



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

UNDER SECRETARY OF WAR
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

DEC 12 2025

**MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOW FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS**

SUBJECT: Pilot Program on Direct Hire Authority for Spouses of Members of the Uniformed Services at Locations Outside the United States

References: (a) Section 625 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022 (Public Law 117-81), “Pilot Program on Direct Hire Authority for Spouses of Members of the Uniformed Services at Locations Outside the United States”
(b) Executive Order 14151 “Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Program and Preferencing,” January 20, 2025”

Reference (a) provides that the Secretary of War may carry out a pilot program to assess the feasibility and advisability of using a direct hire authority to appoint spouses of members of the Uniformed Services at locations outside the United States. The Department first implemented the pilot on September 28, 2022, and made modifications on June 23, 2023.

This memorandum provides new Defense Civilian Personnel Data System processing requirements for the pilot program conducted pursuant to reference (a). The current reporting requirements remain unchanged. However, the Department has updated the tracking process by adding a flex-field that will allow updates to the uniformed service member’s rank, date of estimated return from overseas, and overseas assignment date. Additionally, a new remark, “ZMS,” will annotate whether the employee is the spouse of a current or former member of the Military Services on the Notification of Personnel Action. These added data points will improve the Department’s ability to collect and analyze data for members of the Uniformed Services; enabling the Department to meet current reporting requirements and to better assess whether the continued usage of this direct hire authority is advisable in the future.

Members of the Uniformed Services must be stationed at locations outside of the United States for their spouses to be eligible for time-limited appointments to a competitive service position within the Department of War (DoW) under this authority. Appointments are made without regard to chapter 33, subchapter I of title 5, U.S. Code, other than sections 3303 and 3328.

This pilot is limited to appropriated fund positions within DoW Components, located outside the United States at the General Schedule and Federal Wage System grades 15 and below (or equivalent). The appointment of such spouses is limited to positions in the commuting area of the Uniformed Service member’s assigned duty location outside the United States.

The attached updated implementing guidance incorporates administrative changes in accordance with reference (b). No new appointments may be made under this authority after December 31, 2026.

Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Memorandum, "Pilot Program on Direct Hire Authority for Spouses of Members of the Uniformed Services at Locations Outside the United States," June 23, 2023, is rescinded.

For more information, my point of contact is Ms. LaToya Bedgood, Associate Director, Employment and Compensation, Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service, at (240) 263-6810 or latoya.n.bedgood.civ@mail.mil.



Anthony J. Tata

Attachments:
As stated

**UPDATED IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES FOR THE PILOT PROGRAM ON
DIRECT HIRE AUTHORITY FOR SPOUSES OF MEMBERS OF THE UNIFORMED
SERVICES AT LOCATIONS OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES**

1. Authority.

a. Section 625 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2022 (Public Law 117-81) provides that the Secretary of Defense may carry out a pilot program to assess the feasibility and advisability of using a direct hire authority (DHA) to appoint spouses of members of the Uniformed Services at locations outside the United States.

b. The authority to appoint qualified individuals under this DHA is delegated to Secretaries of the Military Departments, Directors of the Defense Agencies, and Directors of the Department of War (DoW) Field Activities with independent appointing authority for themselves and their serviced organization as defined in their respective DoW chartering directives, hereafter referred to as “DoW Components.”

(1) Appointments under this authority may not be made after December 31, 2026, when the pilot program terminates, unless this date is extended by future legislation. Any appointment made prior to this date will continue until the term of the appointment expires, subject to the conditions provided in 5.c.

(2) The authority should primarily be used to appoint qualified candidates who are not existing DoW competitive service employees with permanent status. Permanent competitive status employees appointed under this DHA require a 3-day break in service.

(3) These DHA appointments will not provide eligibility to noncompetitively convert to a career or career conditional appointment.

(4) Appointments must be made on a time-limited basis. Initial appointments will not exceed 2 years with the ability to extend for two additional terms (not to exceed 2 years each) for a total of 6 years.

2. Use of DHA.

This DHA enables DoW Components to appoint qualified individuals without regard to the competitive rating and ranking procedures established under the provisions of subchapter I of chapter 33 of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.) (other than sections 3303 and 3328 of such chapter). The following principles will be followed when exercising this authority:

- a. Merit factors will be the basis for selecting individuals for positions.
- b. DoW Components must ensure transparency, accountability, and auditability in hiring processes.
- c. Use of this authority does not interfere with a Component’s ability to appoint spouses

of Uniformed Services personnel in overseas locations under any other overseas family member hiring authorities, including the Overseas Family Member Excepted Service Schedule A hiring authority under DoD Instruction, 1400.25 Volume 1232, “DoD Civilian Personnel Management System: Employment of Family Members in Foreign Areas,” January 5, 2012.

3. Covered Positions.

a. The pilot program is exclusive to appropriated fund positions within DoW Components which are:

- (1) Permanently located outside the United States;
- (2) Under the General Schedule and Federal Wage Systems; and
- (3) Grades 15 and below (or equivalent).

b. DoW Components may use this authority with a temporary or permanent manpower authorization for positions that are typically open to spouses of uniform services personnel at locations outside the United States.

c. Covered positions do not include positions requiring the incumbent to deploy.

4. Definitions.

a. Local commuting area, as defined in 5 CFR § 351.203, means the geographic area that usually constitutes one area for employment purposes. It includes any population center (or two or more neighboring ones) and the surrounding localities in which people live and can reasonably be expected to travel back and forth daily to their usual employment. In conjunction with this definition, when a spouse's commute expands beyond the local commuting area, the distance the individual commutes between the residence and duty station must be used in determining the commuting area.

b. The United States, as defined in 10 U.S.C. § 101(a)(1), means the States and the District of Columbia.

c. A Uniformed Services spouse is the wife or husband of an active duty member of the Uniformed Services.

d. The Secretary concerned is the Secretary of the Army, Navy, and Air Force with respect to matters concerning their respective departments and the Secretary of Homeland Security for matters concerning the Coast Guard when it is operating as a Service in the Department of Homeland Security. This includes the Secretary of Commerce with respect to matters concerning the commissioned officer corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Secretary of Health and Human Services with respect to matters concerning the commissioned corps of the Public Health Service.

e. Term appointment is a time-limited appointment lasting longer than 1 year. Employees do not receive permanent status.

f. The Uniformed Services is defined in 10 U.S.C. § 101(a)(4)-(5).

5. Appointment Eligibility.

a. A spouse who accompanies a member of the Uniformed Services stationed at duty locations outside the United States is eligible to be appointed to a time-limited appointment (initially not to exceed 2 years) using this authority when:

(1) The spouse has been authorized to accompany the Uniformed Services member to the duty location on permanent change of station (PCS) orders at Government expense;

(2) The position offered is within the local commuting area (as defined under Section 4, above) of the Uniformed Services member's assigned duty location; and

(3) The spouse resides with the member of the Uniformed Services in the same local commuting area of the member's duty assignment.

b. Appointments under this authority will be made on a time-limited basis in the competitive service for a timeframe not to exceed 2 years. Appointments may be extended for two additional terms (for no more than 2 years each term), for a total of 6 years.

c. Appointments made under this authority will terminate either upon expiration of the term or upon the end of the sponsoring Uniformed Service member's accompanied tour.

d. Spouses of Uniformed Services personnel appointed under this authority are responsible for notifying the applicable human resource offices when a change in one of the above conditions impacts their appointment eligibility. Termination actions must be processed timely.

6. Termination of Appointments.

a. Human Resource Offices will process a "Termination-Exp of Appointment" or a "Termination-Sponsor Relocating" action (whichever is applicable) for all spouses meeting the criteria under 5.c.(1)-(5), above.

b. Under this authority, spouses of Uniformed Services personnel are not eligible for leave without pay when moving back to the United States with or without their Uniformed Service member sponsor.

7. Payment of Travel and Transportation Allowances.

Appointments under this authority do not entitle spouses of Uniformed Services personnel to their own relocation expenses. Spouses are only authorized relocation travel in

conjunction with the Uniformed Services member's official PCS orders.

8. Announcement and Assessment Process.

- a. Public notice is not required; however, if posting job opportunity announcements, DoW Components must use announcements that are easily understood.
- b. DoW Components should ensure published information clearly explains that the DoW military spouse preference program is not applicable to this appointing authority.
- c. DoW Components will establish recruiting procedures that facilitate the identification of qualified individuals for referral to management for selection and appointment consistent with applicable ethics rules.
- d. DoW Components must ensure that merit system principles as enumerated in 5 U.S.C. § 2301, are followed when receiving applications, referring candidates, and notifying applicants regarding receipt and status of their applications.
- e. Potential applicants should have access to information on how to apply for positions, and the basis on which they will be assessed to meet the qualifying criteria.
- f. DoW Components will assess candidates against job-related criteria, ensuring they have the skills, education, training, and behavioral attributes that provide for successful job performance. The Office of Personnel Management qualification standards or DoW qualification standards will be used to determine if candidates have the required job-related experience and education.
- g. Selectees for entry level positions requiring the Administrative Careers with America (ACWA) assessment must be assessed using the most recent, streamlined ACWA examination or a validated alternative assessment instrument (e.g., select USA HIRE assessments).
- h. Appointments under this authority are subject to the Priority Placement Program. Procedures applicable to the use of a statutory DoW DHA may be found in the Priority Placement Program Handbook, Chapter 4, Appendix B.

9. Appointing Authority.

- a. The nature of action (NOA) for initial appointments under this authority will be a 108; extension will be processed using NOA 765. Appointments will use the following Legal Authority Code/Legal Authority:

Z5CAP/NDAA 2022 Section 625- MILITARY SPOUSE, PL 117-81 dtd 12/27/2021

- b. Update the uniformed service members rank, date estimated return from overseas (known as DERO), and overseas assignment date.

Data Definition File (DDF) - “Overseas Uniformed Services Spouse DDF”

c. Include remark “ZMS” - “Employee is the spouse of a current or former member of the Armed Forces”

10. Responsibilities.

Each DoD Component is responsible for determining the appropriate use of this DHA to meet workforce needs, ensuring implementation is in accordance with merit system principles.

a. The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness is responsible for developing implementing guidance and policies.

b. The Secretaries of the Military Departments (Army, Navy, Air Force and Homeland Security for the Coast Guard when it is operating as a Service of the Department of Homeland Security) have the responsibility for determining if a duty location is within reasonable commuting distance of a position, using the definition provided in Section 4 above.

c. The Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service (DCPAS) will oversee and monitor use of this authority throughout the DoW, including the commissioned corps National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the commissioned corps of the Public Health Service.

d. DoW Components are responsible for oversight, accountability, and meeting the reporting requirements for themselves and their serviced organizations. Components are required to report on the usage and effectiveness of the authority as requested by DCPAS.

e. Documentation for appointments made under this authority must be sufficient to allow reconstruction of actions taken and must be maintained for 2 years (e.g., resumes, job opportunity announcements, candidate referral lists, if applicable).

f. Appointments under this authority will be evaluated as part of the DoW Human Capital Framework.

11. Reporting.

DoW Components are required to report on the use of this authority to DCPAS by October 15 annually. These Component reports will be used to support congressional reporting requirements. Component reports must include metrics regarding types of positions filled and types of candidates appointed, including the following:

a. Number of spouses of Uniformed Services personnel appointed under this section;

b. The position series and grade to which each spouse of Uniformed Services personnel was appointed;

c. Demographic data such as race, sex, age, and education level attained on the

individuals described in paragraph 11.a;

d. Data (i.e., pay grade, overseas assignment date, and date eligible or estimated to return from overseas), on the members of the Uniformed Services whose spouses have been appointed under this pilot, including the rank of such member;

e. Analysis on the feasibility and use of this DHA in the overseas environment;

f. The manner in which reasonable commuting distances were determined as they pertain to position locations.

Reports prepared by DCPAS for transmittal to Congress containing recommendations to Congress for legislative action require Office of Management and Budget clearance.