

DEFERRED RESIGNATION PROGRAM

The Secretary of Defense directed the Department of Defense (DoD) to conduct its own Deferred Resignation Program (DRP) and offer Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) to all eligible civilian employees. The DoD DRP generally adopts the voluntary DRP separation framework established by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), with modifications specific to DoD. Principal Staff Assistants and DoD Component heads will administer the DRP and VERA for their respective employees and are authorized to determine exemptions and make decisions on employee requests for DRP and VERA. Employees occupying exempted positions are not eligible to participate in the DoD DRP. Employees who accept the deferred resignation offer, and who are approved for DRP, will be placed on paid administrative leave no earlier than May 1, 2025, and must resign or retire no later than September 30, 2025.

REFERENCE

- (a) Secretary of Defense Memorandum, “Initiating the Workforce Acceleration & Recapitalization Initiative” dated March 28, 2025.
- (b) Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Memorandum, “Guidance on Department of Defense Deferred Resignation Program”, dated April 1, 2025.
- (c) Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness email, “DoD Deferred Resignation Program,” dated April 1, 2025.

INTRODUCTION

The DoD DRP aims to further reduce the civilian workforce by providing a generous opportunity for employees to enter a paid leave status prior to resigning or retiring. Employees pending approval or approved for the DoD DRP will not be subject to return to in-person work requirements. Employees who are approved for the DoD DRP may elect VERA, if eligible. An employee may elect retirement pursuant to VERA without participating in the DoD DRP.

The program is open to most DoD employees. However, the program is not available for Non-appropriated Fund (NAF) employees, Foreign Local National employees, Dual-Status Military Technicians, Highly Qualified Experts, and Reemployed Annuitants. Probationary employees are eligible to participate in the DoD DRP.

Principal Staff Assistants and DoD Component heads, consistent with the guidance in Reference (b), are authorized to exempt mission critical positions prior to offering the DoD DRP and VERA and to disapprove employee requests to participate, subject to the following:

The Secretaries of the Military Departments must obtain the concurrence of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) prior to exempting employees assigned to a Combatant Command or a CJCS controlled activity; and

The Directors of the Defense Agencies and DoD Field Activities (DAFAs) must obtain the concurrence of their controlling PSA prior to exempting employees of a DAA under the authority, direction, and control of the PSA.

Exemptions to the DRP should be rare consistent with the Secretary's guidance in Reference (a).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

General

Q1. How does an employee apply for the Deferred Resignation Program?

A1. Principal Staff Assistants (PSA) and DoD Component heads will administer the DoD DRP and VERA for their respective employees. PSAs and DoD Component heads will offer the DoD DRP from Monday, April 7, 2025, through Monday, April 14, 2025. PSAs and Component heads will ensure all eligible employees are notified of the availability of the DoD DRP and VERA, are provided a means to elect to participate, and will develop procedures to offer the DoD DRP and VERA to their employees. Procedures will ensure consistency, to the maximum extent possible, among similarly situated employees. Any specific questions concerning procedures should be directed to the respective PSA or DoD Component Human Resources lead.

Q2. Once an employee accepts and is approved for the DoD DRP offer, what are the next steps?

A2. Employees approved for the DoD DRP will be placed on administrative leave no earlier than May 1, 2025. Before beginning administrative leave, the employee and the PSA and/or DoD Component head must enter into a written separation agreement to resign or retire by September 30, 2025. Retiring employees will not be permitted to extend their retirement or resignation past September 30, 2025 (as was done with the OPM DRP). Where appropriate, management may agree not to establish a debt for unfulfilled time-in-service requirements. The employee's supervisor should provide the employee with a date and the appropriate procedure for the return of any DoD Component equipment and property.

Q3. Is the April 14 deadline for the DoD DRP firm or can it be extended?

A3. PSAs and DoD Component heads may not extend the deadline to accept its DoD DRP offer but may establish procedures to extend the offer to an employee who was unable to receive the DoD DRP offer in a timely manner. For instance, this may occur if the employee was on approved leave for all or part of the DoD DRP offer period, which runs from Monday, April 7, 2025, through Monday, April 14, 2025.

Q4. Can the other DoD DRP deadlines be adjusted or extended?

A4. No. PSAs and DoD Component heads are not authorized to adjust the period to begin administrative leave for approved DoD DRP participants earlier than May 1, 2025. There are also no exceptions to the requirement that employees must resign or retire no later than September 30, 2025.

Q5. What happens if employees do not respond to the DoD DRP offer?

A5. Employees are under no obligation to respond. Participation in the DoD DRP is voluntary.

Q6. May employees who accept DoD's DRP offer later rescind their resignations?

A6. Employees may request to rescind their resignations prior to signing a separation agreement, but such requests may be disapproved by DoD Components. However, in the separation agreement, the employee acknowledges that the component will immediately rely on the terms of the agreement in consolidating and reassigning roles and otherwise taking steps to reform the agency workforce. As of the effective date of the agreement, the employee will permanently cease to serve in the position from which the employee is agreeing to resign or retire. Consequently, the employee understands that, as of the effective date of the agreement, the agreement is final and reflects the employee's decision to resign effective September 30, 2025, unless the employee resigns or retires earlier.

Eligibility and Participation

Q7. Are employees who submitted a resignation or retirement request prior to their PSA or DoD Component head's DoD DRP offer eligible to participate?

A7. Yes. Employees who previously submitted a resignation or retirement request unrelated to the OPM DRP may participate in the DoD DRP but may only be approved for deferred resignation through September 30, 2025. Employees who submitted an approved resignation request under the OPM DRP will remain under the terms and conditions offered by the OPM DRP.

Q8. Are there categories of employees who are not eligible to participate in the DoD DRP?

A8. Yes. Per reference (b), the DoD DRP is not available for Non-appropriated Fund (NAF) employees, Foreign Local National employees, Dual-Status Military Technicians, Highly Qualified Experts, and Reemployed Annuitants.

Q9. Are employees on paid parental leave eligible to participate in the DRP?

A9. Employees on paid parental leave (PPL) are eligible. Any reimbursement required by section 630.1705(e) of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations may be waived by the PSA and/or DoD Component head. Approved DoD DRP participants who are on PPL must end PPL and be placed on administrative leave.

Q10. Are temporary or term employees eligible to participate in the DoD DRP?

A10. Yes. Temporary and term employees are eligible to participate in DoD DRP. However, PSAs and DoD Component heads may determine whether to extend the DoD DRP to their temporary and term employees.

Q11. Are employees who are on indefinite suspension eligible to participate in the DRP?

A11. Yes. Employees who are on indefinite suspension may request to participate in the DoD DRP. However, depending on the circumstances of each individual case, the PSA or DoD Component head may determine whether to approve or disapprove the request.

Q12. Are employees who are eligible for retirement able to participate in the DRP?

A12. Yes. Employees who are eligible for retirement may participate in the DoD DRP.

Q13. Are reemployed annuitants eligible to participate in the DRP?

A13. No. Reemployed annuitants are not eligible to participate in the DRP.

Q14. Are employees who are undergoing disciplinary action eligible to participate in the DRP?

A14. Employees who are undergoing disciplinary action may request to be considered for the DoD DRP. However, depending on the circumstances of each individual case, the PSA or DoD Component head may determine whether to approve or disapprove the request.

Q15. Will requests to participate in the DoD DRP automatically be approved?

A15. No. PSAs and DoD Component heads are authorized to exempt mission critical positions prior to offering the DoD DRP and VERA, in accordance with DoD guidance. Employees occupying exempted positions will not be eligible to participate, and any requests for DoD DRP will be disapproved.

Q16. Are employees who request to participate in the DRP exempt from the Return to In-Person Work policy while their requests are pending approval?

A16. Employees pending approval or approved for the DoD DRP will not be subject to return to in-person work requirements.

Q17. Are probationary employees eligible to participate in the DoD DRP?

A17. Yes. Probationary employees are eligible to request to participate in the DoD DRP.

Pay and Administrative Leave

Q18. What is administrative leave?

A18. In accordance with 5 U.S.C. 6329a., administrative leave means:

- Leave taken without loss or reduction in (1) pay; (2) leave to which the employee is otherwise entitled to under law; or (3) credit for time or service; AND,
- Leave that is not authorized under any other provision of law.

Q19. Will employees who participate in the DoD DRP be paid during the transition period?

A19. Employees who participate in the DRP will receive paid administrative leave. DRP participants will continue to receive pay and benefits, including annual and sick leave accruals and Thrift Savings Plan matching contributions, through their period of deferred resignation ending no later than September 30, 2025. Timecards will be coded as administrative leave (LN).

Q20. Will employees who participate in the DoD DRP be eligible for unemployment benefits?

A20. In accordance with DoDI 1400.25, Volume 850, employees who participate in the DoD DRP will not be eligible for unemployment benefits as they will remain in an employee status, receiving full pay and benefits while on paid administrative leave.

Q21. Will Federal Wage System (FWS) employees who elect the DoD DRP be eligible for wage schedule increases?

A21. Yes. FWS employees who participate in the DoD DRP will remain eligible for wage schedule increases that occur during their deferred resignation period.

Q22. Once employees are placed on administrative leave for their deferred resignation period, do security clearance obligations remain in effect (e.g. will employees be required to notify their personnel security office of reportable events)?

A22. Yes. An employee's security clearance obligations remain in effect while on administrative leave under the DoD DRP. Employees should consult their servicing personnel security office for guidance on specific requirements. (See Security Executive Agent Directive 3).

Q23. Can employees who participate in the program work at another job while on administrative leave?

A23. The program is intended to allow employees to transition to new employment opportunities within the private sector. Employees will enter agreements with their respective DoD Components which address applicable ethics requirements.

Retirement and Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA)

Q24. Does participation in the DoD DRP affect retirement eligibility?

A24. Employees who are eligible for retirement may retire with full benefits in accordance with 5 CFR § 831 and 842.

Q25. Is Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) applicable to employees who are approved to participate in the DRP?

A25. DoD Components may approve employees who accept the DoD DRP who meet the VERA eligibility requirements.

Q26. Can DoD Components waive the VERA eligibility requirements?

A26. No. The minimum age and service requirements are set by statute in 5 U.S.C. 8336(d)(2) for the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) employees, and in 5 U.S.C. 8414(b)(1) for Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS) employees. DoD does not have authority to waive either the minimum age or service requirement for VERA eligibility.

Q27. If an employee applies for the DoD DRP and the request is denied, will the employee still be permitted to submit a voluntary or disability retirement application?

A27. Yes. If an employee applies for the DoD DRP and the request is denied, the employee may still apply for any type of retirement, (voluntary, disability retirement, etc.) as long as they meet all of the eligibility requirements provided in 5 U.S. Code § 8333, 8337, 8410 and 8451.

Overseas Employees

Q28. May employees be allowed to remain in country while on paid administrative leave for the deferred resignation period?

A28. PSAs and DoD Component heads may direct employees with return rights to return to the U.S. in accordance with their return rights agreement and the provisions of 10 United States Code 1586 and DoDI 1400.25 Vol. 1230.

Q29. Will the Living Quarters Allowance (LQA) and post allowance continue for those on paid administrative leave if the employee remains in country while on paid administrative leave for the deferred resignation period?

A29. In accordance with the Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR), LQA may continue for an individual in a leave status not to exceed 60 days. DoD Component heads may extend this provision for an additional 60 days when it is determined to be in the public interest. Post allowance is determined based on the employee's physical presence at the foreign area location. The employee's leave status does not impact the continuance of payment for post allowance. Employees should contact their local human resources offices for advisement on other allowances that may be impacted by extended leave statuses (e.g., separate maintenance allowance, post hardship differential, etc.).

Q30. What PCS allowances are allowed?

A30. The terms of the service agreements already in place with the employee and tour of duty requirements will inform PCS entitlements and other associated allowances. Employees without return rights wherein they do not retain a true permanent duty station should consult with their supervisor to identify the proper vehicle for their return to the continental United States (CONUS).

Service Obligations**Q31. Will all service commitments be waived under the DoD DRP?**

A31. Prior to beginning administrative leave, employees will enter written agreements that specifically address any employee obligations that will not be satisfied before September 30, 2025. For employee obligations that cannot be waived, DoD Components may agree not to establish a debt. If an employee and a DoD Component are unable to come to an agreement, the employee should not be approved to participate in the DoD DRP.

Performance**Q32. Is an annual appraisal required for employees approved for the DoD DRP?**

A32. The annual appraisal cycle for most employees ended on March 31, 2025. Such employees approved for the DoD DRP, as well as those employees whose resignations do not become effective prior to the end of their annual appraisal cycle, will receive an appraisal in accordance with their performance management program's policies and procedures. If an employee has worked the requisite amount of time under an approved performance plan, DoD Components will ensure a rating of record is in place. This affords the employee with an accurate rating for retention registers in the event the employee returns to the Federal government. It also, potentially, allows an employee to receive a ratings-based award to recognize their contributions during the rating period. DoD Components will

prepare annual appraisals and performance plans for employees on administrative leave under the DoD DRP using the procedures applicable to employees on extended leave per their respective performance management program's established policies and procedures.

Work Schedules

Q33. Are DoD employees on part-time work schedules eligible to request to participate in the DoD DRP?

A33. Yes. Part-time DoD employees, as defined by 5 U.S.C. 3401(2), are eligible to participate even if the employee is working less than 32 hours a week at a component's discretion, provided employees are not compensated above their typical rates of pay. However, temporary part-time employees or part-time employees on intermittent work schedules are not eligible to apply for the DoD DRP.

Q34. Are DoD employees on seasonal work schedules eligible to request to participate in the DoD DRP?

A34. Yes. DoD employees on seasonal work schedules, as defined by 5 C.F.R. 213.104(3) are eligible for the DoD DRP. However, seasonal employees on intermittent work schedules are not eligible to apply to the DoD DRP.

Temporary and Term Employees

Q35. What is the final date of employment for temporary employees who participate in the DoD DRP?

A35. A temporary employee's end date if approved for the DoD DRP will be the earlier of their natural end date or September 30, 2025.

Q36. Will an extension be granted for an employee's term appointment or temporary assignment through September 30, 2025?

A36. No. The employee's DRP administrative leave date will end when the term or temporary appointment expires. Extensions of term or temporary assignment are not permitted for the purpose of remaining in an administrative leave status through September 30, 2025.

Q37. What is the process if an employee's scheduled termination date falls before September 30, 2025?

A37. The employee will be separated from the agency on their scheduled termination date, which may be earlier than September 30, 2025.

CONTACT

DoD Component HR should contact the DCPAS Tiger Team at dodhra.mc-alex.dcpas.mbx.dcpas-communications@mail.mil for additional information. The intent of the group box is to provide DoD Component HR with guidance to support the DRP.

We understand employees have many questions about their personal situations, however, please be advised that the DCPAS Tiger Team does not have access to personal information. To obtain personalized assistance, please contact your Human Resources Service Provider, who will be able to address your questions and provide guidance tailored to your individual situation.