

JAN 13 2006



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
The Under Secretary for International Trade
Washington, D.C. 20230

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant Secretaries
Acting Director of Administration
Acting CFO
Chief Information Officer

FROM: Franklin L. Lavin 

SUBJECT: ITA Hiring Freeze

On January 3, 2006, I imposed a temporary hiring freeze for three months due to resource constraints. The following parameters will apply to the freeze:

1. Hiring within ITA will be permitted. This includes internal reassignments and competitive promotions. The freeze applies to all paid external hiring activity.
2. All positions within ITA are affected except student volunteers. Paid student appointments are included in the freeze. The freeze covers all permanent, temporary, term, time-limited, and student appointments in Washington, DC and the domestic and overseas field.
3. External employment offers made by OHRM prior to January 3, 2006 will be honored; all other external recruitment requests will be returned to the submitting office.
4. Requests for exemption to the freeze must be submitted to Deputy Under Secretary Michelle O'Neill for approval.

Requests for exemption must be submitted in writing by an Assistant Secretary, the Chief Information Officer, Acting CFO or Acting Director of Administration. Exemptions will be granted only where it is clearly demonstrated that there is no alternative means of carrying out major program responsibilities. The attached OHRM policy memorandum establishes the process for requesting freeze exemptions.

Based on Human Resources Policy Bulletin FY05-20, the minimum area of consideration on vacancy announcements will continue to be "All Sources". In the absence of an approved exemption, hiring officials are limited to considering only ITA employees during the selection process. Career ladder promotions are not subject to the hiring freeze.

While this is the ITA policy, you have the discretion to further limit hiring within your organization. Please let Michelle O'Neill or MaryAnn McFate know if you have any questions or would like to discuss this further.

Attachment
OHRM Policy Memo





OHRM - 2005

Office of Human Resources Management Policy Memorandum

Subject: Procedures for Requesting Freeze Exemptions

On January 3, 2006, Under Secretary Franklin Lavin established an ITA-wide hiring freeze for three months, which may be extended if necessary. Job offers extended by OHRM prior to this date will be honored. All requests for exemption to the freeze must be directed to Deputy Under Secretary Michelle O'Neill for approval. To obtain approval, all Assistant Secretaries, the CIO, the Acting CFO, or the Acting Director of Administration must submit a justification that indicates how the vacant position affect(s) ITA's ability to carry out its mission with a particular emphasis on what would happen if an exception is not approved.

2. Purpose: To establish standard operating procedures for processing recruitment actions and freeze exemption requests under ITA's hiring freeze.

3. Procedures: Managers and OHRM staff will follow the procedures below when processing actions requiring an approved freeze exemption.

(a) Managers who wish to recruit must obtain approval of the freeze exemption prior to submitting a Request for Personnel Action (SF-52) to OHRM. The approval will be obtained by submitting a memorandum from the appropriate Assistant Secretary (or designee) to the Deputy Under Secretary. The memorandum (sample attached) will include the following information.

- (1) Position title, series, and grade,
- (2) Exact organizational location of the position,
- (3) Statement of whether the position is an existing or proposed new position,
- (4) Brief description of the work to be performed and linkage to the mission,
- (5) Immediate supervisor over the position,
- (6) A statement explaining the benefits of filling the position,
- (7) A statement of the anticipated consequences of not filling the position, and
- (8) A statement explaining the benefits of considering external candidates vs. limiting consideration to internal employees.

(b) When an SF-52, with the approved freeze exemption is received, the human resources specialist in OHRM will begin the appropriate recruitment process to fill the position in accordance with Merit Systems Principles and established DOC and ITA policies and procedures. If an exception to competitive procedures is proposed (i.e., an accretion-of-duties promotion), all required documentation must be submitted along with the SF-52.

4. Records: Copies of approved freeze exemption requests will be filed in the following locations:

- (a) As an attachment to the SF-52 that is ultimately filed in the Official Personnel Folder of the incumbent,
- (b) As part of the merit promotion file as a record of authority to fill the position; and
- (c) In a central location for all freeze exemption requests maintained by Employment Advisory Services Group.

5. Effective Date: This standard operating procedure is effective upon approval by the ITA Human Resources Officer.

Approved:

Human Resources Officer

Date

SAMPLE MEMO

MEMORANDUM FOR: Michelle O'Neill
Deputy Under Secretary

FROM: Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: Freeze Exemption

This is to request an exemption to the hiring freeze in order to establish or recruit for the position of (Title, Series, and Grade) in (Organizational Location). Information to support this request is provided below.

Background Information on the Position:

Benefits of Filling the Position:

Consequences of Not Filling the Position:

I trust that the information provided above is adequate for you to authorize establishment and/or recruitment for the position of _____. If you require additional information, please contact (Name, Title), at (telephone number).

DECISION:

____ Approve

____ Disapprove

____ Let's Discuss

_____ Date