

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) partnered with other federal agencies and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to reform federal recruitment and hiring processes and systems. The Presidential Memorandum on Improving the Federal Recruitment and Hiring Process, signed by President Obama on May 11, 2010, mandates changes to streamline the federal hiring process. To access the memorandum, visit the [Resources](#) page of the HR Academy website.

A primary component of the hiring reform initiative involves hiring managers becoming more involved in and accountable for recruiting and staffing within VA. As such, human resources (HR) professionals who are involved in recruiting and staffing efforts are encouraged to collaborate and consult with hiring managers.

The HR Academy is here to help you learn about and meet the new requirements of the hiring reform initiative. Read on for tips to effectively consult with hiring managers and to learn about tools you can use to meet VA's recruiting and staffing needs.

Consult with Hiring Managers for Increased Efficiency and Effectiveness

Follow these important guidelines to establish consultative partnerships with hiring managers.

Consult: Discuss the various methods of hiring with hiring managers, such as using a non-competitive hiring authority like VRA, Schedule A, 30% or more for service connected disability, or the student employment program. Use of these non-competitive hiring authorities is simple and effective in decreasing the amount of time jobs are vacant. A job announcement is not needed to fill a job using a non-competitive hiring authority.

The Hiring Reform Initiative involves:

- Eliminating written essays (KSAs) in the initial application
- Allowing applicants to submit simple, plain-language resumes and cover letters
- Eliminating the "Rule of 3" approach, which required managers to select from the three highest ranking candidates
- Requiring managers to be more involved and accountable in the hiring process
- Training managers in efficient and effective hiring methods
- Notifying candidates about the status of their applications

Plan: Work with hiring managers to define job needs by analyzing their workforce objectives. Consider providing managers with a questionnaire to use in developing job requirements.

- To write an effective job announcement, ask managers to identify critical behavioral or personality traits as well as required job skills and relevant experience.
- When writing the job announcement, keep in mind the hiring reform initiative's streamlined and simple, plain language requirements.

Recruit: Consider all possible sources for candidates, and inquire if there is a special pool of applicants who can be targeted, such as Veterans or persons with disabilities.

- Consider alternatives, such as social media and employee referrals.
- Refer to the next page on HR flexibilities, which details additional options to help attract qualified candidates.

Interview: Discuss interview formats with the hiring manager, and select a behavioral or traditional format, one-on-one, or panel style. Provide guidance on best practices, legal issues, and common interviewing mistakes.

- Prepare an interview checklist with hiring managers.
- Assist hiring managers with writing situational and behavioral interview questions.
- Suggest that the hiring message include VA values and the opportunities and rewards of working at VA.
- Agree on a time allotment for each interview.
- Provide hiring managers with candidate evaluation forms.

HR Flexibilities and Authorities Provide a Range of Recruiting and Staffing Options

OPM's HR Flexibilities and Authorities Handbook, available on the HR Academy website's [Resources](#) tab, is an indispensable tool for consultative and strategic HR professionals. This publication provides a wide range of options that can be of great value in searching for a diverse and high-performing pool of candidates, providing accurate benefits, and dealing with emergency situations.

Below are some examples of the range of flexibilities that can be helpful in your recruiting and staffing efforts. These can be explored in their entirety in the [HR Flexibilities and Authorities Handbook](#).

Staffing: Recruiting, short-term staffing, and workforce restructuring strategies, such as the Intra-Agency Selection Priority Program.

Strategic Human Capital Management: The OPM Workforce Planning Model, Communities of Practice, and other tools.

Work/Life: Work/life arrangements and policies on topics such as job-sharing, leave, and scheduling flexibilities.

Employee Benefits: Flexibilities that apply to benefits and eligibility rules, including options such as lump-sum annual leave payments, health savings plans, and subsidized transportation.

Compensation: Compensation for recruitment, relocation, and retention efforts, such as special needs qualifications, physician's comparability allowance, and waiver of dual pay limitations.

Work Design and Classifications: Options for organizing and assigning work, job redesign, and job-grading standards that allow for adjustments in pay or expansion of the candidate pool.

Performance Management: Incentive and award flexibilities such as rating-based and other cash awards used to improve organizational performance.

Performance Development and Training: Training and education flexibilities, such as individual learning accounts, advance payment of education, and training schedule arrangements.

Learn More at the HR Academy

The HR Academy offers a comprehensive range of courses and other resources designed to help HR professionals learn more about important issues in their field. The HR Academy is an important part of ADVANCE, the Office of Human Resources and Administration's long-term investment in the professional and personal growth of its workforce. Through enhanced opportunities for education, professional development and skills training, the HR Academy ensures that VA's employees and customers - our nation's Veterans - are fully supported and served with excellence.

For more information or questions, send the HR Academy National Implementation Team an email at vacoacademy@va.gov.