



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

December 12, 2022

PERSONNEL BULLETIN NO. 22-08

SUBJECT: Direct Hire Authority (Wildland Fire) - Amended

- 1. Purpose.** This Personnel Bulletin (PB) implements the amended Direct Hire Authority (DHA) granted by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) in support of wildland firefighting and support positions. This Personnel Bulletin supersedes PB 22-03.
- 2. Scope.** This policy applies to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and the National Park Service (NPS) (the bureaus). This authority will assist the Department of the Interior (DOI, Department) with meeting staffing requirements related to wildland firefighting activities.
- 3. Authority.** 5 U.S.C. § 3304(a)(3) and 5 CFR 337.205(b)(1)-(4). OPM memorandum dated November 7, 2022.
- 4. Policy.** Effective immediately, this DHA may be used to fill a total of 7,262 positions wildland fire and support positions within the aforementioned bureaus. This Direct Hire Authority is amended as of November 7, 2022, for positions at the GS-2 through GS-14 grade levels nationwide on a permanent, term, or temporary basis.

This authority continues to be based on a critical hiring need to support wildland firefighters' protection of infrastructure, land, and individuals against wildfires in various states. This authority will assist DOI with the continuation of filling mission critical positions to respond to unpredictable and catastrophic wildfires that impact lives, homes, Federal lands, and property.

This authority continues to permit DOI to fill a total of 7,242 positions in the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Park Service nationwide for General Schedule (GS) grade level positions (or equivalent) as specified on the attached table. OPM has approved appointments within the GS-0401, GS-0456, GS-0462, and GS-2151 series, which are directly related to firefighting response efforts, without a specific limitation on the number of hires DOI may make for each of these series, provided that the

overall number of hires with respect to these positions is within the 4,303 positions allocated across these four series.

Note: Human Resources (HR) Assistant (GS-0203), HR Specialist (GS-0201), and Budget Analyst (GS-560) positions may only be filled for one-year from the effective date of approval (no later than 11/06/2023) of this amended and extended authority. In the previous approval, OPM provided this authority to fill these administrative positions for one year from the previous approval, OPM is extending this period through one year of the effective date of approval of this amended/extended authority due to the additional positions that must be filled in support of these wildfires.

The Bureaus may give individuals appointed under this DHA competitive service career, career-conditional (permanent), term or temporary appointments as appropriate, without regard to provisions of 5 U.S.C. § 3309-3318 or 5 CFR part 211 and part 337, subpart A. The Bureaus must comply with the public notice requirements in 5 U.S.C. §§ 3327, 3330 and 5 CFR 330, subpart G, and requirements in 5 CFR 332.402 when seeking to fill positions under this authority.

- 5. Responsibilities.** The bureaus must comply with the public notice requirements in 5 USC § 3327, 3330, and 5 CFR 330, subpart G, and requirements in 5 CFR 332.402 when seeking to fill positions under this authority. In addition, the bureaus must comply with all relevant laws other than those from which the bureaus are exempt pursuant to 5 USC § 3304(a)(3) and this authority.

Bureaus should not conduct additional rating and ranking to determine relative degrees of qualifications when using this authority. DOI must select all qualified applicants on the certificate before considering applicants from another DHA certificate pursuant to this DHA. When selecting individuals under this DHA, without regard to sections 5 USC § 3309-3318, the requirement for applying veterans preference does not apply. Qualified candidates with veterans' preference should be selected as they are found, just as any qualified non-preference eligible candidate would be.

This DHA has been authorized based on a critical hiring need that requires the Department of the Interior to move quickly to fill positions. Though moving quickly, bureaus still should use DHA as part of their overall strategic workforce planning and should take care to have a recruiting strategy that reaches all segments of society, including diverse and underserved communities, veterans, early career talent, and other groups representing the full range of the American workforce. DOI will regularly evaluate use of this DHA to ensure compliance with the aforementioned talent management considerations.

- 6. Appointments.** The bureaus may give individuals appointed under this authority competitive service career, career-conditional (permanent), term, or temporary appointments as appropriate, without regard to provisions of 5 USC § 3309-3318 or 5 CFR part 211 and part 337, subpart A.

The bureaus must use two authority codes when documenting personnel actions using this DHA, as follows:

- First Authority: AYM – Reg. 337-201
- Second Authority: BYO – DOI002

Use of these authority codes and adherence to additional tracking mechanisms will enable DOI and the bureaus to ensure accurate and current utilization of this DHA for ease of required reporting to OPM and compliance with requirements of the DHA.

- 7. Oversight.** Bureaus using this authority must establish written oversight procedures to ensure proper use. Procedures must include guidance on who shall approve hires and the method of tracking and reviewing appointments under this DHA. Bureaus must maintain appropriate documentation of any individual hired under this authority for reconstruction purposes. OPM will review the use of this DHA on a monthly basis to ensure it is being utilized properly and to determine if continued use is supportable. Appointment documentation must be retained for three (3) calendar years from the date of the appointment. Appointments are subject to review, under DOI's Human Capital Accountability Program Evaluation.

- 8. Reporting.** Per the terms of this DHA, the Department is required to provide regular reports to OPM on utilization of the DHA, including:

- Any available demographic data (e.g., race, national origin, gender of applicants), including applicant flow data;
- The number of qualified applicants;
- The number of selections; and
- Grade and step/pay level of the applicants selected.

In order to satisfy this requirement, bureaus must adhere to any reporting requests related to utilization of the DHA within the time period specified by the Department's Office of Human Capital. Bureaus must also adhere to any tracking mechanisms related to this DHA, as specified by the Department's Office of Human Capital (e.g., staffing system tagging). Failure to comply with reporting or tracking requirements could lead to revocation of the DHA.

- 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.

Jennifer A. Ackerman
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Deputy Chief Human Capital Officer

Attachments:

DOI Fire DHA OPM Approved Positions 11-07-2022