



Merit System Principles

The merit system principles are nine basic standards governing the management of the executive branch workforce. The principles are part of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, and can be found at 5 U.S.C. § 2301(b). These nine principles are:

1. Recruit qualified individuals from all segments of society and select and advance employees on the basis of merit after fair and open competition which assures that all receive equal opportunity.
2. Treat employees and applicants fairly and equitably, without regard to political affiliation, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age, or handicapping condition, and with proper regard for their privacy and constitutional rights.
3. Provide equal pay for equal work and recognize excellent performance.
4. Maintain high standards of integrity, conduct, and concern for the public interest.
5. Manage employees efficiently and effectively.
6. Retain and separate employees on the basis of their performance.
7. Educate and train employees when it will result in better organizational or individual performance.
8. Protect employees from arbitrary action, personal favoritism, or coercion for partisan political purposes.
9. Protect employees against reprisal for the lawful disclosure of information in "whistleblower" situation (i.e., protecting people who report things like illegal and/or wasteful activities).