

Reclamation Manual

Directives and Standards

Subject:	Hiring Process-Delegated Examining
Purpose:	This Directive and Standard (D&S) establishes procedures for the hiring process that address barriers to achieving Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) hiring reform initiatives and the 80-day hiring process model. The benefit of this D&S is to establish a collaborative process between human resources (HR) professionals and hiring officials with open communications and shared accountability toward achieving hiring reform.
Authority:	Code of Federal Regulations (5 CFR 332); Federal Register, Vol. 75, No. 93, pp. 27157-27159, <i>Improving the Federal Recruitment and Hiring Process</i>
Approving Official:	Director, Policy and Administration
Contact:	Reclamation Program Group, Human Resources (HR) 84-58100

1. **Introduction.** This D&S is intended to establish hiring process procedures to reform the Bureau of Reclamation's hiring system and to further strengthen its workforce. On May 11, 2010, the President issued a memorandum providing direction to agencies to overhaul the recruitment and hiring of civilian employees. Hiring reform will enable agencies to select high-quality candidates efficiently and quickly and also require hiring officials to take a leadership role in recruiting and selecting employees from all segments of society. This D&S will identify components of Reclamation's hiring process and will implement hiring reform with the goal of establishing and reducing the hiring process to 80 calendar days.
2. **Applicability.** This D&S applies to HR professionals and hiring officials filling positions with new hires from outside the Federal Government into the competitive service under the agency's delegated examining authority (5 USC 1104(a)(2)).
3. **Definitions.**
 - A. **Assessment Tools.** Measurement tools used to screen, rate, and rank candidates; and to make consistent, accurate, and merit-based distinctions among candidates.
 - B. **Category Rating.** A process of evaluating qualified eligibles by quality categories rather than by assigning individual numeric scores. HR professionals assess candidates against job-related criteria and then place them into two or more quality categories. Synonymous with alternative rating as described at 5 USC 3319.
 - C. **Certificate of Eligibles.** A document referred to the selecting official containing the names of the highest-ranked eligible candidates.

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- D. **Competency.** A combination of skills, knowledge, abilities, behaviors, and other characteristics that contribute to outstanding performance in a particular job.
- E. **Electronic Questionnaires for Investigations Processing (e-QIP).** e-QIP is a system that allows applicants to electronically enter, update, and transmit their personal investigative data over a secure Internet connection to their employing agency for review and approval.
- F. **Federal Personnel/Payroll System (FPPS).** The Department of the Interior's automated system used for personnel record keeping and payroll.
- G. **Hiring Management System (HireMe).** Automated recruitment/staffing tool used by Reclamation.
- H. **Hiring Process Roadmap.** OPM's Hiring Process Roadmap illustrating the 80-day hiring process goal.
- I. **Interview Panel.** One or more individuals tasked with interviewing applicants.
- J. **Job Analysis.** Identifies the competencies/knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) directly related to performance on the job. It is a systematic procedure for gathering, documenting, and analyzing information about the content, context, and requirements of the job. It demonstrates that there is a clear relationship between the tasks performed on the job and the competencies/KSAs required to perform the tasks.
- K. **Job Opportunity Announcements (JOAs).** Vacancy announcements.
- L. **Manager Satisfaction Survey.** On-line survey used to gauge managers' satisfaction with the hiring process each time they complete an action on a certificate of eligibles.
- M. **Public Status Codes.** A feature of HireMe that displays the applicant status in USAJOBS, the Federal Government's official source for Federal jobs and employment information online at <http://www.usajobs.gov/>.
- N. **Quality Categories.** Groupings of eligibles with similar levels of competencies, for example, "Best Qualified," "Well Qualified," and "Qualified."
- O. **Request for Eligibles.** A request to recruit for a single position in FPPS which generates a Request for Personnel Action (RPA), also called a Personnel Action Request or Standard Form 52. To track accountability toward the 80-day goal, the request must be generated as a "Request for Eligibles".

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4. Responsibilities.

- A. **Commissioner and Directors.** The Commissioner and Directors are responsible for implementing hiring reform initiatives and for ensuring recruitment and hiring are based on merit after fair and open competition.
- B. **Hiring Officials.** Hiring officials are responsible for being fully involved in the hiring process, including planning current and future workforce requirements, identifying skills required for the job, and engaging actively in the recruitment and interviewing process. Hiring officials are responsible for hiring highly-qualified employees and supporting their successful transition into the Federal service. Hiring officials must ensure the recruitment and selection process are carried out in a timely manner and all actions are consistent with merit system principals and applicable laws and regulations.
- C. **HR Professionals.** HR professionals are responsible for advising and collaborating with hiring officials on the hiring process and providing training to hiring officials on efficient, timely ways to recruit and hire well-qualified individuals. HR professionals will establish a method for tracking each hiring action and notify applicants of their application status.

5. Hiring Process Procedures.

- A. **Clearance Process for Positions Graded GS-14 and Higher.** Request prior approval for filling positions graded GS-14 and higher, or with full performance level at GS-14 or higher in accordance with Reclamation Manual (RM) D&S, *Clearance Process for Positions Graded GS-14 and Higher*, [HRM 04-03](#). HRM 04-03 does not amend or replace any approval process requirements for specific positions such as public affairs, senior executives, and others which require Departmental approval.
- B. **Position Descriptions.** Position descriptions must be classified before submission of the “Request for Eligibles” personnel action in FPPS and will be included with the RPA to fill a vacancy. Requests for position descriptions to be classified will be submitted to HR using an RPA for “Position Action Only” or other means for tracking classification workload.
- C. **Recruitment.** A “Request for Eligibles” personnel action will be submitted after the position description is classified. The RPA in FPPS is Step 1 of the Hiring Process in order to track successful adherence to the 80-day goal for the hiring process. To ensure data integrity, the RPA for filling a vacancy must be submitted as a “Request for Eligibles” personnel action.
- D. **Job Analysis.**
 - (1) **JOAs/Vacancy Announcements.** Hiring officials provide the necessary job analysis information for the vacancy. HR professionals will prepare vacancy

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announcements using the vacancy template for streamlined JOAs. Boilerplate language applying to all positions shall not be changed. Vacancy announcements will be five pages or less.

- (2) **Open Period.** Hiring officials in consultation with HR professionals will determine the open period for each vacancy announcement. There is no minimum open period for vacancy announcements. An adequate open period may vary depending on a recruitment plan, the nature of the position, promotion potential, available labor market, and other considerations. An open period of less than 5 workdays must have clearly documented reasons in the HR vacancy announcement case file for reconstruction purposes. Reasons must be based on job-related factors, such as the number and type of jobs to be filled, labor market conditions, and recent experience filling similar positions.
- (3) **Quality Categories.** Hiring officials in consultation with HR professionals must determine the quality categories through job analysis. The categories must be written to reflect the requirements to perform the job successfully and to distinguish differences in the quality of candidates' job-related competencies or KSAs.
- (4) **Assessment Tools.** Assessment tools must be developed prior to posting the JOA. Essay-style questions are not allowed in the initial application process. Preliminary assessment of qualities and competencies will differentiate candidates who are recommended to move forward in the selection process. Essay-style questions and additional assessment tools are allowed after initial application if their use is identified in the JOA.
- (5) **Pre-Recruitment Activities.** Hiring officials and HR professionals will develop an agreed-upon timeline for each RPA to fill a vacancy. Hiring officials and HR professionals will schedule dates for issuing the JOA, issuing the certificate of eligibles, reviewing applications, conducting reference checks, scheduling interviews, interviewing, and other selection activities as deemed necessary. HR professionals and hiring officials will work together to shorten the hiring process with the goal to achieve OPM's 80-day hiring model. Equal employment opportunity and/or civil rights professionals will consult with HR professionals and hiring officials to identify outreach and recruitment sources for under-represented groups, providing information to hiring officials, as appropriate, in identifying ways to remove barriers to diversity, and providing specific data on their organization's parity needs, see RM D&S, *Pre-Hiring Consultation*, [HRM 04-04](#).

E. **Status Notification.** HR professionals will establish Public Status Codes to ensure applicants are notified of their status at the following major points in the hiring process:

- (1) application received complete/incomplete,

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- (2) minimum qualification met/not met,
 - (3) eligible-referred/not referred, and
 - (4) selected/not selected.
- F. **Assessment and Ranking.** Candidates will be assessed against at least two previously defined quality categories. Assessed applicants will be placed in the appropriate category and ranked according to preference eligibility and non-preference eligibility. HR professionals must send all eligible candidates in the highest qualified category on the certificate of eligibles to the hiring official.
- G. **Life of Certificate of Eligibles.** Certificates will be issued for 30 calendar days with no more than one 30-calendar-day extension. Certificates may be reissued for up to 180 days for additional selections.
- H. **Manager Satisfaction Survey.** Hiring officials are required to complete an on-line Manager Satisfaction Survey for each certificate of eligibles. A link to the survey is provided in the instructions that accompany each email containing the certificate of eligibles.
- I. **Making Job Offers.** All final job offers are made by HR professionals. Hiring officials may make tentative job offers only with prior approval by HR.
- J. **Security Investigations.** An e-QIP background investigation must be completed for all applicants selected for Federal employment. Reference RM D&S, *Personnel Security and Suitability*, [SLE 01-01](#), for the requirements and procedures for initiating and adjudicating background investigations.
6. **Resources.** Additional information on recruitment is located in the HR Toolbox for Supervisors/Managers on Reclamation's HR Intranet site.