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Subject: **1400-335 – MERIT PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT PLAN**

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1. Explanation of Material Transmitted: This release transmits a revised Manual for establishing policies and implementing procedures to ensure all available candidates receive equitable and fair consideration for positions filled under the BLM Merit Promotion and Internal Placement Plan. The new section focuses on changes that allow more flexibility in the BLM's hiring process.

2. Reports Required: None.

3. Material Superseded: This release supersedes Manual number 1400- 335, Promotion and Internal Placement dated January 17, 2001.

4. Filing Instructions: None.

REMOVE

All of 1400-335  
(Total 23 sheets)

INSERT

All of 1400-335  
(Total 31 sheets)

/s/ Carole Carter-Pfisterer  
Assistant Director  
Human Capital Management

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**1400-335 – MERIT PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT PLAN**

.01 Purpose: This plan establishes policies and procedures for promotions, competitive and noncompetitive placement actions for all activities serviced by Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Human Resources Offices (HRO). This plan is in accordance with statutory and regulatory guidance from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the Department of the Interior (DOI). This manual does not pertain to promotion and internal placement for Senior Executive Service (SES) positions.

.02 Objective: To provide equitable means of referral and selection, for all placement actions, according to merit principles.

.03 References:

Title 5 USC 2301, Merit System Principles  
Title 5 USC 2302, Prohibited Personnel Practices  
5 CFR 300, Employment (General)  
5 CFR 302, Employment in the Excepted Service  
5 CFR 307, Recruitment Appointments  
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5 CFR 338, Qualification Requirements (General)  
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370 DM 338, Qualification Requirements  
370 DM 339, Qualification Requirements (Medical)  
Service First Agreements  
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.04 Responsibility:

- A. BLM Director/Deputy Director: The BLM Director/Deputy Director is responsible for implementing the BLM Merit Promotion and Internal Placement Plan and ensuring that all available candidates receive consideration in accordance with merit principles.
- B. The Assistant Director, Human Capital Management is responsible for: Developing, establishing and monitoring the policies, practices and procedures governing this regulation.

Conducting compliance reviews.

Issuing program updates and implementing improvements to the HR program, as required.

- C. HRO employees are responsible for: Assisting selecting officials with the development of job analyses/crediting plans and job specific vacancy questions.

Posting vacancy announcements within two work days after receipt of all required documentation.

Screening, reviewing and rating applications within 15 work days after an established cut-off date or the closing date of a vacancy announcement.

Issuing referral lists within one work day after completion of the rating and ranking process.

Ensuring applicants receive written notices on the status of their resume.

Extending tentative job offers within three work days after a referral list is returned.

Initiating requisite pre-employment clearances, e.g. security checks, drug tests, physicals, etc within 10 work days after a tentative job offer is accepted.

Extending firm job offers and establishing entrance on duty dates within two work days after the requisite clearances are completed.

In-processing new employees within 14 work days after a firm offer is accepted.

Providing guidance in the prevention and resolution of merit promotion related complaints.

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Advising managers and selecting officials on personnel processes and the best manner in which to produce a quality workforce to accomplish the BLM's mission.

Counseling employees regarding merit promotion procedures, promotion opportunities, qualification requirements, and results of merit promotion actions.

Providing periodic training to management and employees on current merit promotion practices and selection procedures.

Adhering to the DOI and the BLM merit promotion and internal placement plans.

Ensuring records and case files are appropriately maintained and handled in accordance with information security rules.

- D. Office of Civil Rights employees are responsible for: Working with managers/supervisors and HRO personnel to identify barriers to selections of under-represented groups.

Advising managers/supervisors on affirmative action goals and responsibilities.

Developing, executing and assessing programs designed to support affirmative employment.

Monitoring selections to ensure compliance with the spirit and intent of affirmative action program goals and objectives.

- E. Supervisors/Selecting officials are accountable for: Ensuring the selection process follows the BLM merit promotion and internal placement plan, National Personnel Management Committee (NPMC) selection requirements, merit principles, and other applicable laws, policies and procedures.

Providing accurate position descriptions and working with the HROs to finalize assessment tools (conduct the job analysis and develop the crediting plan for the position to be filled) prior to submission of the Request for Personnel Action (RPA) to the HR Office.

Submitting a RPA within one work day after all required documentation is received in the HR Office.

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Ensuring employment barriers, which preclude consideration of under-represented groups, are addressed and eliminated.

Reviewing applications, conducting interviews, checking references, making selections and returning referral lists within 15 work days after receiving a referral list.

Notifying employees of vacancies within the organization.

Ensuring that employees are familiar with merit principles.

- F. Employees are responsible for: Seeking out vacancy announcements for positions in which they are interested.

Applying for positions in accordance with the instructions provided in vacancy announcements.

Taking an active interest in formal and informal self-development and training opportunities.

- .05 Policy: Positions will be filled with the best qualified persons available. Identification, qualification, evaluation and selection will be made on the basis of merit principles, without regard to political, religious or labor organization affiliation or non-affiliation, marital status, race, color, sex, national origin, non-disqualifying physical or mental handicap, sexual orientation or age.

Management has the right to make selections from among properly ranked and certified candidates, or may choose to make selections from a variety of other appropriate sources, such as reassignment eligibles, reinstatement eligibles, Veterans Recruitment Appointment candidates, certificate of eligibles obtained through the OPM or through the Interagency Delegated Examining Agreement between the OPM and the DOI and/or other special hiring authorities.

Negotiated Collective Bargaining agreements which contain procedures that differ from the provisions of this regulation remain in effect until renegotiated, except where such agreements are specifically superseded by applicable law or regulation.

- .06 Files and Records Maintenance: Complete files (hard copy and/or electronic) must be maintained in accordance with the BLM records retention guidelines.

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### .1 COVERAGE

- .11 Recusal Requirement: HRO staff members, subject matter experts (SME), supervisors, panel members and selecting officials may not participate in any part of the recruitment process if they intend to apply for the position or if they know that a relative, household member or other person with a close affiliation intends to apply. Notification of recusals must be submitted, in writing, to the servicing HR Officer.
- .12 Competitive Actions: The following placement actions must be accomplished in accordance with the competitive procedures of this plan:
- A. Permanent promotion to higher graded positions or to positions with more promotion potential than any position previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service.
  - B. Reassignment or change to lower grade to a position with more promotion potential than any position previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service, except as permitted by reduction in force (RIF) regulations.
  - C. Temporary promotions, details to higher graded positions and details to positions with promotion potential for more than 120 days. A temporary promotion may be made permanent, without further competition provided the temporary promotion was originally made under competitive procedures, and the fact that it might lead to a permanent promotion was stated in the original vacancy announcement.
  - D. Selection for training which is a part of an authorized training agreement, part of a promotion program, or required by regulation before an employee may be considered for a promotion.
  - E. Appointment, transfer or reinstatement to a position at a higher grade or with more promotion potential than any position previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service.
  - F. Appointments of Veterans Employment Opportunity Act (VEOA) eligibles.
- .13 Noncompetitive Actions: The following actions are excluded from the competitive procedures of this plan:
- A. Promotions resulting from the upgrading of a position without a significant change in the duties and responsibilities due to the issuance of a new classification standard or the correction of an initial classification error.



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- B. Promotions resulting from an employee's position being reclassified at a higher grade because of additional duties and responsibilities (accretion).
- C. Placements made during or in lieu of RIF permitted by governing regulations.
- D. Actions involving statutory, regulatory or administrative placement, to include actions directed by higher authority levels i.e., Merit Systems Protection Board, arbitration decisions, court decisions, local settlements and discrimination complaint decisions.
- E. Promotions within an established career ladder to the identified full performance level, when prior competition established eligibility for promotion. The intent must be made a matter of record and the career ladders must be documented.
- F. Promotions, transfers or reinstatements to a grade previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service.
- G. Promotions, reassignments, demotions, transfers, reinstatements, or details to positions having no greater promotion potential than that of a position the employee currently holds or previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service.
- H. Temporary promotions or details to higher graded positions or details to positions with known promotion potential of 120 days or less. Prior service during the preceding 12 months under non-competitive time-limited promotions and non-competitive details to higher graded positions or details to positions with promotion potential counts toward the 120 day total.
- I. Promotions of employees entitled to priority consideration as corrective action for failure to be given proper consideration under the requirements of this plan.
- J. Non-competitive conversions of individuals appointed under excepted service procedures and promotion after conversion, provided the position occupied has an established full performance level.
- K. Non-competitive conversion of an employee in a trainee program as identified by the OPM, (Pathways Program, Veterans Recruitment Appointment, etc.) and promotion after conversion provided the position occupied has an established full performance level.

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- L. Other actions not specified above which are permitted by regulation and are consistent with the spirit and intent of the merit principles delineated in Title 5 United States Code.

The above actions may require the clearance of applicable placement programs.

Appendix 1 contains more information on actions that must be processed competitively or noncompetitively.

### **.2 DEVELOPMENT OF ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

#### **.21 Job Analysis:**

- A. Federal merit promotion policy requires that selection for positions filled through competitive procedures be made from among the best qualified candidates available. Job related evaluation criteria beyond the standards used for determining basic qualifications must be used to identify the best qualified candidates for a position. This candidate evaluation must be based on a job analysis. Selecting officials, with the assistance of an HR Specialist, must finalize the assessment criteria and a recruitment strategy before an RPA is submitted.
- B. A job analysis is an in-depth review of the position to identify the major duties and to determine the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA) essential to the position and the associated KSA-based application questions for use in an automated rating and ranking system. The job analysis must be conducted by a SME in conjunction with an HR Specialist. The job analysis must be signed and dated by the SME and the HR Specialist and filed in the merit promotion case file. Electronic approval is acceptable.
- C. KSAs and the associated KSA-based application questions must be identified through a job analysis of the position being filled. Only those candidates who meet basic qualification requirements will be further evaluated on the basis of demonstrated job-related KSAs. Measurable KSAs will be identified in the vacancy announcement, and candidates will be required to provide information as to experience, education, training, awards, etc., relating to each KSA.

Appendix 2 contains a sample job analysis format.

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### .22 Crediting Plans:

- A. The crediting plan is a documented summary of the developed applicant evaluation methods for a specific job or a number of similar jobs. Crediting plans must be developed and used for each position or groups of positions being filled. The SME, in conjunction with an HR Specialist, should review and recertify the job analysis and crediting plan each time it is used for recruitment purposes.
- B. As part of the job analysis process, the SME, in consultation with the HR Specialist, selects and/or writes the KSA-based selective and/or ranking factor questions (and the related response choices) and determines the numeric weights to assign to the question responses, before the vacancy announcement opens. The KSA-based questions, associated response choices and assigned numeric weights make up the crediting plan for the position. The HR Specialist selects the basic qualifications questions.
- C. Weighting is used to ensure that qualified candidates, with particular KSAs, will be ranked higher than candidates lacking such KSAs. Individual question response choices can be weighted differently depending on how important the KSA-based questions is in relation to the overall rating of the applicant. The basis for determining that a particular KSA-based question should be more important and have more weight assigned should be based on one or a combination of the following:
  1. TIME – A significant portion of the incumbent’s time is spent on the duties requiring the KSA to be performed frequently.
  2. DIFFICULTY – The level of difficulty of duties requiring the KSA is quite high.
  3. ERRORS – The consequences of committing errors in duties requiring the KSA are serious.
  4. PAYOFF – The payoff from a high level of performance of duties requiring the KSA is great. The employing organization will benefit greatly if an employee does an excellent job in performing the duties requiring the KSA.
  5. OTHER – Document other reasons that a determination is made to justify a higher weight.

### .3 LOCATING CANDIDATES

.31 Reemployment Priority List (RPL): The RPL must be cleared before the recruitment process begins and must be re-cleared before a job offer is extended to a selectee.

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.32 Area of Consideration (AOC):

- A. AOCs for vacancy announcements will be established to ensure the availability of a sufficient number of well-qualified candidates. Selecting officials, in consultation with their Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Specialist and/or HRO, will develop an outreach plan and recruitment strategy for each vacancy that identifies methods and approaches for encouraging under-represented candidates to apply. In determining AOCs selecting officials must consider:
  - 1. EEO goals and objectives.
  - 2. The likelihood of producing sufficient numbers of well-qualified candidates without unreasonably restricting fair and open competition.
  - 3. Budgetary/hiring constraints and cost-effectiveness.
- B. When accepting applications from candidates outside the DOI workforce, the AOC must include Career Transition Assistance Plan/Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan (CTAP/ICTAP) and VEOA eligibles.
- C. In 1998, the VEOA was enacted. The VEOA allows preference eligibles or veterans to compete for vacancies under merit promotion procedures. Veterans are those who have been separated under honorable conditions from the armed forces with three or more years of continuous active service. In accordance with OPM guidance, a veteran who is released under honorable conditions shortly before completing a three-year tour of active service is also eligible for a VEOA appointment. A VEOA eligible, who was separated 30 days or less prior to completion of the three years of continuous active duty service requirement, is eligible to receive consideration for BLM vacancies. A VEOA eligible is considered to be within the AOC, regardless of where they live. AOCs identified for competitive candidates do not preclude consideration and selection of candidates eligible for non-competitive appointments.

.33 Vacancy Announcements:

- A. Vacancy announcements will normally be open for at least five business days to ensure that people who want to apply for the position have an adequate opportunity to do so. If a vacancy announcement is opened for less than five business days, the case file must include written documentation that clearly outlines the reason(s) for opening the vacancy announcement for less than five business days.

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- B. In keeping with the requirements of OPM's hiring reform initiative, vacancy announcements should normally be open for no more than 10 work days. Longer open periods may be used when warranted, e.g. hard to fill positions, the need to fill several vacancies, temporary seasonal vacancies, etc.
- C. Interest vacancy announcements may only be used for non-competitive actions that will not exceed 120 calendar days. When using an interest vacancy announcement, the AOC must be limited to current career, career-conditional or term DOI employees
- D. All competitive service vacancies must be reported to OPM - (USAJOBS) when the AOC includes applicants who are not current DOI employees. The minimum AOC to be used is all current or former federal employees with competitive/reinstatement eligibility and ICTAP/CTAP eligibles in the local commuting area and VEOA eligibles.
- E. Under no circumstances will an HR Office issue a vacancy announcement that exceeds the five page limit as required by Departmental policy. In addition, no modifications may be made to the five page vacancy announcement template unless approval is received from the HR Program Manager at the National Operations Center.

.34 Required Information:

- A. The following information must be included on all vacancy announcements:
  - 1. Agency/Bureau Name.
  - 2. Vacancy announcement number.
  - 3. Title, pay plan or pay rate, series, and grade.
  - 4. Full performance level of the position being filled.
  - 5. Who May Apply.
  - 6. Opening and closing dates, plus any other information on how the receipt of applications will be controlled, such as the use of established cut-off dates.
  - 7. Duty location.
  - 8. Number of vacancies.
  - 9. Description of Duties.
  - 10. Qualification requirements:
    - a. KSAs must be listed on the actual vacancy announcement under the Evaluations Section. KSAs must be limited to no more than five per vacancy announcement. In addition, the use of vacancy-specific questions, requiring narrative responses, is prohibited during the assessment process.

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- b. In addition to mandatory minimum education requirements, vacancy announcements must also include all substitutions of education for each grade level being advertised under the vacancy announcement.
  - c. A definition of specialized experience for each grade level being recruited.
11. Basis for Rating.
- a. Type of assessment to be used.
  - b. Selective placement factors.
  - c. If using an interview, whether the interview will be pass/fail or scored.
12. Whether a drug test is required.
13. What to file.
14. Instructions on how to apply.
15. Required documents.
16. Information on how to claim veterans' preference, if applicable.
17. A definition of well-qualified and information on how CTAP/ICTAP candidates may apply, including proof of eligibility required.
18. EEO statement.
19. Reasonable accommodation statement. When using USAJOBS the information pertaining to EEO and reasonable accommodation is automatically added.
20. Security Clearance requirements.
21. Permanent Change of Station (PCS)/First Duty Station (FDS) travel.
- a. Decisions to pay or not pay moving and related expenses must be made prior to issuing the vacancy announcement.
  - b. When making decisions regarding payment of relocation costs, selecting officials should take into consideration the effect on attaining quality candidates, past practices, benefit to the government and opportunities to diversify the workforce.
  - c. The unavailability of funds to pay for PCS/FDS moves may not be the determining factor.
  - d. A statement addressing the payment or nonpayment of PCS/FDS expenses must be included in the vacancy announcement. Any changes to the decision to pay or not pay moving expenses after the announcement has closed will require that the announcement be re-advertised
22. Information on who to contact if an individual is unable to submit his/her application on-line.

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23. VEOA eligibility criteria, if applicable. To be eligible for a VEOA appointment, a veteran must be honorably separated and either a preference eligible or have substantially completed three or more years of active service. VEOA applicants, who separate with 30 or less days prior to completion of the three-years of continuous active duty service requirement, are eligible to receive consideration for BLM vacancies.
24. Any other information applicable to the position being filled, i.e. travel requirements, medical/physical requirements, license and certificate requirements; government travel card; direct deposit, operation of a motorized vehicle, etc.

**B. Optional Information:**

1. Payment of incentives.
2. Alternative work schedules.
3. Telecommuting options.
4. Employee benefits.
5. Work-life programs.
6. Employee assistance programs.
7. Developmental and training opportunities.

**.4 ACCEPTANCE OF APPLICATIONS**

**.41 Acceptance/Receipt of Applications and Required Documents:**

Application control procedures must be specified in the vacancy announcement and must be applied consistently to all applicants. Vacancy announcements must contain information advising applicants who they must contact if they are unable to apply through the on-line automated application system. All applications and required documents, regardless of the application method, must be received by the HR Office by the closing date of the vacancy announcement. For applicants submitting hard copy application packages, the application package must be received by the date specified by the HR Specialist

- A. When using an automated application system the application package must be completed by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.
- B. Supplemental documents must be submitted by fax, uploaded electronically or as instructed in the vacancy announcement.

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### **.42 Failure to Submit Documentation:**

- A. Applicants who fail to submit the appropriate required documentation by the closing date of the vacancy announcement or by the date specified by the HR Specialist will normally not be considered. However, if the situation warrants, HR Offices may, at their discretion, request missing documentation from qualified applicants. If one qualified applicant is contacted to request missing documentation, all qualified applicants who failed to submit required documentation, must be contacted and given an opportunity to submit their required documentation.
  
- B. Applications will be accepted from all applicants within the AOC. Applicants will be required to submit the following materials, if applicable:
  - 1. Resume.
  - 2. On-line questionnaire.
  - 3. Most recent SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action, (non-award), if applicable.
  - 4. Certificate of Expected Separation or equivalent documentation.
  - 5. College transcripts.
  - 6. DD-214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty.
  - 7. SF-15, Application for 10-Point Veterans Preference and supporting documentation.
  - 8. Licensures.
  - 9. Certifications.
  - 10. In the case of CTAP/ICTAP eligibles, a copy of their most recent performance appraisal.
  - 11. Other documentation, as necessary.
  
- C. BLM employees are authorized to use government equipment to prepare and print applications when applying for vacancies with other Federal agencies. Employees must use this equipment on their own time, before or after work or during their lunch break, to the extent that such equipment is not otherwise needed for pressing government business.

### **.43 Use of Government Postage or Envelopes:**

The use of Government postage or envelopes to mail job applications is a violation of OPM and Postal Service regulations. Applications and/or supplemental documents submitted in Government postage envelopes will not be considered.



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### .5 QUALIFICATION DETERMINATIONS

#### .51 Minimum Qualifications:

Applicants must meet the basic experience and/or education requirements as outlined in the pertinent qualification standard and all other job requirements within 30 days after the closing date of the vacancy announcement or the cut-off date being used to begin reviewing applications.

#### .52 Rating and Ranking Candidates:

Applicant's answers to the vacancy-specific questions are used by the automated system to rate and rank applicants. Vacancy-specific questions include basic qualification questions and KSA ranking factor questions. After the vacancy announcement closes, the HR Specialist must conduct a quality review before an applicant's rating is finalized. Quality reviews must be conducted within 15 work days after the vacancy announcement closes. After the quality review is conducted, an adjustment, lowering the score, will only be made in the event that an applicant's answer(s) to the questions are not consistent with the applicant's resume or other documentation provided by the applicant.

#### .53 Applicant Scores:

- A. Qualified: Candidates who have been determined to meet OPM basic qualification standards for the position and achieve an overall rating less than specified for well-qualified.
- B. Well-qualified: Normally requires a minimum score of 90. CTAP/ICTAP eligibles must also obtain a minimum score of 90 to be considered as well-qualified.
- C. Best qualified: Not all applicants with a score of 90 or above are considered to be best qualified. The cut-off for best qualified can occur wherever a natural break in scores occurs as long as a sufficient number of candidates (at least three) applicants are referred for consideration. The HR Specialist will determine the cut-off score for the group of candidates to be designated as best qualified. The best qualified candidates will be referred to the selecting official in alphabetical order.
- D. All non-competitive applicants, who meet basic qualification requirements, must be referred to the selecting official. However, veteran's preference procedures apply when considering applicants eligible for appointment under the VRA authority. This means that if two or more VRA candidates are qualified and one or more is a preference eligible, veterans preference must be applied as outlined in 5 CFR 302. A non-preference VRA eligible may not be selected over a VRA preference eligible.

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- E. When applicants have a score below 90, the HR Specialist, in conjunction with the selecting official, will determine if further recruitment is necessary or if, in the absence of a sufficient number of best qualified candidates (three applicants), whether or not qualified applicants should be referred to the selecting official. Written documentation must be placed in the case file, justifying the reason(s) for referring applicants with scores below 90.
- F. CTAP/ICTAP eligibles, that score less than 90, may be referred, along with other qualified applicants, but these types of referrals are not mandatory selections because the CTAP/ICTAP eligible does not meet the BLM definition of well-qualified.

.6 REFERRAL AND SELECTION

.61 Referrals:

- A. HR Offices are to issue referral lists as either competitive or noncompetitive. All non-competitive candidates, regardless of their score, will be referred as long as they meet the minimum qualifications for the position. When more than one VRA eligible is qualified and available, procedures outlined in 5 CFR 302 will be applied. Applicants will be referred in alphabetical order.
- B. Referral lists will be issued to the selecting official with a suspense date of not more than 15 work days from the date the referral list is issued. Selecting officials may request an extension of a referral list from their HR Officer on a case-by-case basis.
- C. The reason(s) for requesting an extension of a referral list beyond the initial 15 work days must be submitted to the HR Officer in writing. The HR Officer will extend referral lists in one week increments, not to exceed a total of 30 work days. The written justification must be maintained in the case file. Requests for the extension of referral list(s) will only be approved when management has provided a reasonable rationale for extending the expiration date of the referral list.
- D. Certificates may be re-used for another selection to an identical position. Identical position means the exact same position for which the original referral list was issued. Referral lists may be re-used for up to 90 calendar days after the original referral list was issued.
- E. If selections are not made from referral lists containing at least three BQ applicants, selecting officials will not be allowed to re-advertise the position for 90 calendar days from the date the referral list is returned to the HR Office. HR Officers may, at their

discretion allow exceptions to the 90 calendar day limit. Exceptions must be documented in writing and placed in the case file.

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### **.62 Interviews/Selection:**

- A. Referral lists may be further screened to narrow the number of candidates to be interviewed. The screening must be based on job-related criteria in line with the position being filled. A selecting official and/or interview panel may interview some, all or none of the referred candidates.
- B. Selecting officials and/or interview panels will ensure that all interviews are properly conducted, all questions are job-related, and that every effort is made to obtain the same information from each candidate. Interviewers may not ask about or discuss a candidate's race or ethnic background, color, sex, age, disability, religious beliefs, marital or family status, political affiliation, sexual orientation, or labor organization affiliation or activity. If distance precludes a personal interview, telephone interviews may be conducted or the payment of expenses for pre-employment interviews may be authorized. In accordance with 5 CFR 572.101(b) selecting officials may determine which interviewees are eligible for payment of pre-employment interview travel expenses. Payment of these travel expenses will be in accordance with the Federal Travel Regulations.
- C. Selecting officials must base their selections using job-related factors. The selecting official is not required to make a selection from the competitive referral list. The job may be filled by some other type of internal action or by appointment from outside the agency. Candidates from other sources may be considered concurrently or in any sequence.
- D. Selecting officials must review applications, conduct interviews, check references, make selections and return the referral list to the HR Office within 15 work days after receipt of a referral list. Selecting officials are encouraged to indicate secondary selectees in addition to their primary selection.
- E. Unsuccessful efforts to contact candidates, declination of interviews, not reporting for interviews, etc., must be documented by the selecting official and maintained with the merit promotion case file.

.63 Selection Notification: Job offers are not valid unless they are extended by a member of the HR Office. All selections are considered tentative until the HR Office has conducted all pre-employment processes, e.g. security clearance, medical examination, drug tests, etc. HR Specialists will have three work days, after receipt of the selection package to extend tentative job offers and receive acceptance of the offer from the selectee. The pre-employment process must be initiated by the HR Office within 10 working days after acceptance of the job offer. Official job offers will be extended within two work days after completion of the pre-

employment process.

.64

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.64 Reference Checks: Selecting officials are encouraged to conduct reference checks.

.65 Release of Employees:

- A. Employees are normally released within two weeks of official notification of selection for a promotion, and within four weeks for a reassignment, change to a lower grade or detail (unless travel is involved or an action is delayed due to required clearances such as drug testing and security). When mutually agreeable to both the gaining official and the releasing official, the release date may be extended.
- B. Relocating employees and the gaining supervisor are jointly responsible for working out reporting dates which will minimize relocation expenses. Reporting dates will be established far enough in advance or otherwise managed, to minimize temporary quarters and household goods storage expenses.

### **.7 APPLICANT NOTIFICATIONS**

.71 Written Notification: Applicants must receive written communications concerning the status of their application package. Notifications to applicants must occur after completion of the following steps of the hiring process, where applicable:

.72 Application received: When applying on line, once the applicant clicks on the finish button, USAJOBS sends an automatic notice advising the individual that their resume has been received. For applicants who submit their application package in hard copy, the HR Specialist must send them written notification (electronic notification is acceptable) that their application package has been received within one day after receipt of the hard copy application.

.73 Application packages assessed: HR Specialists must review application packages to ensure all required documentation was submitted and conduct the rating and ranking process within 15 work days after the vacancy announcement closes. Applicants must receive a notice once the application review process is completed. These notifications must be sent to applicants within one work day after the qualifications process has been completed.

.74 Application Referred to Selecting Official or Not: Applicants must receive another notification advising them that their application package has been submitted to the selecting official for further consideration. This notification must be sent within one work day after completion of the application assessment process (can be done concurrently with the second notification).

.75

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.75 Applicant Selected or Not: HR Specialists must notify applicants of their selection within one work day after the referral list is received in the HR Office. All non-selected applicants will receive notification of non-selection within one work day after the firm job offer has been extended and accepted.

### **.8 DOCUMENTATION AND RELEASE OF INFORMATION**

.81 Documentation: Documentation in the case file must be sufficient for a reviewer to reconstruct the action in its entirety, including reasons for determining not qualified, qualified, well-qualified and best qualified applicants. The file must contain, at a minimum, the following information (this information may also be maintained electronically):

- A. Position description.
- B. USAJOBS vacancy announcement.
- C. Justification from management, if the vacancy announcement is open for less than five business days.
- D. Qualification standard used to rate applicants.
- E. Evaluation criteria, including the job analysis, Quickhire crediting plan, selective placement factors and other data that documents the validity and job relatedness of the assessment material used to evaluate applicants.
- F. Listing of all applicants.
- G. Qualifications determinations for each applicant.
- H. Rater's initials and dates of qualification determinations for each applicant whose resume was reviewed.
- I. Referral certificate(s). All referral lists issued must be annotated, signed and dated by the selecting official.
- J. Date RPL was cleared.
- K. Name(s) of individual(s) selected and the reasons why the applicant was selected.
- L. Written documentation as to why a referral list is returned unused and/or cancelled.
- M. Written documentation as to why an HR Officer approved a request from the selecting official asking to re-advertise a vacant position when there were at least three BQ applicants remaining on a referral list.
- N. Notification to applicants.
- O. Any other information that may be needed to explain actions taken during the qualification, evaluation and selection process.

.82 Release of Information: The following information will be available to applicants at their request:

- A. Applicant's qualification determination i.e. minimally, well or best qualified;

B. The applicant's own rating scores, and;

.82C

### **1400-335 – MERIT PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT PLAN**

C. The name of the selectee. No employee will be given the name of a tentatively selected applicant until the entire placement process is complete and cleared by the HR Office.

## **.9 CORRECTIVE ACTIONS**

### **.91 Priority Consideration:**

- A. Special consideration will be given to employees who failed to receive proper consideration. If it is determined that an employee was improperly denied inclusion on a referral list or was not selected solely because of non-merit factors, the employee will be afforded one special consideration. Special consideration will be given for the next appropriate vacancy to make up for the lost consideration. An appropriate vacancy is one for which the priority candidate meets or exceeds all qualification requirements, is at the same grade level (and with the same promotion potential), is a similar type of position and is in the same duty location for which the employee was not originally given proper consideration. Priority consideration will be granted for a period of two years or until the applicant has received priority for the next equivalent vacancy, whichever occurs first.
- B. An individual given special consideration will be referred to the selecting official before any other effort is made to fill the vacancy. Priority consideration referral does not provide an applicant with a selection entitlement.

## **10. ACCRETION OF DUTIES PROMOTIONS**

10.1 Accretion of Duties: An accretion of duties promotion is a non-competitive promotion that occurs due to the addition of substantive new and higher graded duties and responsibilities to an existing position. The HR Specialist must conduct a desk audit, analyze the position, evaluate the changes and prepare an evaluation statement indicating that the changes did or did not result in a position which is a clear successor to the incumbent's prior position and to what extent the prior position was absorbed by the new one.

10.2 Position Management: Sound position management is essential in actions associated with controlling salary costs and efficiently managing the work of the BLM. Position management principles and techniques concerning the assignment of duties and the utilization of positions and skills must be applied in a continuing and integrated fashion with the express purpose of achieving maximum utilization of human resources in an organizational structure designed for optimum efficiency and economy. Higher graded work should not be distributed among multiple positions with the result of upgrading several positions when the higher graded work can be effectively performed in fewer or just one such position. Higher graded work should be assigned to existing higher graded positions whenever possible. Managers, with the assistance of the HR

Office and other locally designated staff, are responsible for sound position management and consideration of alternative options.

10.3

### **1400-335 – MERIT PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT PLAN**

10.3 Criteria: The following criteria will be met in absolute terms whenever an accretion of duties is proposed:

The new position retains the major duties of the old position and the old position is abolished;

The new position is in the same work unit of the organization and retains the same supervisor or leader as the old position being abolished;

The new position does not involve the addition of a project leader, group leader, team leader, or supervisory duties to a formerly non-supervisory or non-leader type position;

There is no other employee in the work unit in a similar position and to whom those added duties could have been assigned and satisfactorily performed within a reasonable timeframe;

The new duties and responsibilities do not result in a promotion from a one grade to a two grade interval position, and;

The employee must have been performing the duties and responsibilities of the newly evolved positions for at least 120 days.

Successive non-competitive promotions of the same employee in the same job based on an accretion of duties is not in accordance with sound merit principles and is not authorized for BLM employees.

10.4 Documentation Procedure: The following documents will be included in each promotion record that is based on the addition of higher graded duties:

- A. The original position description;
- B. The accreted position description;
- C. The evaluation statement for the new position, and;
- D. Certification that a desk audit was conducted.

**1400-335 – MERIT PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT PLAN**

10.5 Written Justification: The supervisor's written justification indicating how the position came to be accreted as well as assurances that the major duties of the original position are included in the accreted position and that the original position will be abolished.

10.6 Reviewing: The HR Specialist must review the accretion of duties to ensure:

- A. That sufficient justification is submitted that addresses the criteria in (1.03) above. The reviewing HR Specialist will ensure there is a requisite amount (25 percent or more) of higher level work being added to the new position.
- B. That the accretion of duty promotion is not based on projected duties, but rather on the identified existence of higher level continuing duties as performed in an existing position.
- C. That potentially grade enhancing work within a work unit is competitively assigned if there is more than one employee assigned to the same position description.
- D. That the justification for Promotion Action Based on Accretion of Duties, is properly completed and includes all required information.
- E. Although employee job performance is not inherent criteria for reclassification of a position to a higher grade level, managers and supervisors must ensure that an employee has demonstrated satisfactory performance of the higher level duties prior to consideration of a promotion action.

See appendix (3) for the Format for Justification of Promotion Action Based on Accretion of Duties.

**11. GRIEVANCES**

The HRO will promptly respond to questions about the merit promotion process or about a specific selection action. A DOI employee may submit a grievance concerning merit promotion matters under the DOI's grievance program or under local negotiated grievance procedures as appropriate, unless otherwise excluded from either process. Where this Merit Promotion and Internal Placement Plan conflicts with a negotiated agreement, the agreement prevails. Non-selection from a list of properly ranked and certified applicants is not grievable under either process. Further, an employee cannot use the formal grievance procedures and the formal EEO complaint process at the same time for the same merit promotion issues.



**1400-335 – MERIT PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT PLAN  
APPENDIX 1**

## Action Matrix

Proposed Action	Position	And	Competition Required
Reassignment	at same grade under same pay schedule	position is one with known promotion potential and employee will gain eligibility for non-competitive career promotion to grade higher than previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service	Yes
		position is not one with known promotion potential	No
Change to lower Grade	lower grade under same pay schedule	position is one with known promotion potential and employee will gain eligibility for non-competitive career promotion to grade higher than previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service	Yes
		position is not one with known promotion potential	No
Reinstatement or Transfer	at a higher grade than previously held on a permanent basis		Yes
	at same or lower grade than previously held on a permanent basis	position is one with known promotion potential and employee will gain eligibility for non-competitive career promotion to grade higher than previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service	Yes
		position is not one with known promotion potential	No
Detail	same grade and is not one with known promotion potential	detail is for any length	No
	higher grade or to position of same grade with known	the detail is for 120 days or less	No

	promotion potential		
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Appendix 1-2

**1400-335 – MERIT PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT PLAN  
APPENDIX 1**

Action Matrix

Proposed Action	Position	And	Competition Required
Selection for training leading to promotion		Successful completion of training is a condition of eligibility for promotion	Yes
Promotion from position of known promotion potential	originally identified as the target position to which employee would advance without competition  or  full performance level or career ladder	Competitive procedures were fully applied at the time of placement into position of known promotion potential and all competitors were informed that selection for the entry position could lead to promotion without further competition	No
Promotion	upgraded by classification	Incumbent's position upgraded without significant change in duties and responsibilities because of classification error or new or revised standards	No
Promotion	upgraded by classification	Incumbent's position reconstituted into a successor position with clearly and solely identifiable duties of the former position and there are no other employees serving in similar or identical positions within the same organization to whom the duties could have been assigned	No

**1400-335 – MERIT PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT PLAN  
APPENDIX 1**

Action Matrix

Proposed Action	Position	And	Competition Required
Promotion	to position to which employee was detailed for training or evaluation	the employee was selected for detail under full competitive procedures and all competitors were informed that the detail could lead to promotion without further competition	No
Temporary promotion or extension of temporary promotion	higher grade under same pay schedule or under a different pay schedule when action is processed as a promotion or represents a promotion under the rules above	the temporary promotion is for a total of 120 days or less within a 12-month period	No
Conversion of temporary promotion to permanent promotion		the employee was selected for temporary promotion under full competitive procedures and all competitors were informed in advance that temporary promotion could lead to permanent promotion without further competition	No
Promotion without time limitation	higher grade under same pay scale	is not covered by promotion rules above	Yes

**1400-335 – MERIT PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT PLAN  
APPENDIX 2**

**JOB ANALYSIS QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Position Title, Series/Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Subject-Matter Expert(s)/Signature/Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**HR Specialist/Signature/Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>List the major Functions and tasks/duties/primary work products of this job along with applicable percent</b>	<b>List the measurable KSA's/competencies required to perform the task or produce the product</b>	<b>Task Statement Selections</b>

**1400-335 – MERIT PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT PLAN  
APPENDIX 3**

**Format for Justification of Non-competitive Promotion Action Based on Accretion of Duties**

This is to request a noncompetitive promotion for (Employee Name) from the position of (Title, series, grade and position number) in support of this action as provided on this attachment.

State what changes have occurred in the employee's duties. Specifically, address each of the following:

What are the changes in the employee's duties and reason(s) for each change?

What position included these duties in the past? If the duties were not performed in the past, what created the need for these duties to be performed now? (For Example, further delegation of authority, new regulatory requirements, etc).

What are the reasons for assigning these duties to the position?

How long has the employee been performing the accreted duties and will these duties continue as a regular and recurring part of the position?

Are there other employees in positions in the same series and grade as the employee being recommended for promotion who could have assumed these duties? If so, why was the decision made to assign the duties to this position instead of one of those positions?

What consideration was given, if any, to assigning these new duties to an already established higher graded position?

Does the new position absorb the major duties of the old position and will the old position be abolished?

State whether the new position is in the same organization as the old position and if it retains the same supervisor as the old position.

Does the new position involve the addition of project leader, group leader, or supervisory duties to a formerly non-supervisory position, or involve the addition of duties which identify the new position as a predecessor to a higher level supervisory position?

I CERTIFY THAT ALL NON-COMPETITIVE ACCRETION OF DUTIES PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS HAVE BEEN MET.

**1400-335 – MERIT PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT PLAN  
APPENDIX 4**

Glossary of Terms

-A-

Accretion of Duties: Promotion of an employee whose position is reclassified at a higher grade because of the performance of additional duties and responsibilities.

Agency: Agency refers to the Department of the Interior (DOI).

Area of Consideration (AOC): Categories of candidates who may apply for a vacancy announcement. AOC may be defined geographically, organizationally, by recruitment source or appointment status. All AOCs must be set to promote fair and open competition and to maintain a diverse workforce.

-B-

Best Qualified Candidates: Those applicants who are determined by the rating and ranking process to possess the job-related knowledge, skills and abilities required or desired for a particular position to a greater degree than other qualified applicants being considered and who are subsequently referred to the selecting official.

BLMJOBS On-Line: A system that automates the Federal Hiring Process. The system enables HROs to use the Internet to build and post vacancies, allow applicants to submit their resumes, respond to position-specific questions and view the status of their applications on-line. The automated system also rates and ranks candidates.

-C-

Career Ladder Promotion: Promotion, without current competition, when the employee competed earlier for the assignment and the higher graded full performance level is a matter of record. Supervisors are responsible for initiating career ladder promotion SF-52s (Requests for Personnel Actions).

Career Transition Assistance Program (CTAP): The CTAP provides assistance to individuals who have been or are likely to be separated from Federal service by reduction in force or decline a directed reassignment or transfer of function outside of their commuting area.

Change to Lower Grade: The change of an employee to a lower grade when both the old and new positions are under the same pay systems or to a position with a lower representative rate of basic pay when the old and new positions are under different pay systems.

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APPENDIX 4**

Competitive Service: All civilian positions that are: (a) in the executive branch of the Federal government not specifically excepted from civil service laws by or pursuant to statute, by the President, or by the Office of Personnel Management, and not in the Senior Executive Service; and (b) all positions in the legislative and judicial branches of the Federal government specifically made subject to civil service laws by statute and in the Federal positions normally filled through open competitive examination under civil service rules and regulations.

Competitive Status: Basic eligibility of a person selected to fill a position in the competitive service. Competitive status may be acquired by career-conditional or career appointment through open competitive examination or may be granted by statute, executive order, or civil service rules. A person with competitive status may be promoted, transferred, reassigned, reinstated, or demoted subject to the conditions prescribed by civil service rules and regulations.

Crediting Plan: Weights and screen-outs used to rank qualified candidates for positions.

-D-

Detail: A temporary assignment of an employee to a different position for a specified period of time with no change in pay. Employees do not have to meet OPM experience requirements, but they must possess the minimum education requirements, if applicable. Details must be documented in 120 days increments.

-E-

Excepted Service: Positions in the Federal civil service not subject to the appointment requirements of the competitive service. Exceptions to the normal competitive requirements are authorized by law, executive order or regulation.

-F-

Full Performance Level (FPL): The grade of a position at which the employee is expected to competently perform the full range of duties in a specific occupation. All jobs below the full performance level are developmental levels through which an employee may progress to the FPL.

-H-

Hiring Management System: A software program utilized by the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) automated assessment system, BLMJOBS On-Line.

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APPENDIX 4**

-I-

Interagency Career Transition Assistance Program: Regulations which provide selection priority to well-qualified displaced Federal employees when applying for jobs with other Federal agencies.

Interview Panels: Interview panels are used to further screen all applicants referred to the selecting official to determine those who will be recommended for an interview by the selecting official. At least one panel member must be a subject-matter expert. All panels must consist of individuals at the same or higher-grade level than the full performance level of the position being filled. Every effort should be made to ensure that the panel is made up of diverse individuals.

-J-

Job Analysis: The analysis of a position to identify the basic duties and responsibilities; the competencies required to be successful in the position; the knowledge, skills and abilities required to perform the duties and responsibilities; and the factors that are important in evaluating candidates for the position.

-K-

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs): The attributes required to perform a job. KSAs are generally demonstrated through qualifying experience, education, or training.

-M-

Merit Systems Principles: Statutory Federal employment principles contained in 5 USC Section 2301, Merit Systems Principles. These principles were established to ensure appointments and promotions are based on open and fair competition; and that employment practices are based on job-related competencies.

-O-

Office of Personnel Management (OPM): The Federal agency that regulates administers and evaluates the civil service program according to merit principles.



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APPENDIX 4**

-P-

Priority Consideration: The referral and consideration of employees, before the recruitment process begins, the manager must be advised that there are individuals who are entitled to special or priority consideration for the vacancy. In some cases, the individual is entitled to be placed in the vacant position; in other cases the entitlement falls short of a mandated placement because the manager has other options available to fill the vacancy. The nature of the special Consideration will depend upon the program involved.

Promotion: The change of an employee to a position at a higher grade level when both the old and new positions are under the General Schedule or under the same wage grade schedule, or to a position with a higher representative rate of basic pay when the old and new positions are under different pay schedules.

-Q-

Qualifications Requirements: Education, experience and other prerequisites to employment or placement into a position as defined by the OPM.

Quality Ranking Factor: KSAs that could be expected to enhance significant performance in a position, but, unlike selective placement factors, are not essential for satisfactory job performance.

-R-

Rating and Ranking: The determination of best qualified candidates based on the degree to which each candidate meets the KSAs of the position. This process is completed by a Human Resources Specialist.

Reassignment: A change of an employee from one position to another in the same grade in the same agency without promotion or demotion.

Reduction in Force (RIF): A management process that may be required for such reasons as reorganization, lack of work, shortage of funds, insufficient personnel ceiling, or the exercise of certain reemployment or restoration rights. A furlough of more than 30 calendar days or of more than 22 discontinuous workdays is also a RIF.

Reemployment Priority List (RPL): The RPL is the mechanism agencies use to give reemployment consideration to their former competitive service employees separated by a RIF or who have fully recovered from a compensable injury after more than one year.

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APPENDIX 4**

Referral List: A document given to selecting officials containing the names of eligible candidates in alphabetical order.

Reinstatement: The reemployment of a former employee with competitive status.

Request for Personnel Action: Request initiated by management to effect a personnel action.

-S-

Selective Placement Factor: KSAs that, in addition to the basic qualifications outlined in OPM's Qualifications Handbook, are mandatory for successful performance in the position to be filled.

Special Selection Priority (SSP): A provision of the CTAP that requires the DOI to give special selection priority to well-qualified eligible surplus and displaced DOI employees who apply for position vacancies within the local commuting area and within the prescribed time frames indicated in the vacancy announcement.

Subject-Matter Expert (SME): An individual knowledgeable in the detailed requirements of a job.

-T-

Temporary Promotion: Placement of an employee into a higher graded position for a specified period of time. Employees must meet the OPM's education and experience requirements as well as time-in-grade restrictions. A temporary promotion must be made to a classified position.

Time-In-Grade: The length of time served at a specific grade level used to satisfy requirements for promotion to a higher grade.

Transfer: A change of an employee from a position in one agency to a position in another agency.

-U-

USAJOBS: The official job site of the United States Federal government. This website is the centralized site for most Federal agencies to post vacancy announcements.

-V-

Vacancy Announcement: A method of advertising vacancies or anticipated vacancies to attract a sufficient number of qualified applicants.

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APPENDIX 4**

Veterans Employment and Opportunities Act (VEOA): Amendment to 5 USC 3304 to allow eligible veterans to compete for vacancies under agency merit promotion procedures. To receive consideration under the VEOA appointing authority, a veteran must be a preference eligible or a veteran separated after three or more years of continuous active service performed under honorable conditions. A veteran, who is released under honorable conditions shortly before completing a three-year tour of continuous active service, is also eligible for a VEOA appointment. A VEOA eligible, separated 30 or less calendar days prior to completion of the three-year active duty service requirement, is eligible to receive consideration for BLM vacancies.

-W-

Well-Qualified: A qualified applicant who possesses the KSAs which clearly exceed the minimum qualification requirements for the position. A well-qualified applicant will not necessarily meet the definition of best qualified when evaluated against other candidates who apply for a particular vacancy. Applicant must score a minimum of 90 points to be considered well-qualified.