

The *ABCs* of **SCHEDULE A** For the Hiring Manager



**How to Hire
Using the
Schedule A
Appointing
Authority**

INTRODUCTION

One of the most common complaints about the federal hiring process is that it takes too long. As reported by the Merit Systems Protection Board in its report entitled *Reforming Federal Hiring -- Beyond Faster and Cheaper* (September 2006), it takes an average of 102 days to complete all of the steps in the competitive hiring process, from making the request, to making the appointment. Certainly you, as a federal hiring manager or official, do not look forward to the prospect of spending three months or more trying to fill a position. Moreover, we know that excellent potential employees are lost because they too do not want to wait (or cannot afford to wait) months for a hiring decision. So what can you do? Use Schedule A!

Schedule A is an excellent alternative to the frustrating and bloated traditional hiring process. Moreover, hiring individuals with disabilities furthers several goals. Every federal agency strives to be diverse, inclusive and provide equal opportunity to all. Agencies appreciate that a diverse workforce is its greatest asset. Further, Congress has mandated that the federal government be **the** model employer. Reaching that status means federal agencies need to make significant improvement in the area

of hiring people with disabilities. Meeting that goal while also getting positions filled quickly makes using Schedule A a WIN-WIN proposition!

Using the Schedule A appointing authority, found at 5 CFR § 213.3102(u), qualified candidates who meet the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) guidelines can be hired non-competitively –

- ❖ without the typical recruitment headaches;
- ❖ without posting and publicizing the position; and
- ❖ without going through the certificate process.

How? By following the Easy How To Steps detailed in the next section.

EASY HOW TO STEPS

- 1 Hiring managers should first approach the Selective Placement Coordinator (SPC) or Disability Program Manager (DPM) in their agency (this person might be housed in HR, or they may be a part of the EEO office). The manager should alert the SPC/DPM of the job opening. The manager should also explain what competencies the ideal candidate should possess, thinking critically about the essential functions of the position.
- 2 An skilled SPC/DPM, after consulting their resources (which should include, but not be limited to, all local colleges and universities, local Vocational Rehabilitation service providers, the Employer Assistance & Recruiting Network (EARN), the Department of Labor's Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP), the Department of Defense's Wounded Warriors program, counterparts at other agencies, etc.), will be able to come back to the manager with potential Schedule A applicants who have already been determined to meet the qualifications for the position. The number of candidates the manager is presented with will vary greatly, depending on the level of specialty required by the job.
- 3 You, as the hiring official, can now review the resumes and references of the applicants, conduct interviews, etc., and then make a selection. Resume and reference reviews should be thorough to accurately assess job readiness. If you are not satisfied with any of the Schedule A applicants presented to you, you retain the option of using the traditional competitive process to fill the vacancy.

- 4 The selection decision, once made, should be relayed to the appropriate persons within HR who extend offers of employment on behalf of the agency. For some agencies, this might be handled *through* the SPC/DPM.
- 5 Once the offer has been accepted, a start date may be established to bring the candidate on board. This requires coordination with the SPC/DPM and/or your servicing HR Specialist to ensure that any accommodation needed is in place on your new employee's first day.

That's it!

Seem easy? It is! Moreover, a skilled SPC/DPM will keep a cadre of Schedule A eligible candidates on stand-by (this can take the form of a resume bank or "Schedule A Register," and should include people with the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities needed to succeed in the major occupations of the agency), so that they can assist busy hiring managers to very quickly fill job openings. No more three, six, or nine month waits!!

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What is Schedule A?

A. Schedule A is an appointing authority, or hiring authority. It is an Excepted Service appointment for persons with disabilities. The regulations guiding the *Excepted Service -- Appointment of Persons with Disabilities and Career and Career-Conditional Appointment* are found in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The citation is 5 CFR § 213.3102(u).

Q. Why should agencies consider using this hiring authority?

A. Agencies should use this hiring authority for a number of good reasons:

- ***Individuals with disabilities are an untapped source of excellent applicants;***
- No public notice is required. In fact, many of the usual HR-related stumbling blocks are avoided, which could result in significantly reducing the time necessary to hire a well-qualified candidate;
- Doing so can support an agency's Career Patterns initiative. Technological advances and growing emphasis on tele-work may dovetail with the needs of many applicants with disabilities; and
- Agencies don't have to clear 'surplus employee' lists prior to using the appointing authority.

Q. What about accommodations? Aren't they expensive and a hassle?

A. No! More often than not, providing accommodations is simple and *usually* free! Moreover, you are not

alone in trying to work through accommodation requests. Your agency's SPC/DPM can help you. Your agency may also have a person who serves as the Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator (RAC), to help with accommodation needs. There are also several resources outside of your agency which can help, some of which are listed herein – just check our Resources page!

And remember, just as we all need assistance at some point in the work place, accommodations may be needed by an individual with a disability. You want all of your employees to be at their best at work, and accommodations play a role in reaching that goal. Providing accommodations, however, does not have to be a difficult, expensive or time consuming process.

Q. Is this appointment to a permanent position?

- A. It can be. Agencies may self-determine what type of placement to make, based on the needs of the position, as well as the qualification level of the candidate. A hiring agency may make a temporary appointment, a time-limited appointment when the duties of the position do not require it to be filled on a permanent basis, or a permanent appointment. Permanent appointments are strongly encouraged, unless there is a compelling reason to do otherwise.

Q. What about a probationary period?

- A. Depending on the type of appointment, probationary periods typically last up to two years. As with any employee, Schedule A candidates should be held to

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

the same performance standards. Once the employee's accommodation needs, if any, have been met, then you should expect no more or less from a Schedule A employee than you would from any other employee.

RECRUITMENT / HIRING

EARN – The Employer Assistance & Recruiting Network (EARN) is a free service that connects employers looking for quality employees with skilled job candidates. EARN provides recruiting services, as well as employer success stories and information on the business case for hiring people with disabilities. Further information can be found at <http://earnworks.com/>.

WRP – The Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) is a recruitment and referral program that connects federal sector employers nationwide with highly motivated postsecondary students and recent graduates with disabilities who are eager to prove their abilities in the workplace through summer or permanent jobs. Students represent all majors, and range from college freshmen to graduate students and law students. A searchable database is available through the WRP website. WRP is ready to help you fill your summer or permanent hiring needs! Further information can be found at <http://wrp.gov>.

For Veterans with Disabilities – There are numerous organizations and agencies that exist to assist veterans with disabilities find and maintain employment. The following is a sample of useful resources to keep handy:

- ❖ The Department of Labor’s (DOL) Veterans Employment & Training Service <http://www.dol.gov/vets/welcome.html>
- ❖ Hire Heroes <http://www.hireheroesusa.org/>
- ❖ Wounded Warriors Project <http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org>

Advocacy Groups – There are several different advocacy groups that also serve as excellent resources for recruiting and hiring individuals with disabilities. The following is a sampling of those resources:

- ❖ American Association of People with Disabilities <http://www.aapd-dc.org/>
- ❖ National Council on Independent Living <http://www.ncil.org/>

RESOURCES

- ❖ Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation <http://www.rehabnetwork.org/>
- ❖ Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Government <http://dhhig.org/>
- ❖ American Council of the Blind <http://www.acb.org/>

Federal Resources – There are numerous federal programs designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities in finding employment. The following is a non-exhaustive list of programs/resources:

- ❖ The Office of Personnel Management’s “Disability Site” <http://www.opm.gov/disability/>
- ❖ DOL’s Office of Disability Employment Policy <http://www.dol.gov/odep/>
- ❖ Also check out the federal government’s one-stop web site for people with disabilities, their families, employers, veterans and service members, workforce professionals and many others. www.DisabilityInfo.gov

ACCOMMODATIONS

CAP – Within the federal government there is a wonderful program housed within the Department of Defense. The Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program (CAP) provides assistive technology and services to people with disabilities throughout the federal government **FREE OF CHARGE!** That means, you, as a hiring manager, can tap this resource for help in accommodating an employee with a disability. CAP will do the needs assessment, buy the needed technology, train the employee on how to use it, and follow up with updates. All you have to do is ask! (Note: Before contacting CAP directly yourself, check with the SPC/DPM or HR, as they may already have a relationship with CAP.) Further information can be found at <http://www.tricare.mil/cap/>.

JAN – The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) represents the most comprehensive resource for job accommodations available, and is a terrific and easy-to-use resource. This **free** consulting service includes providing individualized worksite accommodation solutions, as well as general information on job accommodations and related subjects for employers and people with disabilities. Additional information can be found at <http://www.jan.wvu.edu/>.



U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

1-800-669-4000 / TTY 1-800-669-6820

www.eeoc.gov