



## **NWS Changes Met Intern/HMT Hiring Process Stifles Careers of Hundreds of Current Employees**

(February 1, 2016) The NWS's most recent efforts to speed up the hiring process unfairly penalizes Met Intern/HMT positions and only minimal addresses the problems at Workforce Management. Citing "a significant workload for WFMO staffing specialists to review all the applications for qualifications and eligibility," NWS management notified NWSEO of a proposal to limit their current practice of simultaneously bidding out Met Intern/HMT positions to bidding "Met Intern GS 5 and GS 7, non-status only." The proposal makes no mention of filling vacant HMT positions – which eliminates promotion opportunities for employees hoping for these position. The "non-status" change will also strictly limit current Met Intern/HMTs from bidding on GS 5 and GS 7 positions if they wish to transfer from their current office to another NWS office.

"In an effort to streamline the hiring process, the agency is dismantling opportunities for their current employees," said NWSEO President Dan Sobien. "Four years ago, WFMO had no trouble bidding HMT and Met Intern jobs at various grade levels. They've had all these years to fix the problem at WFMO, instead they are making the Interns and HMTs take the hit."

In the 1990's the National Weather Service proposed eliminating the HMT position. NWSEO defeated that proposal and negotiated for the creation of new promotional GS 12 Observing Program Leader, as well as true time and one-half overtime for HMTs.

"Make no mistake about who is looking out for your career and the future of the National Weather Service," said Dan Sobien. "No one works harder for NWS employees than NWSEO."

**Below is the NWS management's proposal to NWSEO on the Met Intern/HMT advertising changes:**

② **Advertise Met Intern positions at the GS-5 and 7, non-status only.** The announcement would target applicants eligible for the GS-5 and GS-7 level only. The certificate of eligibles will only be issued for the GS-5 and GS-7 qualified applicants. There is no change in the career ladder of the position (GS-5/7/9/11) and selectees will still have a full promotion level to the GS-11. The effort would reduce the time to produce certificate of eligibles at the GS- 5, 7, 9, and 11 levels. Hence, staffing specialist will be able to provide certificates to the hiring official faster and free up time for other job opportunity announcements.

② **Terminate the practice of announcing Meteorological Intern positions simultaneously with Hydrometeorological Technicians (HMT) positions.** The practice as stated in the "Management Plan: Revise WFO Staffing/Alaska WSO Staffing September 2004, Modified February 2008," where all HMT/Intern positions vacancies will be simultaneously advertised. Decoupling this practice would further reduce the amount of certificate of eligibles to be generated.

***Below are NWSEO's proposals in response to Management Notification concerning the manner in which intern and HMT positions are advertised.***

In accordance with Article 8, section 4, last sentence of the parties' CBA, NWSEO proposes that the change proposed by management not be made:

**Proposal No. 1:**

Management's proposal to advertise Met Intern positions at the GS-5 and 7, non-status only, shall not be implemented. The existing practice of advertising these positions to both status and non-status candidates at all grades shall continue.

**Proposal No. 2:**

Management's proposal to terminate the practice of announcing Meteorological Intern positions simultaneously with Hydrometeorological Technician (HMT) positions shall not be implemented. Management shall continue to adhere to the practices concerning filing these positions agreed to by the parties in September 2004, as modified in February 2008.

The agency's proposal to change the manner in which positions in the public service unit are advertised is substantively negotiable. Proposals that would require management to announce vacant bargaining unit positions and allow unit members an opportunity to be considered for them is substantively negotiable:

"Once management has made a determination that it will fill vacant positions, a proposal requiring the Agency to post a notice concerning those vacancies constitutes a negotiable procedure within the meaning of section 7106(b)(2) of the Statute. See Federal Union of Scientists and Engineers, National Association of Government Employees and Naval Underwater Systems Center, Newport, Rhode Island, 23 FLRA 360, 363 (1986)."

*AFGE Local 3354 and Dept of Agriculture, Farm Services Agency, 54 FLRA 807 (1998); See also, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Locals 2910 and 2477 and Library of Congress, 15 FLRA 717, 718 (1984) (proposal requiring the posting of a certain percentage of vacancies constituted a negotiable procedure; the Authority noted that the proposal "leav[es] to the Agency the determination of which and how many such vacancies will be filled."); American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO, International Council of United States Marshals Service Locals and Department of Justice, United States Marshals Service, 2 FLRA 765, 766-67 (1980) (proposal requiring the agency to announce all vacancies for which bargaining unit employees are eligible to apply constitutes a negotiable procedure).*

As an alternative to maintaining the status quo, NWSEO offers this alternative that may accomplish the agency's professed desire to reduce the formal WFMO workload in developing the selection certificates:

**Proposal No. 3:**

a. All positions in the public service unit shall continue to be advertised as an HMT vacancy for status applicants in order to allow bargaining unit met techs from the Alaska and Pacific Regions to be considered for the position.

b. Simultaneously with submitting a request to WFMO to initiate the advertising and recruitment for intern/HMT positions that management has decided to fill, management will notify by email each bargaining unit HMT and intern of the vacancy, and inform them that if they wish to be considered for this vacancy, they should submit a letter expressing an interest in a directed reassignment to the vacant position, along with a resume to the selecting official by a date certain, whose contact information shall be provided. The selecting official shall first consider these expressions of interest in a directed reassignment, as well as applications from internal applicants, prior to considering the applications of any outside candidates.

c. In the event that management determines that a bargaining unit employee who has applied for or expressed interest in a directed reassignment to the vacant position and one or more outside candidates are equally qualified and capable of performing, the bargaining unit employee shall be selected for the vacancy.

A note on the negotiability of this proposal:

“A proposal which requires first consideration of employees within a bargaining unit when filling vacancies, but does not prevent management from timely considering other applicants or expanding the area of consideration once bargaining unit employees have been considered, does not directly interfere with management's right to select from any appropriate source. National Treasury Employees Union and Department of the Treasury, Financial Management Service, 29 FLRA 422 (1987) (Provision 1, requiring the agency to give first consideration to its employees, held to be a negotiable procedure); Association of Civilian Technicians, New York State Council and State of New York, Division of Military and Naval Affairs, Albany, New York, 11 FLRA 475, 477 (1983) (Proposal 1); Association of Civilian Technicians, Inc., Pennsylvania State Council and Adjutant General, Department of Military Affairs, Pennsylvania, 4 FLRA 77 (1980).”

*AFGE Local 2298 and Dept of the Navy, Navy Resale Activity*, 35 FLRA 1128, 1131, 1134 (1990). As to the negotiability of subsection c, see proposal 46 in *Overseas Education Ass'n and DODDS*, 29 FLRA 734, 792 (1987).

#### **Proposal 4:**

a. The change proposed by management on January 4, 2016 shall not be implemented until all negotiability appeals that arise out of these negotiations are resolved.

b. The union shall have an opportunity to submit revised proposals should any of its proposals be held to be non-negotiable and the change proposed by management on January 4, 2016 shall not be implemented until negotiations over those revised proposals are completed.

-NWSEO-

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National Weather Service employees.**

**No one works harder for National Weather Service employees than  
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We are NWSEO.**