

Hiring Flexibilities

Virtual Conference for Supervisors

Recorded March 10, 2017

This is Jo and Katrina. We will get started here in just a little bit. Sit tight, and if you just joined us, we appreciate you making sure your lines are muted. If you can chat a hello—I see several of you have done that. That is fantastic. I see Angie in the participating list; if you're with us Angie, I want to make sure we provide you credit. If you just let us know in the chat pod you are with us. We will get started here shortly. Feel free to chat amongst yourselves. It seemed like some people have been chatting a little bit. Last year Jo had shared with you if you haven't seen in the chat pod that we had some person from Guam. It was like 4 o'clock in the morning for him and he was joining us for the sessions. But it's fantastic that he was able to do that. A lot of dedication. We appreciate the effort.

Absolutely.

Jo and I are experiencing the most snowfall that we received ever so far this winter, which has been a very mild. The sun is out now, but I have experienced where it has been snowing and the sun has been out at the same time. Strange weather. If I was out in California my mother would say it's earthquake weather because of the drastic change in temperatures. Sit back and we will get started shortly. Thank you for your patience.

Katrina, I am emailing Angela information.

Excellent, Thank you for that. Sorry for the delay everybody. Our speaker is having trouble getting logged in. I just resent her the information. We will elevate her to a presenter and get started. Just a reminder, a lot of people are coming online say hello in the chat box and we will give you credit for attending the session. We are recording the session, so please mute your phones by using your mute button on your telephone. Katrina and I will be working to assist Angela as she is doing her presentation. We will start shortly.

Just to confirm this is Hiring Flexibilities class with Angela Hargrove. [Low Volume] We're using strictly the phone bridge. If you need that information, we can provide that for you.

I hear some chatting, some people chatting. If you can mute your lines, that would be wonderful. The voice IP is nice and I do love using the voice over IP; however, when you have this much people the combination of voice over IP and the phone bridge it tends to lead to a lot of technical difficulties in which we don't have a lot of time to spend. A lot of people don't have that capability, so we chose to go to the phone bridge route. [Low Volume]

I'm going to try to call Angela again. It shouldn't take that long. Is she around the corner from Brigitte?

She said she went to Learning & Development and she couldn't find anybody there.

Good afternoon, everybody. This is Angela. I was having a bit of a technical difficulty here. Are you there Jo?

I am here.

We just want to go ahead and get started. Good afternoon everybody. Thank you for taking time out of your Friday to attend this training session on hiring flexibilities. I'm Angela Hargrove and I will be the presenter today. We'll ask that you hold your questions until the end. Jo is going to be assisting me because I don't have any information up on my screen, so please we appreciate your patience and if you can bear with us. Again, I welcome you all and we will go ahead and get started.

Next slide. It's helpful that each of you will have a number of takeaways from today's session. One of the most important take away is the hiring process and it's a collaborative effort. Hiring is a partnership between the hiring manager, the HR specialist and in some cases the EEO specialist. Everybody has a role and responsibility that must be carried out to ensure that the best candidate is selected and that the hiring process is in compliance with law, rules and regulations. One of the things that we believe is the key to any successful hire is going to be thorough communication. Whether that communication is virtual on the phone or in person a communication is really essential. It can lead to better and faster results that are [Indiscernible] less expensive and less time to [Indiscernible]. It's a win/win for everybody. Managers should focus on planning the workforce requirements before they can see [Indiscernible] and should be involved in recruitment activities to include job analysis, question assessment development, and they should be considering possible interview techniques [Indiscernible] any potential panel members that [Indiscernible] experts all before the vacancy announcement closes. HR specialist will need to partner with our managers to communicate the critical skills, experiences and abilities that are required for successful performance on the job. By working together, a hiring manager can go into the hiring process and inform areas about [Indiscernible] copy essential competencies necessary to adjust the workload and awareness of the best methods available to get the right person in the right job and at the right time.

Today our area of focus is going to be to define the various hiring flexibilities or authorities; we want to provide some clarity on how these are used and who is eligible. We will also discuss the advantages or benefits of using these flexibilities, and then we will share with you a number of tools and resources that you can use in the future. I realize when you think about hiring [Indiscernible], but because of the limited time we have today we really need to stay within the parameters of the hiring flexibilities which we will be discussing today. I will say this a couple times, you can always reach out to your [Indiscernible] if you have questions that

pertain to other aspects of the hiring process that we might not touch upon in our discussion today . In most cases I would imagine that [Indiscernible] a vacant position. You generally work with your [Indiscernible] specialist by advertising it be delegated examining, and that's where you would be looking to reach a candidate that is outside the federal government or perhaps you might advertise your job via promotion, where you are looking at candidates were already work for the government or who have status. And lots of cases using these methods would take an extremely long time. As I mentioned earlier, you are required to perform a job analysis, development assessment questions and you might even perform some level of outreach to broaden your applicant pool, and along with that you can rate the application or have a subject matter expert do that. Taking time out to interview and then waiting for the background investigation. It can take an inordinate amount of time.

We're going to talk for just a moment. We have poll question. So, I'm curious as to how long does it take for you to fill your most recent vacant position? I think we have boxes that you can click on anywhere from three to six months, six to nine months, nine to 12 months or more than a year to fill a job . [Poll Question]

Everybody is still voting. We will wait another 30 seconds. [Low Volume] We have 44% said three to six months, 22% for six to nine and 11% for one to three months.

Not as bad as some of the other questions that we have had. We had quite a few recently that are at least nine months. Our hope today is in attending this webinar, some of the information will be shared that will shorten [Indiscernible].

Hiring flexibility serves as a means to bring on a new employee to a noncompetitive process. This allows hiring managers to hire candidates and in most cases without having to go through the full application process. Jobs are open to select candidates as opposed to the general public, and typically those who may have been a federal employee previously. Hiring flexibilities exist to make [Indiscernible] a lot more timely and less cumbersome. When is it appropriate to use the hiring flexibility? This can really be determined by looking at the needs that you are trying to address as you fill your vacant position. Here are a few slides of your questions that should be considered when you're trying to determine if the hiring flexibility is a valuable option that you should pursue. One of the things that you might think about is whether the hiring of the student into a [Indiscernible] meet your needs. Do you have the time to train somebody or do you need them to the ground running? Could you possibly consider hiring an individual with special needs? How am I supposed [Indiscernible] in a program office? Finally, are you looking to hire somebody with federal government experience or are you looking to hire somebody who is new to the government? Your servicing HR specialist can assist you with determining whether one of the flexibilities we will be talking about today can help you meet your hiring goals.

The first hiring flexibility that we are going to discuss today are the authorities associated with hiring veterans. There are three authorities or flexibilities that exist to help government agencies attract veterans to their organization. By a show of hands, I'm going to ask how many

of you have used these authorities or bettering hiring authorities to bring on an employee within your organization?

Just as a reminder icon should be on the upper left-hand corner the person with a raised hand. You can select the raise hand sign. It looks like five or six folks and more. They have raise their hands Angela.

We're just going to go through the various hiring authorities so you can use to bring on the veteran. One of the things that we offered during this virtual training conference was a specific course on veterans hiring. Hopefully, maybe some of you had a chance to take that. The first hiring flexibility around veterans hiring that were going to talk about is the Veterans' Recruitment Authority. This allows you to appoint veterans to positions up to the GS 11 level without competition. [Indiscernible]. Veterans can then be converted non-competitively to a career conditional appointment. For all veterans that receive an honorable discharge, they may be eligible under the VRA appointment. A few examples would include disabled veterans, veterans who served on active duty during a war or in a campaign or expedition or with [Indiscernible], or a veteran who has participated in the United States military operation [Indiscernible]. There is nothing that prohibits you from [Indiscernible] a veteran into a [Indiscernible] position, but again, we want you to keep in mind that when you use a noncompetitive hiring authority, the real intent is to create a permanent job opportunity for those individuals who are eligible. The veterans employment opportunity is a competitive service appointment authority that can only be used when [Indiscernible] service position. This is different from the other authority that we're talking about today, and I wanted to highlight it because it does serve as another tool that you can use to hire a veteran. Unlike the VRA, veterans under this authority have to apply to an announcement that is open to a status candidate, or, in other words, a competitive service employee, who is somebody who is employed by the federal government. That [Indiscernible] among the best qualified when compared to current employ applicants in order to be considered for appointment. They are subject to time restrictions, just like any other general scheduled employee. I wanted to mention it because it is a bettering hiring authority. We could also appoint veterans with the [Indiscernible] 30% or more. All eligible candidates may be appointed to any position but [Indiscernible] in any occupational level or grade. The initial appointment is time-limited, however that is not competitively converted. [Indiscernible] during the time-limited appointment. A few examples would include somebody who has retired from active military service and they have a disability rating of 30% or more or they have been rated by the Department of Veterans Affairs within the preceding year upon leaving that active duty of having a service-connected disability of 30% or more. We are going to move on to the next slide.

This focus is on Schedule A hiring authority. The Schedule A authority is a schedule with disabilities. This is a noncompetitive schedule that allows [Indiscernible] who have a severe physical, psychological or intellectual disability. These types of disabilities can include such things as blindness, deafness, paralysis, missing limbs and several others. You can use this authority to appoint at any grade level and for any job a temporary, term or permanent, as

long as the individual is qualified by your HR office. After completing two years of satisfactory service in a time of [Indiscernible] appointment, this individual can be non-competitively [Indiscernible] to a permanent career or career additional appointment. Hiring a Schedule A requires no public notice and therefore this is one of those flexibilities that should reduce the amount of time to fill a position. The Office of Personnel Management maintains a shared list of people with disabilities and they work in partnership with a private firm to recruit [Indiscernible] with disabilities were interested in federal employment, and these jobs can range in a variety of areas that include accounting, budget analysis, contract, finance, HR, information technology, as well as clerical positions all located anywhere in the United States. OPM and the private partner maintain a database of resumes which is available for hiring managers and human resources throughout the Park Service. The positions are available for applicants of disability who are either early on in their career or who are looking to obtain a job when they are in their later years of employment. This is a great opportunity for college students with disabilities, graduate students and career professionals. The way this really works is there should be someone within your [Indiscernible] who established a partnership with locational offices in your area. They should be able to provide you with points of contact who can share information about upcoming job fairs which are designed to please candidates with disabilities in positions on which they qualify. We're going to take a pause here to see if there any questions out there about what we have talked about so far.

This is Jo. Do you have to consider that before other authorities? Can we hire a person with a disability, even if a local vet assumes he gets the next opening?

When you are looking to hire a Schedule A employee, no public notice is required. You can work with your HR specialist in the locational offices in your state to pick up a Schedule A employee. Again, there is no public notice, so you do not have to consider veterans if you're looking to pick up a Schedule A hire. Please keep in mind there are veterans out there who have a disability of perhaps less than 20%, so you might find a veteran who qualifies for a Schedule A appointment as well. Because there is no public notice you can work directly with your locational office within your state to pick up somebody.

Great. Michelle asks about getting the link for the OPM list. I thought I heard you say somebody in the [Indiscernible] -- [Indiscernible- multiple speakers]

At the end of the presentation we have a link we are providing as a resource, so that is going to be provided as part of our slide.

Okay. Are there any other questions? There doesn't appear to be any, Angela .

Okay. We're going to move on to hiring flexibility, the one that allows us to get [Indiscernible] on board and it's called Pathways. A little later on the slide that's where we will go into the database, so I just wanted to let you know that. Pathways was formally known as the Student Temporarily Employment Program. These authorities are available to students and recent graduates in federal service. The program is designed to provide students who are enrolled in

a wide variety of educational institutions that can range from high school to graduate-level, and provides them with opportunities to work with agencies to assure federal careers and while getting paid for the work that they perform.

There are three key components in the Pathways Program. The first one is the internship program. It targets students enrolled in a wide variety of educational institutions, again from high school to graduate-level, and it includes for your colleges and universities, community colleges and junior colleges as well as vocational and trade schools. The internship program [Indiscernible] that hire students on a short-term basis. [Indiscernible]. Very early on when I was in college, I actually served on an appointment during the summer. Often times, organizations bring young folks and provide them a [Indiscernible] of opportunities with people to see what it's like to work for the government and to have them work on special projects. The Recent Graduate Program is a new one-year developmental program which allows agencies to better recruit for recent graduates for trade and [Indiscernible] schools. This is a relatively new component of the Pathways Program which is a lot different, again, one that was not in existence when we used the [Indiscernible] program. Finally, the Presidential Management Fellows Program. It has been around for more than 30 years. It has been a federal government development program for students who have advanced degrees. The program focuses on developing a cadre of potential government leaders, and under the Pathways authority the eligibility window for applicants have been expanded. [Indiscernible] has two years for completion of their degree requirement to apply for the program. The way the program works, OPM manages it, and I must say the students that come out of this program are very stellar and they have high academic levels, great experience, and usually have a great deal of initiative and just really great people to have on staff. In my career, we have hired several in a variety of places that I worked. The one thing about it, OPM reaches out to each government agency each year to see if there is an interest. Managers have to provide OPM with funding somewhere around \$5-\$7000 to pick these folks up. Again, these candidates are really well-rounded and usually turn out to be great employees. Just a few key things to remember: Public notice is required now when you're trying to pick up the students and veterans preference will be considered [Indiscernible] under Pathways. I do want to share the Park Service has established a Pathways database that is accessible through the Employment [Indiscernible]. We're going to try to get in there now.

[Indiscernible- multiple speakers]. I will let you know when I see it. [Low Volume]

Can you see that right now folks [Indiscernible]? Can you click on that link and browse to it?

I get "Page can't be displayed." Let's go ahead and try this. Let's go ahead and just share your screen. Do you have this URL? Give us a few minutes folks. It says the page cannot be displayed. I can browse to it, yes. Let's go ahead and I will control it. You can tell me what to do. It says to the left of your screen there should be something that says Pathways Database.

Hold on one second. Folks are saying they can't see a [Indiscernible] [Low Volume]. Some people are seeing it and some people aren't. Let me go ahead and do this. I'm going to open

it up in my browser and then share mine. Hold on everybody. [Indiscernible] [laughter]. Can you make me host again, because there is something in my way. Thank you. Let's close the status. We're going to share that. How about that?

[Low Volume] There might be a slight delay. Angela, you were saying?

There should be a link in the left hand side that says Pathwayss Database. If you click on that that will take you into the database.

There is a Pathwayss Portal?

Okay.

There is a Pathwayss Portal.

Try that.

When I clicked on that, that's the homepage.

There is nothing that says Pathwayss Database to the left?

No. Here is the Pathwayss Database. I had to go into all site content. With [Indiscernible] comes up with that. Pathways database. Is it doing anything?

In the interest of time, the reason I wanted to share the database, basically what happens is Pathways employees who are currently working for the Park Service and were coming up on their window of eligibility where they can be converted to a term or permanent position, they can complete a form that allows them to include background information about location preferences, the type of position they are interested in, what their field of study is. They complete this form and it allows them to upload a resume into the database so the database populates and has information about the student, who the supervisor is, ways to contact them and if you go into it, it will show where they would like to work, type of position they are interested in. A lot of times we hire Pathways employees, but we are not able to convert them to a permanent position. They had that window of eligibility for if there is a position in another park or program office, a hiring manager can go to the database and perhaps find somebody who has already competed for the position now that they are in their window of eligibility, that person can now be noncompetitively hired to a career condition appointment. The database is accessible to any hiring manager. If you're unable to access the database, you can shoot me an email [Indiscernible] and I will make sure that you get access. You can tell me you tried and couldn't get in and what [Indiscernible] you work for. This serves as a much more expeditious way to get a person who is currently working for the service, has some familiarity with our programs and whatnot, and you can pick them up without further competition. The one thing I would caution you about is because we don't have the resources to update the

database as often as we would like, before any offer is made you should contact your [Indiscernible].

Just a reminder to assure that all of the hiring that we do is legal and compliant with federal hiring roles, all of the hiring actions would still go through normal HR channels. Again, this is another tool that you can use to gain access to former students or current students who are eligible to be converted to a noncompetitive position.

This is Jo. Brian asked if the Pathways conversion is [Indiscernible]?

The conversion is not. I would caution that you need to make sure that if there are any conversions -- Pathways employees can be converted under the hiring frame.

Another question is [Low Volume]

Veterans are considered first. When we were able to use [Indiscernible] we can pick up the students basically off the street. Now with Pathways we do have to consider veterans.

Okay. Can you reiterate how long is the period to [Indiscernible]? Is it no later than 90 days after fulfillment of Pathways agreement?

It's 120 days.

And the Pathways agreement is what?

The conversion window is about really when they complete their degree requirement. Once they have obtained their degree, they have 120 days from that point to be converted to permanent or term position.

I don't see any more typing coming in.

Feel free to ask questions at the end.

We have three more or so flexibilities that we will talk about. Jo, we should be on the slide at the hiring flexibilities direct hire for Resource Assistant Internship. This flexibility was passed into legislation back in 2013, and it's for all the [Indiscernible]. It is derived from an internship program developed within the [Indiscernible] office. This flexibility can be used to appoint a former resource assistant who has completed a rigorous undergraduate or graduate summer internship with a land management agency. They must have successfully fulfilled the requirement of that internship program and have subsequently earned an undergraduate or graduate degree from an accredited institution of higher learning. The qualified internship program must include a clearly defined deliverable or work product with clear expectations and outcomes, they must work a minimum of 11 weeks and that must be full-time work. Part of their assignment must be a focus on critical thinking and real world problem solving. They

must present findings to keep decision-making and the supervisor that is responsible for providing the internship must provide a certification of high-performance for that intern during 11 week program. There are a variety of program areas where the internship can be established. I will go through those and then we will share a bit more detail around how the program might work. Internship programs can be established in the following areas: park, refuge and monument management and administration; natural resource management; environmental policy in management; historic and/or cultural resource management; business management and administration; public policy administration and management; [Indiscernible] and hospitality services and resource protection. These internships are usually projects that require a focus on a specific candidate's qualifications. The project should be structured in a way that has clear path for candidates and opportunities for managers and supervisors. The internship should allow candidates to operate with a high degree of [Indiscernible] for initiative and innovation are highly encouraged. [Indiscernible] The way the program has worked, and I do have a little more experience about it, in that Jason Gibson manages the Business Management Group here and that is a part of a [Indiscernible] office. Each year they have a call that goes out to supervisors and managers looking for specific projects for these interns to work on. A lot of cases they are working to develop a strategic plan. [Indiscernible] requires a designated partner which is passed with the recruiting the candidates, and then on our end we're looking for specific projects for these folks to come in and work on. Again, after the 11 week program the interns are not considered federal employees, but once they complete the internship they do have the ability to be noncompetitively hired at a successful [Indiscernible]. Jason maintains a listing and all of those folks that have participated in internship and who might now still be interested in federal employment. From my experience, we hired a young employee or young person who has served on an internship program out in one of the parks in the west. She came in and has helped us tremendously with writing policies, implementation procedures and it's kind of a jack of all trades. Very bright and she completed her [Indiscernible] and we were able to convert her to a noncompetitive appointment. Candidates can be appointed directly under promotion staffing procedures for any position for which they are found eligible and qualified. Veterans preference does not apply if you are using this hiring authority.

Drew asks is this type of internship possible within an operation requiring background checks? The intern is still going to have to complete the background check if that is the question.

I believe so.

Yes, they are still required to pass the background check. That check will vary based on the nature of the position.

To interns go through a program such as SCA qualify for this?

No, this is a program that is more [Indiscernible] and students were pursuing a graduate level degree. For my understanding, that is usually not the same background as the students who come through the SCA.

Another question, would female scientist be okay for underrepresented groups?

Yes, females are one of the groups that we have underrepresentation. So, yes.

Those were all the questions.

We're going to move to the Public Land Corps. This is another hiring flexibility available for you. I think the question [Indiscernible] a lot more SCA have come through this program. This authority was established to provide work and education opportunities for young men and women in areas of natural and cultural resource management and/or development. [Indiscernible]. While these folks do have noncompetitive hiring authority, they must apply to a promotion announcement. Former members must be able to show certification of eligibility and really indicate that they have completed the required hours to be considered under the hiring flexibility. There had been a couple of updates to this legislation or to the authority. Since it was effected December 16 of last year, significant things changed in terms of the age of the folks coming through this program. It has been brought in to include individuals now up until the age of 30. The slide shows 16 to 25; it's now 16 to 30 years of age. Another thing with change is in the past, once you have completed your hours you have to apply and be converted to a permanent job opportunity within 120 days of completing the PLC service. Now that window has been expanded to two years. You have a lot more time and a greater window of eligibility in which to be converted. I heard a lot of SCA students come to this program and are made permanent after they finish their [Indiscernible] work.

Next slide.

We're going to talk about Peace Corps and [Indiscernible]. We have approximately over [Indiscernible] Americans who have served in the Peace Corps, and through this work they have required a strong set of skills and experiences. [Indiscernible] Currently, there are about 7000 volunteers or active volunteers that consists of men and women representing a variety of ethnic backgrounds. As a hiring manager, each of you can benefit from the special noncompetitive eligibility hiring status that returning Peace Corps volunteers that they have for one year after completing their Peace Corps service. You are able to bring on a volunteer and again without having to go through [Indiscernible] competitive hiring process. [Indiscernible] Peace Corps volunteers are held in major cities throughout the year, and again, if they [Indiscernible] we can consider and try to attract the former volunteers. The interesting thing here is if you're unable to attend, you can work directly with your [Indiscernible] in the Peace Corps to host your own event all by with the Peace Corps will pay for [Indiscernible].