

FINAL RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation of the Action Plan Team: Staff Development

Statement of Issue #3-35: R-120 (Revised)

Summary: R-120 – Review existing promotional rules to ensure the flexibility exists to preserve the availability of those critical skills, and seek modification where required.

Recommendation: USFA does not have the authority to change personnel regulations, however, supervisors and managers are encouraged to gain a better understanding of them. Where appropriate, establish career ladder positions within the organization.

Background: The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) through 5 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) has established the criteria for promotion and internal placement. As positions are established and classified, the grade level is determined. Grade levels for a particular position are based on the duties and responsibilities of the position as described in the position description. Each position description includes a list of the major duties of the position and the factors related to that position. Among the factors are knowledge required by the position, complexity, scope and effect, supervisory controls, and guidelines. These factors address any required critical knowledge and skills, degree of difficulty, impact of the work being performed, and presence or lack of guidelines for performing the work. Supervisors are responsible for developing and maintaining the position descriptions. The grade level of the position is based on the work that is required by the position, not how well the employee performs the work or how much work the employee does.

The staff located at NETC do not have the same flexibility as do their counterparts in the Washington metropolitan area. The total Federal workforce at NETC is small. There are no other Federal agencies in the immediate area to transfer to for promotion purposes, and many employees choose to work at NETC rather than commute to areas with a larger Federal workforce. Staffing at NETC is a mix of support and specialist positions that require either specific educational requirements and/or work experience that limits the potential for upward mobility for staff in support positions.

The Field Personnel Division of the FEMA's Office of Human Resource Management has provided sessions to help USFA staff better understand position classification, staffing, and the merit promotion process. The sessions will continue to be offered as long as there is interest.

Conclusion: USFA employees are governed by the Code of Federal Regulations with regard to minimum qualifications for hiring and the establishment of grade levels for position classification. Based on the needs of the organization, a position may have promotion potential when it is classified. As an employee ascends through the rank of

the position and reaches the top of the grade, a promotion is unlikely unless the employee changes positions either inside or outside the organization. Often times employees are forced into taking supervisory appointments to obtain a promotion opportunity.

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