



SOUTHWEST CIVILIAN PERSONNEL ADVISORY CENTER

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To reach the SWCPAC: <https://www.swf.usace.army.mil/swd-cpac> (TOLL FREE) 800-453-8907
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Steven G. Crawford, Director, Southwest Civilian Personnel Advisory Center

UPCOMING BENEFITS OPEN SEASON FOR 2012

The Open Season is fast approaching. During this time you will be able to enroll, change or terminate some of your benefits such as your Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB), Flexible Spending Account (FSA) and the Federal Employee Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP). The season will start on 12 November 2012 and end on 10 December 2012. The FEHB Program is GOING GREEN. You will continue to receive printed information from your current plan to include an explanation of the benefit changes for the next year and your new premium rate, but will exclude the health plan brochure. The health brochures will not be automatically mailed to federal employees, but will be accessible online, and will be mailed upon request to your plan.

The 2013 brochures are not published yet, but the new rates are available at <http://www.opm.gov/insure/health/rates/index.asp>

More information will be forthcoming.

POC Catherine Rhodes, 817-886-1190

USA STAFFING ONBOARDING MANAGER

On 1 October 2012, the Army implemented the USA Staffing On-boarding Management tool for in-processing new employees. This USA Staffing module supports all aspects of pre-employment in-processing. The On-Boarding Manager (OM) will replace our current procedures and align Army with Enterprise Human Resources Integration (EHRI) requirements for implementing the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF).

Once the selectee has accepted the tentative job offer, the HR Specialist will assign pre-employment forms for the selectee to complete. The Selectee will receive an On-Boarding Manager invitation to sign on and complete the forms in the system. The HR Specialist will send the firm job offer when all required forms are complete. Only forms requiring hard copy signatures will be scanned for entry into the eOPF. All other forms will be electronically submitted directly to eOPF from the On-Boarding Manager tool.

CPAC POC for more information is Katie Blasingame at Katie.J.Blasingame@usace.army.mil or 817-886-1178.

PATHWAYS Q&As

Q1. Can we recruit for Intern positions under Pathways?

A1. Yes, we can recruit for Intern positions.

Q2. Do we have to post a vacancy announcement on USAJOBS to recruit for Interns under the Pathways Program?

A2. Yes, a vacancy announcement must be posted on USAJOBS.

Q3. Does veteran's preference apply?

A3. Yes, veteran's preference will apply to the referral list of candidates. A nonveteran cannot be selected over a veteran.

Q4. How will candidates be rated?

A4. Candidates will be rated using the Category Rating procedures. This is the same procedure used for external (DEU) announcements. Candidates will be assessed based on basic eligibility for Pathways programs, using OPM qualification standards.

Q5. When will current students be converted to a Pathways appointment?

A5. Army is looking to use an automated process to convert current students sometime between now and 6 January 2013. No Requests for Personnel Actions (RPAs) are required at this time except as discussed in Q6 below.

Q6. Can we extend our current STEP students?

A6. Yes, a current STEP may be extended providing they still meet the appointment eligibility. An RPA is needed first to convert the STEP to an Intern NTE Pathways appointment and another RPA is needed after the conversion so the extension can be processed.

Q7. If a current STEP is working in a field unrelated to their degree, what happens to them when Pathways is implemented? In accordance with the guidance, the Internship Program allows temporary employment, however, it also states that the "duties of the position should be related to either the Intern's academic or career goals".

What happens to current STEP's that do not meet these criteria?

A7. AGCP, CFR 362.203d(2) states "...the duties of the position in which the individual is appointed should be related to the interns academic or career goals." It says "should be related" it does not say it is required to be related; therefore the STEP students may convert to a Pathways NTE position if management wishes to continue the appointment.

Q8. How will SCEPs who graduate between now and 6 January 2013 transition to career-conditional appointments? Will they first convert to Pathways?

A8. SCEPs who graduate during the transition period that ends 6 January will not convert into the Pathways Program. They will convert to the career-conditional appointment if they meet all of the program requirements for conversion.

Q9. Do current and new Pathways participants need to sign a new Participant Agreement?

A9. Each Pathways Programs participant will complete the appropriate program Participant Agreement upon appointment or conversion into the Pathways Programs. The Army Internship Pathways Participant Agreement will specify the ending date of the NTE appointment or the program end date if the appoint is for greater than one year (this is usually the intern's anticipated date of graduation). The forms need to be returned to the CPAC for filing in the eOPF. A copy will be sent to the activity with all signatures complete for filing. Sample Participant Agreements may be obtained from your CPAC HR Specialist.

Q10. Are Pathways Interns able to have breaks in their program?

A10. Any break in Program for Interns will be when the intern is working but is unable to go to school, or is neither attending classes nor working at the agency. The organization may use its discretion in either approving or denying a request for a break in program.

Q11. Can an indefinite intern (previously known as SCEP) who completes the Bachelor's degree

convert to another intern appointment to work on their Master’s degree instead of converting to a career-conditional appointment? Can it be accomplished noncompetitively?

A11. After completion of the first degree the indefinite intern may be converted noncompetitively to a career-conditional appointment but a conversion to a new intern appointment would require the intern to compete for the new appointment.

Q12. Can an Intern NTE be noncompetitively converted to an Indefinite Intern?

A12. No, the Intern NTE would need to compete for the new appointment.

Q13. Can an indefinite intern be promoted while still going to school?

A13. CFR 362.203, “An agency may promote any intern who meets the qualification requirements for the position. This provision does not confer entitlement to promotion. “

Q14. May indefinite interns be reassigned to a different series and organization noncompetitively?

A14. Yes, an indefinite intern may be reassigned to a different series and organization noncompetitively if they meet the qualification requirements. At this time we would need to convert the intern to a Pathways appointment first and reassign after the conversion.

Q15. May an Intern NTE continue to work after degree completion?

A15. No, an Intern NTE may not continue to work after their degree requirements are met. They no longer meet the eligibility for the appointment.

Q16. What are the requirements for an Indefinite Intern to be converted to a career-conditional appointment?

A16. An agency may noncompetitively convert an Intern who is a U.S. citizen and has completed at least 640 hours of work experience, completed a course of academic study within the 120 day period preceding the appointment at a qualifying educational institution conferring a diploma, certificate, or

degree, and received a favorable recommendation for appointment by an agency official, met the OPM qualification standards for the position to which the intern will be converted, and met agency-specific requirements as specified in the agency’s Participant Agreement.

Q17. Upon completing the requirements of the Pathways Internship program, can student/individual be non-competitively converted to the Pathways Recent Graduate program?

A17. No, Pathways Interns who meet the eligibility requirements may be converted to a term or career-conditional appointment. However, these individuals are eligible to compete for Recent Graduate positions, just as any other recent graduate can.

Please contact your staffing specialist as shown at <http://www.swf.usace.army.mil/swd-cpac/phone.asp> if you have additional questions.

Who We Are & Services We Provide

The Southwestern Division Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC) provides human resources services to civilian employees in support of Army’s mission as well as the Commanders and other military personnel assigned. Located in Fort Worth, Texas, the CPAC services the Southwestern Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, as well as the Dallas Recruiting Battalion, in the 5th Brigade of the U.S. Army Recruiting Command. The CPAC covers the Southwestern Division Office and four districts which are Fort Worth, Galveston, Little Rock, and Tulsa. The CPAC is divided into two functional areas—the Staffing and Classification Division and the Employee and Management Support Services Division.

The Staffing and Classification Division provides assistance to prospective employees, current

personnel, and management with the following services:

- **Recruitment and Placement-** Specialists in this division work the recruiting process to fill vacant positions through competitive and non-competitive procedures. During this process, specialists prepare and market job announcements, make qualifications and pay determinations, and coordinate on-boarding procedures for the employee. In addition, specialists also work non-competitive personnel actions involving job changes, such as promotions, reassignments, and changes to lower grade.
- **Classification-** Specialists perform a number of actions involving classification, such as providing management with classification advisory services, assisting employees with classification appeals, and reviewing position descriptions to ensure they have the correct pay plan, series, grade, title, and overtime exemption status.
- **HR Advisory Services-** Specialists provide personnel information and guidance relative to civilian employment and are available to assist managers, employees, and applicants. This information ensures that organizations operate in accordance with federal laws, policies, and regulations.
- **Inquiries-** This division addresses inquiries regarding recruitment and placement, pay, and other employment information. Specialists research personnel issues, formulate plans of action, and coordinate resolutions for employees. This also includes responding to applicant inquiries from USAJOBS and assisting with document submission for employees who have submitted MyBiz tickets.

The Employee and Management Support Services Division provides assistance to current personnel and management with the following services:

- **Civilian Personnel Automated Systems-** Specialists are available to provide one-on-one assistance with the various HR automated systems (i.e., DCPDS, AutoNOA, CPOL) and to monitor the Manager/Administrative Personnel account set-up process. The CPAC also has the capability of generating custom reports on an as-needed basis. Data can be retrieved at the moment (i.e. alpha listings) or across spans of time (i.e. retirement trends and projections).
- **Employee Benefits & Workers' Compensation-** In this area, employees will work closely with Specialists, the Army Benefits Center-Civilian (ABC-C), and the Employee Benefits Information System (EBIS) for benefits and entitlement advisory services and the processing of benefits transactions. When employees are injured at work, every injury should be reported to the employee's Supervisor, Safety Office, and the CPAC (no injury is too small!). Contact your Injury Compensation Program Administrator (ICPA) located in the CPAC office for more information.
- **Training-** The CPAC is committed to providing quality human resources training to our serviced managers and employees (online and onsite training available). We currently offer over 16 courses each year and are continuously introducing new courses as information changes and specific requests are made. Training information including course length, delivery methods, intended audience, course descriptions, dates and locations are available for each course upon request.

- **Management & Employee Relations (MER)**- In this area, CPAC MER Specialists are available to provide management with advisory services on performance management, resolving disciplinary matters, and correcting inappropriate work behavior that adversely affects the efficiency of the service each district performs. In addition to this, assistance is readily available for matters involving performance appraisals, labor relations, leave administration, awards, and hours of work and premium pay, etc.

If you would like to become familiar with the current list of HR Specialists that service your organization, please visit our CPAC homepage. Detailed contact information can be found by clicking on the "CONTACT US" link at the top of the page: <http://www.swf.usace.army.mil/swd-cpac/phone.asp>

POC for the Staffing and Classification Division in the CPAC is Becky Rauch at 817-886-1199.

POC for the Employee and Management Support Services Division in the CPAC is Linda Sullivan at 817-886-1197.
