



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

Tuesday, July 31, 2001
MSG 2001-054a

MEMORANDUM FOR: Human Resources Directors

FROM: Richard A. Whitford, Acting Associate Director Employment Service

Subject: Fixing the Federal Hiring Process: Preferred Practices Guide

As federal teammates charged with the task of hiring new employees in a timely manner, I know you understand the need for helpful tools. Director Kay James has identified the issue of recruitment, and the speed with which agencies execute that task, as central to the nation's effort to recruit and maintain a quality workforce. In order to assist Federal agencies in their responsibility, the Director is committed to providing key resources for your use in order to speed up the hiring process.

Recently, OPM Deputy Director Blair, other OPM staff, and representatives from the Human Resources Management Council and Partnership for Public Service met for an off-site discussion about the Federal hiring system. Among the many suggested initiatives to improve the hiring process, the group agreed a Preferred Practices Guide could be a fundamental resource for managers and human resource professionals. It would contain processes, methods and strategies, many developed by agencies, of effective and efficient hiring practices. We are committing staff to this effort, but need your help. We would like to present examples of how you have optimized existing hiring flexibilities.

Attached is a [conceptual framework](#) for the Guide along with [discussion questions](#) that we hope will provide a stimulus to help you identify effective practices. If you have improved results by developing practices, strategies or methods in one or more of subject areas listed in the attachment or in other areas such as streamlining the SES staffing process, please share your information and examples with us. Provide unique or innovative agency practices that you believe will assist other agencies address similar challenges. Include the name, phone number and e-mail address of a contact where we can obtain additional information, if needed. Use the attached format to respond as soon as possible, but no later than August 10. E-mail your responses to dmtyrrel@opm.gov, or fax them to 202-606-2329.

If you have questions about this request, please contact our Office of Employment Policy at 202-606-0960.

Preferred Practices Guide

Successful Practices

Preferred Practices Guide

We envision that the Guide will be organized into chapters covering all the elements of hiring. Following is a suggested framework and questions to stimulate consideration of your best practices which could become "preferred practices" for all agencies. If you have innovative practices that you do not believe fit into these chapters, including streamlining SES staffing, please identify them as "other."

Chapter 1. Workforce Planning - focusing on how to analyze your current workforce to achieve your agency's goals. The chapter will showcase how agencies have determined where they are now, where they need to be, and how to get there.

- How do you deal with unexpected staffing requirements?
- Do you have successful networking strategies/initiatives with professional organizations, non-profit organizations, etc.? If so, please explain how you established them and what makes them successful.
- What tools (e.g., databases, computer programs, consultants) have you used to analyze your current workforce versus your future workforce requirements?
- Who was involved with your workforce succession planning (e.g., solely HR? Front-line employees? First-line managers/supervisors? Agency leadership?) How did each group become involved and what did each group contribute?
- Describe how you use workforce planning to strategically manage your human capital.

Chapter 2. Critical Job Elements and Competencies - focusing on how to break down a job into its essential elements and how to use this information to identify the critical competencies needed for efficient and effective hiring.

- Who performs the job analysis and develops the critical competencies (or knowledge, skill, ability requirements) in your agency? How effective are the results? What training is provided for those involved in the process?
- What do you believe the outcome would be by using subject-matter experts and/or line managers to perform the job analysis and develop the critical competencies?
- How do you identify and communicate to applicants the competency set you are seeking?
- What do find are the results of the investment in determining the critical job elements and competencies (KSA's)?

Chapter 3. Recruitment - focusing on unique agency practices including innovative uses of technology and other means of attracting candidates and responding to applicants. The Guide will also include results of research from the Recruitment One-Stop interagency team under the President's e-government initiative.

- What successful recruitment strategies have you used for "hard to fill" occupations?
- What consortiums or partnerships have you created or participated in to address recruitment strategies?
- How do you explain the Federal Hiring Process to job seekers? To managers? To HR staff?
- How have you used technology to help with the increased volume of applicants and the need to provide timely responses to managers and applicants?

Chapter 4. Assessment, Rating and Ranking - focusing on the various tools and flexibilities available to ensure that only the best qualified are referred for selection.

- What rating, ranking and assessment tools have you used successfully?
- How do you use critical job elements and competencies in assessment?
- Have you used a structured interview as an assessment tool, and if so describe how it was used (evaluation or selection)? To what extent have you used assessment centers?
- Describe how automated staffing systems aid in assessment.
- What policies have you established to help streamline assessment?

Chapter 5. Hiring - focusing on where and when various appointing authorities can be used for maximum flexibility.

- How do you identify which hiring flexibilities to use?
- Have you used successfully a particular hiring authority or program to meet workforce needs?
- How do you link hiring authorities to workforce planning and your recruiting strategy?

Chapter 6. Retention - focusing on workforce management principles, techniques, and strategies to retain required skill and competency sets.

- How do you integrate your retention strategy(ies) into your hiring strategy(ies) and vice versa? How does development of your current workforce come into play in the strategy(ies)?
- How do you use current flexibilities to support your retention strategy (retention allowance, student loan repayment)?
- What steps do you take to ensure these flexibilities are viable tools (budget, policies, delegations)?
- What retention strategies do you use besides monetary tools?

Chapter 7. Measurement and Accountability - focusing on how to incorporate results and process measurements into an overall management plan, including evaluation methods and procedures.

- How do you measure your success in achieving your workforce planning goals?
- What specific metrics do you use to ensure efficiency and effectiveness?
- How do your strategies result in a citizen-centered, market-driven, and results-oriented workforce?

Successful Practices

Please describe innovative hiring practices that you have used to improve results at your agency. Identify which chapter correlates with your example.

- I. Challenge:**
- II. Optional Solutions Considered:**
- III. Innovative Practice (include tools, strategy, etc.):**
- IV. Obstacles Overcome:**
- V. Metrics:**
- VI. Result(s):**
- VII. Correlating Chapter:**