

## VA CAREER TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PLAN

**1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** To transmit revised policy for the Department of Veterans Affairs Career Transition Assistance Plan (VA CTAP).

**2. SUMMARY OF CONTENT/MAJOR CHANGES:** This Directive provides the authority to provide transition assistance services and placement assistance through special selection priority when filing vacancies under VA's CTAP for displaced and surplus employees.

a. Placement assistance for surplus permanent excepted service Schedule A and Schedule B employees for Schedule A and Schedule B vacancies in the local commuting areas;

b. Allows extension of temporary and term employment actions, provided the original vacancy announcement was open to VA CTAP and/or Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan (ICTAP) candidates, and special selection priority afforded them, as appropriate;

c. Requirement to brief displaced and surplus employees on career transition services available to them, and their right to special selection priority;

d. Requirement to define "well qualified" in vacancy announcements;

e. Requirement to conduct second reviews in all instances where otherwise eligible applicants are determined to be "not well qualified" and to notify applicants of the results of any second reviews;

f. Give employees who decline a directed reassignment or transfer of function outside of the local commuting area eligibility for placement assistance from the date the agency issues to them a notice of separation;

g. Clarifies and expands reporting requirements; and

h. Defines a vacancy as a position lasting 121 days or more.

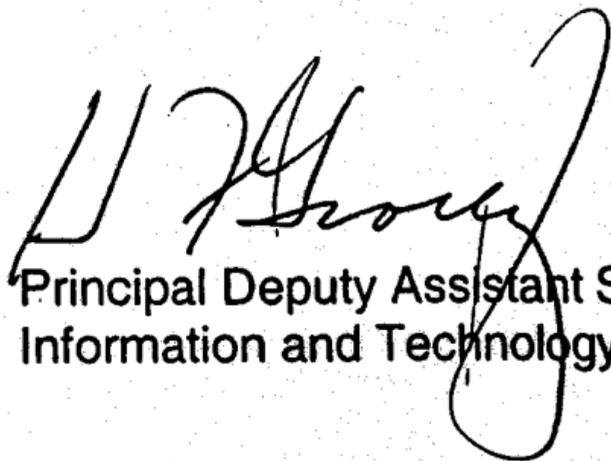
**3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** The Office of Human Resources Management.

**4. RELATED HANDBOOK:** VA Handbook 5330, VA Career Transition Assistance Plan.

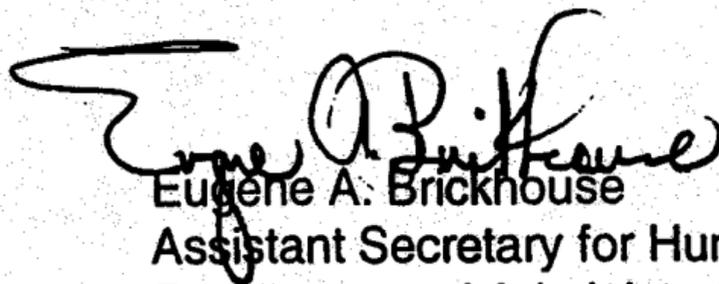
**5. RESCISSION:** VA Directive 5330, VA Career Transition Assistance Plan, dated August 1, 1996.

**CERTIFIED BY:**

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



Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for  
Information and Technology



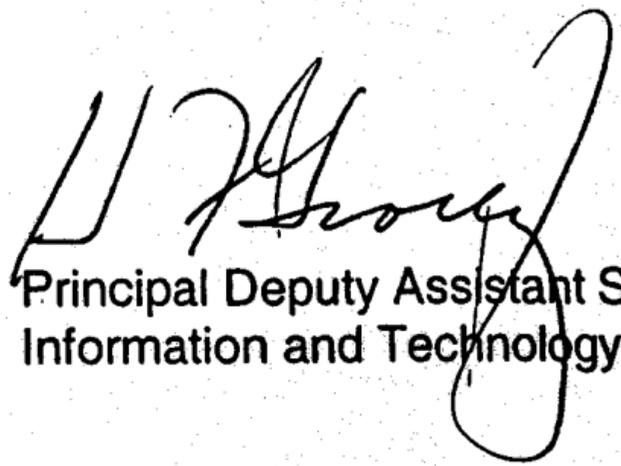
Eugene A. Brickhouse  
Assistant Secretary for Human  
Resources and Administration

Distribution: RPC 5027  
FD

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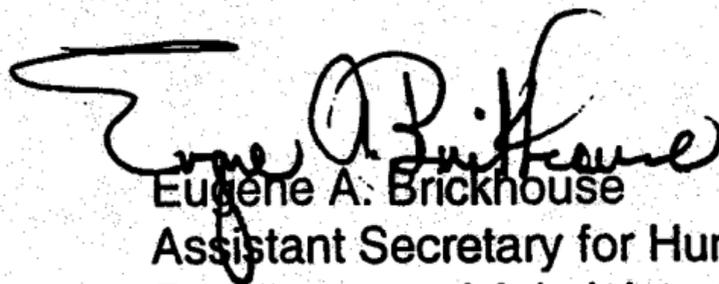
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Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for  
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**BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY  
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS:**



Eugene A. Brickhouse  
Assistant Secretary for Human  
Resources and Administration

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## VA CAREER TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PLAN

- 1. PURPOSE:** This Directive establishes Departmental policy for the Career Transition Assistance Plan (CTAP) for displaced and surplus employees, registrants on VA Reemployment Priority Lists (RPLs), and other similarly affected employees.
- 2. POLICY:** It is the policy of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide effective and timely career transition assistance for employees affected by downsizing or restructuring activities. VA career transition assistance will be administered in accordance with Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 330, Recruitment, Selection, and Placement (General) and VA Handbook 5330, VA Career Transition Assistance Plan and will include:
  - a. Career transition assistance services;
  - b. Procedures for special selection priority for "well qualified" displaced and surplus employees who apply for VA vacancies in the local commuting area, before any other candidate from within or outside of the agency; and
  - c. Procedures for operation of VA's Reemployment Priority List (RPL) for eligible separated VA employees.

### 3. RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. The Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management shall:
  - (1) Provide advice and assistance on matters covered by this Directive;
  - (2) Establish and operate the headquarters Career Transition Center; and
  - (3) Prepare and submit annual agency reports to the Office of Personnel Management.
- b. Administration Heads, Assistant Secretaries, Other Key Officials, and Deputy Assistant Secretaries shall:
  - (1) Ensure that their affected employees receive appropriate and timely notification of the availability of career transition assistance programs; and
  - (2) Provide necessary resources and support for VA's career transition activities.
- c. The Facility Director shall:
  - (1) Establish and implement local career transition assistance services in partnership with local labor organizations; and
  - (2) Ensure that their affected employees receive appropriate and timely notification of the availability of local career transition assistance.

d. The Human Resources Management Officer shall:

(1) Ensure that all displaced and surplus employees in the local commuting area have the opportunity to apply for vacancies;

(2) Where there is more than one Human Resources Management Officer (HRMO) in the local commuting area, these HRMOs will establish local procedures for exchange of pertinent information, including the existence of any displaced and surplus employees and any RPL eligibles;

(3) Determine, in consultation with subject matter experts as appropriate, whether displaced and surplus applicants are "well qualified;"

(4) Ensure that eligible "well qualified" VA displaced and surplus employees receive appropriate special selection priority when they apply for vacancies;

(5) Operate the Reemployment Priority List (RPL) for eligible separated VA employees;

(6) Maintain records of VA CTAP and Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan (ICTAP) activities, prepare, and submit required local annual reports;

(7) Ensure that each impacted employee receives a copy of HRML 05-96-06, The VA Employee's Guide to Career Transition;

(8) Ensure that a specific orientation session is conducted for surplus and displaced employees on the use of career transition assistance services and eligibility requirements for special selection priority under VA CTAP and ICTAP, including information on how to apply for vacancies under VA CTAP and ICTAP; and

(9) Ensure that all displaced and surplus applicants are advised in writing of the results of their application and whether or not they were determined to be "well qualified." If determined to be not "well qualified," such applicants must be notified in writing of the results of an independent documented "Qualification Review." If another "well-qualified applicant" is selected, the applicant must be so advised.

#### 4. REFERENCES

a. Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 330, Recruitment, Selection, and Placement (General), subparts, B, F, and G;

b. Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 410, Training;

c. MP-5, Part I, Chapter 300, Appendix C, Priority Placement Program for Employees in Retained Grade or Pay Status;

d. MP-5, Part I, Chapter 351, Reduction-In-Force; and

e. Human Resources Management Letter No. 05-96-06, The VA Employee's Guide to Career Transition.

## 5. DEFINITIONS

a. **Agency.** An executive department, a Government corporation, and an independent establishment as cited in 5 U.S.C. Sects. 101, 103, and 104;

b. **Bargaining Unit.** A group of employees recognized by the employer and designated by the Federal Labor Relations Authority as appropriate to be represented by a labor organization for purposes of collective bargaining; and

c. **Certification of Expected Separation (CES).** A memorandum that identifies an employee as being in an excess organization or occupation and, therefore, subject to possible separation. An employee in receipt of such a memorandum is considered a surplus employee. A CES would most appropriately be used in cases when entire units are expected to be abolished and can be issued up to 6 months prior to separation.

### d. **Displaced Employee**

#### (1) **Under CTAP**

(a) A current career or career-conditional competitive service employee in tenure group 1 or 2, at grade level GS-15 or equivalent and below, who has received a specific reduction-in-force (RIF) separation notice, or a notice of proposed removal for declining a directed reassignment or transfer of function outside of the local commuting area; or,

(b) A current Executive Branch agency employee in the excepted service, serving on an appointment without a time-limit, at grade levels GS-15 or equivalent and below, who has been given noncompetitive appointment eligibility and selection priority by statute for positions in the competitive service, and who is in receipt of a reduction-in-force separation notice or notice of proposed removal for declining a transfer of function or directed reassignment outside of the local commuting area.

#### (2) **Under The Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan (ICTAP)**

(a) A current career or career-conditional competitive service employee, in tenure group 1 or 2, at grade levels GS-15 or equivalent and below, who has received a specific RIF separation notice, or a notice of proposed removal for declining a directed reassignment or transfer of function outside of the local commuting area;

(b) A former career or career-conditional employee in tenure group 1 or 2, at grade levels GS-15 or equivalent and below, who was separated through reduction-in-force, or removed for declining a directed reassignment or transfer of function outside of the local commuting area;

(c) A former career or career-conditional employee who was separated because of a compensable injury or illness, as provided under the provisions of subchapter I of Chapter 81

of title 5, U.S.C., whose compensation has been terminated and whose former agency is unable to place the individual as required by part 353;

(d) A former career or career-conditional competitive service employee, in tenure group 1 or 2, who retired with a disability under sections 8337 or 8451 of title 5, U.S.C., whose disability annuity has been or is being terminated;

(e) A former career or career-conditional competitive service employee in tenure group 1 or 2, at grades GS-15 level or equivalent or below in receipt of a RIF separation notice, who retired on the effective date of the reduction-in-force or under the discontinued service retirement option;

(f) A former Military Reserve Technician or National Guard Technician who is receiving a special disability annuity from OPM under section 8337(h) or 8456 of title 5, U.S.C., as described in title 5, CFR, Part 330, and subpart H;

(g) A current Executive Branch agency employee in the excepted service, serving on an appointment without time limit, at grade levels GS-15 or equivalent and below, who has been given noncompetitive appointment eligibility and selection priority by statute for positions in the competitive service, and who is in receipt of a reduction-in-force separation notice or notice of proposed removal for declining a transfer of function or directed reassignment outside of the local commuting areas; or,

(h) A former Executive Branch agency employee in the excepted service, who served on an appointment without time limit, at grade levels GS-15 or equivalent and below, who has been given noncompetitive appointment eligibility and selection priority by statute for positions in the competitive service, and who has been separated through reduction-in-force or removed for declining a transfer of function or directed reassignment outside of the local commuting area.

**e. Eligible Employee.** To be eligible for special selection priority under these procedures, an individual must meet all of the following conditions:

(1) Is a surplus or displaced employee as defined in Title 5, CFR, Subpart F, §330.604(c) and (l) or §330.703b;

(2) Has a current performance rating of record of at least fully successful or equivalent;

(3) Applies for a vacancy that is at or below the grade level from which the employee may or is being separated, that does not have a greater promotion potential than the position from which the employee may or is being separated;

(4) Occupies a position in the same local commuting area of the vacancy;

(5) Files an application for a specific vacancy within the established timeframe; and

(6) Is determined by the agency to be well qualified for the specific vacancy.

f. **Facility.** A single medical center, regional office, automation center, other Department field establishment under the direction of local management officials or VA Headquarters. The facility includes any operation (e.g., a satellite) or complex of organizations that is under the control of the same facility director.

g. **Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan (ICTAP).** The Office of Personnel Management program which provide special selection priority to other displaced Federal employees when filling vacancies from outside of VA.

h. **Labor Union.** An organization composed, in whole or in part, of employees in which these employees participate and pay dues, and which has as a purpose the dealing with an agency concerning grievances and conditions of employment.

i. **Local Commuting Area.** The geographic area that usually constitutes one area for employment purposes. It includes any population center (or two or more neighboring ones) and the surrounding localities in which people live and can reasonably be expected to travel back and forth daily to their usual employment.

j. **Qualification Review.** The documented analysis, by the responsible Human Resources Management Officer, of the rationale for a determination of "not well qualified" for an otherwise eligible applicant.

k. **Selecting Official.** That individual with the authority to choose from among candidates for a vacancy.

l. **Special Selection Priority.** The precedence over any other candidates that eligible employees have for being chosen for vacancies for which they apply. **Exception:** No VA CTAP Special Selection Priority can be made which would cause another VA employee to be separated by reduction-in-force. See Appendix B of VA Handbook 5330 for those staffing actions not covered by the VA Career Transition Assistance Plan.

m. **Surplus Employee.**

(1) A current agency employee serving under an appointment in the competitive service, in tenure group 1 or 2, at grade levels GS-15 or equivalent and below, who has received a certificate of expected separation or other official certification issued by the agency indicating that the position is surplus; for example, a notice of position abolishment, or a notice stating that the employee is eligible for discontinued service retirement; or,

(2) A current VA employee serving on an excepted service appointment without time limit, at grade levels GS-15 or equivalent and below, who been issued a certificate of expected separation or other official agency certification indicating that his or her position is surplus; for example, a notice of position abolishment or a notice stating that the employee is eligible for discontinued service retirement, and who has been conferred noncompetitive appointment eligibility and special selecting priority by statute for positions in the competitive service; and

(3) A current VA employee serving on a Schedule A or B excepted appointment without time limit, at grade levels GS-15 or equivalent and below, who is in receipt of a certificate of expected separation or other official agency certification indicating that his or her job is surplus; for example, a notice of position abolishment, or an official notice stating that the employee is eligible for discontinued service retirement, or an employee who has received a RIF notice of separation, or a notice of proposed removal for declining a transfer of function or directed reassignment outside of the local commuting area. Such employee may exercise selection priority for permanent excepted service vacancies within the local commuting area, provided the position from which being separated.

n. **Vacancy.** A position lasting 121 days or more, including extensions, which is being filled, regardless of whether a specific vacancy announcement is issued.

o. **Vacancy Announcement.** The notice of a position opportunity which ensures that eligible displaced and surplus employees in the local commuting area can apply for special selection priority, and which conveys what is required to be determined "well qualified."

p. **Well-Qualified Employee.** An eligible applicant who possesses the knowledge, skills, and abilities which clearly exceed the minimum qualification requirements for the position and satisfy the following criteria, as determined and consistently applied by the agency.

(1) Meets the basic qualification standard and eligibility requirements for the position, including any medical qualifications, suitability, and minimum educational and experience requirements, and;

(2) Satisfies one of the following qualification requirements:

(a) Meets all selective factors, where applicable. Meets appropriate quality ranking factor levels. Selective and quality ranking factors cannot be so restrictive that they run counter to the goal of placing displaced employees. In the absence of selective and quality ranking factors, selecting officials will document the job-related reason(s) the eligible employee is or is not considered to be well qualified; or

(b) Is rated to be above minimally qualified in accordance with specific rating and ranking process. Generally, this means that the individuals may or may not meet the test for "highly qualified," but would in fact, exceed the minimum qualifications for the position;

(c) Is physically qualified, with reasonable accommodation where appropriate, to perform the essential duties of the position;

(d) Meets any special qualifying condition(s) that OPM has approved for the position; and

(e) Is able to satisfactorily perform the duties of the vacancy upon entry.