

# Intergovernmental Personnel Act

Internal Guide for Evidence-Building Support

Fall 2019 / Office of Evaluation Sciences



Disclaimer: This is an internal OES document meant for internal purposes that contains IPA guidance from OPM, templates, and OES past practices. This is not a legal document.

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## Introduction

The 2018 Evidence-Based Policymaking Act (Evidence Act) has led to a government-wide movement towards increased evaluation activities and evidence-building. While some agencies have already been conducting robust evidence building activities, some agencies might need outside expertise to initiate such activities. The Office of Evaluation Sciences (OES) uses the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) Mobility Program to bring on unique talent to support agency priorities and evidence needs.

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management defines IPA agreements as:

*“The temporary assignment of personnel between the Federal Government and state and local governments, colleges and universities, Indian tribal governments, federally funded research and development centers, and other eligible organizations.”*

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide internal guidance on how OES has utilized the IPA Mobility Program in the past to fill highly technical positions in a quick and simple way where there might otherwise be capacity gaps. Personnel with IPAs at OES have served in roles as fellows, academic affiliates, and statistical methods support.

OES has experience utilizing the IPA program with dozens of nonprofit and academic institutions in order to bring on behavioral science experts to conduct low-cost, rapid-cycle evaluations across government.

This Toolkit includes:

- OPM FAQs & General Overview
- IPA Form Guidance
- List of Institutions with OES IPAs
- OES Roles & Alumni Examples

### Contact Information:

IPA Mobility Program  
U.S. Office of Personnel Management  
Room 7463  
1900 E St., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20415  
Email: [ipa@opm.gov](mailto:ipa@opm.gov)

Complete and Current Guidance from OPM on the IPA Mobility Program can be found [here](#).

## FAQs: Recruitment and Hiring Policy "Myth Busters."<sup>1</sup>

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) encourages agencies to re-think the following myths and mis-perceptions:

1. **Myth:** IPAs are popular and widely-used due to their flexibility.  
**Truth:** Agencies do not take full advantage of the IPA program which, if used strategically, can help agencies meet their needs for "hard-to-fill" positions such as Information Technology and Nurses.
2. **Myth:** IPAs are cumbersome to use and require OPM approval.  
**Truth:** Agencies do not need OPM approval to make assignments under the IPA authority. Federal agencies interested in using the authority simply enter into a written agreement.
3. **Myth:** IPAs are expensive to use.  
**Truth:** Agencies may enter into IPA assignments on a reimbursable or non-reimbursable basis. This means they may be cost-neutral to Federal agencies. Whether an IPA assignment is reimbursable is determined by the agency and non-Federal entity involved in the assignment.
4. **Myth:** An agency may only enter into an IPA agreement with a State Government entity.  
**Truth:** An agency may enter into an IPA agreement with State and local governments, institutions of higher education, and Indian tribal governments.
5. **Myth:** Agencies receive no recruitment benefit from sending employees on IPA assignments.  
**Truth:** Federal employees serving in IPA assignments can serve as both recruiters and ambassadors for positions in your agency. For example, Federal nurses sent to colleges and universities as teachers/instructors can inspire students about Federal employment and encourage them to consider employment with your agency via the Pathways Program. This results in a win-win for the academic institution as well as your agency.
6. **Myth:** An agency may document IPA assignments for full-time employment only.  
**Truth:** An agency may document IPA assignments for intermittent, part-time, and full-time employment

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<sup>1</sup> [Hiring Information on the Intergovernmental Personnel Act from OPM, Last accessed October 8, 2019.](#)

## General Overview:

### Objectives

The goal of the Intergovernmental Personnel Act mobility program is to facilitate the movement of employees, for short periods of time, when this movement serves a sound public purpose.

Mobility assignments 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 the transfer and use of new technologies and approaches to solving governmental problems;
- facilitating an effective means of involving state and local officials in developing and implementing Federal policies and programs; and,
- providing program and developmental experience which will enhance the assignee's performance in his or her regular job.

### Eligibility

- Employees of a non-federal organization in career positions that have been employed for at least 90 days prior.
- A non-federal organization can be a state and local governments, colleges and universities, Indian tribal governments, and non-profit institutions
- Agencies are responsible for certifying the authenticity of a partner institution categorized as an “other organization.” If an organization has already been certified by an agency, this certification is permanent and may apply throughout the Federal Government.

### Excluded from Assignment:

Individuals excluded from participation in the Intergovernmental Personnel Act mobility program include:

- Federal, State or local government employees serving under time-limited, temporary or term appointment, non-career or limited SES appointments, or Schedule C appointments;
- Elected Federal, State or local government officials;
- Members of the uniformed military services and the Commissioned Corps of the Public Health Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and
- Students employed in research, graduate, or teaching assistant and similar temporary positions.

### Time Commitment

- Employee can be given a temporary position or detail assignment
- Assignments may be intermittent, part-time, or full-time
  - **Note: OES has had IPAs ranging from 5% to 100% time for time periods of a few months up to 4 years.**

- Assignment agreements can be made for up to two years. The agency head, or his or her designee, may extend an assignment for an additional two years when the extension will be to the benefit of both organizations.

## Employee Status

- Employees on an IPA assignment are on detail or leave without pay (LWOP). The assignee remains an employee of his or her original organization and retains the rights and benefits attached to that status. The position is subject to any personnel actions that may occur.

## Costs

Agencies may enter into IPA assignments on a reimbursable or non-reimbursable basis. 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 an assignment. Costs may include:

- Basic pay
  - Supplemental pay
  - Fringe benefits
  - Travel and relocation expenses
- **Note: OES has done IPAs that were non-reimbursable, partially reimbursable, and full reimbursable. For example, in the case where an academic has an internal fellowship or is on sabbatical - reimbursement may not be needed.**

According to OPM as of 2019, other prohibited costs might include reimbursement or payment for employer contributions to employee benefit programs, tuition costs, family member benefits, office space, staff support, furnishings, and computer time. Outside consulting earnings may not be reimbursed, unless the assignee's regular tour of duty in the non-Federal organization included consulting time that cannot be continued due to the IPA assignment.

Questions or comments regarding this program may be submitted to: [ipa@opm.gov](mailto:ipa@opm.gov)

## IPA Form Guide & Sample Attachments

Below is an example of the IPA form used by OES and the General Services Administration. Full details on required information for IPA Mobility Program forms can be found at the [OPM website](#).

= Government fills out  
  = Institution fills out

OF 69 # (REV. 2-89)

U.S. Office of Personnel Management

FPM Chapter 334

### Assignment Agreement

Title IV of the Intergovernmental Personnel Act of 1970 (5 U.S.C. 3371-3376)

#### INSTRUCTIONS

This agreement constitutes the written record of the obligations and responsibilities of the parties to a temporary assignment arranged under the provisions of the Intergovernmental Personnel Act of 1970.

Within 30 days of the effective date of the assignment, two copies of this form must be sent to:

U.S. Office of Personnel Management  
 Personnel Mobility Program  
 Staffing Operations Division/CEG  
 1900 E street, NW  
 Washington, D.C. 20415

The term "State or local government," when appearing in this form, also refers to an institution of higher education, and Indian tribal government, and any other eligible organization.

Procedural questions on completing the assignment agreement form or on other aspects relating to the mobility program should be addressed to either mobility program coordinators in each Federal agency or to the staff of the Personnel Mobility Program in the U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

Copies of the completed and signed agreement should be retained by each signatory.

#### PART 1 - NATURE OF THE ASSIGNMENT AGREEMENT

1. Check Appropriate Box

☒ New Agreement

☐ Modification

☐ Extension

#### PART 2 - INFORMATION ON PARTICIPATING EMPLOYEE

2. Name (Last, First, Middle)

3. Social Security Number

4. Home Address (Street, City, State, Zip Code)

5. A. Have you ever been on a mobility assignment?

☐ YES

☒ NO

5. B. If "YES", date of each assignment (Month and Year)

From

To

#### PART 3 - PARTIES TO THE AGREEMENT

6. Federal Agency (List office, bureau or organizational unit which is party to the agreement)

7. State or Local Government (Identify the governmental agency)

Agency

Institution (Academic, non-profit, local gov)

8. Is assignment being made through a faculty fellows program?  
 If "YES", give name of the program.

☐ YES

☒ NO

#### PART 4 - POSITION DATA

##### A - Position Currently Held

9. Employment Office Name and Address (Street, City, State and ZIP Code)

10. Employee's Position Title

11. Office Telephone Number  
 (Include the Area Code)

12. Immediate Supervisor (Name and Title)

##### B - Type of Current Appointment

13. Federal Employees (Check appropriate box.)

☐ Career Competitive

☐ Other (Specify):

Grade Level

14. State and Local Employees

State or Local Annual Salary

Original Date Employed by the  
 State or Local Government (Month,  
 Day, Year)

##### C - Position To Which Assignment Will Be Made

15. Employment Office Name and Address (Street, City, State and ZIP Code)

16. Assignee's Position Title

17. Office Telephone Number  
 (Include the Area Code)

18. Immediate supervisor (Name and Title)

#### PART 5 - TYPE OF ASSIGNMENT

##### 19. Check Appropriate Boxes

- ☐ On detail from a Federal agency  
☐ On leave c from a Federal agency  
☒ On detail to a Federal agency  
☐ On appointment in a Federal agency

- ☐ Full Time  
☐ Part Time  
☐ Intermittent

##### 20. Period of Assignment (Month, Day, Year)

From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_

#### PART 6 - REASON FOR MOBILITY ASSIGNMENT

21. Indicate the reasons for the mobility assignment and discuss how the work will benefit the participating governments. In addition, indicate how the employee will be utilized at the completion of this assignment.

#### PART 7 - POSITION DESCRIPTION

22. List the major duties and responsibilities to be performed while on the mobility assignment.

(Include percentage of time at Agency and roles and responsibilities here)

#### PART 8 - EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

23. Rate of Basic Pay During Assignment

24. Special Pay Conditions (Indicate any conditions that could increase the assigned employee's compensation during the assignment period)

25. Leave Provisions (Indicate the annual and sick leave benefits for which employee is eligible. Specify the procedures for reporting, requesting and recording such leave.)

The Home Institution will maintain records for the participant, including official time and attendance. Fellow will coordinate his or her leave with the agency supervisor and will provide approved time and attendance to the Home Institution for recording.



### PART 9 - FISCAL OBLIGATIONS

Identify, where appropriate, the office to which invoices and time and attendance records should be sent.

26. Federal Agency Obligations (If paying more than 50 percent of a Federal employee's salary beyond a 6-month period, specify rationale for cost-sharing decision.)

The fiscal obligation to (Agency) associated with this agreement is \$XX,XXX.00 (Include total cost here excluding travel)

27. State or Local Government agency Obligations  
N/A (Or specify Institution obligations)

### PART 10 - CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND EMPLOYEE CONDUCT

- ☒ 28. Applicable Federal, State or local conflict-of-interest laws have been reviewed with the employee to assure that conflict-of-interest situations do not inadvertently arise during this assignment.
- ☒ 29. The employee has been notified of laws, rules and regulations, and policies on employee conduct which apply to him/her while on this assignment.

### PART 11 - OPTIONS

30. Indicate coverage "N/A", if not applicable.

A. Federal Employees Group Life Insurance

☐ Covered ☒ N/A

B. Federal Civil Service Retirement system or federal Employees Retirement System

☐ Covered ☒ N/A

C. Federal employee Health Benefits

☐ Covered ☒ N/A

31. State or Local Agency Benefits (Indicate all State employee benefits that will be related by the State or local agency employee being assigned to a Federal agency. Also include a statement certifying coverage in all State and local employee benefit programs that are elected by Federal employee on leave without pay from the Federal agency to a State or local agency.)

32. Other Benefits (Indicate any other employee benefits to be made part of this agreement)

Specify whether benefits are associated with this position or not.

### PART 12 - TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION

33. Indicate: (1) Whether the Federal agency or State or local agency will pay travel and transportation expenses to, from, and during the assignment as specified in Chapter 3344 of the Federal Personnel Manual, and (2) which travel and relocation expenses will be included.

Specify whether travel funds will be allocated or not.



### PART 13 - APPLICABILITY OF RULES, REGULATIONS AND POLICIES

#### 34. Check Appropriate Boxes.

- ☒ A. The rules and policies governing the internal operation and management of the agency to which my assignment is made under this agreement will be observed by me.
- ☒ B. I have been informed that my assignment may be terminated at any time at the option of the Federal agency or the State or local government.
- ☐ C. I have been informed that any travel and transportation expenses covered from Federal agency appropriations may be recoverable as a debt due the United States, if I do not serve until the completion of my assignment (unless terminated earlier by either employer) or one year, whichever is shorter.
- ☐ D. I have been informed of applicable provisions should my position with my permanent employer become subject to a reduction-in-force procedure.
- ☐ E. I agree to serve in the Civil Service upon the completion of my assignment for a period equal to that of my assignment. Should I fail to serve the required time, I have been informed that I will be liable to the United States for all expenses (except salary) of my assignment. (For Federal Employees only).

### PART 14 - CERTIFICATION OF ASSIGNED EMPLOYEE

In signing this agreement, I certify that I understand the terms of this agreement and agree to the rules, regulations and policies as indicated in Part 13 above.

35. Location of Assignment (Name of Organization)

36. Date (Month, Day, Year)

From To

37. Signature of Assigned Employee

38. Date of Signature (Month, Day, Year)

### PART 15 - CERTIFICATION OF APPROVING OFFICIALS

In signing this agreement, we certify that:

- the description of duties and responsibilities is current and fully and accurately describes those of the assigned employee;
- this assignment is being entered in to to serve a sound, mutual public purpose and not solely for the employee's benefit;
- at the completion of the assignment, the participating employee will be returned to the position he or she occupied at the time this agreement was entered into or a position of like seniority, status pay.

State or Local Government Agency

Federal Agency

39. Signature of Authorizing Officer

40. Signature of Authorizing Officer

41. Date of Signature (Month, Day, Year)

42. Date of Signature (Month, Day, Year)

43. Typed Name and Title

44. Typed Name and Title

## PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT

Sections 3373 and 3374, Assignment of Employees To or From State or Local Governments, of Title 5, U.S. Code, authorizes collection of this information. The data will be used primarily to formally document and record your temporary assignment to or from a State or local government, institution of higher education, Indian tribal government, or other eligible organization. This information may also be used as the legal basis for personal and financial transactions, to identify you when requesting information about you, e.g., from prior employers, educational institutions, or law agencies, or by State, local or Federal income taxing agencies.

Solicitation of your Social Security Number (SSN) is authorized by Executive Order 9397, which permitted by use of the SSN as an identifier of individual records maintained by Federal agencies. Furnishing your SSN or any other data requested is voluntary. However, failure to provide any of the requested information may result in your being ineligible for participation in the Intergovernmental Assignment Program.

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## Attachment A

### Part 9 – FISCAL OBLIGATION

The reimbursed cost to Institution for Employee Name covers salary, fringe benefits, and travel, during their time with the Federal Agency/Office during the 20XX fiscal year, totals \$XX,XXX USD.

This amount was calculated based on approximately XX% time dedicated to OES, over the period of XX/XX/XXXX to XX/XX/XXXX, and travel costs estimated at \$XXXX.

Invoices for salary and benefits reimbursement should be submitted on a quarterly or monthly basis. Invoices for travel-related cost should be submitted based on the cycle of expenditures.

### **The Institution must mail the invoice to:**

U.S. General Services Administration  
Financial Operations and Disbursement Division  
P.O. Box 419279  
Kansas City, MO 64141

**GSA Reference #:** OX000

**Please reference the GSA reference number on all invoices being submitted.**

The following hereby authorizes funds approval of this agreement.

\_\_\_\_\_  
XXXXXXXXXX  
Budget Analyst  
Staff Office Accounts Division  
Office of Budget, OCFO  
General Services Administration

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Attachment B

### Points of Contact

#### General Services Administration

Agency	General Services Administration
Program POC	XXXXXXX
Street Address	1800 F Street, NW
City, State, Zip Code	Washington DC 20006
Phone Number	XXX-XXX-XXXX
Email Address	xxx@gsa.gov

Agency	General Services Administration
Financial POC	XXXXXXX
Title	Program/Budget Analyst
Street Address	1800 F Street, NW
City, State, Zip Code	Washington DC 20006
Phone Number	XXX-XXX-XXXX
Email Address	xxx@gsa.gov

#### Institution

Institution Name	
Program POC	
Title	
Street Address	
City, State, Zip Code	
Phone Number	
Email Address	

Institution Name	
Financial POC	
Title	
Street Address	
City, State, Zip Code	
Phone Number	
Email Address	
REMIT PAYMENT TO	
Institution Tax ID #	
Institution / Name	
Street Address	
City, State, Zip Code	

## Institutions with OES IPAs

### Academic

- American University
- Brigham and Women's Hospital
- Brown University
- City College New York
- Columbia University
- Cornell University
- George Mason University
- Harvard University
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- New York University
- North Carolina State University
- Northeastern University
- Notre Dame University
- Princeton University
- Reed College
- Rutgers University
- Swarthmore College
- University of British Columbia
- University of California, Berkeley
- University of California, San Diego
- University of Chicago
- University of Florida
- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
- University of Pennsylvania
- University of Pittsburgh
- University of Washington
- Yale University

### Non-profit

- Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL)
- American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)
- Ideas42
- International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)
- MDRC
- Mobiles4All
- Population Services International (PSI)

### State/Local Government

- Covered California

## Roles for OES IPAs

### Methods Team

The Methods Team Lead ensures the rigor of OES work and develops training and resources. Methods Team Members are selected on-demand for specific skill sets and are usually dedicated to functional tasks.

#### Responsibilities:

- Conducting full replications of statistical analyses of randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and quasi-experimental evaluations, including preparing and cleaning data, conducting statistical analysis, recording analytical methods and results, and collaborating with team members to diagnose and resolve any discrepancies with initial analysis (about 8 per year)
- Advising team members on the design of randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and other rigorous evaluations, including estimating statistical power and advising on sample sizes required for achieving adequate power (about 8–10 per year)
- Consulting on and contributing to statistical analysis plans for analyzing randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and other rigorous evaluations (about 8–10 per year)
- Contributing to occasional written guidance for the team on key methodological/statistical issues that arise in the course of OES projects

### Fellows & Associate Fellows

OES Fellows and Associate Fellows are selected through a formal recruitment process and are fully dedicated to deliver core OES projects.

#### Responsibilities:

- Understanding agency objectives and priorities, identifying opportunities to translate findings from the social and behavioral sciences into concrete recommendations
- Driving implementation on 3-5 projects, including collaborating with agency partners to ensure:
  - intervention ideas and the design meet agency goals;
  - field experiments are implemented as planned; and,
  - the implications of results are clearly understood
- Working directly with agency collaborators to design and rigorously test interventions, perform data analysis and interpret results
- Distilling findings into reports, policy memos, and academic publications
- Representing the team by presenting at government and external conferences and meetings



## Academic Affiliates

Academic Affiliates support a subset of OES projects and are comprised of former OES Fellows, academics serving as Principal Investigators on projects, and other technical advisors. Academic Affiliates collaborate on one or more projects, usually on a Gratuitous Services Agreement (GratSA) or part-time IPA, in either case coordinated through GSA HR review.

Responsibilities:

- Support delivery of rigorous evaluations with actionable findings for agency partners in collaboration with full-time OES team member
- Contribute to understanding bottlenecks and agency challenges, and designing evidence based interventions in response to specific agency needs
- Assist in designing rigorous evaluation design to test intervention within agency constraints
- Perform data analysis and interpretation
- Distill findings into project reports and policy memos for academic, agency, and public audiences

## Evidence Team

The Evidence Team Lead and Team Members provide government-wide support for HR 4174 Title I implementation. Team Members are selected on-demand for specific skill sets and are usually dedicated to functional tasks.

Responsibilities:

- Support the Federal evaluation community, including Evaluation Officers and evaluation staff in other agencies, by identifying and sharing guidance on specific evaluation methods or topics
- Coordinate and occasionally develop and conduct training materials for Evaluation Officers or evaluation staff on evaluation methods and best practices
- Help to identify topics or methods on which there is need for new guidance or training by reviewing evaluation reports and other evidence-building research from across the Federal government
- Support refresher trainings/workshops for Evaluation Officers newly designated under the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018'



## Selected OES IPA Alumni

### **Jake Bowers - Fellow, Methods Team**

Jake Bowers teaches at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign as an associate professor of political science and statistics. As an OES Fellow, he worked on the Methods Team to help enhance the transparency and integrity of the research design and data analysis process of the team. He worked virtually at OES from 2015 to 2019 in a part-time capacity (30% time).

### **Crystal Hall - Fellow and Academic Affiliate**

Crystal Hall is an Associate Professor of Public Policy and Governance at the University of Washington. In her time with OES, she focused on projects within the areas of Economic Opportunity and Health. Crystal was on full-time assignment in DC in 2015 and part-time remote (30% time) agreements the following three years as an Academic Affiliate.

### **Lula Chen - Methods Specialist**

Lula worked on the Methods Team at OES from 2016 to 2019 as a virtual Methods Specialist with time commitments ranging from 25-80%. At OES, she worked on reanalysis, evaluation design, and reproducibility. Lula also provided feedback on OES projects and reviewed code. She is currently a PhD student in Political Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

### **Allyson Barnett - Associate Fellow**

Allyson was a full-time Associate Fellow at OES from 2016 to 2017. She continued her work with the team in a part-time capacity (10% time) from 2017 to 2018. While at OES, Allyson primary worked on projects related to health and the use of patient entered health data. Allyson completed a PhD in Agriculture and Resource Economics at the University of California Berkeley in 2019.