PERSONNEL BULLETIN NO. 22-03

SUBJECT: Direct Hire Authority (Wildland Fire) – Extended/Expanded

1. **Purpose.** This Personnel Bulletin implements the extension and expansion of a Direct Hire Authority (DHA) granted by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) in support of wildland firefighter and related positions. This Personnel Bulletin (PB) supersedes PB 20-15.

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) with meeting its staffing requirements.


4. **Policy.** Effectively immediately, this DHA may be used to fill a total of 7,262 positions in the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Park Service. This Direct Hire Authority is extended on the issuance date of this personnel bulletin for positions at the GS-2 through GS-13 grade levels nationwide on a permanent, term, or temporary basis.

- BIA 3405 Position
- BLM 2316 Positions
- FWS 1080 Positions
- NPS 461 Positions

This authority continues to be based on a critical hiring need to support wildland firefighters’ protection of infrastructure, land, and individuals caused by fires 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.

Please note, as listed in the attachment, Human Resources Assistant (GS-0203), Human Resources Specialist (GS-0201), and Budget Analyst (GS-0560) positions may only be filled for one-year from the effective date of OPM’s approval of this authority; through March 13, 2023. All other positions may be filled through September 30, 2025.

5. **Responsibilities.** 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 CPR 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 U.S.C. §3304(a)(3) and this authority.
Bureaus must identify and use proper assessment tools for the position being filled with this DHA to determine who is qualified for the covered positions. Bureaus should not conduct additional rating 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 U.S.C. 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, DOI still should use DHA as part of their overall strategic workforce planning, and agencies should take care to have a recruiting strategy that reaches all segments of society, including diverse and underserved communities\(^1\), veterans, early career talent, and other groups representing the full range of the American workforce. DOI will regularly evaluate their DHA actions to assess compliance with pay equity principles and will balance DHA with longer-term opportunities to offer current employees new opportunities through upskilling and training.

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 U.S.C. §§ 3309-3318 or 5 CFR part 211 and part 337, subpart A.

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

- **First Authority:** AYM - Reg. 337.201
- **Second Authority:** BYO - DOI002

Using these two authority codes will help OPM evaluate the use of these authorities without requiring reports.

7. **Oversight.** Bureaus using this authority must establish written oversight procedures to ensure proper use. Procedures must include guidance on who shall approve the hires and the method of reviewing the appointments. Bureaus must maintain appropriate documentation of any individual hired under this authority for reconstruction purposes. On a periodic basis, OPM will review the use of this DHA to ensure it is being used properly and to determine if continued use is supportable. OPM will monitor DOI's use of this authority and may modify or terminate this authority as appropriate.

Bureaus are responsible for establishing written oversite procedures and maintaining oversight of this Authority within their bureaus; ensuring appointments are made within the guidelines of this personnel bulletin and in compliance with human resources law and regulations; and appointments are appropriately documented and maintained. 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.

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\(^1\) *Diverse and Underserved Communities* as defined by [Executive Order 14035 – Executive Order on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce, dated June 25, 2021*
8. **Reporting.** After any job announcement under which individuals have been hired using this DHA has closed and been audited, Bureaus shall submit data to OPM (via USAJobs) for the job announcement and associated hiring actions. The data must include:

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

This information will be compiled, assessed and consolidated by the Office of Human Capital and submitted to OPM on a quarterly basis.

9. **Inquiries.** Any employee or employee representative seeking further information concerning this policy may contact their respective servicing HRO. Bureau headquarters HR staff may contact John C. Castaneda in the Office of Human Capital at john_castaneda@ios.doi.gov.

Attachments:

- DOI DHA Position Listing DOI-002.pdf