

**For:** FSA, RMA, and FAS Employees

**Implementing USA Staffing**

**Approved by:** Deputy Administrator, Management



**1 Overview**

**A**

**Background**

In an effort to streamline the hiring process, HRD is adopting OPM's USA Staffing automated application system for merit promotion vacancy announcements. USA Staffing provides a variety of automated tools, including online applications, competency-based assessments, automatic rating of candidates, and applicant referral and application notification process.

**B**

**Purpose**

This notice:

- informs employees about the new USA Staffing process
- provides information on how to apply using the new process.

**C**

**Labor Management Obligations**

Where exclusive representation exists, bargaining may be requested to the extent allowed by applicable statutes. Where contract language already addresses these policies and procedures for bargaining unit employees, contract language prevails.

<p><b>Disposal Date</b></p> <p>December 1, 2002</p>	<p><b>Distribution</b></p> <p>All FAS, FSA, and RMA employees; State Offices relay to County Offices</p>
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## 2 Characteristics of USA Staffing

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### A

#### Benefits of USA Staffing

USA Staffing will increase HRD's efficiency in recruitment procedures. For example, USA Staffing:

- accepts applications by Internet, FAX, telephone, mail, or designated drop off locations
- aids development of assessment tools that meet the requirements of the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures
- includes OPM's database of competencies, HR assessment methods, and research
- rates job applicants automatically, and automatically flags the records of applicants requiring adjudication of Veteran's Preference or Career Transition Assistance Program/Interagency Career Transition Assistance Program eligibility
- eliminates the panel review of applicant's knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA's)
- maintains easy-to-read applicant records that enable quick reviews for quality and consistency
- issues selection certificates
- provides capability to notify applicants about the status of their processed application and referral for employment consideration
- enhances HRD's ability to respond quickly to inquiries from applicants and selecting officials
- ensures compliance with appropriate rules, regulations, and guidelines for public sector hiring.

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### 2 Characteristics of USA Staffing (Continued)

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#### **B Differences Between Current Merit Promotion Announcements and USA Staffing**

The following table compares the traditional merit promotion procedures and the new procedures using USA Staffing.

<b>Traditional Announcements</b>	<b>USA Staffing</b>
Required narrative KSA's	Answer job-related statements using multiple choice format
Submit hard copy of application	Submit application by using the Internet
Panel rates and ranks applicants	Computer rates and ranks applicants; HRD determines the best qualified list

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#### **C How to Apply Using USA Staffing**

Each vacancy announcement will contain instructions on how to apply. Carefully read the instructions contained in the announcement for specific details and instructions. The application process consists of 3 separate components which employees **must** submit:

- qualifications and Availability Form C
- resume
- other application materials, such as SF-50 or performance appraisal which require submission of hard copies and **cannot** be submitted electronically.

See Exhibit 1 for more information on USA Staffing application procedures.

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2 Characteristics of USA Staffing (Continued)

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**D**

**How to Submit  
Form C On-Line**

Applicants will be able to submit their Form C on-line by using the USAJOBS web site.

To submit a Form C on-line:

- connect to the USAJOBS web site at <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov>
- scroll down to the lower right corner and click on **Online Application** on the USAJOBS logo
- enter the **Vacancy Identification Number** and click on **Submit** to begin the on-line application.

**Note:** The Vacancy ID # for most FFAS announcements will begin with UF or UK.

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**E**

**How to Submit  
Resumes  
On-Line**

To submit a resume on-line:

- access the entire announcement

**Note:** To view the whole announcement, click on the announcement number in the upper left corner of the screen.

- scroll to the **bottom** of the vacancy announcement
  - click on Resume Builder and follow the instructions.
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**2 Characteristics of USA Staffing (Continued)**

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**D  
Sample Format  
for Answering  
Job-Related  
Statements**

USA Staffing requires applicants to respond to task statements instead of submitting KSA's. The task statements are completed in Form C. In responding to each task statement, applicants typically will be given the following 5 choices. Applicants will choose the level that best describes their experience and/or training. They may select only 1 letter for each item.

Item	Level of Experience/Training
A	I have not had education, training, or experience in performing this task.
B	I have had education or training in performing this task, but have not yet performed it on the job.
C	I have performed this task on the job. My work on this task was monitored closely by a supervisor or senior employee to ensure compliance with proper procedures.
D	I have performed this task as a regular part of a job. I have performed it independently and normally without review by a supervisor or senior employee.
E	I am considered an expert in performing this task. I have supervised performance of this task or am normally the person who is consulted by other workers to assist them in doing this task because of my expertise.

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**3 Timeframe for Implementation**

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**A  
Proposed  
Implementation  
Date for USA  
Staffing in the  
National Office**

HRD hopes to implement the new recruitment tool in August. KCAO has already begun using the new tool for all sources announcements.

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**B  
Web Location**

For more information about USA Staffing, visit the following web site:

<http://www.opm.gov/hr/employ/products/services/usastaffing/usastaffing.htm>

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**C  
Contact**

If there are questions about this notice, contact your HRD staffing specialist. View the HRD Directory at:

<http://dc.ffasintranet.usda.gov/hrd/organiza.htm>

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## USA Staffing Application Procedures

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Many vacancy announcements are currently being advertised using USA Staffing, which is the Office of Personnel Management's automated application system. This system measures the applicant's responses to specific job-related competencies and/or tasks and provides a numerical score. Applicants are not required to address narrative KSA's to vacancies announced through USA Staffing.

**Applicants need to read the vacancy announcement in its entirety and follow the instructions in the announcement.**

**USA Staffing Automated System.** USA Staffing is web-enabled software that completely automates the recruitment, assessment, referral, and applicant notification processes. The application process consists of **3 separate components which employees MUST submit:**

- 1 Qualifications and Availability Form C On-Line Application.** Applicants **must** complete this questionnaire to receive consideration. Applicant's resume or application must support their responses to the questionnaire. The vacancy announcement provides specific instructions on how to complete. There are 3 methods to submit Form C.
  - **On-line.** This method is strongly **encouraged**. It is helpful to print a copy of the entire announcement, mark your answers, then transfer them to the on-line version.
  - **Mail.** A paper Form C may be completed and mailed to OPM in Macon, Georgia. The vacancy announcement provides instructions on how to obtain the paper Form C.
  - **Telephone.** Submit answers by using the telephone, per instructions in the vacancy announcement.
  
- 2 Application for Federal Employment or Resume.**
  - Applicants **must** submit an Application for Federal Employment or a resume. If submitting a resume, applicants must be sure to provide all the information requested in the vacancy announcement.
  - Applicants may choose to submit a **resume on-line** through the USAJOBS, submit their resume by using **FAX, e-mail, or mail**, or use the application drop-off points.
  - Applications/resumes **must be received by midnight eastern time** on the closing date of the announcement.

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## USA Staffing Application Procedures (Continued)

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### 3 Other Application Materials.

The following are examples of other application materials that employees **must** submit in hard copy, if requested in the vacancy announcement:

- **College Transcript.** The college transcript is used to verify successful completion of a degree, or required course work. The college transcript is also used to determine eligibility for Superior Academic Achievement and Outstanding Scholar Provisions. The applicants may send copies.
- **DD-214,** Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, if claiming veterans preference.
- **SF-15,** Application for 10-Point Veterans Preference, and proof required (listed on SF-15), if claiming 10-Point Veterans Preference.
- **SF-50,** Notification of Personnel Action and Performance Appraisal, if applying through Merit Promotion Procedures.

**Common Mistakes.** Common mistakes frequently made by applicants include the following.

- Resume does not break down the percentage of time performing different functions when occupying a mixed-duty position.
  - Application/resume or other application materials are received late.
  - Applicant submits application/resume, but fails to complete Form C.
  - Applicant completes required Form C, but fails to submit application/resume.
  - Applicant fails to submit copies of college transcript.
  - Applicant fails to submit copies of SF-50 or performance appraisal.
  - Applicant fails to provide 2 complete resume/applications if applying under both merit promotion **and** competitive procedures (all sources vacancy announcement).
  - Applicant fails to contact the Employment Branch contact listed on vacancy announcement and relies on information from other sources.
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