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MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Department of Defense Pooled and Shared Hiring Program Strategies and Tools

In support of Executive Order 14170 “Reforming the Hiring Process and Restoring Merit to Government Service” (January 20, 2025), and Office of Personnel Management (OPM) memorandum, *Merit Hiring Plan* (May 29, 2025), the Department of Defense (DoD) is strengthening the use of pooled and shared hiring strategies. DoD’s efforts will directly advance President Trump’s government-wide merit hiring priorities to reduce average time to hire to fewer than 80 days. By reducing duplication, increasing efficiency, and promoting merit-based principles, pooled and shared hiring strategies ensure that the Department can quickly bring in highly skilled talent needed to meet critical defense missions.

The attached document outlines tools and flexibilities designed to maximize pooled and shared hiring. Candidate inventories in USA Staffing allow hiring managers to access previously qualified applicants without restarting the full recruitment and evaluation process, enabling the rapid re-use of talent pools. Shared Delegated Examining (DE) certificates allow DoD Components to draw from existing referral lists across the government or to share certificates within and across DoD Components. Together, these tools eliminate unnecessary barriers, reduce duplication, and expand consideration of highly qualified applicants for mission-critical positions.

These strategies are consistent with OPM’s direction to strengthen merit-based hiring by broadening access to qualified candidates, streamlining hiring actions, and ensuring that agencies make selections based on skills and competencies needed for mission success. By fully adopting pooled and shared hiring, DoD will accelerate recruitment, and ensure that the Department is optimally positioned to recruit and retain top talent in support of national defense.

Accordingly, I strongly encourage all DoD Components to actively promote and maximize the use of pooled and shared hiring efforts. A Department-wide commitment to these strategies will help us deliver a faster, and more effective hiring process that supports both our workforce and our mission. Thank you for your leadership and continued support.

Should you have any questions, my point of contact is Mr. Rocky Weaver, Director, Employment and Compensation, Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service, who you may reach at (703) 622-9851 or rocky.d.weaver.civ@mail.mil.

Michael A. Cogar
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
for Civilian Personnel Policy

Attachment:
As stated



Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Pooled And Shared Hiring Program
Strategies and Tools
January 2025

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1.0 PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of this document is to provide Department of Defense (DoD) Components with information for implementing and utilizing Pooled and Shared Hiring Program (PSHP) strategies and tools that can result in streamlined recruitment processes and time-to-hire reductions.

The DoD PSHP encompasses the candidate sourcing flexibilities of pooled and shared hiring, specifically candidate inventories and shared Delegated Examining (DE) certificates. These strategies and tools enable DoD to identify, evaluate, and select talent more effectively. The strategic use of these tools and flexibilities represents a significant step forward in DoD's collective effort to attract and retain the best skills-based talent.

2.0 STRATEGIES AND TOOLS

2.1 USA Staffing Candidate Inventory

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) launched the USA Staffing (USAS) Candidate Inventory (CI) tool in 2024, which allows DoD human resources (HR) practitioners and hiring managers (HM) the ability to identify and consider candidates who have already been deemed eligible, qualified, and referred on a hiring certificate(s) for a previous position. This tool can assist in reducing the time and resources required to conduct a full recruitment and evaluation process.

The following provides considerations for DoD Components when utilizing the tool, as referenced in OPM's "[Candidate Inventory Pre-Implementation Guide](#)," "[USA Staffing Candidate Inventory Business Process Rules Example](#)," and "[Candidate Inventory Frequently Asked Questions](#)."

2.1.1 Accessing Candidate Inventory

1. DoD Components may only access candidate inventories within their parent USAS organization. Currently, the CI tool does not allow for candidate inventories to be shared across DoD Components associated with different parent USAS organizations (e.g., Department of Navy personnel cannot access or review inventories initiated and maintained by the Department of the Army). HR practitioners should consult their Component USAS Program Managers for additional information on any potential structural limitations inherent to their organization.

2.1.2 Vacancy and Certificate Eligibility and Ineligibility

1. Determine which types of recruitments will be eligible for inclusion in CI. (e.g., noncompetitive, excepted service, merit promotion, hard-to-fill, mission critical occupations (MCOs), etc.).
2. OPM advises that the following types of recruitments/certificates not be included in CI.
 - a. DE certificate types or those which require veterans' preference considerations, such as Category Rating and Rule of Three.
 - b. Others identified by supplemental DoD Component guidance, procedures or business processes.

2.1.3 Vacancy and Certificate Settings

1. For CI to be enabled for each recruitment/certificate within USAS, the CI questionnaire setting must be enabled by HR at the time the job opportunity announcement (JOA) is released on USAJOBS. Additionally, the CI setting must be enabled at the time the certificate is issued.
2. DoD Components may also consider adding additional JOA information regarding CI, as referenced by OPM.

2.1.4 Candidate Inventory Availability Dates

1. When enabling CI on a recruitment/certificate, the following information is completed within USAS to establish start and end dates for candidates that are populated in CI:
 - a. Availability Start Date: Determine if there is a standard start date for candidates to populate in CI (e.g., the day the certificate is released to the original HM).
 - b. Availability End Date: Determine if there is a standard end date for candidates to remain in CI (e.g., 180 days after the Availability Start Date).

2.1.5 DoD and External Program Considerations

1. All standard DoD and external program considerations are made in accordance with applicable Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan (ICTAP), Priority Placement Program (PPP), Reemployment Priority List (RPL), Military Spouse or other relevant program requirements.

2.2 Shared Delegated Examining Certificates

This strategy allows DoD Components to share and receive hiring certificates for recruitments conducted under DE procedures in accordance with Title 5, CFR § 332.408 “[Shared Use of a Competitive Certificate](#),” Title 5, CFR § 330.104 “[Requirements for Vacancy Announcements](#),” and the [Delegated Examining Operating Handbook](#) (DEOH). Shared DE certificates are characterized under two different categories respective to DoD, external and internal.

The following provides considerations for DoD Components when utilizing shared DE certificates, as referenced in:

- OPM’s [DEOH](#);
- OPM Memorandum, “[Implementing Policy Guidance for the Competitive Service Act \(Shared Certificates\)](#)” dated January 11, 2018;
- OPM Memorandum, “[New Talent Pools \(Shared Certs\) Feature for USAJOBS’ Agency Talent Portal](#)” dated December 1, 2023;
- OPM “[Competitive Service Act - Shared Certificates Q&As](#)”; and
- OPM “[USA Staffing Shared Certificate Guide](#).”

- #### 2.2.1 External – Government-wide Talent Pools:
- Introduced by OPM in 2023, Talent Pools are certificates of eligibles that are made available to all Federal agencies. To share or receive certificates via OPM’s Agency Talent Portal (ATP), individuals should

contact their Component Talent Pool Manager (TPM) or Shared Certificate Coordinator (SCC).

Talent Pools consist of the following two types:

1. **Cross-Government Action (CGA):** OPM conducts recruitments and generates CGA hiring certificates for Government-wide access under their inherent DE authority. The following highlights key areas identified by OPM, but is not all inclusive:
 - a. Objections and pass overs made and sustained by one Federal agency do not impact other Federal agencies. Each receiving DoD Component processes the CGA shared certificate independently and considers any objection or pass over on its own merits in accordance with the [DEOH](#) and applicable DoD Component policy.
 - b. Information regarding CGA shared certificates is provided in various formats by OPM. A consolidated bundle of documentation on CGA shared certificates is available on the [DoD PSHP milSuite platform](#).
2. **Competitive Service Act (CSA):** The CSA of 2015 allows a Federal agency to share hiring certificates with one or more Federal agencies for appointment to a position that is in the same occupational series, grade level (or equivalent), full performance level, and duty location. Individual Federal agencies may conduct recruitments and generate hiring certificates for Government-wide sharing under the CSA authority. The following highlights key areas identified by OPM, the CSA, and [DEOH](#), but is not all inclusive:
 - a. When executing a CSA hiring action, DoD Components reference the applicable steps documented in the [DEOH](#) 'Shared Certificates' section and OPM "[USA Staffing Shared Certificate Guide](#)" to share or receive available certificates. HR practitioners should consult their Component USAS Program Managers for additional information on sharing certificates within USAS and any potential structural limitations inherent to their organization.
 - b. The same information for objections and pass overs in accordance with section 2.2.1.1.a also applies to CSA shared certificates.
 - c. Before making a selection from a CSA shared certificate, the receiving DoD Component provides notification and/or an opportunity to apply via a JOA to (1) candidates on the shared certificate, (2) internal employees, and (3) other individuals the DoD Component must consider, such as DoD PPP and RPL eligibles. Details related to this requirement are provided within the [DEOH](#).
 - d. Information regarding CSA shared certificates is provided in various formats by OPM, initially introduced in 2018 with the release of OPM's Memorandum, "[Implementing Policy Guidance for the Competitive Service Act \(Shared Certificates\)](#)." A consolidated bundle of documentation on CSA shared certificates is available on the [DoD PSHP milSuite platform](#).

2.2.2 Internal – DoD Components: DoD Components conduct recruitments and generate hiring certificates of eligibles for sharing within and/or across DoD Components under their inherent DE authorities.

1. When executing an internal DoD Component shared hiring action, DoD Components follow the applicable steps documented in the [DEOH](#) ‘Shared Certificates’ section and OPM’s “[USA Staffing Shared Certificate Guide](#)” to share or receive available certificates. HR practitioners should consult with their Component USAS Program Managers for additional information on sharing certificates within USAS and any potential structural limitations inherent to their organization.
2. The same information for objections and pass overs in accordance with section 2.2.1.1.a also applies to internal DoD Component shared DE certificates when being shared across Components.
3. As DoD is collectively designated as the Agency, internal DoD Component shared certificates do not follow the same notification requirements for internal employees as CSA shared certificates. Consideration for DoD PPP and RPL eligibles remains, as applicable.
4. Additional information regarding internal DoD Component shared DE certificates is available on the [DoD PSHP milSuite platform](#).

2.2.3 DoD and External Program Considerations

1. All standard DoD and external program considerations are made in accordance with applicable ICTAP, PPP, RPL, Military Spouse or other relevant program requirements.

3.0 TRACKING AND REPORTING

To assess the effectiveness of the PSHP, DoD will periodically review comprehensive information on CI participation, shared DE certificate usage, and Talent Pool utilization rates across DoD Components. Best practices, program insights, and other feedback may be compiled by DoD and shared across the Department.

3.1.1 USA Staffing Candidate Inventory

1. USAS Cognos offers reporting that provides which vacancies have CI enabled, the number of applicants who opted-in to having their application shared, and certificate level information when CI has been enabled. This report can also be accessed by DoD Components in Cognos via the following:
 - Team Content > USA Staffing Packages and Folders > Hiring Data Warehouse > Production Metrics > Candidate Inventory Report

3.1.2 Shared Delegated Examining Certificates

1. DoD Components utilizing shared DE certificates maintain records of the instances of using shared certificates in accordance with the [DEOH](#).

2. Additionally, OPM's Hiring Experience fiscal year reports provide DoD-wide information on Talent Pools and other items (e.g., number of CSA certificates shared or received, number of selections made per DE certificate issued, etc.).

4.0 REFERENCES

- A. [Public Law 114-137, Competitive Service Act \(CSA\) of 2015](#)
- B. [5 CFR §332.408](#)
- C. [5 CFR §330.104](#)
- D. [OPM Bulletin - Guidance to Support Cross-Government Applicant Sharing, 2024](#)
- E. [OPM Candidate Inventory Pre-Implementation Guide, 2024](#)
- F. [OPM USA Staffing Candidate Inventory Business Process Rules Example, 2024](#)
- G. [OPM Candidate Inventory Frequently Asked Questions, 2024](#)
- H. [OPM DEOH, 2019](#)
- I. [OPM Memorandum "Implementing Policy Guidance for the Competitive Service Act \(Shared Certificates\)," January 11, 2018](#)
- J. [OPM Memorandum "New Talent Pools \(Shared Certs\) Feature for USAJOBS' Agency Talent Portal," December 1, 2023](#)
- K. [OPM Competitive Service Act - Shared Certificates Q&As, 2023](#)
- L. [OPM USA Staffing Shared Certificate Guide, 2023](#)
- M. [DoD Pooled and Shared Hiring Program milSuite Platform](#)

5.0 POINT OF CONTACT

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Q1. What is the Department of Defense (DoD) Pooled and Shared Hiring Program (PSHP)?

A1. The DoD PSHP encompasses the candidate sourcing flexibilities of pooled and shared hiring, specifically candidate inventories and shared DE certificates. These strategies and tools are designed to streamline the hiring process for DoD Components, making it more efficient and effective for applicants, hiring managers (HM), and human resources (HR) practitioners. By leveraging the available PSHP strategies and tools, DoD Components can reduce administrative burdens, increase candidate quality, and improve time-to-hire.

Q2. Are Candidate Inventory and shared Delegated Examining certificates the only types of pooled and shared hiring strategies and tools available to DoD Components?

A2. In addition to the DoD PSHP strategies and tools, there are other traditional pooled or shared hiring efforts that may be utilized during the recruitment process. These include bundling recruitments, which involves grouping multiple job openings together to create a single recruitment process; and standing registers outside of Candidate Inventory (CI), which involve creating a pool of pre-screened and qualified candidates available for consideration. Other models, such as exploring available U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Talent Programs (e.g., Pathways Recent Graduates, etc.), can also be effective in supporting the recruitment and hiring needs of a DoD Component.

Q3. What labor obligations are considered when utilizing DoD PSHP strategies and tools?

A3. DoD Component HR practitioners should engage with their Labor Relations Specialists (LRS) to ensure any labor obligations are fulfilled. LRS should review Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) prior to implementing aspects of the PSHP as the CBA takes precedence for bargaining unit employees in cases where the PSHP's provisions differ from the CBA requirements.

USA STAFFING CANDIDATE INVENTORY

Q4. What is Candidate Inventory?

A4. It is a USA Staffing (USAS) database of pre-vetted candidates who have applied for and have been deemed eligible, qualified, and referred on a hiring certificate(s) for certain types of recruitments and positions. It is unique to each DoD Component's hiring needs and can be utilized specifically for non-competitive, Direct Hire Authority (DHA), or merit-based appointments, providing a more tailored candidate pool. This inventory provides the opportunity for candidates to be considered for similar positions to which they were originally referred.

Q5. How can Candidate Inventory be accessed and viewed?

A5. It is accessed through the USAS "Hiring Manager Dashboard." HR practitioners may need to add or change their profile setting in USAS to access and view available candidates.

Q6. What candidates populate in Candidate Inventory?

A6. Although the following list is not all inclusive, a candidate must have opted-in for CI during the application process; been rated as eligible, qualified, and included on a certificate of eligibles within USAS; and the candidate was referred on a certificate of eligibles identified for inclusion in CI by HR.

Q7. Can you turn Candidate Inventory on after a job vacancy has been posted on USAJOBS?

A7. No. The CI feature cannot be enabled for a vacancy once the job opportunity announcement (JOA) is released to USAJOBS.

Q8. What is the length of time that a candidate remains available in Candidate Inventory?

A8. All candidates will remain included until the original hiring certificate they were referred on expires or the Availability End Date is reached. This also includes candidates who have already been selected from the originating hiring certificate, which helps ensure that all candidates have the ability to be considered equitability.

Q9. Can candidates be considered for remote type positions in Candidate Inventory?

A9. HR practitioners have the ability to enable JOA's as "Location Negotiable," providing HMs with the capability to filter candidates for remote type positions.

Q10. What appointing authorities can be used when selecting a candidate from Candidate Inventory?

A10. As candidates are currently on valid and open hiring certificates, a variety of options may be considered: selection from the active hiring certificate; available DHA's for non-competitive selection; non-competitive hiring authorities; or other appointing authorities as determined by the hiring DoD Component.

Q11. What criteria is used to select a candidate from Candidate Inventory?

A11. When sourcing a candidate from CI, the HM and HR should consider candidates for the same or/similar position requirements as the vacancy being filled (e.g., series, grade/full performance level, specialized experience/major duties, testing requirements, duty location/remote work, etc.).

Q12. When selecting a candidate from Candidate Inventory, what is the process for clearing Priority Placement Program, Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan, Reemployment Priority List, Military Spouse or other program requirements?

A12. When sourcing candidates from CI, the selection method used may determine the process for clearing the various priorities. A selection made from the original certificate may not require priority clearance as they were already cleared. However, for example a selection via non-competitive hiring authority may require clearance due to the initiation of a new recruitment.

Q13. What are the record keeping recommendations and requirements when utilizing Candidate Inventory?

A13. The DoD Component originating the hiring certificate for inclusion into CI and the hiring organization making a selection, are both responsible for initiating and retaining recruitment and other case file documentation in accordance with established recordkeeping policies and procedures.

Q14. How can DoD Components monitor selections of new hires from Candidate Inventory?

A14. Within USAS, DoD Components have the ability to tag new hire records with “Candidate Inventory” request tags. Additional request tags can also be added to document the hiring authority utilized (e.g., DHA, Veterans’ Recruitment Appointment (VRA), etc.).

SHARED DELEGATED EXAMINING CERTIFICATES**Q15. What is a shared Delegated Examining (DE) certificate?**

A15. A shared DE certificate is a hiring strategy executed under various existing authorities, specifically (1) OPM Cross Government Action (CGA); (2) the Competitive Service Act (CSA) of 2015; and (3) DoD Component’s inherent DE authorities. All actions are executed in accordance with the Delegated Examining Operating Handbook (DEOH) which provides the foundational policies and procedures for DE, including requirements for certificate issuance, applicant assessment, and selection. DEOH sections, such as candidate ranking, veterans’ preference, and suitability requirements, directly apply to shared certificates.

Q16. How can HR practitioners or HMs obtain additional information on shared Delegated Examining certificates within their organization?

A16. DoD Components have identified Talent Pool Managers (TPM) and Shared Certificate Coordinators (SCC) that have access to the various types of certificates available. Individuals interested in seeking additional information should contact their DoD Component TPM and/or SCC.

Q17. What information is provided to applicants in the JOA or eligibility questionnaire regarding the sharing of their application materials?

A17. DoD Components include statements in the JOA and eligibility questionnaire that identify the ability for application materials to be shared or multiple selections to be made from a recruitment. Additionally, applicants have the opportunity to opt-in or opt-out of having their application materials shared during the application process.

Q18. Who manages the applicant list for a shared certificate and how is it maintained?

A18. The originating DoD Component responsible for the hiring action manages and maintains the applicant list. This ensures that the list remains accurate, up-to-date, and in compliance with DEOH requirements. For ongoing certificate actions, the originating DoD Component is accountable for updating applicant statuses and notifying other participating Federal agencies or DoD Components regarding changes.

Q19. How long is a shared Delegated Examining certificate valid?

A19. The validity of a certificate depends on the type of certificate shared:

- External – CGA: OPM has provided that their CGA certificates are valid for one year.
- External – CSA: The DEOH provides that CSA certificates are valid for a maximum of 240 days. However, the actual figure typically aligns with the duration stipulated by the originating Federal Agency or DoD Component.

- Internal – DoD Component: The originating DoD Component stipulates the duration based on internal guidance, business processes, and workforce needs.

Q20. Prior to making a selection from a Competitive Service Act shared certificate, what options are available for DoD Components meeting the internal consideration requirement?

A20. If a selection is envisioned from a CSA shared certificate, in accordance with the DEOH, the hiring DoD Component must post an internal merit promotion JOA for up to 10 business days and issue a referral list to ensure proper consideration of internal candidates. If the hiring DoD Component has a similar vacancy with an existing JOA, OPM allows the use of that existing JOA to satisfy the internal notice requirement. Alternatively, an existing active certificate for a similar position may also be used to meet this requirement.

Q21. What are the record keeping recommendations and requirements when utilizing shared Delegated Examining certificates?

A21. DoD Components document hiring actions and comply with reporting requirements as specified by OPM and the DEOH Appendix C (Records Retention and Disposition Schedule).

Q22. How can DoD Components monitor selections of new hires from shared Delegated Examining certificates?

A22. Within USAS, DoD Components have the ability to tag new hire records with “Shared Recruitment” request tags. Additional request tags can also be added to document the hiring authority utilized. (e.g., DHA, VRA, etc.).

DOD PSHP MILSUITE PLATFORM

Q23. What is the DoD Pooled and Shared Hiring Program milSuite platform?

A23. The PSHP milSuite platform is a centralized online platform located at <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/groups/dod-pooled-shared-hiring-program-home>. The platform provides a single point of access for available Government-wide Talent Pools, internal DoD Component shared DE certificate information, upcoming OPM and DoD trainings, and a consolidated repository of various resources.

REFERENCES

- Public Law 114-137, Competitive Service Act (CSA) of 2015
- 5 CFR § 332.408
- 5 CFR § 330.104
- OPM Bulletin - Guidance to Support Cross-Government Applicant Sharing, 2024
- OPM Candidate Inventory Pre-Implementation Guide, 2024
- OPM USA Staffing Candidate Inventory Business Process Rules Example, 2024
- OPM Candidate Inventory Frequently Asked Questions, 2024
- OPM DEOH, 2019
- OPM Memorandum “Implementing Policy Guidance for the Competitive Service Act (Shared Certificates),” January 11, 2018
- OPM Memorandum “New Talent Pools (Shared Certs) Feature for USAJOBS’ Agency Talent Portal,” December 1, 2023



- K. [OPM Competitive Service Act - Shared Certificates Q&As, 2023](#)
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