



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240



PERSONNEL BULLETIN NO 09-11

AUG 0 6 2009

SUBJECT: Referral Bonus Awards

1. Purpose. This establishes the Department of the Interior (DOI) policy for referral bonus awards. The award is used to provide an incentive or bonus to employees who bring new, different talent into an agency by referring persons who are subsequently selected for hard-to-fill, mission-critical positions. Referral bonuses are granted, as with other awards, at the discretion of management and are not an entitlement. DOI managers along with their human resources offices (HROs) must determine when the use of the referral bonus is appropriate and ensure established criteria for the award is followed.

2. Authorities. Chapter 45 of Title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.) and Part 451 of Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR).

3. Policy. The Department hereby establishes a policy for the establishment and use of a referral bonus award program. This policy delegates to heads of bureaus and bureau equivalent offices authority to carry out the provisions of law and regulation relating to referral bonus awards. Heads of bureaus and bureau equivalent offices are responsible for administering this policy in accordance with this Personnel Bulletin and the law. This authority may be further delegated as deemed appropriate.

4. Covered Employees. All DOI employees who meet the definition of "employee" as defined in 5 U.S.C. 2105 are eligible for referral bonus awards with the exception of:

- (1) Employees whose regular, recurring job includes the recruitment of employees.
- (2) Employees who are related to the referred candidate as defined in 5 U.S.C. 3110. This includes: father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, first cousin, nephew, niece, husband, wife, and any individual related by blood or affinity whose close association with the employee is equivalent to a family relationship.
- (3) All Senior Executive Service (SES) members and employees who are excluded from receipt of incentive or time-off awards in accordance with 5 CFR 451.105. (Political Appointees including Schedule C, EX, SL, and ST)
- (4) Management officials in the supervisory chain of command of the position being filled.

- (5) Other persons associated with or involved in the recruitment, rating, or selection of the candidate.

5. Criteria. Referral bonus awards shall only be granted by the designated management official of the bureau who has encountered difficulty in recruiting high quality candidates for certain hard to fill positions. The award should not be given for recommending an employee currently employed within DOI. However, the referred employee does not have to be newly appointed to the federal government. Managers anticipating using this hiring incentive must indicate so in their vacancy announcements. Thus, advertising the vacancy is a prerequisite to using this incentive. The following factors should be considered in determining hard to fill positions:

- (1) the lack of success in recent efforts to recruit candidates and retain employees in like positions;
- (2) the availability in the labor market of highly qualified candidates;
- (3) the recent turnover in similar positions; and
- (4) other unique factors that demonstrates difficulty in filling the position.

6. Award Amount. The maximum amount of any referral bonus shall not exceed \$500 or 16 hours of time off of work. When setting an award amount, the organization should consider such things as:

- (1) the cost savings by avoiding certain recruiting expenses;
- (2) the difficulty in filling the position; and
- (3) consistency of award amounts for similar referral circumstances.

7. Conditions of Payment. Referral bonus awards should be paid in one lump sum payment after the entrance on duty of the person referred.

8. Processing Procedures. The referring employee must submit a "Candidate Referral Form (See Attachment) to the servicing HRO prior to the issuance of a selection certificate of the referred candidate. If a referred candidate is selected, the HRO should forward the form to the selecting official for completion. It is suggested that the form be forwarded with applicable selection certificate.

Monetary awards will be processed as cash awards using the nature of action code 848 and cannot be issued before the referred candidate joins the agency. It is recommended that the bureau issue the award within 30 days of the referred candidate's appointment in the bureau and equivalent offices.

Time-off awards will be processed using the nature of action code 846. The remarks section of the SF-50 must clearly state "Referral Bonus Award" for additional tracking purposes.


9. Recordkeeping. Servicing HROs are responsible for establishing Referral Bonus Award files.

The servicing HROs are also responsible for maintaining the referral forms and justifications for program review and reporting purposes in the Referral Bonus Awards file. These files should be maintained for a period of two years after issuance of the award. The Office of Personnel Management or the Department may periodically review records to ensure consistency with rules, regulations, policies, and procedures.

10. Program Oversight and Reporting. The servicing HRO is responsible for monitoring and ensuring the effective use of referral bonuses as well as reporting the usage of this incentive to the Office of Human Resources, as required.

The Office of Human Resources may conduct periodic reviews and evaluations of the use of referral bonus awards to ensure the basis and award amounts are consistent with the criteria established in this Personnel Bulletin.

11. Contact. The Department point of contact on this policy is Craig Welch at (202) 513-0755 or via email at Craig_Welch@ios.doi.gov.


Sharlyn A. Grigsby
Director, Office of Human Resources

DOI CANDIDATE REFERRAL FORM
Referral Bonus Award

This form must be submitted by the referring employee to the applicable Human Resources Office prior to the issuance of a competitive selection certificate or prior to management's non-competitive selection of the referred candidate.

Name of the candidate referred: _____

Title, grade, and vacancy announcement number of the position to which the candidate is referred (if applicable): _____

Name of the employee making the referral: _____

I certify that I meet eligibility criteria as specified under "Covered Employees" in PB-09-11. I do not have a relationship to the candidate which violates 5 U.S.C. 3110, 5 CFR 2635.502, 18 U.S.C. 208, 5 CFR 451.105, or any other relevant federal statute or regulation.

Referrer's Signature

Date

HR Specialist Name and Date Received: _____ *(Human Resources Office will complete)*

If the referred candidate is selected, this section must be completed by the applicable management officials:

Justification that the position is hard-to-fill and of the quality of the candidate selected. *(to be completed by hiring official):*

Money Award(Y/N): ___ Time-Off Award (Y/N): ___ Amount: _____

Recommending or Hiring Official Signature

Date

Approving Official Signature

Date