



IPA Program Overview and Process

An Additional Help Document for ADS Chapter 437

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The Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) Mobility Program
Title 5, USC 3371-3376
5 CFR 334
USAID ADS 437

Overview

- The IPA Mobility Program is a ***personnel mechanism*** that allows the temporary assignment of skilled personnel between federal and non-federal entities. The program enables USAID to gain expertise that is not available in-house and also allows USAID employees to serve for limited periods with eligible non-Federal organizations.
- The program's purpose is to facilitate cooperation between the Federal Government and non-Federal entities through the ***temporary assignment of skilled personnel***.
- The assignments allow ***civilian employees of Federal agencies to serve with eligible non-Federal organizations*** for up to two years without loss of employee rights and benefits. ***Employees of State and local governments, Indian tribal governments, institutions of higher education and other eligible organizations similarly may serve in Federal agencies.***
- Mobility assignments must be for a ***sound public purpose*** and may be used to achieve objectives such as:
 - Strengthening the management capabilities of Federal agencies, State, local and Indian tribal governments, and other eligible organizations;
 - Assisting in the transfer and use of new technologies and approaches to solving governmental problems; and,
 - Providing program and developmental experience that will enhance the assignee's performance in his or her regular job.
- **Eligible organizations** include: State, local, and Indian tribal governments, institutions of higher education, and nonprofit organizations certified as eligible.
- **Eligible Federal employees** include career or career-conditional appointees, career appointees in the Senior Executive Service, individuals under appointments of equivalent tenure in excepted service positions (including Presidential Management Fellows). **IPA assignments of Federal employees must be initiated by Agency management, not by the employees themselves.**
- **Eligible non-Federal employees include individuals employed for at least 90 days** in a career position with a State, local or Indian tribal government, a U.S. institution of higher education, or other eligible organization. **The employees must be U.S. citizens and able to receive a security clearance.**

- **Non-federal employees** on IPA agreements may be assigned on a detail to a set of ad hoc duties relevant to the specific assignment, or they may be given non-competitive appointments to established positions. They may serve in USAID/Washington or in USAID Missions (NSDD-38 issues do not apply; however, issues regarding diplomatic passports, transportation, etc., must be worked out between the bureau and the mission). The assignments may be program or OE funded. Details do not count against an office's FTE level; appointments do count.
- **Non-federal employees on IPA agreement details** do not become USG employees, but may be treated as employees and may exercise supervision over Federal employees (although normally they serve on staff assignments or in an advisory capacity). They are subject to ethics, conflict of interest, and other USG regulations. Non-federal employees must be employed by their home organization in a career position for at least 90 days prior to the IPA assignment.
- **Assignments are for two years with the option of a two-year extension.** After four continuous years, the employee on IPA assignment must return to the home organization for at least 12 months. Federal employees on IPA assignments are limited to a maximum of six years.
- Federal and non-Federal employees on IPA assignments must agree to **return to their home organizations** for a period equivalent to the IPA assignment.
- IPA assignments can be **paid fully or partially by the Federal agency.** Costs include basic pay, supplemental pay, fringe benefits, and travel and relocation expenses. Administrative costs associated with the assignment (e.g., payroll transaction costs, office space, supplies, tuition credits, etc.) are not allowed.
- **Cost-sharing** is negotiated between the agency and the partner organization and should be based on the extent to which each benefits from the assignment. The organization which benefits most should bear the larger share. When an organization's resources do not permit costs to be shared on a relative benefit basis, the Federal agency can pay the full share.

How to Obtain an IPA Employee from a Non-Federal Organization: Guidance for USAID Bureaus/Independent Offices (B/IOs)ⁱ

Consult ADS 437 for policies and procedures governing IPA assignments prior to beginning to arrange the assignment. Then follow the steps below:

1. Identify the need for skilled technical staff from outside the Agency and prepare a written justification for bringing in outside talent (i.e., not using USAID staff).
2. Write a position description or scope of work detailing the duties and responsibilities of the position or assignment the IPA employee will perform.
3. Confirm (with appropriate B/IO official) that funding and space will be available for the employee. Funding may be either OE or program, depending on the purpose and task. (See [ADS 601](#).)
4. Contact appropriate sources of candidates for the position, obtain the candidates' resumes, and identify a potential preferred candidate. Check with GC/EA that the candidate and his or her organization do not have any conflict of interest or ethical issues. **GC should be consulted early in the process to avoid pursuing ineligible candidates.**
5. Visit OPM's [List of Organizations](#) to verify that the candidate's organization is eligible. If the organization is not on the list, to be certified as eligible it must submit to the DAA/OHR a copy of its previous certification by another Federal agency **or** its:
 - a) Articles of incorporation;
 - b) By-laws;
 - c) Internal Revenue Service nonprofit statement; and
 - d) Any other information that shows that the organization has as a principal function the offering of professional advisory, research, educational, development services, or related services to governments or universities concerned with public management.
6. Prepare (or obtain from the organization) a budget for the position, including the candidate's salary and benefits (the employer's share of fringe benefits should be itemized) and any travel and transportation and other allowable costs. All costs in the budget must be documented.
7. Obtain a letter or memo from the partner organization confirming their interest in the assignment. The following information should be in the letter or verified by phone or other means of documentation for inclusion on the IPA agreement form (AID 437-1):
 - a) The organization's willingness to participate.

- b) The name and title of the person who will sign the assignment agreement.
 - c) The proposed assignee's name, title, address, and phone number.
 - d) The name and title of the proposed assignee's current supervisor.
 - e) The employee's current salary and fringe benefits (benefits must be reflected as a percentage of base annual salary and then itemized).
 - f) The proposed assignee's original date of employment with the organization as a permanent career employee (must have been employed at least 90 days.)
 - g) A statement indicating that the proposed candidate is a permanent career employee, or equivalent, of the organization. If the equivalent is claimed, the organization must provide an explanation of the proposed assignee's employment status.
8. When ready to finalize the arrangement, prepare an Action Memo for the DAA/HR requesting approval of the assignment. **The Action Memo must be cleared by the AA/M and by cleared by GC, CFO, and any other B/IO approving officials.** Obtain the necessary clearances and ensure the funds are approved and available. Commit and obligate the funds in Phoenix (generally through a Miscellaneous Obligation Document).
9. Once the Action Memo has been cleared – ideally shortly after the request letter from the partner organization has been received and accepted - the Bureau AMS Officer (or the HR Specialist, as necessary) can request a Secret security clearance for the employee (the employee is considered a non-direct-hire/other, **not a contractor**) for this purpose). Request that SEC grant a temporary clearance if the candidate is eligible. (Use Form AID 6-1)
10. When the security clearance is verified (AID 500-3), submit the IPA agreement approval package to the DAA/HR (through the B/IO's HR Specialist). Include in the package the signed and cleared Action Memo. Attach the 437-1 IPA Agreement Form and any additional sheets with the position description or scope of work; the budget; the request letter or memo from the partner organization (#7 above); the candidate's resume; and a copy of the funds obligation document.
11. The HR Specialist will obtain the candidate's and authorized officials' signatures on the 437-1. HR will retain the official file and provide copies to the partner organization, the B/IO, and M/CFO.
12. Arrange for the IPA employee to attend the security briefing (at start of every pay period) to receive a USAID badge and orientation. The employee will need a B/IO escort. (Use Form AID 500-1)

ⁱ Note: This guidance covers IPA agreements for employees coming from eligible organizations to USAID. Similar procedures appropriately adjusted apply to IPA agreements for USAID employees requested by eligible organizations.

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