

**Employee Mobility and Criteria for PCS Benefits  
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)**

**April 8, 2022**

NWS and NWSEO (the Parties) agree that to build the best workforce and to meet the demands of today and tomorrow, NWS must attract the best external talent, as well as cultivate and support the needs of current employees. NWS needs to address attrition by attracting and hiring a steady stream of new employees who can grow with the organization. While NWS must always strive to maintain adequate staffing, we also need to ensure all offices are staffed with a sufficient number of experienced employees to minimize unintended pressure and stress on staff and to ensure we are fully capable of meeting the needs of the mission.

The Parties agree on the importance of enhancing employee mobility and staffing experience. NWS is committed to using appropriated resources to increase mobility opportunities as much as possible and to achieving adequate staffing and experience levels needed for mission success.

The Parties also recognize the need to establish a process and guiding principles to authorize Permanent Change of Station (PCS) benefits consistent with 5 USC 5724 for employee transfers that are “in the interest of the government”, to allow lateral transfers “primarily for the benefit of employees” to the maximum extent possible, and to ensure we increase our overall bench strength by efficiently bringing new employees into the Agency.

In furtherance of these objectives, the Parties agree to the following:

**MAP PCS Scenarios**

1. PCS expenses will be paid consistent with the Federal Travel Regulations and when an employee transfer is “in the interest of government.” PCS benefits will not be provided when transfers are not deemed to be “in the interest of government” and are primarily “for the benefit or convenience of the employee.”

2. The Parties recognize that the hiring process is a continuum that begins with the determination to fill a vacant position and ends with the selection of a candidate for the position. When management decides to fill a vacant position it will make a determination whether transferring an internal/status applicant for the position will be “in the interest of government.” The following factors will be considered in making this determination:

(a) The number of employees and current experience level of the work unit or the level of overall experience among current employees in the unit, office, division, or branch;

(b) The need for unique skill sets at the unit, office, division, or branch, that are possessed by internal/status employees;

(c) Whether the vacancy to be advertised is at a known hard-to-fill location; and

- (d) Availability of qualified candidates in the local area.

If management determines, based upon a reasonable and good faith application of these factors, that transferring an internal/status candidate to fill a vacancy would be “in the interest of government”, the vacancy will be posted MAP/PCS. If management determines, based upon a reasonable and good faith application of these factors, and subject to the requirements of paragraphs 3-5 below, that the filling of the vacancy should be deemed to be “for the benefit or convenience of the employee” the vacancy may be posted as MAP (and DE/CR without PCS benefits) and will indicate whether PCS benefits are provided in accordance with this policy.

3. The following vacancy scenarios have been pre-determined to be “in the interest of the government” and will be advertised MAP PCS:

- a) Lead meteorologist and senior hydrologist vacancy announcements in Weather Forecast Offices (WFOs), River Forecast Centers (RFCs) and National Centers (NCs), and service hydrologist and senior service hydrologist vacancy announcements in WFOs;
- b) GS-12 meteorologist vacancies in Center Weather Service Units (CWSUs).

4. An employee who receives a promotion that exceeds the full performance level of the status applicant's current position will be considered “in the interest of the government” and PCS will be paid.

### **GS1340 Announcements**

5. NWS will increase the frequency of GS-11/12 1340 Meteorologist vacancy announcements **which offer PCS** from a minimum of twice per year to quarterly. These will be deemed to be “in the interest of government” and will be MAP PCS announcements

- a) NWS will provide NWSEO each office's GS1340 5-12 and -13 staffing profile that depicts the health of 1340 filled positions at the full performance level in a timely fashion to provide situational awareness and to inform analysis of, and recommendations for quarterly hiring bids.
- b) NWSEO may then provide a listing of ‘offices of concern’ to the COO (or their designee).
- c) NWSEO and COO (or their designee) will meet to discuss NWSEO's recommendations and to highlight areas of concern to monitor for the current and any future vacancy announcements.

d) COO will make its final determination on which GS 1340 vacancies will be advertised GS11-12 MAP PCS, and will, prior to advertising, provide a courtesy notice to NWSEO leadership.

e) NWS and NWSEO will both strive to provide information, recommendations, and schedule meetings in a timely fashion to ensure important hiring actions are not unduly delayed.

### **RON Process for GS1340 Announcements**

6. The Parties agree that NWS will provide mass lateral transfer opportunities, at least four times per year, using the NOAA Reassignment Opportunity Notice (RON) process to advertise non-competitive transfer opportunities for GS-1340 meteorologists. These transfer opportunities will be considered “for the benefit of the employee” and PCS will not be offered.

The Regional Director/Center Director or designee must provide final approval for each region affected. Management will take the following into consideration when deciding whether to approve RON transfers:

- a) Whether the office losing an employee is or will be critically understaffed by the transfer;
- b) Whether the experience pool in the office losing an employee is or will become critically low by the transfer;
- c) The needs of those employees applying for these positions who are on the hardship transfer list, and
- d) Experience levels of gaining and losing offices.

NWS will make reasonable efforts to use the RON process for in-grade transfer opportunities that are primarily in the interest of the employee for other job series.

The Parties agree that the effective usage of the RON process satisfies the requirements of Article 14, Section 8 of their CBA.

### **GS1340 DE/CR Postings**

7. After the quarterly 1340 MAP and RON announcements referenced above, NWS will continue to release GS-1340 5/7/9 DE announcements. NWS may use positions that might be offered under DE/CR announcements to hire/convert candidates from student intern/scholarship programs in effect at the time of conversion. These conversions would not supplant positions intended per the above process to be released GS11/12 MAP PCS.

8. There may be instances where NWS need to release additional DE/CR 1340 5/7/9 announcements to address attrition or to attain NWS annual staffing targets. In these cases,

NWS and NWSEO will meet in a timely fashion so NWSEO can understand the need for an out-of-cycle announcement and to ensure that listed vacancies meet the spirit of the principles above.

**NLC Discussions**

9. NWS and NWSEO will discuss employee readiness and succession planning at each National Labor Council (NLC) meeting to ensure common understanding of the current status of employee readiness, and to anticipate and mitigate any issues related to employee readiness or experience levels in any work units. NWSEO can identify issues related to work unit experience level to the NWS Designated Management Representative and the NWS Chief Operations Officer (COO) at any time prior to an NLC to ensure issues are monitored and addressed in a timely manner.

**Reopener**

This agreement is subject to the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 7114 (c) and may be reopened after two years by either Party or amended during the duration of the agreement by mutual agreement of both parties.



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A.J. Reiss  
NWS Deputy Director (Acting)

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John Werner  
President, NWSEO

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Date

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Date