

NARA Notice 2020-109: Hiring Guidance to Respond to COVID-19



Notice

This message communicates changes in NARA hiring policy that are necessary to continue NARA operations during COVID-19-related facility closures and "maximum telework" operating status. The changes summarized here are described in greater detail in the attached COVID-19 Fact Sheet #7, Hiring guidance during COVID-19 response. These changes are effective immediately and until further notice.

Hiring Actions

NARA will continue to post job opportunities during the facility closures and "maximum telework" operating status.

NARA will fill positions if the selected candidate is a current NARA employee. This applies to "NARA internal only" announcements as well as announcements that are open to all Federal employees or the public.

In most cases, NARA will not fill a position if the selectee is not a current NARA employee. If an external candidate is selected, NARA will extend a tentative offer to the selectee, complete personnel security and, if required, drug testing, and will then suspend the hiring action. Once NARA returns to normal operations, these selectees will receive a final job offer and be assigned a start date.

NARA employees will not be required to submit a Standard Form 50, Notification of Personnel Action, or provide a copy of their most recent performance appraisal for "NARA internal only" job announcements. Because these documents may not be readily available to all employees during maximum telework, job announcements will list these documents as "optional." This exception only applies to positions advertised as "NARA internal only." NARA employees (and all other applicants) must submit a copy of their SF-50 and performance appraisal when applying to announcements that are open to all Federal employees or the public.

Hiring managers will have additional time to make selections for vacancy announcements that are open to all Federal employees or the public. Certificates of eligibles for positions open to applicants outside of NARA will be available for selection for 180 calendar days from the date the job opportunity announcement closed; if a selection is not made after 180 calendar days, the certificate will be cancelled and cannot be extended. No additional time will be provided for "NARA internal only" announcements. Certificates of eligibles for internal announcements will be available to hiring managers for 15 calendar days, with up to two seven-day extensions.

Drug Testing

Currently, drug testing facilities are open and available for pre-employment drug tests, although some tests are being delayed. If at some point drug testing is not available, NARA would be required to suspend hiring for most positions that require drug testing. Additional information on drug testing positions is provided in the attached Fact Sheet.

NARA is implementing these changes to ensure that NARA employees continue to have opportunities for promotion and reassignment during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to allow NARA hiring managers to secure talented external candidates who are ready to on-board and begin work when NARA returns to normal operations.

Thank you for your cooperation and patience.

[Micah Cheatham](#)

Chief of Management and Administration

Attachment: [Fact Sheet #7, Hiring guidance during COVID-19 response](#)

If you have questions about this notice, contact:

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Attachments

1. [COVID-19 Fact Sheet #7, Hiring guidance during COVID-19 response.pdf](#)



NARA COVID-19 Response

Fact Sheet #7: Hiring guidance during COVID-19 response

April 28, 2020

This fact sheet provides guidance to help protect NARA staff from the spread of the 2019 novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in the workplace and continue agency operations while NARA is in a “maximum telework” operating status.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, NARA has limited ability to successfully on-board new hires and may not be able to fully employ new entrants from outside NARA. As a result, hiring managers may continue to hire and promote internal candidates, but most external hires are suspended until NARA returns to normal operations. Selectees from outside of NARA will be given tentative offers and will complete security screening, but will not be given a start date until their facility reopens. These changes are temporary and only apply during COVID-19 facility closures and while NARA is operating in a “maximum telework” status.

Job announcements and hiring actions.

Job announcements and hiring actions will continue according to the procedures established in [NARA 315, Merit Promotion and Internal Placement](#), except as specifically provided below. These exceptions have been coordinated with NARA’s human capital shared services provider, the Department of the Treasury, Bureau of the Fiscal Service, Administrative Resource Center (ARC). This Fact Sheet lists all permissible deviations from NARA 315: If a hiring manager requires additional considerations or flexibilities not listed here, she or he should contact the Office of Human Capital at staffing@nara.gov.

1. **“NARA Internal only” (Internal Merit Promotion) job announcements and hiring actions.**
 - a. NARA employees will not be required to submit a Standard Form 50, Notification of Personnel Action, or provide a copy of their most recent performance appraisal for “NARA internal only” hiring actions. Because these documents may not be readily available to all employees during maximum telework, job opportunity announcements will list these documents as “optional.”
 - b. NARA’s Office of Human Capital will provide ARC with a copy of the most recent SF-50 and the most recent performance rating of record for each NARA applicant. A copy of the applicant’s performance appraisal will not be provided. If the job opportunity announcement has already been posted, applicants will not be penalized if they have not provided a copy of their most recent SF-50 or performance appraisal.

- c. There are no other changes to the process for “NARA internal only” announcements at this time. NARA will continue to advertise and fill vacancies that are announced as “NARA internal only”, as provided in [NARA 315](#). In particular, certificates of eligibles will still be available to hiring managers to make a selection for 15 calendar days, with up to two seven-day extensions, for a total of 29 calendar days.
2. “Open for all Federal employees” (External Merit Promotion) and “Open to the public” (Delegated Examining) job announcements and hiring actions.
 - a. NARA will continue to post job opportunity announcements that are open to applicants outside of NARA. All applicants, including NARA employees, are required to submit a copy of their most recent SF-50 and performance appraisal with their application. NARA cannot exempt NARA employees from this requirement for announcements that are available to applicants outside of NARA.
 - b. All certificates of eligibles for External Merit Promotion and Delegated Examining job announcements will be available for selection for 180 calendar days from the date the job opportunity announcement closed. If a selection is not made after 180 calendar days, the certificate will be cancelled and cannot be extended.
 - c. NARA hiring managers can continue to make selections from certificates of eligibles but ARC will not make final offers or establish enter-on-duty (EOD) dates if the selectee is not a current NARA employee. ARC will make tentative offers to external selectees. When the tentative offer is made, the ARC Human Resources Specialist will inform the selectee that NARA may not be able to bring them on-board immediately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. ARC and NARA will conduct personnel security / suitability review and, if appropriate, drug testing, for pending selections, so that the selectee is ready to hire when NARA returns to normal operations.
 - d. Each pay period, the Resource Allocation Board reviews all pending selections to identify critical hires that would be appropriate to on-board, despite the general restriction on external hires. Critical hires are positions that are necessary to maintain essential functions, where mission-critical work is available to immediately assign to the selectee, and the selectee can immediately engage in mission-critical work assignments remotely, utilizing their own computer.
 - e. The Office of Human Capital will notify ARC when pending selections can be brought on board, either when approved by the RAB or when facilities reopen. Upon notification from the Office of Human Capital, ARC will issue a final offer letter and assign an EOD. ARC will make a final offer and assign an EOD for all NARA employees who are selected, including employees selected through External Merit Promotion and Delegated Examining job announcements, without

notification or approval from the RAB or Human Capital.

Drug Testing Positions.

Currently, drug testing facilities are open and available for pre-employment drug tests, although some tests are being delayed. NARA has considered the possibility that drug testing laboratories may be closed and has adopted the following policy as a contingency, in case pre-employment drug testing is not available in the future. NARA's drug testing positions are identified in [NARA 306, Supplement 1](#).

In most cases, NARA will suspend hiring into drug testing positions if pre-employment drug testing is not available. NARA will proceed with a hire into a drug testing position if it requires a security clearance and the selectee has an active security clearance that is the same level or higher than the new position requires, as long as the other requirements and conditions outlined in this Fact Sheet are satisfied. An individual who is hired under these circumstances will be hired *contingent on a drug test* once drug testing is available. All other pending selections that require a drug test will be suspended until pre-employment drug testing becomes available, even if the selectee would otherwise be permitted to proceed to a final offer and EOD date.

On-boarding new hires. During the COVID-19 pandemic, NARA is conducting all on-boarding remotely by videoconference or teleconference. NARA's remote on-boarding process is conducted every day of the first week of each pay period. Remote on-boarding is a combination of in-processing by the Office of Human Capital, self-paced learning, and an introductory meeting with the employee's supervisor. New hires who complete on-boarding activities and cannot immediately begin remote work will be placed on weather and safety leave. New hires who are able to telework will be released to their supervisors.

USASTaffing. During the COVID-19 pandemic, ARC will continue to issue certificates of eligibles and hiring managers will make selections through the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) USASTaffing system. Ordinarily, USASTaffing requires the user's PIV card to authenticate and provide access. During the COVID-19 pandemic, OPM is offering a manual work-around for hiring managers who do not have a PIV card reader for remote access. Hiring managers who require access to USASTaffing and do not have a PIV card reader available should contact staffing@nara.gov for assistance.

Point of Contact: The Office of Human Capital at staffing@nara.gov.