




The Deputy Secretary of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

January 6, 2010

MEMORANDUM TO DEPARTMENTAL ELEMENTS

FROM: DANIEL B. PONEMANO 

SUBJECT: Improving the Headquarters' Hiring Processes

Secretary Chu has set forth an ambitious agenda for the Department of Energy in order to build a clean, secure, and prosperous energy future for our Nation. Fulfilling that agenda requires that we act with urgency and purpose. Success will depend largely on our ability to recruit and retain a dedicated, high-performing workforce.

To accomplish our expanded mission, the Department will hire hundreds of new employees during the next year. At Headquarters, we must make certain that we have the capacity to hire staff quickly yet wisely. We have already begun to strengthen the Headquarters' hiring process by launching such initiatives as accelerated procedures for hires pursuant to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and a pilot program using another Federal agency to provide hiring services.

To build upon these efforts, effective immediately, we will institute several reforms in order to expedite the hiring process. These reforms address four major challenges: workload distribution, workflow, enhanced use of technology, and executive-level hiring. The approved measures are set forth in Attachment A. All reforms and measures will be implemented in accordance with the Headquarters Collective Bargaining Agreement.

The Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (OCHCO) will lead the implementation of these reforms within the timeframes indicated on the attachment. All Headquarters' organizations have a shared responsibility in the hiring process and are therefore expected to work with the OCHCO to make needed improvements. The OCHCO will provide me with weekly status reports to monitor our improvement efforts.

Once a Chief Human Capital Officer is appointed, more systemic, long-term reforms will be instituted to strengthen further our capacity to recruit and sustain talent. Until then, let us work to assure that these measures will streamline and expedite the process to secure the personnel we need to achieve our strategic goals.

Attachments



IMPROVING HEADQUARTERS HIRING PROCESS SHORT-TERM MEASURES

Workload Distribution

- No later than March 1, 2010, a six-month pilot will be implemented providing Headquarters' programs the authority to process hiring actions in the field. They may immediately move all of their hiring work (excluding SES, SL, ST, EJ, or EK) to their field offices.
- No later than March 1, 2010, a team of HR professionals and contractors will be mobilized to complete the remaining headquarters hiring actions that have been submitted.
- No later than March 2010, the OCHCO will identify resources required to increase audit capacity to monitor, review, and evaluate the hiring processes and hiring actions completed at field HR servicing offices under pilot program(s).

Workflow Improvement

- Beginning in February 2010, a streamlined hiring process will be instituted within all HQ organizations (including pilot programs) with reduced timeframes for processing personnel actions in accordance with the flowchart in Attachment B. Efficiencies will be gained primarily by standardizing documentation associated with the hiring process and establishing expectations for timeliness. Specific actions include the following:
 - Beginning February 2010, application requirements will be simplified by limiting the number of questions in vacancy announcements.
 - Beginning February 2010, a significantly streamlined background investigation process will be developed to allow new employees to begin work following a preliminary security investigation and prior to completion of a full investigation.
 - By April 2010, OCHCO and responsible program offices will develop standardized position descriptions for the most commonly advertised job series and grade levels to create a fully-functioning position description library.
 - By April 2010, OCHCO and responsible program offices will develop standard job analyses, application questions, vacancy announcements and suggested interview questions for the most commonly advertised positions and made available in electronic format.
- Beginning February 2010, additional hiring strategies, including open-continuous vacancy announcements, will be utilized to attract a larger pool of qualified candidates.
- Beginning February 2010, a "high touch" customer service model will be implemented in which human resources staff members proactively reach out to their customers on a routine basis to identify needs and address concerns.

- By March 2010, performance metrics will be included in the performance plans of responsible program managers, hiring managers, human resources managers and staff that address the average length of time to process hiring actions. In addition, customer feedback will be considered in evaluating performance.

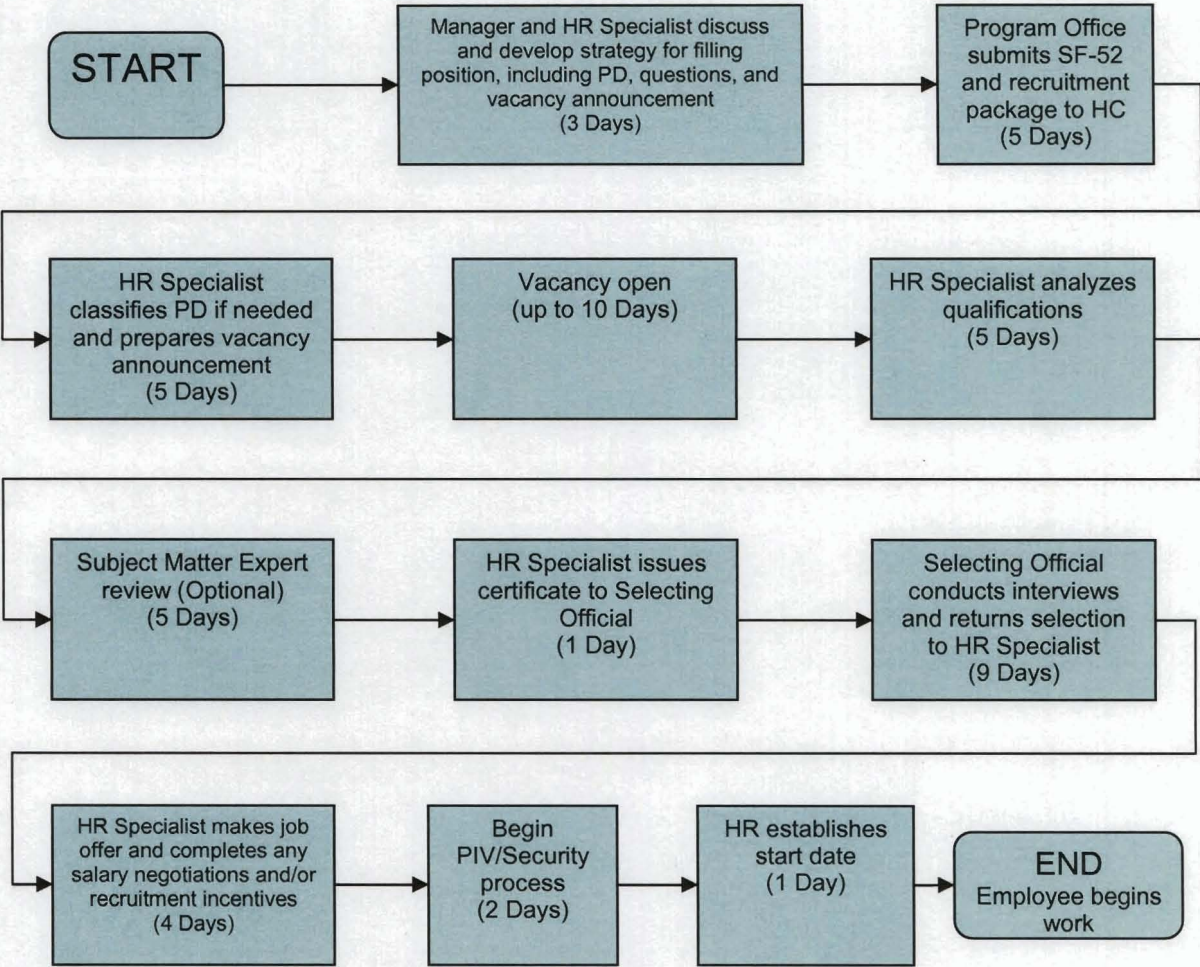
Technology Improvement

- By March 2010, an automated tracking system will be deployed to monitor timeframes for completing hiring actions and provide tracking reports regularly to the Chief of Staff and program customers.

Executive Hiring and Other Improvements

- By February 2010, performance standards will be established for each step in the executive hiring process.
- By February 2010, additional Senior Level (SL) and Scientific/Professional (ST) allocations will be requested from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) which will allow the Department to hire additional staff at the executive level.
- By February 2010, the Human Resources office, in collaboration with customer organizations, will submit a request to OPM to obtain approval for DOE use of special hiring flexibilities already supported by OPM.
- By February 2010, an aggressive corporate recruiting initiative will be launched.

NOTIONAL HIRING PROCESS



TOTAL DAYS TO HIRE FROM BEGINNING = 50 DAYS