

Memorandum of Understanding Between the National Weather Service and the National Weather Service Employees Organization on the Intern Hiring Policy and the Internal Reassignment Process

The National Weather Service (NWS) wants to increase the influx of new employees into the agency. At the same time, we recognize that staff motivation, productivity, and retention are dependent upon people working in jobs that are well suited to their interests. In addition, NWS offices need particularized skills and abilities that may be best satisfied by an employee in another NWS facility. Therefore The NWS offers and encourages reassignment opportunities for current employees. This MOU formalizes two ways to meet those needs.

Increase Intern Hiring Efficiency

The NWS aims to increase the efficiency and speed of filling intern vacancies, by limiting new hiring actions for the intern positions to GS-5 and GS-7 only. The intern position will retain the career ladder through GS-11, however the NWS intends that new announcements will only be open to the GS-5 and GS-7 entry positions. The NWS retains sole discretion as to whether to pay either mandatory or discretionary PCS expenses with these new appointee assignments. HMT positions will be simultaneously advertised with intern positions, area of consideration NWS only, NWS status applications only, as GS-1341-11. The NWS agrees to pay all mandatory and discretionary PCS expenses of HMT selections in accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement and past practice.

Internal Reassignment Process

A second change that will boost employee morale, retention, motivation, and productivity as well as help the agency satisfy needed skills, is through an internal reassignment process. This process will speed the of reassignment of a bargaining unit employee to an office and in a job position he/she desires and would be a benefit to that office. Based on the needs of the office as determined by the manager, the Department has the authority to reassign employees to positions within the agency to maintain efficient and productive workflow and results. Supervisors should support staff members who have the desire to enhance their skills or develop new competencies to pursue different or greater responsibilities across the agency.

This process is open to any bargaining unit employee with a job series of 1301, 1315, 1340, 1341, 2210, 0856, 0802, and 0303 and who is in his or her current position at least nine (9) months. The nine-month waiting requirement may be waived if the position is being adversely affected due to a reduction in the workforce or job elimination, or if there is significant change in the terms and conditions of employment

(e.g. work schedule, hours, salary, status, etc.). In all cases, the employee's work record, including but not limited to performance, attendance, efforts to develop skills and related behavior will be used as criteria for determining suitability for a position.

In consideration of the above factors, along with their resume, employees are required to provide documentation that supports their performance history, such as the last performance evaluation or letters of reference. For all positions, consideration will be given to the employee's demonstrated interpersonal skills, among other job-related factors, before making a final decision. Deficiencies in such skills or job-related factors may eliminate an individual from further consideration.

Within 30 days of the effective date of this MOU, CFO2 will establish and maintain a database for recording employees' reassignment office interests. To initiate an internal reassignment, the hiring manager must request CFO2 provide a list of potential candidates. CFO2 will notify the employees to provide the required documentation to the hiring manager within 7 calendar days. After the seven day notification period, the employee will have 14 calendar days to complete and submit a resume, a copy of the last performance evaluation or letters of reference to the Hiring Manager. If an employee is on the Hardship Transfer List, CFO2 will forward a copy of the employees Hardship Transfer Application to the selecting official. Employees on the hardship transfer list must still send their latest resume, a copy of the last performance evaluation or letters of reference to the Hiring Manager within the 14 day window to be considered. Selecting officials must give priority consideration to anyone on the hardship list before considering any others on the reassignment list. If the hiring manager fails to make a selection from either list, the vacancy will continue through the WFMO hiring process.

The NWS agrees to pay all mandatory and discretionary PCS expenses of the employee in accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement and past practice. Any employee accepting a PCS reimbursement will be required to sign a 12 month service agreement. If the employee is accepted for an internal transfer reassignment position, they will not be eligible to apply for another internal transfer reassignment for 3 years.

If an offer of reassignment is made, the employee will have up to 10 calendar days to accept the offer. If the employee does not accept the offer of reassignment as originally requested, the employee will not be eligible to apply for consideration for reassignment to any duty station for a period of twelve (12) months using the internal reassignment policy.

Exceptions to the time periods in this MOU will be reviewed on an individual basis and either approved or disapproved by the Office of Chief Financial Officer CFO2.

Eligibility Criteria for Reassignment Under this Process

- Employed in current position for at least nine months.
- Written confirmation of acceptable performance record/evaluation signed by the applicant's supervisor and completed no more than 12 months prior to date of reassignment application (e.g. meets expectations, average rating, etc.).
- Maintain an acceptable level of performance including but not limited to absence of corrective action and/or resolution of previous corrective action.
- Successfully meet any special requirements for the position of interest.

Employee Responsibilities: The employee must identify a specific job series they would qualify for and location(s) (not to exceed five locations) to facilitate the reassignment process. In all cases, the employee must submit their interests to CFO2 before the first day of the quarter. Employees may submit areas of consideration during the initial 21 calendar day period after CFO2 announces the start of the program, after that, employees can add or change their areas of consideration during the two week period prior to the first day of every quarter (e.g. January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1). The specific job and location interests will be used to notify the employee when a vacancy is opened for an internal reassignment that meets the criteria. At that time, the employee will need to complete and submit a resume, a copy of the last performance evaluation or letters of reference to the Hiring Manager.

Hiring Manager Responsibilities: To initiate an internal reassignment, the hiring manager must request CFO2 for a list of potential candidates. CFO2 will notify the employees to provide the required documentation to the hiring manager within 7 days. Each hiring manager is responsible for following the selection process. If the hiring manager fails to make a selection, the vacancy will continue through the WFMO hiring process.

CFO2 Responsibilities: Within 30 days of the effective date of this MOU, establish and maintain a database for recording employee's geographic interests, notify employees of the start of the program and begin collecting employee's area of consideration. If an employee requests a cross series (e.g. 2210 to 1340) reassignment, CFO2 will verify the cross series qualifications are met based on the information the employee provides. If qualifications are not met, CFO2 will request additional information from the employee to determine if the requirements may be met. Only employees who are qualified and suitable are forwarded to the hiring manager for review. If a hiring manager has a vacancy in the intern or HMT unit, CFO2 will forward all qualified intern and HMT candidates who requested the location and job series to the hiring manager. While information related to the position status is limited, CFO2 or the selecting official will, upon request, provide information regarding the selection to the employee when the information is available and deemed reasonable and practical to communicate. If an

employee is on the Hardship Transfer List, CFO2 will forward a copy of the employees Hardship Transfer application to the selecting official within 14 calendar days of a request for a reassignment list from a hiring official.

Reference Checks

To facilitate the reference check process and safeguard the rights of employees seeking reassignments, a hiring manager who is considering making an offer of employment to an employee from another office should ask the current supervisor to verify the performance and ability of the employee.

There may be extenuating circumstances in which an employee requests that his/her current supervisor not be contacted before an offer or acceptance. It is the employee's responsibility to notify the hiring official that s/he does not want their current supervisor contacted. Information provided to the hiring manager should reflect only the documented strengths or accomplishments, developmental areas, and corrective action or disciplinary notices as recorded in the employee's personnel file.

Compensation

Hiring managers are expected to prepare the SF-52 and other documents to process the reassignment. The hiring manager and employee have co-responsibility to determine the new duty station salary prior to extending an offer. Hiring managers need to ensure locality and COLA pay adjustments are included and may require a decrease in pay. No salary increase outside of locality and COLA pay adjustments is provided for a lateral reassignment (a move to a job in the same grade) because there is no increase in the level of responsibility. The Internal Transfer reassignment policy cannot be used for promotions and cannot provide increased promotion potential to an employee. When an employee transfers to a job in a lower salary grade, the hiring manager should consult with CFO2 to determine the new salary and communicate the salary to the employee.

Notice of Reassignment

If chosen for an open position, the employee should notify the current supervisor of the reassignment. A date of transfer will be agreed upon by the managers of the affected areas and the employee. Generally, the reassignment should occur within 30 days of notification of acceptance.

Terms

And it is understood by NWS and NWSEO that by agreeing to the change to Increase Intern Hiring Efficiency as detailed above, that part of Paragraph "1." of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) "Management Plan Revise WFO Staffing/Alaska Region WSO Staffing September 2004 Modified February 2008" which reads:

"All HMT/Interns position vacancies will be simultaneously advertised as GS-1341-11, area of consideration NWS only, NWS status applicants only, and as GS-1340-5/7/9 promotion potential to 11, area of consideration all qualified applicants (status, non-status)."

is superceded by this MOU.

This MOU may be reopened by either party after one year from the date of execution. Unless mutually agreed, this MOU will expire three years from the date of execution.

Within 15 days of the effective date of the MOU, NWSEO and NWS will send a joint message to NWS All Hands introducing the Internal Reassignment Process.



Paul Schlatter
For the Agency

3/30/2016

Date Signed



Daniel Sobien
For NWSEO

3/30/2016

Date Signed