positions or when a selectee declines the position or vacates the position within 90 days.

3-9 Selection Consideration

3-9.1 Selecting Official Action

The selecting official is expected to complete action on the Selection Roster within 30 days after receipt.

3-9.2 Interviewing Candidates

The selecting official, designee, or selection panel may conduct optional interviews of best qualified candidates based on grade levels as advertised. If one candidate on a specific roster at a given grade level as advertised is interviewed, all candidates on that roster must be interviewed. The selection roster must be documented if an interview could not be arranged.

A. Exceptions to the interviewing requirements above are:

1. When a selection panel has interviewed all competitive or non-competitive candidate(s) at a given grade and made recommendations to the selecting official for identical or similar positions;
2. When the selecting official has recently interviewed a candidate for an identical or similar position; or
3. When the selecting official is a candidate(s) first or second level supervisor.

B. The reasons for not interviewing one or more candidate (s) based on the criteria above must be documented on the Selection Roster by the selecting official.

C. If a face-to-face interview cannot be arranged, a telephone interview will be held. In this case, the candidate should be given at least a day's notice.

D. In addition to the interviews, selecting officials should consider performance appraisals and awards of candidates.

3-9.3 Action by Selecting Official

After the interviews, the selecting official will either:

- A. Select the candidate(s);
- B. Return the Selection Roster without a selection and
 1. request more candidates;
 2. postpone or cancel the vacancy;
 3. request re-advertisement; and,
 4. document reasons for non-selection on form.

3-9.4 Notification to Candidates

A selection is not final until the selectee receives official notification from the servicing personnel office.

3-9.5 Release of Selected Candidates

When the selection is final, the personnel representative will arrange release and entrance-on-duty dates for the selected individual. For promotion, normally, the selectee will report 2 weeks after selection is finalized. For non-promotion, thirty days or more may be permitted when a mutual agreement is reached between the releasing and receiving offices.

3-10 Merit Staffing Records and Files

3-10.1 Merit Staffing Case Files

Merit staffing case files shall be kept by the servicing personnel office for a period of two (2) years after the selection or non-selection has been made and the certificate has

been returned to the operating HRO and should then be destroyed if there are no pending class action suits, grievances, or EEO investigations. The file will contain:

- A. Merit Staffing Request;
- B. Position Description, Job Analysis, and Crediting Plan;
- C. Notice of Position Vacancy;
- D. Initial Screening Worksheet for Merit Staffing Actions;
- E. Panel Rating Worksheets;
- F. Selection Roster;
- G. Applications for Federal Employment (SF-171's, OF-612's, Resumes), appraisals of performance, and if applicable, supplemental narrative statements, Qualifications Analysis, and Appraisal of Candidates for Supervisory Positions (Optional Form 300), and Job Element Appraisals;
- H. Authorizations by the Director, Office of Human Resources which grant exceptions to the provisions of this handbook; and,
- I. Any other records or documentation required to reconstruct the action.

3-10.2 Documentation in Selected Employee's Official Personnel Folder (OPF)

The personnel representative will ensure that the information listed below is in the new employee's OPF:

- A. Original SF-171, OF-612, or resume of selectee (A copy is to be included in the Merit Staffing case file.); and,
- B. The vacancy announcement number, maximum grade potential, and the OPM qualification standard guidelines. This must be documented on the SF-52 to ensure the correctness of the SF-50.

3-10.3 Release of Merit Staffing Data

HUD guidelines for the release of Federal merit staffing data under the Freedom of Information Act are contained in the most recent Office of General Counsel issuance on this subject.

Merit Staffing Policy

335.1

CHAPTER 4. RESOLVING MERIT STAFFING RELATED COMPLAINTS

4-1 Informal Discussion

An employee with a complaint should informally discuss it with the person capable of resolving the complaint.

4-2 Consultation with Personnel Representative

The employee may also want to discuss the complaint with the personnel representative who handled the merit staffing action. The personnel representative may be able to provide more information on the facts of the case, will be able to explain the controlling merit staffing principles and how they were applied, and if appropriate, may be able to take corrective action to satisfy the complainant.

4-3 Unresolved Complaints

If the complaint is not immediately resolved through informal discussion or consultation with the personnel representative, the options are as follows:

A. Discrimination Complaints

Complaints which allege that unlawful discrimination has been practiced in the administration of the HUD Merit Staffing Policy are to be initiated as prescribed in the applicable HUD Equal Employment Opportunity Regulations. Unlawful discrimination refers to discrimination based upon race, color, religion, sex, national origin, political affiliation, marital status, non-disqualifying handicap, or age.

B. Departmental Grievance Procedure:

1. General

HUD Handbook 771.2 REV-2, Administrative Grievances, instructs employees on how to file a grievance for resolution through the Departmental grievance procedure. Initially, for a merit staffing related grievance, this involves presenting an informal grievance to the servicing Human Resources Office (but not the personnel representative directly involved in the action). Should resolution not materialize at the informal level, the handbook specifies how a formal grievance may be presented to other reviewers.

2. Coverage

The handbook outlines what is covered and what is not covered under the Departmental grievance procedure. The failure to be selected from a group of properly ranked and certified best

qualified candidates is not grievable.

3. Time Limit

A merit staffing related grievance must be presented within 15 Calendar days of the date of the act or occurrence being grieved or the date the employee became aware of that act or occurrence.

Merit Staffing Policy

335.1

APPENDIX A. DEVELOPING A JOB ANALYSIS AND CREDITING PLAN

A-1 Job Analysis and Identification of Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs)

A-1.1 Definition

A job analysis is defined as a systematic examination of a job to determine the duties and worker characteristics which are important for successful job performance. The job analysis delineates the major activities of the job and outlines the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for successful performance of each activity.

Knowledge, skills, and abilities are factors which are job-related as reflected in the position description and are measurable.

A. Knowledge statements refer to an organized body of information, usually of a factual or procedural nature.

B. Skill statements refer to the proficient manual, verbal, or mental manipulation of data or things. Skills can be measured by a performance test (for example, typing).

C. Ability statements refer to the power to perform an observable activity at the present time.

A-1.2 Development of Job Analysis

The job analysis will be developed by the personnel representative and subject matter expert (SME) using the HUD Job Analysis Form.

A. The position description will be reviewed and the major activities will be underlined. The major activities will be recorded on the HUD Job Analysis Form under the column marked Job Activity. Each job activity identified will be analyzed to determine what KSAs are required for successful performance.

B. Those KSAs which are mandatory for successful job performance are marked with an "M" on the HUD Job Analysis Form. These are selective placement factors (SPFs), and consist of those KSAs which must be brought to the position, i.e., cannot be learned on the job in a timely manner.

C. The KSAs which are not mandatory for successful job performance but are desirable characteristics and contribute to outstanding job performance are called quality ranking factors (QRFs). These KSAs are used to distinguish various levels of quality among candidates who demonstrate possession of all of the mandatory KSAs (selective placement factors). Any factor on the

HUD Job Analysis Form which is not designated as mandatory (i.e., is not marked with an "M") is a quality ranking factor. In some instances, it may be desirable to use a KSA identified as a selective placement factor as a quality ranking factor as well. This is particularly true when a minimum level of possession of a KSA is essential, and it is desirable to measure a higher level of competency in the crediting plan.

D. The relative importance of KSAs also is identified on the HUD Job Analysis Form. It is based on such considerations as the amount of time spent using each KSA, the difficulty/complexity of the KSAs, or the consequences inherent in performing the KSAs either well or poorly. (NOTE: Mandatory KSAs are not necessarily considered the "most important"). The following scale is used to determine relative importance:

Most important = 1

Important = 2

Least important = 3

E. After completing the above analysis, the personnel representative and the subject matter expert (SME) will identify the final KSAs to be used in the evaluation process. Starting with the KSAs identified as most important and working to those least important, they must consider the following questions regarding the use of each KSA until a sufficient number of KSAs has been identified for successful evaluation:

1. Are the KSAs ratable?
2. Do the KSAs distinguish superior candidates from barely acceptable candidates? (FOR QRFs ONLY)

With respect to the first question, they must make a judgment about whether the KSA can be measured on the basis of information contained in the SF-171, OF-612, resume, supplemental qualification statement, or other information required in the vacancy announcement. If the KSA is not ratable in this manner, it cannot be used in the evaluation process, although it may be necessary for successful job performance.

With respect to the second question, they should ensure that only KSAs which distinguish various levels of competency are used as QRFs. Only KSAs meeting the criteria of this paragraph may be used in the vacancy announcement.

F. The final step in completing the job analysis is the development of benchmarks for the KSAs identified as ratable and to be used for filling the position. A benchmark is an example of experience, education, and/or training which shows how one could demonstrate possession of a KSA at a particular level of competency. Examples of such experience, education, and/or training which indicates possession of the minimal acceptable level for each KSA will be written on the HUD Job Analysis Form.

This benchmark will be used as the Average Level Benchmark description and will be the starting point for developing the crediting plan.

G. The Subject Matter Expert (SME) and the personnel representative will specify one of the Quality Ranking Factors (QRFs) as being the most critical for successful job performance. That QRF will be used to evaluate the candidates and determine who will be referred as highly/best qualified in cases where an abbreviated form of evaluation is deemed appropriate.

A-2 Crediting Plan

A-2.1 Definition

A crediting plan is a plan developed to rate and rank candidates for a specific position. It is designed to measure the various quality levels at which candidates possess the job-related knowledge, skills, and abilities that are necessary for successful performance in a position.

A-2.2 Development of Crediting Plan

The crediting plan for each grade level will be developed using the KSAs identified as quality ranking factors in Section A-1.2 of this Appendix. For each quality ranking factor, a benchmark must be developed to show the kinds of experience, education, or training which would demonstrate competency at various levels. The benchmarks developed define three quality levels: Outstanding, Above Average, and Average. The description of these quality levels should be broad and flexible since candidates may have acquired the KSAs in a number of ways.

A. Evidence of outstanding levels should not create artificial restrictions. For example, experience gained in a large company or government setting is not automatically an indication of outstanding possession of a KSA. Likewise, not all types of work experience are better than education. Avoid writing benchmarks which emphasize length of and/or regency of experience.

B. Although stated broadly and with flexibility, statements must be descriptive and specific enough to be meaningful. A benchmark such as "Experience which provides a good understanding of," is not a benchmark. "Experience working in a file room" is a benchmark, but it is not a very good one since it does not describe the specific kind of work (manual, automated, supervisory, etc.) that demonstrates possession of a KSA. "Experience in maintaining and retrieving records" is more specific and makes the benchmark more meaningful.

C. For the Outstanding Level Benchmark, evidence should include extensive or high level education and/or experience which required an application of the KSA. The quality of the evidence is more important than its duration. Examples of evidence appropriate for this level could be based on such things as using the KSA in a variety of settings; or planning, administrative or supervisory work requiring its application. This benchmark level represents three points.

D. For the Above Average Level Benchmark, evidence should include education and/or experience similar to that which the majority of candidates have or might be expected to have. This benchmark level represents two points.

E. For the Average Level Benchmark, evidence may or may not be directly related to the duties of the position to be filled. The education, experience, or training could be in another field which demonstrates a likely possession of the KSA and the potential for successful application of the KSA. Evidence should include experience, education, and/or training beyond that required to meet minimum qualifications. This benchmark level represents 1 point.

A-2.3 Points for Quality Ranking Factors

Points are assigned to each benchmark level of the QRFs using a three-point system as described in paragraphs 45c, d, and e. 3, 2, 1 or 0 points must be awarded for each QRF. Scores for each QRF may not be interpolated, i.e., points may not be assigned between the Average and Above Average Levels or between the Above Average and Outstanding Levels. A QRF may be of such importance to successful performance that it may be double-or triple weighted. Factors which are double-weighted are valued at 6, 4, and 2. Factors which are triple-weighted are valued at 9, 6, and 3. Any factors which are double-or triple-weighted must have been stated on the vacancy announcement.

Merit Staffing Policy

335.1

APPENDIX B. SPECIAL CONSIDERATION PROGRAM PROCEDURES

B-1 Priority Consideration Program (PCP)

B-1.1 Coverage

Priority consideration eligibles are applicants who did not receive proper consideration in an earlier merit staffing action due to a documented procedural, regulatory, administrative or program error, and the applicant would have otherwise been placed on the Selection Roster had the error not occurred. For example, if an applicant is erroneously found not qualified, therefore not considered, for a position and it is determined by any portion of the original panel that the applicant would have been placed on the Selection Roster, priority consideration must be granted. If any member of the original rating panel is not available the HR Specialist may make the determination on whether to grant priority consideration.

B-1.2 Entitlement

An applicant is entitled to only one priority consideration for non-competitive placement for each instance in which he/she previously was denied proper consideration. An applicant shall exercise his/her entitlement to priority consideration for a specific announced vacancy by written request to the servicing Human Resources Office responsible for staffing the position. The applicant will provide all required information as specified in the vacancy announcement. If not exercised within 2 years from official notification, an applicant's entitlement to priority consideration will expire. In addition to being considered for a specific position through priority consideration, an applicant may also be considered for that specific position through the normal merit staffing process; if so, it is the applicant's responsibility to file a separate application for the announced position. The servicing personnel office will not submit applications for applicants who wish to be considered concurrently under merit staffing procedures.

B-1.3 Appropriate Vacancy

An appropriate vacancy is the next available position for which the applicant is interested and fully qualified, including similar or identical selective placement factors, and which is at the same grade level and has the same promotion potential as the one for which proper consideration was not given. The position is within the area of consideration stated in the next paragraph.

B-1.4 Area of Consideration

Priority consideration eligibles are entitled to priority consideration from the servicing Human Resources Office which is responsible for the improper consideration. For example, if a GS-12 Administrative Service Center "1" applicant applies for a GS-13 position in Administrative Service Center 3 and is improperly considered, the Administrative Service Center 3

servicing Human Resources Office must give the applicant one priority consideration for an appropriate GS-13 vacancy in the location originally applied for.

B-1.5 Notification of Eligibles

The personnel office responsible for the improper consideration will send a written notice to an eligible advising him/her of the basis for and extent of his/her priority consideration and the actions required of him/her in order for consideration to be operative.

B-1.6 Processing

A. Before referring a Selection Roster to the selecting official, the personnel representative will provide the selecting official with a list of priority consideration eligibles. These names will be referred in alphabetical order on the List of Priority Consideration Eligibles, HUD Form 2034B (Appendix 4). Application materials submitted by the eligibles will accompany the list.

B. The selecting official will review the qualifications of eligibles on the list and give them consideration for the vacancy. Interviews with each priority consideration eligible referred to the selecting official are required unless the conditions described in Chapter 3, section 9, paragraph 34a exist. Telephone interviews are acceptable for applicants located outside the commuting area.

C. The personnel representative will notify those applicants who are not selected under priority consideration. Non-selection under this process will not preclude an applicant from subsequent selection from a Selection Roster for the same position.

B-1.7 Disposition of Records

The personnel office responsible for handling the PCP case will maintain a file which will contain all priority consideration eligible lists and all materials submitted by the person requesting consideration. Individual case records may be disposed of after 2 years from the date PCP consideration occurred.

B-2 Reemployment Priority List (RPL)

B-2.1 Coverage

The Reemployment Priority List provides certain employees (as defined below) with priority consideration for reemployment with the Department by referring their applications to selecting officials for appropriate vacancies before other candidates are referred. Detailed regulatory requirements for the RPL program are contained in Subpart B of 5 CFR 330. The RPL covers the following persons:

A. Separated employees in Tenure Group I (Career) or Tenure Group II (Career-Conditional) encumbering full-time and other than full-time competitive/excepted service positions who were

separated under OPM's reduction-in-force regulations (5 CFR-Chap.351).

B. Employees on injury or disability compensation where recovery takes more than 1 year from the time employee began receiving compensation. In such cases, the individual must apply for reemployment within 30 days after compensation ceases, except when an appeal for continuation of compensation is filed. The 30-day period begins the day after resolution is reached.

B-2.2 Entitlement

Employees are eligible for RPL consideration after they receive their specific notices. Employees in Tenure Group I (Career) are entitled to RPL consideration for a maximum of 2 years from the date the employee is entered on the RPL. Employees in Tenure Group II (Career-Conditional) are entitled to priority consideration for a maximum of 1 year from the date the employee is entered on the RPL. An employee's name is removed from the RPL, prior to eligibility expiration, when:

A. An employee submits a written request to be removed from the list;

B. A full-time employee:

1. Accepts a non-temporary, full-time competitive position, or excepted service appointment; or,
2. Declines a full-time non-temporary competitive position or excepted service appointment with a representative rate the same as, or higher than, the position from which the employee was or will be separated.

C. Any other than full-time employee:

1. Accepts a non-temporary competitive position or excepted service appointment; or,
2. Declines a full-time non-temporary competitive position or excepted service appointment with a representative rate and regularly scheduled administrative work week the same as, or higher than, that of the position from which the employee was or will be separated.

B-2.3 Appropriate Vacancy (Reference 5 CFR 330.206)

A. When filling all competitive/excepted service vacancies, whether temporary, term, or permanent appointment, a qualified RPL registrant must be considered for non-permanent as well as permanent positions when such interest is indicated on their RPL application:

1. An RPL registrant is entitled to consideration for positions at or below the grade level of the position from which separated and the position must not have greater promotion potential than the position from which separated or will be separated, and have

the same type of work schedule;

2. In addition, an employee is entitled to consideration for any higher grade previously held on a non-temporary basis in the competitive or excepted service from which the employee was demoted under 5 CFR Chapter 351; and

3. Appropriate vacancies under RPL are those positions for which non-HUD employees may apply.

B. An individual is qualified for a position if he/she meets OPM-established or approved qualification standards and requirements for the position, including any minimum educational requirements, and any selective placement factors established by the agency; is physically qualified, with reasonable accommodation where appropriate, to perform the duties of the position; etc. (Reference 5 CFR 330.208).

C. The position is within the area of consideration.

B-2.4 Area of Consideration

An eligible employee may be entered on the RPL only for the commuting area in which separated and may not apply for the RPL in any other location, except as provided in 5 CFR 330.206 (a) (4).

B-2.5 Notification of Eligibles

The Office of Human Resources Headquarters or Field location responsible for providing RPL consideration will send a written notice to an eligible advising him/her of the basis for and extent of his/her RPL consideration. At that time, the eligible will be asked to submit an updated SF-71, OF-612, or resume', current performance appraisal, and any other necessary information.

If the eligible fails to supply the requesting information, a qualifications decision will be based upon whatever information is available. It is the responsibility of the eligible to provide updated information and inform the servicing office of Human Resources in writing of changes in his/her address, telephone number, and application materials.

B-2.6 Selection Process

A. The personnel representative will provide the selecting official with a list of qualified eligibles. These names will be placed on the List of Reemployment eligibles, HUD Form 203A (Appendix 4). The names will be placed on the list in tenure subgroup order. Eligibles' application materials will accompany the list. Action must be completed on the list before a Selection Roster will be forwarded to the selecting official.

B. The selecting official will review the qualifications of eligibles on the list and give them consideration for the vacancy. Selections from the list must be made in tenure

subgroup order.

C. Interviews are mandatory. If face-to-face interviews cannot be arranged, telephone interviews are acceptable. Selecting officials must make reasonable efforts to contact eligibles. Documentation of unsuccessful efforts to contact eligibles is required on the referral form.

D. If no selection is made from the list and the selecting official still wants to fill the position, written justification for non-selection from the list must be provided to and approved by the appropriate Human Resources Division Director before other applicants can be referred.

E. If the selecting official makes a selection from the list, he/she will inform the personnel representative, who will make a formal offer in writing to the selectee. The selectee will respond to the offer in writing within 10 workdays following receipt of the offer letter. Failure to respond to an offer letter will be considered a declination of the offer.

F. If the selectee declines the offer:

1. The selecting official should make another selection from the list if there are additional eligibles available; and,
2. The selectee will lose eligibility under the RPL if he/she meets either condition specified in paragraphs 57b (2) or 57c (2).

G. When an eligible's name is removed from the RPL he/she will be notified in writing.

B-2.7 Records

A. The Office of Human Resources will maintain a referral file for all RPL eligibles in Headquarters.

B. Field Human Resources Division Directors will establish procedures for maintenance of RPL files within their perspective field locations.

C. Active files will include the following materials for each covered eligible:

1. SF-171, OF-612, resume and any additional information requested from the eligible (e.g., performance appraisals, appraisals of potential, list of college courses, etc.);
2. Each local "List of Reemployment Eligibles" on which the eligible's name is listed;
3. All correspondence sent to the eligible regarding reemployment priority consideration(s);
4. Written Declination(s) of offers;
5. Documentation justifying non-selection(s); and,

6. Any instructions received from the eligible regarding RPL consideration (i.e., availability, updates, changes in status, etc.).

D. Individual files may be discarded 2 years after eligibility ends.

B-2.8 Appeals

An individual who believes that his or her re-employment priority rights have been violated because of the employment of another person who otherwise could not have been appointed properly may appeal to the Merit Systems Protection Board under the provision of the Board's regulations.

B-3 Special Reassignment Plan (SRP)

B-3.1 Coverage

Special Reassignment Plan eligibles are employees who are placed in positions at a lower grade as a result of reduction-in-force procedures, or whose positions are reduced in grade as a result of reclassification of the positions. These eligibles are either in a retained grade or retained pay status.

B-3.2 Entitlement

An employee is entitled to SRP consideration for a maximum of 2 years from the effective date of his/her demotion or any subsequent demotions; or until the employee:

- A. Is re-promoted to the grade from which demoted;
- B. Has a break in service of 1 day or more;
- C. Is demoted for personal cause or at his/her own request;
- D. Declines a reasonable offer (an offer of a position made at the same grade level from which demoted); or,
- E. Elects in writing to have his/her grade retention benefits terminated.

B-3.3 Appropriate Vacancy

SRP eligibles downgraded from part-time positions can be considered only for part-time vacancies with a work schedule of an equal or greater number of hours than the eligible's work schedule at the time of downgrading. Full-time employees are considered only for full-time vacancies. An appropriate vacancy is one which meets all of the following:

- A. The position is permanent and has been advertised under the provisions of this handbook;
- B. The position's minimum qualification requirements (including selective placement factors) are met by the SRP eligible;

C. The position must have no greater promotion potential than the position from which demoted; and,

D. The position is within the commuting area at the time the employee became eligible under this plan.

B-3.4 Notification of Eligibles

The Office of Human Resources responsible for providing SRP consideration will send a written notice to an eligible advising him/her of the basis for and extent of his/her SRP consideration. At that time, the eligible will be asked to submit an updated SF-171, OF-612, resume, current performance appraisal, and any other necessary information. If the SRP eligible fails to supply the requested information, qualifications decisions will be based upon whatever information is available in the employee's Official Personnel Folder (OPF).

B-3.5 Processing

A. The personnel representative will provide the selecting official with a list of qualified SRP eligibles. Action must be completed on this list before referring a Selection Roster. These names will be listed on the List of Special Reassignment Plan Eligibles, HUD Form 2034C (Appendix 4). Application materials submitted by the SRP eligibles will accompany the list.

Qualified SRP eligibles are listed in the following order:

1. By grade level from highest grade to lowest grade when it is a multiple grade position; and,

2. Alphabetically within grade eligibility.

B. The selecting official will review the qualifications of SRP eligibles on the list and give them consideration for the vacancy. Interviews are optional.

C. If the selecting official makes a selection from the list, he/she will inform the personnel representative, who will make a formal offer in writing to the selectee in accordance with the provisions of Title 5 (CFR 536.206). The selectee will respond to the offer in writing within 3 workdays following receipt of the offer letter.

D. If the employee declines the offer:

1. The selecting official may make another selection from the list or make no selection;

2. The employee will remain eligible for SRP if the offer was less than a "reasonable offer"; and,

3. The employee will lose eligibility under the SRP, and grade retention will be terminated if the offer was a "reasonable offer".

E. When an employee's name is removed from the SRP, he/she will be notified by the servicing personnel office.

B-3.6 Consideration for Merit Staffing Vacancy Announcements

If an employee wants to be considered for a specific position through the normal staffing process, the employee must file a separate application for the announced position. The servicing Office of Human Resources will not submit applications for announced positions.

B-3.7 Records

A. The Office of Human Resources, Servicing Personnel Offices will maintain a referral file for all SRP eligibles in Headquarters.

B. Field OHR Division Directors will establish procedures for maintenance of the SRP files within their jurisdictions.

C. Active files will include the following materials on each covered SRP eligible.

1. SF-171, OF-612, resume, and any additional information requested from the employee (e.g., appraisals of performance, appraisals of potential, list of college courses, etc.);

2. Each local "List of Special Reassignment Plan Eligibles" on which the employee is listed; and,

3. Written offers and any other correspondence sent to the employee regarding special reassignment consideration(s).

D. Individual files may be discarded 2 years after eligibility ends.

B-4 Career Transition Assistance Program (CTAP)

B-4.1 Coverage

On September 12, 1995, President Clinton issued a directive that Federal agencies provide increased assistance to their employees who are affected by downsizing. As a result, all Executive branch agencies must set up new career transition programs for their employees who have been or are likely to be separated from the Federal service as we downsize the government. On December 29, 1995, OPM issued regulations (5CFR330.601) implementing the President's directive.

Programs are to consist of three parts:

A. providing special selection priority to agency surplus and displaced employees who apply for competitive service agency vacancies in the local commuting area,

B. providing a system of consideration for employees from other agencies who are displaced along with HUD employees consistent

with the Department's Reemployment Priority List system, and,

C. providing career transition services to assist all agency employees affected by downsizing.

B-4.2 HUD Responsibilities

The Department will use all resources at its disposal including early retirement, separation incentives (buyouts), and attrition to reduce staffing levels without adversely affecting employees. The Department will also commit to substantial outplacement and re-training in an effort to ensure that employees are given every resource available to meet their employment needs. The responsibility for the HUD Career Transition Program is as follows:

A. The Assistant Secretary for Administration is responsible for Career Transition in the Department.

B. The Director, Office of Human Resources is responsible for the direction and implementation of the Department's Career Transition Assistance Program and for the other career transition information and resources.

C. The Director of the HUD Training Academy is responsible for providing guidance and, as appropriate, directing training on available career transition services.

D. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) will provide counseling and assistance to employees and their families to cope with stress and other difficulties associated with displacement.

E. The Career Transition Services staff will conduct or arrange briefings on the services, identify and purchase appropriate equipment and other material, provide on-site assistance, as appropriate, inform eligible employees of resources available to them, serve as contract monitors for contractual career transition services, and generally manage the Career Transition Assistance Program for the Department.

A copy of this plan will be provided to eligible HUD employees who receive a specific RIF separation notice, Certificate of Expected Separation, or other certification identifying the employee as surplus, from the Director, Office of Human Resources. In addition, HUD will take reasonable steps to notify eligible employees of agency vacancies and the requirements for a well-qualified determination.

B-4.3 Employee Responsibilities

In order to prepare for downsizing which may occur in the Department, employees should take the following action:

A. Ensure that records in the Office of Human Resources are complete and reflect all Federal service, as well as experience, education, and qualifications.

B. Understand how the displacement process works. This information will be available from the Office of Human Resources.

C. Determine their financial needs and available benefits, if separated. Most of this information is available from the HUD Employee Benefits Services line.

D. Take advantage of the HUD Career Transition services and other out-placement programs that will be available.

B-4.4 HUD Career Transition Assistance Program (CTAP) for local Displaced and Surplus Employees

The Department will provide special selection priority to well-qualified, eligible, displaced or surplus Departmental employees who apply for competitive service vacancies in the local commuting area, prior to selecting any other applicant from outside the Department. The Department will encourage and allow all employees (with special emphasis on surplus and displaced employees) the opportunity to use the full range of services available through the Department's Career Transition Program.

B-4.5 Eligibility for CTAP Special Selection Priority

A. To be eligible for CTAP special selection priority, an individual must meet ALL of the following conditions:

1. Is a surplus or displaced Departmental employee serving under an appointment in the competitive service in tenure group I or II;
2. Has a current performance rating of at least fully successful;
3. Applies for a vacancy at or below the grade level from which the employee may be or is being separated, that does not have greater promotion potential than the position from which the employee may be or is being separated;
4. Occupies a position in the same local commuting area as the vacancy;
5. Files an application for a specific vacancy within the timeframe established by the Department; and,
6. Is determined by the Department to be well qualified for the specific vacancy.

B. Eligibility begins on the date HUD issues a RIF separation notice, a Certificate of Expected Separation, or other certification from the Director, Office of Human Resources, whichever is earliest.

Eligibility expires on the earliest of:

1. The RIF separation date;
2. Cancellation of the notice or certification described above;

or,

3. When an eligible employee receives a career, career conditional, or excepted appointment without time limit in any agency.

B-4.6 Application Process

To receive CTAP special selection priority, an eligible employee must:

1. Apply for a specific Departmental vacancy in the same local commuting area as the position the employee occupies, within the prescribed time-frames and meet all conditions of employment;
2. Attach proof of eligibility (i.e., RIF separation notice or Certification of Expected Separation or other certification identifying the employee as surplus, from the Director, Office of Human Resources); and,
3. Be determined "well-qualified" as noted below:
A "well-qualified employee" means an eligible employee who meets the qualification and eligibility requirements of the position, meets all selective placement factors (where applicable) and appropriate quality ranking factor levels (80% of the maximum quality ranking factor points which may be awarded under the crediting plan, is physically qualified with reasonable accommodation to perform the essential duties, meets any special qualifying OPM approved conditions, AND whose experience shows he/she is able to satisfactorily perform the duties of the position upon entry.

B-4.7 Selection

Applicants who meet the minimum qualification requirements will be further evaluated to determine if they meet the well-qualified criteria. A Personnel Specialist will determine, in consultation with the selecting official, whether the applicant will be rated as well-qualified by the Personnel Specialist or a subject-matter expert. Well-qualified applicants will be referred to the selecting official.

Displaced HUD employees will be selected prior to surplus HUD employees. If two or more eligible employees apply for a vacancy, and are determined to be well-qualified, any of these eligible employees may be selected. Candidates from within or outside the Department cannot be selected if eligible well-qualified displaced or surplus HUD employees are available.

B-4.8 Actions Covered

All actions to fill competitive service vacancies are covered by this program except as provided in 5 CFR 330.606 (b). The Department must select an eligible employee as described above, before selecting any other applicant from within or outside the Department, unless doing so would cause another employee to be separated by reduction-in-force.

B-4.9 Actions Not Covered

The following actions are regulatory exceptions to special selection priority:

- A. Placement of an agency employee through reassignment, change to lower grade, or promotion, when no employee who is eligible applies;
- B. Reemployment of a former agency employee exercising regulatory or statutory reemployment rights;
- C. Position changes resulting from reclassification actions;
- D. Temporary appointments of under 121 days (including extensions);
- E. Exchange of positions between or among agency employees, when the actions involve no increase in grade or promotion potential;
- F. Conversion of an employee on an excepted appointment which confers eligibility for non-competitive conversion into the competitive service;
- G. Placement activities under 5 CFR 351;
- H. Placement of an employee into a new position as a result of a reorganization, when the former position ceases to exist, and no actual vacancy results;
- I. Placement made under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act for critical situations where the failure to make the assignment would substantially harm Federal interests;
- J. The filling of a position through an excepted appointment;
- K. Details;
- L. Time limited promotions of under 120 days;
- M. Non-competitive movement of surplus or displaced employees;
- N. Movement of excepted service employees within an agency;
- O. A placement under 5 USC 8337 or 8451 to allow continued employment of an employee who has become unable to provide useful and efficient service in his or her current position because of a medical condition;
- P. A placement that is a "reasonable offer" as defined in 5 U.S.C. 8336(d) and 414(b);
- Q. Career ladder promotions;
- R. Recall of seasonal employees from non-pay status;

S. Placement back into previous position due to a supervisor not completing the one year supervisory probationary period;

T. Demotion due to cause; and,

U. Corrective Actions, Court Orders, etc.

B-4.10 Special Qualification Reviews

Whenever an eligible employee is determined not to be well qualified, a review of this determination will be made by a Personnel Specialist or subject-matter expert, other than the selecting official, who is at or above the grade level of the vacancy. This review will be documented in the CTAP case file.

B-4.11 Records

A. The servicing personnel offices will maintain a record file in their respective jurisdiction for all CTAP referred eligibles for a period of 2 years or after the program has been formally evaluated by OPM (whichever comes first) if the time limit for grievances has lapsed before the anniversary date.

B. Active files will include the following materials on each covered CTAP eligible:

1. SF-171, OF-612, resume, and any additional information requested from the employee (e.g., appraisals of performance, appraisals of potential, list of college courses, etc.);
2. All selection and non-selection decision criteria used in making a determination; and,
3. Written offers and any other correspondence sent to the employee regarding CTAP consideration.

B-5 The Interagency Career Transition Assistance Program (ICTAP) for Displaced Employees

B-5.1 Coverage

The Interagency Career Transition Assistance Program (ICTAP), effective February 29, 1996, replaces the Interagency Placement Program (IPP) which was suspended on the same day. All IPP registrants who received notification of the suspension of the IPP were informed of their eligibility for assistance through the new placement program (ICTAP) which began on February 29, 1996 and will continue through September 3, 2001. The purpose of this new program is to help displaced competitive employees find employment with Federal agencies, and private industry during the period of Federal downsizing through September 1999. It also prescribes procedures for agencies to follow in filling competitive service positions by outside hiring during this period of time.

B-5.2 Eligibility for ICTAP Special Selection Priority

To be eligible for ICTAP special selection priority, an

individual must meet ALL of the following conditions:

A. Is a displaced employee (a current or former career or career-conditional employee) who has received a specific RIF separation notice, who was separated because of compensable injury, whose disability annuity is being terminated, who retired on the effective date of the reduction-in-force or under discontinued service retirement, declined a transfer of function or reassignment outside the local commuting area, or meets other requirements noted in 5 CFR 330.703 (b). and 5 CFR 330.704 (a);

B. Has a current (or a last) performance rating of record of at least fully successful or equivalent (except for those who are eligible due to compensable injury or disability retirement);

C. Applies for a vacancy that is at or below the grade level (with no greater promotion potential) from which the employee has been or is being separated;

D. Occupies or was displaced from a position in the same local commuting area;

E. Files an application for a specific vacancy by the closing date of the announcement and meets all the conditions for employment; and,

F. Is determined to be well-qualified for the specific position for which the individual applied;

Eligibility for ICTAP special selection priority begins on the date the employing agency issues the RIF separation notice or employees meet other conditions which provide employees with eligibility as displaced employees. Eligibility expires one year after separation. (see 5 CFR 330.704 (c)).

B-5.3 Departmental procedure for considering outside candidates

When filling a vacancy from outside the Department, the Office of Human Resources will first review the Reemployment Priority List. If there are no eligible employees, then outside candidates can be considered using the appropriate procedure:

A. Vacancies will be reported to OPM when the Department accepts applications from outside the Department (including applications from candidates serving in temporary appointments within the Department).

B. The Vacancy Announcements prepared by the Department will include the position title, tenure, location, pay plan and grade (or pay rate) of the vacant position, application deadline, and what the Department is seeking in Well-Qualified Candidates.

C. When applications are received, the Office of Human Resources or HR Division will rate and rank them using the following procedure.

B-5.4 Application Process

A. To receive ICTAP special selection priority, eligible employees must apply directly to agencies (including HUD) for specific vacancies in the local commuting area within the prescribed timeframes, and attach the appropriate proof of eligibility. Additionally, the applicant must provide all required information specified in the vacancy announcement, e.g., latest performance appraisal, narrative statements, etc.

B. Eligible candidates are required to comply with ALL instructions within the vacancy announcement. Failure to do so will result in non-consideration for the vacancy. Those applicants considered basically qualified will be further evaluated to determine if they meet the well-qualified criteria. In HUD the Personnel Specialist will determine, in consultation with the selecting official, whether the applications will be rated as well-qualified by the Personnel Specialist or a subject matter expert. Well-qualified applicants will be referred to the selecting official.

C. Be determined "well-qualified" as noted below:

A "well-qualified employee" means an eligible employee who meets the qualification and eligibility requirements of the position, meets all selective placement factors (where applicable) and appropriate quality ranking factor levels (80% of the maximum quality ranking factor points which may be awarded under the crediting plan), is physically qualified with reasonable accommodation to perform the essential duties, meets any special qualifying OPM approved conditions, AND whose experience shows he/she is able to satisfactorily perform the duties of the position upon entry.

B-5.5 Selection

In making selections the following rules apply:

A. Candidates from outside the Department cannot be selected if eligible HUD employees are available for the vacancy or vacancies.

B. If two or more eligible employees apply for a vacancy and are determined to be well-qualified, either employee may be selected.

C. If no eligible employees apply or none are deemed well-qualified, the Department may select another candidate without regard to this subpart (this flexibility does not apply to selections made from the Reemployment Priority List [RPL]).

The order of selection for filling vacancies from outside the Department's workforce will be as follows:

1. Current or former Department employees who are eligible under the RPL (RPL regulations found in 5 CFR 330, Subpart B);

2. At the selecting official's option, any former employee displaced from the Department (under appropriate selection procedures);

3. Current or former eligible Federal employees displaced from other agencies; and,

4. Any other candidate (under appropriate selection procedures).

B-5.6 Actions Covered

A. Competitive appointments (i.e., from registers and direct hire, outstanding scholar);

B. Non-competitive appointments (except 30% severely disabled);

C. Movement between agencies (e.g., transfer);

D. Reinstatements;

E. Time-limited appointments of 120 days or more to the competitive service; and,

F. Extensions of time-limited appointments of 120 days or more to the competitive service.

B-5.7 Actions Not Covered

A. Selections from the Department's internal CTAP or RPL, or any other internal Department movement of current agency employees;

B. The non-competitive appointment of 30% or more severely disabled veterans;

C. Reemployment of former Department employees who have regulatory or statutory rights;

D. Temporary appointments of under 121 days (including conversions to other temporary appointments or extensions). If conversion extension does not permit employment 120 days beyond effective date of initial temporary appointment;

E. An action taken under Reduction-in-Force procedures (5 CFR 351);

F. The filling of a position by excepted appointment;

G. Conversions of employees on excepted appointments that confer eligibility for non-competitive conversion into the competitive service;

H. Non-competitive movement of displaced employees between agencies or employees moved as a result of reorganization or transfer of function; and,

I. Placement of injured workers receiving workers compensation benefits.

B-5.8 Acceptance/Declination

All employees eligible for ICTAP special selection priority who decline an official job offer lose eligibility with HUD.

B-5.9 Special Qualification Reviews

Whenever an eligible employee is determined not to be well-qualified, a review of this determination will be made by a Personnel Specialist or subject-matter expert who is at or above the grade level of the vacancy, other than the selecting official. This review will be documented in the ICTAP case file.

B-6 Career Transition Services

B-6.1 Eligibility

All permanent HUD employees are eligible for Career Transition Services.

B-6.2 Training

During the first year of implementation, and as requested thereafter, training on the CTAP and ICTAP programs will be provided to HUD employees, managers, supervisors, and union representatives on the program procedures and career transition services available.

B-6.3 Access to Services

A. Employees will be given excused absence for a reasonable period of time to use services and facilities of the Career Counseling/Transition Centers or other similar facilities. In addition, employees will be given excused absence to complete scheduled and verified job interviews within HUD, with other Federal agencies, and/or private sector companies. A Headquarters employee must schedule his/her absence with the Career Transition Center and acquire the approval of the supervisor.

B. All employees located in the field and at remote sites will be notified of career transition services provided by HUD and other government and private organizations. A point of contact will be established for all services offered. Subject to budget restrictions and the number of employees involved, the Department may schedule sessions with a HUD representative or counselor at the remote site, pay for an eligible employee's travel to the main agency facility, and/or make information available via computer, satellite broadcast, etc.

Merit Staffing Policy

335.1

APPENDIX C. VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT CONTENT AND UNIFORM NUMBERING SYSTEM

C-1 Vacancy Announcement Content

- A. Area of Consideration is indicated at the top left side of the Notice of Position Vacancy. Refer to section 3-5.3 to determine area of consideration.
- B. Issue Date represents target date for publicly posting the Notice of Position Vacancy.
- C. Closing Date represents final date that applications will be accepted. Applications must be received in the servicing HR Office by this date in order to be considered, unless other instructions are specified in the vacancy announcement.
- D. Position will give title, series, and grade of the position. More than one grade level may be indicated. This should also indicate the type of appoint and the maximum grade potential for this position.
- E. Location will state specific field or headquarters, organization, and duty station.
- F. Duties will briefly describe the major duties and responsibilities of the position. The duties statement should reflect the selective placement and quality ranking factors advertised.
- G. Minimum Qualifications Requirements will summarize the relevant requirements of the governing OPM Qualification Standards. Time-in-grade requirements will also be stated.
- H. Required Statement (as applicable)

"In addition to the SF-171, OF-612, resume, all applicants are required to list each selective placement and quality ranking factor separately and provide a narrative description of how their experience and education satisfy the factors. Applicants will NOT receive consideration for this position if this additional description material is not submitted.
- I. Selective Placement Factors will be entered under this section, if applicable at the time vacancy announcement is constructed.
- J. Quality Ranking Factors will be entered under this section. If factors are double or triple-weighted, this must be stated next to the factor.
- K. Required Statement (Basis of Rating)

When more than ten candidates meet the minimum qualification requirements and the selective placement factors, if applicable, candidates will be further evaluated by comparing each candidate's application with the Quality Ranking Factors listed below. These items are assigned values and defined by a crediting plan. This rating process will determine who will be referred to the selecting official. If ten or fewer candidates meet the minimum qualification requirements and the selective placement factor(s), if applicable, the candidate's applications will be further evaluated using a required Critical Factor identified in the vacancy announcement. Each applicant's background will be compared to the Quality Ranking Factor identified as the "Critical Factor". Those applicants whose applications meet the "above average" benchmark for the Critical Factor, will be referred to the selecting official.

Applications of qualified candidates eligible for non-competitive reassignment or repromotion will be referred to the selecting official simultaneously on a separate Selection Roster, without ranking or rating. Selecting Officials may choose a candidate or candidates from either Selection Roster.

L. Other Essential Information

1. Maximum grade potential of this position will be stated.
2. Required statement: This position is exempt (or non-exempt) from the Fair Labor Standards Act, as amended.
3. The current Appraisal of Performance, HUD Form 8054.1 front cover sheet and HUD Form 8054.2 or its equivalent must be attached to the application.
4. When required, Appraisals of Potential, HUD Form 832 for upward mobility positions must be attached to the SF-171, OF-612, or Resume.
5. If the merit staffing is for a temporary promotion, the following statement may appear, if applicable: "The temporary promotion may be non-competitively converted to a permanent promotion".
6. Any travel requirements and other special employment conditions should be stated.
7. Supervisory probationary period statement, if applicable.
8. Required statement, if applicable: "Applications will also be accepted from candidates who have eligibility for non-competitive appointments, such as those available for 30 percent disabled veterans, Vietnam-Era Veterans (GS-1 to GS-11 positions), and handicapped persons. Candidates eligible for these special non-competitive appointments must submit evidence of their eligibility with their applications".
9. Required Statement

Non-competitive applicants are required to submit only the basic application or resume, and when applicable, separate narrative statements addressing the Selective Placement Factor(s). Non-competitive applicants may choose to submit the additional narrative statements addressing the Quality Ranking Factors to enhance their application package. Candidates eligible for non-competitive referral are not rated and ranked; therefore, these supplemental documents are not mandatory submissions.

10. Other essential information including Bargaining Unit/Non-Bargaining Unit, Designated smoking areas, payment of relocation costs, drug testing, CTAP, ICTAP information will be applied to the vacancy announcement as appropriate.

M. Personnel Representative is the person officially delegated the authority to handle the merit staffing action. A name and phone number must be shown.

N. How to Apply will give the address where applications are to be sent.

C-2 Vacancy Announcement Numbering System

The vacancy announcement numbers described below will be used as the vacancy announcement numbers on all HUD vacancy announcements within their perspective local commuting areas.

ESC Field/Headquarters-Program Code-Fiscal Year-Sequence Number followed by either amendment and/or bargaining unit code.

A. Location codes are:

00	for Headquarters Announcements
01	for ASC 1 Announcements
02	for ASC 1 Announcements
03	for ASC 1 Announcements
04	for ASC 2 Announcements
05	for ASC 1 Announcements
06	for ASC 2 Announcements
07	for ASC 3 Announcements
08	for ASC 3 Announcements
09	for ASC 3 Announcements
10	for ASC 3 Announcements

B. Program Codes are:

UM	-	Upward Mobility Program
HI	-	HUD Intern Program
ER	-	Executive Resources Personnel Management
positions		
MS	-	Merit Staffing positions

C. In addition to the Program Code, Human Resources Offices may add a third letter to the two-letter code to designate a specific person, team, or office in charge of the particular vacancy.

D. Fiscal Year

Refers to the last two digits of the fiscal year in which the vacancy is opened. The fiscal year starts October 1 and ends September 30.

E. Sequence Numbers

These numbers are assigned sequentially each fiscal year; the first announcement for each program code in the fiscal year is designated "0001", with subsequent announcements numbered sequentially. Field announcements are distinguished by their ASC (Field) codes.

	Sample:	Headquarters vacancy announcement number			
	Location	Program	Optional	Fiscal	
Sequence	Code	Code	Code	Year	Number
	00	MS	F	96	0012
	Sample:	ASC (Field) vacancy announcement number			
	Location	Program	Fiscal	Sequence	
	Code	Code	Year	Number	
	02	UM	96	0015	

F. Amendment Codes

These are single letters added after the sequence number to indicate an amended vacancy. The code shall be a capital alphabet starting with "A" for the first amendment and run through "Y" for any subsequent amendments for each particular vacancy. (example: 00-MSD-86-0012A).

G. Bargaining Unit Codes

Announcement numbers for bargaining unit positions are followed by a lower case "z". If the announcement has been amended, the bargaining unit code should follow the amendment code letter. (Example: 00-MSF-86-0012z, 00-MSF-86-0012Az).

ii
04/04

335.1 REV-3

335.1 REV-3

C-5
04/04

335.1 REV-1

C-4
04/04

