

# Veterans' Appointment Authority

## Virtual Conference for Supervisors

Recorded March 6, 2017

Ty, we'd like to give a few extra minutes, just in case.

Sure. No problem.

Okay. Let's do that, Brigitte, just in case. I will check in and see if there is some other folks in the other classroom.

Okay.

Thank you. Brigitte, we were supposed to have 8 and right now we have [Inaudible].

Some of these people were left over from the last session, because of some of the names I have down on here, Eric is here, that is good. I have Eric. Dylan was from the last class. Dylan, are you in the room? He was from the last class; he never dropped out. John, are you on? John is another one that was from the last class, but if they stayed in, it is fine. So John, I do not think John is on and I do not think Dylan is on.

Right now we only have, I know we have Julie.

Yes. We have Julie. No, you have Julie, Catherine, [Inaudible], Eric, and two Julies are in the room.

I heard a couple of beeps, so it probably means we had a couple of people join us through the audio, and so we may have just been getting back from a bio break from the last session. So, welcome, folks. If you just joined us, we appreciate you being here today. We will start our session in just a few more minutes. We are just waiting for some others to join us. If you could, just mute your phone by hitting the star 6, please do that. Also, if you want to receive credit for today's session conference, go to the chat box and just chat hello, we can make sure that you receive credit for today's session. John, you are typing, and I see that you are in the webinar twice, which is perfectly fine. Michelle, that is great. Thank you for coming back and joining us. I take it the three friends are with you, and that will be fantastic. John, you say good morning. I am curious as to where you are coming in from. That is great. Michelle, thank you very much. We will make sure that all of you get credit for today's session. Hawaii? John is in Hawaii. I wish I were there.

Me also.

It has been pretty cold here in Harper's Ferry, West Virginia. I think it was in the high 20s or something like that. Thank you for joining us today, John. Good afternoon to everyone. Good morning as well, just in case there are others out there. If you just joined us, again, please mute your line and you can start whenever you want to, Ty. We have about 4:03 PM, and again, if you want to receive credit for today's session, please chat hello and where you are joining us from. We would appreciate that. And we'll get started shortly. We do have a closed captioning link. It is a different one than the first session that you were in in classroom A perhaps if you joined us for that one. If you have any questions through the session, I suspect Ty, you would want them to chat in the chat pod?

That is correct.

That is fantastic. Eric, thank you for chiming in. We will make sure you receive credit. You are at Voyageurs National Park. It is probably pretty cold and probably colder than the 20s. So thank you for joining us today. I have got my heater on right now, because even though we have an old system in this historic building, it is pretty cold. Actually 40s and raining. You are actually probably warmer than we are. Thank you, everyone, for joining us. Without further ado, I will have this over to Ty, your present for this afternoon. Ty, you may begin.

I hope you guys are doing well. I am very enthusiastic giving this training information about veterans appointment authorities and about Schedule A. Before we get started, I want to ask a question. The last time you guys did a new hire, how long did it take, three months, six months, nine months, or over a year? If all of you could respond to the poll question, we will move on further.

I am sorry, Ty. I just opened the question. That was my fault.

Okay. I am watching the participants. I do not know if we just have 4 participants. I cannot tell, Katrina. I will give them about 30 seconds.

About one more minutes because in one room you have three or four people sitting in one room.

That is where Michelle is at, correct?

That is correct.

Okay. If Michelle could just answer for everybody or however you guys do it? We have about five responses so far. So, would you like to go ahead and broadcast those results?

Sure. I will show everyone those results. If you cannot see them, let us know. There are a couple of things in the chat pod, Ty. Eric says I have not hired yet, so, I cannot answer this question.

[laughter]

Maybe we should change that to zero. One of those answers would be zero. Michelle, yes, we are discussing answers together. Excellent. If we accidentally closed the poll question on you there, I apologize and you can share with us in the chat. We will go ahead and let [Inaudible]. I see William, if you joined us, if you would let me know if you are with us, I can make sure you receive credit for this last session of the day. I appreciate that.

Okay. The poll question is closed. I believe Katrina is showing you the results. 60% of you said it takes six months to hire. What if I told you guys that I can show you away that you can bring your employees on than six months by using veterans hiring authorities or Schedule A? A lot of the folks will say I do not want to bring on a veteran or a veteran with disabilities or Schedule A. I am a veteran of 20 years of military and not all veterans have one leg or one arm or look injured. So, you have to keep in mind that there are a lot of advantages to hiring veterans. In order for the HR process to work using these hiring authorities, you need a collaborative hiring process.

This will involve the manager and the HR specialist. This should take place prior to you even announcing the position. When you know you have a vacant position, you should sit down with your HR professional and you should come up with a collaborative strategy on how you are going to fill the position. One of the ways to fill the position and fill it fast is using some of the veteran hiring authorities or Schedule A. If you have questions at any time, please chime in and I will answer questions. These are our objectives today. I am not going to read you the slide. I will give you a second to digest it yourself.

Someone is typing in the background. If you just joined us on the audio abridged, sure you are muted with your mute button or your star 6. Thank you so much. We appreciate it.

The first thing is some folks like my main man said he did not hire yet, some people want to know: what is a hiring flexibility? It is a tool that provides an opportunity to improve your ability and timeliness to get the right people. A lot of times, folks think you have to traditionally announce the position internally or externally and go through the full process to hire a new employee. Even some of these noncompetitive hiring authorities, you do not have to go the announcement process or issuing of referrals. If you have a candidate via veteran or Schedule A, you just hire this person straight off the street. If all of the documents are prepared, it is usually a quick process, and the most time we spend is doing the security process. It is not done during the hiring process. When hiring a flexibility, you have to determine your specific needs. You have to determine do I want a candidate, do I have time to develop my workforce, do I want a candidate that I can train it to do the job I want to do or to have a candidate that I need to come in with the knowledge and hit the ground ready to run? In most agencies, you have to pretty much train the person to do their job.

I know people say I want a person to come in with the experience. Different agencies work differently. For example, in a chart you have a different promotion plan with every agency you

go to, so you have to pretty much give a person a quick briefing on how you do business in that agency. Same thing when you go down to the managers and supervisors. You may have a budget analyst in one organization that does business a little bit differently and [Inaudible] in the National Park Service. So you are going to have to provide a little bit of training to that individual to show them how we do business in this organization.

You want to know if the position can be filled with an applicant who has mental retardation or severe physical or psychiatric disability. Some people on Schedule A can do the job as well as a normal applicant without a disability, but they just require some type of help with their ability to perform the job. You want to know if you are seeking a candidate with a proven track record of government service or are you looking to attract a candidate with no prior government service.

The good thing about hiring a veteran is you get somebody you can train them for what you want them to do. If you get someone who comes in with government service from someplace else and they are used to doing business a certain way and they have been serving the government a long time, sometimes it is hard to break old habits. If you hire a veteran, or a Schedule A candidate, and to show them the way you want the job done, sometimes you get a better candidate.

First thing you have to do is determine your specific needs. Here is the hiring flexibility for veterans. First you have the VRA appointment. These people can be appointed up to the GS 11 without competition. For example, if you find a veteran who has greater than 0% disability but less than 30%, they can be hired under the VRA appointed authority. They are on eight two-year trial period, not probationary period. It is a trial period. This allows you to have two years instead of the one year to see if this employee works out. If you give them a plan to learn their job in three months I want you to be able to do this, in six months I want you to be able to do this, then you get an employee that you can gauge and measure how much they are learning, and in two years if they know the job, then you get to keep that employee. In two years, if they are not meeting your expectations, you get to let the employee go.

You have VEOA, the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act, which allows it veterans of three years with honorable service to apply for positions on an internal announcement with candidates that are already in the federal government. Remember the difference between internal announcements and external announcements. The hiring flexibilities with internal announcements [Inaudible] you do not get any points. You compete with other candidates just as if answering the same assessment questionnaires and doing the same things they do. On an external announcement, veterans get preference. Keep that in mind when you talk to your HR specialist when you start the hiring process.

Do I want an external candidate? Am I going to be blocked by a vet? Is this a professional or technical position where veterans' preference does not apply? 30% or more disabled veterans, these veterans can also be noncompetitively appointed, and they can be appointed up to the GS 15 if they have the experience to do the job. You are not limited to the GS 11 as you are

with the VRA appointment, and you must have at least 30% or more to qualify for this type of authority. Again, it is an excepted appointment. It is a two-year trial period, and you have two years to get the veteran up to speed. That is if you have a position that you are willing to train the veteran and you do not need someone coming and had hit the ground running with minimal training.

Then you have the Schedule A and this slide tells you what a Schedule A is. Schedule A is also a noncompetitive hiring authority. You find a candidate, the candidate is qualified for the position, based on the resume and the position description and the job announcement, and a lot of Schedule A's think because I am Schedule A and this is a noncompetitive hiring authority, I should get first preference on the job. Schedule A's do not get preference over any other applicants. Schedule A's have to be qualified just like anybody else.

Any questions on what we have discussed so far? This is Katrina. I see Eric had a question and I apologize if you may have answered this along the way. I will only be doing seasonal hiring. Can I use this?

Yes, you can.

Since we have a small group, I am going to change things up on you, Brigitte. If anyone would care to ask a question on the phone bridge, then you can unmute your phone line with star 6 and that will unmute your line and you can ask a question because we are in a small group this afternoon. We always want to hear other voices out there, so you if you have any follow-up questions, Eric, did that answer your questions?

That answered it. Thank you.

Okay. Thank you, Eric. Any other questions out there at this time? I think we are good.

Okay.

Ty and I decided since it was a small group that we would open the line.

Perfect.

Voice communication.

Absolutely.

Okay. Thank you.

This slide shows you some of the contact information if you want to learn more about these hiring flexibilities. Also, you can contact me directly if you have any questions. I have [Inaudible] the select placement coordinator for our National Park Service. If you want to

know how you can use some of these hiring authorities, you can contact me directly or email me and use some of these hiring authorities.

The National Park Service, all federal agencies have reports, two reports that are due at the end of the fiscal year every year. They are called the [indiscernible word] report and field reports. These are, the [indiscernible word] report is a report about how many veterans we hire, how many veterans we retain and how many veterans, the percentage of veterans in our workforce. We have not been doing the job lately. For whatever reason, I do not know if a lot of managers do not want to hire veterans or why they would not want to hire veterans, but we are trying to put some things in place where we have a list of veterans and available to managers to look at the list and view some of the resumes. The problem is, a lot of veterans write their resumes the right way. They do not look at the resumes and look at it and say, excuse me, they do not look at the job announcement in the job announcement tells the applicant what the manager is looking for.

They feel like as a veteran they are a good person, and they can do the work if taught to do the work. I was a veteran, I am a veteran, and when I first started applying to come into the federal government, what I would do is write on my resume things like captured Saddam Hussein, saved someone from a burning truck, and I was always get not qualified because managers are not looking for good people. They are looking for good people with skills that they need to do their job. So, I think we need to do a better job of assisting veterans in writing their resumes and management needs to do a better job of pulling information from the actual veteran.

Here is an example of how these authorities are used. Let's just say you have a position as the budget analyst position and you know of a veteran that 30% disabled. You get the veterans resume and DD 214, which is the veterans form showing if they received a preference and their VA letter. You take those documents and take them to the HR specialist and say this is a veteran I am interested in. The HR specialist will determine if the veteran is qualified based on his resume and they will tell you this veteran is or is not qualified. If they say he is qualified, they can go ahead and make the job offer. After that they do other requirements such as background investigation and everything like that. Once that is done, you wait for the backend information to come back so this makes the process a lot faster than saying I'm going to have an announcement for two weeks or sometimes longer. I'll get a referral list which sometimes takes a month. Then I will review the referral list that I will do it, do interviews with the candidate, then I will make a selection and here you are into six months by the time this happens and you still do not have a candidate.

By using some of these noncompetitive hiring authorities, you can bring a person on a lot faster. Faster than going through the full process. And I know sometimes you want [Inaudible], but sometimes you have got to try different things or sometimes it is better to try different things and then at least you can say I tried that. And it will decrease your hiring time. Any questions?

Again, you are welcome to chat any of your questions you might have and/or you're certainly welcome to open up the phone line and hit star 6 to unmute your line to ask the question. Ty, this is Sean. Can I caveat to your presentation?

Go ahead.

There is a VRA hire, you do not necessarily have to find a veteran that has a disability. If they have been recently on active duty or if they have certain campaign medals for different appointments, there are several things that qualify them under that VRA.

Exactly. What I was trying to stress is that it is a noncompetitive hiring authority.

Right. A lot of veterans do not know what qualifies and what does not. There are several things that can qualify them.

That is correct. I know we have small group. I would like to ask, is there any reason why any of the current managers supervisors on the call feel like you would not like to try to hire a veteran using the noncompetitive hiring authorities? Has anybody had a bad experience?

John is typing, Ty.

Okay. Something happened. John was typing.

He did. He typed it. And, John, that is good. I wonder if your organization is reporting these because we need to know if we have hired three veterans, that is a good thing. We try to get 1% or really 2% of our workforce across parks services as veterans. OPM does not mandate that you hire a veteran.

This is John. Who reports that? Is that in HR? I have never seen any requests for data for that for me. Second that is correct. A chart should report it.

Okay.

HR knows when they are hiring a veteran or when they are not hiring a veteran. They should do the reporting.

Okay. We have hired three in the protection division here. It has worked out well for us so far. Good. Second that's great, John. National Park Service is one of the largest bureaus in the Department of Interior. It is the largest bureau within the Department of Interior, and when our [Inaudible], the department numbers are bad. So we have to do a better job of hiring veterans in the field, and I know we only have a small group of folks that we have on the line right now, so if you can, pass on some of the information you have, pass on the slides, give out my information, and let managers know this is way you can hire and bring people on faster and save some time by hiring a veteran.

I always think that managers should make two selections if they do have an announcement. I think they should select if they want to hire a veteran, select that person and make that their primary selection and select another person and make it their secondary selection, so if it does not work out [Inaudible], you know, you guys are the SMEs. You are the subject matter experts. You know in three months if the person will work out or not. A lot of times folks wait until one year, 11 months and 15 days, and then they say this person is not going to work out. That is kind of too late. When you usually know in the beginning if it is going to work out or not, and then you can move to your second selection. But the advantage of a lot of veterans is these guys come to work, they do what they are supposed to do, they are used to a chain of command or in the case of civilians, chain of concern. They respect the grades, and they understand the work structure and how it is supposed to be. So, I think a lot of times you bring veterans in and they serve as better candidates than the actual candidate is supposed to have with working experience who is stuck on wanting to do it the way they have always done it. I will tell you I'm guilty coming from the Department of Defense to National Park Service, my boss Deborah always gets on me and tells me you are not in the Department of Defense anymore. So that has been a stumbling block that you have to learn when you are in Rome, you do as Romans.

I think Michelle had a question. Her park did not fully appreciate veterans' flexibility [Inaudible]. Before that she said they hired three seasonals and it worked great. All were on board within a month which is superfast.

And that is great. I agree with you, Michelle. If we just give this a chance, and I say we collectively as a bureau would give it a chance, you will see that hiring a veteran is really a lot of advantages. Number one, you said you got them all in within a month. They did a great job. Veterans want to feel like they are a part of something. I can speak from being a veteran. They want to feel like they are a part of something. These guys will pretty much do whatever you ask them to do because they want to excel and they want to make a difference in an organization. As Michelle said, yes, they were quality employees. That is correct. Every now and then [Inaudible].

Just a comment also, since this is not really being well attended right now and when you get the word out, maybe the next presentation if you would have a list of people with parks and their name and the phone number that the other person could call and say I want to talk to someone that is really got a person underneath their wings this week and they could call this number. Nothing against you and your presentation, but sometimes people want to hear it from the ground up so to speak. We would be willing to give you our name so you could have it and people could call and talk to us. Not every experience is great, but our last three and the guy that you are talking to before, Shawn, is a veteran. We have about one third of our staff right now that are veterans.

That is great. Word-of-mouth sometimes works a lot better than a presentation, because in this case, we are doing the Midwest all the way to the West Coast and we got 10 people on



the line and I am sure there are a lot more managers and supervisors than 10 folks. There has to be another way to get information out and word-of-mouth, like you said, if they have a way to call somebody and say I understand you hired a veteran and how is that working out, what are the advantages and disadvantages of hiring a veteran, and we have to get buy-in by management in order for this to be successful. So thank you for that idea.

Do we have any other questions? Julie recently hired two, one good and one not so much. He just wanted to get permanent status and after getting the job he left for another job within a month. I think you will see that sort of thing happen. Katie says that they were easily able to hire one of the pathways students into a permanent position using the RA. It was a win-win situation.

Let me give you an example of why some veterans to stay and why some leave. When I first came to the federal government, I came in as a GS 5 people technician. I was under the impression that if I did a good job, I came to work on time, I can get promoted to GS 6 then GS 7 all the way up to GS 15. I did not understand the process that when a job is announced as a GS 5, then you are a GS 5 because you're doing GS 5 level work. So a lot of veterans come in and think if I come to work early and I leave late and I do a great job then I can get promoted. But they do not quite understand that you are not going to get promoted to a GS 13 if the job only requires GS 5 level work.

Does that make sense?

Can I ask something? We had a situation where we did hire a nice young man and sometimes it is just not a fit for that person. Like you said, he came to work on time, he did everything he was supposed to, but he could not quite catch on to the job. So, sometimes I think that in these type of situations, the job needs to be explained to the veteran, but they [Inaudible] and then came to [Inaudible] and I heard it was some type of, something happened with that job and they ended up getting a fit for him somewhere, but he was allowed to go from one place to another, which I thought was a good thing because I think he was a good young man and what happened to him was so horrible. Something blew up at his arm, he wanted to be law-enforcement but without the Army he could not, so they tried to put in the administration and that was not a fit and then they, I do not know exactly what happened to him, but they did shift him around to [Inaudible]. I think when they hired these vets, sometimes the job may need to explain to them and not just give someone a job.

You're correct. That should have an interview process. A lot of veterans and I will use myself again as an example, when you are in the military, you get promoted every so often based on your performance. It doesn't work that way. You can perform well but not get promoted because of the level of work that you are doing. Also, if you are a veteran and you have achieved a rank of sergeant or higher, you're used to being in charge in taking initiative and doing certain things. When you come into the federal government as a civilian, you have a supervisor and you cannot just arbitrarily make those decisions and just say I am in charge and I will do this, I will change this or change that. You are correct that the job needs to be

explained and the procedures need to be explained to the veteran during interview, and I think some people are afraid of what they can and cannot say, but there is nothing wrong with discussing the duties of the job and how it works, and if you are a GS 5 you can do this and if you are GS 11 team leader you can do this, and your supervisor is responsible for doing this.

That is a good comment. For some veterans, they are not fit for some jobs. I think that is why they do the two-year trial period except for the appointment.

Are there any other questions? I do not see any others in the chat pod or anybody on the line.

We have such a small group and the folks that we have really have had pretty good experiences, so there is not a lot of comments, I had a real bad experience or this did not work out and the guys in our group appear to understand what the noncompetitive veteran hiring authorities are. So, there is really not a lot of questions and I am glad that some people out there understand how to use these authorities. Like someone said earlier, if we have some type of a form where folks can talk to the individual supervisor or manager who have hired veterans and have had good experiences, it will help them consider veterans were often than just looking for a candidate as years of experience doing the job.

Katrina, if we do not have other questions, I do not just want to hold folks on the line.

I accidentally forgot to unmute myself. I do not think we have any other questions. If anything should come up, feel free to email or call. Ty will do his session later on also on Wednesday.

Wednesday and Friday.

Thank you very much for clarifying that.

If you guys, you guys can feel free to pass my information on two other managers and supervisors who are not even on the call. I am here as the selective placement coordinator and I am willing to take time off to discuss these noncompetitive hiring authorities with anybody who wants to listen.

[laughter]

Excellent. Thank you, Ty, for your time and efforts today. We appreciate that. All of you, thank you for joining us. This concludes today's webinar. The final webinar for today. Come back and join us bright and early tomorrow morning at 8:30 AM Eastern time and in Hawaii that is pretty early for you. Thank you everyone for joining us today and have a great rest of the day.

Have a nice day.

Thanks, Katrina.

Thank you, Ty.

Thank you very much.

Take care for now.

See you tomorrow, Katrina.

Sounds good.