

DEFERRED RESIGNATION PROGRAM

DoD will make decisions on employee requests for DRP based on the Secretary of Defense's discretion to determine certain functions that are critical Department of Defense (DoD) operations and exemption of positions performing those functions from the program. Employees occupying exempted positions will not be eligible to participate in the DRP and their deferred resignation request will be disapproved. Employees who accept the deferred resignation offer, and who are approved for DRP, will be placed on paid administrative leave, and will not have a delay to their requested leave effective date, starting as early as February 28, per the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Decisions will be made and communicated to employees within the next few weeks.

INTRODUCTION

The Deferred Resignation Program (DRP) is a voluntary program established by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) that allows eligible employees an approximate eight-month paid transition period – through September 30, 2025 - during which they will generally not be expected to work, are exempted from in-person work requirements, and will be exempt from any reductions-in-force applicable to the DoD workforce.

The program is open to most full-time DoD employees, including those who are eligible for early retirement or have a retirement date between now and December 31, 2025. However, the Secretary of Defense has discretion to determine certain functions are critical to Department of Defense (DoD) operations and to exempt positions performing those functions from the program. Employees occupying exempted positions are not eligible to participate in the DRP and their deferred resignation request will be disapproved.

Employees who accept the deferred resignation offer, and who are approved for DRP, will be placed on paid administrative leave pursuant to a written agreement between the employee and the employing DoD Component. DRP participants will continue to receive pay and benefits, including annual and sick leave accruals and Thrift Savings Plan matching contributions, through their period of deferred resignation ending no later than September 30, 2025.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

General

Q1. How does an employee apply for the Deferred Resignation Program?

A1. Employees who wish to pursue Deferred Resignation must accept OPM's offer no later than 11:59 pm, Thursday, February 6, 2025. Employees may accept the DRP offer by replying to the hr@opm.gov email, titled "A Fork in the Road," sent to all federal employees on January 28, 2025, with the word "resign" in the body of the email. Alternatively, employees may send an email to hr@opm.gov from their government account with the word "Resign" in the subject line of the email. While it is

recommended for the employee to copy their direct supervisor, it is not mandatory. Before accepting the DRP offer, employees should review information about the offer at <https://www.opm.gov/fork>.

Q2. Once an employee accepts the DRP offer, what are the next steps?

A2. Employees should receive a response from hr@opm.gov within 72 hours acknowledging receipt of their DRP acceptance email. OPM will provide DoD with a list of DoD employees who have accepted DRP. DoD Components will review the list and notify any employees who are ineligible to participate in the DRP by Friday, February 14, 2025. If the employee is eligible and approved to participate in the DRP, the DoD Component will work with the employee to enter an agreement specifying the date on which the employee will be placed on paid administrative leave. Employees will work with their supervisor to determine the effective date of their administrative leave and to ensure a smooth transition of the employee's duties, responsibilities and work assignments. Employees who are approved for DRP will enter an agreement with the DoD Component which addresses work during the transition period. Generally, employees will be placed on administrative leave as soon as practicable. The employee's supervisor will provide the employee with a date and the appropriate procedure for the return of any DoD Component equipment and property.

Q3. How do DoD Components request an exemption for certain functions or positions from the DRP?

A3. DoD Components may request that the Secretary of Defense exempt certain functions or positions from the DRP as provided in the Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (PTDO USD(P&R)) Memorandum, "Solicitation of Exemptions from the Office of Personnel Management Deferred Resignation Program," dated January 30, 2025.

Q4. Where can employees find information about the DRP?

A4. Information for employees is available at <https://www.opm.gov/fork>.

Q5. Is the February 6th deadline for the DRP firm, or can it be extended?

A5. OPM has indicated that it will not extend the deadline to accept its DRP offer unless the employee did not timely receive the offer (for example, the employee was on approved leave for all or part of the DRP offer period which began January 28, 2025, and ends February 6, 2025).

Q6. What happens if employees do not respond to the DRP offer?

A6. Employees are under no obligation to respond. Participation in DRP is voluntary.

Q7. May employees who accept DRP offers later rescind their resignations?

A7. Employees may request to rescind their resignations but such requests may be disapproved by DoD Components.

Eligibility and Participation

Q8. Are employees who submitted a resignation or retirement request prior to the OPM DRP email on January 28, 2025, eligible to participate in the DRP?

A8. Employees who previously submitted a resignation or retirement request may participate in the DRP but may only be approved for deferred resignation through the requested retirement date. For example, if John Smith had already notified his supervisor of intent to retire on March 31, 2025, John may participate in DRP and be placed on administrative leave through March 30, 2025, with a retirement effective date of March 31, 2025.

Q9. Are human capital staff eligible to participate in the DRP?

A9. Human capital staff are eligible to participate in the program unless the Secretary of Defense approves a DoD Component's request to exempt the employee's function or position.

Q10. Are employees on paid parental leave eligible to participate in the DRP?

A10. Employees on paid parental leave (PPL) are eligible and any reimbursement required by section 630.1705(e) of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations is waived. Approved employees must end PPL and be placed on administrative leave.

Q11. Are temporary or term employees eligible to participate in the DRP?

A11. The eligibility of temporary or term employees is still being determined.

Q12. Are employees who are on indefinite suspension eligible to participate in the DRP?

A12. Employees who are on indefinite suspension may participate in the DRP.

Q13. Are employees who are eligible for retirement able to participate in the DRP?

A13. Employees who are eligible for retirement may participate in the DRP.

Q14. Are reemployed annuitants eligible to participate in the DRP?

A14. Reemployed annuitants are not eligible to participate in the DRP.

Q15. Are employees who are undergoing disciplinary action eligible to participate in the DRP?

A15. Employees who are undergoing disciplinary action may request to be considered for the DRP.

Pay and Administrative Leave

Q16. What is administrative leave?

A16. In accordance with 5 U.S.C. 6329a., administrative leave means:

- Leave taken without loss or reduction in (1) pay; (2) leave to which the employee is otherwise entitled to under law; or (3) credit for time or service; AND,
- Leave that is not authorized under any other provision of law.

Q17. Will employees who participate in the DRP be paid during the transition period?

A17. Employees who participate in the DRP will receive paid administrative leave. Timecards will be coded as administrative leave (LN).

Q18. Will employees who participate in the DRP be eligible for back pay if there is a lapse in appropriations?

A18. Employees who participate in the DRP will be placed in a furlough status during a lapse in appropriations. Once removed from furlough status, employees will be eligible to receive back pay for the period of lapse under the Government Employee Fair Treatment Act of 2019, 31 U.S.C. 1341(c)(2).

Q19. Will employees who participate in the DRP be eligible for unemployment benefits?

A19. In accordance with DoDI 1400.25, Volume 850, employees who participate in the DRP will not be eligible for unemployment benefits as they will remain in an employee status, receiving full pay and benefits while on paid administrative leave.

Retirement and Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA)

Q20. Does participation in the DRP affect retirement eligibility?

A20. Employees who are eligible for retirement may retire with full benefits in accordance with 5 CFR § 831 and 842.

Q21. Must retirement-eligible employees indicate that they wish to retire, not just resign, when accepting the DRP offer?

A21. Employees may type “retire” when accepting OPM’s offer, but it is not required. Employees approved for participation in the DRP will enter a written agreement that addresses the retirement date. Retiring employees must submit a separate application for retirement to their DoD Component and OPM will process it in accordance with statute. For information on retirement, please visit [OPM’s Retirement Center webpage](#).

Q22. Is Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) applicable to employees who are approved to participate in the DRP?

A22. DoD Components may approve employees who accept OPM’s Deferred Resignation Offer before February 6, 2025, and who meet the VERA eligibility requirements, for voluntary early retirement.

Q23. Can DoD Components waive the VERA eligibility requirements?

A23. No. The minimum age and service requirements are set by statute in 5 U.S.C. 8336(d)(2) for the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) employees, and in 5 U.S.C. 8414(b)(1) for Federal Employees’ Retirement System (FERS) employees. Neither OPM or DoD have authority to waive either the minimum age or service requirement for VERA eligibility.

Q24. Do DoD Components need to satisfy any labor relations obligations pertaining to use of VERA for the DRP?

A24. If there is a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) that covers the timeframe a VERA window is open, the terms of the CBA must be followed. Components should review their CBAs to determine what, if any, constraints are in place for implementing the DRP with VERA as an option. Additionally, if CBA provisions are in place that impact the VERA window, Components should review whether those provisions can be renegotiated.

Miscellaneous

Q25. How will OPM ensure that employees who participate in the DRP are not disadvantaged in terms of their benefits or retirement eligibility?

A25. OPM will work with DoD to ensure that employees who participate in the DRP are not disadvantaged in terms of their benefits or retirement eligibility. OPM will provide guidance and support to help DoD navigate the process and ensure that employees receive the benefits they are eligible for.

Q26. How will DoD handle employees who are on service obligations, such as those required by travel or transportation agreements, recruitment incentives, or student loan repayment programs?

A26. Service obligations will be waived and DoD will take no steps to establish a debt for failure to satisfy any service time commitments. Additionally, any remaining service requirements from Paid Parental Leave will be waived.

Q27. Can employees who participate in the program work at another job while on administrative leave?

A27. The program is intended to allow employees to transition to new employment opportunities within the private sector. Employees will enter agreements with their respective DoD Components which address applicable ethics requirements.

REFERENCES

Acting Director, OPM Memorandum, “Guidance Regarding Deferred Resignation Program” dated January 28, 2025,

<https://chcoc.gov/sites/default/files/OPM%20Guidance%20Memo%20re%20Deferred%20Resignation%20Program%2001-28-25%20FINAL.pdf>

OPM emails and Frequently Asked Questions, “A Fork in the Road,” dated January 28, 2025, and February 2, 2025, <https://www.opm.gov/fork>

PTDO USD(P&R) Memorandum, “Solicitation of Exemptions from the Office of Personnel Management Deferred Resignation Program,” dated January 30, 2025, [Solicitation of Exemptions from the Office of Personnel Management Deferred Resignation Program - Signed January 30, 2025.pdf](#)

“Exemption of Critical Positions”, [Exemption Request for Critical Positions.docx](#)

CONTACT

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