



Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service (DCPAS)

DEVELOPING A RECRUITMENT STRATEGY JOB AID

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1.0 PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

A recruitment strategy is a written plan that identifies the positions an organization is recruiting for and outlines when, and how the positions will be filled. The purpose of this document is to provide information on things to consider when building a recruitment strategy.

Recruitment strategies should align with the overall Component/Agency Strategic Plan and take into account any planned changes in mission or strategic direction. If available, the recruitment strategy should also be informed by the Component/Agency Strategic Workforce Plan which identifies and addresses any gaps between the current workforce and future workforce requirements.

2.0 KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Developing a recruitment strategy requires collaboration and coordination between key stakeholders such as the servicing Human Resources Practitioner, Hiring Manager, Subject Matter Experts, Recruiters, and representatives from Budget or Finance and Manpower offices, as appropriate. Roles and responsibilities in the recruitment strategy development process should align with stakeholder's area of expertise and/or function.

3.0 IDENTIFY HIRING NEED

The first step in building a recruitment strategy is to understand and identify your Component, Agency, or organization's hiring need (i.e., positions and skills needed to meet mission requirements). Consider the following to determine the hiring need (i.e., positions that need to be filled).

3.1 Circumstances prompting the need to recruit qualified talent

- Backfill for an existing position
- New position/requirement
- Establish a candidate pool for ramp-up of anticipated vacancies due to new, emerging or expanded mission
- Hard to fill, high-turnover, high priority or mission critical occupation(s)
- Lack of qualified candidates due to inability to pay competitive salaries, tight labor market, etc.
- Other _____

3.2 **Type and number of positions needed to accomplish the mission. Obtain the associated position descriptions or create and classify position descriptions and identify the following:**

- Pay plan, occupational series, and grade positions will be filled (to include full performance level or developmental/career growth)
- Knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies
- Qualification requirements and other significant factors pertaining to position such as special placement factors, licensures, certifications, minimum education/degree, security clearance, etc.
- Characteristics or qualities of ideal candidates for each type of position
- Location of vacancies

3.3 The priority order in which positions should be filled based on mission requirements, congressional or legislative mandates, budgetary impact, etc.

- For mission critical occupations and hard-to-fill positions, recruitment may be ongoing

4.0 CONDUCT RESEARCH AND DISCOVERY TO INFORM RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

Once the hiring need is determined, conduct research and discovery by seeking and reviewing relevant information that will help you devise an effective recruitment strategy. Consider the following information to help inform your recruitment strategy:

4.1 Review and assess existing or a previously developed recruitment strategy for similarly situated positions

4.1.1 Based on analysis of available metrics/data, assess existing or previously developed recruitment strategies and identify recruitment method(s) that yielded qualified candidates.

4.1.2 Identify any recruiting challenges/obstacles encountered and mitigation strategies.

- For example, if a job announcement was the recruitment method used to fill a similar position but yielded minimal number of qualified candidates, consider the following mitigation strategies: a) review and modify the job announcement to ensure it is written in plain language to attract and encourage qualified candidates to apply; b) verify the job title used in the job announcement is widely recognized across the industry; c) review duties and responsibilities to ensure they accurately describe the work to be performed; d) “must-have” qualification requirements are clearly identified; e) the organization’s mission or role and why it’s a great place to work is described, etc. Office of Personnel Management also recommends applying to your job announcement to better understand the applicant’s experience and identify first hand, any opportunities to improve the job announcement or application process. Another option is to consider an alternate or additional recruitment method. For information on recruitment methods, see [Recruitment Methods Matrix](#).

4.2 **Determine experience levels to target.** Based on the hiring timeline, succession plans, criticality of positions, etc. determine the experience levels needed to meet mission requirements. If an organization’s goal is to grow talent, then entry-level candidate sources are appropriate. Entry-level candidate sources include but are not limited to students, recent college graduates, and/or internal employees who possess competencies, skills, and/or requisite education for the position in question. Conversely, if the goal is to fill the position at the journeyman or full performance level, targeting industry or professional associations, industry competitors, or other federal agencies, etc. to attract mid to senior level candidates are appropriate.

4.3 **Know your employer brand.** An employer brand is how your current workforce and prospective applicants perceive your Component, Agency or organization. It describes your promise (or employee value proposition) to employees in exchange for their skills, capabilities and experience. A well-defined and strong employer brand plays a vital role in your ability to attract quality candidates. It is also important to note that an overarching DoD Civilian Employment brand was developed to promote DoD as an employer of choice, increase

awareness of the vast employment opportunities for civilians across DoD and align with and complement existing agency or component-specific brands.

- 4.4 **Review available data related to the positions identified for fill** (see [Section 3](#) above). The DCPAS Planning and Accountability Line of Business posts updated workforce related data to their milSuite page at <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/groups/cspr>. This data can help provide insight on the civilian workforce for your individual Component and Agency. The data also includes workforce demographics, gains and losses within specific functional communities and occupational series, skills gaps and overages, DoD's mission critical occupations, use of incentives by components, etc.
- 4.5 **Recruitment Competitor analysis.** Research competitors' recruitment methods and activities to identify similarities/differences and best practices for possible implementation. Special attention should be given to competitors that consistently hire your top prospects. Consider reviewing the following to gain insight on your competitors:
- Job announcements (wording used to describe jobs, salary, benefits, incentives, qualification requirements, work schedules, etc.)
 - Careers page (type of information provided, website format, use of stock imagery or employee photos, job search functionality, job descriptions, employer value proposition, etc.)
 - Application process
 - Social recruiting (social media channels used to reach target candidates, type of information posted on social media, recruitment messaging, etc.)
 - Company rating on employer review sites or various job boards
- 4.6 **Identify appropriate academic fields of study for vacancies that can be filled based on education.** If filling vacancies where applicants can qualify based on education, identify specific majors or courses of study that provide the training and education that would be qualifying for the occupations.
- 4.7 **Identify the industry and professional associations for targeted occupations.** Research [industry and professional associations](#). Identify potential marketing and recruitments opportunities affiliated with the target industry such as publications, events, conferences, etc. Identify contacts for association chapters in areas where vacancies exist. Stay abreast of hiring trends through association newsletters and journals.
- 4.8 **Affirmative Employment Program (AEP) Plan.** Review your AEP to identify established goals by your component, agency or organization to improve employment and advancement opportunities of women, minorities, and individuals with disabilities, veterans, etc.
- 4.9 **Other online resources for information on various occupations, employment or labor statistics, career resources, salaries, etc.** Research various online resources for information related to hiring such as
- [Career One Stop](#)
 - [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)

5.0 IDENTIFY POTENTIAL CANDIDATE SOURCES

Based on the information above, consider the various sources where quality candidates may be found. If available, consider metrics or recruitment data (e.g., new hire or hiring event surveys, applicant tracking systems, manual logs, and/or information from recruiters) that shows the number of hires by source.

5.1 Know the difference between active and passive candidates

- Active candidates are job seekers actively searching for a job. While many active candidates are unemployed, you may also find candidates currently employed who are actively searching for other job opportunities.
- Passive candidates are individuals not actively seeking a new job opportunity but may be convinced to make a move under the right circumstances.

5.2 Identify the recruitment sources where you might find qualified candidates and associated recruitment methods (see [Recruitment Methods Matrix](#)).

- Internal workforce
- Colleges/universities
- Trade schools
- Other federal agencies
- Social media platforms
- Niche social media sites frequented by target audience
- Employee referrals
- Private industry competitors
- Professional organizations
- Industry associations
- Job boards
- Internet using proactive sourcing such as Boolean searches
- USAJOBS (Agency Talent Portal/Resume Mining)
- Priority Placement Program (standard requisition or interrogation process)
- Veterans groups, databases
- State and local employment offices
- Free or with paid subscription [resume databases or repositories](#)
- Scholarship recipients eligible for noncompetitive appointments such as National Security Education Program
- Peace Corps (staff and returned volunteers) eligible for noncompetitive appointments

6.0 IDENTIFY AVAILABLE HIRING AUTHORITIES/FLEXIBILITIES AND WORK-LIFE BENEFITS

Leverage existing hiring authorities, hiring flexibilities and work-life benefits available to remain competitive with private industry in attracting and hiring quality talent for mission critical, high priority, and hard to fill positions. Take the necessary steps to ensure costs associated with hiring flexibilities are reflected in the budget.

- 6.1 **Hiring Authorities.** Identify available hiring authorities that will facilitate reaching and expediting appointments of targeted candidates. For information on available hiring authorities by occupational series to include DoD Direct Hire Authorities, see the [Hiring Authorities Decision Tool](#).
- 6.2 **Hiring Flexibilities.** Identify available hiring flexibilities such as Superior Qualifications appointments, recruitment, relocation and retention incentives, first duty station travel, advance pay, Student Loan Repayment, credit for nonfederal and uniformed service for annual leave, etc. and positions where offering such flexibilities is required to compete for talent.
- 6.3 **Work-Life Benefits.** Identify available work-life benefits such as flexible and alternate work schedules, ability to work remotely, ability to telework, job security and stability, employee assistance program, TSA PreCheck, onsite fitness center and onsite dining options, etc. and incorporate in job announcements, recruitment marketing and advertising to attract targeted talent.

7.0 DOCUMENT RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

Based on review and analysis of the information identified above, information and data from other appropriate sources, Component or Agency Strategic Plan and associated Strategic Workforce Plan, and Recruitment Methods Matrix, develop and document your recruitment strategy. As the recruitment strategy is an internal document, there is no right or wrong format. *Break the Code* Guide is an example recruitment strategy developed by the Defense Digital Service.

8.0 IMPLEMENT RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

Implement recruitment strategy. Keep in mind that a recruitment strategy is a living document that should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to ensure continued alignment with mission requirements, insights from talent analytics, changes in recruitment and hiring trends, etc.

9.0 FOLLOW STANDARD RECRUITMENT AND ONBOARDING PROCESS

Assess and review applicants' resumes for qualifications, review results of any tests or assessments, conduct interviews as applicable, complete vouchering/reference checks, make selection(s), extend tentative and final job offers.

Complete pre-employment documentation and other onboarding requirements. Onboarding includes activities that facilitate continued engagement from the candidate to employee phase. The CareerOneStop website suggests the following additional onboarding activities aimed at ensuring a positive employee experience to improve retention:

- The employee and supervisor go over the employee's job description to clarify expectations.
- The employee is immediately assigned tasks he or she was hired to do.
- A manager and/or an assigned mentor are available to answer questions.
- The employee receives regular, as-needed feedback (not just every six months or once a year).
- The employee receives regular company updates via newsletters and other methods.

10.0 RESOURCES/REFERENCES

10.1 Resources

- CareerOneStop (<https://www.careeronestop.org/>)
- CareerOneStop – List of Industry and Professional Associations
<https://www.careeronestop.org/BusinessCenter/Toolkit/find-professional-associations.aspx>
- Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service Messages
(<https://dcpasportal.ds.dhra.osd.mil/DCPAS%20Messages/Forms/AllItems.aspx>)
- Defense Digital Service Break the Code Guide (<https://dds.mil/work/break-the-code/>)
 - Use personal/nongovernment computer to access URL
- Hiring Authorities Decision Tool (<https://www.milsuite.mil/book/docs/DOC-852288>)
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (<https://www.bls.gov/>)
- Recruitment Methods Matrix (<https://www.milsuite.mil/book/docs/DOC-857288>)

10.2 References

- Recruiting Active vs. Passive Candidates
(<https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/2013/12/recruiting-active-vs-passive-candidates>)
- Recruit Through Professional Associations
(<https://www.monster.com/career-advice/article/Recruit-Through-Professional-Associ>)
- Top Echelon – 6 Sources of Recruitment to Find More Candidates –
(<https://www.topechelon.com/blog/recruiter-training/sources-recruitment-types/#:~:text=Internet%20searches%20are%20among%20the%20best%20sources%20and,add%20or%20remove%20certain%20things%20from%20the%20search>)