

## Federal Hiring Process Definitions

**Career Appointment:** A career appointment begins once an employee has three years of permanent, substantially-continuous, creditable service in federal competitive service.

**Career-Conditional Appointment:** A permanent, competitive service appointment in which the employee has not yet completed the required period of creditable, substantially-continuous federal service - normally three years.

**Career Ladder:** A position filled at the entry level that allows an employee to develop to the full performance level.

**Change to Lower Grade:** Permanent assignment at a lower level.

**Competitive Service Appointment:** Applicants must compete with other applicants in open competition under the Office of Personnel Management's merit system.

**Detail:** Temporary assignment to a position at the same grade with no change in pay or requirement to be qualified. Done in 120-day increments up to 1 year.

**Excepted Service Appointment:** Civil service appointments in the federal government that do not give competitive status.

**Merit Promotion:** Placement, promotion, transfer, or reassignment of a competitive service employee.

**Noncompetitive Appointment:** Applicants hired without competition under certain hiring authorities.

**Noncompetitive Promotion:** May be available to an employee who previously held a permanent career or career conditional position at or above the full performance level of the position to be filled.

**Promotion:** Temporary, term, or permanent assignment to a higher-level position. Competitive temporary promotions can be made for up to 120 days in a 12-month period without competition.

**Reassignment:** Assignment to a position at the same grade.

**Temporary Appointment:** A job expected to last for a period not to exceed 1 year to support an agency's temporary need.

**Transfer:** Movement to an organization from another federal agency

**Term Appointment:** A job lasting 1 – 4 years and may be used for project work, extraordinary workload, scheduled cancellation of a position, reorganization, or uncertainty of future funding.



USDA Rural Development  
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# External Competitive Appointments

## Delegated Examining

The competitive hiring process is open to all U.S. applicants. It requires public notice and application of veterans' preference. Candidates are rated and ranked according to quality categories. Selections are made from the highest quality category. Appointments to the competitive service can be temporary, term, or permanent.

## Interchange Agreements

Agreements exist between agencies to allow employees to move from the excepted service to the competitive service. Interchange agreements exist with employees in the: Postal Career Service, Administrative Office of the U.S. Court, DoD Non-Appropriated Fund, DHS, TSA, Tennessee Valley Authority, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Corporation for National and Community Service (AmeriCorps), Postal Rate Commission, Government Accountability Office and certain Foreign Service employees.

## Pathways Internship Program

This internship program provides current students with paid opportunities to work in federal careers while completing their education.

## Pathways Recent Graduates Program

This program provides federal developmental experience for recent graduates.

## Term Appointment

A job lasting 1 – 4 years and may be used for project work, extraordinary workload, scheduled cancellation of a position, reorganization, or uncertainty of future funding.

## Veterans' Employment Opportunity Act

Allows eligible veterans to compete for certain vacancies under merit promotion procedures when vacancies are open to status candidates outside of DoD. Selected veterans receive career-conditional appointments at all levels of the competitive service.



## Noncompetitive Appointments

### 30 Percent or More Disabled Veterans

Veterans with a Veterans Administration-issued notice of a compensable, service-connected disability of 30 percent or more can receive an appointment at any level without competition.

### Former Peace Corps Staff

Individuals who completed 36 months of continuous, satisfactory service with the Peace Corps can be noncompetitively appointed within three years of their separation from the Peace Corps.

### Former Peace Corps VISTA/ Volunteers

Individuals who have satisfactorily volunteered in the Peace Corps can be noncompetitively appointed to federal service within one-year after completing their volunteer service. Under certain circumstances, the one year period can be extended.

### Military Spouse

Certain military spouses can be appointed without competition. The

authority does not entitle spouses to an appointment over other applicants. There is no grade level limitation.

### OPM Government-Wide Direct Hire Authorities

Applies to all grades and locations unless otherwise noted:

- Economist 0110 (Grades 11-15)
- General Engineer 0801 (Grades 11-15)
- Civil Engineer 0810 (Grades 11-15)
- Contract Specialist 1102 (Grades 11-15)
- Physical Science 1301 (Grades 11-15)
- Statistician 1530 (Grades 11-15)
- IT Cybersecurity 2210 (Grades 12-15)

### People with Disabilities Employment Program

Qualified disabled individuals can be hired noncompetitively through excepted service appointing options. The candidate must be able to perform the essential functions of the position with or without reasonable accommodation.

### Pathways Presidential Management Fellows Program

This program recruits outstanding advanced degree students interested in careers analyzing and managing public policies and programs. Agencies can appoint Presidential Management Fellows at the GS 9-12 levels (or their equivalents), along with appointments in STEM disciplines.

### Re-Employed Annuitants

Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) or Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) annuitants can be rehired by the federal government on a temporary or indefinite basis. In some situations - and with restrictions - an annuitant whose retirement was not based upon disability will continue to receive their full retirement annuity and salary during re-employment.

### Reinstatement Eligible

Former federal government employees can be noncompetitively placed in positions at grades or pay bands equal to - or lower than - the grade or pay band they previously held. Reinstatement eligibles also can compete with merit promotion candidates for positions at higher grades than they previously held.

### Schedule C Political Appointees

This is a type of political appointment for confidential or policy roles immediately subordinate to other appointees. Schedule C appointments are part of the excepted service.

### Veterans' Recruitment Appointment

A special option allowing the appointment of an eligible veteran without competition to a competitive position up to the GS-11 level. The candidate must meet the basic qualification requirements for the position. After two years of satisfactory service, they are converted to a career-conditional appointment.