

## **District Manager Leadership Selection System Q's & A's**

### **ELIGIBILITY**

#### **Q1. Who is eligible for the District Manager (DM) positions described in the vacancy announcement opening on June 7<sup>th</sup>?**

A1. The vacancy announcement covers District Manager, GS-340-14/15 positions. GS-13's, who meet time-in-grade and specialized experience requirements within 90 days of the closing date of the announcement, are eligible for this position. GS-14's and 15's are also eligible. Note that GS-15's who are not currently District Managers must apply through this process if they wish to be considered for a District Manager vacancy over the next two years.

### **APPLICATION PROCESS**

#### **Q2. What's the most efficient method for developing my online résumé and essay answers?**

A2. Type and save your résumé as a Microsoft Word document so that you have the information to refer to later or to use again. You can easily copy (not cut!) and paste this information into the résumé block of your online application.

TO COPY AND PASTE: Highlight all text to be copied. Right click on the mouse and select "Copy." Then go to the online program, find the résumé box in the online program and place your cursor in the box. Right click on the mouse and select "paste." **Or** you can press the <Ctrl> and "C" keys to copy and the <CTRL> and "V" keys to paste.

You can have both the MS Word program and the online résumé box open at the same time – simply minimize the one you are not currently using by clicking on the \_ at the top right of the screen. The program will still be running and visible on the bottom bar of your screen. To bring it up to a full screen again, just click the box at the bottom. You can toggle back and forth between programs this way, making the "copy and paste" process easy.

You can go in and edit your application as long as the vacancy announcement is still open. Be sure to review and follow the instructions online regarding "saving" your work.

#### **Q3. Can I use my office computer to access vacancies online?**

A3. You may use computers at work to register and apply for vacancies, but work assignments and official duties have priority. (**NOTE:** FSIS employees are not entitled to overtime, compensatory time, or credit hours under maxiflex for the purpose of applying for positions.)

#### **Q4. Are there important tips to help me navigate through this system?**

A4. Use the rectangular bar or the arrow keys on the right edge of your screen to navigate the page; generally you have to scroll down to the bottom of the screen and click on the <NEXT> or <CONTINUE> button to get to the next step or next page.

If you encounter a <SAVE> button, it will save partially-completed information and allow you to return and continue later. However, pressing the <SAVE> button does not serve to submit any information for a vacancy. The application is not submitted until it is entirely completed. At the end of the vacancy application process there is a <FINISH> button. This button **MUST** be clicked in order for your application to be submitted for consideration. If any mandatory questions have not been answered, you will be immediately directed to answer those questions before the system accepts your submitted information. Keep clicking on the <FINISH> button

until you receive a message indicating that your information has been accepted for the vacancy. That signifies that your application has been received in the online system.

**CAUTION:**

- Make sure your online résumé is completed. The system does not remind you about résumé information.
- Avoid clicking the back arrow button in the upper left corner of your browser until you are sure that all previously entered information has been saved. Otherwise, you may lose information you have just edited.

**Q5. What if I have other questions about this online process?**

A5. Go to [Food Safety Jobs Online FAQ's](#) for frequently asked questions on the online process.

**SELECTION PROCESS**

**Q6. Will there be other ways to obtain DM jobs other than through this selection process?**

A6. For approximately the next 2 years, it is Office of Field Operations's (OFO) intention to fill District Manager vacancies only from the pool of best qualified candidates established by this process or by reassignment of current District Managers. However, if extreme extenuating circumstances or an emergency situation should arise, OFO may need to revisit this decision.

**Q7. Will interviews be conducted, and if so, when?**

A7. If interviews are conducted as an aid in the selection process, selecting officials will likely conduct them after the pool is established and a DM vacancy is available to be filled.

**Q8. If I am in the best qualified pool of candidates, will I be guaranteed a DM job?**

A8. Candidates in the best-qualified pool are not guaranteed promotion to/placement in a DM position. Additionally, candidates in the DM pool are not eligible for noncompetitive promotion to other GS-14/15 positions in OFO or in the Agency. Noncompetitive consideration for DM positions based on this two-phase process is only valid for the life of the DM pool. However, candidates selected for the DM pool should be prime candidates for future vacancies once the DM pool is eliminated.

**Q9. Is there a sunset date for the pool - i.e., when will the next competition for a DM pool be held?**

A9. It is anticipated that the large number of retirements will occur primarily over the next two years. Therefore, there will probably be no need for a pool of candidates ready to fill DM vacancies at the end of two years. Assuming that is the situation, the pool will be eliminated, after which, vacancies will again be announced on a case-by-case basis.

**Q10. How will selections be made from the pool for a specific DM vacancy?**

A10. Consistent with merit promotion procedures, a panel of OFO selecting officials will make selections from the DM pool based on job-related criteria.

**Q11. What about Deputy District Manager (DDM) positions – will that process change?**

A11. A new selection process for DDM positions will occur at a later date. However, if a GS-13 candidate is in the pool for the GS-14/15 DM job, and a DDM job opens up, that person would need to apply for the DDM job if a DDM pool has not yet been established. If selected, the new DDM would remain in the DM pool for consideration for a DM vacancy.

**Q12. If I am selected for a DM position at the GS-14 level, will I have to compete for the GS-15 grade level?**

A12. GS-14 DM's can be noncompetitively promoted to GS-15, once time-in-grade requirements are met.

***Q13. How will candidates in the DM pool be used?***

A13. Candidates in the DM pool remain in their current positions until selected for a DM job or until the pool is eliminated. They will receive training and developmental assignments, based on their assessment center results and Agency needs. Developmental assignments could include details to other positions and/or temporary promotions of 120 or fewer days to cover current DDM's or DM's leaves of absence or vacation, food safety emergencies, or unanticipated workload fluctuations.

***Q14. Can I express geographic preference for a particular area of the country?***

A14. When a DM vacancy opens up, candidates in the pool will be asked of their interest in that particular vacancy/location. A selection will be made from the group that expresses interest in that location. Although candidates can express a geographic preference, the expectation is that those in the pool are there because of their interest in a DM position and that they would be willing to move to a vacant DM position in most locations. Candidates should bear in mind that each time they decline interest in a given vacancy, they reduce their number of opportunities to obtain a DM position during the 2-year period.

**ASSESSMENT CENTER**

***Q15. What does the assessment center entail?***

A15. We are using a simulation-based assessment center. Each candidate will be observed performing simulated activities in a controlled environment. These simulated activities could be described as "a day in the life of a District Manager." The simulations are based on real-life situations with which District Managers must deal on a regular basis. A candidate's performance during these simulations are rated based on the success with which he/she demonstrates the core competencies, skills, and judgment necessary to perform effectively in the leadership role of the District Manager. The simulation exercises are a full day of activity with feedback sessions for each candidate following a day or so later.

***Q16. Where and when will the assessment center be held?***

A16. There are three assessment centers scheduled during the month of August. Candidates will participate in only one of them, and will need to travel to the Washington, DC metropolitan area to undergo the assessment center. The weeks during which these sessions are scheduled are the week of August 2, the week of August 17, and the week of August 30. The Monday is a travel day and the session is over by 1:00 on the Thursday of the given week.

***Q17. Who rates my performance during the assessment center?***

A17. A trained team comprised of both internal (FSIS) and external (contractor) assessors will be utilized to assess each candidate. The FSIS assessors are expected to be very familiar with the District Manager position and the demands on that position. The assessors discuss their ratings of the candidates and come to a consensus rating regarding the performance of each candidate they have assessed.

***Q18. What type of rating will I get as a result of my performance during the assessment center?***

A18. Shortly after the assessment center, each candidate will receive verbal feedback on their performance in the simulations from the assessors. This feedback will be useful to the candidate as s/he creates a leadership development plan.

The assessment center process also results in an individual report for each candidate that will be provided to the Assistant Administrator for Field Operations. The written reports are equivalent to the documents associated with a promotion panel rating of candidates and become part of the merit promotion file. They will be used to determine those that are placed on the best qualified list which is the pool from which selections will be made for future DM vacancies.

The results of the assessments overall will also be used to create a development strategy, not only for the candidates who become a part of the pool, but also for those who went through the assessment center, but were not selected for the pool.

***Q19. How will the results be used to determine which candidates become part of the future District Manager pool?***

A19. There is no established cut-off score or predetermined pool size. The candidates who demonstrate the highest degree of readiness to assume the District Manager role will be listed on the promotion certificate and will be a part of the pool used to fill District Manager vacancies. This is similar to when a promotion panel rates candidates and a best-qualified group results from the rating process and is referred to the selecting official.

***Q20. What if I become ill when I am scheduled to attend the assessment center?***

A20. These assessment centers are very resource-intensive and expensive to run so we cannot change the entire schedule to accommodate an individual. Every effort will be made to reschedule you if you were scheduled for one of the earlier sessions, but if you miss the last one you have missed an opportunity to compete to be in the District Manager pool.

***Q21. What happens to my assessment center results if I am not selected to be part of the pool?***

A21. You will have feedback from this experience on your strengths and development needs relative to the competencies required to perform successfully as a District Manager. The experience should leave you better informed about the demands of the District Manager or similar jobs. The feedback should help you to design an individual development plan for yourself to address areas in which you need additional development.

***Q22. What happens with me if I am selected for the pool, but my feedback indicates I need development in some areas?***

A22. Once we have all of the feedback and have made the selections for the DM pool, training and developmental opportunities will be designed, both for the group as a whole and for individuals. This could include formal training, details, or other developmental assignments. For example, a Frontline Supervisor who is selected for the DM pool may fill in a vacant DDM position as a developmental assignment.