



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Farm and
Foreign
Agricultural
Services

Foreign
Agricultural
Service

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TO: All FAS Employees

FROM: Michael W. Yost 
Administrator

DEC 18 2006

SUBJECT: Job Sharing Policy for the Foreign Agricultural Service

1 Overview

The Federal Employees Part-time Career Employment Act of 1978 encouraged a greater Federal commitment to utilizing employees who wish to work less than the traditional 40-hour work week. In a July 1994 memorandum executive departments and agencies were directed to establish a program to encourage and support the expansion of flexible family-friendly work arrangements, including the use of career part-time employment and job sharing.

Throughout the working life of any employee, different stages bring different responsibilities and demands at and outside of work. The Foreign Agricultural Service understands these changing lifecycle needs and offers flexible work arrangements such as part-time work and job sharing. Workplace flexibility enables employees to meet their responsibilities at and away from work, while also helping organizations attract and retain a committed, effective workforce.

2 Job Sharing Defined

Job sharing is a form of part-time employment in which one position is filled with two part-time employees.

Job sharers are treated individually as part-time employees and are subject to personnel policies on that basis.

By law, part-time employees are limited to a regular work week of no less than 16 and no more than 32 hours per week. This limitation may be temporarily suspended by the supervisor when it is necessary to carry out the agency's mission. However, a temporary increase in the tour of duty above 32 hours per week is not permitted for more than two consecutive pay periods. If the supervisor determines that the needs of the office require more than 32 hours per week for more than two pay periods, then the employing office must submit an SF-52 to change the work schedule of the part-time/job share covering each pay period affected, not to exceed 4 pay periods in a year, except in rare and unusual circumstances.

Each job sharer can work up to 32 hours per week on a prearranged schedule. If a holiday falls on a day the employee normally works, the employee is paid for the number of hours he or she was scheduled to work, not to exceed 8 hours, except for an employee on a compressed work schedule. A part-time employee is not entitled to a holiday which falls on a day the employee is not normally scheduled to work.

Part-time permanent employees are eligible, on a prorated basis, for the same benefits as full-time employees: leave, retirement, and health and life insurance coverage. Other personnel policies such as computation of pay, reductions in force, and service credit may affect part-time employment. Employees should contact HRD to discuss the impact of part-time employment on these areas.

There is no law or regulation that limits part-time employment to specific jobs or grade levels. Generally, a job share team means two employees at the same grade level, but other arrangements are possible.

Agencies may not refuse to accept applications from individuals solely because they are a member of a job sharing team. Each job sharer must be evaluated individually to determine eligibility and must be among the best qualified in order for the job share team to be selected.

3 Supervisor's Responsibilities

The supervisor shall:

determine whether the job sharers will be jointly responsible for the entire position or only for separate functions. To determine the arrangement for a particular job, the supervisor (with assistance from HRD, if needed) should examine the position description and decide which tasks will be shared.

review the specific work schedules requested by each job sharer taking into account the nature of the job and the needs of the office and the job sharing team.

establish a job sharing agreement, discuss the proposed job share arrangement with the Deputy Administrator, and seek his/her concurrence (see Appendix A).

establish and discuss performance standards with each member of a job sharing team. These may be identical if the job sharers are jointly responsible for the entire position.

evaluate each job sharer separately at the end of the rating cycle.

4 Employees' Responsibilities

The employees shall:

submit a proposed work schedule to the supervisor, not to exceed 32 hours per week for each job share team member.

review the position description and participate in the development of performance standards.

be willing to consult and cooperate as members of a team rather than as competitors, be flexible, and have a strong commitment to the job and to making the job sharing arrangement work.

ensure there is a workable communication system in place so that supervisors, co-workers, and clients can expect to communicate with both job sharers via the person on duty at the time.

if applicable, agree on the basics when sharing the same desk, telephone, computer, etc.

5 Other Considerations

The decision to approve or to terminate a job share arrangement, as well as to approve work schedules, is at the supervisor's discretion. However, the supervisor will consult with the Deputy Administrator prior to approving a job share arrangement to ensure budget issues are considered.

It should be decided in advance what will happen if one job sharer is unable to maintain the agreed-upon schedule, goes on extended leave, resigns or takes another job.

If it is necessary to end a particular job sharing arrangement, the agency may reassign one or both of the job sharers to other part-time positions or to other full-time positions.

Sample Job Sharing Agreement

Note: This is only a sample agreement. All parts of the actual agreement should be tailored to suit the needs of the office and of the employees, including the schedule.

MEMORANDUM FOR: (insert Deputy Administrator)

FROM: (insert supervisor)

SUBJECT: Proposed Job Share for Employee A and Employee B

SUMMARY

This memorandum proposes the establishment of a job share for the position of _____. The proposed job share would partner (insert employee's name) with (insert employee's name) in management of _____. In addition to strengthening the staff, this action would ensure the retention of two highly experienced employees with specialized area and program backgrounds. We ask that the action be approved under the terms and specifications suggested below.

BACKGROUND

With regard to the assignment of responsibilities and scheduled work hours, we propose the following:

(Employee's name) and (Employee's name) will each work ___ days per week (___ total hours) with Wednesday as the overlapping day of the week.

(Employee's name) will be assigned primary responsibility for _____.
(Employee's name) will have secondary responsibility for _____.

(Employee's name) will be assigned primary responsibility for _____.
(Employee's name) will have secondary responsibility for the _____ Program.

On the overlapping work day, employee responsibilities will not differ from the other days of the week. Each will report directly to the supervisor on activities that relate to their primary program assignments. In the absence of one job share partner on the overlapping work day (or any other day), accountability for the secondary program assigned is automatically assumed by the partner present.

All time and attendance recordkeeping and reporting will be handled by the time and attendance clerk for the unit, with approval of the supervisor.

In the event that one of the job share partners decides to resign or transfer from the unit, the supervisor will assess the needs of the office, determine a course of action from the following options, and inform the remaining job share partner of his/her decision:

- 1) Advertise the position as a part-time job share. In the event that the position cannot be filled with another job sharer, it may revert to a full-time position with the requirement that the remaining job share partner will assume the full time requirements of the above position, including a 40-hour work week.
- 2) Allow the remaining job share partner to continue working the same part-time schedule.
- 3) Convert the remaining job share partner to a full-time work schedule.
- 4) Adjust the work schedule of the remaining job share partner to meet the office needs.

DISCUSSION OF CREDENTIALS

The candidates for this proposed job share are both exceptional employees with crucial backgrounds and experience and excellent performance records.

(Employee's name) has been in the unit since March, 1990. He/she holds an MA in public administration and joined the Agency as a Presidential Management Intern in 1980, rotating through a number of Agency offices until he/she joined this unit. He/she has a wide general knowledge of Agency exchange programs and is the expert on these programs.

(Employee's name) holds an MA in Public Administration and joined the Agency as a Presidential Management Intern. He/she started work in the agency as an economist, developing an impressive background and expertise in the area which lead to her/his promotion to senior analyst. In his/her current position, she/he has accrued wide experience with its programs, making her particularly valuable to the unit which has expanding programs.

ACTION REQUESTED

That management concur with the establishment of a job share for the position under the conditions outlined above.

CONCUR _____ **Date** _____

DISCUSS _____