Memorandum of Understanding Between the National Weather Service and the National Weather Service Employees Organization on the Intern Hiring Policy and the Internal Reassignment Process

The National Weather Service (NWS) wants to increase the influx of new employees into the agency. At the same time, we recognize that staff motivation, productivity, and retention are dependent upon people working in jobs that are well suited to their interests. In addition, NWS offices need particularized skills and abilities that may be best satisfied by an employee in another NWS facility. Therefore, the NWS offers and encourages reassignment opportunities for current employees. This MOU formalizes two ways to meet those needs.

Increase Intern Hiring Efficiency

The NWS aims to increase the efficiency and speed of filling intern vacancies, by limiting new hiring actions for the intern positions to GS-5 and GS-7 only. The intern position will retain the career ladder through GS-11, however the NWS intends that new announcements will only be open to the GS-5 and GS-7 entry positions. The NWS retains sole discretion as to whether to pay either mandatory or discretionary PCS expenses with these new appointee assignments. HMT positions will be simultaneously advertised with intern positions, area of consideration NWS only, NWS status applications only, as GS-1341-11. The NWS agrees to pay all PCS expenses of the employee in accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement, past practice and to the extent allowed by law or Government-wide rule or regulation.

Internal Reassignment Process

The Internal Reassignment Process presents another mechanism to benefit the agency in terms of satisfying needed skills and increasing the speed of moving employees to fill critical positions.

The Department retains the authority to reassign employees. The agency benefits in this process by obtaining employees with diverse skills sets that could increase the effectiveness and productivity of offices across the organization.
This process is open to any bargaining unit employee with a job series of 1301, 1315, 1340, 1341, 2210, 0856, 0802, and 0303 and who is in his or her current position at least nine (9) months. The nine-month waiting requirement may be waived if the position is being adversely affected due to a reduction in the workforce or job elimination, or if there is significant change in the terms and conditions of employment (e.g. work schedule, hours, salary, status, etc.). In all cases, the employee's work record, including but not limited to performance, attendance, efforts to develop skills and related behavior will be used as criteria for determining suitability for a position.

In consideration of the above factors, along with their resume, employees are required to provide documentation that supports their performance history, such as the last performance evaluation or letters of reference. For all positions, consideration will be given to the employee's demonstrated interpersonal skills, among other job-related factors, before making a final decision. Deficiencies in such skills or job-related factors may eliminate an individual from further consideration.

Within 30 days of the effective date of this MOU, the Agency will establish and maintain a database for recording employees' reassignment office interests that will be used to compile lists of potential candidates for available reassignment opportunities. After the Agency has initiated this internal reassignment process, management will have seven days to contact potential candidates for the reassignment and request any needed documentation. After the seven day notification period, the employee will have 14 calendar days to complete and submit a resume, a copy of the last performance evaluation or letters of reference to the Hiring Manager. If an employee is on the Hardship Transfer List, a copy of the employee's Hardship Transfer Application will be provided to the selecting official. Employees on the hardship transfer list must still send their latest resume, a copy of the last performance evaluation or letters of reference to the Hiring Manager within the 14 day window to be considered. Selecting officials shall give priority consideration to anyone on the hardship list before considering any others on the reassignment list or nonunit applicants. Applicants on the reassignment list shall be given prior consideration before other unit and nonunit applicants. Nothing in this agreement prevents management from concurrently soliciting unit and nonunit applications and rating and ranking unit and nonunit candidates, such as through the WFMO hiring process.

The NWS agrees to pay all PCS expenses of the employee in accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement, past practice, and to the extent allowed by law or Government-wide rule or regulation. Any employee accepting a PCS reimbursement
will be required to sign a 12 month service agreement. If the employee is accepted for an internal transfer reassignment position, they will not be eligible to apply for another internal transfer reassignment for 3 years.

If an offer of reassignment is made, the employee will have up to 10 calendar days to accept the offer. If the employee does not accept the offer of reassignment as originally requested, the employee will not be eligible to apply for consideration for reassignment to any duty station for a period of twelve (12) months using the internal reassignment policy.

Exceptions to the time periods in this MOU will be reviewed on an individual basis and either approved or disapproved by the Agency.

**Eligibility Criteria for Reassignment Under this Process**

- Employed in current position for at least nine months.
- Written confirmation of acceptable performance record/evaluation signed by the applicant's supervisor and completed no more than 12 months prior to date of reassignment application (e.g. meets expectations, average rating, etc.).
- Maintain an acceptable level of performance including but not limited to absence of corrective action and/or resolution of previous corrective action.
- Successfully meet any special requirements for the position of interest.

**Employee Responsibilities:** The employee must identify a specific job series they would qualify for and location(s) (not to exceed five locations) to facilitate the reassignment process. In all cases, the employee must submit their interests to CF02 before the first day of the quarter. Employees may submit areas of consideration during the initial 21 calendar day period after CF02 announces the start of the program, after that, employees can add or change their areas of consideration during the two week period prior to the first day of every quarter (e.g. January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1). The specific job and location interests will be used to notify the employee when a vacancy is opened for an internal reassignment that meets the criteria. At that time, the employee will need to complete and submit a resume, a copy of the last performance evaluation or letters of reference to the Hiring Manager.
Agency Responsibilities: After the Agency has initiated this internal reassignment process, management will review a list of potential candidates from the database and the Hardship Transfer List. Management will notify the employees to provide the required documentation to the hiring manager, or their designee within seven days. The Agency is responsible for following the selection process.

Within 30 days of the effective date of this MOU, the Agency will notify employees of the start of this internal reassignment process, establish a database to record employees’ expressions of interests for reassignment opportunities, including geographic preferences, and begin collecting employees expression of interests. If an employee requests a cross series (e.g. 2210 to 1340) reassignment, management will verify the cross series qualifications are met based on the information the employee provides. If qualifications are not met, management will request additional information from the employee to determine if the requirements may be met. Only employees who are qualified and suitable will be considered and eligible for reassignment. If there is a vacancy in the intern or HMT unit, the Agency will forward all qualified intern and HMT candidates who requested the location and job series to the appropriate management official. While information related to the position status is limited, the selecting official will, upon request, provide information regarding the selection to the employee when the information is available and deemed reasonable and practical to communicate.

Reference Checks
To facilitate the reference check process and safeguard the rights of employees seeking reassignments, a hiring manager who is considering making an offer of employment to an employee from another office, or the hiring manager’s designee, should ask the current supervisor, or other appropriate management official, to verify the performance and ability of the employee, and any other relevant factors as determined by management.

There may be extenuating circumstances in which an employee requests that his/her current supervisor not be contacted before an offer or acceptance. It is the employee's responsibility to notify the hiring official that s/he does not want their current supervisor contacted. Information provided to the hiring manager may include, but is not limited to, documented strengths or accomplishments, developmental areas, and corrective action or disciplinary notices as recorded in the employee's personnel file.
Compensation

Prior to extending an offer, the Agency will inform the employee of the position’s salary, including any applicable locality pay. An employee accepting a lateral reassignment will maintain the employee’s same grade, and therefore, any change in salary will generally be limited to a potential change in locality pay. The Internal Transfer reassignment policy cannot be used for promotions and cannot provide increased promotion potential to an employee. When an employee transfers to a lower graded position, the Agency will inform the employee of the salary of the lower graded position.

Notice of Reassignment

If chosen for an open position, the employee should notify the current supervisor of the reassignment. Management will determine a date of transfer; however employees are encouraged to provide input regarding their preferred transfer dates for management’s consideration. Generally, the reassignment should occur within 30 days of notification of acceptance.

Terms

And it is understood by NWS and NWSEO that by agreeing to the change to increase Intern Hiring Efficiency as detailed above, that part of Paragraph "1." of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) "Management Plan Revise WFO Staffing/Alaska Region WSO Staffing September 2004 Modified February 2008" which reads:

"All HMT/Interns position vacancies will be simultaneously advertised as GS-1341-11, area of consideration NWS only, NWS status applicants only, and as GS-1340-51719 promotion potential to 11, area of consideration all qualified applicants (status, non-status)."

is superseded by this MOU.
This MOU may be reopened by either party after one year from the date of execution. Unless mutually agreed, this MOU will expire three years from the date of execution.

Within 15 days of the effective date of the MOU, NWSEO and NWS will send a joint message to NWS All Hands introducing the Internal Reassignment Process.

Paul Schlatter  
NWS Management Representative  
6/2/16  
Date

Dan Sobien  
NWSEO President  
6/1/16  
Date