



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

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PERSONNEL BULLETIN NO. 20-14

SUBJECT: Shared Certificates Policy

1. **Purpose.** This Personnel Bulletin establishes a Shared Certificates Program within the Department of the Interior (DOI) that expedites hiring by permitting DOI Servicing Human Resources Offices (SHROs) to share certificates of eligibles across DOI bureaus and offices.
2. **Applicability.** This policy applies to all Servicing Human Resource Offices (SHRO) supporting all bureaus and offices within the Department of the Interior.
3. **Policy.** The Department of the Interior (DOI) is establishing guidance under the Shared Certificate Program that encourages the inter- and intra-bureau sharing of job opportunity announcements and certificates of eligibles, when filling certain vacancies under Merit Promotion Procedures (MPP), including those applicants with non-competitive status; Direct-Hire Authorities (DHA); or when filling positions via non-competitive appointment authorities. The intent of this program is that bureaus will maximize the inclusion of language enabling shared certificates on job opportunity announcements and utilization of shared certificates to fill vacancies.

All Bureau SHROs will establish procedures to ensure operational level collaboration necessary to promote, participate and utilize shared certificates; especially when seeking candidates for positions that are commonly filled, DOI mission critical, and Government-wide mission critical. Additionally, all HR specialists will familiarize themselves with this policy and advocate the use of shared certificates as a hiring efficiency tool during consultation with hiring officials.

When provisions of this policy differ from changes in applicable law or regulation, the changes in law or regulation apply. **This policy does not cover the sharing of certificates under Delegated Examining (DE) with other Federal agencies, based on the Competitive Service Act of 2015 and 5 CFR §332.408.**

Prior to implementing this policy, bureaus must review collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) and satisfy any labor-management obligations, as applicable. Where the provisions of this instruction differ from the requirements contained in an applicable CBA, the CBA takes precedence.

4. Definitions.

- A. **Calendar Day.** Every day of the calendar year including federal holidays and periods when the government is operating under a shutdown furlough (5 CFR §210.102).
- B. **Certificates/Certificates of Eligibles.** A list of qualified candidates submitted to a hiring manager for selection consideration in compliance with the appropriate merit staffing procedures.
- C. **Direct-Hire Authority (DHA).** Authority that permits hiring, after public notice, without regard to the rating and ranking procedures and veterans preference provisions of 5 U.S.C §§ 3309 through 3318, and 5 CFR §§211 and 337, Subpart A (OPM Delegated Examining Operations Handbook).
- D. **Job Opportunity Announcement (JOA).** A job announcement posted by a Servicing HR Office (SHRO) for an available vacancy.
- E. **Merit Promotion (MP) Procedures.** A placement made under the authority of 5 CFR §335, Promotion and Internal Placement. With certain important exceptions (e.g., Veterans Employment Opportunities Act, other candidates with non-competitive eligibility) only federal employees who currently hold or previously held a competitive service position may apply for positions that are to be filled under merit promotion procedures.
- F. **Originating Servicing Human Resources Office (Originating SHRO).** The human resources office that initiated the hiring action (i.e., posted the JOA).
- G. **Priority Placement.** Selection priority, which is part of career transition assistance plan (CTAP) and Interagency Career Assistance Plan (ICTAP), afforded to employees affected by downsizing or restructuring. DOI's CTAP includes special selection priority (SSP), reemployment priority list (RPL), and priority placement list (PRL).
- H. **Receiving Servicing Human Resources Office (Receiving SHRO).** The human resources office that requests a Certificate of Eligibles from a SHRO.

5. Roles and Responsibilities.

- A. **DOI Office of Human Capital** is responsible for developing Department-wide policy and guidance regarding the Shared Certificates Program consistent with Office of Personnel Management (OPM) policies and guidance, and all applicable federal laws and regulations. Evaluating program and providing oversight through human capital evaluation program/accountability reviews.

- B. **Bureau Human Resource Offices** are responsible for complying with this guidance and assisting SHRO to implement shared certificates and providing operational oversight and evaluation of shared certificate execution within bureau SHROs. Bureaus HROs should encourage the use of shared certificates and assist SHROs in the coordination with other bureaus.
- C. **Originating Servicing Human Resource Offices (SHRO)** are responsible for the operational management and efficacy of shared certificates, including:
- Clearing appropriate priority placement programs (CTAP, ICTAP, RPL, PRL) at initial announcement;
 - Ensuring announcement contains standardized language notifying applicants that their applications may be shared;
 - Sharing certificates with interested SHROs, including all case file documentation;
 - Conducting quality control/assurance reviews prior to sharing a certificate;
 - Redacts names of selected candidates;
 - When sharing a certificate, the originating SHRO will provide the receiving SHRO with a copy of all documentation pertaining to the creation of that certificate (e.g., the job analysis, JOA, rating schedule/crediting plan, applications of those certified, etc.); and
 - Managing case files through audit close out.
- D. **Receiving SHROs** are responsible for ensuring proper certificate management and utilization, including:
- Verifying through job analysis that the minimum qualification requirements (including use of any selective placement factors) and the competencies, or knowledge, skills and abilities, that were used for the original position are appropriate for their internal position to be filled;
 - Make selections within thirty (30) calendar days of the date the certificate is received from the originating SHRO (this may be extended up to 240 calendar days from original certificate issuance date by the originating SHRO only);
 - Re-clear appropriate priority placement programs (CTAP, ICTAP, RPL, PRL) after 120 calendar days of the certificate issuance date (DOI CTAP/SSP lists and RPL should be cleared prior to each hire);
 - Sending notification within seven (7) calendar days to the originating SHRO when selections are made;
 - Conducting quality review of selection(s) prior to tentative job offer;
 - Providing selection package(s) after job offer to the originating SHRO, including all case file documentation sufficient for third party audit and reconstruction;
 - Notifying the originating SHRO within seven (7) calendar days if a selected candidate declines an offer, or if a selected candidate does not onboard with the Department;

- Notifying the originating SHRO within seven (7) calendar days when no further selections will be made; and
- Proper selection, audit and recordkeeping, etc.

6. **Requirements.** SHROs must adhere to the requirements in this section when filling competitive service positions and excepted service positions through a shared certificate of eligible candidates.

A. The following language must be included in each Job Opportunity Announcement (JOA) that will result in a shared certificate opportunity. **“Notification to Applicants:**

Applicants who apply under this job opportunity announcement agree to have their application, associated documents and applicable personal information shared with other Bureaus/Offices within the Department of the Interior (DOI) who have vacancies within the same occupational series, grade, full performance level and in the same geographic location(s), including within the same metro/commuting area. Applying to this announcement does not replace the need to apply to other job opportunity announcements for which you wish to receive consideration.”

B. In addition to above, the following requirements must be met in order to make a selection(s) from a shared certificate:

- The JOA must be open to DOI-wide or broader area of consideration.
- The certificate must be active.
- The position must be in the same series, grade level and full performance level (FPL).
- The appointment type must be the same (e.g. permanent, temporary, term).
- The position has the same work schedule (full-time, part-time, seasonal, etc), but does not have to have the same tour of duty.
- The position must have the same selective factors, if applicable.
- The position must have the same testing requirements.
- The major duties of the position are the same or similar.
- The position must have comparable specialized experience requirements.
- The position must have comparable knowledge, skills, and abilities as reflected in the job analysis and assessment questions.
- The position must be within the same duty location(s), as announced, including within the same metro/commuting area.

C. If the announcement was for an inter-disciplinary position, the position filled from the shared certificate must also be inter-disciplinary of the same series/grade combinations.

D. If the announcement explicitly states that a Relocation Allowance will not be offered, then that incentive may not be offered to any selectee from the announcement.

- E. Any job requirements or flexibilities not listed above and not stated in the original announcement that differ from the position being filled must be communicated to the candidate no later than the tentative job offer so the candidate can make an informed decision to accept or decline the position. This includes financial disclosure reporting, inclusion in a bargaining unit, an increased security clearance or background investigation, Emergency Tier designation, paid relocation, required travel, atypical tour of duty (e.g., early mornings, night hours, weekends, split schedules), drug testing/screening, or any other job requirement or flexibility that differs from the requirements or flexibilities in the original announcement.
 - F. Certificates covered under this guidance are available for minimum of 120 days, with no exceptions. Originating SHROs should make certificates available for sharing no later than forty (40) calendar days from the certificate issuance date.
 - G. Candidates will remain referred for consideration while the certificate is open, provided they are still eligible, unless the candidate requests to withdraw from continued consideration. This is to ensure applicants have the ability to compete for all vacant positions that may be filled through the JOA.
7. **Documentation.** The bureau sharing the certificate and the bureaus receiving the certificate are each responsible for maintaining complete case file documentation sufficient to reconstruct all hiring actions in accordance with DOI Merit Promotion Policy and/or Delegated Examining Operation Handbook, as appropriate. Each time the certificate is shared, each receiving bureau is responsible for creating a new instance of a case file to document its use.
8. Bureau Human Resource Policy Offices may reach out to the Office of Human Capital (OHC) at DOI_Office_of_Human_Resources@ios.doi.gov with additional questions. SHROs should contact their bureau policy offices with any questions.

Sincerely,

JENNIFER
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