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USDA Pathways Programs for Recruiters  
and Student Coordinators

# INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND



- Under the leadership of President Obama, OPM has reformed the federal hiring process for students and recent graduates.
- One of the major reforms include recruiting, hiring, and retaining talented students and recent graduates.
- As a result, Executive Order 13562 established the Pathways Program.

# CORE PRINCIPLES



- Transparency- All job opportunities require a public posting on USAJOBS and/or the agency's website
- Limited Scope- Workforce Planning Strategy and Annual Reporting to OPM
- Fairness to Veterans-Veterans Preference and additional flexibilities
- Agency Investment-Career and Training Development
- OPM Oversight-MOU

# CFR TRAINING

- 5 CFR 362-establishes the framework and purpose of the Pathways Program
- 5 CFR 213.3402(a)(b)(c)- establishes the newly created Schedule D Appointing Authority in the excepted service
- 5 CFR 302.401 – Veteran's preference are applicable to the selection of applicants in the Pathways Program
- 5 CFR 610.121 – Interns may work full and/or part-time schedules,

# CFR TRAINING CONTINUED

- 5 CFR 362.202- establishes program requirements that define the definition of a student and establishes limits on hiring students that qualify for the Pathways Program

- 5 CFR 362.104(b) – Requires each intern to sign a Pathways agreement.
- CFR 362.203- Public Notice requirement



# Recruiting

**Schedule D Hiring Authority, 5 CFR  
213.340 (a)(B)(C), Excepted Service  
MOU  
Public Notice Requirement**

# USDA Internship Program



- **The Internship Program**
  - Replaces SCEP and STEP
  - Veterans Preference
  - Targets current students enrolled in accredited educational institutions
    - High School
    - Certificate Program
    - 2-year and 4-year college and university
    - Technical and Vocational Schools
    - Home Schools
    - Graduate Schools

# USDA Recent Graduates Program



- Recent Graduates Program
  - Targets Recent Graduates within 2 years
  - Targets Veterans who recently graduated within 6 years
  - Participation Agreement
  - Program Requirements
  - One Year Program (can be extended up to 2 years)
  - Eligible for Career-Conditional Appointment
  - Training and Career Development
  - Veterans Preference

# USDA Presidential Management Fellows



## ✘ Presidential Management Fellows Program

- + Geared towards recent graduates with advanced degrees
- + OPM sponsored program
- + Targets Veterans who recently graduated within 6 years
- + Training and Career Development
- + Program Requirements
- + Participation Agreement
- + Two year program
- + Conversion to Career-Conditional Appointments
- + Veterans Preference

# Career Fairs



- USDA Student Coordinators and Recruiters may continue to participate in career fairs and recruitment events
  - The career fair must be posted publically
  - Resumes should not be collected
  - A calendar of events that specifies the date, location, and positions must be shared openly
  - Materials shared at the recruitment table must be shared with everyone at the fair

# Pathways Agreement

## Agreement will include:

- Description of duties
  - Work Schedules
  - Length of appointment and termination date
  - Evaluation procedures
  - Minimum Eligibility requirements for non-competitive conversion in the competitive service
  - Program Requirements
- Every participant is required to sign a Pathways Participant Agreement
  - 5 CFR 362.104(b) Requires each intern to sign a Pathways Agreement

# Pathways Programs



- Interns must complete 640 hours of work experience in a related field prior to being considered for conversion to a career or career-conditional appointment
- Recent Graduates must work for 1 consecutive year prior to conversion. PMF's must work for 2 years prior to conversion.
- OPM may place a cap on the number of conversions
- The conversion limits may be included in the MOU

# Break in the program



- USDA may use its discretion to deny or approve a break in the program.
- A break in the program occurs when an intern is in school and not working in the program.

# Movement between Federal Agencies



- Participants may transfer to another Federal agency and carry over the accumulated work experience
- Participants must accumulate 640 hours of work experience prior to conversion
- Time spent as an intern may be counted toward career tenure
- 320 hours of non-federal work experience may be credited towards the 640 hours of work experience requirement

# Program Highlights



- There is no US citizenship requirement to participate in the Pathways Programs
- US Citizenship is required for conversion into the competitive service
- 640 hours of work experience
- 320 hour credit
- ✗ Agencies may terminate participants for misconduct, suitability, for poor performance, or at the end of the program period
- ✗ Participants are eligible for benefits as full-time employees.
- ✗ Full-time and Part-time Schedules

# Qualifying for a position



- Interns may be qualified for positions that are not directly related to their academic career goals if the position does not have a positive education requirement.

# Communication Strategies



- In an effort to keep you informed, various communication strategies are being implemented.
  - FAQ's
  - Memorandums
  - Fact Sheets
  - Email's
  - Briefings
  - Announcements
  - Desk Aids

# Questions?



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