



Fact Sheet: Direct Hiring Authority

February 2014

What is Direct Hire Authority?

Direct Hire Authority (DHA) is a temporary authority granted to agencies by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to hire individuals in an expedited manner.

DHA allows agencies to:

- Waive the rating and ranking system (including examinations, if required);
- Suspend veterans' preferences;
- Eliminate the "Rule of Three" – where hiring managers are presented the top three candidates.

Agencies must still post vacancy announcements on USAJOBS and include information about the use of DHA, but when the agency identifies a qualified candidate, an employment offer can be made on the spot and an appointment can be made immediately.

Current Government-wide Direct Hire Authority

OPM granted government-wide DHA in June 2003 for Information Technology Management (Information Security) positions under grade series GS-2210, GS-9 and above. This authority is currently active with no expiration date.

Obtaining Direct Hire Authority

DHA may be granted either government-wide or to a specific agency after a determination has been made that there is either (1) a critical need or (2) a shortage of candidates.

An agency may request DHA from OPM by presenting OPM with evidence demonstrating a critical need or a shortage of candidates. Alternatively, OPM may independently determine that there is a critical need or a shortage of candidates.

OPM will typically provide expirations for DHA. Agencies must present additional evidence to OPM to request an extension. If no expiration is provided, OPM will periodically review the DHA.

While DHA shortens the hiring process in several areas, not all hiring procedures are affected:

- DHA may be used for temporary, limited or term hiring, along with full-time employment;
- Agencies may use DHA to convert employees to the excepted service, or those on temporary, limited or term appointments to a permanent career or career-conditional appointment. Agencies must provide public notice if they use DHA to do so, follow all applicable laws and regulations, and give full consideration to all candidates;
- DHA does not waive qualification requirements – all candidates selected using DHA must meet the same qualification requirements as other candidates;
- DHA does not waive the one-year probationary period or restrictions on movement in the first three months;
- DHA may still be used after the expiration only if a written employment offer was sent prior to the expiration date, unless otherwise specified by OPM.

Recent examples of agency use of DHA include the Department of Homeland Security and the US Air Force receiving DHA in 2010 to hire nearly 1,700 cybersecurity professionals over two years. The 2012 DHS Homeland Security Advisory Council recommended that DHS use its existing DHA to hire 600 new cybersecurity personnel.