

Veterans' Appointment Authority

Virtual Conference for Supervisors

Recorded March 10, 2017

Good morning, everyone. This is Katherine and Brigitte from Learning and Development. We'd like to welcome you this morning to Veterans Appointment Authorities. Please remember to place your phone on mute. If you do not have a mute button, please press *6. If you need to make another call during the session, please disconnect and connect after the call. Do not place this call on hold. There are also chat pods available on the right-hand side of the screen if you need to ask question. If you chat us a quick hello so we can take attendance and give you credit. A quick reminder that the session is being recorded. Now I will pass it over to Ty.

Good morning. Let's see how many we have. It looks like five so far. Good morning, everybody.

I'm going to make this as painless as possible. It is Friday and I am sure we are all ready for the weekend. Before we get started with our flight I would like to open up a quick poll. I'm going to ask how long did it take you to fill your position for your last new hire? If you did not have a new hire it did not take any time. I would like to gauge where you are in the process. Okay, Katherine. You can close the poll. It looks like we have three folks. We are getting anywhere from three months to nine months. It is hard to gauge with a group, but what if I told you we have nine months and one over a year? What if I told you there was a faster way to bring your employee on board using noncompetitive hiring authorities, or hiring veterans through Schedule A? Would you like that? Scott says yes.

Let's start with our Veterans Appointment Authorities. What I'm going to do is tell you what the process look like. I know we are from different regions in the National Park Service, but I will tell you how the process is supposed to go. When the process starts, you to need have a collaborative hiring process. The manager and the HR professional should be talking to each other from the time you had open positions. That could be a position where you recently [Indiscernible] an employee to go to another agency, retired or what have you. For having that clarification process with your manager. A lot of times a lot of our [Indiscernible] times are increased because we do not do this. We do not do this effectively. Let me tell you how it is supposed to go. If you have a position and it is open, you would know the content if you are creating a brand-new position you would know [Indiscernible] specialist would know if he is monitoring his organization. You should get together and decide what steps you are going to take to hire a new employee. The first thing the manager or supervisor/want to look at the position description and ensure that the description is up-to-date, and the position description is stating all of the things you want employee to do. If you have an old position description, the problem it is [Indiscernible] working as outlined in the old position description may not be

done anymore, or you may have gotten a piece of equipment and filling out a job announcement based on old duties they don't do anymore. You will not get the candidate you want to get.

If your position description is good, then you want to ensure you have funding for the position. Once you ensure you have funding, you want fill out an assessment questionnaire. The assessment questionnaire should not have open ended questions. You do not want to say [Indiscernible] you cannot effectively [Indiscernible]. Somebody will say yes. It will be a yes or no question, and that is a closed question. You may want to say, give an example of communicating with a disgruntled employee. How many employees have you communicated with based on performance evaluation? It is going to be based on whatever the duties of the position are to ensure that you have a good assessment questionnaire. You want to have your assessment questionnaire developed, your PD is good and you know that you have funding, then you are ready to start the process and you can send everything over to your HR specialist. A lot of times, we want a position announced and we do not have anything done. You send it to the HR and they send it back. You send it over and they send it back. Have all of the documents ready when you are ready to announce your job or you are ready to select a candidate.

If you have a question, type in the question and I will stop and answer the question.

Our objectives today we are going to define what our hiring flexibilities are. I will type a list of competitive and one noncompetitive hiring body and how they are used. We will also identify how we determine who is eligible and not eligible and how to use the hiring authorities. And we will discuss why it is good and what benefits you get out of using the flexible hiring authority. Later on in the presentation, we will give you some tools and resources that you can use on your own.

The first thing we want to determine is what is a hiring flexibility? Everybody has a different definition of a hiring flexibility. This is what HR that hiring flexibility. I am not going to review the slide. I will give you a second to read it yourself. The whole purpose of hiring flexibilities are so that you can get the right person in the job. We don't know how long you have to fill the position unless we talk to you. We don't know exactly what you are looking for unless we have a conversation with you. Once we have the conversation that we can determine if we have hiring flexibilities you can use to shorten your time.

First thing we should do, HR specialist are [Indiscernible] your specific needs. That is why having a collaborative process of sitting down and talking with you that we will state what do you need? You say I need a GS 11 budget analyst. And we say, how you want to announced this? Internal? External? All sources? You tell us what you want to do. We will send an announcement out for if you have a noncompetitive candidate and get the process started with a noncompetitive candidate. This is what we mean by determining your specific needs. If you have time and you have folks there that are pretty much excellent and what the position requires, senior-level folks [Indiscernible] be a junior level [Indiscernible] want to know if you

have time for a student. We have student hires you can use using the Pathways Program, and you could bring a person on board that way, and basically you could train them or develop them into doing what you want them to do. You could put out a targeted position, 5 target 7 or 5 target 9, then you can train them to do the job you want them to do, and then they can be converted competitively into a career conditional employment into the federal government.

You want to know if the position can be filled by [Indiscernible] Schedule A candidate. This is a not appointment talk about on. There are certain questions you can ask Schedule A candidates. This is one of the reason that during the process you should always your candidate, not because they are schedule A, not because they are [Indiscernible]. It could be a normal employee. You have positions in your [Indiscernible] that require you to lift 25 pounds; most managers or supervisors interview resumes and not people. If it says it the position description, it should also state a job announcement. Ability to lift 25 pounds. You make it a Schedule A candidate that has a disability where they cannot lift, but they may write one heck of a resume and you may say this is the guy or young lady I want for the position, but they cannot fulfill the duties of the position description because they cannot lift 25 pounds. On their assessment questionnaire or resume you have no idea whether they can or can't. You select this person and get them in and they cannot do the job. You would be able to remove the person if it is listed in your resume, you could say you couldn't do it, but you said you could, and now have to on which brings up my point of why you should make two selections.

You should make a primary selection and a secondary selection. If you have a primary selection and the person is a person that cannot perform the duties of the job, then you can move to the secondary selection. Without [Indiscernible] selection without having to go through the whole process with your position description, your assessment questionnaire, the announcement and issuing a referral list. This is where all of the time that we take all of the time. This is why it is better to use the noncompetitive hiring authorities because you do not have to do all of it.

Then you want to know if the position can be filled [Indiscernible] a candidate with a proven track record. The problem with this proven track record [Indiscernible] if you don't have an employee that you are using with a noncompetitive hiring authority, you get the paperwork to start the job. You have an announcement. You may want the announcement to be 14 days. You may want it to be 30 days. Let's just say 30 days. Recounted 30 days before the announcement. A takes a few days for USA staffing to get the candidate and the HR specialist has to review the candidates. That may take another seven days or two weeks depending on the candidate. You have to apply for the position at the planning if you have to announce the job internal and external. They have to announce it and they have to rate and rank the candidates. That could be another two weeks. Now we are at 44 days. We issue you a referral list for 14 days. If you are on leave or have other pressing things in the organization, then that can take you another 30 days. You may want an extension on referral to do your interviews and that could possibly take you another 30 days. Now we are already at 103 days and we haven't even gotten the candidate yet.

So then select the candidate. Once we select the candidate and it back to HR can't pass [Indiscernible] that we have to contact John Thomas and make the job offer. If John Thomas wants to negotiate the job offer [Indiscernible] that is another 2 to 3 days to negotiate when a manager says we are offering this or that or we will not offer this or that. Once you have the candidate set up, you have to go to the security process and you all know how that is. The candidate has seven days to fill out the security paperwork. Once he fills out the security paperwork and everything comes back every move to making a start date. Some candidate are working the job and they want to finish off the project they are working. They will ask, and I have two weeks or a month. That is another 30 days. This is what takes the process so long. But by using some of the noncompetitive hiring flexibilities you will not have to go through the long process. The veteran has a 15 he has his letter from the VA and resume. Then you pass it to HR and say this is the person I want to handle and you do not have to use any announcements.

Let's talk about some of our veteran hiring flexibilities. I am going to fast just let me know and I will slow it down.

[Indiscernible] our first veteran hiring flexibilities is the VRA appointment. This is the Veterans' Recruitment Authority appointment. You do not have to have a job announcement to hire VRA. This is a competitive and noncompetitive bid. If you find a veteran who is a VRA candidate you can get it DD 214 entire veteran noncompetitive. What makes a VRA candidate eligible? They can be a disabled veteran or were a veteran who served on active duty in the armed forces during the war or in a campaign for which [Indiscernible] campaign that has been authorized, or a veteran serving in active forces participating in the operations or recently separated veteran. It's our job as HR Specialists to determine if a person is eligible for a VRA appointment. I am giving you the information. You can always look in the VET guide to see if any of these appointment authorities that I will have later on the last slide.

What you want to do is determine, if you find a noncompetitive candidate you can get us the information and we will determine the qualification and if they are eligible for the appointment authority, or if you announce the position, veterans can apply to internal announcements. These are merit promotions where veteran can apply with status candidates. We can send you a list of veterans' preannouncement process. That is the VRA hiring authority. It can be competitive or noncompetitive.

We also have the VEOA recruitment authority. [Indiscernible] Implement opportunity. The position has to be announced and the veteran can apply. [Indiscernible] will be allowed to apply with status candidates. They can apply for the position and not be a federal employee, but they are ranked and rated just like any other federal employee. They do not have an advantage or disadvantage over any other employee. Let me tell you what you would have to do to be eligible for this appointment. You have to be eligible or a veteran separated from the United States Armed Forces after three years of continuing service of honorable conditions [Indiscernible] honorable conditions.

Going back to the VRA. All veteran appointment you must have a VRA honorable discharge. [Indiscernible] do not have honorable discharge, their service does not count and you cannot be appointed to the flexible hiring authority. The reason we talk about honorable discharge and why the HR specialist determined who is eligible and who is not eligible, when a former armed service member gets out of the military they receive a DD 214, which shows their last allotment of service. Every time you re-enlist in the service for 2 to 3 more years, you get a new DD 214. There could be a veteran who served his first four years of service and have an honorable discharge and then he goes the second 3 to 4 years and he gets dishonorably discharged. That veteran would not be eligible for any of these hiring authorities, because it is the final DD 214. The final account. [Indiscernible] also veterans who were released shortly before their tour are considered to be eligible. This is from active duty. What we consider active-duty in the uniform services includes full-time training, annual training, full-time National Guard duty and attendance while in active service at a school or a school designated as a service school by law by the secretary of the military branch. The Army secretary or maybe Navy. That is what makes you eligible for the VEOA appointment.

Do not panic, because the HR specialist will determine who is eligible and is not eligible. It is always good to know what makes you eligible and you could look in the VET guide. If you have a dispute, you can look where you think they are eligible and we will tell you why or why not that's why they are not eligible.

30% or more disabled veterans. Let me go back one more time. The VRA can only be appointed up to the GS 11. They can go from the GS 1 to the GS 11 without competition. When you are hiring a VRA appointee the position could be a 14 position, but you can only bring them in at the 11. It's a targeted position is 11 through 15. They can only come in as high as the GS 11 regardless what they are qualified for. With the 30% or more disabled veterans they can come in at any position, as long as they have really be required experience they can come in at any grade. Let me tell you what qualifies you for the 30% or greater.

If you have a VA letter that determines the percentage of disability that you received that shows 30% or greater, and you have an honorable discharge, then you qualify for the 30% or greater hiring. You must be retired from active duty military service with a disability rate of 30% or more rated by the Department of Veterans Affairs related to a crew disability determination from a branch of the Armed Forces at any time.

We are going to talk about one more disability. The SSP. It's zero point preference. Is when a spouse or family member can use [Indiscernible] a child of the veteran can use their disability. In August 2008, the Hubbard Act made it possible for your wife to use your disability if you are deceased, or the children to use your disability if the veteran and the spouse are deceased, and it is also called a zero point preference. FFP. SSP stands for sole survivor preference.

Another hiring flexibility is Schedule A. It is used for persons with disabilities. There is a source of excellent applicants. We asked managers not to discriminate or shy away from Schedule A

candidates or veterans. I really do not like the term wounded warriors, because everybody [Indiscernible] Schedule A disability or VA disability are not an individual with one arm, one leg, cannot walk or so on. Some disabilities you cannot see, and you would never notice if you weren't informed. There is no public notice required for a Schedule A candidate. Remember, with Schedule A veterans you cannot ask them about their disability, and we will not tell you at HR that they have a disability. The only way you would be informed as if the person needs some type of help doing their job and have to go out and request [Indiscernible] if they have a hearing impairment and we have to request a phone or reasonable accommodation for the person to be able to do the job.

Are there any questions? I have a very small group and we are going through it pretty fast.

If there are no questions, here are tools and resources that can be used. These will help you find noncompetitive candidates and to better understand some of the things we went over today. You have OPM Federal Hiring Flexibility Resource Center. OPM has a website where you have Schedule A candidates – Feds Hire Vets. You have your servicing HR specialist you can talk to. Your regional selective placement program coordinator. That happens to be me right now for the National Park Service. This is my contact information. At any time you want to discuss anything we have talked about today, feel free to give me a call or email me, and I will be here to answer any questions that you may have.

If we have no questions, this will conclude my presentation. You have my contact information if you need any assistance on anything we discussed today.

Thank you much Ty. Our next session in this classroom is at 11:30 AM. And in classroom B is reasonable accommodations.