



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

AUG 31 2012

PERSONNEL BULLETIN NO. 12-09

SUBJECT: Establishing and Maintaining Competitive Areas

1. **Purpose:** This bulletin sets forth the Department of the Interior's (DOI) policy on the establishment and maintenance of competitive areas. Bureaus and equivalent offices are responsible for administering this policy in accordance with Personnel Bulletin 11-10 and the regulations issued by the United States Office of Personnel Management in 5 CFR Part 351.

2. **Authority:** 5 CFR Part 351, Personnel Bulletin 11-10

3. **Policy:** Bureaus and equivalent offices are authorized to define their own competitive areas in accordance with DOI policy. A competitive area establishes the geographic or organizational boundaries within which employees compete for retention under the reduction-in-force (RIF) regulations. Employees compete for retention only with other employees in the same competitive areas; they do not compete with employees in another competitive area.

For the purposes of this bulletin, all bureaus and equivalent offices will ensure their competitive areas are established and kept up-to-date. This includes annually validating the accuracy of the competitive areas. The annual review shall be completed prior to June 1st of each year, at which time; a report will be issued to the Office of Human Resources verifying that competitive areas are accurate and will be appropriate in the event of a RIF.

Competitive areas must be defined at least 90 days in advance of a RIF in accordance with 5 CFR 351.402, and the competitive areas must be made available to affected employees in the event of a RIF. Bureaus and equivalent offices will consult the Office of the Solicitor (SOL) and the Office of Human Resources as early as possible in the RIF planning process, but at least 30 days prior to issuance of specific RIF notices. The SOL will ensure any proposed RIF action is legally defensible.

If there are any questions, please contact Craig Welch at (202) 513-0755 or by email at Craig_Welch@ios.doi.gov.

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