
FSIS DIRECTIVE

4280.1

1/12/17

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

I. PURPOSE

This directive provides the policy and procedures for the Student Employment Program (SEP).

II. BACKGROUND

A. The SEP serves as a part of the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM's) Recruitment, Engagement, Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI) strategy for the President's Management Agenda to improve the way that the Federal Government attracts, recruits, and hires new talent.

B. On December 27, 2010, President Obama signed Executive Order 13562 (see link: [Executive Order 13562- Recruiting and Hiring Students and Recent Graduates](#)). This Executive Order established the Internship Program for current students and the Recent Graduates Program for people who have recently graduated from qualifying educational institutions or programs (2 years from the date the graduate completed an academic course of study). The Executive Order also made changes to the Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Program for people who obtained an advanced degree (e.g., graduate or professional degree) within the preceding two years. These programs, collectively the Pathways Programs, are streamlined developmental programs tailored to promote employment opportunities for students and recent graduates in the Federal workforce. For more information, see USDA's Pathways Program website at: [USDA Pathways Programs](#).

C. In addition to the Pathways Programs, SEP includes several third-party internships and student volunteers who are considered non-Federal employees, such as Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, Summer Youth Employment Program, Washington Internship for Native Students, Conference on Asian Pacific American Leadership, and USDA/1890 National Scholars Program.

III. ALLOTMENT OF PATHWAYS INTERNS

A. The SEP office allocates to each FSIS program the number of interns it can hire for the summer based on the size of the program, the SEP budget, and the number of interns the program hired the previous year.

B. In the allocations provided to the programs, the SEP office identifies the grade at which each intern can be hired and the number of weeks that each intern can work.

C. Assistant Administrators or District Managers are to distribute their allocation of interns within their respective program area or district.

D. Programs are to submit all positions they wish to fill to the SEP mailbox, FSISStudentJobs@fsis.usda.gov, within 5 business days after receiving their allocation. The submission is to be titled: "Request - FY-- Summer Hire Intern" and include the supervisor's name, duty location, and grade levels of interns to be hired. If the request is not received by the deadline, the SEP will redistribute the program area's allocation to another program.

E. Internships are not to exceed 12 weeks within the SEP covered timeframe. Any extension beyond the 12 weeks will be at the expense of the program area or district office.

F. Interns who are currently on board or are returning for the summer will also be held to the 12 week maximum internship as referred above in (E). However, the 12 weeks maximum internship will exclude third-party interns, volunteers, and special emphasis groups that have specific program requirements.

IV. SEP OFFICE DUTIES

A. The SEP office clears all interns whether they are paid or volunteer.

B. The SEP office pays for interns' travel, salary, and housing from May 1st through September 30th. Any cost beyond this timeframe is the program area's or district office' responsibility for each intern.

C. The SEP office approves all modes of intern transportation except for air travel. Programs are to provide reason for alternate travel and a cost analysis in which SEP will determine if alternate transportation is cost effective to the Agency.

D. The SEP office approves car rentals for interns in advance.

E. The SEP office will use an independent contractor to transport non-federal employees, such as third-party interns and volunteers, on plant tours or any other excursion that requires transportation service.

F. The SEP office sets the enter on duty (EOD) dates for all interns; however, no EOD date is set until the SF-52, "Request for Personnel Action," is submitted by the program, and all required pre-employment information submitted by the intern is received and adjudicated one week before the beginning of the pay period. The EOD will only occur at the beginning of a pay period, with no exceptions.

V. PROGRAM AREA OFFICES AND SEP POINT OF CONTACT (SEP POC)

A. Each program is to identify SEP POCs within its program who are to serve as the liaison between the SEP office and the program's hiring supervisors as follows:

1. The Office of Field Operations (OFO) is to identify two POCs for each district;
2. The Office of Public Health Science (OPHS) is to identify one POC for each laboratory; and
3. All other programs, including OFO headquarters, are to identify one POC for each respective program.

B. Once the SEP POCs are identified, the SEP POCs are responsible for the following:

1. Serving as liaisons between supervisors and SEP to ensure that all information and requests for information are relayed from SEP to supervisors and vice versa;
2. Ensuring that all documents are completed and submitted to SEP on time (e.g., SF-52, Pathway Agreements);
3. Providing the SEP with a recommendation for the most appropriate and closest hotel to the duty location for a student during his or her internship;
4. Working with supervisors to ensure that all travel arrangements, and that vouchers are completed on time in accordance to travel regulations;

5. Working with supervisors to find placement for student volunteers who were requested;
6. Attending a SEP POC webinar training session to be announced and led by the SEP office; and
7. Attending regular scheduled SEP meetings.

VI. SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Supervisors are required to participate in a webinar training session to be announced and led by the SEP office and are to certify completion of the session before receiving a summer intern each year.
- B. Supervisors are responsible for following the SEP Intern Hiring Process, which can be found on Inside FSIS: [FSIS Student Employment Program](#) (level 2 eAuthentication is required to access this site).
- C. Supervisors are to interview intern candidates before making an intern selection.
- D. Supervisors are to make all intern selections in the e-Recruit system.
- E. Supervisors are responsible for creating profiles, working with their SEP POC in regard to travel authorizations and ensuring that travel vouchers are submitted for his or her intern in accordance with the travel regulation for all intern travel. (See link to travel FAQs: [Temporary Duty Travel FAQ](#)) (level 2 eAuthentication is required to access this site).
- F. Supervisors are to ensure that interns work within the core hours of the program or establishment. Any work outside of the core hours due to the nature of the job should be clearly stated in the job announcement and in the Pathways Agreement (intern contract) before the intern enters on duty (e.g., may work some weekends on the, recruitment or outreach events.).
- G. Supervisors are to ensure that interns do not work any overtime; however, interns are eligible to earn credit hours.
- H. Supervisors are to ensure that student use of government vehicles is in accordance with Agriculture Property Management Regulations (see link: [Agriculture Property Management Regulations Chapter 110 – 34 Motor Vehicle Management](#)).
- I. Supervisors are responsible for planning for Pathways interns, therefore; supervisors must submit a request for an extension of NTE interns to the SEP office 35 days prior to the end of the initial NTE date. The request must be made via email on the official USDA Pathways Extension Request Form which can found on the SEP webpage on InsideFSIS. It is the goal of the SEP office to appropriately use the Pathways Program in accordance to the USDA Pathways Program policy and regulations.
- J. Supervisors will adhere to and ensure that their interns adhere to all SEP established protocols.

VII. MENTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Each program is to recruit their employees to serve as mentors for interns and to provide the SEP office with the name of the mentor for each intern, PMF, Recent Graduate, or volunteer that the program hired.

B. Mentors are:

1. To be outside of the student's line of supervision;
2. Not to have more than one mentee at a time; and
3. To participate in a mentoring webinar session to be announced by SEP and led by the Office of Outreach, Employee Education and Training (OOEET) office and to certify completion before serving as a mentor.

VIII. PMF AND RECENT GRADUATES

A. Programs that hire a PMF or Recent Graduate are responsible for paying the salary and benefits of the selected candidate.

B. Programs are responsible for paying the PMF appointment fee of \$7,000 to OPM within 30 days of hiring the Fellow or 2 weeks prior to the orientation session the PMF registers for, whichever is earlier. More information on the PMF program can be found on www.pmf.gov.

IX. QUESTIONS

Refer questions regarding this notice to the Student Employment Program FSISStudentJobs@fsis.usda.gov.



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