

Upward Mobility Program

951.1

Chapter 3. Upward Mobility Program Requirements and Procedures

3-1. Eligibility.

Trainees will be selected competitively under the Department's Merit Staffing Policy, HUD Handbook 335.1 , Rev-2, from among those HUD employees who:

are currently in positions at the GS-2 through GS-9 levels or equivalent; and

are currently serving under a Career or Career-Conditional Appointment; or are serving under Schedule A Authority 213.3102(u) for employment of severely physically disabled individuals; or

are serving under a Veterans Readjustment Appointment (VRA). Applicant must have completed one year of training under VRA to be eligible. If selected, VRA appointees will be reassigned to trainee positions, and their initial training agreements under the VRA appointment, if not entirely completed, may be terminated or amended at that time. They will remain on their VRA appointment, however, until such time as they have completed the required two years of service necessary for conversion to competitive status. At that time VRA's may be converted to competitive service under the provisions of CFR 315.703(b); and

have completed 90 days of service following their initial competitive appointment.

Employees above the GS-9 level who are in one-grade interval occupational series, who do not currently meet the Qualification Standards for two-grade interval positions in the occupation and grade of the Upward Mobility position and who are willing to take a change to lower grade also may apply when the above conditions are met.

Candidates for the Upward Mobility Program must demonstrate the potential to perform higher level work and can reasonably be expected to perform the duties of the target position within two years. Potential is an abstract term which refers to an individual's ability, aptitude and/or desire to do something or learn to do something. Potential cannot be measured in the abstract but must be viewed in relationship to the criteria for specific trainees and target positions.

3-2. Vacancy Announcement and Evaluation Process.

All vacancy announcements for Upward Mobility positions will be prepared in accordance with HUD Handbook 335.1 REV-2, Merit Staffing Policy and/or the Negotiated Bargaining Agreement. Announcements will be electronically posted and published on HUD Form 878.1, Notice of Position Vacancy-An Upward Mobility Program Opportunity (See Appendix 1). The personnel representative will prepare the vacancy announcement based on the merit staffing request and the job analysis. The vacancy announcement shall contain:

Description of the trainee position;

Identification of the target position's title, series and grade;

Full performance level (i.e., Maximum grade potential);

Eligibility requirements for program participation;

Minimum Qualification Standards and notation of waiver based on HUD-OPM Special Training Agreement;

Application procedures, including opening and closing dates, how-to-apply, and other required information; and

In cases where the bridge approach is used, the announcement will identify the bridge position's title and the target position's title.

Applications shall be rated and ranked by careful evaluation of the following elements/factors and assigned numerical scores for each (see Method IB, Appendix 2):

Work experience - score 20;
Current performance appraisal - score 20;
Appraisal of potential - score 40;
Education and training - score 10; and
Achievements and Awards - score 10.

In the event that Method IB does not produce a sufficient number of quality candidates, the Crediting Plan method in the Merit Staffing Policy may be substituted.

Applicants will be considered only for the specific position for which they have applied and have been found eligible. Final selections will be made by selecting officials after interviewing all of the best qualified candidates on the selection roster. Selected trainees will be required to participate in formal training or education, and intensive on-the-job training.

3-3. Salary Adjustments for Trainees.

Pay Retention Provisions.

The acceptance of a change to lower grade to enter the Upward Mobility program entitles the trainee to pay retention. However, the existing salary of most trainees can be accommodated within the rate range of the grade of the trainee position under the highest previous rate rule.

Annual Comparability Pay Raise.

Trainees who are under pay retention during the annual comparability pay increase are entitled to 50% (one half) of the increase in maximum rate of basic pay (10th step) of the grade level actually held. For example, a trainee was changed to lower grade from a GS-9, step 3 to a GS-7 with pay retention. A comparability increase is granted. The trainee, who is still being paid at the GS-9/3 level, is entitled to receive 50% of the increase for the GS-7/10 grade level.

3-4. Individual Training and Development Plan.

The Individual Training and Development Plan (IDP) is prepared by the supervisor with input from the trainee, personnel specialist or Academy Training Consultant, and/or Upward Mobility Program Coordinator. (See HUD Form 931, Appendix 3.) The process should start immediately after a selection has been made, and should be finalized within 30 days after the trainee enters the program. The participants in the development process should focus on the following areas:

Personnel Representative or Academy Training Consultant
and/or Program Coordinator.

Program Requirements
Qualification Requirements for the target position
Trainee's background
Length of training require
Types of required training, education, and
developmental assignments

Supervisor.

Trainee's background and advancement potential
Organization's needs and expectations
Developmental assignments
Types of training and educational requirements

c. Trainee.

Strengths and weaknesses

Short and long range goals
Program requirements and expectations
Organization requirements and expectations
Training and education requirements

Group Discussion (Supervisor, Trainee, Personnel Representative/Academy Training Coordinator/Program Coordinator).

Knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA's) to be acquired.
Material topics to be covered
Methods of instruction to be used (on-the-job, classroom, etc.)
Amount of time expected to be devoted to each training phase
Overall length of training to qualify for the target position

e. Final Product (Individual Development Plan).

The IDP will be signed by the supervisor, trainee, personnel specialist or Academy Training Consultant, Training specialist, (Headquarters) and program coordinator and should identify the following elements of training (See sample HUD Form 931, Appendix 4):

Orientation.

A session designed to provide a general overview of the organization where the employee will be assigned. In the event that orientation is not necessary, no entry on the IDP is required.

On-the-job Training.

An intensive on-the-job training experience in the target office will provide for substantive and productive assignments. These assignments will consist of progressively more difficult work commensurate with the trainee's grade level. Special rotational assignments may be made to other program areas to provide a general overview of organizational activities.

At least 50% of training must be in work activities in the target functional occupation or in closely related career fields.

(3) Formal Training.

Formal training courses which are relevant to the trainee's career field may be taken during or after regular work hours at government expense and after consultation with and approval by the supervisor. These may include courses offered at

accredited local schools and colleges, through interagency facilities, non-government contractor, other private vendors, etc. Training after regular work hours is not considered work for the purpose of entitlement to overtime pay, compensatory time or credit hours.

Self-Development.

Self-directed developmental activities will be encouraged and the trainee shall be made aware of his/her responsibilities in fulfilling this aspect of his/her training plan. The program may include extensive reading from a selected bibliography of materials in the career field and other areas of interest. Written reports may be required as part of the training requirements. The trainee will also be encouraged to join and participate in professional associations, community and civic organizations.

3-5. Length of Training.

Under the Upward Mobility Training Agreement, the length of training may range from six months to two years. Each trainee's length of training is to be determined individually based on his/her knowledge, skills, and abilities at program entry and the additional knowledge, skills, and abilities required for successful performance in the target position. Therefore, the length of training must be sufficient for the trainee to make up the difference in qualifications from what he/she brings into the program and the qualifications required for the target position.

3-6. Crediting Training.

Training under the Upward Mobility Program is credited at an accelerated rate. One month of training is creditable for two months of experience.

3-7. Flexibility Provisions.

Sometimes situations occur which cause a need to change a trainee's IDP. A supervisor may make modifications by preparing a brief, but concise written statement which outlines the change and its reason. It should be signed by both the supervisor and the trainee and forwarded to the personnel specialist or Academy Training Consultant for review. After determining that the change will not interfere with the trainee's ability to meet qualifications for the target position, the signed original copy will be placed in the trainee's Official Personnel Folder with the IDP and a copy placed in the employee's training file. Supervisors may make the following modifications to

IDPs established under this agreement:

Alter length and intensity of the subject matter to meet the individual needs of trainees provided they are made within the total scope and overall objectives of the training program;

Adjust length of training on individual bases up to a maximum of six months to cover contingencies such as:

Sick leave, Emergency annual leave, and trainee's inability to absorb certain skills and knowledges to complete a developmental assignment;

Change sequence of training schedule to permit learning experience to coincide with actual work assignments as they develop during the training period, when conditions or experience indicate the need of such modifications; and

Alter subject matter material requirements to reflect technological changes, the needs of the agency and the trainees, and evaluation of the requisites of the development program.

3-8. Promotion Policy.

Upward Mobility trainees will not be promoted while assigned to the trainee position or while carrying out the training program prescribed in their Individual Development Plan, unless it is clearly documented that the Bridge approach is used. Further, there are no guaranteed promotions under the provisions of the Upward Mobility Program.

Promotion to the Target Position.

Although promotion to the target position is a non-competitive process, consideration will depend on all of the following:

The positive determination that the trainee has satisfactorily completed the necessary training;

Demonstrated ability to perform duties at the higher level; and

Final evaluation and recommendation for promotion by the immediate supervisor.

Documenting Program Completion.

Upon completion of the training program, the supervisor will make a final summary evaluation of the achievements and performance of the trainee, and certify that the terms and intent of the training

agreement were met. The supervisor's final evaluation of the trainee's satisfactory program completion should be sent to the personnel representative for filing in the trainee's Official Personnel Folder, and a copy sent to the Academy Training Consultant or program coordinator for inclusion in the employee's training file. After the immediate supervisor's certification that the trainee has completed all prescribed training and education, has demonstrated successful performance of the job element criteria established for the position, and has met the qualifications requirements established for the target position, he/she is eligible for reassignment or promotion to the target position.

c. Subsequent Promotion to Full Performance Level.

Subsequent promotions (career-ladder promotions) can be made non-competitively provided the established maximum grade/promotion potential was specified on the original position vacancy announcement. However, promotion to the maximum potential is not automatic. Promotion determinations are dependent upon the following three factors:

The employee's demonstration of the ability to perform the duties of the next higher grade to the satisfaction of his/her supervisor;

The availability of enough work at the next higher grade; and

Meeting the minimum qualification and time-in-grade requirements.

In addition, no employee shall receive a career ladder promotion unless his/her current summary rating of record is fully successful or higher. Further, no employee may receive a career ladder promotion who has a rating below fully successful on a critical element that is also critical to performance at the next higher grade of the career ladder.

Former trainees have no more assurance for advancement than do other employees in the same occupation.

Program Failure.

Trainees who fail to meet the performance requirements of the training may be returned to their former positions or to positions for which they are qualified and which have the same grade and promotion potential as their pre-Upward

Mobility positions, unless the trainee accepted a change to lower grade to enter the program. In this event, repromotion to the employee's original grade will be subject to competitive procedures of HUD's Merit Staffing Policy. The employee will not be entitled to priority consideration.

The trainee's former and current organizations should cooperate in finding a suitable alternative placement. However, the final responsibility for absorbing the employee rests with the organization in which the Upward Mobility vacancy was established.

3-9. Counseling and Performance.

a. Counseling.

Proper counseling is critical to the Upward Mobility Program and its participants. Because of the importance of proper and timely counseling, the trainee should receive career counseling as soon as he/she has been selected or in collaboration with the trainee's supervisor for the program, at appropriately scheduled intervals, and as requested during the training period. Counseling will be done by the personnel specialist and/or training specialist. It may be on an individual basis or in collaboration with the trainee's supervisor and should provide comprehensive information about the Upward Mobility Program; the trainee's current background, short and long range objectives; type and quality of experience to be gained; methods of acquiring needed experience; career ladders, organizational expectations, and any other topics as appropriate.

b. Performance Evaluation of Trainee's Progress.

In addition to the EPPES ratings, written supervisory and trainee evaluations are required periodically during the training period. Supervisory evaluations entitled "Supervisor's Evaluation of Employee in Training," assess the trainee's progress and application of training. (See HUD Form 933, Appendix 6). The first report is due 60 days after assignment to trainee position. Subsequent reports are to be made at regular 60 day intervals. Reports should be sent to the personnel specialist for filing in the trainee's Official Personnel Folder and, a copy to the Academy Training Consultant or program coordinator for inclusion in the employee's training file.

Trainees are required to make quarterly written reports at the completion of any formal training

provided at government expense and to periodically make assessments of their self-development (See HUD Form 932, Appendix 5).

3-10. Program Evaluation and Monitoring Process.

The success of the Upward Mobility Program will depend largely on the ability to provide real career opportunities to participants. To evaluate the effort, in Headquarters, Office of Human Resources and in the Field Offices, the Human Resources Division will collect information about:

The various programs developed and implemented as they relate to recruitment, selection, placement, orientation and counseling, job analysis and restructuring, training and supportive services;

Participants when they enter the program, their movements during the training program and their career progression after program completion; and

The effectiveness of the Upward Mobility Program as identified in the program evaluations from participants, supervisors, and Upward Mobility Coordinators.

The Headquarters Office of Human Resources will coordinate the Department-wide monitoring efforts to assure effective implementation of all program requirements.

3-11. Accommodation of the Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program.

There is a direct relationship between the Department's Annual Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP) and Upward Mobility Program Plans. FEORP is designed to encourage affirmative recruitment of minorities and women both internally and externally. Positions identified for targeted internal recruitment on the FEORP should be consistent with the Upward Mobility Program Plan.

In many instances, the Upward Mobility Program can be used to correct manifest imbalances and/or conspicuous absences identified as internal movement goals. Therefore, when establishing positions under the Department's Upward Mobility Program, each office should actively take into account the positions and/or occupational categories targeted for internal recruitment in the FEORP Plan.