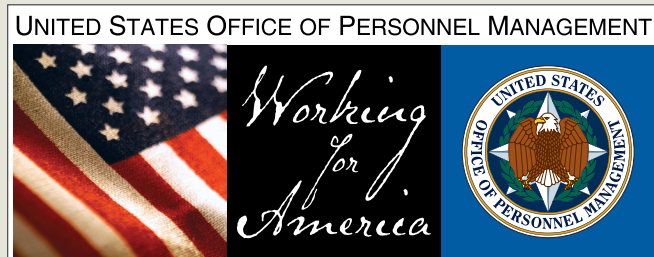


**REPORT
ON
AGENCIES' USE OF
HIRING FLEXIBILITIES**

May 2008



Report on Agencies' Use of Hiring Flexibilities

**U.S Office of Personnel Management
Strategic Human Resources Policy Division
Center for Talent and Capacity Policy
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**MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE
U.S. OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT**

I am pleased to share this report on *Federal Agencies' Use of Hiring Flexibilities*. I want to thank the Chief Human Capital Officer agencies for their participation and commitment to improving the Federal hiring process. The purpose in collecting information on the agencies' use of hiring flexibilities was to obtain baseline data on the use, effectiveness, and efficiency of hiring flexibilities, and to use this information when deciding whether or not to make changes to Government-wide policies on these flexibilities.

The demographics of the Federal workforce are changing, with roughly 60 percent of the workforce expected to be eligible for retirement over the next decade. This presents an opportunity for all agencies to reshape the future Federal workforce. The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) continues to provide agencies with tools to assist them in educating supervisors and managers on using hiring flexibilities. Those flexibilities include category rating, veterans appointing authorities, direct-hire authority, student employment, and excepted-service appointments.

In addition, OPM implemented numerous recruiting and hiring initiatives over the past two years to maintain the Federal Government's position as an employer of choice in a highly competitive market. OPM introduced the Career Patterns Initiative— a 21st century approach to recruiting talent, launched televised Federal job recruitment advertisements featuring Federal employees in media markets across the country, and promoted Federal employment widely, including areas with diverse populations of potential applicants.

I encourage agencies to continue using hiring flexibilities, when appropriate, to hire top talent.

Linda M. Springer
Director

Executive Summary

A primary responsibility and continuing concern of Federal supervisors and managers is hiring qualified people into the Federal service. Agencies which claim the traditional ranking and selection procedures of the Federal hiring process are the main barrier to attracting qualified candidates and filling positions with the people they need to carry out their missions.

To address these concerns, as part of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, Congress authorized two new hiring flexibilities: category rating, an alternative ranking and selection procedure; and Direct-Hire Authority which allows agencies to appoint qualified candidates directly to jobs for which the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) determines there is a severe shortage of candidates or a critical hiring need. These new hiring flexibilities, coupled with those already in existence, have the potential to improve agencies' ability to attract qualified applicants.

As a result of input from the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee and the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, the Office of Management and Budget provided funding for OPM to examine the extent to which agencies use existing hiring flexibilities. To accomplish this, OPM conducted an on-line survey to obtain baseline data on the use, effectiveness, and efficiency of hiring flexibilities, including agency evaluation of OPM's guidance on the appropriate use of these flexibilities. In addition, researchers retrieved data from OPM's Central Personnel Data File (CPDF) on the agencies' use of appointing authorities for fiscal years 2004 through 2007.

This report provides survey findings to participating Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) agencies on their use of eight appointing authorities and category rating. Special appointing authorities allow agencies to appoint candidates when use of traditional competitive procedures is not feasible or practical. The eight appointing authorities¹ included in this report are:

1. Direct-Hire Authority
2. Federal Career Intern Program
3. Presidential Management Fellows Program
4. Individuals with Mental Retardation, Severe Physical Disabilities, or Psychiatric Disabilities
5. Student Career Experience Program
6. Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998, as amended
7. Veterans Recruitment Appointment
8. 30-Percent or More Disabled Veterans Appointing Authority

The following eight CHCO agencies² participated in the survey:

- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Defense

¹ Category Rating and the eight listed appointing authorities are referred to collectively in this report as "hiring flexibilities."

² Participating agencies account for the majority of the Federal workforce represented by membership on the CHCO Council.

- Department of Homeland Security
- Department of the Interior
- Department of the Treasury
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Social Security Administration

OPM sent an on-line survey to a random sample of supervisors/managers, and human resources (HR) practitioners at these eight CHCO agencies to obtain baseline data about agencies' experiences using the hiring flexibilities. The response rate was 28 percent for supervisors/managers and 32 percent for HR practitioners.

Survey results indicate:

- When hiring flexibilities are used instead of traditional ranking and selection procedures, both supervisors/managers and HR practitioners rated these flexibilities as more efficient;
- The majority of supervisors/managers who used hiring flexibilities indicated they are more effective in producing quality hires than traditional ranking and selection procedures;
- The majority of respondents are not using OPM resources (i.e., Hiring Flexibilities Resource Center, Presidential Management Fellows Program website) or other guidance about these hiring flexibilities;
- Supervisors/managers rely most on their HR staff for information on these hiring flexibilities; and
- Participating agencies have provided a modest amount of training on these hiring flexibilities to their supervisors/managers and HR staff.

I. Background

A primary responsibility and continuing concern of Federal supervisors and managers is hiring qualified people into the Federal Government. Agencies often claim the traditional ranking and selection procedures of the Federal hiring process are the main barrier to attracting qualified candidates and filling positions with the people they need to carry out their missions. To address these concerns, as part of the Homeland Security Act of 2002,³ Congress authorized two new hiring flexibilities: Direct-Hire Authority and category rating.

Direct-Hire Authority⁴ (DHA) allows agencies to hire qualified candidates, after public notice has been given, directly into the competitive service without conducting a formal rating and ranking process. This appointing authority is limited to occupations for which the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) determines there is a severe shortage of candidates or a critical hiring need. Congress enacted stringent conditions for use of this authority because it suspends veterans' preference requirements. OPM has approved 14 agency-specific DHAs. OPM has also approved four governmentwide DHAs,⁵ which all Federal agencies may use.

Category rating,⁶ an alternative set of ranking and selection procedures, is part of the competitive examining process. Use of category rating increases the number of eligible candidates from which a selecting official may choose while preserving veterans' preference rights. Applicants who meet minimum qualification requirements for the position and whose job-related competencies or knowledge, skills, and abilities have been assessed are ranked by being placed in one of two or more pre-defined quality categories instead of being ranked by individual numeric score. The names of all eligible candidates in the highest quality category are referred to the selecting official for consideration. The selecting official selects from among candidates in the highest quality category without being limited to the top three eligible candidates. Preference eligibles are listed ahead of non-preference eligibles within each quality category. Absolute veterans' preference is given within each quality category.

Key findings from recent studies on hiring flexibilities include the following:

³ Title XIII of the Homeland Security Act of 2002. Pub. L. No. 107-297 §§1301-3 (Nov. 25, 2002). Codified at 5 U.S.C. §3319

⁴ 5 U.S.C. § 3304(a)(3)

⁵ Governmentwide (GW) Direct-Hire Authorities are: GW-001- Issued in June 2003, for vacancies in all grade levels and all locations for the following medical occupations: Diagnostic Radiological Technologist, Medical Officer, Nurse, and Pharmacist. GW-002- Issued in June 2003, for Information Technology Management (Information Security) vacancies in grade levels GS-9 and above, at all locations. GW-003- Issued in July 2003, for positions involved in Iraqi Reconstruction Efforts requiring fluency in Arabic or other related Middle Eastern languages at all Wage Grade levels, single-grade interval occupations in the General Schedule (GS), and two-grade interval GS occupations at GS-9 and above. GW-004- Effective August 2005 for Federal Acquisition positions covered under title 41, United States Code 433(g)(1)(A). This authority is based on a severe shortage of candidates, with an expiration date of September 30, 2012.

⁶ Interim regulations for Category Rating were published in 2003. Final regulations were published in the Federal Register on June 15, 2004.

- In 2003, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) reported that the largest Federal agencies describe the competitive hiring process as inefficient or ineffective. A key problem identified in the report was the “under-utilization of human capital flexibilities.”⁷ Based on interviews with the CHCO Council members, GAO reported agencies were making limited use of new hiring flexibilities, namely Direct-Hire Authority and category rating.
- In 2004, GAO assessed the extent to which Federal agencies were using category rating and Direct-Hire Authority and concluded little use is made of the new hiring flexibilities.⁸ CHCO Council members cited several barriers to using the hiring flexibilities, including: (1) rigorous regulations, (2) lack of OPM guidance on their use, (3) lack of agencies’ policies and procedures on their use, and (4) concerns about potential inconsistencies when these flexibilities are utilized.
- In 2004, OPM published a report⁹ that concluded Federal agencies were not using all the hiring tools available to them.
- A Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) report¹⁰ on Federal Hiring recommended streamlining and consolidating appointing authorities to simplify hiring procedures. In the 2006 report MSPB stated that “a smaller number of flexible authorities will make the process more transparent and understandable. Coupled with valid assessment processes, they can speed the process while still ensuring merit.”
- A recent OPM review¹¹ indicates the use of category rating has increased over the past three years. Governmentwide, 26 agencies (including some of the agencies participating in the study) have established policies implementing category rating and are using it.
- A recent OPM review¹² on Direct-Hire Authority found this authority to be a useful hiring mechanism for agencies that meet the statutory standard. Agencies have hired more individuals utilizing the governmentwide authorities.
- An MSPB report¹³ on Federal hiring found “a growing number of new hires are being brought into the civil service through excepted service authorities, such as the Federal Career Intern Program.”

Table 1: Appointing Authorities Covered in the Hiring Flexibilities Study

⁷ Additional Human Capital Flexibilities Are Needed, GAO-03-1024T, July 2003.

⁸ Increasing Agencies’ Use of New Hiring Flexibilities, GAO-04-959T, July 2004.

⁹ “Working for America: Agency Survey on Improving Federal Hiring”, June 2004.

¹⁰ Reforming Federal Hiring: Beyond Faster and Cheaper, U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, September 2006.

¹¹ In 2007, OPM conducted a review on the use of Category Rating.

¹² In 2007, OPM conducted a review on the use of Direct-Hire Authority.

¹³ Attracting the Next Generation: A Look at Federal Entry-Level New Hires, U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, February 2008.

Appointing Authority	Purpose	Authorizing Provision
Direct-Hire Authority	Allows agencies to hire qualified candidates, after public notice has been given, directly into competitive service positions without conducting a formal rating and ranking process. Limited to occupations for which OPM determines there is a severe shortage of candidates or a critical hiring need.	5 U.S.C. 3304 5 CFR 337
Federal Career Intern Program	Allows excepted service appointment of individuals to 2-year internships that provide formal training and development assignments. Interns who successfully complete the program are eligible to be noncompetitively converted to the competitive civil service.	5 U.S.C. 3302 5 CFR 213.3202 (o) 5 CFR 302 E.O. 13162
Presidential Management Fellows Program	Allows excepted service appointment of qualified individuals from graduate programs in the nation's colleges and universities.	5 U.S.C. 3302 5 CFR 213.3102 (ii) and (jj)
Individuals with Mental Retardation, Severe Physical Disabilities, or Psychiatric Disabilities	Allows excepted service appointment of individuals with severe physical, psychiatric, or mental disabilities that limit one or more life activities. Individuals may be appointed without public notice and an agency may provide reasonable accommodations to help an individual perform the job. Individuals may be converted to the competitive civil service.	5 U.S.C. 2103 5 CFR 213.3102 (u) E.O. 12125, as amended
Student Career Experience Program	Allows temporary excepted service appointments of students to positions related to their academic fields of study. Students who meet the requirements of the program may be noncompetitively converted to the competitive civil service.	5 U.S.C. 2103 5 CFR 213.3202 (b) E.O. 12015
Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998, as amended	Allows appointment of qualified veterans to the competitive civil service who successfully compete under merit promotion procedures when an agency recruits for a position outside its own workforce.	VEOA of 1998, as amended, (Public Law 105-339) 5 CFR 315.611 5 CFR 335.106
Veterans Recruitment Appointment	Allows temporary hiring of eligible veterans to positions for which they are qualified up to the GS-11 level without issuing a vacancy announcement. Veterans appointed under this authority may be noncompetitively appointed to the competitive civil service if they meet specified conditions.	Jobs for Veterans Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-288) 5 U.S.C. 3320 5 CFR 302
30-Percent or More Disabled Veterans Appointing Authority	Allows temporary hiring of 30% or more disabled veterans to positions for which they are qualified at any grade level without using a vacancy announcement. Veterans selected under this authority may be noncompetitively appointed to the competitive civil service if they meet specified conditions.	5 U.S.C. 2103 5 U.S.C. 3112 5 CFR 315.707 5 CFR 316.302 5 CFR 316.402

II. Methodology

The study consisted of two versions of an on-line survey sent to employees at eight of the largest CHCO agencies to collect baseline data on agency use of hiring flexibilities. OPM sent one version to supervisors/managers and another version to HR practitioners. Both surveys covered agency training on the use of hiring flexibilities, sources of information agencies use on these flexibilities, and their perceptions of the efficiency (i.e., faster in filling jobs) and effectiveness (i.e., provides better candidates) of these flexibilities. The survey for HR practitioners also included a question about advising supervisors/managers on the use of these hiring flexibilities.

The survey focused on the use of category rating and the following eight appointing authorities:

- Direct-Hire Authority
- Federal Career Intern Program
- Presidential Management Fellows Program
- Schedule A-Individuals with Mental Retardation, Severe Physical Disabilities, or Psychiatric Disabilities
- Student Career Experience Program
- Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998, as amended
- Veterans Recruitment Appointment
- 30-Percent or More Disabled Veterans Appointing Authority

The following eight CHCO agencies participated in the survey:

- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Defense
- Department of Homeland Security
- Department of the Interior
- Department of the Treasury
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Social Security Administration

As part of the survey administration process and data analysis, OPM:

- Used a sampling plan to randomly choose supervisors/managers and HR practitioners from the eight CHCO agencies to participate in the survey. OPM worked with representatives from each of the eight participating agencies to coordinate survey administration
- Sent the survey to participants via e-mail with a link to the on-line survey. The survey administration period was March 19–30, 2007. Participants received an e-mail every two days reminding them to complete the survey. The response rate across the eight agencies was 28 percent for supervisors/managers and 32 percent for HR practitioners

- Developed a plan for weighting the survey results to adjust for the differences between the survey population and the respondent group

III. Data on the Use of Hiring Flexibilities

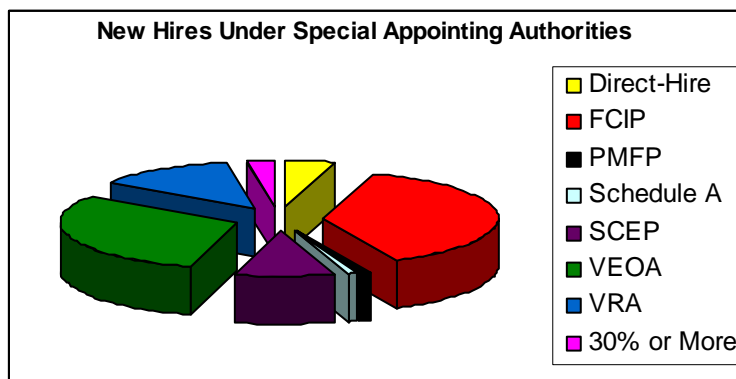
In addition to the survey, researchers retrieved data from OPM's Central Personnel Data File (CPDF) for fiscal years (FY) 2004 through 2007 on the use of hiring flexibilities.

Table 2: Governmentwide Use of Appointing Authorities*

Appointing Authority	New Hires FY 2004	New Hires FY 2005	New Hires FY 2006	New Hires FY 2007
Direct-Hire Authority	202	1,077	1,204	2,105
Federal Career Intern Program (FCIP)	6,783	10,369	12,068	16,755
Presidential Management Fellows Program (PMFP)**	377	346	348	392
Schedule A - Individuals with Disabilities	468	468	450	453
Student Career Experience Program (SCEP)	5,228	4,590	4,360	3,913
Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998, as amended (VEOA)	10,703	12,839	13,004	13,431
Veterans Recruitment Appointment (VRA)	4,542	5,600	5,553	5,488
30% or More Disabled Veterans Appointing Authority	1,075	1,294	1,287	1,152
Number of total new hires using these eight appointing authorities	29,378	36,583	38,274	43,689
Percent of total new hires using these eight appointing authorities	12%	16%	16%	18%
Total Number of New Hires	235,969	234,116	237,282	240,484

*Source: CPDF as of September 30 of each year. This is all new hires, including temporary, seasonal, intermittent, and full-time permanent.

** Governmentwide cap of 400 hires per year was removed in 2005.



Highlights of CPDF Data

- In FY 2007, 18.2 percent of all new hires were attributed to the eight special appointing authorities
 - Federal Career Intern Program 7.0%
 - Veterans Employment Opportunity Act 5.6%
 - Veterans Recruitment Appointment 2.3%
 - Student Career Experience Program 1.6%
 - Direct-Hire Authority .9%
 - 30% or More Disabled Veterans Appointing Authority .5%
 - Schedule A-Individuals with Disabilities .2%
 - Presidential Management Fellows Program .16%

- Six of the eight special appointing authorities showed an increase in the number of new hires between FY 2004 and FY 2007
 - Direct-Hire Authority 942%
 - Federal Career Intern Program 147%
 - Veterans Employment Opportunity Act 25.5%
 - Veterans Recruitment Appointment 20.8%
 - 30% or More Disabled Veterans Appointing Authority 7.2%
 - Presidential Management Fellows Program 4.0%

- Two of the eight special appointing authorities showed a decrease in the number of new hires between FY 2004 and FY 2007
 - Student Career Experience Program (25.2%)
 - Schedule A-Individuals with Disabilities (3.2%)

- Five of the eight special appointing authorities showed an increase in the number of new hires from FY 2006 to FY 2007
 - Direct-Hire 74.8%
 - Federal Career Intern Program 38.8%
 - Presidential Management Fellows Program 12.6%
 - Veterans Employment Opportunities Act 3.3%
 - Schedule A-Individuals with Disabilities .7%

- Three of the eight special appointing authorities showed a decrease in the number of new hires from FY 2006 to FY 2007
 - 30% or More Disabled Veterans Appointing Authority (10.5%)
 - Student Career Experience Program (10.3%)
 - Veterans Recruitment Appointment (1.2%)

Direct-Hire Authority
(CPDF Data and Survey Results)

- .9% of FY 2007 new hires were direct-hire
- 942% increase in direct hires between FY 2004 and FY 2007
- 74.8% increase in direct hires from FY 2006 to FY 2007
- 30.3% of supervisors/managers received direct-hire training, with 46.3% satisfied/very satisfied with the training
- 36.2% of supervisors/managers used direct-hire authority for entry-level jobs: 61.1% find it more effective (i.e., provides better candidates) and 56.5% find direct-hire more efficient (i.e., faster in filling jobs)
- 86.4% of supervisors/managers did not use governmentwide direct-hire authorities
- 81.2% of supervisors/managers did not use agency-specific direct-hire authorities
- 98.3% of supervisors/managers did not use direct-hire authority for GS-1102 acquisition positions (non-Defense)
- 60.3% of supervisors/managers do not believe governmentwide direct-hire authorities apply to their agency
- 58.8% of supervisors/managers do not believe agency-specific direct-hire authorities are applicable
- 86.9% of supervisors/managers do not believe direct-hire authority for acquisition positions (non-Defense) is applicable
- 33.6% of HR practitioners received direct-hire training, 55.2% were satisfied/very satisfied with the training
- 37.3% of HR practitioners used direct-hire authority to fill entry-level jobs, 68.7% found it more efficient

Federal Career Intern Program (FCIP)
(CPDF Data and Survey Results)

- 7% of FY 2007 new hires were FCIP
- 147% increase in FCIP between FY 2004 and FY 2007
- 38.8% increase in FCIP from FY 2006 to FY 2007
- 26.4% of supervisors/managers received FCIP training, 52.7% were satisfied/very satisfied with the training
- 25.2% of supervisors/managers used FCIP appointing authority for entry-level jobs: 72.3% found it more effective (i.e., provides better candidates) and 66.9% found FCIP more efficient (i.e., faster in filling jobs)
- 19.6% of supervisors/managers used FCIP to convert employees to competitive service appointments, 76.3% found it more effective and 74.4% found FCIP more efficient
- 23.6% of HR practitioners received FCIP training, 56.5% were satisfied/very satisfied with the training
- 27.1% of HR practitioners used FCIP to fill entry-level jobs, 69.3% found it more efficient

Presidential Management Fellows Program (PMFP)
(CPDF Data and Survey Results)

- 0.16% of FY 2007 new hires were PMFP
- 4% increase in PMFP between FY 2004 and FY 2007
- 12.6% increase in PMFP from FY 2006 to FY 2007
- 8.9% of supervisors/managers received PMFP training, 41.7% were satisfied/very satisfied with the training
- 4.7% of supervisors/managers used PMFP appointing authority for entry-level jobs, 58.1% found it more effective (i.e., provides better candidates) and 51.2% found PMFP more efficient (i.e., faster in filling jobs)
- 3.8% of supervisors/managers used PMFP to convert employees to competitive service appointments, 58.9% found it more effective and 60% found PMFP more efficient
- 10.5% of HR practitioners received PMFP training, 51.8% were satisfied/very satisfied with the training
- 8.0% of HR practitioners used PMFP to fill entry-level jobs, 53.1% found it more efficient

**Schedule A- Individuals with Mental Retardation, Severe Physical Disabilities, or
Psychiatric Disabilities**
(CPDF Data and Survey Results)

- 0.2% of FY 2007 new hires were Schedule A
- 3.2% decrease in Schedule A between FY 2004 and FY 2007
- 0.7% increase in Schedule A from FY 2006 to FY 2007
- 20.4% of supervisors/managers received Schedule A training, 44.1% were satisfied/very satisfied with the training
- 11.5% of supervisors/managers used Schedule A appointing authority for entry-level jobs, 36.9% found it more effective (i.e., provides better candidates) and 42.3% found Schedule A more efficient (i.e., faster in filling jobs)
- 7.5% of supervisors/managers used Schedule A to convert employees to competitive service appointments, 46% found it more effective and 51.1% found Schedule A more efficient
- 27.6% of HR practitioners received Schedule A training, 54.8% were satisfied/very satisfied with the training
- 32.7% of HR practitioners used Schedule A to fill entry-level jobs, 55.2% found it more efficient

Student Career Experience Program (SCEP)
(CPDF Data and Survey Results)

- 1.6% of FY 2007 new hires were SCEP
- 25.2% decrease in SCEP between FY 2004 and FY 2007
- 10.3% decrease in SCEP from FY 2006 to FY 2007
- 24.4% of supervisors/managers received SCEP training, 54.8% were satisfied/very satisfied with the training
- 27.1% of supervisors/managers used SCEP appointing authority for entry-level jobs, 68.2% found it more effective (i.e., provides better candidates) and 66.1% found SCEP more efficient (i.e., faster in filling jobs)
- 21.3% of supervisors/managers used SCEP to convert employees to competitive service appointments, 73.7% found it more effective and 73.9% found SCEP more efficient
- 28.9% of HR practitioners received SCEP training, 58.9% were satisfied/very satisfied with the training
- 37.3% of HR practitioners used SCEP to fill entry-level jobs, 70.2% found it more efficient

Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998, as amended (VEOA)
(CPDF Data and Survey Results)

- 5.6% of FY 2007 new hires were VEOA
- 25.5% increase in VEOA between FY 2004 and FY 2007
- 3.3% increase in VEOA from FY 2006 to FY 2007
- 21.6% of supervisors/managers received VEOA training, 41.9% were satisfied/very satisfied with the training
- 20.8% of supervisors/managers used VEOA appointing authority for entry-level jobs, 39.1% found it more effective (i.e., provides better candidates) and 40.8% found VEOA more efficient (i.e., faster in filling jobs)
- 35.1% of HR practitioners received VEOA training, 60.4% were satisfied/very satisfied with the training
- 44.5% of HR practitioners used VEOA to fill entry-level jobs, 57.1% found it more efficient

Veterans Recruitment Appointment (VRA)
(CPDF Data and Survey Results)

- 2.3% of FY 2007 new hires were VRA
- 20.8% increase in VRA between FY 2004 and FY 2007
- 1.2% decrease in VRA from FY 2006 to FY 2007
- 23.9% of supervisors/managers received VRA training, 44.6% were satisfied/very satisfied with the training
- 28.6% of supervisors/managers used VRA appointing authority for entry-level jobs, 39.4% found it more effective (i.e., provides better candidates) and 43.1% found VRA more efficient (i.e., faster in filling jobs)
- 17.8% of supervisors/managers used VRA to convert employees to competitive service appointments, 48.5% found it more effective and 53.9% found VRA more efficient
- 38.3% of HR practitioners received VRA training, 63% were satisfied/very satisfied with the training
- 48.9% of HR practitioners used VRA to fill entry-level jobs, 63.7% found it more efficient

30% or More Disabled Veterans Appointing Authority
(CPDF Data and Survey Results)

- .5% of FY 2007 new hires were 30% or More Disabled Veterans
- 7.2% increase in 30% or More Disabled Veterans between FY 2004 and FY 2007
- 10.5% decrease in 30% or More Disabled Veterans from FY 2006 to FY 2007
- 21.8% of supervisors/managers received 30% or More Disabled Veterans training, 43.2% were satisfied/very satisfied with the training
- 18.3% of supervisors/managers used 30% or More Disabled Veterans appointing authority for entry-level jobs, 31.9% found it more effective (i.e., provides better candidates) and 39% found 30% or More Disabled Veterans more efficient (i.e., faster in filling jobs)
- 11.6% of supervisors/managers used 30% or More Disabled Veterans to convert employees to competitive service appointments, 41.2% found it more effective and 46.1% found 30% or More Disabled Veterans more efficient
- 37.2% of HR practitioners received 30% or More Disabled Veterans training, 61.5% were satisfied/very satisfied with the training
- 43.1% of HR practitioners used 30% or More Disabled Veterans to fill entry-level jobs, 62.5% found it more efficient

IV. Survey Results for Federal Supervisors and Managers

The majority (92%) of the supervisors/managers responding to the survey are at the GS-13 to GS-15 grade levels or equivalent, and have worked for the Federal government for 20 years or more. Almost half (49.1%) of the respondents have been supervisors or managers for more than 10 years and 60 percent work in field offices (Table 3).

Table 3: Supervisors/Managers Demographics Across Eight Agencies

Question	Percent of Respondents
Where do you work?	
Headquarters	39.4
Field	60.6
What is your supervisory status?	
Supervisor	46.6
Manager	43.8
Executive	9.6
What is your pay category?	
GS-7 to G-12 or Equivalent	1.8
GS-13 to G-15 or Equivalent	92.0
Senior Executive Service or Equivalent	6.3
How long have you worked for the Federal Government?	
Less Than 1 Year	.3
1-3 Years	2.0
4-5 Years	1.9
6-10 Years	5.2
11-20 Years	20.9
More Than 20 Years	69.7
How long have you worked for your current agency?	
Less Than 1 Year	1.6
1-3 Years	7.8
4-5 Years	6.0
6-10 Years	11.2
11-20 Years	26.0
More Than 20 Years	47.5
How long have you been a supervisor/manager in the Federal Government?	
Less Than 1 Year	2.7
1-3 Years	13.7
4-5 Years	12.2
6-10 Years	22.2
11-20 Years	27.9
More Than 20 Years	21.2

The survey included a question on agency training for their supervisors/managers on hiring flexibilities. Survey results indicate only 18 percent of supervisors/managers received training on category rating, and 30 percent on the use of Direct-Hire Authority (Table 4). Forty-six percent were satisfied with training received from their agencies on category rating and Direct-Hire Authority. Results indicate over half of supervisors/managers are satisfied with training received on the Student Career Experience Program and the Federal Career Intern Program (Table 4).

Table 4: Supervisors/Managers - Agency Training Results (Weighted Results¹⁴)

Hiring Flexibility	Received Training (Percent)	Satisfaction with Training*		
		Satisfied (5 or 4)	Neutral (3)	Dissatisfied (2 or 1)
		Percent	Percent	Percent
Category Rating	17.9	46.1	42.0	11.9
Direct-Hire Authority	30.3	46.3	39.9	13.8
Federal Career Intern Program	26.4	52.7	37.3	9.9
Presidential Management Fellows Program	8.9	41.7	43.3	15.0
Schedule A- Individuals with Disabilities	20.4	44.1	46.2	9.6
Student Career Experience Program	24.4	54.8	36.7	8.5
Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998, as amended	21.6	41.9	48.9	9.2
Veterans Recruitment Appointment	23.9	44.6	45.6	9.8
30% or More Disabled Veterans Appointing Authority	21.8	43.2	48.3	8.6

* Scale: 1-Very Dissatisfied, 2-Dissatisfied, 3-Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied, 4-Satisfied, 5-Very Satisfied

¹⁴ When the data collected from survey respondents are adjusted to represent the population from which the sample was drawn, the resulting data are called weighted data.

The survey asked participants if they have used recent OPM web-based resources on the hiring flexibilities. Survey results indicate supervisors/managers across the eight agencies seldom use them. Only eight percent of supervisors/managers used the “Hiring Flexibilities Resource Center.” However, when supervisors/managers used OPM resources, over 84 percent of them perceived they were useful or very useful and easy to use (Table 5).

Table 5: Supervisors/Managers - Use of OPM Resources on Hiring Flexibilities (Weighted Results)

Response	Hiring Flexibilities Resource Center	Presidential Management Fellows Program Web Site	VetGuide
	Percent of Respondents	Percent of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Used			
Yes	8.1	3.1	6.7
No	91.9	96.9	93.3
Frequency			
1–3 Times	50.5	71.0	45.9
4–6 Times	22.9	19.3	20.7
7–9 Times	8.1	6.2	5.5
10 or More Times	18.5	3.4	27.8
Useful			
Very/Extremely Useful	43.3	41.7	61.5
Somewhat Useful/Useful	41.4	45.7	27.5
Not Useful at All	15.3	12.5	11.0
Ease/Difficulty			
Easy	45.2	46.4	56.0
Neutral	41.2	46.4	36.7
Difficult	13.6	7.2	7.3

At least half of the respondents using Direct-Hire Authority, Student Career Experience Program, and the Federal Career Intern Program rated these hiring flexibilities as more effective and efficient than traditional ranking and selection procedures; 41 and 43 percent rated the Veterans Recruitment Appointment as more effective and efficient, respectively. Survey responses show 18 percent of supervisors/managers have used category rating. After using category rating to rank and select, almost half (47%) perceived it was more effective than traditional rating and ranking procedures, while 43 percent indicated category rating was more efficient (Table 6).

Table 6: Supervisors/Managers - Use of Hiring Flexibilities for Filling Entry-Level Jobs (Weighted Results)

Hiring Flexibility	Used this Hiring Flexibility (Percent)	Effective* (i.e., provides better candidates)		
		More (5 or 4)	Neutral (3)	Less (2 or 1)
		Percent	Percent	Percent
Category Rating	18.3	47.3	41.1	11.7
Direct-Hire Authority	36.2	61.1	28.8	10.2
Federal Career Intern Program	25.2	72.3	20.3	7.4
Presidential Management Fellows Program	4.7	58.1	25.1	16.8
Schedule A - Individuals with Disabilities	11.5	36.9	45.3	17.8
Student Career Experience Program	27.1	68.2	23.7	8.1
Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998, as amended	20.8	39.1	43.7	17.2
Veterans Recruitment Appointment	28.6	39.4	41.4	19.2
30% or More Disabled Veterans Appointing Authority	18.3	31.9	45.9	22.2
Hiring Flexibility	Efficient** (i.e., faster in filling positions)			
	More (5 or 4)	Neutral (3)	Less (2 or 1)	
	Percent	Percent	Percent	
Category Rating	42.8	41.7	15.4	
Direct-Hire Authority	56.5	28.3	15.2	
Federal Career Intern Program	66.9	23.7	9.4	
Presidential Management Fellows Program	51.2	31.3	17.5	
Schedule A - Individuals with Disabilities	42.3	41.1	16.6	
Student Career Experience Program	66.1	25.3	8.6	
Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998, as amended	40.8	43.9	15.2	
Veterans Recruitment Appointment	43.1	41.6	15.2	
30% or More Disabled Veterans Appointing Authority	39.0	42.7	18.3	

*Respondents were asked to compare each hiring flexibility they used with traditional ranking and selection procedures. Scale: 1-Much Less Effective, 2-Somewhat Less Effective, 3-Neither More nor Less Effective, 4-Somewhat More Effective, 5-Much More Effective

** Scale: 1-Much Less Efficient, 2-Somewhat Less Efficient, 3-Neither More nor Less Efficient, 4-Somewhat More Efficient, 5-Much More Efficient

The provisions for Federal Career Intern Program; Presidential Management Fellows Program; Schedule A-Individuals with Disabilities; Student Career Experience Program; Veterans Recruitment Appointment, and 30 Percent or More Disabled Veterans Appointing Authority allow agencies to non-competitively convert the appointee to a career-conditional or career appointment after completion of program requirements. The survey asked supervisors/managers if they have used these hiring flexibilities to fill a permanent position by conversion. Supervisors/managers used the following authorities most frequently to non-competitively convert employees into the competitive service: Student Career Experience Program (21.3%); Federal Career Intern Program (19.6%); and Veterans Recruitment Appointment (17.8% Table 7). Survey results indicate the majority of the supervisors/managers perceived the conversion process as effective and efficient in most cases (Table 7).

Table 7: Supervisors/Managers - Conversion of Employees to Appointments in the Competitive Service (Weighted Results)

Hiring Flexibility	Conversions Made Using Hiring Flexibility	Effective (i.e., provides better candidates)*		
		More (5 or 4)	Neutral (3)	Less (2 or 1)
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Federal Career Intern Program	19.6	76.3	18.3	5.4
Presidential Management Fellows Program	3.8	58.9	29.8	11.3
Schedule A - Individuals with Disabilities	7.5	46.0	40.5	13.5
Student Career Experience Program	21.3	73.7	20.4	5.9
Veterans Recruitment Appointment	17.8	48.5	38.9	12.5
30% or More Disabled Veterans Appointing Authority	11.6	41.2	44.5	14.3
Hiring Flexibility	Efficient (i.e., faster in filling positions)**			
	More (5 or 4)	Neutral (3)	Less (2 or 1)	
	Percent	Percent	Percent	
Federal Career Intern Program	74.4	19.1	6.5	
Presidential Management Fellows Program	60.0	26.2	13.8	
Schedule A- Individuals with Disabilities	51.1	37.3	11.6	
Student Career Experience Program	73.9	19.6	6.5	
Veterans Recruitment Appointment	53.9	36.0	10.1	
30% or More Disabled Veterans Appointing Authority	46.1	42.4	11.5	

* Respondents were asked to compare each hiring flexibility used with traditional ranking and selection procedures. Scale: 1-Much Less Effective, 2-Somewhat Less Effective, 3-Neither More nor Less Effective, 4-Somewhat More Effective, 5-Much More Effective

** Scale: 1-Much Less Efficient, 2-Somewhat Less Efficient, 3-Neither More nor Less Efficient, 4-Somewhat More Efficient, 5-Much More Efficient

The survey asked supervisors/managers if they use any of the existing governmentwide Direct-Hire Authorities. Survey results indicate 86 percent of respondents did not use them (Table 8). Survey results show the governmentwide Direct-Hire Authority for non-Defense acquisition positions, authorized as of August 2005, has been used sparingly. The majority of supervisors/managers consider the use of Direct-Hire Authorities more efficient and effective than traditional rating and selection procedures (Table 8).

Table 8: Supervisors/Managers- Use of Direct-Hire Authorities (Weighted Results)

Question	Governmentwide Authorities	Agency-Specific Authorities	Acquisition, Non-Defense
	Percent	Percent	Percent
Applicable to Your Agency			
Yes	39.7	41.2	13.1
No	60.3	58.8	86.9
Used Direct-Hire Authority			
Yes	13.6	18.8	1.7
No	86.4	81.2	98.3
Frequency			
1-3 Times	58.0	55.1	65.2
4-6 Times	18.8	20.3	19.0
7-9 Times	7.1	7.5	11.8
10 or More Times	16.0	17.1	4.0
Effectiveness			
More	60.9	65.7	54.3
Neutral	30.7	27.1	32.5
Less	8.4	7.2	13.2
Efficiency			
More	57.2	63.2	50.0
Neutral	30.5	25.0	35.6
Less	12.3	11.9	14.4

V. Survey Results for Federal Human Resources Practitioners

The profile for human resources (HR) practitioners shows 55.1 percent of respondents work in field offices and 62.8 percent are at the GS-7 to GS-12 grade levels, or equivalent. The vast majority (85.8%) of HR respondents have worked for the Federal Government for more than 10 years (Table 9).

Table 9: HR Practitioners – Demographics Across Eight Agencies

Question	Percent of Respondents
Where do you work?	
Headquarters	44.9
Field	55.1
What is your pay category?	
GS-7 to G-12 or Equivalent	62.8
GS-13 to G-15 or Equivalent	37.2
Senior Executive Service or Equivalent	0.0
How long have you worked for the Federal Government?	
Less Than 1 Year	0.5
1–3 Years	3.8
4–5 Years	3.1
6–10 Years	6.9
11–20 Years	22.5
More Than 20 Years	63.3
How long have you worked for your current agency?	
Less Than 1 Year	3.6
1–3 Years	15.9
4–5 Years	8.6
6–10 Years	15.2
11–20 Years	22.8
More Than 20 Years	33.8

Survey results indicate that when agencies provided internal agency training on the hiring flexibilities more was given to HR practitioners than to supervisors/managers, although the majority (over 60% for each of the hiring flexibilities) received no training. When training was received, results show over half of the HR practitioners were satisfied with the training (Table 10).

Table 10: HR Practitioners - Agency Training Results (Weighted Results)

Hiring Flexibility	Received Training Percent	Satisfaction with Training*		
		Satisfied (5 or 4)	Neutral (3)	Dissatisfied (2 or 1)
		Percent	Percent	Percent
Category Rating	27.0	51.8	37.5	10.7
Direct-Hire Authority	33.6	55.2	35.5	9.3
Federal Career Intern Program	23.6	56.5	34.3	9.2
Presidential Management Fellows Program	10.5	51.8	36.3	12.0
Schedule A- Individuals with Disabilities	27.6	54.8	36.3	8.8
Student Career Experience Program	28.9	58.9	31.7	9.4
Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998, as amended	35.1	60.4	30.3	9.3
Veterans Recruitment Appointment	38.3	63.0	28.9	8.1
30% or More Disabled Veterans Appointing Authority	37.2	61.5	30.4	8.1

*Scale: 1-Very Dissatisfied, 2-Dissatisfied, 3-Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied, 4-Satisfied, 5-Very Satisfied

Survey results show 40 percent of HR practitioners used the appointing authorities for hiring veterans (e.g., Veterans Recruitment Appointment, Veterans Employment Opportunity Act, and 30-Percent or More Disabled Veterans Authority) into entry-level positions. Over 30 percent of respondents used the Student Career Experience Program, Schedule A, and Direct-Hire Authorities. Category Rating has been used by 25 percent of the HR respondents. When these hiring flexibilities were used, a majority (53%) of HR practitioners found them to be more efficient than traditional ranking and selection procedures (Table 11).

Table 11: HR Practitioners - Use of HR Flexibilities for Filling Entry-Level Jobs (Weighted Results)

Hiring Flexibility	Used Hiring Flexibility Percent	Efficient (i.e., faster in filling positions)*		
		More (5 or 4)	Neutral (3)	Less (2 or 1)
		Percent	Percent	Percent
Category Rating	24.7	54.8	36.2	9.0
Direct-Hire Authority	37.3	68.7	24.7	6.5
Federal Career Intern Program	27.1	69.3	23.1	7.6
Presidential Management Fellows Program	8.0	53.1	37.0	9.9
Schedule A- Individuals with Disabilities	32.7	55.2	35.0	9.8
Student Career Experience Program	37.3	70.2	23.6	6.3
Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998, as amended	44.5	57.1	37.8	5.0
Veterans Recruitment Appointment	48.9	63.7	30.5	5.8
30% or More Disabled Veterans Appointing Authority	43.1	62.5	31.0	6.5

*Scale: 1-Much Less Efficient, 2-Somewhat Less Efficient, 3-Neither More nor Less Efficient, 4-Somewhat More Efficient, 5-Much More Efficient

Almost 53 percent of the HR practitioners indicate they have used the *VetGuide*. Eighty percent of the respondents found it very useful. Twenty-nine percent report using the Hiring Flexibilities Resource Center and 60 percent of HR practitioners find it helpful (Table 12).

Table 12: HR Practitioners - Use of OPM Resources on Hiring Flexibilities (Weighted Results)

Response	Hiring Flexibilities Resource Center	Presidential Management Fellows Program Web Site	<i>VetGuide</i>
	Percent	Percent	Percent
Used			
Yes	28.7	7.7	52.9
No	71.3	92.3	47.1
Frequency			
1-3 Times	31.0	58.4	10.8
4-6 Times	26.9	20.2	16.6
7-9 Times	12.9	10.1	10.6
10 or More Times	29.3	11.4	61.9
Useful			
Very/Extremely Useful	59.4	56.3	79.9
Somewhat Useful/Useful	32.1	35.0	16.8
Not Useful at All	8.5	8.7	3.3
Ease/Difficulty			
Easy	57.2	54.4	70.6
Neutral	34.3	34.9	21.9
Difficult	8.5	10.8	7.5

Over half (56%) of the HR respondents indicate they discuss the use of hiring flexibilities with their supervisors/managers when filling positions. Forty-four percent of the HR practitioners indicate rarely advising supervisors/managers on available hiring flexibilities (Table 13). In turn, supervisor/managers consider HR practitioners as their main source of information concerning hiring flexibilities.

Table 13: HR Practitioners - Advising Supervisors/Managers

How often do you discuss applicable hiring flexibilities with a supervisor/manager when filling a position?		
Almost Always/Often (4 or 5)	Sometimes (3)	Rarely/Never (1 or 2)
Percent	Percent	Percent
39.0	16.9	44.1

VI. Conclusions and Recommendations

CPDF data shows governmentwide use of the hiring authorities included in this survey has increased over the past four fiscal years. Supervisors, managers and human resource practitioners who responded to this survey report use of these hiring authorities to fill entry-level positions is more efficient and effective than traditional ranking and selection procedures.

Supervisors, managers, and human resource practitioners also report a lack of agency training on the use of these hiring flexibilities and limited use of OPM information resources on these flexibilities. Improving the Federal hiring process remains a top priority for OPM. OPM will continue to provide technical assistance to agencies, HR staff and hiring managers on the use of these flexibilities, where appropriate.

We recommend the following:

- Continue to emphasize availability of tools, such as the Hiring Flexibilities Resource Center, and promote them, where appropriate, through the CHCO Council, OPM website, and OPM's Human Capital Officers.
- Continue to educate HR staff through delegated examining training on the availability of category rating as an alternative ranking and selection procedure.
- Encourage agencies to examine their human capital strategies and internal hiring processes to maximize use of available hiring flexibilities.
- Encourage agencies to increase the number of supervisors/managers and HR staff trained on hiring flexibilities.



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