



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

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PERSONNEL BULLETIN NO. 24-02

SUBJECT: Hiring Authorities for Advancing Federal Government Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

- 1. Purpose.** This Personnel Bulletin (PB) implements the Direct Hire Authority (DHA) and Schedule A hiring authority authorized by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) for positions with major duties and responsibilities supporting the integration of Artificial Intelligence.
- 2. Scope.** This policy applies Department-wide. This authority will assist the Department of the Interior (Interior, Department) with meeting the goals identified in Executive Order (EO) 14110.
- 3. Authorities.** Executive Order (EO) 14110 and 5 CFR 213.3102(i)(3); Chief Human Capital Officer Council Memorandum – Government-wide Hiring Authorities for Advancing Federal Government Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

4. Policy.

DHA. Effective immediately, this DHA may be used to fill positions directly related to artificial intelligence (AI) work in the series and grades listed below. This DHA is based on an urgent critical hiring need to support permitting needs across the Department. OPM has approved the use of these hiring authorities through December 31, 2028.

This authority permits positions within the Department to be filled nationwide in the General Schedule (GS) grade levels 9 through 15. OPM has approved appointments within the following occupational series which are directly related to the integration of AI.

- GS-2210 Information Technology Specialist*
- GS-1550 Computer Scientist (Artificial Intelligence)
- GS-0854 Computer Engineer (Artificial Intelligence)
- GS-0343 Management and Program Analyst**

*AI work may include cyber work or may be classified in the 2210 series. If applicable, bureaus and equivalent offices may find the National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education (NICE) framework may cover specific AI roles, as well. The NICE framework may be used to code AI positions.

****AI work must involve the design and development of systems capable of performing tasks that includes the use of machine learning to create, deliver, and maintain algorithms, large language models, and systems that can process and analyze data used to make intelligent decisions or predictions. AI work must also entail the technical skills and competencies described by OPM in [The AI in Government Act of 2020 – Artificial Intelligence Competencies](#), July 6, 2023.**

Positions filled under the DHA must be directly related to the use and implementation of AI as documented within the major duties of the official position description of record associated with the vacancy. Major duties are those that represent the primary reason for the position's existence, and which govern the qualification requirements. Typically, they occupy most of the employee's time. For example, employees in AI positions covered under the DHA perform duties reflective of the following:

- Design, develop, and modify AI techniques, applications, tools, and solutions;
- Conduct assessments on technical and societal risks across the lifecycle of AI solutions;
- Help end users understand, engage with, and provide feedback on AI technology;
- Conduct assessments on technical and societal risks across the lifecycle of AI solutions;
- Analyze a collection of platforms, including edge processing and autonomous systems, to exploit data from sophisticated collection systems;
- Employ AI techniques, to include deep learning and machine learning, multi-agency systems, expert systems, and mixed-initiative human-machine teaming, to enable outstanding intelligence collection and the exploitation of data from collection systems;
- Use advanced hardware, software, and computational platforms with an emphasis of highly scalable and efficient solutions to bring exploitation capabilities to production and bear insights on the nation's most difficult national security challenges;
- Use problem-solving skills on highly collaborative teams with problem domain experts, data and collection experts, system designers and integrators, and with analysts to interpret insights derived;
- Uses advanced hardware, software, and computational platforms with an emphasis of highly scalable and efficient solutions to bring exploitation capabilities to prediction and bear insights on the most difficult national security challenges;
- Establish data pipelines with documented data of sufficient quality to achieve successful AI use cases;
- Conduct assessments to identify potential bias in AI systems and the data supporting them.

Under this DHA, individuals may be appointed to competitive service career, career-conditional, term, or temporary positions, as appropriate, without regard to provisions of 5 U.S.C. §§ 3309-3318 or 5 CFR part 211 and part 337, subpart A.

These appointments are subject to public notice requirements in 5 U.S.C. §§ 3327 and 3330 and 5 CFR 330, as well as procedures in 5 CFR part 330 pertaining to candidates' eligible for priority selection, and requirements in 5 CFR 332.402.

In accordance with 5 CFR 337.206(c), OPM and the Department may request information from bureaus or equivalent office on their use of this direct hire authority. OPM and the Department will periodically assess the use of this authority as well as continued need for them. OPM or the Department may modify or terminate use of this direct hiring authority as appropriate.

Bureau and equivalent offices are required to request an applicable pre-employment background investigation at the appropriate tier to establish whether candidates are suitable for Federal employment. Candidates may be credentialed in accordance with Government-wide credentialing standards and can hold a position that is national security sensitive (including but not limited to those requiring eligibility for access to classified information) at the appropriate level (if required for the particular position).

Servicing Human Resources Offices (SHROs) must identify and evaluate applicant qualifications for positions being filled via DHA. Additional candidate assessments or ratings are not permitted to determine relative degrees of qualifications when using this authority. SHROs may select any qualified applicant in an order that approximates order of receipt. Qualified candidates with veterans' preference should be selected as they are found, just as any qualified non-preference eligible candidate would be.

Schedule A. Effective immediately, excepted service Schedule A appointments can be made under 5 CFR 213.3102(i)(3) to address the need for hiring temporary staff in support of EO 14110. Positions authorized under this Schedule A must be below the Senior Executive Service (SES) level and must involve performing work directly associated with implementing directives of EO 14110. This Schedule A is not for hiring technical AI positions. No appointments may be made under this Schedule A authority after December 31, 2028. This Schedule A authority cannot be used to fill any position for which OPM has granted DHA in support of EO 14110, any Department-specific DHA, or any Government-wide DHA. Note: for reviewing availability of current DHAs, please consult the Department's [Hiring Authorities at a Glance](#) website and/or contact DOI.Office.of.Human.Resources@ios.doi.gov to verify if DHA is already available for a given series and grade.

Positions filled under this Schedule A must be directly related to implementation of EO 14110 as documented within the major duties of the official position description of record associated with the vacancy. Major duties are those that represent the primary reason for the position's existence, and which govern the qualification requirement. Typically, these duties occupy most of the employee's time. For example, people in AI Enabling positions covered under the Schedule A hiring authority perform duties reflective of the following:

- Build an agency's AI vision and plans for using AI;
- Ensure that data systems are accurate, flow logically, and are managed to meet mission needs;
- Recruit or evaluate qualifications of AI experts to be hired;

- Write policy guidance to ensure AI is used safely;
- Design, develop, and test backbone software applications.

Appointments under this authority must follow the provisions for application of veterans preference under 5 CFR 302, 5 USC 3318(c), AND 5 USC 3319(c)(7). When using this Schedule A authority, and a certificate of eligibles is established with multiple candidates, veterans preference procedures must be followed as outlined in the Delegated Examining Operations Handbook. Schedule A appointments made under 5 CFR 213.3102(i)(3) do not meet the exceptions identified in 5 CFR 362.101(c).

Appointments under the Schedule A hiring authority are not subject to public notice requirements.

Individuals can only be appointed to temporary positions for duration up to one year under this authority. Bureaus and equivalent offices may contact OHC to request extension of these appointments for one additional year for a total of two years. Extension requests must include the justification for the extension (e.g., continued need for the position in support of implementation efforts for EO 14110), position description, resume, and request memorandum containing both the previous and proposed not-to-exceed date addressed to the Deputy Chief Human Capital Officer.

Servicing Human Resources Offices (SHROs) must identify and evaluate applicant qualifications for positions being filled with this Schedule A authority. Additional candidate assessments or ratings are not required when using this authority.

5. Background Investigation.

Bureau and equivalent offices are required to request an applicable pre-employment background investigation at the appropriate tier to establish whether candidates are suitable for Federal employment. Candidates may be credentialed in accordance with Government-wide credentialing standards and can hold a position that is national security sensitive (including but not limited to those requiring eligibility for access to classified information) at the appropriate level (if required for the particular position).

6. Appointment Documentation.

Documenting DHA Appointments on the SF-50 “Notification of Personnel Action”

When using a government-wide authority, a SHRO must enter the following authority codes:

- “AYM” must be entered on the SF-50 in item 5-C, **and**
- “BAJ: GW-009” must be entered as the secondary authority code for item 5-E of the SF-50.

Documenting Schedule A Appointments on the SF-50

When documenting the SF-50 “Notification of Personnel Action” for such appointments, cite as “W9R/Sch. A, 5 CFR 213.3102(i)(3)”.

As a reminder, temporary employees who are hired for more than 90 days may be entitled to benefits to include health insurance, dental/vision, flexible spending accounts (medical and dependent care), annual leave, and sick leave. Temporary employees hired under this authority are not eligible to participate in Thrift Savings Plan, life insurance, or retirement.

- 7. Oversight.** Bureaus using this authority may establish additional written oversight procedures to ensure proper use of these authorities. Bureaus must maintain appropriate documentation of any individual hired under this authority for reconstruction purposes. Appointment documentation must be retained for three (3) calendar years from the date of the appointment. Appointments are subject to review, under the Department's Human Capital Accountability Program Evaluation.
- 8. Reporting.** As a condition of this DHA and Schedule A authorization, all bureaus and equivalent offices will submit reporting numbers as requested by the Department that identify for each hire made under this DHA and/or Schedule A authority:

 - A. For each position and grade level filled utilizing this authority:

 - a. Total number of job announcements posted;
 - b. Total number of qualified applicants;
 - c. Total number of selections; and
 - d. Total number of hires to include grade and step/pay level.
- 9. Inquiries.** Any employee or employee representative seeking further information concerning this policy may contact their respective servicing human resources office. Bureau headquarters HR staff may contact the Office of Human Capital at DOI_Office_of_Human_Resources@ios.doi.gov.

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