



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Washington, DC 20240

July 25, 2024

## PERSONNEL BULLETIN NO. 24-06

### SUBJECT: SkillBridge Program Policy

1. Purpose. This Personnel Bulletin (PB) establishes the U.S. Department of the Interior (Department) policy governing SkillBridge internships.
2. Background. The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) Military-Civilian Transition Office (MCTO) manages the [DOD SkillBridge Program](#), an opportunity for active duty Service Members to gain valuable civilian work experience with the Department during their last 180 days of service.  
DOD SkillBridge connects transitioning Service Members with private and public sector organizations that offer internship opportunities for the purpose of building their resumes, exploring employment interests, developing job skills, and gaining valuable Federal government work experience that will help them prepare for their adjustment to the workplace.
3. Authority. Effective April 23, 2021, the Department instituted an official [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) and became an approved DOD SkillBridge Industry Partner. This MOU applies uniformly across the Department; therefore Bureaus and Offices DO NOT establish a separate MOU nor do they complete a DOD “New Industry Partner request.”  
As published in the [joint ethics regulations](#) of the DOD, and as outlined in the U.S. Department of Labor [guidance](#), Service Members participating in a SkillBridge program are participating in a Capstone training experience at the end of their military career. DOD will continue to cover the salaries and benefits of the participating members; thus, they are NOT eligible for wages or other benefits from the Department.  
Bureaus/Offices are responsible for any costs associated with training, travel, attendance at events, etc that are part of the internship duties and/or training plan.
4. Definitions.
  - Armed Forces. The Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force and Coast Guard are the Armed Forces of the United States.
  - Content Management System (CMS). DOD manages the CMS which is where internship opportunities are posted for interested SkillBridge members to view and obtain contact information to apply.

- Service Member. A member of the uniformed services as defined in section 101(a)(5) of Title 10. Members of the armed forces who are serving on active duty; members of the Selected Reserve (including Selected Reserve members of the National Guard), regardless of duty status; and members of the Individual Ready Reserve as described in Section 10144(b) of Title 10, U.S.C.
- Uniformed Services. Per 31 USC § 3701(a)(7), the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force, Coast Guard, Commissioned Corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and Commissioned Corps of the Public Health Service.
- Veteran Employment Coordinators. Each Bureau/Office has a designated Veteran Employment Coordinator that serves as the official point of contact for inquiries about the program. Find your Veteran Employment Coordinator in the “Resources” section.

## 5. Policy.

**A. Overview.** The Bureau/Office offers training and work experience in high demand fields of work while having the opportunity to evaluate the Service Member’s suitability for the work. Service Members can be granted up to 180 days of permissive duty to focus solely on training full-time with the Department after Unit Commander (First O-4/Field Grade Commander in chain of command) provides written authorization and approval.

**B. Eligibility.** The DOD SkillBridge program is for active duty Service Members and select groups of the National Guard and the Reserves. [DoDI 1322.29](#) lists general eligibility requirements as:

- Service Members may participate within 180 days of being discharged or released from active duty and Service Members must have served 180 continuous days on active duty.
- Approval authority rests with the First Field Grade Commander authorized to impose non-judicial punishment under Article 15 of the UCMJ in the Service Member's chain of command.
- Such Commanders may approve or disapprove participation by a Service Member based upon unit mission requirements.

Additional items to note:

- Any rank, Enlisted or Officer, may apply for SkillBridge.
- During SkillBridge participation, Service Members continue to receive military compensation and remain covered by their military benefits.
- Release for SkillBridge participation is always mission-dependent and Unit Commanders must authorize participation prior to entering into an agreement with the Department.
- Service Members remain on active duty during internship.
- Service Members cannot be paid or receive compensation, this includes any

travel-related expenses..

- SkillBridge interns serve as volunteers and will be treated as such for “onboarding” purposes.
- Training cannot exceed 40 hours per week and cannot create a conflict of interest for the Service Member.
- The Department does not require nor authorize Service Members to sign a non-compete agreement to participate in a SkillBridge internship. Any Bureau/Office that asks Service Members to sign a non-compete agreement may jeopardize their ability to participate as a SkillBridge partner.

### **C. Responsibilities.**

- Office of Human Capital (OHC). OHC is responsible for overall administration and management of the Departmental SkillBridge MOU and policy enforcement. OHC will:
  - Maintain the Departmental SkillBridge MOU with DOD;
  - Develop policy governing the implementation and administration of the SkillBridge Program throughout the Department;
  - Provide program changes/updates as they occur; and
  - Ensure Bureau/Office compliance and accountability through reporting, evaluations, and/or audits.
- Servicing Human Resources Office (SHRO) and Department Veteran Employment Coordinators. Responsibilities include:
  - Veteran Employment Coordinators serve as the primary user of the DOD Content Management System (CMS) to post internship opportunities.
  - Follow Department specific SkillBridge policies and procedures;
  - Keep Hiring Managers informed about the SkillBridge internship option available to them especially when informed of an upcoming vacancy and also during the pre-recruitment consultation;
  - Refer Hiring Managers to their Veteran Employment Coordinator and/or additional SkillBridge designated point of contact for any detailed questions/concerns about the program;
  - Advise the Hiring Manager during the development of internship duty descriptions and training plan development;
  - Work with Service Members and their Commanders to obtain verification of the eligibility requirements for the internship;
  - Work directly with the Hiring manager and Service Member to send tentative offer, establish statement of understanding, and coordinate pre-internship requirements (security access, required documents, etc.);
  - Maintain communication with the Hiring Manager throughout the internship to ensure efficient planning for desired end result (hire or non-hire); and
  - Report the internship to the Office of Human Capital, Strategic Talent Management, Special Employment Programs Manager, [Angela Mettling@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Angela_Mettling@ios.doi.gov) (see Section 11 of this PB). This may be delegated to Hiring Managers.

- Hiring Mangers. Responsibilities include:

- Work with SHRO/Veteran Employment Coordinators/Hiring Managers to answer program inquiries, and post and maintain the internship listing opportunities;
- Inquire with servicing HR Specialists and/or Bureau/Office Veteran Employment Coordinator about the SkillBridge program to learn about the benefits of internship for their position(s);
- Keep the servicing HR Specialist and/or Veteran Employment Coordinator informed of upcoming vacancies and request to see if there are any interested Service Members (via career fairs, unsolicited resumes, etc);
- Review Service Member information to determine if there is a qualified fit for the position;
- Develop required internship duty descriptions and training plans;
- Review tentative internship offer along with necessary SkillBridge documents;
- Assist in onboarding of the intern (coordination of computer equipment, reporting instructions, etc.); and maintain copies of the SkillBridge documents;
- Engage in ongoing communications with the Service Member;
- Report the internship to the Office of Human Capital, Strategic Talent Management, Special Employment Programs Manager, [Angela Mettling@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Angela.Mettling@ios.doi.gov) (see Section 11 of this PB). This may be delegated to the Servicing Human Resources Office (SHRO) or Veteran Employment Coordinators.

6. DOD Content Management System. This platform is used to update any information associated with the Bureau/Office program(s), and/or any available opportunities on the public-facing SkillBridge site. DOD SkillBridge administrators will review and approve any edits prior to posting to the public site.

- a. DOD authorizes two CMS account users per Bureau/Office. Since Veteran Employment Coordinators are the subject matter experts (SMEs) regarding the SkillBridge program, and are public-facing points of contact, the first CMS user is the Bureau/Office Veteran Employment Coordinator. Therefore, it is advisable to always contact your Bureau/Office Veteran Employment Coordinator with any SkillBridge questions.
- b. Bureaus/Offices may designate a second CMS user to also coordinate and manage internship postings.
- c. Veteran Employment Coordinators and/or additional designated second Bureau/Office user without a CMS account may request credentials via the DOD SkillBridge “Contact Us” form at <https://skillbridge.osd.mil/contacts.htm>.
  - Please email Office of Human Capital, Strategic Talent Management Veteran Employment Program Manager, [Angela Mettling@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Angela.Mettling@ios.doi.gov), after you’ve requested a CMS account so it can be “approved” by DOD and the Department. Upon approval, you will be emailed a copy of the CMS User Guide which contains instructions on how to post internship opportunities.

7. **Procedures.** Department Hiring Managers, Human Resources Professionals, and Veteran Employment Coordinators all collaborate to ensure successful outreach and onboarding.

- a. Hiring Managers identify available internship opportunities and create Training Plan(s) for internships they are offering. Training Plans must be established before a Service Member receives a tentative internship offer. Bureaus/Offices are permitted to create their own branded template as long as all the required items are included.
- b. HR Professionals/SHRO will send requests to either their Veteran Employment Coordinator or designated second CMS user to have the internship opportunity posted in the CMS to appear on the SkillBridge website.
- c. SkillBridge internship opportunities are viewable at <https://skillbridge.osd.mil/locations.htm>. In addition to the search feature provided by this site, participating industry partners can work with local installation support offices to spread the word about opportunities to the base population.
- d. Additional avenues of internship solicitation are encouraged (e.g. local military installations, military partnerships/industries, outreach and recruitment events, virtual internship/career fairs, social media, etc).
- e. The posting must be maintained by the original CMS account user.
- f. When making a selection, utilize the “Required Documents” templates to send to the Service Member.
- g. Veterans Preference does not apply to the initial SkillBridge internship. Veterans Preference only applies to permanent hires made via non-competitive appointment at the conclusion of the internship.
- h. Upon Service Member onboarding, report the internship to the Office of Human Capital (see Section 11 of this PB).
- i. Guidance for Collecting Self-Reported Data. At the end of each SkillBridge program, Bureaus/Offices will be asked to report Service Member demographics for equity, compliance, and program evaluation purposes. DOD strongly recommends providing a short demographic questionnaire during Service Member onboarding to collect this information.

When collecting demographic data, it is imperative to ensure data is voluntary and self-reported by the Service Member. Please do not attempt to interpret a participant's gender, race, or age. Participants must voluntarily consent to sharing that information. Sample instructions that your Bureau/Office can use to collect demographic data from your SkillBridge interns can be found in the “Required Documents” (section seven of this PB).

8. **Required Documents.** All required documents can be located at the “[Departmental SkillBridge Program Policy & Documents SharePoint site](#).”

- a. DOI SkillBridge Approval to Participate
- b. SkillBridge Program Flyer – use this flyer to promote participation across your Bureau/Office and/or at outreach/recruiting events
- c. SkillBridge Request for Consideration
- d. SkillBridge Statement of Understanding
- e. SkillBridge Training Plan
- f. SkillBridge Demographic Information—Voluntary
- g. SkillBridge Tentative Internship Offer Template\*

\*The Tentative Offer Template below should be modified to meet the requirements of the Bureau/Office and internship position.

**9. Internship Completion.** Although not required, Bureaus/Offices are encouraged to create a document that certifies the Service Member completed the internship (certificate of completion, language specific email, branded template, etc). If created, this document should be utilized consistently, provided to the Service Member, and maintained within the Bureau/Office.

- a. HR Specialists will advise Hiring Manager on next steps if the internship is leading to a potential hire via non-competitive hiring authorities.
  - Although the Bureau/Office SkillBridge training program must offer a high probability of post-service employment with the organization, DOD SkillBridge participants are not entitled to a job with the specific industry partner as a result of completing the DOD SkillBridge program.
  - Post-internship hiring is completed as a separate process and will require that the Service Member is eligible and qualified for non-competitive hiring authorities. Non-competitive hiring authorities can be used to recruit Veterans external to a USA Jobs posting so long as all applicable regulatory procedures are applied (e.g. ICTAP, CTAP, Veterans preference). View “[Hiring Authorities as a Glance](#)” for more information.
- b. Report hire or non-hire status at the conclusion of the internship to the Office of Human Capital (see Section 11 of this PB).

**10. Resources.**

- [DOD SkillBridge Resources](#)
- [DOD SkillBridge Partner Brochure](#)
- [DOD Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [DOD Content Management System \(CMS\) Login](#)
- SkillBridge Technical Assistance: Utilize the “Contact Us” form at <https://skillbridge.osd.mil/contacts.htm>
- [DOI Veteran Employment Coordinators](#)
- [DOI Servicing Human Resource Offices \(SHRO\)](#)
- [DOI Required Documents](#)

**11. Reporting.** As a requirement to maintain the MOU with DOD, all participating Bureaus/Offices MUST report to the Office of Human Capital, Strategic Talent

Management, Veterans Employment Programs Manager, [Angela\\_Mettling@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Angela_Mettling@ios.doi.gov). The reporting requirement applies to the initial internship opportunity AND if applicable, the permanent opportunity. The Bureau/Office sends email notification of:

- a. Service Member Name;
- b. Branch of service;
- c. Internship Title;
- d. Approximate number of hours to be worked;
- e. Demographic Self-Reported Data
- f. If applicable, permanent position offered (title, series, and grade);
- g. Location of internship, and if applicable, location of permanent position.

- 12. 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](mailto:DOI_Office_of_Human_Resources@ios.doi.gov).

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