

Date: January 21, 2025

From: Acting Secretary

Subj: Hiring Freeze Guidance (VIEWS 12678309)

To: Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries and Other Key Officials

1. This memorandum provides additional guidance regarding the freeze on the hiring of federal civilian employees as directed by President Trump on January 20, 2025, via Presidential Memorandum (PM) entitled "Hiring Freeze."
 - a. No vacant position existing at 11:59 a.m. on January 20, 2025, may be filled and no new positions may be created, except in limited circumstances as described in paragraph 3 below.
 - b. For the purposes of the memorandum, a position is not considered vacant if an individual has been given an offer of employment prior to Noon on January 20, 2025, has signed an offer letter in acceptance of the position, and has a designated start date on or before February 8, 2025. These positions may proceed with hiring and onboarding.
 - c. Offers signed prior to Noon on January 20, 2025, with a start date after February 8, 2025, or an unconfirmed start date must be revoked no later than 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) on January 21, 2025.
 - d. For vacant positions as of Noon on January 20, 2025, Human Resources Specialists must instruct candidates that the agency is no longer hiring for the role and cease correspondence no later than 5 p.m. EST on January 21, 2025.
 - e. All positions that are not exempt from the hiring freeze must be unlisted from USAJOBS.gov and any other applicable websites no later than January 21, 2025, at 5 p.m. EST.
 - f. Any recruiters working to fill positions on behalf of the government must cease correspondence with candidates no later than January 21, 2025.
 - g. Agencies shall not acquire by contract with a commercial vendor, services that are substantially similar to those that would have been provided by a Federal civilian in a vacancy covered by the PM.

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2. Agency Human Resources leaders received the guidance above earlier today from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Chief Human Capital Officer and have been working to comply with the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) direction.
3. I am providing additional guidance regarding exemptions, which will be supplemented in future communications.
 - a. Positions critical to delivering care to Veterans in the Veteran Health Administration, as reflected in Attachment A, are exempted under the category of public safety.
 - b. Positions critical to the provision of Veterans' benefits may be exempted by OPM. Requests must be made to OPM in writing and signed by the Secretary. The request must: (1) explain the critical need and how it relates to essential services or critical mission requirements, (2) explain why reallocation (reassignment/detail) of existing staff within the agency is not possible to meet the needs outlined in the request, and (3) explain the urgency of the need and the consequences of not filling the position within a 3-to-6-month timeline.
 - c. All other positions for which an exemption is requested must be submitted through to the Chief of Staff for Veterans Affairs (COSVA) for concurrence prior to the Secretary's approval. The attached VA Hiring Justification Form shall be used for these submissions and sent through the Office of Human Resources/Operations Security and Preparedness to the COSVA through VIEWS.
4. VA remains committed to being deliberative in the hiring actions taken to ensure we is postured for success as we implement overall modernization efforts and reform plans in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget. To this end, prior to authorizing recruitment for vacant positions, VA leaders must certify that actions are aligned with VA goals, priorities, and modernization plans and support the more efficient and effective delivery of services to Veterans.
5. Questions regarding this memorandum may be directed to: Carrie Johnson-Clark, Executive Director, Corporate Senior Executive Management Office (CSEMO) at carrie.johnson@va.gov for Senior Executive Service (SES) and SES-equivalent matters; or Tracey Therit, Chief Human Capital Officer, at tracey.therit@va.gov for all non-SES matters.



Todd B. Hunter
Attachments