

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Priority Placement Program (PPP)

Q. What is the Priority Placement Program (PPP)?

A. The PPP is an automated mandatory placement program used to match eligible well-qualified employees, most of whom are subject to displacement, with vacant positions throughout DoD. It enables DoD to maintain a relatively stable work force during base realignment and closure, reduction-in-force, contracting out, etc., and minimizes the adverse effect of these actions on employees. The PPP has long been the most effective program of its kind in the Federal government.

Q. I have heard that DoD activities are required to clear all of their vacant positions through the PPP. Are there any exceptions to this requirement?

A. Yes. The PPP Operations Manual, Chapter 4, Section C, lists a number of standard exceptions that can be applied by DoD activities. For example, an employee who is subject to involuntary separation due to job abolishment may be reassigned to a vacant position within the same activity as an exception to the PPP. In addition to these standard exceptions, activities may seek case-by-case approval for exceptions that are in keeping with the spirit and intent of the PPP.

Q. What is the impact of the PPP on DoD staffing programs? With so many employees registered for mandatory placement, it seems that managers would have few opportunities to make selections from merit promotion lists or other traditional recruitment sources.

A. There is a widespread misconception that the PPP has a significant impact on the DoD staffing process. Recent surveys have revealed that PPP placements account for less than three percent of all positions filled. This is a very conservative figure since placement actions that are normally exempt from the PPP were not counted.

Q. What can a registrant do to increase his/her chances for success in the PPP?

A. The single most important determinant of success is mobility. Registrants who are willing to relocate are placed more often than those who register only for their current commuting area. Except for those in hard-to-find jobs, most employees who register on a broad geographic basis eventually receive offers. Registering for lower grades also increases the probability of an offer.

Q. Are managers permitted to interview PPP registrants?

A. No. With the exception of military spouses referred under competitive procedures (see PPP Operations Manual, Chapter 14, Section F1a), managers may not interview PPP registrants. The purpose of interviews is to enable the manager to select the best qualified candidate, while the intent of the PPP is simply to insure that a well qualified candidate is placed. Interviews are not only beyond the scope of the PPP, they would also significantly delay the placement process, adversely affecting both registrants and activities. Additionally, the number of referrals and the geographic dispersion of PPP registrants render interviews impractical.

Q. If an activity receives ten Priority 1 resumes, what criteria must be applied in order to determine which registrant receives the job offer?

A. The PPP does not impose ranking factors within individual Priority groups (in this case, Priority 1). As long as offers are made in Priority order (e.g., priority 1 registrants before priority 2 and 3 registrants and priority 2 before priority 3), activities may normally select any well-qualified registrant. Exceptions to this general rule are listed in the PPP Operations Manual, Chapter 4, Section D6a.

Q. If the position that is offered to a PPP registrant requires shift work, is the offer considered valid?

A. Yes. However, CARE Program Coordinators can approve exceptions on a case-by-case basis. Exceptions have been approved in cases involving compelling circumstances that are beyond the registrants' control.

Q. If a GS employee receives an offer at his/her current grade in a geographic area with a lower locality rate, is the offer valid? What about a WG employee who receives an offer at his/her current grade in an area with lower wage rates?

A. Yes, the offer is valid in both cases.

Q. An employee was involuntarily demoted due to performance problems. The employee's performance has improved significantly and the supervisor now wishes to repromote the employee to the former position, which has recently been vacated. Can the employee be promoted as an exception to the PPP?

A. No. Repromotions are subject to the PPP except under the specific circumstances outlined in the PPP Operations Manual, Chapter 4, Section C2a(2). This repromotion is not an authorized exception.

Q. My activity gives priority merit promotion consideration to employees who are receiving grade retention benefits. Does this offset the need to register employees in the DoD Retained Grade Placement Program (Program R)?

A. No. DoD employees must be registered in Program R while serving under grade retention, even if they receive consideration for noncompetitive repromotion under an activity's merit promotion program. Unlike Program R, such programs do not provide referral to other activities in the commuting area, nor do they necessarily obligate selecting officials to make job offers to well qualified candidates.

Q. May a military spouse register in the Military Spouse Preference Program (Program S) for referral to activities in the commuting area of the sponsor's new duty station, and remain at the current duty station until an offer is received?

A. No. A military spouse is eligible to register in Program S only when accompanying the sponsor to the new permanent duty station. Except for the 30-day period preceding the sponsor's reporting date (see PPP Operations Manual, Chapter 14, Section D1), spouses are not eligible to register prior to relocation.

Q. In conjunction with a reduction-in-force, an activity is separating all temporary employees. Is there an outplacement program for employees who are on non-permanent appointments?

A. Yes. Temporary employees may register in the Defense Outplacement Referral System (DORS) for as long as they remain on the DoD rolls. This program provides courtesy referral to DoD activities, other Federal agencies, and private sector employers. However, selection of a DORS registrant is not mandatory.