



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Washington, D.C. 20240

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DIRECTOR'S ORDER NO. 199

Subject: Program for Centralized Hiring of Refuge Officers

Sec. 1 What is the purpose of this Order? This Order establishes procedures for centralizing the hiring of full-time Refuge law enforcement officers (Refuge Officers) in the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS).

Sec. 2 Does this Order amend or supersede any other guidance? This Order supersedes Section 6 of [Director's Order No. 155](#).

Sec. 3 What is the purpose of centralized hiring? The purpose of the program is to:

- a. Provide a steady pool of fully trained natural resource conservation law enforcement officers for the NWRS to fill vacancies in a timely, efficient manner;
- b. Improve diversity and retention in the Refuge System law enforcement ranks; and
- c. Comply with the Secretary's Directives on law enforcement reforms for the Department of the Interior.

Sec. 4 What is the scope of this program? This Order applies to hiring Refuge Officers with a Full Performance Level (FPL) of GS-09.

Sec. 5 What are the authorities for this Order?

- a. Memorandum of July 19, 2002, from the Secretary of the Interior requiring implementation of the recommendations in the *Law Enforcement at the Department of the Interior, Recommendations to the Secretary for Implementing Law Enforcement Reforms* report, July 2002.
- b. *Interim and Long-term Deployment of Law Enforcement Resources of the National Wildlife Refuge System*, May 2003.

Sec. 6 What is the overall hiring process? The hiring process for permanent Refuge Officers at the FPL GS-09 level is unchanged except for trainee positions.

a. We will:

- (1) Maintain trainee positions in the Regions at the GS-05/07 grade level.
- (2) Advertise trainee positions at the GS-05/07 grade level, with a FPL of GS-09.
- (3) Select applicants at the GS-05 or GS-07 level only and assign them to the applicable Standard Position Description.
- (4) Enter into a mobility agreement with the new officer stating that we will move

the officer to a new duty location as their training progresses and vacancies or needs occur.

b. Since the officer has competed for an FPL-09 position, we will be able to non-competitively place trainee officers at new duty locations where the position is an FPL-09.

Sec. 7 Who is responsible for the program?

a. The **Director** approves policy and ensures the resources are in place to implement the sound and efficient management of the NWRS.

b. The **Assistant Director, NWRS:**

(1) Oversees the program and ensures there is policy in place, and

(2) Must concur or decline to concur with the Chief, Division of Refuge Law Enforcement's selections for new officers.

c. The **Chief, Division of Refuge Law Enforcement (DRLE):**

(1) Is the Selecting Official for new hires,

(2) Manages the hiring process from advertisement to the completion of training,

(3) Appoints the members of the Interview Team,

(4) Develops policy for the program, and

(5) Leads the evaluation of the program and recommends changes to the program based on the evaluation.

d. The **Chief, Branch of Training, DRLE:**

(1) Makes Field Training Evaluation Program assignments for all new officers in coordination with the Regional Refuge Law Enforcement Chief, and

(2) Coordinates psychological evaluations, the pre-Land Management Police Training Physical Efficiency Battery, and new employee orientation.

e. Staff in the Headquarters **Branch of Human Resources:**

(1) Advise the Chief, DRLE of recruitment options for filling these positions (e.g., delegated examining unit (DEU) to accept applications from all sources, merit promotion), including the Service staffing policies, regulations, and procedures;

(2) Assist DRLE with developing job assessment tools (e.g., job analysis, job questionnaire) for evaluating applicants;

(3) Coordinate with U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) recruitment for positions (GS-05 and 07) covered under the Administrative Careers with America

program;

(4) Prepare and manage the vacancy announcement process, which includes having applicants identify the location(s) for which they want to be considered;

(5) Manage the application process, determining minimum qualifications and the best qualified candidates for promotion eligibles, and issuing certificates of eligibles;

(6) Provide guidance and assistance to the Selecting Official in managing the interview and selection process;

(7) Make job offers and notify DRLE of accepted and declined offers; and

(8) Coordinate with the Regional Human Resources Offices and provide them with the necessary information to complete the selection process.

f. The **Regional Chiefs, NWRS** identify the location(s) of the training positions within their Regions.

g. The **Regional Refuge Law Enforcement Chiefs:**

(1) Coordinate with the Chief, Branch of Training in DRLE for Field Training Evaluation Program assignments, and

(2) Work with the Regional Human Resources Office to facilitate the Regional hiring process for new Refuge officers, including drug testing, medicals, and initiating a Single Scope Background Investigation (SSBI) and a waiver request. If approved, the waiver request allows the Refuge Officers to work while they are completing training and waiting for the investigation's completion.

h. **Refuge Managers**, or their designees, at the station where the new officers are placed are the supervisors of record.

i. **Interview Team Members** (also see [section 8](#)):

(1) Interview candidates,

(2) Check references for applicants, and

(3) Make recommendations to the Chief, DRLE for new hires.

Recommendations include potential duty stations and a justification for each potential hire selected.

j. **Regional Human Resources Offices** complete the hiring process for new Refuge Officer trainees assigned to their Regions.

Sec. 8 Who is on the Interview Team and how are members selected?

a. The Regional Chiefs, NWRS nominate members for Interview Teams to the Chief, DRLE. The Chief, DRLE appoints members to the teams. An Interview Team should include:

(1) 1 Headquarters representative from DRLE;

- (2) 1 Refuge Supervisor or 1 Regional Chief/Deputy Regional Chief;
- (3) 1 Refuge Manager;
- (4) 1 Zone Law Enforcement Officer; and
- (5) 1 Regional Law Enforcement Chief.

b. If no nominations of volunteers are available in a particular category, and the Regional Chief cannot locate a volunteer, the DRLE Chief will fill the Interview Team position(s) from available nominees in other Regions.

Sec. 9 How will the Interview Team conduct evaluations?

- a. The Headquarters Branch of Human Resources refers the Merit Promotion certificate(s) of the applicants who are best qualified to the Chief, DRLE. The Chief, DRLE gives the Interview Team the Merit Promotion certificate(s).
- b. For the DEU certificate(s), the HR specialist will work with the Interview Team to determine applicants to interview.
- c. The Interview Team must ask each applicant the same questions during a telephone interview.
- d. The team invites a subset of applicants to participate in face-to-face interviews, and Headquarters will reimburse the applicants for travel costs.
- e. The team evaluates applicants based on responses to questions, interview performance, and past employment history and record.
- f. At the conclusion of all interviews, the Interview Team convenes and makes final recommendations.
- g. Once the new Refuge Officers are matched to a duty station, the team sends recommendations to the Chief, DRLE for approval. The team must provide a short (1 paragraph) justification for each recommended applicant.
- h. The Chief, DRLE is the Selecting Official for new trainee hires.

Sec. 10 When will the Service schedule new hires to begin duty?

- a. For those new Refuge Officers needing Land Management Police Training, Refuge Officer Basic School, and the Field Training Evaluation Program, the target date for them to begin duty is April 1, 2010. This date is flexible and the Region, duty station, and new Refuge Officer may negotiate it to accommodate unusual personal circumstances.
- b. For those new Refuge Officers not needing Land Management Police Training, the Region, duty station, and new officer will negotiate a date to begin duty to allow officers ample time to get established at their new duty station before they have to attend Refuge Officer Basic School training.

Sec. 11 What duty station do the new hires report to and who supervises them? The Headquarters Branch of Human Resources will offer jobs at specific duty stations to the selected new officers. The Refuge Manager, or his/her designee, at the duty station will be the supervisor.

Sec. 12 How does this process affect the Student Career Employment Program (SCEP); the Veterans Readjustment Act (VRA) and the Veterans Employment Opportunity Act (VEOA) program; and the Federal Career Internship Program (FCIP) program?

a. Regions may continue to use the SCEP, VRA, VEOA, or FCIP programs to seek applicants or select new Refuge Officers. The Regions do not have to use the centralized process to hire SCEP students, VRA eligibles, and FCIP students into the Refuge Officer program. Regions must notify the Chief, DRLE within 45 calendar days of beginning the hiring process if they intend to hire a SCEP, VRA, or FCIP student to fill one or more of the positions.

b. The host Region will assign duty stations and supervisors to students in the SCEP, VRA, and FCIP programs who are selected as officers for a trainee position.

Sec. 13 Will the Service pay moving costs for new hires? The Service will not pay moving costs for new hires coming into the Federal Government. The Service will pay for a permanent change of station (PCS) move of a current Federal employee otherwise eligible for this benefit. The receiving Region pays PCS costs for those eligible (see [266 FW 1](#)).

Sec. 14 When will the Service evaluate this new program? The Service will closely monitor the process and trainees we hire using this methodology.

a. Factors that DRLE, working with the Regions and Human Resources offices, will track and evaluate include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Efficiency of hiring,
- (2) Retention,
- (3) Mobility, and
- (4) Time required to fill vacancies.

b. We will begin our continuous evaluation of the program as soon as we begin using the process.

Sec. 15 When is this Order effective? This Order is effective immediately. It remains in effect until we incorporate it into the Service Manual or until we amend, supersede, or revoke it, whichever comes first. If we do not incorporate it into the Service Manual, amend, supersede, or revoke it, the Order will expire 18 months from the date of signature.

/sgd/ Sam D. Hamilton
DIRECTOR

Date: October 20, 2009

For specific information on the content of this Director's Order, contact the Division of Refuge Law Enforcement. For more information about the Web site, contact [Krista Holloway](#) in the Division of Policy and Directives Management.

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