

# Recruitment/Retention Tools and Other Flexibilities

## Recruitment/Retention Tools

### **Recruitment Incentive**

A recruitment incentive may be paid to a newly appointed employee if it's been determined that the position is likely to be difficult to fill in the absence of an incentive. This incentive can be for up to 25% of an employee's annual rate of basic pay including any special rate or locality payment multiplied by the number of years, or fractions of a year in a service period. This will allow an office to pay a recruitment incentive of as much as 100% of an individual employee's annual rate of basic pay in effect at the beginning of the service period if the employee signs a four year service agreement. The incentive may be paid as an initial lump-sum payment at the beginning of the service period, in installments throughout the service period, as a final-lump sum payment upon completion of the service period, or in a combination of these methods. Candidates are required to sign a written service agreement to complete a specified period of employment with the DOI.

### **Approval level – USGS Deputy Director**

For additional information please click [here](#).

### **Relocation Incentive**

An agency may pay a relocation incentive to a current Federal employee who must relocate to accept a position in a different geographic area if the agency determines that the position is likely be difficult to fill in the absence of an incentive. This incentive can be for up to 25% of an employee's annual rate of basic pay including any special rate or locality payment multiplied by the number of years, or fractions of a year in a service period. This will allow an office to pay a relocation incentive of as much as 100% of an individual employee's annual rate of basic pay in effect at the beginning of the service period if the employee signs a four year service agreement. The incentive may be paid as an initial lump-sum payment at the beginning of the service period, in installments throughout the service period, as a final lump-sum payment upon completion of the service period, or in a combination of these methods. The agency may not pay a relocation incentive until the employee establishes a residence in the new geographic area. Employees are required to sign a written service agreement to complete a specified period of employment with the DOI.

### **Approval level – USGS Deputy Director**

For additional information please click [here](#).

### **Retention Incentive (likely to leave the Federal service)**

An agency may pay a retention incentive to a current employee if the agency determines that the unusually high or unique qualifications of the employee or a special need of the agency for the employee's services makes it essential to retain the employee and that the employee would be

likely to leave the Federal service in the absence of a retention incentive. A retention incentive payment may not exceed 25% of an employee's rate of basic pay (including any special rate or locality payment), if authorized for an individual employee, or 10% of an employee's rate of basic pay (including any special rate or locality payment), if authorized for a group or category of employees. Payments may be made as installments after the completion of specified periods of service; or a single lump-sum payment after completion of the full service period. A retention incentive may not be paid as an initial lump-sum payment at the start of a service period or in advance of fulfilling the service period for which the retention incentive is being paid. Employees are required to sign a written service agreement to complete a specified period of employment with the DOI. A service agreement is not required when the retention allowance is paid in biweekly installments of equal amounts.

#### **Approval level – USGS Deputy Director**

For additional information please click [here](#).

#### **Retention Incentive (likely to leave for a different the Federal position)**

An agency may pay a retention incentive to a current employee if the agency determines a special need for the employee's services that makes it essential to retain the employee in his or her current position **during a period of time before the closure or relocation of the employee's office, facility, activity, or organization and the employee would be likely to leave for a different position in the Federal service in the absence of a retention incentive.** The incentive payment may not exceed 25 percent of an employee's rate of basic pay (including any special rate or locality payment), if authorized for an individual employee (or not to exceed 50 percent with OPM's approval based on a critical agency need). Payments may be made as installments after the completion of specified periods of service; or a single lump-sum payment after completion of the full service period. A retention incentive may not be paid as an initial lump-sum payment at the start of a service period or in advance of fulfilling the service period for which the retention incentive is being paid. Employees are required to sign a written service agreement to complete a specified period of employment with the DOI.

#### **Approval level – USGS Deputy Director**

For additional information please click [here](#).

#### **Superior Qualifications Appointment (a.k.a. Advance in Hire or Above the Minimum)**

A superior Qualifications Appointment allows for the government to compete for top quality candidates. A new employee's pay can be set at a rate above the minimum step within the grade in which they were selected.

- Based on special need or individual's superior qualifications.
- May be used for permanent, term or temporary appointments in competitive or excepted service.
- Ongoing payment – part of basic pay.

**Approval Level - Center Director or equivalent for up to 20% of candidate's existing pay; Assistant Secretary for Water and Science when greater than 20% of candidate's existing pay.**

For additional information please click [here](#).

### **Advance in Pay**

Payment of no more than two paychecks advanced so that a new employee can meet living and other expenses. This tool can be used to attract and encourage prospective employees.

- Must not have received first paycheck.
- Must sign agreement to repay advance over a period of not more than 14 pay periods - deducted from regular pay.
- Lump sum payment based on basic pay.

**Approval Level – Center Director or equivalent.**

For additional information please click [here](#).

### **Payment of Travel and Transportation Expenses to First Post of Duty**

Travel and transportation expenses to a new employee's new location can be paid for all appointments (competitive and excepted service), at all grade levels, that are not limited to 1 year or less.

- Pathways appointments are also eligible upon conversion if travel and transportation expenses were not paid when originally appointed.
- Must sign an employment agreement to remain in Federal Government for 12 months.

**Approval Level – Center Director or equivalent.**

For additional information please click [here](#).

### **Student Loan Repayment Program**

Using this authority, agencies may repay certain types of federally made, insured, or guaranteed student loans to attract job candidates or retain current employees. A center may make payments to the loan holder of up to a maximum of \$10,000 for an employee in a calendar year and a total of not more than \$60,000 for any one employee. In return, employees must sign a service agreement to remain in the service of the paying agency (i.e., DOI) for a period of at least 3 years.

- A recruitment justification is required that includes information about how the absence of such a benefit, would encounter difficulty in filling the position with a highly qualified candidate.
- For retention justification to include that special need of bureau or unique qualifications of employee make it essential to retain the employee and that in the absence of offer

student loan repayment, employee would likely leave for employment outside the Federal service.

- Service agreement must be signed for minimum period of 3 years.

**Approval Level – In the regions, requests can be approved by the Regional Director; for Headquarters organizations, requests can be approved by an official one SES or SL level below the Associate Director or Deputy Director.**

For additional information please click [here](#).

### **Creditable Service for Annual Leave Accrual**

Credit can be given towards a candidate's service computation date (determines annual leave accrual rate) for prior experience in non-Federal positions or as a retired member of the uniformed services. Creditable service must be based on a written determination that the skills and experience the candidate possesses gained from prior non-Federal positions are essential to the new position and that the use of this authority is necessary in order to achieve an important mission or performance goal. The written documentation will address both factors and the reasons for granting a higher annual leave accrual rate. The written determination must be approved prior to the effective date of the candidate's entry date.

A statement of understanding must be signed by the individual agreeing to remain in the service of the DOI for a period of one full year from the effective date of the appointment.

### **Approval level – USGS Deputy Director**

For additional information please click [here](#).

### **Highest Previous Rate (HPR)**

This pay setting flexibility applies to General Schedule and Federal Wage System positions and allows an employee's pay to be set above step 1 of the grade based on a higher rate of pay the employee received in a previous civilian Federal position.

- Use of this flexibility is usually at the discretion of the hiring official.
- HPR may only be authorized for an employee upon reemployment, transfer, reassignment, promotion, demotion, or change in type of appointment.
- Under this provision, the employee's rate may not exceed the maximum rate of the grade (i.e., step 10).
- The decision to offer HPR must be made prior to the effective date of the personnel action which authorizes its use.

### **Approval level – First line supervisor.**

For additional information please click [here](#).

## **Flexible Work Arrangements**

### **Alternative Work Schedules**

Alternative work schedules are those outside a normal, fixed eight-hour workday / 40-hour workweek that afford employees flexibility to accommodate personal activities while maintaining full-time hours. These include:

- Compressed Work Schedules, which for full-time employees is an 80-hour biweekly basic work requirement scheduled for less than 10 workdays.
- Flexible Work Schedules, which allow for a degree of flexibility in either start or stop times around a core workday, while still maintaining a given eight-hour workday / 40-hour workweek for full-time employees.

**Approval level – First line supervisor.**

For additional information please click [here](#).

### **Job Sharing**

Job sharing may help balance some employees' work and family responsibilities. Under such arrangements, two employees each work less than full-time, but coordinate their schedules and assignments so together they "share" a work role and ensure the duties and responsibilities of what would otherwise be one full-time position are properly carried out.

**Approval level – First line supervisor.**

For additional information please click [here](#).

### **Part-Time Work**

Part-time work allows an employee to work between 16 and 32 hours each week on a pre-arranged work schedule.

**Approval level – First line supervisor.**

For additional information please click [here](#).

### **Telework**

Telework refers to any arrangement in which an employee performs officially assigned duties at home or other worksites geographically convenient to the residence of the employee.

**Approval level – First line supervisor.**

For additional information please click [here](#).