



United States Department of Agriculture

Departmental
Administration

Office of the
Assistant Secretary
for Administration

Office of Human
Resources
Management

1400 Independence
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Washington, DC
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DATE: July 15, 2022

TO: Mission Area Chief Operating Officers and Staff Office Equivalents
Mission Area Chief Human Capital Officers

FROM: Anita R. Adkins
Chief Human Capital Officer

SUBJECT: OHRM Advisory: Referral Bonus Changes

Purpose:

The purpose of this advisory is to update the current language in Departmental Regulation (DR) [4040-430](#), *Employee Performance and Awards*. The updates impact Referral Bonus policy, reducing the timeframe to award the referral bonus.

Background:

A referral bonus is an award given to an employee who helps the agency recruit new talent by referring someone for an advertised, hard-to-fill vacancy (*i.e.*, after the vacancy has been announced for open competition through proper channels). A referral bonus may be paid after that person is hired by the agency and performs successfully in the job.

After review of [5 U.S.C. Chapter 45](#), [5 CFR Part 451](#), [DR 4040-430](#) and consideration of input from Mission Areas, Agencies, and Staff Offices, the following changes are implemented to Referral Bonus.

Changes:

To streamline the awards process and to encourage employee participation in this program, the timeframe for when the recommending employee is eligible to receive a Referral Bonus Award has been reduced. The following changes are effective immediately:

1. DR 4040-430 Para 6 c. (11) (d) 3 5a

Current language:

The newly appointed employee (*i.e.*, an employee on their first appointment with a USDA Mission Area, Agency, or Staff Office, or an appointment to a USDA Mission

Area, Agency, or Staff Office after a break in service of 90 or more calendar days) has **served 1 year** with the Mission Area, Agency, or Staff Office; and

Updated language:

The newly appointed employee (*i.e.*, an employee on their first appointment with a USDA Mission Area, Agency, and Staff Office, or an appointment to Mission Area, Agency, or Staff Office after a break in service of 90 or more calendar days) has **served a minimum of 90 days** with the Mission Area, Agency, or Staff Office; and

2. DR 4040-430 Para 6 c. (11) (d) 3 5b

Current language:

The new employee has a rating of record of Fully Successful.

Updated language:

The new employee is performing at the Fully Successful level.

If you have any questions about this memorandum, please contact Allen Hatcher, USDA Acting Deputy Chief Human Capital Officer, at Allen.Hatcher@usda.gov, or Doug Lattimer, Senior Human Resources Specialist, Performance Management Policy, at Douglas.Lattimer@usda.gov or (202) 993-0136.

This HR Policy Advisory is effective upon receipt and remains in effect until it superseded or updated Department Regulation is published.