

NOAA GC/NOAA Attorneys Guild Professional Development Program

Continuous attention to training and development is essential for improving the performance of the federal workforce and enhancing the services provided by the federal government.¹ It is the policy of the Government of the United States to develop its employees through the establishment and operation of progressive and efficient training programs, thereby improving public service, increasing efficiency and economy, building and retaining a force of skilled and efficient employees, and installing and using the best modern practices and techniques in the conduct of the Government's business.² Active fostering of our employees' career development reflects the high value of our employees. Promoting a variety of cross-section experiences broadens employees' understanding of NOAA's goals, missions, and organizational structures, enhances employees' technical skills and enlarges their substantive legal knowledge, improves morale, increases employee engagement, and is a key driver of productivity, retention, and performance. To fulfill these goals, NOAA General Counsel and the NWSEO, NOAA Attorneys Guild agree to the following programs:

Professional Development and Honors Attorney Programs

It is NOAA management's intent to provide attorneys with regular voluntary opportunities for development, including the honors attorney program, temporary details, developmental work assignments outside attorneys' usual area of practice, permanent internal transfers/reassignments, or mentoring opportunities in different NOAA GC sections.

Goals:

1. Provide attorneys with opportunities for part-time developmental work assignments, full-time temporary details as available, or permanent transfers/reassignments consistent with the needs of the organization;
2. Identify and resolve barriers or impediments to attorneys being able to take advantage of these opportunities; and
3. Evaluate and adjust this program as agreed to by the parties.

Professional Development Program Design Elements:

1. This program is intended to provide flexibility for management to accommodate attorney requests for voluntary details, developmental assignments, internal transfers/reassignments, and mentoring, and for attorneys to collaborate with management.
2. Each year, management will announce an "open season" from approximately January 15 through February 15. During the open season, attorneys may identify an interest in details, developmental assignments, permanent transfers/reassignments, or mentoring opportunities, including noting the desired section and duration.
 - a. Developmental assignments could include discrete work projects of varying duration;
 - b. Details could include inter-agency or inter-Departmental work;

¹ From OPM web-site: <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/training-and-development/>

² From Executive Order 11348—Providing for the further training of Government employees

- c. Internal transfers could include being reassigned to another section;
 - d. Mentoring opportunities could include either serving as a mentor or receiving a mentor.
3. Management will make reasonable efforts to identify and notify bargaining unit attorneys in the open season announcement or during the open season of specific available opportunities.
 4. Management will attempt to accommodate as many requests as practicable consistent with the Agency's mission and goals, and will make best efforts to respond to the attorney within 60 days of the end of the open season (or, if it takes longer than 60 days, will provide notice to the attorney of why it will take longer to respond). For requests that cannot be accommodated, management will explain the reasons, and consider possible alternatives, as appropriate. This Program is intended to provide opportunities for consideration, but it does not provide a guarantee that management can or will fulfill each attorney request.
 5. Management will make reasonable efforts to accommodate attorneys who wish to be mentored or to be a mentor themselves. Attorneys who wish to mentor other attorneys may notify management in response to the open season announcement. Management will make reasonable efforts to accommodate such requests, but reserves the right to decide whether each arrangement is mutually beneficial and practicable. Bargaining unit attorney mentoring does not include providing or making any performance evaluation recommendations or opinions.
 6. The open season is not intended to prevent the consideration of suitable arrangements and opportunities at other times. Specifically, details, developmental assignments, transfers/reassignments and mentoring opportunities may be identified at any time by either management or interested attorneys, and management will attempt to accommodate those opportunities as practicable consistent with the Agency's mission and goals.

Honors Attorney Program Design Elements:

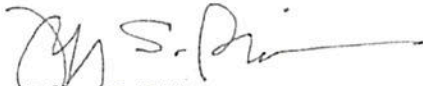
1. Management may initiate hiring honors attorneys consistent with the Agency's needs and the Professional Development Program.
2. Honors attorneys will participate in up to three rotations of four to six months each in various sections in the Washington D.C. area during the first 18 months after being hired. Attorneys may volunteer to work in a regional office during their second or third rotation.
3. Management will make reasonable efforts to accommodate an attorney's preference for their rotations, consistent with the needs of the Agency.
4. Management will make reasonable efforts to accommodate an attorney's preference for their permanent placement after their rotations are completed. Management will also attempt to provide as much advance notice as practicable and will provide at least 90 days for the attorney to find a suitable residence before the attorney is required to move to a new location for the permanent position. If a permanent placement involves a change in location, honors attorneys are expected to be responsible for their personal relocation costs.

5. The honors attorney may be assigned a mentor who will assist the attorney with the honors attorney program and help acclimate the attorney to the Office of General Counsel.

Generally applicable provisions:

1. Before a change in duty station where relocation is involved, employees may be granted up to 24 hours of excused absence for making moving arrangements and for moving in and unpacking upon arrival at the new location.
2. The honors attorney program and details/assignments/transfers programs are intended to be complementary parts of the Professional Development Program. Management agrees that the honors attorney program will not displace or prevent an open season and detail/assignment/transfer opportunities.

On behalf of Management



Jeffrey S. Dillen
Acting General Counsel

Date: 8/9/2017



Kristen L. Gustafson
Acting General Counsel

Date: 8/30/17

On behalf of NWSEO's NOAA Attorney's Guild



J. Mitch MacDonald
Attorney Advisor

Date: 8/9/17

