

**US Geological Survey**  
**Office of Human Resources**  
**Customer Service Plan**

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# US Geological Survey Human Resources

## Customer Service Plan

### Introduction

The Human Resources (HR) office is committed to excellence in customer service.

**VISION:** *We are one cohesive, collaborative team of professionals dedicated to creating partnerships with the US Geological Survey (USGS) employees, its leadership and outside entities by supporting all mission areas.*

**MISSION:** *With a strong commitment to providing high quality service to our customers, Human Resources ensures that the USGS has the Right People, in the Right Jobs with the Right Skills.*

### Codes of Conduct

The Human Resources office is committed to working cooperatively with our customers toward their success. Our customers' ideas and opinions are valued. Delivering quality and timely services to them is the most important thing we do. HR employees will be honest, open, courteous, respectful, and fair in all of our dealings with all customers.

Professionalism and effective teamwork help us prosper in a rapidly changing environment. To provide our customers with the best possible service, we develop the technical competence of the staff in different areas and share information with each other on how to get the job done. We value a work environment where all HR employees feel they can openly and honestly discuss opportunities and challenges.

Within HR, we believe:

- Integrity is Critical
- Communication is Essential
- Teamwork is a Must
- Innovation is Vital

HR employees will only share, discuss, or release employee information on a need to know basis.

## **Customer Identification**

The HR customers include:

- all employees (including our co-workers and supervisors) within the USGS, and under certain circumstances, their families
- employees of the Department of Interior (DOI), the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and other Federal Agencies
- the general public

## **Partnership Relationship**

Successful implementation of the HR mission is accomplished in partnership with management and employees. We pledge to provide high quality, caring, timely, and accurate service within established legal guidelines.

In this partnership, HR employees will do the following:

- listen to our customers' needs
- be knowledgeable about the centers/offices we serve
- be accountable for our actions
- provide quality, timely service and updates on progress
- be honest, open, courteous, respectful, and fair in all contacts with our customers
- be proactive and anticipate customer needs
- provide explanation for our actions
- be flexible and creative; seek innovative alternatives
- share our knowledge openly with our customers and co-workers
- educate our customers on time frames needed to complete request
- update HR subject matter contact points via the HR website as needed
- respond to questions or provide appropriate resources
- be easily accessible
- ensure emergency phone numbers are provided on voice mail messages
- update voicemail greetings/out of office assistance when out of office
- protect the rights and benefits of USGS employees as well as the rights of the bureau

So the HR office can provide the best possible service, our customers should do the following:

- involve us early
- be frank and candid in identifying needs
- provide complete information
- submit personnel actions and required documentation within necessary time frames

- work in cooperation with HR staff to prioritize work performed
- provide timely and constructive feedback on work performed
- be honest, open, courteous, respectful, and fair in all contacts with HR staff
- be mindful to read information and updates provided by HR staff
- leave a detailed message (by phone or email) if we are not available. This will allow us an opportunity to respond to your needs appropriately and in a timely manner.

Our goal is to provide excellent customer service. We ask our customers for support and cooperation in assisting us in meeting this goal. The HR staff will work to respond to inquiries within 24 hours.

## HR Operational Services

*The HR office provides the following operational services to its customers: Staffing; Classification; Employment and Recruitment; Employee Benefits; and Employee and Labor Relations.*

### Staffing/Classification, Employment and Recruitment

We work with managers to hire applicants, both federal and non-federal (applying OPM established policies and procedures), beginning with the establishment of the recruitment strategy, continuing through the hiring process, and subsequent position changes, i.e., promotions, reassignments, etc. All services are performed within established guidelines, practices, and procedures and include the following items:

- **Employment and Recruitment** – the process of hiring employees (through the use of the OPM Qualification Handbook and agency policies and procedures), which begins with the establishment of recruitment strategy and concludes when the person enters on USGS rolls.
- **Position Classification** – the process of working directly with managers and supervisors in outlining duties and responsibilities, and determining the appropriate title, occupational series, grade, and pay level through interpretation of regulatory OPM Position Classification Standards.
- **Position Management** – the process of working with managers and supervisors to ensure organizations, positions, and functions are structured efficiently and economically.
- **Personnel and Payroll Processing** – the process of entering data into the Federal Personnel and Payroll System (FPPS) from source document, and researching and resolving problems.

## Standards

We maintain open and continuing communication with customers; listen to their needs; provide clear, complete, and well thought-out advice; provide updates as each situation warrants; notify customers of problems promptly; and set mutual realistic dates with customers for completion of assignments.

We advise supervisors and managers on position management considerations, for example, the relationship to other positions in the organizational structure.

We use flexible approaches – think outside of the box – for classification and staffing activities, while ensuring merit principles and regulations are met. We identify and explain the full range of options and alternatives to managers and supervisors on actions in progress.

We reference and apply human resource laws, regulations, policies, and procedures, as well as, internal agency tools and reports.

| <b>Staffing/Classification, Employment and Recruitment</b>   |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Action Required</b>   | <b>Typical Time Frame For Completion*</b>  |
| Career ladder promotions.  | Effective the next pay period after the FPPS action is received and qualification requirements have been met provided the action is received at least 5 days prior to the beginning of the pay period. |
| Classification of new positions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standard positions (as listed in HR website).</li> <li>• Nonstandard positions.</li> </ul> | Within 5 business days.<br><br>Within 15 business days.  |
| Accretion Requests   | Within 15* business days. Effective the pay period following the final classification decision.<br><br>*complex accretions may take longer but timeframes will be discussed with requesting supervisor |

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| <p>Recruitment actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vacancy announcement prepared.</li> <li>• Certificate issued.</li> <li>• Offer Employment</li> </ul> | <p>Within 10 business days after position has been classified.</p> <p>Within 14 business days after closing date of the announcement.</p> <p>Within 3 business days of receiving selection from hiring manager.</p> |
| <p>Non-recruitment actions (e.g. change in work schedules; change in hours , etc.)</p>  | <p>Effective the next pay period after receipt provided the required supporting documentation (when required) and personnel action is received at least 5 days prior to the beginning of the pay period.</p>        |
| <p>Entrance on Duty (EOD) paperwork.</p>  | <p>Completed in the pay period in which the appointment was made.</p>   |

***\*Time frames may be altered as a result of changed staffing levels, client requirements, priorities established by management, and/or new policies and procedures.***

**Please Note: Actions not submitted in a timely manner will cause delays in processing.**

## Employee Benefits

We provide information to employees, family members, supervisors, and managers on various benefits, including health and life insurance, retirement, death, and disability based on guidelines and law.

### Standards

We maintain open and continuing communication with customers; listen to their needs; provide clear, complete, and correct information; provide updates as each situation warrants; notify customers of problems promptly; and set mutual realistic dates with customers for completion of assignments.

We process actions by the effective date (once completed paperwork is received) to avoid undue financial hardship on the employee and/or the family.

We communicate information about changes in employee benefit laws and regulations. Where changes require new or revised policies and procedures, we immediately issue interim guidance on changes to customers for their use.

We interpret new employee benefit laws and regulations, prepare appropriate policy guidance or policy and procedures; and communicate information in user-friendly and accessible formats.

We provide retirement calculations. We let customers know immediately if the response will take longer for reasons beyond our control, such as when requesting records.

We submit retirement cases to the appropriate contacts.

| <b>Employee Benefits</b>             |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Action Required</b>               | <b>Typical Time Frame For Completion*</b>   |
| Retirement estimates (1 to 5 years). | Within 20 business days of the receipt of the retirement request sheet. One retirement estimate per year, per employee.   |
| Retirement applications.             | Within 30 business days of receipt or within one pay period of separation.<br><i>Employees should submit completed applications within 60 business days prior to selected retirement date to the Servicing Benefits Specialist.</i> |



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| Completed disability retirement applications   | Within 30 business days of receipt.<br><i>OPM is responsible for approval or disapproval of all cases.</i>   |
| Death cases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Death claim forms sent to beneficiary of applicable person.</li> <li>• Completed death case processed</li> </ul> | <p>Within 1 business days after notification of death or appropriate for the situation. Benefit Specialists are sensitive to the family needs.</p> <p>Within 5 business days.</p>                                |
| Request for civilian deposit/redeposit.  | Within 5 business days of receipt.   |
| Estimates for military deposit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Payment request processed.</li> </ul>   | <p>Within 5 business days of receipt of Estimated Earnings During Military Service Statement submitted by employee.</p> <p>Within 5 business days of receipt of completed application and payment documents.</p> |

***\*Time frames may be altered as a result of changed staffing levels, customer requirements, priorities established by management, and/or new policies and procedures.***

**Please Note: Actions not submitted in a timely manner will cause delays in processing.**

## Employee/Labor Relations

We provide advice and counsel to address and resolve problems related to conduct and performance and labor relation’s issues. We participate in official proceedings and ensure compliance with applicable laws, regulations and policies.

- **Employee Relations** – We advise managers, supervisors, and employees on adverse and disciplinary actions, employee recognition programs, performance appraisal systems, attendance and leave, hours of work, telework, suitability, drug-testing, grievances and appeals. Responsibilities include the operational support of the Leave Share Program.
- **Labor Relations** – We provide labor relations advice, assistance, and counsel to managers and supervisors on the requirements of the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations statute. This includes union notification, consultation, contract administration, conducting and participating in negotiations, resolving grievances, and participating or representing the bureau in third-party proceedings.

### Standards

We maintain open and continuing communication with customers; listen to their needs; and provide clear, complete, and technically sound advice and counsel.

We work with customers to develop solutions to complex and sensitive problems; explore and discuss options including innovative and creative approaches and make recommendations that are consistent with applicable laws, case laws, regulations, practices and policies.

We provide regular feedback to customers on our work to include results of our research, analysis of documentation, and preparation of appropriate actions and documentation. The time frames outlined in the following chart are for routine actions

| <b>Employee/Labor Relations</b>   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Action Required</b>  | <b>Typical Time Frame For Completion</b>                             |
| Letters of Warnings/Caution.  | Within 10 business days after the receipt of required documentation. |
| Letters of Reprimand.   | Within 15 business days after the receipt of required documentation. |
| Proposed Suspension Letters; Removals; Probationary Termination Letters; Performance Improvement Period (PIP) Letters; Denial of Within Grade Increase (WGI) Letters. | Within 30 business days after the receipt of required documentation. |

|   |  |
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| Grievance responses; investigations and responses, labor relations responsibilities, and representing the Agency in third-party proceedings | Within established time frame.   |
| Provide clear, complete, and technically sound advice and counsel to customers.   | Within 3 business days of the initial inquiry or sets mutual realistic dates with customers for completion of assignments. |
| Processes completed Leave Transfer Program package that includes medical documentation, audits, and application.                            | Within 10 business days.   |

***\*Time frames may be altered as a result of changed staffing levels, client requirements, priorities established by management, and/or new policies and procedures.***

**Please Note: Actions not submitted in a timely manner will cause delays in processing.**

## **Feedback and Suggestions**

We will solicit feedback on Human Resources activities from our customers on at least an annual basis to determine if our services are meeting customer standards. We will request this information in various formats, including questionnaires, discussions and other methods.

We welcome your feedback and suggestions for improvement. Please send your comments and questions to your servicing Human Resources Office.

Please refer to the HR website for an updated list of the management team and subject matter specialists at the following URL: <http://internal.usgs.gov/ops/hro/askhro.html>