

DATE OF FORUM:

February 4, 2015 (9:00 am – 12:00 pm)

LOCATION:

U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 1900 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20415

SUMMARY:

In support of the President's Management Agenda (PMA) SES reform initiative, specifically relating to hiring innovations, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) hosted an interagency forum to discuss and share information on the SES resume-based hiring method. The forum included a presentation from the Partnership for Public Service, presentations from agencies that were "early implementers" of the SES resume-based hiring method, shared perspectives by Qualifications Review Board (QRB) members, and a panel discussion with questions and answers. The forum provided an opportunity to further gather, memorialize, and share information on agencies' lessons learned, best practices, challenges, and tools to assist to implement the SES resume-based hiring method.

PRESENTERS:EARLY IMPLEMENTERS**Shonna James**

Manager,
Executive Resources Policy
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Lucy Cunningham

Deputy Director,
Office of Executive Resources
U.S. Department of Labor

Maria Lefevre

Executive Director,
Office of the Under Secretary for Policy
U.S. Department of Transportation

Tia Butler

Executive Director,
Corporate Senior Executive
Management Office
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE**Tim McManus**

VP for Education and Outreach,
Partnership for Public Service

QUALIFICATIONS REVIEW BOARD**Ted Gerarden**

Director,
Office of Administrative Litigation,
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

Joseph A. McMillan

Assistant Inspector General for Investigations,
Nuclear Regulatory Commission

SPEAKER AND PANEL MODERATOR**Stephen Shih**

Deputy Associate Director
Senior Executive Services and Performance
Management
U.S. Office of Personnel Management

FORUM HOST**Laura Lynch**

Manager
U.S. Office of Personnel Management

**Senior Executive Service
Resume-Based Hiring Forum – Summary**

OPM PRESENTERS

Nicole Wright

Human Resources Specialist, Team Lead

Eric Schmidt

Human Resources Specialist

BACKGROUND

- During Fiscal Years 2008 and 2009, OPM, enlisting a number of agencies, piloted two additional SES hiring methods; the Accomplishment Record and Resume-Based Method. This pilot was conducted to help agencies improve, customize, and streamline their SES selection processes in support of executive hiring under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009. Upon pilot completion, OPM began working with agencies to design and complete a process and plan for implementation.
- The Accomplishment Record and Resume-Based Methods were implemented in January of 2010. Early implementing agencies included: Homeland Security, Labor, Transportation and Veterans Affairs. Currently Homeland Security and Transportation utilize the Resume-Based Method.
- OPM presenters also spoke about the use of structured interviews in combination with the streamlined SES hiring methods. Structured interviews help ensure candidates have equal opportunities to provide information and are assessed accurately and consistently. To support agencies' use of structured interviews, OPM developed the Structured Interview Questions and Benchmarks. This tool originated from a 2008 President's Management Council (PMC) pilot project to develop structured interview questions and benchmarks based on the 5 Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs). In July of 2011, the project was adopted by a team of OPM employees with backgrounds in Industrial/Organizational Psychology. Working with SES subject matter experts, the OPM team developed validated questions and benchmarks for each of the 22 ECQ competencies and posted the tool for agency use on Executive and Schedule C System (ESCS) in September of 2012.

**Senior Executive Service
Resume-Based Hiring Forum – Summary**

FORUM PRESENTATION KEY POINTS:

- The following four agencies participated in the forum: U.S. Department of Labor (DOL); U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS); U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT); and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).
- Three of the four agencies concluded the SES resume-based hiring method effectively streamlined and facilitated the application process – encouraging a significantly-increased number of individuals to submit applications. However, the increased volume of applications, coupled with the decreased amount of information provided through the new application process, also created a significantly-increased administrative burden for agencies, to include difficulty conducting effective assessments, increased internal processing time and overall time to hire. Agencies also emphasized the implementation of the resume-based method involves a significant change management effort. It was strongly recommended and encouraged that agencies interested in adopting the resume-based method seek assistance from OPM and the early-implementing agencies to help effectively plan and prepare for successful implementation.
- DHS expressed that at the onset of the pilot, there was strong support and satisfaction with the SES resume-based hiring method, but noted that after 50-plus staffing actions across the Department only two components continued using the method after the pilot. The biggest challenges were the strain on personnel resources sorting through two to three times more applications to determine minimally qualified; the substantially higher volume of resumes to review for interview panel members; and the length of time the process took to get to selection which often exceeded the 90-day rule applicable to the traditional hiring method; DHS does however find the process beneficial for technically specific positions and uses it frequently for those types of occupations. Several interview panel members also expressed dissatisfaction regarding the inability to ask behavioral questions outside the structured interview questions provided by OPM coupled with technical experience that could not be scored in the interview process.
- DOL conveyed strong dissatisfaction with the SES resume-based hiring method, and indicated they will not continue using this method. Specifically, DOL concluded the following: the resume-based hiring method created significantly-greater administrative cost and work for DOL to process the significantly-increased volume of applications, while DOL did not experience an accompanying benefit in the quality of the applicant pool or eventual hires. DOL also found that it had less success obtaining Qualifications Review Board (QRB) approvals when utilizing the resume-only method.

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- DOT expressed support for the SES resume-based hiring method. They noted they experienced an increased upfront staff workload due to the significantly increased number of applications, including additional highly-qualified candidates which helped improve the quality and diversity of the applicant pool. The increase in applications created additional administrative time to process. DOT likes the resume-based hiring process and though implementing it involved growing pains, it was well worth it. It allowed DOT to look at each area of the recruitment process to reduce barriers to employment and to increase the potential number of eligible candidates which supports a Presidential initiative.
- VA experienced difficulty discerning the quality of applicants only from resumes, and therefore had trouble initially identifying the most qualified candidates to efficiently refer for further consideration. VA also indicated the structured interview process created additional time, and did not feel the resume-based method yielded a good return on investment.
- Each of the agencies emphasized the implementation of this new hiring method posed a significant change management challenge, requiring senior leadership commitment and not only new processes but also staff with different skill sets, requiring new training.
- Each agency sounded a caution on the increased administrative burden resulting from the transition to and implementation of a new hiring method – likely significantly increasing the time-to-hire.
- According to the Partnership for Public Service, agencies that spent significant time and resources preparing for SES resume-based hiring implementation, and implementing effective recruitment strategies, tended to experience greater success in the use of resume-based hiring. The resume-based hiring process is more applicant-friendly and consequently increases the diversity of the applicant pool, including with qualified external candidates.