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EMS TRANSMISSION- 03/18/2009
Instruction Memorandum No. OR-2009-026
Expires: 09/30/2010

To: DMs, DSDs, Staff, and Branch Chiefs

From: State Director, Oregon/Washington

Subject: Student Career Experience Program Washington Office Funding Assistance
Criteria and Request Procedures for Oregon/Washington State Office Participants

Program Area: Human Resources

Purpose: This Instruction Memorandum (IM) includes the criteria for each type of Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) funding assistance available from the Division of Recruitment, Retention, and Talent Management (WO 730) as well as procedures for requesting WO 730 funding assistance for Oregon State Office (OSO) SCEP participants.

Policy Action: Participants in the SCEP may be eligible to receive WO 730 funding if they meet specific funding criteria. Funding assistance from WO 730 is available in the following areas: salary, tuition, travel for SCEP Orientation, and travel to/from the duty station.

Criteria for Salary Funding

Regular salary may be funded by WO 730 for new SCEP participants for a period of 12 consecutive weeks, May 1 through August 31 of each fiscal year. SCEP participants are required to work 40 hours per week during this 12-week period. The hiring office is responsible for salary beyond the 12 weeks as well as awards, overtime, and compensatory time. Salary funding assistance from WO 730 is only available for the first year the SCEP participant is in the program. Thereafter, the state/district office provides funding for their participants' salaries.

Procedures for Requesting Funding for Salaries

1. The OSO SCEP Coordinator will assist the selecting official in completing and submitting the attached “Request for WO 730 Funding Assistance” form to WO 730 for approval. Funding requests are usually accepted each year beginning in February (the specific date to be determined each year) and ending on May 1st. For current submission dates, contact Alina Malray, the OSO SCEP Coordinator at (503) 808-6242.
2. The OSO SCEP Coordinator will notify the selecting official of the approval or disapproval of the funding request. If the funding request is approved, the selecting official and authorized timekeeper will then be notified by the OSO SCEP Coordinator of funding approval via electronic memorandum from WO 730 identifying authorized funding codes to be utilized for the participant’s salary costs.
3. From May 1 to August 31, the National Student Educational Employment Program (SEEP) Coordinator will act as the alternate timekeeper for new WO 730-funded SCEP participants. The state/district office timekeeper will ensure that the National SEEP Coordinator is listed as the alternate timekeeper for new SCEP participants for the entire 12-week period.
4. During the 12-week work period, the payroll process will include the following steps:
 - a. The SCEP participant will enter his/her hours into the timesheet located in the Quicktime system and forward the information to the state/district timekeeper.
 - b. The state/district timekeeper will approve the SCEP participant’s timesheet and forward the timesheet to the SCEP participant’s supervisor for certification.
 - c. The supervisor will certify and submit the timesheet according to regulations.
 - d. The National SEEP Coordinator will contact the OSO SCEP Coordinator with any timesheet errors or discrepancies, and the OSO SCEP Coordinator will then notify the appropriate timekeeper and will ensure that errors or discrepancies are corrected in a timely manner.

Note: The supervisor should contact the OSO SCEP Coordinator with any changes to a SCEP participant’s start and end dates or program status. The state/district office may not use or “switch” salary dollars allocated for one SCEP participant to cover other expenses.

Criteria for Tuition Assistance Funding

Tuition assistance is available each year for any new or returning students that are in the program. Tuition assistance from WO 730 pays for tuition costs, general university fees, and required lab fees. Tuition assistance from WO 730 does not pay for books, supplies, parking fees, health fees, and other academic fees or benefits. Students may request tuition assistance from October 1 to August 31 of the fiscal year. Tuition assistance will be disbursed by semester or on a quarterly basis. For SCEP participants on a semester schedule, tuition assistance will cover spring, summer, and fall semester expenses. For SCEP participants on a quarterly

schedule, tuition assistance will cover allowed expenses during the fall, winter, and spring terms within the fiscal year October 1 to September 30. Once allocated funds are depleted, SCEP participants will not receive additional WO 730 funding until the next fiscal year.

Note: When submitting invoices or bills for tuition reimbursement, any processing fee/credit card fees should be included in the requested amount. These additional fees will be deducted from the SCEP participant's tuition assistance balance. Reimbursement for processing or credit card fees after the fact will not be provided.

Procedures for Requesting Funding for Tuition Assistance

1. New and returning WO 730-funded SCEP participants are required to provide their supervisors with bills or invoices from their educational institutions.
2. The hiring office will identify the specific dollar amount being requested for tuition assistance and forward the invoice or bill to the OSO SCEP Coordinator.
3. The OSO SCEP Coordinator will fax the tuition invoice to WO 730.
4. Upon approval, WO 730 will send the OSO SCEP Coordinator an electronic memorandum containing a charge code and an approved dollar amount for tuition assistance.
5. For tuition payments of less than \$2500, the OSO SCEP Coordinator will provide the hiring office with the electronic memorandum containing the charge code. The hiring office will then coordinate payment of the participant's tuition with his/her educational institution.
6. For tuition payments greater than \$2500, the OSO SCEP Coordinator will coordinate payment with the National Business Center (D-2663) by completing and submitting Form SF-1164, a copy of the tuition invoice or bill, and the participant's SCEP agreement rather than providing the hiring office with the charge code via electronic memorandum.

IM No. BC-2004-032 outlines procedures for appropriate use of the SF-1164. It states that the tuition reimbursement can include compensation for books purchased. **This statement does not apply to WO 730-funded participants if the request exceeds \$2,500.**

Note: Supervisors must ensure that all tuition bills submitted for payment after August 19th are coordinated with the OSO SCEP Coordinator and that a miscellaneous obligation form is completed for tuition to be paid. All credit card bills for tuition payments must be reconciled before the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) September cutoff date, which varies by fiscal year.

Criteria for SCEP Orientation

Travel, lodging, and per diem expenses for new SCEP participants and their mentors attending the SCEP Orientation at the National Training Center (NTC) in Phoenix, Arizona, will be provided by WO 730.

The SCEP participants and mentors who receive WO 730 funding may attend local SCEP orientation sessions in addition to, but not instead of, the mandatory SCEP Orientation at the NTC in Phoenix, Arizona. Attendance is mandatory, with few exceptions.

Procedures for Requesting Funding for SCEP Orientation

1. The SCEP Coordinator will provide WO 730 with the names of new SCEP participants and the mentors who will attend orientation during the funding request process. Funding requests are usually accepted each year beginning in February (the specific date to be determined each year) and ending on May 1. For current submission dates, contact Alina Malray the OSO SCEP Coordinator at (503)-808-6242.
2. The hiring office will enroll the SCEP participant and mentor in the National SCEP Orientation course electronically through the NTC's intranet site.
3. Travel and lodging information and a charge code will be provided by the OSO SCEP Coordinator to the new SCEP participant, the mentor, and the supervisor via electronic memorandum.
4. The hiring offices are then responsible for making travel arrangements for SCEP participants and their mentors using only the charge codes provided by WO 730 for orientation expenses.
5. The SCEP participant and the mentor will submit signed travel vouchers to the hiring office for processing within 5 working days after returning from the SCEP Orientation.
6. The hiring office will provide the OSO SCEP Coordinator with copies of completed travel vouchers no later than 7 business days after returning from the SCEP Orientation.
7. The OSO SCEP Coordinator will provide copies of the completed travel vouchers to WO 730 no later than 10 business days after the SCEP Orientation.

SCEP Waiver for Orientation

The National SCEP Orientation requirement will be waived by WO 730 during the participant's first year if a new SCEP participant who receives funding assistance from WO 730 is unable to attend the orientation due to extenuating circumstances. With the initial request for funding, the State SCEP Coordinator will submit a written request for a waiver, which will include an explanation of the circumstances requiring the waiver, to the National SEEP Coordinator. Any WO 730-funded SCEP participant who receives a waiver must attend the National SCEP Orientation during the next fiscal year.

Criteria for Requesting Funding for Travel to/from Duty Station

New and returning SCEP participants are eligible to receive round-trip travel assistance to and from their assigned duty stations if they travel more than 50 miles (not to include Permanent Change of Station (PCS), lodging, or per diem expenses). Round-trip travel will be funded by WO 730 no more than once each fiscal year and during the employment cycles of May 1 to August 31 only.

Travel assistance from WO 730 does not include the PCS move for converted SCEP participants. The PCS move is the responsibility of the hiring office. In addition, travel assistance from WO 730 does not include emergency travel (even if the travel is due to illness or death in the family) for SCEP participants, if the participant travels during the 12 week period.

Hiring offices must contact the BLM's travel agency for price quotes when submitting travel assistance requests for airfare for their participants in order to ensure that the quotes are based on current, standard Federal rates.

Hiring offices must contact the BLM's travel agency for a price quote on round-trip airfare when requesting travel assistance for a SCEP participant traveling by a privately owned vehicle (POV) or rental car. The hiring office must provide the OSO SCEP Coordinator with written documentation that the participant's travel by POV or rental car is advantageous to the government. The OSO SCEP Coordinator will then advise the participant and the supervisor that WO 730 provides funding for mileage only when the participant elects to travel by POV or rental car. Additional travel costs such as gasoline, tolls, lodging, and the cost of the rental car will not be reimbursed by WO 730 but may be covered at the hiring office's discretion and expense.

Procedures for Requesting Funding for Travel to/from Duty Station

1. The hiring office will make travel arrangements for the SCEP participant and prepare a travel authorization according to BLM standard procedures.
2. The hiring office will submit a copy of the approved travel authorization to the SCEP participant and to the OSO SCEP Coordinator who will then request a charge code from WO 730.
3. The OSO SCEP Coordinator will receive an electronic memorandum from WO 730 which includes a charge code to be used for the SCEP participant's travel to and from the duty station. Upon receipt, the electronic memorandum containing the charge code will be provided to the hiring office.
4. The SCEP participant must complete a travel voucher (with receipts) within 5 business days of arrival at the assigned duty station.
5. The hiring office will submit a travel voucher for processing and provide a copy of the voucher to the OSO SCEP Coordinator no later than 7 business days after the participant arrives at the duty station.
6. The OSO SCEP Coordinator will provide a copy of the completed travel voucher to WO 730 no later than 10 business days after the participant arrives at the duty station.

Note: When submitting invoices or bills for travel reimbursement, any processing fee/credit card fees should be included in the requested amount. Reimbursement for processing or credit card fees after the fact will not be provided by WO 730.

Administration: The SCEP Program will be administered by the OR/WA BLM in accordance with Department of the Interior (DOI) Personnel Bulletin No. 06-08, dated July 19, 2006.

Timeframe: This IM is effective immediately.

Budget Impact: As determined by each organizational unit.

Background: Each year, the Division of Recruitment, Retention, and Talent Management (WO 730) provides funding assistance to BLM offices that hire students in positions of critical need or hard-to-fill job series.

Manual/Handbook Sections Affected: None.

Coordination: OR/WA Human Resources Management Committee.

Contact: The point of contact for this IM is OSO SCEP Coordinator, Alina Malray, at 503-808-6242 or Alina_Malray@blm.gov.

Districts with Unions are reminded to notify their unions of this Instruction Memorandum and satisfy any bargaining obligations before implementation. Your servicing Human Resources Office or Labor Relations Specialist can provide you with assistance in this matter.

Signed by

Authenticated by

Michael S. Mottice
Associate State Director

Rhondalyn J. Darnell
Records Section

Attachment

1. [Request for WO 730 Funding Assistance Form \(2pp\)](#)

Distribution
WO 730