

October 21, 2003

**FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE
223 FW 10 FEDERAL CAREER INTERN PROGRAM
HANDBOOK**

Introduction

It is imperative that the Service remain competitive and attract a diverse workforce as the labor market and workforce undergo significant and continuous change. The Federal Career Intern Program (CIP) establishes another hiring tool that will assist managers in recruiting for critical occupations. Furthermore, the CIP is one way to address succession planning needs and increase diversity in the Service.

Since this is a decentralized program, regions have the opportunity to design a program that best suits their organizational and programmatic needs. Use of this program should be planned in advance and program offices must ensure that adequate funds and resources are allocated to fulfill program obligations. In addition, leadership and management support at all levels is expected. Career intern recruitment and selection will be done by the hiring program office. These are permanent, full time positions.

The purpose of this operational guide is to provide additional guidance for implementing the Career Intern Program in the Service. This guide is intended for recruiters, diversity managers, hiring officials, managers and human resources specialists. Refer to 223 FW 10 Federal Career Intern Program for specific Service policies and procedures.

I. Developing a Recruitment Strategy

The Career Intern Program is open to all qualified candidates, including current federal employees. The recruitment strategy may target both external and internal high caliber candidates. In the case of internal candidates, the CIP provides another avenue for development and advancement in a particular field. This hiring authority also provides flexibility in conducting targeted recruitment at top colleges and universities, professional organizations, college organizations and minority associations. External recruitment can be geared to targeted Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and other colleges and universities that have outstanding programs in natural resources and mission-oriented disciplines.

Workforce planning processes will assist in identifying the appropriate occupations for hiring into the CIP. Program offices, in consultation with the diversity and civil rights office and servicing human resources office, should develop a recruitment plan for the types of occupations needed for the program. The CIP is an excellent way to bring high quality and diverse employees into the pipeline. Recruitment efforts should be focused on improving and building long-term relationships with colleges and universities, professional organizations, and minority groups to gain credibility as a bureau and attract the right talent. It is important to remember that recruitment is a long-term commitment and cannot be based exclusively on the hiring needs of the moment or budget situation.

II. Participating in Recruitment Trips

Supervisors, managers, human resources specialists, diversity managers and other recruiters who attend recruitment trips represent not only their program office but the Service. In this capacity, the recruiter's role is to attract a potential pool of highly competent and diverse applicants. The following are helpful tips on how to effectively communicate and promote the Service's mission and encourage applicants to join your organization.

The CIP recruiter should:

- ▶ Market the Service as "Employer of Choice." Mention attractive features of the work of your organization such as nature of work, culture of the organization, opportunity to gain new skills, and networking with leaders in various natural resources career fields at all levels. Share points of contact information to those applicants interested in relocating to another geographic location.
- ▶ Be aware of the Service's EEO diversity profile.
- ▶ Be personally and professionally ethical at all times and ensure observance of merit principles, Equal Employment Opportunity, diversity awareness, etc.
- ▶ Present relevant information to the candidate. Recruiters should be familiar with the Service's programs and nature of work in specific occupations.
- ▶ Market learning opportunities, employee benefits, and worklife programs which allow employees to balance work and family life (e.g., retirement and Thrift Savings Plan, flexible work schedules, flexible spending accounts, annual and sick leave, etc.). Much attention is given to salaries, so be sure to emphasize the whole benefit package including all other flexibilities available such as student loan repayment program and recruitment bonus, if applicable.
- ▶ Respect policies and traditions of the institutions and organizations visited.
- ▶ Take recruitment materials and business cards to career fairs and recruitment trips. Your servicing human resources office or diversity and civil rights office should have a supply of materials for these activities.
- ▶ Follow-up with applicants and school contacts you met on recruitment trips with an email, phone call, or the sending information.

III. Career Intern Program Application Process

A. Publicizing Opportunities

Public notice is not a requirement for announcing Career Intern vacancies since they are in the excepted service and Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan provisions do not apply.

This means that a vacancy announcement to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is not required for CIP positions. In addition, issuance of a merit staffing vacancy announcement is not required. However, human resources offices and diversity and civil rights offices should ensure the recruitment strategies developed for CIP positions are sufficient for attracting a diverse pool of highly qualified candidates. Furthermore, managers and supervisors must follow merit principles when filling vacancies under the CIP.

The matter of public notice can be confusing for some managers, supervisors and recruiters. The main point is that public notice is a statutory requirement only when filling positions through the competitive examining process. Therefore, this requirement does not apply to the Federal Career Intern Program. Since OPM is not the central source for CIP opportunities, applicants wishing to participate in the CIP must contact the servicing human resources office for information on specific CIP jobs.

Though public notice is not required, potential applicants must be informed of the recruitment event, the jobs under recruitment, and the appointment requirements. Recruiters may announce vacancies through an information notice to placement offices, career counselors or career fair sponsors before attending recruitment events. The information notice must contain basic information regarding the position to be filled and any other information on the specific nature of the CIP in your region. The information notice must include information about knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) required for the position if a ranked referral process will be used in considering applicants for the position being announced. The servicing human resources office must maintain a written record of the job advertisement process for each event.

To fully optimize opportunities to reach a pool of qualified and diverse candidates, offices can and may decide to post a vacancy announcement in CARES and also send information notices to academic institutions, career events or job fairs. If a vacancy announcement will be used to seek candidates for a CIP position, ensure this announcement is user-friendly, easy to read, and provides information on training requirements. The vacancy announcement should provide a good description of the duties, responsibilities, and competencies required for the position but should not read like an official position description.

B. Application Forms

Applicants should submit an application (e.g., OF-612) or resume which addresses the minimum required qualifications for the position being filled. If vacancy notices contain desired KSAs, applicants should address them in their resumes or applications.

Veterans' preference procedures must be applied in the selection process. Applicants who served on active duty in the U.S. military and received an honorable or general discharge may be eligible for veterans' preference and must submit the required documentation (e.g., Form DD 214) to support their eligibility for preference.

C. Guidance on Accepting Applications

Regions may determine what procedures are most appropriate to fill their positions using the Federal Career Intern Program. 223 FW 10, Exhibit 1 provides different means to solicit and receive applications.

Hiring officials and recruiters may accept resumes and applications directly from applicants. However, all applications submitted for consideration by recruiters will be accepted and must be forwarded to the servicing human resources office for determination of basic qualifications, veterans' preference, etc. The human resources office will review all applications to determine that requirements are met before a selection is confirmed. It is highly recommended that procedures be documented and applied consistently to avoid any appearance of impropriety.

Prior to the recruitment trip, discuss the issue of accepting applications with your servicing human resources office. A very important consideration is not creating the perception that individuals are treated differently. Therefore, recruiters and hiring officials must not accept applications selectively. A recommended approach is to share a general job announcement with applicants and stress the prescribed method for applying.

Important tips to remember:

- ▶ Provide information (e.g., vacancy announcement, notice, flyer, etc.) to career counselors, placement offices, and applicants on CIP opportunities. Encourage potential applicants to regularly visit the Service's website for information on employment opportunities.
- ▶ Discuss application procedures with potential applicants. For example, importance of submitting necessary documents such as college transcripts, proof of preference eligibility, etc.
- ▶ Do not discourage anyone from applying on the basis of qualifications, experience, education, etc. A qualifications determination is a technical decision which must be made by the servicing human resources office.
- ▶ Do not make job offers or promises regarding pay levels. The human resources office must verify the applicant's qualifications for the job before any offer is made.

D. Rating and Arranging Applications

Human Resources Offices should ensure that any qualified candidates entitled to consideration for reemployment in the excepted service, such as priority reemployment candidates, receive such consideration before other candidates. Refer to Personnel Bulletin 02-7 (302).

E. Passing Over a Veteran

If the selecting official wishes to pass over a preference eligible and select a nonpreference eligible when an equal or higher ranked preference eligible is available, this may be done only for reasons of qualifications or suitability. The human resources office must establish procedures to

process such cases. These procedures must be in writing and include responsibilities for review and approval of requests. Documentation must be maintained as part of the record and furnished to the preference eligible upon request.

F. Applicants for positions covered under the Luevano Consent Decree

The Luevano Consent Decree focuses on the use of recruitment to reduce adverse impact by increasing the pool of African Americans and Hispanic applicants. Specific occupations and grade levels (GS-5 and GS-7) are covered by the consent decree (refer to Appendix A.).

When filling positions covered under the Luevano Consent Decree, applicants must be assessed through use of the appropriate Administrative Careers with America (ACWA) assessment and rating tools. Therefore, arrangements for administering the assessment to applicants must be made with the appropriate Office of Personnel Management service center or by the servicing human resources office with a Delegated Examining Unit (trained and certified by OPM to use ACWA assessment tools). When a certificate is issued, applicants are considered according to their veteran's preference and numerical ranking, in accordance with the "rule of three."

The Outstanding Scholar Authority, normally a companion appointing authority to the Luevano consent decree assessment process, may not be used when filling Career Intern Program positions. The Outstanding Scholar Authority can only be used to supplement competitive examining for Luevano covered positions.

OPM requires that agencies report race and national origin (RNO) data on all individuals who apply for CIP positions covered under the Luevano consent decree.

G. Applicants for non-ACWA positions

For non-ACWA positions, human resources offices will determine whether a numeric rating and ranking system, category rating or preference categories (preference and non-preference) will be used to apply veteran's preference in considering candidates for appointments. Human resources offices must follow procedures stated in 5 CFR Part 302 regarding ranking and referring candidates, and making selections.

IV. Interviews

Hiring officials must ensure that all candidates are treated fairly and equitably. If only certain candidates are chosen to be interviewed, the choice should be based strictly on job-related criteria.

V. Processing Personnel Action

Individuals hired under the CIP will be appointed in the excepted service under Schedule B authority found at 5 CFR 213.3202(o). Upon successful completion of the internship, an intern will be eligible for noncompetitive conversion to a career or career-conditional appointment. The human resources specialist must ensure CIP participants sign the statement of understanding and file a copy in the employee's Official Personnel Folder.

Use the following information when processing personnel actions appointing individuals under the CIP:

Appointment Type: Exc. Appt; Conv to Exc Appt
Nature of Action: 170; 570
Legal Authority: Sch. B, 213.3202(o)
Legal Authority Code: YCM

VI. Movement of CIP interns between bureaus

To move from one bureau to another during the internship, the CIP participant must separate from the current bureau and be reappointed under the CIP program by the new employing office without a break in service. The CIP participant does not begin a new 2-year internship period. The time previously served under the CIP position counts toward completion of the 2-year period.

VII. Promotions

Time-in-grade requirements do not apply for CIP positions. The qualification requirements may be met by experience gained during the internship or prior to entering the program.

Promotions are allowed within the 2-year intern period. Upon completion of the internship and conversion to competitive status, the CIP participant may be promoted to the next grade level if a documented career ladder to that level exists and was identified in conjunction with the selection and appointment. Otherwise, merit staffing competition is required for promotion to the next grade level.

VIII. Conversions

CIP participants may be converted noncompetitively to career or career-conditional appointments in positions for which they are qualified. However, conversion cannot be made prior to full completion of the 2-year internship. CIP participants must complete all IDP assignments and training requirements prior to conversion to the competitive service. The supervisor is required to complete a recommendation for conversion to the competitive service no later than 30 days before the completion date of the internship. This statement should include a summary evaluation on how the participant met the IDP requirements of the internship and must be submitted to the servicing human resources office. Managers and supervisors must not allow a conversion action to occur if the CIP participant's performance is not satisfactory.

A CIP participant whose employment is converted to career or career-conditional employment under this authority acquires competitive status automatically on conversion.

IX. Termination of Appointment

The Schedule B appointment of a CIP participant expires at the end of the 2-year internship period. The servicing human resources office may convert the participant to the competitive service, extend the appointment not-to-exceed 120 days or return the employee to a position at the same grade and pay as previously held (if applicable). If none of these actions is taken, the

employee must be separated. The supervisor of the CIP participant must notify the servicing human resources office as soon as it is anticipated that an intern may be separated. Supervisors must consult with their human resources office before initiating such action.

X. Training

A. Rotational Assignments

During the 2-year internship, CIP participants may have developmental assignments on- or off-site. Assignments longer than 120 days must have a performance plan. The supervisor must put in writing the details of the proposed developmental assignment to include:

- ▶ Duties that the CIP intern will perform
- ▶ Dates of the assignment
- ▶ How the supervisor will appraise the CIP participant's performance
- ▶ How the assignment relates to position

B. Mentors/Coach

Mentoring is optional. However, to ensure the success of the program it is recommended that CIP participants have one or more advisors, coaches, or mentors to discuss career related issues, questions, and other things associated with the program.

Appendix A.

Positions covered by the *Luevano* Consent Decree Below is the list of positions covered by the [Luevano Consent Decree](#). Updated as of November 2002.

Series	Position Titles
0011	Bond Sales Promotion
0018	Safety and Occupational Health Management
0020	Community Planning*
0023	Outdoor Recreation Planning
0025	Park Ranger
0028	Environmental Protection Specialist
0080	Security Administration
0101	Social Science* **
0105	Social Insurance Administration
0106	Unemployment Insurance
0107	Health Insurance Administration
0110	Economics*
0130	Foreign Affairs*
0131	International Relations*
0132	Intelligence
0140	Manpower Research and Analysis*
0142	Manpower Development
0150	Geography*
0170	History*
0180	Psychology*
0184	Sociology*
0187	Social Services
0190	General Anthropology*
0193	Archeology*
0201	Human Resource Management Former covered title and series: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personnel Management (0201); • Military Personnel Management (0205);

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personnel Staffing (0212); • Position Classification (0221); • Occupational Analysis (0222); • Salary and Wage Administration (0223); • Employee Relations (0230); • Labor Relations (0233); and • Employee Development (0235).
0244	Labor Management Relations Examining
0249	Wage and Hour Compliance
0301	Miscellaneous Administration and Program**
0341	Administrative Officer
0343	Program Management and Program Analysis
0346	Logistics Management
0391	Telecommunications Specialist
0501	Financial Administration and Programs**
0526	Tax Technician (Series renamed Tax Specialist)
0560	Budget Analysis
0570	Financial Institution Examining
0673	Hospital Housekeeping Management
0685	Public Health Program Specialist
0901	<p>General Legal and Kindred Administration Former covered title and series:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal Retirement Benefits (0270); •

	Contact Representative (Two-grade interval position) (0962); and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Claims Examining (Two-grade interval position) (0990).
0950	Paralegal Specialist
0958	Pension Law Specialist
0965	Land Law Examining
0967	Passport and Visa Examining
0987	Tax Law Examining
0991	Worker's Compensation Claims Examining
0993	Railroad Retirement Claims Examining
0994	Unemployment Compensation Claims Examining (Series canceled August 2002)
0996	Veterans Claims Examining
1001	General Arts and Information**
1015	Museum Management (Curator)*
1035	Public Affairs
1082	Writing and Editing
1083	Technical Writing and Editing
1101	General Business and Industry** Former covered title and series: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractor Industrial Relations (0246)
1102	Contracting Series*
1103	Industrial Property Management
1104	Property Disposal
1130	Public Utilities Specialist
1140	Trade Specialist
1145	Agricultural Program Specialist
1146	Agricultural Marketing
1147	Agricultural Market Reporting

1150	Industrial Specialist
1160	Financial Analysis
1163	Insurance Examining
1165	Loan Specialist
1169	Internal Revenue Officer
1170	Realty
1171	Appraising
1173	Housing Management Specialist
1176	Building Management
1412	Technical Information Services
1420	Archivist*
1421	Archives Specialist
1654	Printing Management Specialist*
1701	General Education and Training * **
1715	Vocational Rehabilitation
1720	Educational Program*
1801	General Inspection, Investigation, and Compliance** Restricted to following positions and agencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Aviation Security Specialist (FAA Only), • Center Adjudication Officer (INS Only), • District Adjudication Officer (INS Only)
1810	General Investigator**
1811	Criminal Investigator**
1812	Game Law Enforcement
1816	Immigration Inspection
1831	Securities Compliance Examining
1854	Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms Inspection
1864	Public Health Quarantine Inspection
1889	Import Specialist

1890	Customs Inspection
1910	Quality Assurance Specialist
2001	General Supply**
2003	Supply Program Management
2010	Inventory Management
2030	Distribution Facilities and Storage Management
2032	Packaging
2050	Supply Cataloging
2101	Transportation Specialist**
2110	Transportation Industry Analysis
2125	Highway Safety
2130	Traffic Management
2150	Transportation Operations
2210	Information Technology Management Former covered title and series: • Computer Specialist (Trainee, Alternative B Qualifications) (0334)