

## Merit Staffing Policy

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### 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.