DIRECT HIRE AUTHORITIES
An interactive electronic information guide to the DoD Direct Hire Authorities.
Direct Hire Authority (DHA) is an appointing (hiring) authority that either the Office of Personnel Management or Congress may grant to the Department of Defense in order to expedite the recruitment process by exempting some of the requirements of traditional recruiting authorities.

DHA allows hiring managers to directly appoint qualified candidates without applying competitive rating and ranking procedures or veterans’ preference. Depending on the DHA authority, public notice may be required, modified, or exempt.

The purpose of this guide is to assist hiring managers in understanding how DHA can help to meet recruitment needs; explaining the differences in DHA granted by OPM or Congress; and providing an overview of the wide variety of DHAs to determine which authority provides the best strategy for reaching the necessary talent pool for positions under recruitment.
DHA OVERVIEW

Traditional methods for filling vacant positions involve posting a job announcement on USAJOBS, waiting for candidates to apply, rating and ranking candidates, and issuing a referral certificate. These activities can be time consuming and extend the fill process. As DoD is in high competition with private industry for the same sources of talent, it is necessary to evolve recruitment efforts to better acquire the high quality caliber candidates needed to advance the missions of the Department.

The DHAs are designed to expedite the hiring process by streamlining the recruitment process to efficiently and quickly reach candidates. However, DHAs do not overcome recruitment challenges incidental to position compensation or influence the time associated with pre-employment requirements. As DoD has approximately 30 separate DHA authorities at their disposal, it can be difficult to determine which authority is the best to select. This guide will summarize the aspects of the DHAs to assist managers in selecting which authority to use in their recruitment actions.

When recruiting under a DHA, recruitment efforts should be expansive to ensure diverse candidate pools representative of all segments of society are considered and merit factors are the basis for selection. This ensures merit system principles are upheld by promoting transparency, fair and open competition, and that accountability and auditability are inherent in recruitment activities. All personnel programs and practices shall be administered in accordance with DoD Directive 1020.02E, “Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity in the DoD.”

TYPES OF HIRING AUTHORITIES

DHA authorities are derived from two primary sources.

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM)

OPM is authorized in 5 United States Code 3304(a)(3) and based on critical hiring need and/or severe shortage criteria as defined in 5 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 337, to grant a DHA for government wide use or only to specific agencies. An OPM DHA requires public notice on USAJOBS and clearance of priority candidates (i.e., ICTAP, RPL, etc.); however, application of veterans’ preference and rating and ranking criteria are not required.

Department of Defense

DoD is granted hiring authorities through legislative action and congressional approval. These authorities are contained in various National Defense Authorization Acts (NDAA). The basis for these DHAs do not use the same criteria as OPM and requirements vary by authority. While application of veterans’ preference and rating and ranking criteria are typically not required, public notice, limitation on allocations, expiration dates, the clearance of PPP may be under modified procedures, and covered positions all differ widely between authorities.
DIRECT HIRE AUTHORITY FOR CERTAIN PERSONNEL OF THE DOD WORKFORCE

SECTION 1109 OF THE NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT (NDAA) FOR FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2020 AMENDS SECTION 9905 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATE CODE (U.S.C.) TO INCORPORATE, STREAMLINE, AND SIMPLIFY CERTAIN DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (DOD) CIVILIAN HIRING AUTHORITIES. THIS MODIFICATION UPDATES THE COVERED POSITIONS FOR WHICH THIS AUTHORITY MAY BE USED AND SUSPENDS THE EXISTING HIRING AUTHORITIES, TO INCLUDE THEIR ASSOCIATED IMPLEMENTING POLICIES THAT WERE INCORPORATED INTO THIS AUTHORITY.

ITEMS TO NOTE
Implementing DoD policy identifies covered positions for which this authority may be used and lists the individual hiring authorities that are suspended for the duration of this authority.

The DoD policy was signed on April 2, 2020.

Any prior implementing policy specific to these covered positions is hereby cancelled.

THIS DHA SUSPENDS THE FOLLOWING EXISTING HIRING AUTHORITIES:

- Expedited Hiring Authority for shortage category and/or critical need health care occupations
- Temporary DHA for child care providers at department child development centers
- EHA for select defense acquisition workforce positions
- DHA for select technical acquisition positions
- Temporary DHA for financial management experts in the department of defense workforce
- Temporary DHA for DOD for personnel to assist in business transformation and management innovation
- DHA for cyber workforce positions
CERTAIN PERSONNEL OF THE DOD WORKFORCE

APPLICABILITY

This DHA can be used to appoint individuals at the General Schedule (GS)-15 and below (or equivalent grades) into positions in the DoD which meet one of the following criteria:

- Involved with DoD maintenance activities, including depot-level maintenance and repair
- In the cyber workforce as defined in DoDD 8140.01
- In the acquisition workforce that are responsible for managing service contracts necessary to operation and maintenance of programs
- In science, technology, or engineering, including any such positions at the Major Range and Test Facilities Base, to allow development of new systems and provide for maintenance of legacy systems
- STEM positions with the acquisition workforce, or any category of acquisition positions designated as shortage or critical need
- STEM positions, except any position with any Science and Technology Reinvention Laboratory, for veteran candidates or candidates required to possess a bachelor’s or advanced degree
- In medical or health professions designated as a shortage category or critical need occupation
- In childcare services, including family childcare and school age childcare coordinator services, for which there is a critical hiring need and shortage of childcare providers
- In financial management, accounting, auditing, actuary, cost estimation, operational business or business administration for which a qualified candidate is required to possess a finance, accounting, management, or actuarial science degree or a related degree or equivalent experience
- As determined by the Secretary, for the purpose of assisting and facilitating DoD’s efforts in business transformation and management innovation

*Additional criteria and definitions may apply and are prescribed in the actual policy

THE BASICS

This authority may be used for permanent, term, or temporary appointments of qualified candidates to positions in the competitive service.

May be used to appoint individuals at the General Schedule (GS)-15 and below (or equivalent pay grades).

Public notice is not required. Merit factors shall be the basis for selecting individuals for positions.

Veterans’ preference does not apply when selecting individuals under this DHA.

The restriction on movement following competitive appointment applies for the first 90 days under this authority (5 CFR 330.502).

Allocation limitations no longer apply as any numerical hiring limits imposed by the original authorities are suspended under this streamlined authority.

DIRECT HIRE AUTHORITY FOR CERTAIN PERSONNEL OF THE DOD WORKFORCE

(CONTINUED)

POST SECONDARY STUDENTS AND RECENT GRADUATES

PURPOSE

Used for the appointment of qualified current post-secondary students and recent graduates into professional and administrative occupations.

POST-SECONDARY STUDENT ELIGIBILITY:

- Student must be currently enrolled in good academic standing at a full-time program at an institution of higher education
- Student must be making satisfactory progress toward receipt of a baccalaureate or graduate degree; and
- Student must have completed at least one year of the program

RECENT GRADUATE ELIGIBILITY:

- A person who was awarded a degree by an institution of higher education not more than two years before date of appointment, or four years before date of appointment if the person has completed more than a four year period of uniform service

The hiring authority is limited to a specific number of allocations across the DoD. Each year, DCPAS assigns the Components with a share of allocations that must be used by the end of the fiscal year, September 30th. Any allocations not used by this date will expire.

POSITIONS ARE AT THE GS-11 AND BELOW, OR EQUIVALENT

VETERANS’ PREFERENCE IS NOT REQUIRED

APPOINTED DIRECTLY INTO THE COMPETITIVE SERVICE

EXPIRES SEPTEMBER 30, 2025, UNLESS AMENDED

PUBLIC NOTICE IS REQUIRED VIA A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

DID YOU KNOW?

This DHA is different from the OPM Pathways hiring authority for Interns or Recent Graduates. Although this DHA offers greater flexibility in recruitment, it has some limitations not applicable to the OPM Pathways authority. Hiring managers may elect to use one or both of these authorities to meet student/recent graduate hiring efforts.
DOMESTIC DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL BASE FACILITIES AND THE MAJOR RANGE AND TEST FACILITIES BASE

This authority states that the Secretary of Defense may appoint qualified candidates to positions in the competitive service in the DoD at any domestic defense industrial base facility or Major Range and Test Facilities Base without traditional competitive examining procedures.

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

“DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL BASE FACILITY” means any DoD depot, arsenal, or shipyard located within the U.S.

“MAJOR RANGE AND TEST FACILITIES BASE” means those ranges and facilities which, pursuant to DoD Instruction 3200.18, “Management and Operation of the Major Range and Test Facility Base,” comprise the list that is published and disseminated, at least annually, by the Director, Test Resource Management Center.

REAL ESTATE

Direct-Hire Authority for Shortage Category and/or Critical Need

OVERVIEW

In accordance with Section 9902(b)(2) of title 5, U.S. Code, and in coordination with the Director of OPM, the Secretary of Defense assumes the responsibility from OPM for determining there is a severe shortage of candidates or a critical hiring need for occupations within the DoD. Under this authority, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) may fill non-acquisition coded positions in the real estate workforce in occupational series 1170 and 1171.

RECRUITMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Public Notice is satisfied by posting on USAJOBS; recruitment should be expansive to ensure diverse candidate pools representative of all segments of society are considered. Clearance of priority candidates (PPP, ICTAP, RPL) is required. While application of veterans' preference is not required, consider all qualified candidates (veterans' preference eligible and non-preference eligible) as they are found.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE

DHA for Shortage Category and/or Critical Need Positions FAQ's

DID YOU KNOW?

If this authority sounds exactly like an OPM DHA, that is because it is. This DHA was granted using the criteria of critical hiring need as defined by 5 CFR 337.202(c). The only difference is that DoD approved this authority, instead of OPM. (See page 15 for more information about OPM DHAs).

This authority may only be used by the USACE Command for covered positions.

PUBLIC NOTICE IS REQUIRED

EXPIRATION DATE

SEPTEMBER 31, 2021

PUBLIC NOTICE NOT REQUIRED

EXPIRATION DATE

September 30, 2021

MAY BE USED FOR TEMP, TERM, OR PERMANENT POSITIONS

APPLIES TO GS OR FWS POSITIONS, UP TO GS-15 OR EQUIVALENT

SENIOR RANKS

OVERVIEW

In accordance with Section 9902(b)(2) of title 5, U.S. Code, and in coordination with the Director of OPM, the Secretary of Defense assumes the responsibility from OPM for determining there is a severe shortage of candidates or a critical hiring need for occupations within the DoD. Under this authority, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) may fill non-acquisition coded positions in the real estate workforce in occupational series 1170 and 1171.

RECRUITMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Public Notice is satisfied by posting on USAJOBS; recruitment should be expansive to ensure diverse candidate pools representative of all segments of society are considered. Clearance of priority candidates (PPP, ICTAP, RPL) is required. While application of veterans’ preference is not required, consider all qualified candidates (veterans’ preference eligible and non-preference eligible) as they are found.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE

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This authority may only be used by the USACE Command for covered positions.
OVERVIEW

In accordance with Section 9902(b)(2) of title 5, U.S. Code, and in coordination with the Director of OPM, the Secretary of Defense assumes the responsibility from OPM for determining there is a severe shortage of candidates or a critical hiring need for occupations within the DoD. Under this authority, a DoD-wide DHA is approved for Police Officer (GS-0083) vacancies worldwide.

RECRUITMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Public Notice is satisfied by posting on USAJOBS; recruitment should be expansive to ensure diverse candidate pools representative of all segments of society are considered.

Clearance of priority candidates (PPP, ICTAP, RPL) is required.

While application of veterans’ preference is not required, consider all qualified candidates (veterans’ preference eligible and non-preference eligible) as they are found.

WASHINGHTON HEADQUARTERS SERVICE RESPONSIBILITIES

The authority to appoint qualified persons under this direct-hire authority (DHA) is delegated to Washington Headquarters Services (WHS), as the organization with appointing authority for DOT&E. WHS is responsible for oversight, accountability, and reporting of this DHA.

WHS will establish procedures for recruiting that ensure the identification of qualified individuals for referral to management for selection and appointment.

WHS will assess candidates against job-related criteria, ensuring they have the skills and behavioral attributes that lead to success.

POSITION REQUIREMENTS:

Scientific and engineering positions at the GS-9 through GS-15, and comparable levels, but not positions above GS-15 (or comparable levels), such as Senior Executive Service positions, in the following occupational series:

- Engineering 08XX
- Physical Science 13XX
- Mathematics and Statistics 15XX

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE

Temporary DHA for the DoD, Office of the Director of Operational Test and Evaluation
NONCOMPETITIVE TEMPORARY AND TERM APPOINTMENTS TO MEET CRITICAL HIRING NEEDS

THE BASICS

Section 1105(b) of the NDAA for Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, allows the Secretary of Defense to make a noncompetitive temporary or term appointment in the competitive service for a period not more than 18 months if there is a critical hiring need, and without regard to the requirement of public notice.

APPLICATIONS TO GS OR FWS (OR EQUIVALENT PAY BANDS); CANNOT EXCEED THE GS-15 (OR EQUIVALENT)

VETERANS PREFERENCE NOT REQUIRED

TEMP OR TERM APPOINTMENTS ONLY; TOTAL OF 18 MONTHS

AUTHORITY HAS NO EXPIRATION DATE

PUBLIC NOTICE NOT REQUIRED

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

"CRITICAL HIRING NEED"

The need to fill the position(s) to meet mission requirements brought about by circumstances such as, but not limited to, extraordinary workload or unusual or unanticipated event(s) or circumstances creating the need to fill the position(s).

"TEMPORARY APPOINTMENT"

The appointment of an employee in the competitive service for a period that is not more than 1 year.

"TERM APPOINTMENT"

The appointment of an employee in the competitive service for an initial period that is more than 1 year.

APPPOINTMENT LENGTHS

TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS:

Appointments may be extended an additional 6 months, for a total of 18 months.

TERM APPOINTMENTS:

Appointments may not exceed a total of 18 months.

Appointments under this authority may not be extended beyond a total of 18 months, and do not convey noncompetitive conversion to any other appointment.

Reappointment to a successor position (i.e., to a position that replaces and absorbs the position to which an individual was originally appointed under this authority) beyond 18 months is considered to be an extension of the original appointment and is not permissible.

CRITICAL HIRING NEEDS

STAFFING AUTHORITIES

To satisfy public notice, job opportunity announcements (JOAs) must be posted on USAJOBS. Announcements may be either open on a continuous basis or as a one-time occurrence. Applicants may be considered only during an open JOA period.

MEDICAL OCCUPATIONS

Cybersecurity Related Positions

Positions covered: GS-12 through 15

Temp, Term, and Permanent

Expiration Date: Indefinite

Governing Guidance:

5 CFR § 337, Subpart B

Pharmacist GS-0660

GW-003, issued 7/1/03

5 CFR § 213.3106(b)(9)

5 USC § 3304

5 CFR § 337, Subpart B

GW-002, issued 6/30/08

Announcement Required: Yes

Consideration of Veterans: No

STEM POSITIONS

Positions covered: GS-0701-11 through 15

Temp, Term, and Permanent

Expiration Date: Indefinite

Governing Guidance:

5 CFR § 337, Subpart B

GW-005, issued 2/12/09

Announcement Required: Yes

Consideration of Veterans: No

VETERINARY MEDICAL OFFICER

Positions covered: GS-1550 through 15

Temp, Term, and Permanent

Expiration Date: Indefinite

Governing Guidance:

5 CFR § 337, Subpart B

GW-005, issued 2/12/09

Announcement Required: Yes

Consideration of Veterans: No

IT MANAGEMENT

Positions covered: GS-0701-11 through 15

Temp, Term, and Permanent

Expiration Date: Indefinite

Governing Guidance:

5 CFR § 337, Subpart B

GW-005, issued 2/12/09

Announcement Required: Yes

Consideration of Veterans: No

DID YOU KNOW?

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DIRECT HIRE AUTHORITIES GRANTED TO ALTERNATIVE PERSONNEL SYSTEMS

Hiring managers may have other authorities available subject to their own agency policy. These include the DHAs for Acquisition Demonstration positions and those for Science and Technology Reinvention Laboratory (STRL) positions.

**ACQUISITION DEMONSTRATION HIRING AUTHORITY**

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<tr>
<th>APPLICABLE TO</th>
<th>GRADE LEVELS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualified candidates with at least a bachelor's degree for positions in critical acquisition career fields.</td>
<td>NH Career Path</td>
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**VETERAN BUSINESS AND TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT**

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<tr>
<th>APPLICABLE TO</th>
<th>GRADE LEVELS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualified veteran candidates for positions in critical acquisition career fields. Candidates must be a veteran as defined in 38 U.S.C. 101.</td>
<td>NH or NJ Career Path</td>
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**STUDENT INTERN**

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<th>APPLICABLE TO</th>
<th>GRADE LEVELS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualified Post-Secondary Students and Graduates candidates for positions in critical acquisition career fields. This is only for interns, not graduates.</td>
<td>NH, NJ or NK Career Paths</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT**

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<tr>
<th>APPLICABLE TO</th>
<th>GRADE LEVELS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appointment of candidates with at least a bachelor's degree to acquisition positions with positive education requirements. NH-II positions – must have overall 3.0 GPA (on a 4.0 scale) and a 3.25 GPA or better in those courses that are specified in the OPM Qual Stds. NH-III positions – must have 3.5 GPA for graduate courses in the field of study required for the occupation.</td>
<td>NH-II or NH-III broadband levels</td>
</tr>
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**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY REINVENTION LABORATORIES**

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<tr>
<th>APPLICABLE TO</th>
<th>GRADE LEVELS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualified candidates with advanced degrees for science and engineering positions.</td>
<td>highest grade qualified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualified candidates with advanced degrees for science and engineering positions.</td>
<td>GS 2 – 11, or demo equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualified veterans for scientific, technical, engineering and mathematics positions.</td>
<td>highest grade qualified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student enrolled in a Scientific or Engineering Program leading to a Bachelor’s or Advanced degree in a STEM course of study. This DHA is on a temp or term basis only.</td>
<td>GS 2 – 11, or demo equivalent</td>
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The NDAA for FY2020 granted additional DHAs that are pending implementation procedures before they may be used. The following is a summary of those DHAs.

### SECTION 3035

**EXPANSION OF THE DIRECT HIRE AUTHORITY FOR DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE CHILD CARE PROVIDERS AT DEPARTMENT CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTERS TO INCLUDE DIRECT HIRE AUTHORITY FOR INSTALLATION MILITARY HOUSING PERSONNEL:**

Expands coverage of an existing DHA to include military housing personnel; however, section 1109 also temporarily suspends the DHA as related to childcare providers. As these two sections impact different categories of personnel (childcare providers vs. military housing office) under the existing direct hire authority, a separate policy is needed to address the recent inclusion of military housing office personnel.

### SECTION 3511(d)

Provides that the Secretary of Defense shall have direct hiring authority to employ separated members of the uniformed services with valid merchant mariner licenses or sea service experience in support of United States national maritime needs and that section 3326(b) of title 5, U.S.C. shall not apply when hiring a separated member of the uniformed services under this authority.
The Employment and Compensation Line of Business within the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service (DCPAS) develops civilian personnel policies, provides training services, and technical and advisory support to Department of Defense and human resource specialists on a wide variety of Human Resources (HR) programs including staffing, recruitment and outreach, pay, leave, classification, and civilian transition programs.

Employment and Compensation provides technical and advisory support to DoD and human resources specialists on a variety of HR programs:

- Workforce Shaping Programs
- Classification
- Compensation
- Strategic Outreach and Recruitment
- Staffing

To locate published policies and more detailed descriptions of the Employment and Compensation Directorate’s lines of effort, please visit the DCPAS Website: https://www.dcpas.osd.mil/EC/Index

DCPAS EMPLOYMENT AND COMPENSATION FIELD ADVISORY AND SUPPORT
For inquiries please email our inbox at: dodhra.mc-alex.dcpas.list.ec-field-advisory--support@mail.mil or contact us at: (703) 545-7487