LIBRARY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

LCD 9-1610.1
Senior Level Merit Selection Plan

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1. Purpose and Applicability

This plan describes the objectives, policies, and procedures governing the competitive filling of non-bargaining unit Senior-Level Library vacancies through merit selection of qualified individuals. Merit Selection refers to filling vacancies through a competitive process and includes promotions of employees accomplished through the competitive hiring process. The plan applies to filling all Library non-bargaining unit Senior-Level positions.

2. Authority

The provisions of this plan are authorized by and consistent with LCR 9-110, "Merit Selection and Employment". For a list of Library regulations related to the provisions of this plan, see Appendix B.

3. Policy

It is the policy of the Library that all vacancies filled under the provisions of this plan will be filled from among the best qualified candidates available. All selections shall be made solely on the basis of merit, fitness, and qualifications and without regard to political, religious or labor organization affiliation or non-affiliation, marital status, race, color, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, non-disqualifying physical disability, age, or other non-merit factor. Consideration for selection shall be based on job-related competencies/knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs). [Footnote 1]

The selection policies and procedures in this plan shall be applied consistently and shall promote fairness, diversity, and integrity. The policies and procedures used to implement this plan will be consistent with the principles of content-validity. [Footnote 2]

4. Objectives

The objectives of the Merit Selection Plan are to:

4.1. Acquire a highly qualified workforce through the selection of best qualified candidates,

4.2. Ensure that all applicants for merit selection and promotion are treated equitably,

4.3. Refer highly qualified, diverse interview pools for all vacancies, and

4.4. Provide incentive for employees to develop their competencies/KSAs in order to advance to maximum realization of their career potential within the framework of the jobs needed to carry out the Library's mission.

5. Exemptions

Exemptions to this Senior Level Merit Selection Plan are found in LCR 9-110, § 4.

6. Responsibilities

The Librarian of Congress, the Chief Operating Officer, the Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO), the Heads of all Service Units, as well as selecting officials and all other managers are responsible and accountable for ensuring that the provisions of this plan are applied consistently and equitably, thereby demonstrating commitment to and support for merit selection principles, policies, and practices.

6.1. **Managers/Selecting Officials** are responsible for applying the principles, policies, and procedures of this plan, including the principle of equal employment opportunity, in filling vacancies and making selections. Specific responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

6.1.1. Anticipating staffing needs and initiating actions to allow for timely recruitment and selection in accordance with this plan;

6.1.2. Ensuring the currency and accuracy of position descriptions for all positions to be filled;

6.1.3. Serving on job analysis and interview panels;

6.1.4. Determining whether job analysis materials developed in the past 24 months for job series, job families, or individual position(s) may be used in lieu of convening a new job analysis panel;

6.1.5. Determining recruitment strategies and sources designed to target highly qualified, diverse

candidates, including areas of consideration and the length of time a vacancy will be posted beyond the minimum requirement;

6.1.6. Keeping informed of and adhering to this plan; and

6.1.7. Counseling employees on ways to improve their potential for selection or promotion and assisting them in self-development activities.

6.2. **Chief Human Capital Officer** is responsible for administering and overseeing implementation of this plan in accordance with applicable law and Library regulations. Specific responsibilities of the CHCO (and Human Capital Directorate (HCD) staff, contractors, or Service Unit staff designated by the CHCO) include, but are not limited to:

6.2.1. Providing leadership and support for implementation of the provisions of this plan, ensuring that all related policies and procedures are applied equitably;

6.2.2. Ensuring that managers /selecting officials are aware of the provisions of this plan by communicating the plan, providing appropriate training, and issuing instructions, procedures, or other communications required to clarify, update, and improve the plan's implementation;

6.2.3. Informing employees periodically of the requirements and objectives of this plan and any procedural changes, and advising them of where they may review or obtain a copy of this plan;

6.2.4. Establishing, maintaining, and keeping secure merit selection records necessary to answer inquiries and reconstruct personnel actions for a minimum of two years from the date of selection or cancellation of a vacancy announcement;

6.2.5. Advising job analysis and interview panel members and Selecting Officials of their duties and responsibilities and serving as a technical advisor;

6.2.6. Facilitating the work of job analysis panels and ensuring appropriate documentation of job analysis;

6.2.7. Assisting managers/selecting officials in targeted recruitment efforts, including coordinating with executive search agencies where applicable and providing recruitment information of previously successful recruitment sources for the same or a similar position;

6.2.8. Issuing and publicizing vacancy announcements;

6.2.9. Screening applicants against eligibility requirements for positions (education, licensing and/or certification where applicable; see 8.2.2. Determining Basic Qualification Requirements);

6.2.10. Issuing interview and Final Referral List(s) to Selecting Officials;

6.2.11. Responding to questions from applicants regarding the status of their application or the requirements of this plan;

6.2.12. Ensuring that all applicants who apply under a vacancy announcement are notified of the results;

6.2.13. Reviewing selections and making official offers of employment;

6.2.14. Reviewing selection process for conformance with merit principles and Library regulations and diversity goals, as defined by the Multi-Year Affirmative Employment Program Plan and/or the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity Programs; and

6.2.15. Providing for periodic evaluations of operations under this plan.

6.3. **Director of Office of Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity Programs (EEODP)** is responsible for ensuring that reliable, accurate workforce data is available to Service Units for use

in recruitment plans and for coordinating with HCD and Service Units on diversity analysis as outlined in Section 12, Diversity Analysis.

6.4. **Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)** serving on job analysis and/or interview panels are responsible for:

6.4.1. Applying their subject matter expertise to perform job analysis tasks (identifying competencies/KSAs necessary to perform the job being analyzed and developing rating instruments to measure levels of proficiency in the competencies/KSAs, such as the interview guide);

6.4.2. Maintaining confidentiality of job analysis and/or interview process/proceedings and documentation; and

6.4.3. Disqualifying him or herself from serving on a Job Analysis and/or Interview Panel if, to do so, would create a conflict of interest or the appearance of such a conflict, e.g., the SME's relative is an applicant for a vacancy.

6.5. **Job Analysis Panels** are responsible for:

6.5.1. Reviewing position descriptions and determining, if needed, any minimum education, licensing, certification and/or experience qualifications (conforming to the provisions of this plan outlined in Section 8. Recruitment and Selection Procedures);

6.5.2. Identifying the competencies/KSAs necessary to perform the duties of the job series, job family, or individual position(s) being analyzed, including the "critical" competencies/KSAs [Footnote 3] to be measured by the Selecting Official and/or the Interview Panel;

6.5.3. Developing validated rating instrument(s), i.e., structured interview guides, and/or other rating tools, which measure levels of proficiency in the competencies/KSAs; and

6.5.4. Ensuring the content-validity of the selection process by appropriately documenting as outlined in this plan the job-relatedness of the competencies/KSAs and rating instruments used to fill a vacancy.

6.6. **Interview Panels** are responsible for:

6.6.1. Attending required structured interview training and ensuring that the interview process is conducted according to interview training and guidelines;

6.6.2. Conducting and documenting an application review to determine whether the applicant appears to have the necessary competencies/KSAs for the position (the Selecting Official may choose to do this alone or with the assistance of the other panel members);

6.6.3. Conducting and documenting the preliminary telephone interview, if appropriate; and

6.6.4. Conducting the structured interview, scoring interviewees using the benchmark anchors, and documenting the interview process.

6.7. **Applicants** are responsible for:

6.7.1. Submitting all required application materials for vacancies for which they have an interest and for which they qualify and ensuring that such materials are received by HCD no later than the closing date of the vacancy announcement;

6.7.2. Demonstrating that they have the competencies/KSAs necessary to qualify for positions for which they desire consideration by accurately portraying their job-related knowledge, education, training and experience in all application materials and throughout the selection process;

6.7.3. Familiarizing themselves with the provisions of this plan and the procedures for applying for advertised positions; and be considered for selection. Critical competencies/KSAs are

generally technical in nature.

7. Area of Consideration

7.1. **Determining Area of Consideration.** The area of consideration refers to the boundaries (area, organization, or group of organizations), within which persons must work to be eligible for consideration for a specific vacancy. Areas of consideration are determined by the Selecting Official for a vacancy, unless budgetary or FTE (full-time equivalent) constraints apply as outlined in 7.2., Restrictions Due to Budgetary Constraints. When considering the appropriate area of consideration, the Selecting Official shall choose an area large enough to produce an adequate number of highly qualified, diverse applicants. Selecting Officials may choose one of the following areas of consideration:

  7.1.1. Unrestricted. (Anyone may apply. Normally, Library employment is limited to U.S. citizens. However, non-citizens may be employed provided they meet the conditions defined in LCR 9-322, Employment of Non-U.S. Citizens.)

  7.1.2. Federal employees. (Current and former Federal employees from all three branches of government) [Footnote 4]

  7.1.3. Library-wide. (Current permanent, indefinite, indefinite NTE and/or temporary Library employees)

  7.1.4. Service Unit or Division-Wide. (Current permanent and indefinite employees working within a specified Service Unit or Division.)

7.2. **Restrictions Due to Budgetary/FTE Constraints.** Vacancies can only be restricted to the Service Unit or Division due to budgetary and/or staff (FTE) ceiling constraints. [Footnote 5] Requests to restrict vacancies must be certified in writing by the Service Unit Head through the vacancy announcement request process.

7.3. **Concurrent Consideration.** The Selecting Official may consider applicants through noncompetitive processes while concurrently considering candidates through the merit hiring competitive process. In accordance with Library regulations, noncompetitive processes include: 1) non-advancement placements (i.e., reassignments); 2) the Selective Placement Program; and/or 3) approved exchange programs.

8. Recruitment and Selection Process

8.1. **Vacancy Announcement Request Procedures**

  8.1.1. Identifying a Vacancy. The Service Unit determines the need to fill a vacancy in accordance with its procedures and designates a Selecting Official.

  8.1.2. Accuracy of Position Description. The Selecting Official is responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the position description for the vacancy being filled. The Selecting Official and/or position manager reviews an existing position description and updates the position description, if needed. For new or significantly changed positions, the Selecting Official and/or position manager creates a new position description. [Footnote 6] New or updated position descriptions must be certified for accuracy by the position supervisor or Selecting Official, reviewed and approved in accordance with the internal procedures of each Service Unit, and forwarded to HCD for classification approval in accordance with the Classification Procedures outlined in LCR 9-210. HCD staff, contractors, and/or Service Unit staff provide consultative support to Selecting Officials in creating and updating position descriptions.

  8.1.3. Requesting a Vacancy Announcement. A Service Unit requests that HCD announce a vacancy by submitting a Vacancy Announcement Request (VAR) to the HCD Office of Workforce Acquisitions. The Service Unit must identify on the VAR the position to be filled and the Selecting Official and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) for the Job Analysis and Interview

Panels. In addition, the VAR must include the signature of the appropriate Fund Manager authorizing fiscal approval to post the position.

8.1.4. Designating SMEs for the Job Analysis and Interview Panels. Each panel consists of the Selecting Official and at least two SMEs. The Selecting Official designates the members of the Job Analysis and Interview Panels for each vacancy announcement.

8.1.4.1. SMEs must be individuals who are performing, have performed, or are very knowledgeable of the responsibilities and tasks of the position being filled and who are at the Senior Level.

8.1.4.2. Individuals who intend to apply for the vacancy or for whom it might pose a conflict of interest or appearance as such (e.g., a family member may apply for the vacancy) cannot serve as a SME panel member.

8.1.4.3. Every reasonable effort shall be made to ensure that the panels reflect the diversity of the Library's workforce by including men, women, minorities, and persons with disabilities who meet the criteria outlined in 4.a. above.

8.1.5. Completing a Recruitment Plan. A Recruitment Plan must be prepared for each vacancy. This Recruitment Plan identifies areas and degrees of current Library under-representation as well as internal and external recruitment sources designed to attract qualified applicants to the vacancy, including members of the under-represented groups. The development of the recruitment plan constitutes Diversity Analysis Stage 1.

8.1.5.1. The Recruitment Plan is developed by the Selecting Official, in consultation with the Job Analysis Panel, Service Unit administrative staff, HCD Specialists, the EEODP and an executive search agency, if applicable.

8.1.5.2. The plan must be received by HCD prior to posting the position.

8.2. **Job Analysis Procedures**

Job analysis at the Library is conducted for vacancies to identify the competencies/KSAs necessary to perform the duties of the job series, job family, or individual position(s) being analyzed and to develop rating instruments (i.e., structured interview guides, and other rating tools, such as Skill or Specific Ability Tests) which measure levels of proficiency in the competencies/KSAs.

8.2.1. Conducting a Job Analysis Panel. Job Analysis Panels are convened by HCD or authorized Service Unit administrative staff. The Panel's work may be facilitated by HCD staff, contractors and/or Service Unit staff authorized by the CHCO. Each Job Analysis Panel is provided with:

8.2.1.1. A classified position description;

8.2.1.2. If applicable, OPM's Qualification Standards and/or Library-wide Occupational Requirements identifying basic requirements for the job series being analyzed, including any positive education, licensing, or certification requirements;

8.2.1.3. A draft job analysis worksheet/matrix and/or a list of competencies/KSAs to consider;

8.2.1.4. If available, draft interview questions and benchmark anchors; and

8.2.1.5. A draft vacancy announcement.

8.2.1.6. a report identifying areas of Library underrepresentation to be used in developing the recruitment plan

8.2.2. Determining Basic Qualification Requirements. The Panel reviews for reference purposes OPM and/or Library Occupational Requirements for the job series being analyzed and

determines minimum education, licensing, certification, and/or experience requirements for the position being analyzed. Individual SME Panels may choose to adopt existing OPM or Library Occupational Requirements if job-related, important to performing the duties of the position, and required upon entry.

8.2.3. Determining Competencies/KSAs and Completing Job Analysis Worksheet/Matrix.

  8.2.3.1. The Panel determines the competencies/KSAs necessary to perform the duties of the position being analyzed. Competencies/KSAs may only be included in the selection process if evaluated by the Panel as job-related, important to performing the duties of the position, and required upon entry. [Footnote 7]

  8.2.3.2. Once competencies/KSAs are identified, the Panel assigns a relative weight (ranging from 1-3) to each competency/KSA. The weights are assigned based on the relative importance of each competency/KSA to each other. In addition, the Panel must identify the linkages between the competencies/KSAs and the duties found in the position description. The Panel must also identify the competencies/KSAs to be measured in the Structured Interview and/or other rating instruments, such as Skill or Specific Ability Tests and the critical competencies/KSAs to be measured in the preliminary telephone interview and/or the full structured interview.

  8.2.3.3. The Panel must document its work in a job analysis worksheet/matrix. Documentation must include:

    8.2.3.3.1. All competencies/KSAs to be used in the selection process;

    8.2.3.3.2. Importance and Required Upon Entry ratings;

    8.2.3.3.3. Assigned weights (1-3);

    8.2.3.3.4. Identification of rating instruments (i.e., Structured Interview and Skill or Specific Ability Tests) to be used to measure each competency/KSA;

    8.2.3.3.5. The critical competencies/KSAs to be used in the preliminary telephone interview and/or the full structured interview; and

    8.2.3.3.6. Linkages between each competency/KSA and the duties identified in the position description.

8.2.4. Completing Final Structured Interview Questions and Benchmarks. The Panel reviews, edits, and refines the interview questions and benchmark anchors to be used when scoring interviews. If draft interview questions and benchmarks are not available, the Panel develops appropriate interview questions and benchmark anchors with the assistance of the HCD staff, contractor or Service Unit staff facilitating the work of the Panel. Panel members should ensure benchmark anchors are sufficiently descriptive to provide a meaningful guide for use by the Interview Panel in scoring the interviews.

8.2.5. Approving Final Job Analysis Package. Based on the work of the Job Analysis Panel, HCD or authorized Service Unit administrative staff prepares the final job analysis documents (job analysis worksheet/matrix, interview questions and benchmarks, vacancy announcement and recruitment plan) for final Panel review and approval. The Panel is responsible for ensuring the accuracy and content validity of these documents.

8.2.6. When to Conduct a Job Analysis Panel. Job analysis is not required every time a position is filled. Whether a new job analysis is required depends on the currency of the most recent job analysis for the position(s) to be filled and the frequency of changes in the requirements of a position. For example, information technology positions will likely require more frequent reviews than more static positions. Selecting Officials may choose to rely on recent job analysis materials (i.e., those developed for job series, job families, or individual position(s) within a two year period) in lieu of convening a new job analysis panel. When filling any

vacancy for which the job analysis documents are more than two years old, a job analysis panel will be convened to review the job analysis and update, if necessary.

8.3. **Vacancy Announcement Procedures**

    8.3.1. Content of Vacancy Announcements. Vacancy announcements shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

        8.3.1.1. Vacancy announcement number;

        8.3.1.2. Opening and closing dates and whether the position is open until closed or open continuously;

        8.3.1.3. Title of position, series, grade, salary range, and appointment tenure;

        8.3.1.4. Tour of duty (hours, special shifts), work schedule (including alternative work schedule options), and any overtime requirements;

        8.3.1.5. Organization and geographic location of position;

        8.3.1.6. Statement that a position is managerial, if applicable

        8.3.1.7. Number of vacancies at time of posting, with a stated reservation by the Library to fill a lesser or greater number of vacancies;

        8.3.1.8. Summary of the duties of the position/essential functions of the job;

        8.3.1.9. Area of consideration;

        8.3.1.10. Eligibility requirements;

        8.3.1.11. Education, license, or certification requirements, if applicable;

        8.3.1.12. Critical competencies/KSAs and other competencies required for the position with clear designation of the critical competencies/KSAs;

        8.3.1.13. Security clearance requirements, physical requirements, and test requirements, if any;

        8.3.1.14. Instructions on how to apply;

        8.3.1.15. List of documentation required from applicants;

        8.3.1.16. Equal employment opportunity statement;

        8.3.1.17. Selective Placement Program statement;

        8.3.1.18. Description of the evaluation process, including the role of critical competencies/KSAs;

        8.3.1.19. Statement regarding relocation expenses;

        8.3.1.20. Statement on probationary period requirements;

        8.3.1.21. Statement regarding procedures to be followed if vacancy announcement is canceled and reposted;

        8.3.1.22. Contact information (e-mail and telephone) for general and technical questions;

        8.3.1.23. Statement regarding what to do if technical difficulties prevent applicants from submitting their applications prior to the posted deadline; and

        8.3.1.24. Statement that the application, once submitted via the Library's on-line system, is final and cannot be revised even if the vacancy has not closed.

    8.3.2. Posting Period for Vacancy Announcements. Vacancy announcements will remain open for a minimum recruitment period of ten (10) workdays unless a longer posting period is requested by the Selecting Official or required by the Recruitment Plan. Closing dates may

be extended by the Selecting Official in increments of five workdays or more or extended by the CHCO one day or more due to circumstances beyond the Library's control, such as emergency closings. Vacancy announcements remain open to receipt of applications until the posted closing date.

8.3.3. Distribution of Vacancy Announcements. HCD staff are responsible for posting vacancy announcements. All announcements are posted on the Library's Web site and paper copies placed on the Library's Employment Office bulletin boards. Vacancy announcements are also distributed electronically by HCD to all labor organizations and Service Units. HCD will ensure that employees with visual impairments are provided access to vacancy announcements, upon request. HCD staff, contractors, and/or Service Unit administrative staff are responsible for distributing vacancy announcements to sources targeted in recruitment plans developed in Diversity Analysis Stage1.

8.4. **Application Procedures**

8.4.1. Method of Applying. Applicants must apply for a vacancy on-line using the Library's automated system. Applicants located through an executive search firm will be directed to the Library's automated system to complete the necessary documentation.

8.4.2. Required Application Materials. Applicants must apply as specified in the vacancy announcement to be considered for a vacancy. Upon request, the HCD Staffing Specialist will assist applicants with the on-line application process. Application materials must be submitted on-line on or before the final closing date. Once submitted in the on-line system, applicants may not change their applications. Applicants who wish to be considered for a vacancy must submit the following materials:

8.4.2.1. Online Application: a completed electronic application form (available through the Library's automated system) with an attached resume. The brief application consists of the applicant's identity and contact information (name, address, and phone numbers), citizenship status and voluntary race/national origin information. The applicant's resume must be attached to the application. The resume should contain sufficient information to assist the Selecting Official in a determination of whether the applicant possesses the necessary competencies/KSAs for the position.

8.4.2.2. Transcripts, licenses, and/or certifications: Applicants for vacancies with education, licensing, and/or certification requirements must submit copies of their documentation. These (official or unofficial) documents may be faxed, scanned, or mailed to the Staffing Specialist or hand-delivered to the Interview Panel. They must be received prior to a full interview. Applicants who do not submit the required documentation will not be interviewed and will be disqualified from further consideration. Official documentation will be required if selected for the position. Failure to complete all mandatory sections of the on-line application form or failure to submit a resume will disqualify applicants from further consideration for the vacancy for which they are applying.

8.4.3. Notification to Applicants. Applicants will receive an electronic confirmation of successful submission of applications.

8.5. **Screening Procedures**

The Library employs multiple steps to screen candidates for selection. The steps include screening through a review of the resumes, the optional use of a preliminary telephone interview and the full structured interview. Skill or Specific Ability Tests, if validated, may also be used in addition to the structured interview, as specified in Section 8.5.6., below:

8.5.1. Initial Screening of Applicants. The Selecting Official has the option to receive applications

electronically or in a hard copy daily, twice a week or once a week. The resumes are screened for experience related to competencies/KSAs. The Selecting Official may choose to review the resumes alone or with the assistance of one or more of the other Interview Panel members. The Selecting Official may also delegate the application review to one or more of the Interview Panel members. The Interview Panel members may not delegate the review of resumes. If the reviewer(s) determines, based on the resume information, that an applicant does not possess the competencies/KSAs for the position, then s/he will be disqualified from further consideration. An applicant need only be eliminated based on one critical competency. If there is more than one Panel member reviewing applications they must unanimously agree on which applicants to eliminate from further consideration. If the reviewers do not agree on which critical competencies to base the elimination decision, they may have a Panel discussion to attempt to resolve these differences. The Selecting Official and HCD Staffing Specialist will record elimination decisions and the applicable competencies/KSA(s) on an electronic form accessible by the HCD Staffing Specialist and the Selecting Official. This initial screening of applicants must be completed within 10 business days after the vacancy closes.

8.5.2. Evaluating Interview Referral List Diversity. Two business days prior to the closing of the vacancy announcement, the HCD Staffing Specialist will review the race/national origin information supplied by the applicants still under consideration and compare this data to the under-representation information. The HCD Staffing Specialist determines the percentage of individuals from under-represented groups and the percentage of applicants that chose not to identify their race/national origin in the applicant pool. These percentages are communicated to the Selecting Official. Based upon this information, the Selecting Official then decides whether to extend the posting period and/or add additional recruitment sources to improve the diversity of the interview referral pool. This process is repeated if the posting is extended.

8.5.3. Establishing Interview Referral List.

8.5.3.1. After the posting has closed and all applicants' resumes have been screened, HCD staff issues the interview referral list to the Selecting Official.

8.5.3.2. For vacancies with minimum education, certification, or licensing requirements, HCD staff verifies that applicants on the interview referral list meet those requirements by reviewing transcripts, licensing, and/or certification documentation. If an applicant has not supplied the necessary documentation, HCD staff will contact the applicant and advise him or her that the documentation must be supplied either before or at the time of their interview.

8.5.3.3. Documentation of an applicant's declination or unavailability for interview or withdrawal from the process shall be maintained by HCD.

8.5.4. Option to Conduct Preliminary Telephone Interview. The Interview Panel may choose to conduct preliminary telephone interviews with all applicants, using the questions related to one or two of the critical competencies/KSAs. If this option is used, the Panel shall disqualify applicants found by the Panel to have less than "Fully Acceptable" experience on one or two of the critical competencies/KSAs. All Panel members must agree on a decision to disqualify on this basis. Documentation of disqualifications shall be maintained by HCD.

8.5.5. Structured Interview. Using standard procedures and questions developed in advance of the posting and asked of all applicants, the Library uses structured interviews to identify best-qualified applicants for final referral to the Selecting Official.

8.5.5.1. Conducting Structured Interviews. Structured interviews are conducted by Interview Panels, which include the Selecting Official and at least two additional Subject Matter Experts (SMEs). One of the SMEs, other than the Selecting Official, acts as the Chairperson of the Panel. This person ensures that the interview process

is conducted according to interview training and that required documentation is produced throughout the interview process.

8.5.5.2. Structured Interview Training. Interview Panel members (Selecting Official and SMEs) as well as the HCD staff assigned to the Panel must receive structured interview training prior to the interviews. The HCD staff ensures that interview training has been provided to all participants prior to conducting any interviews and responds to any questions from interviewers prior to the interviews commencing and throughout the selection process.

8.5.5.3. Interview Materials. Structured interviews will be conducted using the interview questions and benchmark anchors developed in job analysis. Prior to the interviews, interviewers will be provided with an interview referral list and an interview package for each referred applicant that includes the application (including resume), a structured interview guide, and copies of transcripts, licenses, and/or certifications, if applicable.

8.5.5.4. Request for References. All applicants who are interviewed will be asked for permission to contact supervisors as references and for a list of references, if not already provided in the application materials. References will be contacted only for applicants whose names appear on the Final Referral List.

8.5.5.5. Scoring of Structured Interviews. The Interview Panel members independently score the interviews using the benchmark anchors. The scores will be based on a five-point scale (4 = Outstanding, 3 = Superior, 2 = Fully Acceptable, 1 = Less than Fully Acceptable, and 0 = No Evidence of Experience). After completing their individual scoring, the Interview Panel meets with an HCD staff member who compiles the individual scores and facilitates a discussion of their ratings and justifications. Based on the discussion, the Interview Panel members make final ratings independently.

8.5.5.5.1. Each applicant's final interview score is mathematically computed based on a weighted average of the interviewers' scores. This score is calculated by

1) summing ratings across panelists for each competency/KSA;

2) multiplying each summed score by the competency/KSA weight to get a weighted score;

3) summing weighted scores across competencies/KSAs into a Grand Total; and

4) dividing the Grand Total by the sum of competency/KSA weights multiplied by the number of panelists.

8.5.5.5.2. The final interview score is computed to the first decimal and is rounded to the next highest if the second decimal is .05 or greater (e.g., 3.05 would become 3.1). Otherwise, the second decimal is truncated (e.g., 3.22 would become 3.2).

8.5.5.6. Disqualification of Applicants. If an applicant receives a "less than fully acceptable" or "no evidence of experience" rating (1 or 0) on any critical competency/KSA or a "no evidence of experience" (0) rating on any competency/KSA from any interviewer, the Panel must decide during the facilitated meeting whether the applicant should be considered further in the selection process. All interviewers

must agree on a decision to disqualify on this basis and must document the basis for the disqualification.

8.5.5.7. Establishing the Final Referral. Based on each applicant's final score in the structured interview, HCD staff issues a Final Referral List of the best-qualified applicants to the Selecting Official for selection. All applicants scoring "fully acceptable" or above are listed on the Final Referral List and are eligible for selection.

8.5.6. Optional Use of Skill Tests/Specific Ability Tests. Job applicants may be assessed through content valid Skill Tests (work simulations) or Specific Ability Tests (knowledge tests). These tests may be introduced prior to, during, or after the interview process and may be administered online or through a proctored test. The Library may choose to use a Skill Test (work simulation) or a Specific Ability Test (knowledge test) for assessing candidates for specific job series, families, or highly populated positions when such tools would improve the evaluation of applicants for critical competencies/ KSAs. The process of developing and validating such tests is a collaborative effort of the Service Unit(s) requesting such a test and HCD.

8.6. **Selection Procedures**

8.6.1. Selection from Final Referral List. The Selecting Official is responsible for choosing the successful applicant(s) from among those applicants on the Final Referral List.

8.6.1.1. References must be conducted by the Selecting Official using the reference check form as a guide. References will be checked only for those applicants under consideration for final selection. The task may be assigned to another person on the panel only under rare, extenuating circumstances. The CHCO must approve all requests for delegating reference checks to panel members. Exception: If three or more hires will be appointed from the same vacancy then the reference check(s) can be delegated to other panel members without permission from the CHCO.

8.6.1.2. Selection Factors. The Selecting Official will choose from among those applicants on the Final Referral List by weighing such factors as organizational needs, reference information, writing/work samples, and applicants' ratings on the most important experience areas for the position as identified in job analysis. The Selecting Official may request that applicants on the Final Referral List provide writing samples or work samples such as design drawings for use as additional information by the Selecting Official when making a selection from the Final Referral List.

8.6.1.3. Preparation of Selection Documentation. Selection documentation will be prepared by the Selecting Official to explain the reason(s) the successful applicant(s) was selected and the reason(s) the other finalists were not selected. Once the Selecting Official has made the selection(s), a Personnel Action Request (PAR) for the proposed selectee(s) is submitted by the Service/Support Unit for Personnel Security Office review and approval by HCD.

8.6.1.4. Contingent and Official Offers. The Selecting Official may make a contingent offer to the selectee prior to the Service Unit submission of the PAR. All new hires must be reviewed by the Personnel Security Office prior to the official offer being made to a selectee. The CHCO is the appointing authority for all selections. Only HCD staff are authorized to make an official final offer of employment.

8.6.1.5. Time Period for Making Selections. The Selecting Official makes the selection(s) as expeditiously as possible. The initial and any additional selections must be made within 90 days of issuance of the Interview Referral List. The Selecting Official may request an extension of the 90 day period in writing to the CHCO. That request must contain the extenuating reason(s) requiring an extension of time.

8.6.1.6. Reinstatement of Final Referral List. If a selection has been made from a Final Referral List, and the Selecting Official subsequently wants to make a substitute or additional selection from the same Final Referral List, the Final Referral List may be reinstated for thirty (30) days to initiate a Personnel Action Request (PAR), provided no more than six (6) months has elapsed from the date of the initial selection. In extraordinary cases, the Final Referral List may be reinstated for thirty (30) days to initiate a PAR, provided no more than one year has elapsed from the date of the initial selection. "Extraordinary cases" may include, but may not be limited to, any of the following situations:

8.6.1.6.1. After the first selection has been made, another incumbent retires or resigns, leaving an unexpected vacancy.

8.6.1.6.2. The initial selectee from the Final Referral List retracts his/her acceptance, is disqualified by the Personnel Security Office, or for some other reason does not report to duty.

8.6.1.6.3. The initial selectee from the Final Referral List reports for duty but separates from the Library before completing the qualifying period.

8.6.2. Right to Not Select. Management has the right to select or not select for any given position.

9. Notification to Applicants

The Library will notify the selectee through an official offer and person(s) not selected will be notified of their non-selection when the selectee(s) has entered on duty (begins work).

10. Documentation and Record Keeping

10.1. **Maintenance of Merit Selection Files.** The Library (HCD) will maintain merit selection files to document each hiring action taken under this plan. Merit selection files will be maintained for two years from the date of selection or cancellation of a vacancy. If a complaint, grievance, or dispute is filed regarding an action, the merit selection file will be maintained until the conclusion of the case, including any appeals.

10.2. **Content of Merit Selection Files.** The merit selection files shall comply with the record keeping provisions of the Federal Records Act of 1950 (FRA). (See the approved Library of Congress Records Schedules.) Merit selection files must include documentation sufficient to reconstruct hiring actions taken under the plan and include the following records:

10.2.1. Vacancy Announcement Request (VAR);

10.2.2. Copy of vacancy announcement;

10.2.3. Copy of position description;

10.2.4. Copy of Recruitment Plan (Diversity Analysis Stage 1);

10.2.5. All application materials and attachments received from applicants;

10.2.6. Copies of all correspondence with applicants (including e-mail);

10.2.7. Diversity Analysis Stage 2 review;

10.2.8. Diversity report on overall applicant pool;

10.2.9. Vacancy control record listing all applicants;

10.2.10. Signed job analysis documentation, including job analysis worksheet/matrix, interview questions and benchmarks, and vacancy announcement;

10.2.11. Copy of any Skill or Specific Ability Tests used;

10.2.12. Interview Referral List;

10.2.13. Selecting Official and SMEs' interview forms, disqualification documentation and final rating forms (Interview Panel documentation);

10.2.14. Final referral list;

10.2.15. Narrative explanation of the reason(s) for selection [Footnote 8];

10.2.16. Reference check forms; and

10.2.17. Diversity Analysis Stage 3 review.

10.3. **Access to Merit Selection Files.** The Library is responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all documentation. Merit selection files will be safeguarded and not released to unauthorized persons. Information sent to authorized persons will be marked "Confidential – for addressee only".

11. Employee/Applicant Information

11.1. **Information Made Available to Applicants.** Any applicant may request information from HCD regarding the status of their application at any stage in the process. Any applicant may also inquire in writing to HCD as to their total score for any vacancy for which he/she has applied. Following this request, an applicant for a position will be informed of:

11.1.1. The total score he/she received on the structured interview, and

11.1.2. Whether the position has been filled

11.2. **Point(s) of Contact.** There will be a central point of contact within HCD to whom applicants may submit questions and receive information regarding their applications. HCD shall publicize the identity of the central point of contact and how to contact that person or persons to make inquiries. Service Units may also, as they determine necessary, identify central points of contact within the Service Unit for this purpose.

11.3. **Availability of the Senior-Level Merit Selection Plan.** The objective of this plan is to provide merit employment opportunities with equity for all applicants. For this reason, applicants should become fully informed of this plan. A copy of this Senior Level Merit Selection Plan will be made available to all applicants on the Library's employment website.

12. Diversity Analysis

The Library shall conduct a diversity analysis at the following stages of the merit selection process:

12.1. **Stage 1 Review.** Prior to posting the vacancy, a Recruitment Plan is developed by the Selecting Official in consultation with the job analysis panel, Service Unit administrative staff, HCD staff, the EEODP, and an executive search firm, if applicable. The Recruitment Plan identifies areas and degrees of current Library under-representation relevant to the job being advertised as well as internal and external recruitment sources designed to attract qualified applicants to the vacancy, including members of the under-represented groups.

12.2. **Stage 2 Review.** Two business days before the vacancy is scheduled to close, the list of applicants to be referred for interview is reviewed by the HCD Staffing Specialist to determine the diversity of the applicant pool. The Staffing Specialist advises the Selecting Official of the percentage of applicants to be referred from under-represented groups. The Selecting Official then has the choice of extending the vacancy announcement, adding additional recruitment sources and/or closing the vacancy on its original closing date.

12.3. **Stage 3 Review.** Based on an analysis of the effectiveness of the Recruitment Plan and its recruitment sources for delivering qualified, diverse applicants, the Selecting Official in consultation with HCD staff, the EEODP, and Service Unit administrative staff will review and

revise, when possible, the Recruitment Plan to improve diversity with future postings. The EEODP will incorporate selection decision information into the Library's EEO profile.

12.4. **Periodic Diversity Analysis Reviews.** The EEODP will conduct periodic statistical analyses assessing the effectiveness of the Library's hiring and recruitment practices in yielding highly qualified diverse applicants for Library positions.

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13. Appendix A. Definitions

Area of Consideration: The boundaries (area, organization, or group of organizations) within which persons must work to be eligible for consideration for a specific vacancy.

Benchmark Anchors: Criteria identified by a Job Analysis Panel for evaluating responses to interview questions in a structured interview.

Competency: A measurable pattern of knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics (KSAs) that an individual needs in order to perform work roles successfully.

Content Validation: The methodology used by the Library to establish the job-relatedness of the merit selection process used to fill a vacancy. Job-relatedness is established by ensuring the competencies/KSAs and the assessment instruments used to fill a vacancy are related to the duties of the position.

Critical Competencies/KSAs: Critical competencies/KSAs are those identified by a job analysis panel for which applicants must be assessed by an Interview Panel in a preliminary telephone interview or a full structured interview as having "fully acceptable" experience to be considered for selection. Critical competencies/KSAs are generally technical in nature.

Evaluation of Candidates: The process of assessing the degree to which applicants possess the competencies/KSAs needed for successful performance in the position being filled.

Final Referral List: The list of applicants/interviewees referred to the Selecting Official eligible to be considered for selection upon completion of all structured interviews for a vacancy to be filled.

FTE / Full-time Equivalent: Service Units are given a number of FTEs in their annual budget that allows them to fill the equivalent of the given number with full-time equivalent employees or work years. One FTE is equivalent to 2,080 hours of work, which could mean, for example, one employee on a full time schedule of 40 hours for 52 weeks, or two part-time employees for 20 hours per week for 52 weeks.

Interview Panel: Individuals brought together for the purpose of interviewing and rating candidates for a position to be filled. The Interview Panel uses structured interview questions and benchmark anchors approved by the Job Analysis Panel.

Interview Referral: The list of applicants referred by the Staffing Specialist for structured interview.

Job Analysis: The process of assessing the duties and responsibilities of a position in order to determine the competencies/KSAs necessary to perform the job. In the context of this plan, job analysis provides the foundation for establishing the job-relatedness of the selection process. Job analysis may

also provide data that can serve as a foundation for developing effective performance management and career development processes.

Job Analysis Panel: A panel of three or more individuals brought together to review the major duties of a job being filled, identify the competencies/KSAs necessary to performing the job, and developing the rating instruments used to measure levels of proficiency in the competencies/KSAs. The Panel includes the Selecting Official and at least two other individuals who have performed, are performing, or are very familiar with the duties of the job being analyzed.

Job Analysis Worksheet/Matrix: A document developed by the Job Analysis Panel identifying the linkages between the competencies/KSAs that are important and required upon entry to a job and the major duties of a position. The Job Analysis Worksheet/Matrix is a key tool for documenting the content validity of the selection process being used to fill a vacancy.

KSAs: The competencies/KSAs (knowledge, skills, and abilities) needed by individuals to successfully perform the duties of a job as identified in a position description.

Operational Definition: A statement that clarifies the meaning of a competency/KSA, thereby creating an agreed upon, common perspective that grounds the job analysis and selection process.

Optional Form 8 – Position Description (OF 8): An official document, signed by the organizational unit supervisor and reviewing official, certifying that the major duties and responsibilities defined in a position description accurately describe the duties to be performed by an individual or individuals within the organizational unit under their supervision. The HCD Specialist approving the classification of a position description also signs the OF 8.

OPM Qualification Standards/ Library-Wide Occupational Requirements: Basic standard requirements for a job series, including any positive education, licensing, or certification requirements. OPM Qualification standards are government-wide and are promulgated by the United States Office of Personnel Management (OPM). The Library may choose to create Library-wide Occupational Requirements for assessing candidates for specific job series, families, or highly populated positions. The process of developing and validating such Library-wide Occupational Requirements involves consultation with an Industrial Psychologist and Library-wide facilitation involving HCD. Individual job analysis panels may use applicable standards, if desired, in filling Library vacancies.

Position Description: The official document that specifies the duties, tasks, and responsibilities to be performed by the incumbent of an official position of the organization.

Recruitment Plan: A document that identifies the areas and degrees of under-representation, as well as internal and external recruitment strategies and sources, designed to attract highly qualified, diverse applicants for a Library vacancy.

Selecting Official: The management official authorized to make a selection for the position to be filled, subject to final approval by the CHCO.

Skill/Specific Ability Tests: Job applicants may be assessed through content valid Skill Tests (work simulations) or Specific Ability Tests (knowledge tests). These tests may be introduced prior to, during, or after the interview process and may be administered online or through a proctored test. The Library may choose to use a Skill Test (work simulation) or a Specific Ability Test (knowledge test) for assessing candidates when such tools would improve the evaluation of applicants for competencies/ KSAs. The

process of developing and validating such tests is a collaborative effort of the Service Unit(s) requesting such a test and HCD.

Structured Interview: An assessment tool that measures an applicant's job-related competencies/KSAs consisting of standard interview questions that are scored systematically using predetermined criteria or benchmarks for all interviewees for a particular job.

Subject Matter Experts (SMEs): Individuals who are performing, have performed, or are very knowledgeable of the responsibilities of the position being filled and who are at or above the grade level of that position. SMEs serve on job analysis and/or interview panels.

Vacancy Announcement: The announcement of a position or positions that are available to be filled.

Vacancy Announcement Request (VAR): An official document used to request the posting of a vacancy to be filled.

Weights: Values assigned by a Job Analysis Panel to the competencies/KSAs to indicate the relative importance of each competency/KSA to the other competencies/KSAs.

14. Appendix B: References

Library of Congress Regulations (LCRs)
* 9-110 – Merit Selection and Employment
* 9-120 – Equal Employment Opportunity Policy
* 9-123 – Equal Employment Opportunity Program
* 9-210 – Position Classification and Organization
* 9-211 – Position Terminology
* 9-220 – Position Sensitivity and Risk Designations
* 9-310 – Employment Authority
* 9-322 – Employment of Non U.S. Citizens
* 9-323 – Employment of Relatives
* 9-324 – Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA)
* 9-331 – Part-time Career Employment
* 9-332 – Intermittent Employment
* 9-412 – Advertisements for Vacancy Announcements
* 9-440 – Personnel Reference Inquiries
* 9-510 – Personnel Action Recommendations – Approval
* 9-531 – Probationary Periods – New Employees
* 9-610 – Personnel Security and Suitability Programs
* 9-750 – Workers Compensation and Benefits Under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA)
* 9-1210 – Security Clearance Eligibility
* 9-1610 – Senior Level Executive System
* 9-1940 – Reduction-in-Force (RIF) – Non-Bargaining Unit Employees and Employees in Bargaining Unit Positions in the Law Library

15. Footnotes

1 Although not synonymous, competencies and KSAs serve the same function in job analysis. To avoid confusion, competencies and KSAs are referred to as competencies/KSAs throughout this Plan.

2 Content validity is the methodology used by the Library to establish the job-relatedness of the merit selection process used to fill a vacancy. Job-relatedness is established by ensuring the competencies/KSAs and the assessment instruments used to fill a vacancy are related to the duties of the position.

3 Critical competencies/KSAs are those identified by a job analysis panel for which applicants must be assessed by the Interview Panel in a preliminary telephone interview or a full structured interview as having "fully acceptable" experience to be considered for selection. Critical competencies/KSAs are generally technical in nature.

4 This includes status and nonstatus employees. Status employees are employees with three or more years of service in a position in the Competitive Service.

5 The Library's annual budget designates a fixed number of full-time equivalent positions for organizations in the Library. If the hiring organization has no available FTEs then the posting must be limited to that organization to avoid exceeding the staff ceiling constraint.

6 Any position description changed and classified as a result of job analysis will become the position description of record for all incumbents in that position.

7 For most positions, it is recommended that panels identify seven to ten (7-10) competencies/KSAs to assess during the selection process.

8 Includes reason(s) applicant was not selected.