

**U.S. Department of Agriculture
Food Safety & Inspection Service**

Recruitment and Retention Flexibilities

A Guide for Managers



**Prepared By: The Human Resources Division
Employment & Benefits Policy Branch 05/03**



Type of Flexibility	Coverage	Requirements/Criteria	Approval Process
<p>Recruitment Bonus</p>	<p>New Federal appointees OR reappointment if 90-day break in service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard to fill position (e.g., trouble attracting candidates, position has been readvertised, etc.) • Maximum of 25% of basic pay • One time, lump sum payment • Must sign a 1 year service agreement • Can be given in conjunction with one or more of the following: FPD, PCA, Student Loan Repayment, and Superior Qualifications (service agreements run concurrently) 	<p>Recommending official (District Mgr, Division Dir or higher) submits written request to HR specialist.</p> <p>Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title, series, grade level(s) of position, duty location, and organization. • Provide a justification outlining the difficulty expected or experienced in filling the job if a bonus is not used. • Amount of the bonus and rationale for amount proposed <p>All requests are submitted to the Chief, EBPB for review and approval.</p>
<p>Relocation Bonus</p>	<p>Current Federal employees who relocate to a new duty station location (e.g., change in residence)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard to fill position (trouble attracting candidates, position has been readvertised, etc.) • Maximum of 25% of basic pay • One time, lump sum payment (see note below) • Must sign a 1 year service agreement • Can be given in conjunction with one or more of the following: Retention Allowance and Student Loan Repayment (service agreements run concurrently) <p>Note: Also entitled to relocation <u>allowance</u> - different from a relocation bonus. CG decisions say that if you select a Federal employee for a job and they have to move, their relocation expenses <u>must be</u> paid (e.g., travel, transportation)</p>	<p>Recommending official (District Mgr, Division Dir or higher) submits written request to HR specialist.</p> <p>Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title, series, grade level(s) of position, duty location, and organization. • Provide a justification outlining the difficulty expected or experienced in filling the job if a bonus is not used. • Amount of the bonus and rationale for amount proposed <p>All requests are submitted to the</p>

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		of household goods, house-hunting trip, temp quarters, etc.) unless the Agency has a policy that prescribes differently. FSIS does not have such a policy. A relocation allowance is an entitlement and a relocation bonus is discretionary.	Chief, EBPB for review and approval.
<p>Payment - First Post of Duty Travel (FPD)</p> <p>FPD (cont.)</p>	New Federal appointees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payment for actual costs incurred as a result of travel & transportation of household goods to the first post of duty. • Does not include home sale transaction, temp quarters, house-hunting trips, etc. • Can be given in conjunction with one or more of the following: Recruitment Bonus, PCA, Student Loan Repayment, and Superior Qualifications (service agreements run concurrently) 	<p>Recommending official (District Mgr, Division Dir or higher) submits written request to HR specialist.</p> <p>Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title, series, grade level(s) of position, duty location, and organization. • Provide a justification outlining the difficulty expected or experienced in filling the job if travel to first post of duty is not used. <p>All requests are submitted to the Chief, EBPB for review and approval.</p>
<p>Payment of Travel for Pre-Employment Interview</p>	New Federal appointees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use is based on criticality of job or necessity of face-to-face interviews 	<p>Recommending official (District Mgr, Division Dir or higher) submits written request to HR specialist.</p> <p>Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title, series, grade level(s) of position, duty location, and organization. • Provide a justification (e.g., criticality of job, why face-to-face interview is necessary, etc.)

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			HR Specialist completes form DPM Letter 572-1 and submits with request to the Chief, Servicing HR Office for review and approval.
Retention Allowance	Current Federal employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee must have completed 1 year of continuous service with the agency • Employee possesses unusually high or unique qualifications or the Agency has a special need for the employee's services • It would be difficult to replace the employee due to job market conditions, the position is hard to fill, or is a shortage occupation • Employee is likely to leave <u>Federal service</u> (i.e., job offer, retirement, etc.) • Maximum of 25% of basic pay • Reviewed annually to see if still warranted (recertification) • Can be given in conjunction with one or more of the following: Relocation Bonus and Student Loan Repayment (service agreements run concurrently) 	<p>Recommending official (District Mgr, Division Dir or higher) submits written request to HR specialist (must have concurrence of Dep Adm or Asst Adm). Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name, title, series, grade level of position, duty location, and organization. • The unusually high or unique qualifications of the employee or special need the agency has for the employee's services (e.g. Would the individual be difficult to replace because there are few individuals in the job market with these qualifications or it is a shortage or difficult to fill occupation? Is the individual performing a special project that could be significantly hampered if he/she left) • The extent to which the employee's departure would affect the agency. • A written determination that the employee is likely to leave Federal service if a retention allowance is not provided (e.g.

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Retention Allowance (cont.)			<p>job offer, eligible for retirement, etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the individual is involved in a particular assignment/project that is critical to the Agency, provide a timeline for the project's completion. If the employee is planning to leave Federal Govt to retire, identify plans for developing others in a back-up role and/or any strategies for staffing behind the employee. • The amount of the retention allowance requested AND, • A rationale for the amount. • If recertifying, outline why it is necessary for the Agency to <i>continue</i> to pay a retention allowance, using the criteria above. In addition, the justification should highlight the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If occupation held by the employee is in a shortage category, or job market conditions continue to be tight, provide supporting documentation to that effect. Should note recent unsuccessful attempts to advertise and fill similar jobs. • If individual is performing a

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Retention Allowance (cont.)			<p>particular project or assignment critical to the Agency mission, outline what changes occurred in the timeline originally set for the project's completion, and why. Also, if the employee is planning to leave Federal service to retire, describe what has been done to date to develop others in a back-up role and/or staff behind the individual.</p> <p>All requests are submitted to EBPB for review.</p> <p>Approval: HRD Director</p>
Physician's Comparability Allowance (PCA)	<p>Medical officers in the 602 occupational series (includes permanent and temp appointments of at least 1 year in the GS/GM, SL/ST, or SES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used to solve severe recruitment & retention problems • GS-602 Medical Officers may be offered 1 or 2 year service agreements • Maximum per annum is \$14,000 if less than 24 months of creditable Federal service and up to \$30,000 if 24 or more months of Federal service (additional criteria must be met for the higher PCA) • The PCA is pro-rated and paid bi-weekly to the employee • Can be given in conjunction with one or more of the following: Recruitment Bonus, FPD, Student Loan Repayment, and Superior Qualifications (service 	<p>All requests are submitted to EBPB for review. HRD Director submits request to Dept.</p> <p>Approval: Director, OHRM, USDA</p>

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		agreements run concurrently)	
<p>Student Loan Repayment</p>	<p>New Federal appointees or current employees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention tool - can be offered if an employee is likely to leave for employment outside the Federal Govt AND if the employee's departure would affect the Agency's ability to carry out an activity or perform a function deemed essential to the Agency mission. • Cannot be used to retain employees who leave for other Federal agencies. • Recruitment tool - can be offered based on difficulty experienced or expected in filling a job (e.g., shortage location) OR difficulty in recruiting individuals with high or unique qualifications OR special need of the Agency (e.g., critical mission function, specialized knowledge or qualification needed in the Agency). • May repay up to \$6,000 per year per individual for a maximum of \$40,000 lifetime. • Taxes are deducted before the payment is made directly to the loan holder. • Minimum of 3 year service agreement. For every \$6,000 increment paid (over the first \$6,000), one additional year is added. <p>Repayment guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>One time payment.</i> \$2,000 for a shortage and hard to fill position OR \$4,000 for high qualifications of the individual OR \$6,000 for special certifications that are in high demand (Microsoft Certified 	<p>Recommending official (District Mgr, Division Dir or higher) submits written request to HR specialist (must have concurrence of Dep Adm or Asst Adm).</p> <p>Each case is evaluated individually and is contingent on budgetary resources.</p> <p>Approval: Director, HRD</p> <p>Refer to FSIS Directive 4537.1 for additional guidance.</p>

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Student Loan Repayment (cont.)		<p>Engineer); or a particular knowledge or skill critical to the mission (risk assessment)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Multiple payment over more than 1 year:</i> up to \$10,000 for jobs or locations that have experienced chronic staffing problems over a long period of time OR up to \$20,000 for high qualifications that are also in high demand in private sector OR \$40,000 for situations where there are few individuals with the skills needed by the agency and where there is a high demand for those skills in the private sector. • Can be given in conjunction with one or more of the following: Recruitment or Relocation Bonus, FPD, Retention Allowance, and Superior Qualifications (service agreements run concurrently) 	
Superior Qualifications	New Federal appointees or 90 day break in service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant must possess outstanding/high qualifications clearly above that of the other applicants, or the agency must show that there is a special need for the person's particular knowledge or skills • Advanced rate of pay or higher step offered. Pay can be set 2 steps above the salary or offer (promotion equivalent) • Consideration of a recruitment bonus (if appropriate - i.e., hard to fill) • Can be given in conjunction with one or more of the following: Recruitment Bonus and FPD (service agreements run 	<p>Recommending official (District Mgr, Division Dir or higher) submits written request to HR specialist. HR Specialist can provide additional justification and should include the person's application and the vacancy announcement. The following information must be included in the request:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Documentation that shows the applicant meets the "superior qualifications" criteria to warrant an advanced rate of pay.</i> To do this, the applicant must possess

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<p style="text-align: center;">Superior Qualifications (cont.)</p>		<p>concurrently)</p>	<p>outstanding/high qualifications (clearly above that of other applicants), or the agency must show that there is a special need for the person's particular knowledge or skills. Supporting documentation on how the individual far exceeded the KSA's in comparison to others on the certificate should also be provided to support high qualifications. The qualifications must be job-related.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A justification must also be provided to support the higher step offered. Some examples are:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Current salary of applicant ✓ Other bonafide private sector job offers that the applicant has received during this announcement period ✓ Job market—i.e. salaries for the occupation in the geographic location of the position ✓ If a candidate is retired and has no other bonafide job offers, can consider typical salaries for those with similar backgrounds in the geographic location; market conditions, etc. (NOTE: the candidate's salary prior to retirement by itself is not sufficient; must consider

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<p>Superior Qualifications (cont.)</p>			<p>salary he/she would receive upon return to the workforce)</p> <p>If the individual is currently making a higher salary or has a bonafide offer, obtain the individual's pay stub, an offer letter, or other documentation which supports the use of the appointment. If market conditions are used to set the advanced rate, provide the information on which the rate is based. For example, the documentation can be supported based on Department of Labor statistics; job ads in newspapers; information from websites that track job markets (e.g. www.salary.com); survey information from occupational associations (e.g. AVMA), etc. To make the offer attractive, pay can be set two (2) steps above the salary or offer (promotion equivalent) to entice the candidate to the position.</p> <p><i>The justification must also include the reasons for authorizing an advanced rate instead of or in addition to a recruitment bonus. For example, although we may offer recruitment bonuses and the payment of first post of duty travel, in some cases these recruitment incentives may not be sufficient due to the competitive job market, etc. Documentation must reflect how the recruitment bonus was considered.</i></p> <p>Approval: Branch Chiefs, HRFO (for inplant VMOs only) Branch Chief, EBPB</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May set the rate of basic pay by 	

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Highest Previous Rate (HPR)	Current Federal employees or reinstatement eligibles	considering the highest rate previously received by the employee while in a Federal position <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not exceed the maximum rate of the employee's grade 	Approval: Branch Chief, CASSB Branch Chiefs, HRFO Refer to FSIS Directive 4530.3 for additional guidance

For additional information, please contact your Servicing HR Office:

FIELD HQ	Human Resources Field Office (HRFO) Classification & Staffing Services Branch (CASSB)	(612) 370-2000 (202) 720-6617	Your HR Specialist Your HR Specialist
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If you have questions about FSIS policy, please contact:

HQ	Employment and Benefits Policy Branch (EBPB)	(202) 690-3463	Andrea Cotter
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