



The ABCs of Schedule A Tips for Hiring Managers on using the Schedule A Appointing Authority

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INTRODUCTION

Americans with disabilities lead thriving businesses, teach our children, and serve our Nation; they are innovators and pioneers of technology. In urban centers and rural communities, they carry forward our Nation's legacy of hard work, responsibility, and sacrifice, and their contributions strengthen our economy and remind us that all Americans deserve the opportunity to participate fully in society.

As the nation's largest employer, the federal government is committed to increasing and improving employment opportunities for people with disabilities. By including people with disabilities, we are better able to serve the America.

Managers across the government know that hiring talented and highly qualified job seekers can be challenging. In addition, the federal government's recruitment and hiring process may at times be complicated and time-consuming. One way to expedite the process and without compromising on the caliber of candidates is to use the Schedule A hiring authority for persons with disabilities!

What is Schedule A hiring authority for persons with disabilities?

The **Schedule A hiring authority for individuals with disabilities** (<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/disability-employment/hiring/#url=Schedule-A-Hiring-Authority>) streamlines the often complex federal hiring process. Agencies can hire qualified individuals with disabilities without posting a job announcement or going through the certificate process.

Using Schedule A benefits federal agencies, in particular hiring managers, by greatly expediting the hiring process. It can also assist an agency in being a model employer for people with disabilities as mandated under **Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973** (<https://www.eeoc.gov/statutes/rehabilitation-act-1973>). In short, using Schedule A is a Win-Win for all!

Ready to learn the ABCs for Schedule A Success?

This guide answers many questions Hiring Managers may have about using Schedule A to hire individuals with disabilities.



A. Starting the Hiring Process

Managers should consider using the Schedule A hiring authority as soon as you have a hiring need. As a best practice, Managers should contact both the Human Resource professional and the Disability Program Manager (DPM) or Special Placement Program Coordinator (SPPC) about the opening before taking steps to formalizing the job announcement. Explain what competencies the ideal candidate should possess and what functions are essential versus non-essential. The DPM or SPPC then has an opportunity to search their candidate database and send you several resumes of qualified Schedule A eligible candidates who have the requisite skills and are actively seeking employment opportunities.

- *Quick Tip:* Depending on the agency, the DPM or SPPC may be part of the Human Resources department or the EEO office. If you don't know who it is, ask your HR Professional.



B. Review Resumes and Interview Candidates

While the DPM/SPPC or HR professional will typically make an initial determination as to which candidates are qualified for the position you wish to fill, once you receive the list of Schedule A eligible candidates, you should review each application to ensure the candidate is qualified for the job.

It is important to remember that **Schedule A is an affirmative action program for people with disabilities**. Therefore, the assessment should focus on determining whether the candidate is "likely to succeed" in the job. When making this determination you should consider the totality of the applicant's qualifications

including, but not limited to, employment experience, education, volunteer work or other relevant experience.

Once you have identified your top three to five candidates you should start conducting interviews. Below are best practices for interviewing candidates with disabilities:

- Before the interview, check with the DPM/SPPC to confirm whether the applicant's reasonable accommodation requests for the interview, if needed, are in place.
- During the interview, assess the candidate based on their ability to do the job. Do not ask disability related questions including questions about their Schedule A eligibility.
- For more information on interviewing "do's and don't" read: **Interviewing Candidates with Disabilities (<https://askearn.org/topics/recruitment-hiring/interviews/>)** by the **Employer Assistance Resource Network (<http://askearn.org/>)**.



C. On-boarding and Conversion

Once a selection decision is made, you should notify the appropriate HR Professional. He or she will then extend an offer of employment on behalf of the agency. Once the offer has been accepted, a start date will be established to bring the candidate on board. This requires coordination with the SPPC/DPM and/or your servicing HR specialist to ensure that any accommodation which may be needed is in place on your new employee's first day.

Finally, **probationary periods** for Schedule A employees typically last up to **two years**. Schedule A candidates should be held to the same performance standards as all other employees. Managers are strongly encouraged to track the date the employee is eligible for conversion into the competitive service. If you feel the employee will successfully complete the probationary period, you should let HR know that the employee should be converted to the competitive service



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1: Who is eligible for appointment under Schedule A hiring authority for persons with disabilities?

A1. Schedule A regulations (**5 CFR § 213.3102(u)** (http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?rgn=div5&node=5:1.0.1.2.22#se5.1.213_13102)) specify that a person must have an *intellectual disability*, a *severe physical disability* or a *psychiatric disability* to be appointed using this hiring authority. The regulations do not specifically include or exclude particular disabilities under those three categories of disabilities.

Q2. Is this appointment to a permanent position?

A2. Agencies are strongly encouraged to make permanent appointments unless there is a compelling reason to do otherwise. However, the Schedule A appointing authority can be used to make a temporary appointment or a time-limited appointment when the duties of the position do not require it to be filled on a permanent basis.

Q3. Are agencies required to convert Schedule A hires into the competitive service at the end of the two year period for noncompetitive conversion?

A3. No. However, when the employee is performing satisfactorily, agencies are **strongly urged to convert** Schedule A appointees at the end of the two year period for noncompetitive conversion. The intent behind Schedule A is to help people with disabilities attain "civil service competitive status." Civil service competitive status is obtained through conversion to the competitive service, rather than remaining in the excepted service.

Q4. Are managers required to choose among the candidates submitted by the DPM/SPPC?

A4. If you are not satisfied with any of the Schedule A applicants presented to you, you retain the option of using the traditional competitive process to fill the vacancy.

Q5. What should supervisors and managers know about requests for reasonable accommodations?

A5. A request for accommodation is made any time an applicant or an employee asks for some change in the workplace or in the way things are usually done because of a medical condition. A request may be made to an employee's supervisor, another supervisor or manager in the employee's immediate chain of command, the EEO office, or any other office or individual designated by the agency to receive requests or oversee the reasonable accommodation process. Applicants may request accommodation from the DPM or SPPC, from an HR staff person, or from the hiring manager.

Because an accommodation request does not have to contain any magic words, a hiring manager should **consider whether the reasonable accommodation obligation applies before denying any request for an adjustment or change to the application process, or one that may be requested to perform the job, for a reason related to a medical condition.** Hiring managers should familiarize themselves with their agency's reasonable accommodation procedures to ensure that a request for reasonable accommodation is handled appropriately and in a timely manner. If you are uncertain where to locate your agency's accommodation procedures, consult with HR department or EEO office.

- For more information on reasonable accommodations, read: the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (**EEOC** (<https://www.eeoc.gov/>)) ***Policy Guidance on Executive Order 13164*** (<https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/policy-guidance-executive-order-13164-establishing-procedures-facilitate-provision>) and Part IV in the EEOC's ***Question and Answers: Promoting Employment of Individuals with Disabilities in the Federal Workforce*** (<https://www.eeoc.gov/federal-sector/questions-and-answers-promoting-employment-individuals-disabilities-federal>).
- For practical tips and resources on federal accommodation programs read: the Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment's (**ODEP** (<http://www.dol.gov/odep/>)) fact sheet ***Advancing Opportunities: Accommodations Resources for Federal Managers and Employees*** (<https://ecommons.cornell.edu/handle/1813/76631>).



RESOURCES

eFedLink (<https://efedlink.org/login/index.cfm>): eFedLink is a free resource designed to help federal hiring managers and human resources personnel recruit, hire, retain and advance persons with disabilities in the federal government.

Employer Assistance and Resource Network (EARN) (<http://askearn.org/>): EARN is a resource for employers seeking to recruit, hire, retain and advance qualified employees with disabilities. EARN supports employers through toll-free technical assistance, individualized consultation, customized trainings, webinars and events, and regular updates on disability employment news.

Recruitment & Outreach

- The **Workforce Recruitment Program (<https://www.wrp.gov/wrp>)**, a recruitment and referral program, co-sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy, and the U.S. Department of Defense, connects federal sector, private, and nonprofit employers nationwide with highly motivated, qualified, and pre-screened postsecondary students and recent graduates with disabilities who are ready to prove their abilities in summer or permanent jobs.
- The **OPM Shared List of People with Disabilities (<http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/disability-employment/recruiting/#url=OPM-CHCO-Shared-List-of-People-with-Disabilities>)** is a database of candidates with disabilities, who are Schedule A eligible. It is provided by OPM free of charge to federal human resources and hiring managers in order to assist in the recruitment of people with disabilities. Prior to inclusion in the Shared List, candidates proceed through a skills, education, professionalism, and work ethics screening process.
- **Vocational Rehabilitation (<https://rsa.ed.gov/about/states>):** Vocational rehabilitation state agencies facilitate a wide range of services for youth and adults with disabilities that help prepare them with skills to meet the workplace needs of business. The Council of State Administrators of

Vocational Rehabilitation has created a **National Employment Team** (<https://www.csavr.org/the-net>) (The NET) that offers businesses a single point of contact to connect with qualified applicants, resources, and support services in their local area.

- **Employment Networks** (<http://www.chooseworkttw.net/findhelp/>): Employment Networks are public or private organizations that are authorized by the **Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work Program** (<http://www.socialsecurity.gov/work/index.html>) to provide free employment support services to Social Security disability beneficiaries ages 18 to 64.
- **The Department of Veterans Affairs** (<http://www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/>): The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program, administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, assists Veterans with service-connected disabilities and service members who are in the process of transitioning from the military to civilian employment in preparing for, finding, and retaining suitable employment.
- **Centers for Independent Living (CILs)** (<http://www.ilru.org/projects/cil-net/cil-center-and-association-directory/>): The Centers for Independent Living are federally funded consumer-controlled nonprofit, nonresidential organizations. The CILs' mission is to empower people with disabilities by providing information and referral services, independent living skills training, peer counseling, and transition services, and by developing additional services based on community needs. A growing number of CILs are Employment Networks and offer additional services such as job interview practice and other pre-employment services to people with disabilities.

Employee Organizations

Partnering with the Employee Resource Group (ERG) at your agency for persons with disabilities can help you with your recruitment and outreach efforts. Below are links to National Employee Resource Groups for federal employees and applicants with disabilities:

- **Deaf in Government (DIG)** (<http://www.deafingov.org>)
- **Federal Employees with Disabilities (FEDs)** (<http://www.fedsfirst.com/>)

Reasonable Accommodation

- **Department of Defense Computer/Electronic Accommodation Program:** (<http://www.cap.mil/Default.aspx>)_The Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program (CAP) provides free assistive technology and services to people with disabilities throughout the federal government.
- **JAN (<https://askjan.org/>)**- The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is the most comprehensive resource for job accommodations available and is a terrific and easy-to-use resource. This free consulting service is designed to increase the employability of people with disabilities. JAN provides individualized worksite accommodation solutions, as well as information on job accommodations and related subjects for employers and people with disabilities.
- **U.S Department of Agriculture TARGET Center:** (<http://www.targetcenter.dm.usda.gov/>)_The TARGET Center accommodates individuals with disabilities, educates management, and supports agency efforts to increase the recruitment and advancement of individuals with disabilities. Federal agencies have access to the TARGET Center accessibility, interpreting services, ergonomics and education programs.
- **Federal Communications Commission Disability Rights Office:** (<http://www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/disability-rights-office>)_The **Disability Rights Office (DRO)** addresses disability-related matters, including access to telecommunications services and equipment; hearing aid compatibility; access to advanced communications services and equipment; access to Internet browsers built into mobile phones; telecommunications relay services; the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program; accessible video programming and video programming apparatus (access to televised emergency information, closed captioning on television and television programs on the Internet, video description, and accessible user interfaces, text menus, and program guides). DRO provides expert advice and assistance to other Commission Bureaus and Offices, consumers, industry, and others on issues relevant to persons with disabilities.

