**TOD Hiring**

**Quote:**

“Unless we can quickly and effectively hire a candidate into a relevant position, the strongest technical talent experts will likely drop out of the process. Hiring is like riding a bike. If you stop moving, you fall over.” ["Building the Hiring Process for USDS,” United States Digital Service, Unpublished Case Study, 2016.]

**Intro:**

The caliber of the people that Federal departments and agencies are able to recruit, hire, and retain has a decisive impact on public sector performance. Agencies already draw on the efforts of a diverse and talented workforce, but many could additionally benefit by continuing to actively recruit individuals who can help build a more effective, efficient, and innovative government. Framing employment opportunities as temporary “tours of duty” can tap into new talent willing to answer the call to serve their country. [Anastasoff, J., personal communication with Policy Design Lab, Washington DC, December 7th, 2016.]By augmenting their traditional recruitment channels with the use of flexible hiring authorities, agencies can recruit executives, entrepreneurs, technologists, and other innovators willing to enter government service for a short period of time. [“[A Strategy for American Innovation](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/strategy_for_american_innovation_october_2015.pdf),” Economic Council and Office of Science and Technology Policy, October 2015.] Drawing in fresh, outside talent is an important avenue for infusing new, innovative thinking into Federal work. When coupled with active recruitment methods, tour of duty hiring approaches can help agencies rapidly address technical skill gaps and tackle emerging challenges.

This guide lays out the rationales and use cases for “tour of duty” hiring. Instances where “tour of duty” stints have been impactful for agencies are highlighted. Agency leadership and human resource officers can find information regarding:

* **How to use flexible authorities,** including the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA), Direct Hire Authority (with permission from OPM), Schedule A Part R hiring authority, and Expert and Consultant Pay
* **How to pitch to talent in the private sector with a “call to serve”**
* **How to effectively recruit top talent into government by adopting private-sector best practices**
* **How to recruit for both technical expertise and cultural fit**
* **How to build collaborations between innovators and career Federal employees** so that the influx of new talent serves as a “force multiplier” for the entire Federal workforce
* **How to ensure that innovators are supported** during their tenure for maximal impact.

**Why:**

Agencies may find flexible hiring models useful for more rapidly recruiting top-class talent with specialized skills. By drawing upon an additional talent pool from the private sector, tours of duty also help to infuse new technologies and innovative practices into agencies. Programs like the [Presidential Innovation Fellows](https://presidentialinnovationfellows.gov/), 18F, and the [United States Digital Service](https://www.usds.gov) (USDS) have demonstrated the benefits of recruiting technical and design talent to significantly improve the delivery of digital services and experiment with new approaches to solving problems. Agencies can reap similar benefits from using flexible hiring authorities to bring in domain experts in other critical areas besides digital technology, including process improvement, data science and data-driven decision-making, financial innovation, human-centered design, open source, and agile approaches. The benefits of detailing world-class talent extend beyond filling critical skill gaps; they can help agencies define their frontier problems and stretch goals. [Chopra, A., “[Memoranda for the National Science and Technology Council Committee On Technology](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/openinnovatortoolkit_nstcmemo.pdf),” National Science and Technology Council, February 8th, 2012.]

**How:**

A “tour of duty" refers to temporary employment hiring process under flexible hiring authorities. Tour of duty hiring approaches allow agencies to meet critical hiring needs at a faster pace than the traditional Federal hiring process, Examples of flexible hiring authorities that can facilitate tour of duty stints include the [Intergovernmental Personnel Act](https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/hiring-information/intergovernment-personnel-act/) (IPA), [Direct Hire Authority](https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/hiring-information/direct-hire-authority/) (with permission from Office of Personnel Management (OPM)), [Schedule A Part R hiring authority](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?rgn=div5&node=5:1.0.1.2.22#sg5.1.213.c.sg0), and [Expert and Consultant Pay.](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?rgn=div5;node=5:1.0.1.2.34)

This hiring method may be an attractive option for agencies looking for specific talent to join on a temporary basis to address a new or challenging issue. It is a complement -- not a replacement - to traditional competitive hiring practices. Understanding and properly using all available flexible hiring authorities can help each agency's human capital team meet agency hiring needs more efficiently. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) offers [additional guidance](https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/reference-materials/handbooks/humanresourcesflexibilitiesauthorities.pdf) on different hiring authorities and recruitment approaches that agencies may use to meet hiring needs. [see below for potential embed text]

How can agencies attract top talent on a temporary basis? Domain experts and outside leaders can be drawn by an active recruitment strategy framed around a “call to serve,” explains Jennifer Tress, the Director of Talent at 18F. [Tress, J., phone interview with Policy Design Lab, August 2, 2016.] An effective public service appeal tells prospective hires that they have tremendous skills and directly asks them to use those skills to serve their country. Particularly with the use of fellowship authority ([Schedule A sub-part R](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?rgn=div5&node=5:1.0.1.2.22#sg5.1.213.c.sg0)), talent can be hired under 2 year appointments with the option of being extended another 2 years. The tour of duty model can be especially alluring to talent with technical expertise who might not have otherwise considered public service, Tress explains: “These [2-year] terms actually do a good job of saying [to recruited hires], ‘We want you here for a focused period of time, and we want you here to disrupt in a respectful way.’” [Tress, J., phone interview with Policy Design Lab, August 2, 2016.] [[Crosslink to “Fact Sheet: Fellowships and Industry Exchange Programs Hiring Authority”, housed in D6]]

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| **Human Resources Flexibilities and Authorities in the Federal Government**  Office of Personnel Management, August 2013  Selected flexible hiring authorities available to agencies include:   * Bring in temporary assignees from state and local governments, colleges and universities, Indian tribal governments, and eligible not-for-profit organizations under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) Mobility Program. Assignments should be made for the mutual benefit of the Federal Government and the non-Federal entity, and are for 2 years. Assignments may be extended for an additional 2 years, allowing for a maximum term of 4 consecutive years. Assignees are either temporarily appointed to the Federal agency or serve while on detail. Cost-sharing arrangements for mobility assignments are negotiated between the participating organizations. The Federal agency may agree to pay all, some, or none of the costs associated with the assignment. Such costs may include basic pay, supplemental pay, benefits, and travel and relocation expenses. (5 U.S.C. 3371- 3375; 5 CFR part 334) * Use temporary appointments for short-term needs not expected to last longer than one year. Recruitment is accomplished through the competitive process. (5 CFR part 316, subpart D) * Use term appointments for more than one and up to four years in circumstances where the need for the employee's services is not permanent, including but not limited to: project work; extraordinary workload; scheduled abolishment, reorganization, or contracting out of the function; uncertainty of future funding; or the need to maintain permanent positions for placement of employees who would otherwise be displaced from other parts of the organization. Recruitment is accomplished through the competitive process. (5 CFR part 316, subpart C) * Employ experts or consultants for temporary or intermittent employment. The excepted service appointment is used to hire experts and consultants under 5 U.S.C. 3109, to perform temporary (not to exceed one year) or intermittent expert or consultant work. (This differs from employing experts and consultants through procurement contracts, which are covered by regulations issued by the Federal Acquisition Regulation Council.) Under 5 CFR part 304, an expert is someone who is specifically qualified by education and experience to perform difficult and challenging tasks in a particular field beyond the usual range of achievement. A consultant is someone who can provide valuable and pertinent advice generally drawn from a high degree of broad administrative, professional, or technical knowledge or experience. (5 U.S.C. 3109; 5 CFR part 304; agency specific legislation) * Use commercial temporary help services for brief periods (120 days, with extension of additional 120 days) for short-term situations. This option may be used only when regular recruitment and hiring procedures are impractical, and the commercial service is purchased through the Federal procurement system. (5 CFR part 300, subpart E)   Excerpted directly from: [“[Human Resource Flexibilities and Authorities in the Federal Government](https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/reference-materials/handbooks/humanresourcesflexibilitiesauthorities.pdf),” Office of Personnel Management, August 2013.] |

**Case Study:**

**General Services Administration (GSA):** [**18F**](https://18f.gsa.gov/)

**Summary**: Built in the spirit of America’s top tech startups, 18F is a team of top-notch designers, developers, and product specialists inside the [General Services Administration](http://www.gsa.gov). Begun in 2014, 18F is a civic consultancy for the government, inside the government, and enables agencies to rapidly deploy tools and services that are easy to operate, cost efficient, and reusable. [Smith, M. and Kalil, T., “[A Call to Action at the Consumer Electronics Show](https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2016/01/05/call-to-action-consumer-electronics-show),” White House, January 5th, 2016.] 18F’s philosophy focuses on collaborating to solve the “problem space” confronting agencies by providing “agile coaching, modular contracting expertise and technical advice to Federal agencies at cost-recovery prices.” [Read, R. L. and Black, T., “[A Story of an Agile Workshop](https://18f.gsa.gov/2015/02/11/a-story-of-an-agile-workshop/),” 18F, February 11th, 2015.]

**Key Accomplishments (Impact**)

When 18F changed their hiring process to screen applicants for technical expertise and fit with 18F’s open and agile approach, the result was an 80 percent reduction in hiring times and six-fold growth in only five months.

**How it works:**

18F developed a streamlined process for hiring, with sub-processes to coordinate and clear role delineations among the hiring team. Recruiters and hiring managers work together directly to create job listings. Recruiters are essential for 18F’s hiring process. They play a key role in “sourcing the right individual and then building the relationship with them to convince them that the Federal government is an employer of choice,” explains Jennifer Tress. [Tress, J., phone interview with Policy Design Lab, August 2, 2016.] Recruiters can also work directly with the agencies 18F serves to better clarify the specialized experience that is sought; agencies have found in talking with 18F recruiters that the role they were envisioning is not necessarily the role that they truly needed. Collaboration with the recruiting specialists can lead to reimagining and redefining the agency’s hiring goals, helping them better pinpoint the skillset or technical gap they are targeting. [Tress, J., personal communication with Policy Design Lab, December 7th, 2016.] (For more detail on the hiring process, see the Hiring Process Guide.)

Once recruiters understand the problem space that agencies are trying to solve, the path forward for sourcing talent becomes clearer. Recruiters can connect with the right individuals and organizations to link agency need directly to prospective candidates. Tress cautions that even for 18F, rapid hiring is often a three to four month process from candidate identification to start date. [Tress, J., phone interview with Policy Design Lab, August 2, 2016.] At the same time, because time has been invested in sourcing the best fit for the need, the resulting hires are able to quickly perform once brought on-board. [Tress, J., phone interview with Policy Design Lab, August 2, 2016.]

**Key learning insights:**

* A gateway to longer-term government service

Short-terms help to attract talent, but they can also help with retention. A majority of 18F’s employees have remained beyond their two-year terms, and many have gone on to new terms or career service at other agencies.

* To solve challenges, plan for the long-term

18F works with agencies to institutionalize progress with succession planning; an explicit goal is to eventually replace staff roles with permanent agency employees to help ensure the sustainability of initiatives.

**Read more:**

18F describes their [hiring process](https://pages.18f.gov/joining-18f/how-to-apply/), [benefits](https://pages.18f.gov/joining-18f/benefits/), and [what they’re looking for in applicants.](https://pages.18f.gov/joining-18f/who-we-are-hiring/)

[[UPLOAD: 18F Core Values Interview Guide]]

[[UPLOAD: 18F Hiring Process Guide]]

**Next Steps/Checklist:**

**Relevant Policies:**

**Additional Resources:**