



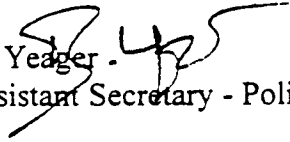
United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, D.C. 20240

Memorandum

OCT 9 1997

To: Solicitor
Assistant Secretaries
Inspector General
Heads of Bureaus and Offices
Bureau Personnel Officers

From: Brooks B. Yeager - 
Acting Assistant Secretary - Policy, Management and Budget

Subject: Final Career Transition Assistance Plan

On June 9, 1997, OPM issued final regulations for the implementation of Agency Career Transition Assistance Plans (CTAP). Attached is the revised DOI Plan. OPM's regulations expand employee coverage as well as provide more flexibility to managers.

The major required changes to our existing CTAP policy include the following:

- ▶ The term "well-qualified" must be clearly defined in vacancy announcements.
- ▶ Bureaus must conduct a second independent review of any CTAP or ICTAP applicant who is determined not to be well-qualified. The applicant must be notified in writing of the results of this second review.
- ▶ Surplus and displaced employees must be briefed on the career transition services available to them.
- ▶ Employees who decline a directed reassignment or transfer of function outside of the commuting area must be given selection priority based upon the date the agency issues them a notice of proposed removal, in lieu of their date of declination.
- ▶ The definition of vacancy has been changed from positions lasting 90 days or more to positions lasting 121 or more days.
- ▶ Extensions of temporary or term appointments may now be extended if ICTAP or CTAP eligibles were considered under the original vacancy announcement.

The new DOI CTAP is effective immediately. If you have questions regarding the new plan, you may contact Debra Summers on (202) 208-4231.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

CAREER TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PLAN

September 8, 1997

SECTION A. GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE CAREER TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PLAN (CTAP)

1. What is the DOI CTAP?

The DOI CTAP effective April 30, 1996, is a program that provides assistance to individuals who have been or are likely to be separated by reduction-in-force (RIF) in finding other employment. The CTAP has four components:

- a) Career Transition Training and Support Services - policies to provide services such as skills assessment, resume preparation, counseling and job search assistance;
- b) Special Selection Priority (SSP) - policies and procedures for selecting well-qualified surplus or displaced employees who apply for vacancies in the local commuting area (LCA) over other candidates;
- c) Reemployment Priority List (RPL) - policies and procedures for placement of qualified eligible employees or former employees in the local commuting area (LCA); and
- d) Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan (ICTAP) - policies for giving priority consideration on external hires to well-qualified displaced applicants from other Federal agencies.

2. Does the CTAP guarantee jobs for former DOI employees who have been displaced by reduction-in-force?

No, there is no guarantee. In fact, OPM recommends an emphasis on "individual employee empowerment" suggesting that the "key to successful career transition is individual initiative." The Department is committed to providing out placement assistance to its surplus, displaced, and separated employees through the provisions of the CTAP; however, these are not entitlement programs. Employees must take the initiative to use available support services, apply to vacancies to receive special selection priority, and register for reemployment priority consideration.

3. What is a "local commuting area" (LCA)?

Based on the definition in 5 CFR 351.203, LCA is the area surrounding the duty station of the position from which an employee is being or has been separated that the organization has in practice expected employees to travel back and forth to work on a daily basis.

SECTION A. GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE CAREER TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PLAN (CTAP)

4. What is the order of selection when filling vacancies for competitive service positions?

a) At bureau option, Internal (within Interior) personnel actions not covered by SSP/CTAP [listed in 5 CFR 330.606 (d) of the CTAP regulations].

b) Internal selections from within a bureau and the same LCA after eligible SSP applicants from within that bureau and LCA have been given selection priority.

b) Well-qualified DOI Special Selection Priority (SSP) candidates for any vacancy within the local commuting area. A well-qualified SSP eligible must be selected unless that selection would cause another employee to be separated by RIF. Surplus and displaced employees may be selected without regard to tenure/subgroup order.

c) At bureau option, Internal actions not subject to the Reemployment Priority List (RPL) (for example, any competitive/noncompetitive action on a permanent DOI employee).

d) Qualified RPL candidates in the local commuting area.

e) At Bureau discretion, any former displaced well-qualified DOI employee, including a well-qualified RPL candidate from outside the local commuting area who applies.

f) Well-qualified displaced applicants from other Federal agencies (ICTAP applicants) in the local commuting area.

g) Other outside applicants (other agencies, nonstatus, etc.)

5. What is the definition of a Certification of Expected Separation (CES) or other certification?

The definition of a CES may be found in 5 CFR 351.807. "Other certification" is defined as an official notice signed by the official who is delegated authority to issue reduction-in-force notices; such notice will identify an employee (by name or series) as being in a surplus organization or occupation.

SECTION B. CAREER TRANSITION TRAINING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

1. Who is Eligible for Career Transition Assistance Training and Support Services?

All current DOI career and career-conditional employees in the competitive service *and any other surplus and displaced agency employees affected by downsizing or restructuring* are eligible for career transition assistance training and support services. Surplus and displaced career employees will be given priority access. Separated employees are not eligible for training or retraining, but will have access to facilities and resources such as copying, use of resumé preparation software and job search information. This access may be extended for up to one year following date of separation.

2. What types of Career Transition Services will be Provided?

The Department has adopted OPM's "individual employee empowerment" model. These services are designed to give surplus and displaced employees the information, skills, and tools they need to successfully pursue career alternatives. The following transition services will be made available from both the Department and bureaus:

- List of materials for Career Transition Information Kits (for both individual employees and Servicing Personnel Offices);
- Skills inventory and assessment services;
- Job search information (how to find a job);
- Job vacancy information;
- Job application and resumé software;
- Access to the Defense Outplacement Referral System (DORS);
- Workshops and seminars including resume writing, SF-171 and/or OF-612 preparation, interview techniques, stress management, preparation for retirement;
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) counseling services; and
- Sponsorship of job clubs.

Additional services, such as group and individual counseling (via teleconferencing in remote sites) may be provided based on the need for such services and the availability of funds. Given current staffing limitations, bureaus are not expected to be able to provide all of the above services in-house and may contract with private vendors (for assistance, see paragraph 3 below).

SECTION B. CAREER TRANSITION TRAINING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

3. How will these Services be Provided?

The Department has established a Clearinghouse for Career Transition Information, located in Room 2071 of the Main Interior Building in Washington, D. C. This site is also the location of a model Career Transition Assistance Center, serving the Washington, D. C. metropolitan area. The Clearinghouse will provide information on programs and services. It will also coordinate the pooling of resources among Interior bureaus and other Government agencies to establish Career Transition Centers in major DOI population centers nationwide. For information about these services, contact the Clearinghouse Director, on (202) 208-3617.

At a minimum, each bureau will offer Career Transition Services appropriate to its employees' needs through its servicing personnel offices. Services, where practical, will be provided in convenient locations near work sites. Where this is not possible at remote locations, bureaus will provide "Career Transition Information Kits," resources and reference materials such as videos, self-study career guides, CD-ROM and other self-instructional materials.

4. What is DOI's Policy on Excused Absences for Employees to Use Career Transition Services and Facilities?

Supervisors are encouraged to be as flexible as possible as the needs of the workplace permit, to allow eligible career employees a reasonable amount of time to participate in activities such as the following:

- Placement interviews and/or examinations for jobs within DOI, other Federal agencies, or the private sector
- Professional or civil service examinations necessary to qualify for positions in DOI, other Federal agencies, or the private sector
- Attendance at career counseling sessions and formal training programs related to career transitioning such as interviewing techniques, resumé and/or application preparation, and stress management.

5. May a former employee use DOI's Career Transition Services or Facilities After Being Separated?

Yes. Displaced career DOI employees will be eligible for and may continue to use departmental career transition services for up to one year following separation. Access

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to services will be terminated when the displaced employee receives a career, career conditional or excepted service appointment without time limit.

6. Who is Eligible for Retraining and Who is Responsible for it?

(a) Career and career-conditional employees in the competitive service *and any other surplus or displaced employees affected by downsizing or restructuring* who have received notice (specific RIF separation notice, Certificate of Expected Separation (CES), or other official notification from an authorized Bureau official notifying them that they are in a surplus position or organization) and who are still on the rolls may receive training or retraining for DOI positions. This may be done through a variety of departmental and Bureau programs including coursework, cross-training assignments, rotational assignments, details, or placement through modification of qualifications. There are no Department funds for retraining; bureaus may fund such training if they choose. However, such training is limited to employees who are still on the rolls.

(b) Servicing personnel offices (SPOs) are responsible for reduction-in-force (RIF) activities which will include giving notice to affected career employees and the Career Transition Clearinghouse Manager as early in the process as possible. SPOs will also be responsible for coordination, on behalf of career employees who are scheduled to be separated. This coordination will include organizations such as the U.S. Department of Labor, State Dislocated Worker Units, State Employment Security Offices, local private industry councils, and the Department's Career Transition Services Office for counseling, job information, and other transition services.

7. What Resources Will the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Provide?

The EAP may be used to provide individual and organizational advice to eligible employees. (EAP's vary somewhat according to bureau vendor, but all provide basic individual counseling.) The provision of EAP services will be in addition to the career transition services identified in this Plan.

8. How Can an Employee Find Out About DOI's Career Transition Services?

An orientation session for surplus and displaced employees on the use of career transition services and the eligibility requirements for selection priority under CTAP and ICTAP will be provided by the servicing SPO. Information about the availability and use of career transition services under this Plan will also be provided to all managers, supervisors, and union representatives. For further information, contact the Director, Career Transition Services Clearinghouse, on (202) 208-3617.

SECTION C. SPECIAL SELECTION PRIORITY (SSP) COMPONENT

1. What is the SSP component?

A provision of the CTAP that requires the Department to give special selection priority (priority consideration) to well-qualified eligible surplus and displaced DOI employees who apply for position vacancies within the local commuting area and within the prescribed time frames indicated on the vacancy announcement.

2. What is a "vacancy" for purposes of SSP?

A competitive service position lasting *121 or more days*, including extensions, which the Department is filling, regardless of whether DOI issues a specific vacancy announcement. See Question No.14 of this section.

3. What is a "surplus" employee for purposes of SSP?

(1) A current DOI employee serving under a career or career-conditional appointment in the competitive service at grade levels GS-15 or equivalent and below, who has received a Certification of Expected Separation or other certification issued by an authorized DOI official which identifies the employee as being in a surplus organization or occupation *or* (2) *a current DOI employee in the excepted service on an appointment without time limit, at grade levels GS-15 or equivalent and below, who has non-competitive appointment eligibility and special selection priority by statute for positions in the competitive service and who has been issued a certificate of expected separation or other official agency certification indicating that his or her position is surplus.. (An "authorized DOI official" is an employee with authority to issue RIF notices.)*

4. What is a "displaced" employee for purposes of SSP?

(1) A current DOI employee serving under a career or career-conditional appointment in the competitive service *at grade levels GS-15 or equivalent and below* who has received a specific RIF separation notice *or notice of proposed removal for declining a directed reassignment or transfer of function outside of the local commuting area, or* (2) *a current DOI employee in the excepted service, serving on an appointment without time limit, at grade levels GS-15 or equivalent and below, who has been given noncompetitive appointment eligibility and selection priority by statute for positions in the competitive service and who is in receipt of a RIF notice or notice of proposed removal for declining a transfer of function or directed reassignment outside of the local commuting area. For example, an individual serving under a Schedule A appointment for severely disabled individuals, would be qualified under this definition.*

SECTION C. SPECIAL SELECTION PRIORITY (SSP) COMPONENT

5. When must the SSP component be applied?

Except as set forth in 5 CFR 330.606, when filling a vacancy, the selecting official must select a well-qualified eligible applicant under the SSP component of CTAP before selecting any other candidate from within or outside the Department, unless doing so would cause another employee to be separated by RIF (this must be documented). SSP must be applied when the vacancy lasts *121 days or more* (including extensions) and is filled by an action not identified in 5 CFR 330.606(d).

6. What staffing options and classification actions are not subject to SSP regulations?

The following actions are not subject to SSP regulations:

- a. *Placements from within a bureau when well-qualified surplus and displaced employees of that bureau and from within the same local commuting area have been given selection priority;*
- b. *Extensions of temporary or term actions, provided the original action, upon which the extension is based, was made on or before February 29, 1996; or for actions initially made after February 29, 1996, the original vacancy announcement was open to CTAP candidates and selection priority given to them as appropriate. The original vacancy announcement must have specified that the action could be extended without reannouncement;*
- c. *The internal placement of an injured or disabled worker into a position for which he/she can be reasonably accommodated;*
- d. *An action taken to return an employee to his or her original or similar position during a supervisory probationary period;*
- e. *Actions taken by the agency head or his designee to settle a formal complaint, grievance, appeal, or litigation*

SECTION C. SPECIAL SELECTION PRIORITY (SSP) COMPONENT

- f. *The retention of individuals whose positions are brought into the competitive service under CFR 316.701 (a position that has been brought into the competitive service because a public or private enterprise has been taken over by the government) or CFR 316.702 (an excepted position has been brought into the competitive service by statute) and subsequent conversion, when applicable under CFR 315.701;*
- g. *The retention of an employee for whom OPM has approved a rule 5.1 variation;*
- h. *The reemployment of a former agency employee who retired under a formal trial retirement and reemployment program, and who seeks reemployment with DOI under CTAP provisions within designated time limits;*
- i. *The placement of a member of the Senior Executive Service under 5. U.S.C. 3594;*
- j. *The noncompetitive movement of displaced employees between agencies as a result of reorganization, transfer of function, or mass transfer;*
- k. Placement of a DOI employee through reassignment, change to lower grade, or promotion, **when no employees eligible under this subpart apply;**
- l. Reemployment of a former DOI employee exercising regulatory or statutory reemployment rights;
- m. Position changes resulting from reclassification actions;
- n. Temporary appointments of under *121 days* (including extensions);
- o. Exchange of positions between or among DOI employees, when the actions involve no increase in grade or promotion potential;
- p. Conversion of an employee on an excepted appointment which confers eligibility for noncompetitive conversion into the competitive service (e.g., conversion of VRA appointees to a career conditional appointment under CFR 315.705);
- q. Placement activities under 5 CFR 351 (Reduction-in-Force);

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- r. Placement of an employee into a new position as a result of a reorganization, when the former position ceases to exist, and no actual vacancy results;
- s. Placements made under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) as provided in 5 CFR 334; (*where they are for critical situations where the failure to make the assignment would substantially harm Federal interests, such as providing training for State takeover of a Federal program*) - *this text was removed.*;
- t. The filling of a position through an excepted appointment;
- u. Details;
- v. Time-limited promotions of under *121 days*;
- w. Noncompetitive movement of surplus or displaced employees *within DOI and within the same local commuting area*;
- x. Movement of excepted service employees within the Department;
- y. A placement under 5 U.S.C. 8337 or 8451 to allow continued employment of an employee who has become unable to provide useful and efficient service in his/her current position because of a medical condition;
- z. A placement that is a "reasonable offer" as defined in 5 U.S.C. 8336(d) and 8414(b);
- aa. Career ladder promotions;
- bb. Recall of seasonal employees from nonpay status; or
- cc. *Position changes resulting from disciplinary actions.*

7. What are the eligibility requirements for an employee to be considered under the SSP component?

To meet eligibility requirements for SSP, an employee:

- a. Must be surplus or displaced;

SECTION C. SPECIAL SELECTION PRIORITY (SSP) COMPONENT

- b. Must have a current performance rating of record of at least fully successful or results achieved;
- c. Must apply for a vacancy in the same local commuting area from which he/she is being or may be separated;
- d. Must apply only for positions at or below his/her current grade level and with no greater promotion potential than his/her current position;
- e. Must apply within the specified time frames *and provide proof of eligibility*;AND
- f. Must be determined to be well-qualified for the vacancy.

8. How does an individual receive priority consideration under the SSP component?

The surplus or displaced employee must meet the eligibility requirements described in the answer to Question 7 above. The employee must apply within the specified time frames and submit proof of eligibility (his/her RIF separation notice *or notice of proposed removal for declining a directed reassignment or transfer of function outside the local commuting area*, Certification of Expected Separation *or other official notice from DOI indicating that the employee is surplus or eligible for discontinued service retirement, or official DOI certification identifying the employee as being in a surplus organization or occupation*). The eligibility determination is subject to verification prior to a final offer.

9. When does eligibility for CTAP/ICTAP begin?

Eligibility begins on the date on which the employee receives a separation notice, certificate of expected separation, notice of proposed separation for declining a directed reassignment or transfer of function outside of the local commuting area or other official agency certification identifying the employee as being in a surplus organization or occupation, whichever is earliest.

10. What is meant by "well qualified" for a vacancy under the SSP component of CTAP?

OPM has defined well-qualified to be generally those applicants whose knowledges, skills, and abilities clearly exceed the minimum qualification requirements but who

SECTION C. SPECIAL SELECTION PRIORITY (SSP) COMPONENT

would not necessarily meet the definition of highly or best qualified. An eligible CTAP applicant is determined to be well-qualified if he/she meets the following:

- OPM qualification standards for the position;
- All selective factors, where applicable;
- Special qualifying conditions that OPM has approved for the position;
- Is physically qualified with reasonable accommodation, where appropriate, to satisfactorily perform the duties of the position upon entry; **and**
- Is rated by the organization at least the "good" or equivalent rating level on all quality ranking factors.

The well-qualified determination will be made by a personnel specialist, subject-matter expert(s) (SME), or by a merit promotion panel. *If the applicant is found to be not well-qualified, a second independent review must be conducted by a senior personnel specialist (e.g., team leader, branch chief, etc.) who was not involved in the original rating process. The applicant must be notified in writing of these results.*

11. How will employees know if they are "well-qualified" for a position?

A job announcement must clearly state the definition of "well-qualified" on the vacancy announcement.

12. How do eligible employees apply for vacant positions?

Vacancy announcements must include information on how a CTAP and/or ICTAP eligible may apply, and what proof of eligibility is required.

13. If an SSP eligible employee applies for a vacancy outside the local commuting area (LCA) from which he/she will be separated through RIF or in which he/she is determined to be surplus, does he/she receive special selection priority?

No.

14. Must an eligible well-qualified surplus or displaced employee who applies under the SSP component for a vacancy within his/her local commuting area and within the specified time frames be hired by a DOI bureau?

Yes, unless the action being taken to fill the position vacancy is one identified in 5 CFR 330.606(a) or (b).

SECTION C. SPECIAL SELECTION PRIORITY (SSP) COMPONENT

15. In what order do SSP applicants receive consideration?

Any eligible well-qualified surplus or displaced applicant may be selected for a vacancy without regard to tenure/subgroup.

16. Can an SSP applicant appeal a qualifications decision?

An applicant cannot appeal to the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB); however, he/she may request a review of the decision by the Servicing Personnel Office (SPO).

17. Must all vacancies be advertised?

Yes, unless the action being taken is an exception as cited in the answer to Question 6 above, or a determination has been made by the servicing personnel office (through contact with other bureaus in the local commuting area of the vacancy or through the Department's report to bureaus described in Section F) that no SSP candidates are available.

18. What is the minimum area of consideration and how long must the vacancy announcement remain open?

The minimum area of consideration for permanent positions is bureauwide within the local commuting area for at least 10 work days to meet CTAP requirements. If you anticipate making a selection from outside the bureau, you may expand the area of consideration to departmentwide, governmentwide or all sources for 10 work days or more. The minimum time period for announcements for temporary/term appointments is 5 work days in accordance with regulations governing 5 CFR 333, Recruitment and Selection for Temporary and Term Appointments Outside the Register.

19. How will employees know if an advertised position is subject to CTAP guidelines?

Vacancy announcements must contain the following statement: "Department of the Interior (DOI) Career Transition Assistance Plan (CTAP) procedures apply in filling this vacancy. 5 CFR 330, Career Transition Assistance for Surplus and Displaced Federal Employees requires the following order of selection for this position:

- a) At bureau option personnel actions listed in 5 CFR 330.606(d);

SECTION C. SPECIAL SELECTION PRIORITY (SSP) COMPONENT

- b) The selection of an employee from within a bureau and the same LCA after eligible SSP applicants within that bureau and LCA have been given selection priority;*
- c) Any well-qualified SSP candidate who applies within the local commuting area (Surplus and displaced employees will be given equal consideration);
- d) At Bureau option, personnel actions not subject to RPL;
- e) Qualified RPL candidates in the local commuting area;
- f) At Bureau discretion, any other former displaced well-qualified DOI employee, e.g. a well-qualified RPL candidate who applies from outside the local commuting area;
- g) Well-qualified ICTAP applicants in the local commuting area;
- h) Other outside applicants (other agencies, nonstatus, etc.) .

20. *How will an employee know if he/she was selected for a position?*

The SPO is required to advise, in writing, surplus and displaced employees who apply under specific vacancy announcements, of the results of their applications.

If well-qualified, the SPO should notify the applicant as soon as possible. If another CTAP or ICTAP candidate is chosen, the applicant should also be notified of these results. If the applicant is found to be not well-qualified, a second independent review must be conducted by a senior personnel specialist (e.g., team leader, branch chief, etc.) who was not involved in the original rating process. The applicant must be notified in writing of these results.

21. *When does an employee's eligibility for SSP expire?*

An employee's eligibility for SSP expires at the earliest of:

- a) the RIF separation date, *the date of the employee's resignation from DOI, or the date of separation under adverse action procedures for declining a directed reassignment or transfer of function to another local commuting area,*

SECTION C. SPECIAL SELECTION PRIORITY (SSP) COMPONENT

b) the cancellation of the RIF separation notice or Certification of Expected Separation, *notice of proposed removal for declining a directed reassignment or transfer of function outside of the commuting area or other official agency certification identifying the employee as surplus,*

c) *when an eligible employee declines a career, career conditional, or excepted appointment (without time limit), for which the employee has applied and been rated well qualified, or*

d) when the surplus/displaced employee receives a career, career-conditional, or excepted appointment without time limit in *any agency at any grade level.*

22. What is the role and responsibility of the Servicing Personnel Office (SPO)?

The SPO must provide orientation sessions for surplus and displaced employees on the use of career transition services and the eligibility requirements for selection priority under CTAP and ICTAP. This orientation must include information on how to apply for vacancies under the CTAP and ICTAP. These sessions should be conducted at the time the SPO issues a specific RIF separation notice, Certification of Expected Separation, or other official notification.

The SPO must give each of its eligible employees notification in writing about the priority consideration available to them. This notification must contain guidance on how to apply for vacancies under CTAP, and the documentation generally required as proof of eligibility.

The SPO must be available to answer questions on the SSP and assure that the program is being implemented appropriately. The SPO must also meet the reporting requirements defined in Section F.

23. What is the employee's responsibility?

Employees must apply for vacancies within the specified time frames listed in the vacancy announcement and provide proof of program eligibility in order to receive special selection priority.

SECTION C. SPECIAL SELECTION PRIORITY (SSP) COMPONENT

24. **If a displaced employee applies for a specific vacancy within the local commuting area within specified time restrictions, furnishes proof of eligibility, is determined to be well qualified, and is referred to the selecting official, but is separated prior to a selection being made, does he/she retain SSP based on meeting all requirements prior to separation?**

Yes. An SSP eligible who meets the filing requirements (timeliness and proof of eligibility), and is determined to be well qualified as of the date the vacancy announcement closes shall be considered "a current employee" for selection purposes even though he/she may be separated prior to a selection being made.

SECTION D. REEMPLOYMENT PRIORITY LIST (RPL)

1. What is the RPL?

The RPL is a required component of the Department's career transition assistance program. It is designed in accordance with 5 CFR 330, Subpart B, and provides priority consideration to qualified departmental employees who have received a RIF separation notice or a Certification of Expected Separation or who have been separated through RIF. Employees who are fully recovered from a compensable injury after more than 1 year are also entitled to register for the RPL.

2. What is a "vacancy" for purposes of the RPL?

A competitive service position which the agency is filling, regardless of the duration of the appointment. RPL registrants must be considered for nonpermanent as well as permanent positions when they have indicated such interest on their RPL application.

3. When is use of the RPL required?

The RPL must be cleared before filling any competitive service position, regardless of whether the organization plans to make a temporary, term, or permanent appointment. Exceptions to use of RPL are as follows:

- a. When all qualified individuals on the RPL decline an offer of a specific position or fail to respond to an official agency inquiry about their availability for it.
- b. When filling a position with a current, qualified employee of the agency through:
 - (i) Detail or position change (e.g. promotion, demotion, reassignment); or
 - (ii) Conversion to competitive appointment of employees currently serving under appointments that carry a noncompetitive conversion eligibility (e.g., Veterans Readjustment Appointee, 30 percent disabled veterans, disabled employees under Schedule A appointments, Presidential Management Interns, and Student Career Experience Program participants);
 - (iii) Reappointment without a break in service to the same position currently held by an employee serving under a temporary appointment of 1 year or less (only to another temporary appointment not to exceed 1 year or less and not to a permanent appointment); or

SECTION D. REEMPLOYMENT PRIORITY LIST (RPL)

(iv) Extension of an employee's temporary appointment up to the maximum permitted by the appointing authority or as authorized by OPM.

- c. By a 30-day special needs appointment or 700-hour temporary appointment of a severely disabled or mentally restored individual, when the agency's staffing policies provide for these exceptions.

4. When is an employee eligible to be placed on the RPL?

An employee is eligible to apply for registration on the RPL through his/her SPO anytime after receipt of the Certification of Expected Separation or RIF separation notice, but not later than the 30th day after separation. A former employee who has recovered from a compensable injury after more than 1 year is also eligible.

Other eligibility requirements include:

- has received a rating above unacceptable or results not achieved as the last annual performance rating of record for Part 351 purposes;
- is/was employed in the competitive service, on a career or career-conditional appointment; and
- has not declined an offer of a position with the same type of work schedule and a representative rate at least as high as that of the position from which the employee was or will be separated (5 CFR 351, Subpart G).

5. How does an eligible employee apply for registration on the RPL?

Eligible employees should contact their SPO for registration information and assistance.

6. What is meant by "qualified" for a vacancy?

An RPL registrant is determined to be qualified for a position if he/she meets the minimum OPM qualifications standards and meets all selective factors. He/she must be physically qualified, with reasonable accommodation where appropriate, and meet any special qualifying condition that OPM has approved for the position.

SECTION D. REEMPLOYMENT PRIORITY LIST (RPL)

7. When does an eligible individual begin receiving RPL consideration?

Not later than 10 calendar days after the SPO has received the individual's application. Each Bureau/SPO is responsible for registration of eligible individuals (inputting the registration information) on the Department's RPL within the 10 day time frame.

8. When does a registered employee receive priority consideration for vacant positions for which he/she is registered?

Priority consideration **will** be given if the position is:

a) in the same local commuting area from which the employee may be or has been separated, and

b) in a series and at a grade level for which the employee is registered providing the position is at no higher grade and has no higher promotion potential than that of the position from which the employee is being or has been separated.

The RPL must be cleared only at the grade level and series of the position being filled (regardless of the full performance level) provided conditions 8(a) and 8(b) are met. It must also be cleared up to the point of making a final commitment of employment when that selection is subject to RPL procedures.

Priority consideration **will not** be given to RPL registrants if the position is filled through one of the exceptions listed in Question 3.

9. Does a registered employee receive priority consideration only in the local commuting area (LCA) from which he/she is being or has been separated?

Yes, unless eligibility is based on service in Alaska, in an overseas area, or recovery from a compensable injury. In those cases, the SPO should refer to 5 CFR 330.206 for guidance. Refer to 5 CFR 210.102(b)(9) for the definition of overseas.

10. Will an individual who is not registered on the RPL, but who presents a RIF separation notice or CES to the SPO, receive priority consideration for a vacancy?

No. Unlike the SSP component of CTAP, employees must be registered on the RPL to receive priority consideration.

SECTION D. REEMPLOYMENT PRIORITY LIST (RPL)

11. Does an employee registered on the RPL receive consideration for positions only with the same work schedule as the position from which he/she is being or has been separated?

Yes. However, if no other applicants are available for the position, consideration **may** be given to RPL registrants who have indicated an interest in work schedules other than the one from which they will be or have been separated.

12. What is the selection priority for individuals on the RPL?

Qualified individuals on the RPL within the local commuting area must be selected in subgroup order: by tenure group and veterans' preference. In the Bureau of Indian Affairs, subgroup order is tenure group, Indian preference, and veterans' preference.

13. Are there any exceptions to this order of selection?

Yes, the only exceptions are for duties that cannot be taken over without "undue interruption" to the organization. The "rule of thumb" is that an employee should be "up to speed" within 90 days.

5 CFR 351.203 defines "undue interruption" as: "...a degree of interruption that would prevent the completion of required work by the employee 90 days after the employee has been placed in a different position under this part. The 90-day standard should be considered within the allowable limits of time and quality, taking into account the pressures of priorities, deadlines, and other demands. However, a work program would generally not be unduly interrupted even if an employee needed more than 90 days after the reduction-in-force to perform the optimum quality or quantity of work. The 90-day standard may be extended if placement is made under this part to a low priority program or to a vacant position." (60 FR 3055, Jan. 13, 1995)

The Bureau/SPO shall notify in writing each individual on the RPL who is adversely affected by an appointment under this paragraph of the reasons for the exception and of the right of appeal to the MSPB.

14. Does an individual need to be "well-qualified" to receive RPL consideration?

No. A registrant need only be "qualified" to receive RPL consideration for positions within the local commuting area. (See Question 6 in this section. The "well-qualified" criterion only applies to the SSP components of CTAP/ICTAP and to those RPL registrants who apply for positions **outside the local commuting area.**)

SECTION D. REEMPLOYMENT PRIORITY LIST (RPL)

15. Can an individual on the RPL appeal a qualifications decision?

Yes; an individual may appeal to the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) under the provisions of the Board's regulations.

16. At what points must the RPL be cleared?

The RPL must be cleared after a determination is made that (a) there are no well-qualified SSP-eligible applicants in the LCA available for the position, and (b) the position will not be filled through one of the exceptions listed in Table 3. The RPL must also be cleared immediately before the point of final commitment of a competitive service position to an individual when that selection is subject to RPL procedures.

17. If a separated individual applies for a position for which he/she is not registered on the RPL, does he/she receive priority consideration?

No. He/she would only be entitled to consideration with other candidates in accordance with normal merit promotion procedures. However, at their discretion, bureaus may provide priority consideration to other former displaced well-qualified DOI employees as provided for in the order of selection. (See the answer to Question 4 of Section A.)

18. When does an individual lose his/her eligibility for RPL consideration?

Career employees retain eligibility for 2 years from the date the employee is entered on the RPL. Career conditional employees retain eligibility for 1 year from the date the employee is entered on the RPL. Loss of eligibility also occurs:

- a. When an individual declines an offer of career, career-conditional, or excepted appointment without time limitation or fails to respond to an inquiry, he/she loses consideration for all positions with a representative rate at/or below the grade of the position offered;
- b. When an individual receives a career, career-conditional, or excepted appointment without time limitation in any Executive Branch agency;
- c. When an individual declines or fails to respond to an inquiry for a permanent position with a representative rate of at least as high and with the same work schedule as that of the position from which he/she will be separated. The

written offer or inquiry must clearly state that failure to respond will result in

SECTION D. REEMPLOYMENT PRIORITY LIST (RPL)

loss of RPL consideration for that grade or higher grades, if eligible.

d. When an individual separates before (**not on**) the RIF effective date for reasons such as resignation or retirement;

e. When an individual requests removal from the RPL;

f. When an individual declines an interview; or

g. When an individual fails to appear for a scheduled interview, but only if notified in advance that this could result in removal from the RPL.

19. Does declination of nonpermanent employment effect RPL eligibility/consideration?

No.

20. How can RPL registrants be considered for positions outside their LCA?

RPL consideration is limited to the LCA. An RPL registrant who wishes to relocate should apply for departmental vacancies in other commuting areas, and provide evidence of their separation (a specific RIF separation notice or CES) along with their application. If determined to be well-qualified, selecting officials are encouraged to consider them prior to hiring an individual from outside the Department.

21. What is the role and responsibility of the SPO?

SPO's must provide information on the RPL, including appeal rights, to eligible employees in specific RIF separation notices or Certifications of Expected Separation. In addition, SPO's must assist employees in registration for the RPL, which includes identifying all series for which the employee is qualified. Within 10 calendar days of receiving an employee's application for registration or registration update, the SPO must insure the employee is actively registered on the RPL and that updates have been input and are active. SPO's will also review RPL data for accuracy, including removal of those registrants who have lost eligibility for consideration.

SPO's considering RPL registrants for vacancies are also responsible for verifying the qualifications of registrants for the positions being filled.

SECTION D. REEMPLOYMENT PRIORITY LIST (RPL)

22. What is the employee's responsibility?

The employee/former employee must initiate registration within the time limits, complete all required information on the application form, and keep the SPO informed of any changes in registration information. If interested, the employee/former employee must apply to specific vacancy announcements for positions outside the LCA.

23. What is the manager's responsibility with regard to surplus and displaced employees outside the commuting area?

Managers must follow the order of selection when filling vacancies for competitive service positions. (See Section A, Question 4.) At Bureau discretion, managers can consider any former displaced well-qualified RPL registrant from outside the LCA who applies. Managers are strongly encouraged to hire surplus and displaced former employees from outside the commuting area when relocation expenses are not an issue.

SECTION E. PRIORITY CONSIDERATION OUTSIDE THE AGENCY--THE INTERAGENCY CAREER TRANSITION PLAN (ICTAP)

1. What is a displaced employee under ICTAP?

A displaced employee as defined in 330.703(b):

- a. Current or former career or career-conditional competitive service employee, in tenure group I or II, who has received a specific separation notice *or notice of proposed removal for declining a directed reassignment or transfer of function outside of the LCA*;
- b. Former career or career-conditional employee separated because of compensable injury as provided under provisions of Subchapter I or chapter 81 of Title 5, United States Code, whose compensation has been terminated and whose former agency is unable to place as required by part 353;
- c. Former career or career-conditional competitive service employee, in tenure group I or II, who retired with a disability under sections 8337 or 8451 of Title 5, United States Code, whose disability annuity has been or is being terminated;
- d. Former career or career-conditional competitive service employee, in tenure group I or II, in receipt of RIF separation notice who retired on the effective date of the RIF or under the discontinued service retirement option;
- e. Former career or career-conditional competitive service employee, in tenure group I or II, who is separated because he/she declined transfer of function or directed reassignment to another commuting area;
- f. Former Military Reserve Technician or National Guard Technician who is receiving special disability retirement from OPM under section 8337(h) *or 8456* of Title 5, United States Code, as described in Subpart H of this part (5 CFR 330);
- g. *A current Executive Branch agency employee in the excepted service, on a non-temporary appointment, who has been given noncompetitive appointment eligibility and selection priority by statute for positions in the competitive service, and who has received a separation notice or notice of proposed removal for declining a transfer of function or directed reassignment outside of the LCA; or*

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h. A former Executive Branch agency employee in the excepted service, who has been given noncompetitive appointment eligibility and selection priority by statute for positions in the competitive service, and who has been separated through reduction in force or removed for declining a transfer of function or directed reassignment outside of the LCA.

2. Who is eligible for the ICTAP?

A displaced employee as defined in question 1 above.

3. What is meant by "well qualified" for a vacancy under ICTAP?

OPM has defined well-qualified to be generally those applicants whose knowledges, skills, and abilities clearly exceed the minimum qualification requirements but who would not necessarily meet the definition of highly or best qualified. An eligible ICTAP applicant is determined to be well-qualified if he/she meets the following:

- OPM qualifications standards for the position;
- All selective factors, where applicable;
- Special qualifying conditions that OPM has approved for the position;
- Is physically qualified with reasonable accommodation, where appropriate, to satisfactorily perform the duties of the position upon entry; and
- Is rated by the organization at least "good" on all quality ranking factors.

The well-qualified determination will be made by a personnel specialist, subject-matter expert(s) (SME), or by a merit promotion panel. *If the applicant is found to be not well-qualified, a second independent review must be conducted by a senior personnel specialist (team leader, branch chief, etc.) who was not involved in the original rating process. If the applicant is found to be not well-qualified by the second reviewer, the applicant must be notified in writing of these results* A determination of "not well-qualified" must be documented describing the job-related reason(s) for that determination.

4. How is an ICTAP-eligible employee considered for a vacancy?

The displaced employee must meet the eligibility requirements described above; must apply for the vacancy within the specified time frames; must submit proof of eligibility; and must be determined to be well qualified. The vacancy must be in the same local

SECTION E. PRIORITY CONSIDERATION OUTSIDE THE AGENCY--THE INTERAGENCY CAREER TRANSITION PLAN (ICTAP)

commuting area as the position from which the employee will be or has been separated by RIF or other separation as listed in question 1 above. The position can be at no higher grade level or have a higher full performance level than the position from which the employee will be/has been separated. He/she is eligible for placement only after SSP and RPL procedures have been applied with no successful results but before any offer of employment may be made to any other candidate from outside the Department of the Interior. The eligibility determination is subject to verification prior to a final offer.

5. *What documentation may employees submit as proof of eligibility?*

- a. RIF separation notice, or notice of proposed removal for declining a directed reassignment or transfer of function to another commuting area;*
- b. SF 50 showing separation as a result of RIF, or for declining a transfer of function or directed reassignment to another commuting area;*
- c. Official certification from an agency stating that it can't place an individual whose injury compensation has been or is being terminated;*
- d. Official notification from OPM that an individual's disability annuity has been or is being terminated; or*
- e. Official notification form Military department or National Guard Bureau that the employee has retired under 5 U.S.C. 8337(h) or 8456.*

6. *In what order do ICTAP applicants receive consideration?*

Any eligible well-qualified ICTAP applicant within the local commuting area of the vacancy may be selected for a vacancy.

7. *Do ICTAP applicants receive priority consideration when extending temporary appointments?*

Extensions of temporary or term appointments are excepted from ICTAP procedures if the original vacancy announcement specified that ICTAP candidates could apply and would be given selection priority if appropriate. The original vacancy announcement must have specified that the action could be extended without reannouncement.

SECTION E. PRIORITY CONSIDERATION OUTSIDE THE AGENCY—THE INTERAGENCY CAREER TRANSITION PLAN (ICTAP)

8. When does an employee's ICTAP eligibility expire?

A current or former Federal employee's ICTAP eligibility expires:

- a. One year after separation, except for those employees separated on or after September 12, 1995, and prior to February 29, 1996, whose, eligibility expired February 28, 1997;
- b. one year after an agency certifies that an individual under 5 CFR 330.703(b)(3) cannot be placed;
- c. one year after an individual under 5 CFR 330.703(b)(4) receives notification that his/her disability annuity has been or will be terminated;
- d. when the employee receives a career, career-conditional, or excepted appointment without time limit in any agency at any grade level;
- e. when the employee no longer meets the eligibility requirements (e.g., the employee is no longer being separated by RIF, *or under adverse action procedures for declining a transfer of function or directed reassignment outside the local commuting area*, or separates by resignation or non-discontinued service retirement prior to the RIF effective date); or
- f. *when an eligible employee declines a career, career conditional, or excepted appointment (without time limit) within DOI, for which the employee has applied and been rated well-qualified; or upon failure of the applicant to respond within a reasonable period of time to an offer or official inquiry of availability.*

9. Is an ICTAP appointment subject to any hiring freeze guidelines?

Yes, an ICTAP appointment is subject to any departmental or Bureau hiring freeze in effect at the time.

SECTION E. PRIORITY CONSIDERATION OUTSIDE THE AGENCY--THE INTERAGENCY CAREER TRANSITION PLAN (ICTAP)

10. What is the SPO responsibility?

The SPO must give employees information *in writing* about eligibility for interagency special selection priority at the time specific RIF separation notices are issued *including guidance on how to apply for vacancies under ICTAP and the documentation that is generally required. SPOs must advise in writing any ICTAP candidates of the results of their application.* SPOs must report all vacancies to OPM when accepting applications from outside the Department (including applications for temporary positions lasting *121 or more days*).

SECTION F: REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

1. Are there reporting requirements associated with these programs?

Yes. The reporting requirements vary for each program:

SSP and ICTAP - Bureaus must submit to the Director of Personnel, by December 15 of each year, information to cover the prior fiscal year for the SSP program:

- The total number of employees identified as [surplus and/or displaced] for the entire fiscal year;
- The number of selections of eligible employees under the SSP component of CTAP;
- *The number of eligible applicants found well-qualified, and not well-qualified;*
- *The number of second reviews and the results of such reviews;*
- *The number of selections of ICTAP eligible employees from other agencies;*
- *The number of selections of career and career conditional competitive service employees from other Federal agencies who are not displaced;*
- *The number of career and career conditional competitive service appointments from outside the Federal Government;*
- *The number of placements made from the RPL;*
- *The number of CTAP/ICTAP eligibles who declined job offers; and*
- The name, title, and telephone number of the Bureau employee responsible for the report.

RPL: Bureaus must submit consolidated biweekly reports to the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources including the number of vacancies under active recruitment, the names of RPL candidates actually selected, and the number of positions filled from all other recruitment sources.

SECTION F: REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

2. How will bureaus and SPOs know that the SSP is in effect within the local commuting area?

Any Bureau planning reduction-in-force activity must notify the Director of Personnel at least 15 days prior to issuing a specific RIF separation notice, CES, or other certification. The notification will provide the following information: Bureau, local commuting area of the RIF activity, the approximate number of employees to be separated, and the anticipated issue date and effective date of separation notices. The Director of Personnel will then relay this information to all bureaus so that SPOs are aware of RIF activity in their local commuting areas. SPOs may also contact other DOI offices in the local commuting area of potential vacancies to verify planned/ongoing reduction-in-force activities.