



PERSONNEL AND  
READINESS

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**OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE**  
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MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS

SUBJECT: Direct Hire Authorities for Select Technical Acquisition Positions

As set forth in the attachment, this memorandum establishes a pilot program pursuant to section 1112 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 to directly hire veteran technical experts into the defense acquisition workforce of the Military Departments and delegates appointing authority under this program.

As further set forth in the attachment, this memorandum provides implementation procedures for Secretaries of the Military Departments to directly hire technical experts into the defense acquisition workforce of a Military Department pursuant to section 1113 of the NDAA for FY 2016.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Peter Levine", is written over a large, stylized, circular scribble.

Peter Levine  
Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary of  
Defense for Personnel and Readiness

Attachment:  
As stated

DIRECT HIRE AUTHORITIES FOR  
SELECT TECHNICAL ACQUISITION POSITIONS  
IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

1. Authority

a. Section 1112 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2016, provides that the Secretary of Defense may: (1) carry out a pilot program to assess the feasibility and advisability of directly appointing qualified veteran candidates to certain scientific, technical, engineering, and mathematics positions, including technicians, within the defense acquisition workforce of the Military Departments; and (2) recruit and appoint qualified veterans to these positions without regard to subchapter I of chapter 33 of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.). The Department will preserve sections 3303, 3321 (as modified by 10 U.S.C. 1599e), 3323, 3326, and 3328 of subchapter I of chapter 33 of title 5, U.S.C., and corresponding Code of Federal Regulations provisions to recruit and appoint.

(1) The authority to appoint qualified persons under the direct hire authority (DHA) is delegated to Secretaries of each of the Military Departments. The Secretary of each Military Department shall carry out the pilot program through the Service Acquisition Executive of that Department.

(2) Appointments under this authority may not be made after November 22, 2020, the date that is 5 years after the date of enactment of NDAA for FY 2016. Military Departments must maintain records on their use of this authority for themselves and for their serviced organizations until the authority expires. The Military Departments may be asked to submit reports on usage.

b. Section 1113 of the NDAA for FY 2016, provides that the Secretaries of the Military Departments may recruit and appoint qualified candidates possessing a scientific or engineering degree directly to scientific and engineering positions within the defense acquisition workforce of the Military Departments without regard to subchapter I of chapter 33 of title 5, U.S.C. The Department will preserve sections 3303, 3321 (as modified by 10 U.S.C.), 3323, 3326, and 3328 of subchapter I of chapter 33 of title 5, U.S.C., and corresponding Code of Federal Regulations provisions to recruit and appoint.

(1) The Secretary of each Military Department shall carry out the pilot program through the Service Acquisition Executive of that Department.

(2) Appointments under this authority may not be made after December 31, 2020. Military Departments must maintain records on their use of this authority until the authority expires. They may be asked to submit reports on usage.

2. Use of Direct Hire Authority – DHA enables the Department to recruit and appoint qualified persons directly, without applying competitive rating and ranking procedures. The following principles shall be followed when exercising these authorities:

- a. A highly qualified workforce is critical to the Department's mission.
- b. Recruitment efforts should be designed to be expansive enough to attract diverse candidates who are representative of all segments of society.
- c. Merit factors shall be the basis for selecting individuals for positions. All personnel programs and practices shall be administered in accordance with Department of Defense (DoD) Directive 1020.02E, "Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity in the DoD."
- d. Military Departments must ensure transparency, accountability, and auditability in hiring processes.

3. Acquisition Workforce Positions – For purposes of these authorities, positions for which these acquisition direct hire authorities can be used are defined below:

a. Scientific and engineering positions at the entry (General Schedule (GS)-5 through GS-7), mid (GS-9 through GS-13), higher (GS-14 and GS-15) and comparable levels, but not positions above GS-15 (or comparable levels) such as Senior Executive Service positions, and positions included pursuant to section 1721 of title 10, U.S.C., the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA), in the following acquisition career fields:

- (1) Facilities Engineering (FE)
- (2) Information Technology (IT)
- (3) Production, Quality and Manufacturing (PQM)
- (4) Program Management (PM)
- (5) Science and Technology Management (S&T)
- (6) Engineering (Engr)
- (7) Test and Evaluation (T&E)

4. Definitions

a. For the purposes of sections 1112 and 1113 of the NDAA for FY 2016, "employee" is defined as set forth in section 2105 of title 5, U.S.C.

b. For the purposes of section 1112 of the NDAA for FY 2016, qualified candidates are defined as individuals who:

- (1) Meet the definition of "veteran" as defined by section 101 of title 38, U.S.C.;
- (2) Meet the minimum standards for the position as published in the Office of

Personnel Management's (OPM's) operating manual, "Qualification Standards for General Schedule Positions," and any DoD qualification standards specific to the position to be filled;

(3) Meet or will meet DAWIA certification requirements, within the required time frame, for appointment to the position being filled; and

(4) Meet any selective placement factor(s) and/or competencies identified as necessary for appointment to the position.

c. For the purposes of section 1113, NDAA for FY 2016, qualified candidates are defined as individuals who:

(1) Possess a bachelor's or advanced degree from an accredited college or university in a field of scientific or engineering study related to the functions of the position to be filled;

(2) Meet the minimum standards for the position as published in OPM's operating manual, "Qualification Standards for General Schedule Positions," and any DoD qualification standards specific to the position to be filled;

(3) Meet or will meet DAWIA certification requirements, within the required time frame, for appointment to the position being filled; and

(4) Meet any selective placement factor(s) and/or competencies identified as necessary for appointment to the position.

##### 5. Announcement and Assessment Process

a. If using vacancy announcements, Military Departments must use job opportunity announcements that are concise and easily understood (e.g., standard announcement templates for the Acquisition Functional Community, where available).

(1) Military Departments will establish procedures for recruiting that ensure the identification of qualified individuals for referral to management for selection and appointment.

(2) Potential applicants should have ready access to information about how to apply for acquisition positions, and the basis on which they will be assessed to meet the qualified criteria.

b. Military Departments will assess candidates against job-related criteria, ensuring they have the skills and behavioral attributes that lead to success.

(1) Selectees for entry level positions requiring the Administrative Careers With America (ACWA) assessment must be assessed using the most recent, streamlined ACWA examination or a validated alternative assessment instrument (e.g., select USA HIRE assessments).

6. Appointing Authority – Appointments may be made on a permanent, term, or temporary basis using the following Legal Authority Codes/Legal Authorities:

- a. For the appointments of veteran candidates under paragraph 1(a):

Z5CB/Direct-Hire Auth (Acq-Vet Tech Exp), Sec 1112, PL 114-92, 11/25/2015

- b. For the appointments of candidates under paragraph 1(b):

Z5CC/Direct-Hire Auth (Acq-Tech Exp), Sec 1113, PL 114-92, 11/25/2015

7. Oversight and Accountability

a. The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness is responsible for the development of implementing guidance and policies, in consultation with the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics (AT&L).

b. Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service and the Director, Human Capital Initiatives, AT&L, shall jointly oversee and monitor use of these authorities throughout the Department and ensure compliance with any reporting requirements on the authorities.

c. The Secretaries of the Military Departments or their designees are responsible for oversight, accountability, and reporting for their respective Departments in coordination with their Service Acquisition Executive and Director, Acquisition Career Management.

d. Documentation for appointments made under these authorities must be sufficient to allow reconstruction of actions taken and must be maintained for a time frame consistent with other appointing authorities.

e. Appointments under these authorities will be evaluated as part of the DoD Human Capital Accountability Framework.

8. Authorized Positions

a. Appointments pursuant to section 1112 of the NDAA for FY 2016. The number of appointments made in a calendar year may not exceed 1 percent of the total number of civilian positions in that Military Department's acquisition workforce as of the close of the fiscal year ending before the start of such calendar year. [For this purpose, "acquisition workforce" includes positions at the entry (General Schedule (GS)-5 through GS-7), mid (GS-9 through GS-13), higher (GS-14 and GS-15) and comparable levels, but not positions above GS-15 (or comparable levels) such as Senior Executive Service positions, and positions included under section 1721 of title 10, U.S.C., DAWIA.]

b. Appointments pursuant to section 1113 of the NDAA for FY 2016. The number of appointments made in a calendar year may not exceed 5 percent of the total number of scientific and engineering positions within the acquisition workforce in that Military Department, that are filled as of the close of the fiscal year ending before the start of such calendar year.

c. If the percentage of authorized positions does not equate to a whole number, the Secretaries of the Military Departments or their designees shall round down to the next lower number.