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Upward Mobility Program

A Mandatory Reference for ADS 418

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UPWARD MOBILITY PROGRAM

1. Policy. The Upward Mobility Program (UMP) is a special program that enables managers and supervisors to identify training positions in their organizations to provide career development and growth opportunities for USAID's underutilized and underdeveloped General Schedule (GS) employees, who are in positions at the GS-9 grade level or below. Organizations may participate in this Program on a voluntary basis.

Through the UMP, eligible employees apply for entry training positions in the Agency. If selected, they are placed in the entry or intermediate position within the organization and receive training (e.g., formal, on the job, or online) specifically designed to qualify them for the target occupation at the end of the training period. Upon successful completion of the training program, the employee will be reassigned or promoted to the target position. If the target position has a career ladder, the employee may be promoted non-competitively to the next grade level in the career ladder, and when eligible, up to the full potential (highest grade) level of the position.

The following is a brief description of the program:

a. How the Program Works

(1) The entry position is advertised as a UMP opportunity. Eligible employees apply via USAID's online automated recruitment system (AVUE) and answer questions designed to measure their potential and ability to acquire the necessary skills.

(2) Applications are reviewed by the AVUE system and the responsible Human Resources (HR) Specialist for eligibility.

(3) Eligible employees are referred to the selecting official for consideration.

(4) Once a selection is made, the supervisor and employee develop a training plan (enclosure (1)). The plan identifies the specific experience, training, and education the trainee needs to fully qualify for the target position at the end of the training period. The training experience (e.g., formal, on the job, or online) is given double credit: one month of training equals two months of experience.

(5) Employees selected for a UMP position at a lower grade level than their current position are entitled to pay retention, if their existing salary cannot be accommodated within the salary range of the grade level for the UMP position.

(6) The supervisor establishes a performance plan for the trainee in accordance with guidelines in ADS 462, Employee Evaluation Program, Civil Service. On a quarterly basis, the supervisor evaluates the trainee's job performance, progress, and training. The trainee provides input on his or her training and job performance to date and any other training or development still needed to fully qualify for the target position at the end of the training period.

(7) The trainee is reassigned or promoted to the target position, subject to successful completion of the training plan and satisfactory performance on the job.

(8) If a trainee does not satisfactorily complete the requirements of his or her training plan for any reason, management in the respective Bureau or Independent Office is responsible for placing the employee in a position equivalent in grade and tenure to the position held before selection into the UMP position. For a trainee who accepted a voluntary change to a lower grade to participate in the UMP, management in the respective Bureau or Independent Office will make every effort to re-promote the employee to a position equivalent in grade and tenure to the one held prior to being placed in the UMP position, if such a position is available. If an equivalent position is not available, the employee will be reassigned at the current grade held under the UMP position.

2. Participation Criteria

To be eligible to participate, the employee must:

- Be a current USAID employee serving under a career or career conditional appointment in the competitive service;
- Be in a position at the GS-9 level or below with no known promotion potential;
- Apply at the same or lower grade level of the advertised position;
- Have a current annual performance rating that is the equivalent of "Fully Successful" or higher;
- Meet all eligibility requirements identified in the vacancy announcement.

3. Additional Information

Specific questions regarding the UMP should be addressed to the HR Specialist servicing the respective Bureau or Independent Office.

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