

## GSA ORDER

SUBJECT: Using Schedule A to Hire Candidates with Disabilities

1. Purpose. This Order establishes guidelines for hiring candidates with disabilities using Schedule A of Title 5, Excepted Service at the General Services Administration (GSA).

When provisions of this guidance differ from changes in applicable law or regulation, the changes in law or regulation apply.

2. Background. This guidance covers only Schedule A positions filled under the excepted service authority, 5 CFR 213.3102(u), regarding persons with intellectual disabilities, severe physical disabilities, or psychiatric disabilities (hereinafter “Persons with Disabilities” or ‘Schedule A’). This directive incorporates information from

- Applicable statutes (e.g., 5 U.S.C. 3302),
- Regulations (5 CFR 3.1, 5 CFR 213.3102(u) and 5 CFR Parts 302 and 315),
- Executive Order (E.O.) 12125, Competitive Status for Handicapped Federal Employees (March 15, 1979),
- E.O. 13124, Amending the Civil Service Rules Relating to Employees With Psychiatric Disabilities (June 4, 1999),
- E.O. 13548, Increasing Federal Employment of Individuals with Disabilities (July 26, 2010), and
- E.O. 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government (January 25, 2021).

This Order creates a foundation for consistent hiring practices of individuals with disabilities using the Schedule A authority.

3. Scope and Applicability.

a. This Order contains policies and procedures for the hiring of applicants with disabilities using Schedule A of Title 5, Excepted service. The provisions of this Order apply to all hiring actions using this authority and are intended to improve the quality and availability of this information to all hiring officials within GSA.

b. This policy does not apply to the Office of Inspector General (OIG). The OIG has independent personnel authority. See Section 6 of the Inspector General Act of 1978, (5 U.S.C. App.3), as amended (Inspector General is authorized “to select, appoint, and employ such officers and employees as may be necessary for carrying out the functions, powers, and duties of the Office of Inspector General”) and GSA Order ADM 5450.39D CHGE 1, GSA Delegations of Authority Manual (Delegations Manual), Chapter 2, Part 1 (“The Inspector General has

independent authority to formulate policies and make determinations concerning human capital issues within the OIG” and GSA determinations/delegations do not limit that authority). Similarly, GSA specifically recognizes that the Inspector General has independent authority to formulate policies and make determinations concerning training, employee development, and career management.

c. This policy applies to the Civilian Board of Contract Appeals (CBCA) only to the extent that the CBCA determines it is consistent with the CBCA’s independent authority under the Contract Disputes Act and it does not conflict with other CBCA policies or the CBCA mission.

4. Nature of Revision.

This directive is new and does not revise any other GSA Orders.

5. Implementation action. The implementation of this GSA Order must be carried out in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, and, as it affects employees represented by a bargaining unit, is contingent upon compliance with applicable labor relations obligations.

6. Signature.

/S/  
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Office of Human Resources Management

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## **SCHEDULE A TO HIRE CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES**

### **1. Introduction.**

Schedule A, 5 CFR 213.3102(u), is a special non-competitive hiring authority reserved for people with severe disabilities. Greater use of Schedule A, 5 CFR 213.3102(u) authority by GSA helps to advance employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, a goal of many Presidential administrations since the 1970's. It is intended for the appointment of persons with documented intellectual disabilities, severe physical disabilities, or psychiatric disabilities. Schedule A, as a type of non-competitive appointing authority, represents an exception to the traditional competitive hiring process. Persons with disabilities are hired under excepted service appointments to positions that would otherwise be filled through competitive procedures. Individuals hired under Schedule A are subject to a two-year trial period. An employee appointed under a non temporary appointment under 5 CFR 213.3102(u) may be converted to a career or career-conditional appointment if he or she successfully completes a two-year trial period (without a break of more than 30 days) and may be recommended for conversion by their supervisor, upon meeting all the requirements and conditions governing career and career-conditional appointment (see 5 CFR 315.709(a)). Upon conversion to a career-conditional appointment, the employee may be subject to 1 year of probation under the competitive service (see further 5 CFR 315.801(e)).

The Schedule A hiring authority was not intended as a vehicle for temporary or time-limited employment. Temporary and time-limited appointments should only be used when the position demands this particular appointment type, for example, when the work is of a temporary nature, or when a temporary appointment is necessary to determine an individual's job readiness. GSA will utilize the Schedule A hiring authority to appoint individuals and convert them noncompetitively into the competitive service, once appointment requirements are met.

### **2. References.**

- [5 CFR 213.3102 \(u\), Employment In The Excepted Service](#)
- [29 U.S.C. 701, et seq., The Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#)
- [Title 42 U.S.C. 12101 Equal Opportunity for Individuals with Disabilities](#)
- [42 U.S.C. 12102, Definition of Disability](#)
- [5 USC 3321: Competitive service; Probationary Period](#)
- [5 USC 2108: Veteran; Disabled Veteran; Preference Eligible](#)
- [5 CFR 213.104, Special provisions for temporary, time-limited, intermittent, or seasonal appointments in Schedule A, B, C, or D](#)
- [OPM Policy, Schedule A Hiring Authority](#)
- [Federal Register, 5 CFR Part 302, Employment in the Excepted Service](#)
- [5 CFR 315.709, Appointment for Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [EEOC Notice, No. 915.002, EEOC Enforcement Guidance: Disability-Related Inquiries and Medical Examinations of Employees Under the Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\), July 27, 2000](#)

### **3. Definitions.**

a. **Career Development.** The support an organization provides to an employee's professional growth and training which will provide the employee the necessary skills for

promotion and advancement within the organization. This support often includes coaching, mentoring, and skills development.

b. Competitive Schedule A Hiring Process. Persons with disabilities may apply under the traditional competitive hiring process by responding to a vacancy announcement posted on [USAJOBS](#). Under this application method, the applicant must provide sufficient evidence as proof that they are eligible for consideration under Schedule A, as well as under competitive procedures (i.e. the selection certificate under merit promotion or delegated examination). The servicing human resources staffing specialist should use the materials supplied by the applicant pursuant to the announcement to verify not only Schedule A eligibility but also that the applicant meets minimum qualifications (see 5 CFR 302.202).

c. Non-Competitive Conversion. Provision which allows a Schedule A Appointee's position conversion to career or career-conditional employment under special authorities covered in 5 CFR Part 315. The result of non-competitive conversion is placement in a position in the competitive service that is not made by selection from an open competitive examination, and that is usually based on current or prior Federal service.

d. Non-Competitive Schedule A Hiring Process. Persons with disabilities may apply under the Schedule A non-competitive hiring process. Under this application method, the applicant may submit their resume (and proof of disability documentation) to GSA regardless of whether or not a specific job opportunity exists at a given time. They are not required to compete with non-Schedule A applicants; but they are required to compete with other Schedule A, Persons with Disabilities, applicants who apply for the vacancy. Schedule A applicants are assessed and may be appointed via Schedule A, 5 CFR 213.3102(u), following appropriate hiring procedures.

e. Proof of Disability. Proof of disability refers to the submission of appropriate documentation issued by a licensed medical professional (e.g., a physician or other medical professional duly certified by a State, the District of Columbia, or a U.S. territory, to practice medicine), a licensed vocational rehabilitation specialist (State or private), or any Federal agency, State agency, or an agency of the District of Columbia or a U.S. territory that issues or provides disability benefits. Appropriate documentation can constitute medical records or statements by healthcare providers (such as a written justification letter addressed to GSA).

f. Psychiatric Disability. The term psychiatric disability as defined in 29 U.S.C. 705(9) and 42 U.S.C. 121202, means a mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of an individual and either a record of impairment or being regarded by others as having such an impairment.

g. Severe Disability. The term "severe disability" (or handicap) is defined in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 87 Stat. 355 (1973), as amended and as codified within 29 U.S.C. 705(21). This term identifies an individual with a disability who has a severe physical or mental impairment which seriously limits one or more functional capacities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills) in terms of employment outcome. a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment.

h. Selective Placement Coordinator: GSA Agency Coordinator who helps managers and supervisors recruit, hire, and accommodate individuals with disabilities, Schedule A, Targeted Disabilities, Disabled Veterans, etc.

i. Temporary appointment. An appointment made for a limited period of time of one year or less, with a specific not-to-exceed (NTE) date determined by the authority under which the appointment is made.

j. Trial period. The period during which management evaluates an employee's performance and conduct to determine whether their continued employment is in the best interest of GSA.

#### 4. Responsibilities.

a. Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM). OHRM is responsible for the overall administration and management of GSA's excepted service employment programs to include hiring of individuals with disabilities. OHRM is responsible for:

(1) Developing policy governing the implementation and administration of hiring individuals for Schedule A appointments at GSA;

(2) Providing program direction to GSA servicing Human Resources offices;

(3) Providing program oversight and ensure that all managers and supervisors are aware of the flexibilities of hiring employees with disabilities under the Schedule A appointment and carry out their responsibilities related to the program and participants within their organizations;

(4) Monitoring and assessing GSA, Schedule A hiring, by conducting periodic program assessments and report results to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), as required;

(5) Ensuring that hiring officials are made aware of the opportunity to hire individuals with disabilities using this Schedule A hiring authority;

(6) Advising and assisting hiring officials in employing Schedule A applicant referrals in accordance with this policy and relevant statutes and regulations;

(7) Advising and assisting hiring officials regarding reasonable accommodation requests;

(8) Partnering with hiring officials to tailor disability recruitment planning and encouraging hiring managers to use the Schedule A appointing authority for filling vacant positions. Collaborating with managers to develop a targeted disability recruitment strategy. A strategic recruitment strategy will not only encourage hiring managers to use Schedule A, but it will also help the GSA Selective Placement Coordinator build a pipeline of qualified candidates who can be hired without posting or publicizing vacant positions.

b. GSA Heads of Services and Staff Offices. GSA Heads of Services and Staff Offices are responsible for:

(1) Conducting workforce planning and analysis in partnership with OHRM to identify required skill sets, positions, and appointment types necessary to accomplish mission goals and objectives;

(2) Reviewing applications for Schedule A applicants and allowing qualified applicants to be considered for employment where appropriate.

c. Supervisors. Supervisors are responsible for collaborating with OHRM and facilitating hiring actions to appoint employees to positions using the Schedule A hiring authority:

(1) Submitting a fully classified position description to OHRM to begin the recruitment process;

(2) Collaborating with OHRM to review applications of qualified Schedule A applicants;

(3) Conducting interviews and making selections of prospective Schedule A employees;

(4) Facilitating activities to ensure that reasonable job accommodations are discussed and/or made prior to an offer letter being extended to a prospective employee and prior to the employee participating in the GSA Onboarding process;

(5) Ensuring that Schedule A employees are placed on GSA performance standards;

(6) Validating and confirming that Schedule A employees complete the 2 year trial period successfully; and,

(7) Submitting a Personnel Action Request (PAR) to convert an employee from their Schedule A appointment to a permanent position within the competitive service, if appropriate.

d. Selective Placement Coordinator. Provides assistance to GSA, OHRM, and GSA Heads of Services and Staff Offices by coordinating Schedule A hiring activities to include but not limited to:

(1) Advising managers and OHRM about candidates available for placement in jobs under special hiring authorities as well as providing managers with information on reasonable accommodation and needs assessments for applicants and employees;

(2) Monitoring and evaluating selective placement program efforts and activities for people with disabilities to determine their effectiveness, and making changes as needed to improve effectiveness; and,

(3) Coordinating activities through external recruitment sources.

5. Procedures for Hiring Persons with Disabilities.

a. Verifying Proof of Disability Prior to Appointment

(1) The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) does not allow an employer to ask questions about a disability until after the employer makes a conditional job offer; however, an employer may invite applicants to voluntarily self-identify as a person with a disability. An applicant who identifies themselves as "Schedule A" eligible must provide the proper medical documentation when applying to federal positions in accordance with Schedule A guidelines.

(2) To be eligible for an appointment under Schedule A authority, the applicant must have a disability that meets the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Rehab Act") definition of a disability and the applicant must submit proof of their disability prior to appointment. The Self-Identification of Disability Form, OPM Standard Form (SF) 256, lists disabilities that meet the Rehab Act's definition of a disability; however, this list is not exhaustive and an individual may be eligible for an appointment even though they have a disability that is not on the SF-256 list, if they meet the requirements of 5 CFR 213.3102(u).

(3) The servicing HR Specialist must verify the authenticity of medical documentation from a medical professional described in 5 CFR 213.3102(u)(3)(ii)

- The applicant must submit "proof of a disability" documentation. Documentation of eligibility for employment under Schedule A can be obtained from a licensed medical professional (e.g., a physician or other medical professional certified by a state, the District of Columbia, or a U.S. territory to practice medicine); a licensed vocational rehabilitation specialist (i.e., state or private); or any Federal agency, state agency, or agency of the District of Columbia or a U.S. territory that issues or provides disability benefits. To be official, the letter must be on official letterhead and signed and dated by a licensed medical professional or a licensed rehabilitation specialist that can certify that an applicant has a disability as described under Schedule A, 5 CFR 213.3102(u).
- Candidates hired via the Schedule A authority will be required to complete a SF-256 form during the GSA Onboarding process. The document will be reviewed by the servicing HR Specialist along with all other required Onboarding forms.
- Schedule A applicants applying for a position outside of a GSA vacancy announcement must submit a resume and Schedule A letter to the GSA Selective Placement Coordinator. The GSA Selective Placement Coordinator will use the Schedule A letter to determine eligibility and qualifications for vacant GSA positions and if the Schedule A applicant is hired, they will be required to complete an SF-256 form during the GSA Onboarding process as previously mentioned.
- The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has [Sample Schedule A letters](#) that can be used as templates for healthcare providers.

- GSA will accept Schedule A letters that qualify under 5 CFR 213.3102(u)(3). The letter should meet the Schedule A regulations which specify the following: “A person must have an intellectual disability, a severe physical disability or a psychiatric disability” to be hired through the Schedule A appointing authority. The letter will be acceptable if the information is provided using an authorized medical physician or a medical facilities letterhead with appropriate documentation and signatures. Samples of such letters are included in the link above. The servicing HR Specialist must be provided with sufficient information to determine that the applicant meets all requirements according to 5 CFR 213.2102(u)(3) prior to considering applicants for Schedule A appointments. All proof of eligibility **must** be received prior to a tentative offer being extended to a prospective candidate.

## 6. Filling Positions.

a. Hiring Process - Schedule A positions may be filled through one of following methods:

(1) Competitive process. The applicant may be considered for Federal positions in the same manner as applicants without disabilities, then they may be appointed via the hiring authority for the position for which they applied.

(2) Non-competitive process. The applicant may apply for jobs under the Schedule A appointment authority. They are not required to compete with non-Schedule A applicants; but they are required to compete with other Schedule A, Persons with Disabilities, applicants who apply for the vacancy. Schedule A applicants are assessed and appointed via Schedule A, 5 CFR §213.3102(u), following the hiring procedures specified within this directive.

(3) 5 CFR 213.3101 Subpart C. Positions other than those of a confidential or policy-determining character for which it is impracticable to examine. Upon specific authorization by OPM, agencies may make appointments under this section to positions which are not of a confidential or policy-determining character, and which are not in the Senior Executive Service. Examining for this purpose means applying the qualification standards and requirements established for the competitive service. Positions filled under this authority are excepted from the competitive service and constitute Schedule A.

(4) Veterans Appointments - If the applicant is a Veteran, they may apply for jobs through veterans appointing authorities. Veterans with disabilities may also be considered and appointed via the [Veterans Recruitment Appointment \(VRA\): 30% or More Disabled Veterans Program](#); or, [Veterans Employment Opportunity Act \(VEOA\)](#) special hiring authorities. Below is a summary of each of the Veteran's appointments previously discussed:

- Veterans Recruitment Appointment (VRA). The VRA is a special authority by which agencies may appoint eligible veterans without competition to positions at any grade level through General Schedule (GS) 11 or equivalent.
- Veterans Readiness and Employment Program (VR&E). Disabled veterans eligible for training under the Veterans Administrations VR&E vocational rehabilitation program may enroll for training or work experience. Applicants who complete the VR&E program are required to coordinate job readiness functions

with the Veterans Administration. GSA will consider eligible Schedule A applicants through the normal Schedule A hiring processes described within this directive.

- Veterans Employment Opportunities Act. The Veterans Employment Opportunities Act (VEOA) of 1998 as amended by Section 511 of the Veterans Millennium Health Care Act (Pub. Law 106-117) of November 30, 1999, provides that agencies must allow preference eligibles or eligible veterans to apply for positions announced under merit promotion procedures when the agency is recruiting from outside its own workforce. A VEOA eligible, who competes under merit promotion procedures and is selected will be given a career or career conditional appointment. Veterans' preference is not a factor in these appointments.

(5) Proof of Veterans' Preference For Schedule A Hiring. Persons claiming veterans' preference must submit proper documentation as proof of veterans' preference.

- 10-Point (30% or More Disabled) Preference. Veterans must submit member copy 4 of their DD-214 for the period of service which they are claiming preference; 30% or more rating disability letter from the Veterans Administration; SF-15 and other required documentation identified on the [SF-15](#).
- 10-Point Preference (10% but less than 30%). Veterans must submit member copy 4 of their DD-214 for the period of service which they are claiming preference; less than 30% rating disability letter from the Veterans Administration; SF-15 and other required documentation identified on the SF-15.

## 7. Recruitment.

a. GSA utilizes the Schedule A appointing authority to hire qualified applicants with disabilities as discussed in 5 CFR 213.3102(u). GSA Human Resources staff will refer qualified applicants with disabilities as applicable and may consult with GSA's Selective Placement Coordinator prior to hiring an applicant for a Schedule A appointment. The following is a summary of information and guidance to ensure successful attraction and recruitment of Schedule applicants.

### b. Applicant Eligibility and Qualifications Requirements Eligibility/Citizenship.

(1) Applicants with disabilities who wish to be considered under the Schedule A appointing authority must be U.S. citizens or nationals. Non-U.S. citizens may be considered when recruitment efforts for difficult to fill positions or positions with highly specialized experience and skills requirements do not yield sufficient pools of quality candidates who are U.S. citizens, provided the individual is lawfully admitted to the United States as a permanent resident or is otherwise authorized to be employed. Justification for such appointments must be fully documented and must be approved by the GSA, Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO). Justification must include a description of the impact of the position on mission goals of the organization; results of recent recruitment and outreach efforts; data showing the availability and quality of candidates; and expected results of successful employment. Approved justifications and documentation supporting recruitment efforts and results must be maintained in the case file.

(2) Schedule A applicants must meet all eligibility and qualifications requirements for the position being filled, including general and/or specialized experience as defined by the OPM or by the agency for positions not covered in OPM's qualification standards; any positive education requirements; and selective placement factors identified for the position; and any special conditions of employment associated with the position. Additionally, applicants must submit appropriate documentation to substantiate eligibility for appointment.

(3) Documentation confirming the applicant's disability must be provided before a candidate can be hired for a Schedule A appointment.

(4) Age 16 is the minimum age allowed for Federal employment. This requirement is described in OPM's regulations on child labor at 5 CFR 551.601(a). Age 18 is the minimum age for hazardous positions 5 CFR 551.601(b).

(5) All individuals must undergo a security clearance. Depending on the type and location of the person's position, an individual may be required to meet certain medical requirements for various occupations. The servicing HR Specialist should consult the hiring manager to ensure that the individual has met these requirements.

(6) If the individual requires reasonable accommodations, the hiring manager should contact their servicing Staffing Specialist to discuss reasonable accommodations prior to the extension of the final Schedule A appointment offer.

8. Veterans' Preference. 5 CFR §302.101(c) and OPM Vet Guide, Veterans' Preference in Appointments, Excepted Service Employment. When considering more than one Schedule A applicant and one or more applicants is a preference eligible, the servicing HR Specialist:

a. Must apply veteran's preference as far as administratively feasible, i.e. military service is a positive factor when assessing candidates. Applicant lists will annotate which applicants are veterans.

b. Must provide preference eligible applicants the reason(s) for non-selection upon request.

c. Document the case file when a non-preference eligible applicant is selected over a preference eligible applicant. The pass over procedures under 5 U.S.C. 3318 are not required to be followed; however, the servicing HR Specialist should document the reasons for non-selection. See Employment in the Excepted Service Policy HRM 9302.1, Appendix A, Checklist: Excepted Service Appointment Recruitment Case Files.

9. Priority Reemployment List (PRL). Selection priority must be provided to former GSA excepted service employees who are registered on GSA Priority Reemployment List (PRL) before referring the names of other qualified candidates. Sufficient documentation must be retained to demonstrate PRL clearance for each vacancy. The Servicing HR Specialist is not required to provide selection priority to displaced or surplus candidates under the Career Transition Assistance Plan (CTAP), Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan (ICTAP), or the Reemployment Priority List (RPL) before making a Schedule A, Persons with Disabilities, appointment (5 CFR 330.211(i); 330.609(i); and 5 CFR 330.707(g)).

10. Referral Services and Other Resources.

a. Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP). The WRP is a recruitment and referral program that connects federal sector employers nationwide with highly motivated postsecondary students and recent graduates with disabilities who are eager to prove their abilities in the workplace through temporary or permanent jobs. The Department of Labor and Department of Defense manage databases which contain thousands of applications from individuals with diverse backgrounds. Interested supervisors can contact their Servicing HR Specialist or the GSA Selective Placement Coordinator to request access to the WRP database. All applicants within the database meet eligibility requirements for Schedule A appointments.

b. OPM Shared List of People with Disabilities. Database of candidates with disabilities, who are Schedule A eligible. It is provided by OPM free of charge to federal human resources and hiring managers in order to assist in the recruitment of people with disabilities. Prior to inclusion in the Shared List, candidates proceed through a skills, education, professionalism, and work ethics screening process.

c. Vocational Rehabilitation. Vocational rehabilitation state agencies facilitate a wide range of services for youth and adults with disabilities that help prepare them with skills to meet the workplace needs of business. The Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation has created a National Employment Team (NET) that offers businesses a single point of contact to connect with qualified applicants, resources, and support services in their local area.

d. Employment Networks. Employment Networks are public or private organizations that are authorized by the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work Program to provide free employment support services to Social Security disability beneficiaries ages 18 to 64.

e. Department of Veterans Affairs. Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program: is a program administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs. This program assists Veterans with service-connected disabilities and service members who are in the process of transitioning from the military to civilian employment in preparing for, finding, and retaining suitable employment.

f. Centers for Independent Living (CILs). The Centers for Independent Living are federally funded consumer-controlled nonprofit, nonresidential organizations. The CILs' mission is to empower people with disabilities by providing information and referral services, independent living skills training, peer counseling, and transition services, and by developing additional services based on community needs. A growing number of CILs are Employment Networks and offer additional services such as job interview practice and other pre-employment services to people with disabilities.

g. GSA Selective Placement Coordinator Referral. The GSA Selective Placement Coordinator may refer applicants who meet Schedule A eligibility, qualification and all other requirements to the servicing HR Specialist or to the Hiring Official. If an HR Specialist receives an unsolicited resume outside of a posted vacancy announcement, they should forward the information to the Selective Placement Coordinator, who will facilitate further action and determine if the Schedule A applicant is qualified for any vacant positions within GSA. Note: The Selective Placement Coordinator will need the following information:

- A current resume providing an applicant's qualifications/specialized experience.

- A signed disability letter on appropriate letterhead and a medical professional signature at the bottom of the letter as discussed in [5 CFR 213.3102 \(u\)](#);
- An OF 306, Declaration of Employment form; and,
- An SF-50 if the applicant has prior government service.

h. Government Resources for Individuals with Disabilities After Selection

[Deaf in Government \(DIG\)](#): DIG's mission is to empower Deaf and Hard of Hearing Government employees at the local, state, and Federal levels. DIG addresses communication barriers and accessibility issues, and it attempts to promote a fully inclusive work environment through networking, fostering professional growth, and career advancement. DIG's website obtains a wealth of resources and general information for deaf and hard of hearing government employees.

i. Reasonable Accommodation Resources.

- [Department of Defense Computer/Electronic Accommodation Program](#). The Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program (CAP) provides free assistive technology and services to people with disabilities throughout the federal government.
- [Job Accommodation Network \(JAN\)](#). The most comprehensive resource for job accommodations available and a terrific and easy-to-use resource. This free consulting service is designed to increase the employability of people with disabilities. JAN provides individualized worksite accommodation solutions, as well as information on job accommodations and related subjects for employers and people with disabilities.
- [U.S Department of Agriculture TARGET Center](#). The TARGET Center accommodates individuals with disabilities, educates management, and supports agency efforts to increase the recruitment and advancement of individuals with disabilities. Federal agencies have access to the TARGET Center accessibility, interpreting services, ergonomics, and education programs.

j. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's Fact Sheet - Schedule A Hiring.

- [Promoting Employment of Individuals with Disabilities in the Federal Workforce](#)
- [Applying MD-715 to Improve Participation of Employees with Targeted Disabilities](#)

k. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment (ODEP) - E.O. 13548.

- [Toolkit for Federal Agencies on Implementing E.O. 13548](#)

11. Onboarding. Once a prospective candidate has been identified, the servicing HR Specialist will work with the hiring manager, to on-board the candidate. The following is a summary of steps to be followed during the onboarding process:

a. Prior to extending an offer, the servicing HR Specialist will verify that the candidate has submitted the appropriate documentation as proof of disability or Schedule A letter. If the information has not been submitted, the servicing HR Specialist will notify the applicant that the offer is contingent upon receipt of the applicant's proof of disability documentation. The servicing HR Specialist will ensure that the hiring manager is not involved in the disability

documentation process. Proof of disability documentation, like other medical information, must be kept strictly confidential.

b. The servicing HR Specialist along with the GSA Selective Placement Coordinator will address Reasonable Accommodation requests prior to the candidate's Start Date. Once an offer has been extended, and prior to the entry-on-duty date being finalized, the servicing HR Specialist will contact the candidate to verify whether their accommodation needs have been addressed. Where the need has not been addressed, the servicing HR Specialist will follow GSA's policy for handling reasonable accommodation requests. The HR Specialist will work with the supervisor and the GSA Selective Placement Coordinator to ensure that all accommodations are in place when the new employee comes on board.

c. The servicing HR Specialist will collaborate with the servicing processing personnel to ensure that personnel documents are correctly coded. When processing the Standard Form 52, Request for Personnel Action, and/or the Standard Form 50, Notification of Personnel Action, the servicing HR Specialist will make sure that the correct position description has been assigned and that the personnel action has been properly coded and that the SF-50 includes appropriate remarks.

d. The servicing HR Specialist will ensure that the applicant completes and submits an SF-256 as one of the Onboarding forms. Schedule A is an affirmative action program for persons with disabilities. The servicing HR Specialist will assure the appointee that every precaution is taken to ensure that the information provided is confidential and explain the importance of keeping accurate data to determine an agency's progress in meeting the requirements set forth in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

## 12. After Schedule A Selection.

a. Career Development: The Supervisor will provide Career Development planning to ensure that the employee receives clear, transparent performance expectations to include a review of the employee's performance standards, position description, and possible training opportunities. The GSA Workforce Learning and Development Team will further assist supervisors with facilitating the Career Development process.

b. Promotion. Persons appointed to positions under the Schedule A authority may be promoted within the excepted service. The following guidelines should be followed.

(1) Promotions within the excepted service are not subject to the time-in-grade restrictions outlined in 5 CFR Part 300, Subpart F; however, excepted service employees must meet the qualification requirements for the position. Servicing HR Specialists may waive the qualifications specified under 5 CFR302.403 for preference eligibles.

(2) The merit system principles apply to promotions within the excepted service; therefore, the employee must compete/have competed for the proposed position/grade level, otherwise the action may constitute a prohibited personnel practice (see 5 U.S.C. 2301 and 2302).

(3) Schedule A, Persons with Disabilities, employees may be promoted upon conversion to the competitive service under the following conditions:

- If the employee is in an excepted service position with a career ladder and the employee competed for the proposed position/grade level, and
- The employee meets the qualification requirements for the competitive service position at the time of conversion, then promotion upon conversion is allowed as follows: (1) The promotion action is processed first, while the employee is a Schedule A employee, then (2) The non-competitive conversion to the competitive service is processed as the second personnel action.
- Competitive service rules, including time-in-grade, apply for promotions made effective after a Schedule A employee has been converted.

13. Duration of Appointment.

The length of a Schedule A appointment may vary. Individuals can be appointed on a temporary, time-limited, or permanent basis, although there are time limitations associated with temporary appointments. Regulations permit an individual to be appointed for a 12-month initial period and extended up to an additional 12 months, with exceptions. Probationary periods can last between 12 and 24 months of service.

14. Probationary Period.

An individual must serve an initial two-year trial/probationary period to be converted from excepted service to competitive service. The individual must have completed at least 2 consecutive years of service and must have obtained satisfactory performance ratings in order to become eligible for conversion to the competitive service. The employee's supervisor must confirm the ratings and provide a letter stating that the employee meets eligibility requirements for conversion to the competitive service. This period should be noted on the appointment SF-50. Note: There are exceptions if the individual has prior service in the competitive or excepted service with same grade and like positions in accordance with 5 CFR 315.802 Subpart H.

15. Crediting Prior Service for Probationary Period.

a. The probationary period required by 5 CFR 315.801 is 1 year and may not be extended.

b. Prior Federal civilian service (including non-appropriated fund service) counts toward completion of probation when the prior service:

- (1) Is performed within the same agency;
- (2) Is in the same line of work (determined by the employee's actual duties and responsibilities); and,
- (3) Contains or is followed by no more than a single break in service that does not exceed 30 calendar days.

c. Periods of absence while in a pay status count toward completion of a probationary period.

(1) Absence in non-pay status while on the rolls (other than for compensable injury or military duty) is creditable up to a total of 22 workdays.

(2) Absence (whether on or off the rolls) due to compensable injury or military duty is creditable in full upon restoration to Federal service.

(3) Non-pay time in excess of 22 workdays extends the probationary period by an equal amount.

(4) An employee serving probation who leaves Federal service to become a volunteer with the Peace Corps or the Corporation for National and Community Service serves the remainder of the probationary period upon reinstatement provided the employee is reinstated within 90 days of termination of service as a volunteer for training for such service.

d. The probationary period for part-time employees is computed based on calendar time, in the same manner as for full-time employees. For intermittent employees, i.e., those who do not have regularly scheduled tours of duty, each day or part of a day in pay status counts as 1 day of credit toward the 260 days in a pay status required for completion of probation. (However, the probationary period cannot be completed in less than 1 year of calendar time.)

16. Eligibility for Leave.

Schedule A appointees are eligible for sick leave. Appointments for a period in excess of 90 days are eligible to earn annual leave. Temporary employees generally are not entitled to full benefits, and generally serve less than 1 year.

17. Eligibility for Benefits.

a. Certain temporary employees are eligible for health benefits. Temporary employees are generally excluded from life insurance coverage. Visit OPM's Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FGLI) Program Handbook for eligibility information. Temporary employees are covered under the Social Security (OASDI) Program. Temporary employees are generally ineligible for federal retirement coverage and the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). See 5 CFR 831.201 and 5 CFR 842.105.

b. An individual that is appointed to a time-limited (i.e., longer than one-year) or permanent appointment is afforded the same benefits as an employee serving on a career, career-conditional appointment.

18. Time in Grade Requirements/Within Grade Increases (WGI's)

a. Time-in-grade restrictions only apply to positions in the competitive service (See 5 CFR 300.603). A Schedule A appointee may be promoted once they meet the qualifications of the higher grade. The applicable OPM qualifications standard should be utilized for Schedule A employees.

b. Within Grade Increases (WGI's) - GS employees on temporary appointments do not receive WGIs.

c. GS employees that are not on a temporary appointment (i.e., term or permanent) are eligible for WGLs.

d. Federal Wage employees on temporary, time-limited, or permanent appointments are eligible for WGLs.

e. Schedule A appointees are eligible for promotion. The Nature of Action Code (NOAC) is a conversion to a new excepted appointment (at the higher grade level) if the appointment has a Not To Exceed (NTE) date.

f. The current NTE date does not change. If the appointee does not have an NTE date on their appointment, the NOAC is a promotion.

g. Regardless of whether the action is a conversion to a new appointment or a promotion, a GS employee is entitled to an increase in pay of at least two steps upon placement in a higher graded position without a break in service. A Federal Wage employee is entitled to an increase in pay of at least one step. See 5 CFR 531.214 and 5 CFR 532.407.

#### 19. Conversion.

a. Employees on a temporary Schedule A, Persons with Disabilities appointment, are not eligible for non-competitive conversion to the competitive service. Time served in a temporary appointment under 5 CFR 213.3102(u) does not count toward the two (2) year service requirement for non-competitive conversion (5 CFR 213.3102(u)(6)(ii) and 5 CFR 315.709(a)(1)).

b. An employee on a permanent or time-limited (i.e., with a NTE date) appointment may be noncompetitively converted to a career or career-conditional appointment in the competitive service if the employee meets the following requirements (5 CFR Part 3; 5 CFR 213.3102(u)(6) and 315.709):

- Is recommended for conversion by his or her supervisor.
- Meets all requirements and conditions governing career and career-conditional appointment, except those requirements concerning competitive selection from a register and medical qualifications; and,
- Is converted without a break in service of one (1) workday.
- Note: The OPM Guide to Processing Personnel Actions requires the NOAC to be: "500 - Conversion to Career Appointment" This NOA is to be used for employees who have completed the 3-year requirement for conversion to a Career appointment; "501 - Conversion to Career Conditional Appointment". This NOA is to be used when an employee has not met the 3-year service requirements for a Career appointment.

c. An individual on a Schedule A appointment that has successfully completed two years of satisfactory service on a non-temporary appointment may be converted to the competitive service. Employees who are not converted to the competitive service, may remain in the excepted service until satisfying the requirement of obtaining two consecutive End Of Year (EOY) Performance Evaluations at the Satisfactory level have been met.

d. A conversion to a career or career-conditional appointment is not mandatory. GSA maintains the discretion to determine whether an employee is ready for placement in the permanent career workforce. Although GSA is not required to convert an individual under the 5 CFR 213.3102(u) appointing authority; the intent of E.O. 12125 and E.O. 13124 concerning employment of persons with intellectual disability, severe physical disabilities and psychiatric disabilities is to permit these individuals to obtain "civil service competitive status." Civil service competitive status is obtained through conversion to the competitive service, rather than remaining in the excepted service. Individuals with disabilities are eligible to be noncompetitively converted into any federal agency.

e. GSA may noncompetitively convert an employee on a Schedule A appointment who has completed two years of satisfactory service to a career or career-conditional appointment in the competitive service. Satisfactory service is service that begins with a non-temporary (e.g., permanent or indefinite) 5 CFR 213.3102(u) appointment.

## 20. Promotions.

Schedule A, Persons with Disabilities, employees may be promoted upon conversion to the competitive service under the following conditions:

- If the employee is in an excepted service position with a career ladder and the employee competed for the proposed position/grade level, and
- The employee meets the qualification requirements for the competitive service position at the time of conversion, then promotion upon conversion is allowed as follows: (1) the promotion action is processed first, while the employee is a Schedule A employee, then (2) the non-competitive conversion to the competitive service is processed as the second personnel action.
- Competitive service rules, including time-in-grade, apply for promotions made effective after a Schedule A employee has been converted.

## 21. Transfers to Another Federal Agency.

a. Title 5 CFR 213.3102(u) states that for an appointee transferring from one agency to another, time previously spent under a non-temporary Schedule A appointment counts toward the completion of the two-year trial/probationary period if the person is reappointed without a break in service. Individuals who left a Schedule A appointment (had a break in service) for an appointment in the competitive service and then subsequently accepted a Schedule A appointment, are required to serve another 2 years before non-competitive conversion to the competitive service. Employees/Candidates can use the Schedule A appointment multiple times. When an employee who is currently in the competitive service uses the Schedule A Hiring Authority to apply for a position, the agency must convert the employee back to a Schedule A 5 CFR 213.3102(u) excepted service appointment.

b. 5 CFR 302.102(b) requires an organization to:

(1) inform the employee that, because the position is in the excepted service, it may not be filled by a competitive appointment, and that acceptance of the proposed appointment will take them out of the competitive service while he/she occupies the position; and,

(2) the employee must acknowledge and sign a written statement that he/she understands he/she is leaving the competitive service voluntarily to accept an appointment in the Excepted service.

c. The two years of satisfactory service for non-competitive conversion begins when the employee is converted to the new Schedule A appointment, regardless of previous appointments or conversions. This period is required and cannot be reduced.

d. After the employee successfully completes the two-year period under the Schedule A appointment, an organization may convert the employee to a career appointment once the employee has two consecutive performance evaluations at the Satisfactory level and 24 months of service. Once the Supervisor confirms the requirements have been met and informs Human Resources. The HR Specialist can utilize the Guide to Processing Personnel Actions in accordance with the guidelines of the OPM, Guide to Processing Personnel Actions, Chapter 9, "Career and Career Conditional Appointments". To create a conversion personnel action that will convert qualified Schedule A employees from excepted service to competitive service.

e. An organization may convert an employee if the employee has completed two years or more of substantially continuous service in a non-temporary Schedule A appointment (5 CFR 315.709(b)(2)) and upon satisfactorily meeting the requirements provided within 5 CFR 315.709(a). Once the requirements have been met, a personnel action should be processed in accordance with the OPM. Once the Supervisor confirms the requirements have been met and informs Human Resources. The HR Specialist can utilize the Guide to Processing Personnel Actions in accordance with the guidelines of the OPM, Guide to Processing Personnel Actions, Chapter 9, "Career and Career Conditional Appointments". To create a conversion personnel action that will convert qualified Schedule A employees from excepted service to competitive service.

## 22. Reinstatements.

A person who was serving probation when they were separated and who is reinstated under [CFR 315.401](#) acquires a competitive status automatically on completion of probation.

## 23. Adverse Actions and Appeals.

Excepted service employees who meet the definition of 'employee' under 5 U.S.C. 7511(a)(1)(B-C) generally have appeal rights to the Merit Systems Protection Board for adverse actions. Note: Employee' is defined as an individual in the competitive service who is not serving a probationary or trial period under an initial appointment or (ii) except as provided in section 1599e of title 10, who has completed one year of current continuous employment under other than a temporary appointment limited to one year or less; a preference eligible in the excepted service in the same or similar position.

a. Servicing Employee Relations staff should be consulted when dealing with unacceptable performance and/or employee misconduct to ensure actions are in compliance with law, regulations, GSA policy, and applicable collective bargaining agreement(s).

b. Individuals entitled to priority consideration who are preference eligibles, or suffered compensable injury, have appeal rights to the MSPB, if they believe their reemployment rights were violated (5 CFR 302.101(c); 5 CFR 302.103; and 5 CFR 302.501).

24. Hiring Goals.

GSA may choose to establish a numerical hiring goal for each fiscal year using the Schedule A authority.

25. Documentation and Accountability.

a. Records associated with personnel actions, including all documentation sufficient for third party reconstruction purposes, must be retained according to the record disposition schedule. Generally, all records created in a given year must be retained for a total of three (3) full years. Records involved in litigation and grievance processes may be destroyed only after official notification is received from OPM, Department of Justice, courts, the Office of the General Counsel etc. that the matter has been fully litigated, or resolved, and closed.

b. The GSA Human Capital Policy and Programs Division in collaboration with the GSA, OHRM staff will conduct periodic accountability reviews to ensure compliance with this guidance, OPM policy and all applicable Federal laws and regulations.