

PRIORITY PLACEMENT PROGRAM

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Attachment PPP Registration Form, CDC 0.1219

I. PURPOSE

This chapter establishes policy and procedures and assigns responsibility for the formation and implementation of the CDC¹ Priority Placement Program (PPP).

II. INTRODUCTION

In June 1995, as a result of the position classification review, the RIF Avoidance Employee Referral Program (RAERP) was developed to provide priority placement for employees whose positions were identified either for downgrade due to classification error or for abolishment as a result of reorganization.

On October 1, 1995, actions were effected to reclassify positions that were misclassified due to classification error. The incumbents of those positions are entitled to the protection of either grade or pay retention based on the specifics of the action. In accordance with HHS Instruction 335-2, employees who are placed on retained grade or retained pay must be given mandatory priority placement consideration.

CDC is committed to aggressive RIF-avoidance actions and to the repromotion of employees whose positions have been downgraded. Accordingly, RAERP coverage has been expanded to include employees whose positions have been downgraded and who have been placed on retained grade or retained pay. This expanded program is entitled the Priority Placement Program (PPP) and replaces the RAERP.

The PPP is an on-going program that matches employee and organizational needs in a systematic and equitable manner. Placements are made by reassignment or repromotion of PPP registrants into properly classified positions. When there are no PPP candidates within

¹References to CDC also apply to ATSDR.

a CIO who qualify for a specific vacancy but there are PPP candidates within the CIO who demonstrate the capability to perform effectively in the particular assignment, a Career Opportunity Training Agreement (COTA) may be used to “suspend” a portion of the qualification requirements and thus permit the placement.

The PPP candidates placed through use of a COTA begin an individual training program designed to enable the employee to fully meet the qualification requirements for the assignment at the end of the training period. While placement through PPP is mandatory, both employees and supervisors have the right to request an exception to the process.

III. REFERENCES

- A. 5 CFR 335.102: Agency authority to promote, demote, or reassign
- B. 5 CFR 536: Grade and pay retention
- C. HHS Instruction 335-2: Placement Program for Employees on Grade and Pay Retention
- D. CDC/ATSDR Merit Promotion Plan: Actions Excepted from Competitive Promotion Procedures
- E. CDC/ATSDR Pilot Staffing Program: Concept of Lateral Reassignment Process

IV. REQUIREMENTS

A. Program Eligibility:

1. An employee whose position has been formally identified for grade reduction or abolishment due to reclassification or reorganization² will be registered in the PPP until he/she is placed in a properly classified position or the position encumbered is no longer in jeopardy.
2. An employee entitled to grade retention must be registered in the PPP during the entire period of grade retention (two years). Grade retention is provided an employee whose position has been changed to a lower grade due to reclassification and **the position had been classified for at least one year**. Grade retention is also provided when an employees’s position is abolished or changed to lower grade as a result of reorganization or reduction-in-force (RIF) and **the employee held the higher grade for at least 52 consecutive weeks**.

Grade retention is granted for two years. During grade retention an employee’s pay

²The Director HRMO must certify that a position has been "formally identified" for grade reduction or abolishment.

does not change; he/she is eligible for all within grade increases, general pay increases, and locality pay increases. Also under grade retention, the retained grade is considered to be the employee's grade for all purposes (e.g., pay administration, retirement, insurance, eligibility for training or promotion) **except** that the new (lower) grade is used to determine placement rights if the employee is involved in a RIF while on grade retention.

3. An employee on pay retention is registered for PPP during the entire period of pay retention, but an employee may voluntarily withdraw from the PPP without affecting their entitlement to pay retention. An employee on pay retention receives the lower of either (a) his/her current rate of pay, or (b) 150 percent of the 10th step of the new grade. Pay retention continues for an indefinite period based on current pay and future general pay increases. An employee on pay retention receives 50 percent of comparability increases and 100 percent of locality pay increases. Pay retention is provided an employee whose coverage under grade retention has expired or whose position has been abolished or changed to lower grade as a result of either correction of classification error or RIF/reorganization and the time requirements for eligibility for grade retention were not met.
 4. Employees whose positions are not affected by abolishment or downgrade may not volunteer for PPP participation since this is a mandatory referral and placement program.
- B. Registration Process: The Human Resources Management Office (HRMO) will contact eligible employees to ensure proper registration. At a minimum, PPP enrollees will be registered for referral for positions in the same geographic area and series³ as the last position held (prior to downgrade or abolishment). PPP enrollees should be aware that if they elect to limit their registration to a single series, their potential for referral may be quite limited. Conversely, PPP enrollees may enhance their potential for placement by volunteering for referral to positions in other series for which they qualify. To assure full consideration under PPP, all enrollees should provide an updated application and a completed registration form. Failure to comply with this enrollment procedure in a timely manner may cause the loss of grade or pay retention, as appropriate.
- C. Referral Process: HRMO, Central Staffing Activity (CSA), will maintain the resource pool of PPP enrollees. Upon receipt of requests from CIOs to fill vacancies, HRMO/CSA will match requests with the PPP candidate pool and refer qualified PPP

³In instances where the last position was reclassified and the series was changed, the corrected series may be used for PPP registration purposes.

candidates for selection consideration. Candidates will be referred in CIO groupings. Qualified PPP enrollees from CIOs where vacancies exist will be given priority in the referral process. CIO officials must give priority consideration to internal CIO PPP enrollees before considering candidates from other CIOs.

- D. Interviews: Selecting officials are not required to conduct interviews when considering PPP candidates. However, when a supervisor elects to conduct selection interviews, the candidates must be treated equitably and interview questions must be based on job-related criteria. Selecting officials may elect to (1) interview all candidates referred, (2) have an interview panel conduct preliminary interviews of all candidates referred and provide the selecting official with a list of candidates determined to be “highly recommended,” or (3) have an advisory panel evaluate all applications referred and forward for final selection consideration the applications of the candidates who are determined to be “highly recommended.” To assure full consideration under PPP, all program participants are required to comply with this interview process. Failure to comply with or cooperate in this process may cause the loss of grade or pay retention, as appropriate.
- E. Selection: Candidates referred from the PPP resource pool must be selected unless an exception is granted. If more than one PPP candidate is referred, any PPP candidate may be selected based on merit principles (e.g. experience, training, etc.). Within each CIO, priority selection consideration must be given to internal candidates before considering candidates from other CIOs (see Section IV.C.).
- F. Declination of Job Offers: If an employee on either grade or pay retention declines a job offer at his/her former grade, and no exception has been granted (see Section IV K.), his/her grade or pay retention will be terminated. Declinations must be in writing and must indicate that the employee is aware that grade or pay retention benefits will be terminated.
- G. Termination of PPP eligibility: PPP participation is terminated in any one of the following circumstances.
- an employee is repromoted and is no longer on retained grade or retained pay.
 - an employee is placed in a properly classified position at the current grade.

- an employee voluntarily elects (in writing) to terminate grade retention.⁴
- an employee declines (without an authorized exception) a job offer that results in the loss of grade or pay retention.

H. Career Opportunity Training Agreement (COTA): COTA is a career development and staffing tool to be used to help fully utilize employees while continuing to meet organizational needs. COTA allows employees who do not presently meet all qualification requirements for a specific vacancy, but who demonstrate the potential to perform successfully in the position, to be placed in the position in a trainee capacity utilizing an individual training plan. Upon successful completion of the individual training plan requirements, the employee will meet all qualification requirements for the target position.

For example, if there are no PPP enrollees who qualify for a particular vacancy, the selecting official may elect to use COTA to fill vacancies. The use of a COTA is optional. However, if a COTA is used, certain rules apply. A COTA may not be used through PPP to promote an employee beyond their former grade level or to provide additional grade potential. COTA may not be used through PPP to place an individual in a supervisory position. When electing to use COTA, CIOs must give preference to internal PPP participants. A selecting official may select any PPP registrant from within his/her CIO when filling a vacancy under COTA. If no employee is available from within the CIO where the vacancy exists, the selecting official may select from among all other CIO PPP enrollees.

- I. Relocation: No employee will be required to relocate outside his/her commuting area because of PPP placement efforts. However, if an employee wishes to be considered for placement in different duty locations through the PPP, he/she should provide the specific locations to the HRMO generalist at the time of program registration.
- J. Standard Exceptions: The following are “automatic” exceptions to the PPP:
- Career promotions and other noncompetitive promotion actions are exceptions to the mandatory PPP. Employees assigned to positions with established career ladders or positions that were announced with known promotion potential may continue to be promoted until they reach the top of their respective career ladders or the identified levels of known promotion potential.

⁴This is not a likely occurrence but could occur if an individual wished to stay in his or her "downgraded" position for personal reasons.

- Reassignments within CIOs.
- Positions filled through the Career Mobility Program.
- Merit Promotion and other competitive selection procedures (e.g., USOPM/Delegated Examining Unit certificate) may be used to fill positions **if** no qualified candidate is available through PPP. If a qualified PPP registrant is available, competitive placement may not be used unless an individual exception is granted (see Section IV.K.).

K. Individual Exceptions: Individual exceptions to PPP may be requested by either the selecting official or the selected employee. All exception requests must be in writing and forwarded through the HRMO, Central Staffing Activity, Mailstop K-16. Requests for exception for employees who are on retained grade or retained pay must be addressed to the Director, CDC. These rare requests for exception must be well documented. Requests for exception for employees not on either retained grade or retained pay must be addressed to the Associate Director for Management and Operations, CDC.

To be favorably considered, requests for exception must show clearly why it is in the interest of CDC to grant an exception. Employee or management convenience or preference is not adequate justification to grant an exception. Examples of situations warranting an individual exception include (but are not limited to):

- Either the PPP referral candidate or management specifies in writing that the candidate is not sufficiently qualified to perform the duties of the new position without significant training. Such a training or “start-up” period would prove to be detrimental to the achievement of the organization’s mission.
- An individual on grade retention who will be eligible for retirement before the termination of grade retention (two years) and has indicated in writing the intention to retire.
- A PPP referral candidate who has filed an official classification appeal (either DHHS or USOPM) may request exception from mandatory placement until the appeal is adjudicated. However, such an exception will not delay the filling of any vacancy.

**CDC/ATSDR PRIORITY PLACEMENT PROGRAM
Registration Form**

PART I-Identification

1. Employee's Name: _____
2. Impacted Position (title/series/grade): _____ 3. CIO: _____
4. Duty Location: _____ 5. Daytime phone: (____) _____

PART II-Registration Request

1. Limit consideration to original/impacted/corrected series: _____ Yes _____ No
- If Yes, please indicate the series you wish to be considered for: _____
- If No, please indicate in the space below the specific series you desire. (Impacted series must be included)
- _____

2. Employee is willing to relocate: _____ Yes _____ No
- If Yes, please indicate the geographic areas that you wish to be considered for:
- _____

Part III-Certification

Section A

If you fail to respond to or decline an offer of a permanent position with a representative salary rate equal to or greater than the position for which the PPP eligibility was granted without an authorized exception, your application will be removed from the Priority Placement Program and you may lose retained grade and/or pay.

Signature of Registrant: _____ Date: _____

Section B - To be completed by HRMO

1. I certify that the above identified employee meets basic qualification requirements for the following series:
- _____
2. Form CDC 0.996 received by HRMO: _____ (date)
3. Basis for registration (CHECK ONE):
- _____ Save Grade _____ Save Pay _____ Pending Classification Review or Official Reorganization

Signature of Personnel Generalist: _____ Date: _____