



# Hiring Options

A tool for hiring managers and applicants

## External Competitive Options

### Delegated Examining

The competitive hiring process is open to all U.S. applicants. It requires public notice and application of veterans' preference. Candidates are ranked according to two or more "quality categories" established to assess job-related criteria. 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 Nonappropriated 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.

### Temporary Appointment

A job expected to last for a period not to exceed 1 year.

### Term Appointment

A job lasting 1 - 4 years that can be used to support project work, extraordinary workloads, scheduled cancellation of a position, or uncertainty of future funding.

### Pathways Recent Graduates Program

This program provides federal developmental experience for recent graduates.

### Pathways Internship Program

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

### 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.



Rural  
Development  
Careers

To apply for USDA Rural Development jobs visit [usajobs.gov](https://usajobs.gov)  
USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

# Noncompetitive Options

## OPM Governmentwide Direct Hire Authorities

RD utilizes the following Direct Hire Authorities:

- Economist
- General Engineer
- Civil Engineer
- Contract Specialist
- Physical Science
- Statistician
- IT Cybersecurity Specialist

## 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.

## Former Peace Corps VISTA Volunteers

Individuals who have satisfactorily volunteered in VISTA 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. However, the authority does not entitle spouses to an appointment over other applicants. There is no grade level limitation.

## 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.

## Reemployed 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 is not based upon disability will continue to receive their full retirement annuity and salary during reemployment.

## 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.

# Federal Hiring 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 Options:** Applicants must compete with other applicants 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 for up to 1 year.

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

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

**Noncompetitive Service Options:** 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 last 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.

**Transfer:** Movement from one federal agency to another.

**Term Appointment:** A job lasting 1 - 4 years that can be used to support project work, extraordinary workloads, scheduled cancellation of a position, or uncertainty of future funding.