

## STAFFING

1. **REASON FOR ISSUE:** To revise VA policy on relocation allowances for merit promotion transfers in VA Handbook 5005, Part III.
2. **SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES:** This handbook contains mandatory procedures on staffing. Revised text is contained in [brackets]. These changes will be incorporated into the electronic version of VA Handbook 5005, Staffing, which is maintained on the [Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer website](#) and the [VA Publications website](#). Significant changes:
  - a. Remove certain language pertaining to relocation expenses/allowances and merit promotion transfers, specifically terms such as “for the benefit of the Government” or “in the interest of the Government” as those determinations are outlined in the Federal Travel Regulations, Chapter 302 - Relocation Allowances and VA Office of Management’s Travel Policy for procedures on Permanent Change of Station/relocation allowances, located in VA Travel Policy.
  - b. Change the term “relocation expenses” to “relocation allowances.”
  - c. Incorporate general language to describe paid relocation requests and revises language specific to the VA Form 3918 – Interagency Transfer Request.
3. **RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** Office of Human Resources and Administration/ Operations, Security, and Preparedness (006), Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (05), Recruitment and Placement Policy Service (059).
4. **RELATED DIRECTIVE:** [VA Directive 5005, Staffing, April 15, 2002](#).
5. **RESCISSION:** Not applicable.

**CERTIFIED BY:**

**BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY  
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS:**

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**DISTRIBUTION:** Electronic only

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## 10. ROTATION OF KEY PERSONNEL.

- a. **Interchange of Employees. Requirement** - To the extent practical, [hiring managers may use movements] and interchanges of line and staff officials and key supervisory employees, including tours of duty in Central Office [to meet staffing needs of the Department and career needs of employees]. These placements will include, but are not limited to, positions for which employment matters are centralized to the Secretary, Administration Heads, Assistant Secretaries, or Other Key Officials ([for example], General Counsel).
- b. **Employee Mobility. Requirement** - [Hiring managers may use rotation, as necessary,] to ensure key positions are filled by well-qualified candidates in a cost-effective manner. Employees selected by management for movement to key positions at other VA facilities are expected to make themselves available. [Hiring managers are encouraged to give serious consideration to any objections by the employee].

## 11. TRANSFERS WITHIN VA.

- a. **Definitions.** For the purpose of this paragraph, a transfer within VA is a change in position while the employee is continuously serving VA and involves a change in appointing officer.
- b. **Selection of Transferee. Requirement** - Selection of an employee for transfer within VA [must comply] with merit promotion procedures in this chapter.
- c. **Requests for Transfer - Unsolicited Applications.**
  - (1) **Acceptance of Voluntary Applications. Guidance** - [VA HR office staff may accept unsolicited applications from VA employees at other facilities in USA Staffing (or other appropriate methods) through open continuous announcements or applicant supply files.] It may be appropriate to: (a) accept such applications only when an appropriate vacancy is likely to occur within a reasonable period of time ([for example], 6 months); (b) establish open seasons (certain months) for acceptance; and/or (c) establish a standardized [process for acceptance and a] suspense date for [consideration].
  - (2) **Promotion Requirement** - If [HR offices accept voluntary applications] for promotion [ ], they may consider them in any area (limited, minimum, or extended) but must be considered along with other applicants for promotion when an extension of the area of promotion consideration includes the voluntary applicant's home facility (see chapter 3, paragraph 7d(4)).

**d. Off-Station Applications Resulting from Extension of the Area of Consideration.**

- (1) **Requirements** - Employees applying for vacancies at other facilities must submit a current [résumé] and/or any other information specified in the [job opportunity] announcement [(JOA)] having vacancies in which the employee is interested.

**NOTE:** See paragraph [14], this chapter, concerning relocation [allowances] and merit promotion transfers.

- (2) **Requirement** - It is the employee's responsibility to secure appropriate supervisory evaluations of performance and annual performance appraisals and forward them, along with completed employment application [materials], in accordance with the due date specified in the [JOA, as applicable]. The receiving facility will be informed by the applicant when its request for additional information requires extra time and the anticipated date of receipt. The local HR [ ] staff will, when requested, provide information to applicants concerning the proper completion of the employment application [materials] and/or other forms or requests for information. [ ]

**12. [REQUESTS FOR PAID RELOCATION FOR TRANSFERS IN VA].**

- a. **General Requirement** - [The hiring manager/selecting official or their designee is the approving official who is responsible for determining whether the payment of relocation allowances are in the best interest of the Government. The guidance for determining whether relocation allowances may be authorized at Government expense is found in the [Federal Travel Regulations, Chapter 302 - Relocation Allowances](#) and VA Office of Management's Travel Policy in [VA Finance Policy, Volume XIV, Chapter 8](#). Instructions for requests for paid relocation differ by VA Administration and Staff Office, HR offices must refer to the [VA Financial Services Center](#) (FSC) Direct Permanent Change of Station (PCS) intranet site for instructions on how to submit a relocation request.]

**b. Action by the Receiving HR [ ] Office.**

- (1) When an employee is selected for transfer in VA and the [receiving] facility/organization is authorized to pay relocation [allowances], the receiving HR [ ] office validates the hiring managers' decision and initiates the request for paid relocation [in accordance with VA Travel Policy.]

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- (2) **Requirement** - [The request for paid relocation] documents whether relocation [allowances] are authorized by the approving official. If hiring manager/selecting official does not authorize relocation expenses], the

employee statement and signature cited in paragraph [14c] of this chapter, are required on the [request for paid relocation].

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- c. **Action by the Releasing HR Office - Requirement** - Upon receipt of the [request for paid relocation], the releasing HR office will complete the appropriate portions of the request[ ].
- d. **Enroute Time or Delays in Reporting. Requirement** - Any time required for travel, or a delay in route, will follow the effective date of transfer and be accomplished on the receiving facility's time, unless other arrangements are mutually agreeable to both facilities concerned.

### 13. DETAILS (5 C.F.R. § 300.301 and 5 U.S.C. § 3341).

- a. **General.** [When details are] based on the needs and mission requirements of VA, VA facilities/organizations must limit details of employees to the shortest [timeframe permitted] by 5 U.S.C. § 3341 and 5 C.F.R. § 300.301. Under these requirements, VA [facilities/organizations] may detail employees [ ]to other positions at their facility, to other VA facilities, or to other agencies. [Detailed employees earn] appropriate credit toward meeting the qualification requirements of the position in any subsequent personnel action. (For restrictions on details to higher graded positions, see 5 C.F.R. §§ 335.101 through 335.106 and paragraph 15 of chapter 3, this part.)
- b. **Types and Criteria for Details.**
  - (1) **Informal Detail.** A detail within VA of less than 30 days. Prior approval of the individual's supervisor is required.
  - (2) **Formal Detail.** A detail within VA of 30 days or longer. Prior approval at the service/division chief level or higher is required. Details within VA must conform to the requirements of 5 U.S.C. § 3341 and 5 C.F.R. § 300.301. Additionally, to the extent practicable, selection for details must be consistent with policies and requirements for other placement actions (see 5 C.F.R. §§ 335.101 through 335.106).
  - (3) **Interagency Detail.** A detail between VA and another Federal agency in which the detailing agency is reimbursed for the cost of salary and other expenses as agreed upon prior to the detail. (See 7 Comp. Gen. 709 and 13 Comp. Gen. 234.) Interagency details will be made only where there is an emergency need or some unusual situation where the employee can better serve in the interest of the Government service. Such details will not be based on the employee's request unless it can be clearly shown that the experience and knowledge gained will benefit the agency [or department]. [ ]

**c. Procedures for Detailing Employees.**

- (1) **Within VA.** [The officials concerned and the employee arrange informal details.] The hiring manager/selecting official initiates a formal detail using the SF 52, Request for Personnel Action, by forwarding it the [servicing] HR Office for action. The hiring manager/selecting official must submit an additional SF 52 to extend or to terminate the detail. Certain details require an SF 50-B, Notification of Personnel Action. OPM's Guide to Processing Personnel Actions contains the documentation requirements for details, extensions and terminations of details. If the formal detail is from a classified position to an unclassified position, [the hiring manager/selecting official must enter] a brief explanation of the duties [ ] in the "Remarks" space of VA Form SF 52 in lieu of the position identification in the "TO" column.
- (2) **Extension of Details Beyond 120 days.** Employees may be detailed, in 120-day increments, to the same or lower grade positions for up to 1 year. Details to higher grade positions, may be made for up to 1 year during periods of major reorganization (as determined by the appropriate administration/staff office head in VA Central Office). Details of 120 days to higher graded positions in the absence of a major reorganization may be extended for an additional 120 days (maximum period of 240 days). If a detail of more than 120 days is made to a higher graded position, or to a position with known promotion potential, it must be made under competitive promotion procedures. Whenever possible, temporary promotions should be considered for employees serving in higher grade positions for other than brief periods (for example, in lieu of details exceeding 120 days; or for Assistant Chiefs acting for their Chiefs, in lieu of details exceeding 240 days).
- (3) **Between Agencies.** [VA and other Federal agencies must agree in writing on reimbursable details. Fiscal and HR Officers must concur on these written agreements to ensure compliance with technical requirements. Such written agreements must include the dates, employees, and agencies involved and describe the basis for reimbursement. The servicing HR Office must file a copy of the letter in the employee's personnel folder a give a copy to the employee. Interagency details and loans are approved by] facility heads for noncentralized positions under their control, by the administration or staff office heads for centralized positions in the field under their control or by the Secretary, for field positions centralized to the Secretary. For all actions involving centralized and noncentralized employees in Central Office, [ ] the servicing HR Office must coordinate to obtain Secretary's approval prior to initiating the detail.

#### 14. RELOCATION [ALLOWANCES] AND MERIT PROMOTION TRANSFERS.

**NOTE:** The term "relocation [allowances]" is used herein as a shorthand reference to all transfer [allowances] authorized under 5 U.S.C., sections 5724 and 5724a.

- a. **Guidance** - Generally, when an employee is selected pursuant to a merit promotion plan for transfer to a position, [the approving official (hiring manager/selecting official) must determine if] the transfer is considered to be for the benefit of the Government for the purpose of paying relocation [allowances] under 5 U.S.C., sections 5724 and 5724a. [The approving official must make this determination for each vacancy.]
- b. **Requirement** – [VA approving officials must refer to [Federal Travel Regulations, Chapter 302 - Relocation Allowances](#) and VA Office of Management’s Travel Policy in [VA Finance Policy, Volume XIV, Chapter 8](#) for guidance on relocation allowances.]

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- c. **Records.**

- (1) **Requirement** - When an approving official decides that relocation [allowances] will not be paid, the following statement along with the employee's signature must be [documented in] the VA Form 3918. [ ]

"I am fully aware of and understand the decision that my transfer is primarily for my convenience or benefit or at my request and is not in the interest of the Government (VA). I further understand and agree that all travel, transportation and other expenses[/allowances] incident to this move will be at my own personal expense."

- (2) **Requirement** – [The servicing VA HR office will maintain] a record of the basis for [the approving official’s] decision not to pay relocation [allowances] in the applicable [recruitment case file].