



The Four Winds

National Weather Service Employees Organization

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NWS PROMISES FAIR TREATMENT OF HMTs IN SELECTION ACTIONS; EXPANDS OPPORTUNITIES FOR HMTs TO BID ON OPL SLOTS

As a result of a grievance filed by NWSEO, NWS management has agreed to ensure that HMTs receive full and equal consideration when they apply for HMT/Intern vacancies at other WFOs. In a February 5 letter to Regional Directors, NWS Director Hayes reaffirmed that selecting officials “are obliged to consider applicants from both the HMT and Intern certificates . . . when reviewing applicants for a vacancy in the HMT/Intern Unit.”

NWSEO had earlier filed a grievance on behalf of an OPL who had applied for an HMT vacancy at an office in the Eastern Region, but who was told by the selecting official that only interns were going to be considered for the slot. The union alleged that this violated the parties’ 2004 staffing agreement under which all vacancies in the HMT/Intern unit would be open to both HMT and intern applicants. The position at issue in the grievance was rebid after the grievance was filed, and an HMT was ultimately selected.

NWS has also agreed to amend the 2004 staffing plan by promising to bid all OPL vacancies nationwide if there is no HMT on station. In the original agreement, the parties agreed that OPL vacancies would be initially bid on station and that consideration would be given to the most senior HMT on station. However, since that agreement there have been a number of occasions where there were no HMTs on station who could have priority to bid on the job. The OPL position was originally envisioned as an opportunity for HMTs to serve in a GS-12 slot immediately prior to retirement rather than as a way for forecasters to get out of shift work. The modification of the agreement will help ensure that the original intent of the 2004 staffing agreement is complied with.

“I take this resolution as a good indication of the value which the new NWS Director places on the work of the HMTs” said NWSEO President Dan Sobien.