

Priority placement for Department of Defense (DoD) employees in retained grade status due to reduction in force (RIF) or reclassification change-to-lower grade is the means by which employees receive consideration for placement at DoD activities in their commuting area. Employees are granted grade retention under Part 536 of Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations.

WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR RETAINED GRADE EMPLOYEES?

Retained grade employees are eligible to exercise their priority status upon the effective date of the action placing them in retained grade. Eligibility continues for the 2-year period authorized for grade retention.

Employees with grade retention in the excepted service are eligible for placement only in excepted service positions unless they have personal competitive status.

HOW DO I EXERCISE MY PRIORITY STATUS AS A RETAINED GRADE EMPLOYEE?

Retained grade employees should be aware that the PPP process has been simplified by eliminating the registration requirement. It allows retained grade employees to exercise their priority status for a variety of positions by simply applying to the vacancy announcement.

- To exercise priority status through the application-based process, retained grade employees must:
 - Create a login.gov account to sign in to USAJOBS (first time users). Login.gov is a service that offers secure and private online access to government programs, such as Federal benefits, services, and applications. To establish a login.gov account, the PPP applicant must:
 - Use the same email address for login.gov and USAJOBS.
 - Create a new password.
 - Have a working phone number (mobile or landline); login.gov will send a unique security code each time the account is accessed.
 - Build or post a resume to the USAJOBS profile and upload essential documents. Examples of essential documents may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Retained Grade PPP Self-Certification Checklist, which must be included with each job application.
 - Notification of Personnel Action, Standard Form (SF)-50, effecting the placement in retained grade status; and
 - A copy of the notification letter the employee received (RIF or classification downgrade).

- Apply to and submit all required documentation listed in the job opportunity announcements (JOAs) for which interested and available.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE JOA CLOSES?

- Once the JOA closes, the HRO will evaluate the applications and refer eligible applicants to the selecting official for consideration.
- You will receive a notification from USAJOBS on the status of your application and whether you were referred to the selecting official.
- When exercising priority placement status through the application-based process, retained grade employees, if determined well qualified, will preclude new appointments, conversions, and transfers unless a PPP exception applies.

WHEN DOES MY ELIGIBILITY FOR RETAINED GRADE TERMINATE?

- Eligibility for PPP terminates upon:
 - Placement in a permanent Federal position at or above the retained grade;
 - Declination of a PPP job offer; or
 - Expiration of retained grade eligibility (2 years).

DOES PRIORITY PLACEMENT FOR RETAINED GRADE EMPLOYEES APPLY TO ALL DOD JOB VACANCIES?

No. Priority placement for retained-grade employees is limited to permanent DoD appropriated-funded positions in the commuting area and at the same grade as the employee's retained grade.

WHAT TYPES OF POSITIONS CAN I APPLY FOR?

The following guidelines will govern your JOA choices:

- You must meet all established Federal and DoD qualification requirements.
- You may apply for permanent DoD appropriated-funded positions at your retained grade.

- You may include any or all DoD installations/organizations within your commuting area. There are no permanent change of station (PCS) entitlements for employees exercising their priority status unless PCS is authorized outside of the PPP.

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

In all cases, when you apply for DoD positions as a retained grade employee priority placement eligible, you must follow all instructions as required by the JOA. This process is necessary in order for the HRO to determine if you are well qualified for the position. The evaluation factors used to rank you are the same factors that apply to all candidates. If you do not submit an application and all required documentation, you will not be considered for the position.

Employees on grade retention who are serving overseas may only exercise their priority placement status for activities within their commuting area. These employees are eligible if they can complete 1 year of service prior to the expiration of the tour, or if they can complete 1 year of service prior to the expiration of the 5-year limitation on overseas employment.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

The PPP is too complex to adequately explain in such an abbreviated format. This information only provides an overview of the program's basic policies and procedures. For more details, contact your supporting HRO. You can also find detailed information on the Office of Personnel Management public website at <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/pay-administration/fact-sheets/grade-retention/>