

DISABILITY HIRING AND ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM

The U.S. Department of State (the Department) is committed to recruiting and hiring a diverse workforce that includes individuals with a broad range of disabilities, including individuals with targeted disabilities. Being a model employer of individuals with disabilities is critical to our efforts of building a diverse workforce and is a legal obligation under Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 791, as amended. Per the Rehabilitation Act and implementing regulations, *see* 29 C.F.R. § 1614.203(d), the Department will implement a robust strategy to recruit and retain individuals with disabilities. The Department will strive to meet the representation goals of:

- 12 percent of employees with disabilities at the GS-11 grade level and above, including Foreign Service equivalents;
- 12 percent of employees with disabilities at the GS-10 grade level and below, including Foreign Service equivalents;
- two percent of employees with targeted disabilities the GS-11 grade level and above, including Foreign Service equivalents; and
- two percent of employees with targeted disabilities at the GS-10 grade level and below, including Foreign Service equivalents.

The strategy will address recruitment, the application process, and advancement programs.

Recruitment

Pursuant to 29 C.F.R. § 1614.203(d), the Department will continue its efforts to attract competitive individuals with disabilities to the State Department's Foreign Service and Civil Service. The strategy will include the identification of programs and resources to recruit job applicants with disabilities. The strategy will also establish and maintain contacts with organizations that specialize in providing assistance to, securing employment for, and maintaining employment for individuals with disabilities, including individuals with targeted disabilities.

The Office of Accessibility & Accommodations in the Bureau of Human Resources (HR/OAA) works collaboratively with the Office of Recruitment, Examination, and Employment, in the Bureau of Human Resources (HR/REE) Outreach and Marketing teams, the Office of Civil Rights in the Bureau of the Secretary (S/OCR), and the Office of Civil Service Human Resource Management in the Bureau of Human Resources (HR/CSHRM). The Department's Selective Placement Program Coordinator (SPPC) is located in HR/OAA, the Recruiter in charge of the Disability Portfolio is located in HR/REE/REC, the Department's Disability Program Manager (DPM) is located in S/OCR, and the Department's Veterans Employment Program Manager (VEPM) is located in HR/CSHRM.

The Recruitment/Outreach Division (HR/REE/REC) has a Washington-based Recruiter and 16 Diplomats in Residence (DIRs) based at universities across the country that engage with students with disabilities and mid-career professionals, including veterans, as part of the Department's

strategic recruitment plan. HR/REE/REC's goals for the recruitment of individuals with disabilities include:

- All Recruiters, including DIRs, will conduct outreach and increase awareness to Disability and Career Services Offices on college and university campuses;
- Collaborate with national disability organizations;
- Assist HR/OAA to increase yearly, by 10%, the number of candidates in the Department's Talent Database, which contains Schedule A, 5 CFR 213.3102(u), eligible job-seekers and is managed by HR/OAA; and
- Support the recruitment and placement of the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) candidates across the Department.

In addition, HR/REE's marketing team partners with HR/OAA to develop targeted recruitment strategies and maintain owned media properties to raise awareness and promote opportunities for individuals with disabilities. This includes:

- Assist in maintaining a Facebook page for the Department's SPPC;
- Maintain a LinkedIn Showcase Page for the Department's SPPC;
- Expend funds for targeted media outreach and social media advertising to individuals with disabilities and military/veterans; and
- Ensure careers.state.gov and any HR/REE-produced videos are 508-compliant.

Recruitment, outreach, and placement efforts include:

- Maintain a Talent Database that includes individuals with disabilities who are eligible to be appointed under a hiring authority that takes disability into account;
- Attend career fairs where the primary audience are individuals with disabilities and/or veterans with disabilities;
- Assist with WRP recruitment efforts on a yearly basis;
- Provide DIRs with contacts from Disability Services Offices at over 300 participating colleges and universities nationwide;
- Centrally fund up to ten WRP interns yearly;
- Encourage offices to self-fund WRP interns and to use the WRP database as a source for qualified applicants with disabilities for their vacant positions;
- Encourage the use of the various Wounded Warrior Initiatives Department-wide;
- Collaborate with colleges and universities to educate college students and recent graduates with disabilities regarding the employment opportunities and hiring flexibilities for individuals with disabilities within the Department;
- Sponsor Disability Mentoring Day within the Department; and
- Conduct webinars on hiring authorities that take disability into account.

Pursuant to 29 C.F.R. § 1614.203(d)(1)(i)(A), the Department will include individuals with disabilities who were qualified for, referred to, but not selected for positions through USAJOBS in the DOS Talent Database. These individuals will be referred for future similar vacancies at

the same grade, series, and geographic location due to their eligibility to be appointed under a hiring authority that takes disability into account.

Pursuant to 29 C.F.R. § 1614.203(d)(1)(i)(B), the Department will maintain contacts with organizations that specialize in providing assistance to individuals with disabilities, including individuals with targeted disabilities, in securing and maintaining employment. When appropriate, the Department will develop formal agreements such as a Memorandum of Understanding with such organizations. Contacts may include, but are not limited to:

- OPM's Shared Register of Candidates with Disabilities;
- State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies;
- Ticket-to-Work Employment Networks;
- Employment One-Stop Career Centers;
- The Workforce Recruitment Program;
- Programs for students with disabilities;
- National and local disability advocacy groups;
- Colleges and universities nationwide;
- Centers for Independent Living; and
- Veterans' Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program.

Application Process

Pursuant to 29 C.F.R. § 1614.203(d)(1)(ii), the Department will ensure it has designated sufficient staff to handle any disability-related issues that arise during the application and/or selection processes. The Department maintains an email inbox (SelectivePlacement@state.gov) for all inquiries regarding Selective Placement for applicants and current employees with disabilities. All inquiries are promptly answered by the SPPC and referred to other Department subject matter experts as necessary.

According to 29 C.F.R. § 1614.203(d)(3)(D) an applicant may make a request for a reasonable accommodation to any agency employee connected with the application process. All inquiries regarding reasonable accommodations for the application process are referred to HR/OAA's Disability/Reasonable Accommodation Division (HR/OAA/DRAD) for processing.

The Department accepts applications for appointment under hiring authorities that take disability into account, consistent with the Office of Personnel Management's regulations. Individuals with disabilities who request consideration for employment utilizing hiring authorities that take disability into account are added to the Department's Talent Database for future employment opportunities.

If an individual has applied for appointment to a particular position under a hiring authority that takes disability into account, the SPPC determines whether the individual is eligible for appointment under such authority. If so, the SPPC forwards the individual's application to the relevant HR Service Provider with an explanation of how and when the individual may be appointed, consistent with applicable regulations. The HR Service Provider will conduct the qualifications analysis to determine eligibility.

The SPPC in HR/OAA also oversees the selection and appointment of all WRP hires, including temporary and permanent, within in the Department and ensures that they are properly reported to the Department of Labor for accountability purposes.

Advancement Program

Pursuant to 29 C.F.R. § 1614.203(d)(1)(iii), the Department will take specific steps to ensure that current employees with disabilities have sufficient opportunities for advancement. Through continued education of employees and hiring managers via bureau-specific briefings, a webinar series, Department Notices, and a training course PA447 (Disability & Reasonable Accommodations) at the Department's Foreign Service Institute, the Department will clearly outline reasonable accommodation procedures and Schedule A hiring obligations and benefits.

HR/OAA strives to eliminate any potential barriers to inclusion and advancement of individuals with disabilities by working with S/OCR and the Office of the Executive Director, Systems Oversight Division in the Bureau of Human Resources (HR/EX/SOD). HR/EX/SOD will provide the SPPC and the DPM with data that shows which employees were hired via the Schedule A hiring authority. The SPPC and DPM will use the data to track which employees are eligible to be converted to career conditional status and help ensure that those who are eligible are converted promptly after they have served their two year probationary period.

Relevant Training:

Pursuant to 29 C.F.R. § 1614.203(d)(1)(iii)(A), HR/CSHRM's Career Development and Training Division (CD) coordinates external leadership and professional development programs. These programs will continue to be advertised through various channels such as Department Notices, webinars, and informational sessions which are open to all Department employees. Additionally, HR/CSHRM/CD works with and maintains a liaison with each of the 13 Employee Affinity Groups (EAGs), including the Disability Action Group (DAG). Personnel from the Career Development and Training Division will hold informational sessions specifically for the EAGs, including DAG, on an annual basis to encourage participation of their members.

Mentoring:

Pursuant to 29 C.F.R. § 1614.203(d)(1)(iii)(B), the Department leads mentoring programs for all employees including pre-employment student programs, orientation courses, domestic programs, and post specific programs at U.S. Missions overseas.

For the past 14 years, the Department has led a robust Mentoring Program which is available to all Civil Service and Foreign Service employees. One of the Department's Leadership & Management Principles, Value and Develop People, gets at the core of mentoring. The Civil Service program matches Civil and Foreign Service mentors with Civil Service mentees and features an on-line application, training and structured goal-setting. Foreign Service mentoring includes pre-employment student programs, A-100 orientation courses, post specific programs at U.S. Missions overseas, among other efforts. Additional FS mentoring programs include both the FAST (First and Second Tour officers) Program, which provides entry level Foreign Service

employees with mentoring by a Deputy Chief of Mission or Principal Officer at U.S. Missions, and, in some cases, post specific mid-level leadership development and mentoring programs.

To ensure that the widest audience is reached, the Department has updated the mentoring application to include language on how to request a reasonable accommodation for participation in the program. In addition, a mandatory Employee Identification (Emp. ID) field has been added to the application. This will allow the Department to easily identify Race, National Origin, and Disability status information of participants for reporting purposes only. All Employee Affinity Groups (EAGs) will be encouraged to participate in annual briefings on the mentoring program where they will receive up-to-date information on the benefits of the mentoring program for their members.

Committed to building a state-of-the-art mentorship program and fostering a culture of leadership that supports ongoing professional development and competency building, HR is rolling out a series of new initiatives for all employees under the mantle of the iMentor program to include the following new initiatives:

- Detailed mentoring toolkits, training resources, and an overall strategy that are industry gold standards that mentors and mentees can tap into world-wide.
- An internal HR database to match Civil Service and Foreign Service mentors and mentees.
- Transformation of the Foreign Service orientation formal mentor program and one-on-one matching process to create a more employee-centric mentor relationship that encourages dialogues on diversity, inclusion, and networking.
- A mid-level mentor program pilot for Foreign Service generalists and specialists serving a tour in the DC metro area for the first time.
- Publicize and draw attention to HR's Mentoring Portal on Diplopedia.

Through outreach events with partners such as S/OCR, HR will leverage the opportunity to showcase the new HR mentoring initiatives that build on our existing mentoring programs to various audiences. Audiences may include the 13 EAGs and employees with disabilities who attend events such as the Department's National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) event.

Exit interviews:

Pursuant to 29 C.F.R. § 1614.203(d)(1)(iii)(C), the Department administers exit surveys. HR is able to link employee exit survey responses to their employment records and can subset the exit survey data by various demographic characteristics such as race, gender, grade, and disability status. The Department notes that the number of individuals who take exit surveys has been low in the past and present such that generalizable analysis would not be statistically valid.

In 2018, HR will update the Department's exit interview tool and make changes to the current questionnaire to add questions related to disability to meet the requirements of 29 C.F.R. § 1614.203(d)(1)(iii)(C). The data will be shared with the bureaus to address potential deficiencies. If resources are available, HR will consult with the bureaus, at their request.