

Manager's FAQ's - Region 4 Fire Hire

Managers

1) Why are we making this change in our hiring process for fire positions?

The change in hiring process is in response to a continual vacancy situation that all of the National Forests in the Intermountain Region currently face. At any one time there are approximately 100 GS-5 through GS-9 fire vacancies open in the region, even during fire season. Consequently supervisors, program managers, and line officers are always involved with the hiring process. By narrowing the time commitment dedicated to hiring efforts, managers have more time to attend to other program responsibilities. The unique feature of this process is the ability to immediately backfill positions that have been vacated, thus avoiding the current several month long process to backfill vacancies. This process will better ensure that we have a higher level of permanent staffing and adequate leadership during our peak fire season period. Additionally, it may improve the ability to fill vacancies in hard to fill duty locations from larger regional referral lists.

2) Is there an opportunity to opt out of this process and continue the present system?

No, the new system will take a commitment of personnel and time from each of the forests to make this system successful. Continuation of the present hiring would only add to the hiring workload and hinder that objective. Each unit will be encouraged to have employees available as SME's in the evaluation process. Even if volunteers are not selected as evaluation SME's local participation will be a key component during the evaluation process as current supervisors and references will be contacted about applicants. Additionally, close coordination with the Forest representative during the selection process would be encouraged to ensure local unit support for recommendations on selection.

3) How is the process going to work?

There are some similarities to the process we currently follow to fill vacancies. During these months potential applicants will be notified of the upcoming Fire Hire Process (Outreach) and encouraged to apply for a location that they are interested in working, regardless of whether or not a vacancy exists. Subject Matter Experts (SME) will be gathered from the forests and will evaluate applicants against a defined set of criteria and assign a ranking from 1-4. Once the referral lists and rankings are generated, representatives from each of the Forests in the region will convene to make recommendations for hiring and present them to the delegated Forest Supervisors for selection. There will be two Forest Supervisors assigned that will represent the other Forest Supervisors for the selection and delegated to act on their behalf. A Regional Forester representative will be present in the event that a regional decision is necessary.

4) What is meant by Subject Matter Experts (SME's) in the evaluation of applicants?

Individuals that have specific background, experience, and extensive knowledge of the positions will be considered SMEs. SMEs will be selected from supervisors who have volunteered and have background in a specific position. For example, when filling an engineer position, SME's will be drawn from personnel across the region including engine captains who do not have an application in the current Fire Hire. Assistant Fire Management Officers (AFMO) and District Fire Management Officers (DFMO) who have an engine background will be included.

5) How are the selections made for a vacancy?

Once all of the applicants have been evaluated, a database is prepared that provides information on the available applicants for individual vacancies, as well as all locations that an individual applicant has applied.

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*There are Forest Representatives present at the selection meeting that will have the authority to make recommendations to the Forest Supervisor representatives. **These recommendations are made with close coordination with the supervisors at the home unit.** The Forest Supervisors with delegated authority will the selection based on the recommendations from the forest representatives.*

- 6) What happens if one of my employees accepts a position during the process and now I have a vacancy?**
One of the major benefits of adopting this hiring process is that if a vacancy occurs as in this situation, there is an immediate backfill. The local unit does not have to wait until the next Fire Hire period, submit another outreach, request another referral list, or start the process over from the beginning. The existing referral lists are used and the Forest Representatives in coordination with the local unit will make a recommendation for selection. This will greatly reduce the time commitment needed to fill vacancies.
- 7) What if my remote duty location does not receive any applications, how will I fill my position?**
At the end of the hiring process, there is an opportunity to consider individuals who have not been offered a position at their selected duty locations. Forest Representatives may review these applicants and contact the applicant to gauge interest in their duty location. For example, SFEO referral list has five applicants left that did not choose your duty location. Forest Representatives will review those applicants. If interested in said candidate, they will contact the applicant
- 8) How do I track vacancies on my Forest?**
A database will be developed that lists all vacancies on Forest units in the Southwest Region. It will be in the best interest of Forests to keep the databases current with respect to vacancies to ensure the best possible pool of candidates for a location.
- 9) How are civil rights addressed during this hiring process?**
During the Fire Hire process a regional Civil Rights person is present and available for assistance to the individual Forests with guidance and information on diversity. The HR Fire Team will be able to provide quantitative information to the Forests for use on reporting requirements.
- 10) What is the method of filling positions when a person selected to the position takes another position at another location or region leaving the original position vacant?**
Referral lists will remain open after primary selections are made and filled. If an original selectee opts to decline a position after the fact due to specific reasons (other offers, personal reasons, etc.), the referral lists which are open may be used to fill positions left vacant.
- 11) Is it possible for an individual to change an effective date once it has been set?**
On boarding all selectees at the same time allows for smoother processing of the actions along with the scheduling of any required training. Changing effective dates for one or groups of individuals presents additional problems that will delay other forests on boarding efforts. Drug test and approved TOS positions may have extended effective dates.

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Applicant

1) What positions are included in this hiring process?

All permanent full time (PFT) and permanent seasonal fire positions in the Southwestern Region from the GS-4 level to the GS-9 level are part of the Fire Hire Process. Excludes hiring of temporary seasonal employees (1039).

2) When are applications due?

Twice a year, a referral list of applications will be generated for each type of position that is vacant. This will occur in January and August. Outreach efforts will occur at least one month prior to the close of the application period.

3) How can I find out what jobs are vacant/open?

A database, listing all permanent fire vacancies in the Southwestern Region from the GS-4 level to the GS-9 level, will be available soon on the Region 3 website for you to see where positions are vacant/open. Outreach will list the most current fire vacancies and locations.

4) How do I apply for a vacant/open position?

*AVUE Digital Services, at www.avuedigitalservices.com, is used to apply for vacant/open positions. You apply to specific vacancy announcements that they are interested in. You may apply for multiple locations within a vacancy announcement by selecting up to nine locations you would like to be considered for employment. **You are highly encouraged to apply for multiple locations, even if vacancies for certain locations are not listed as vacant, as vacancies may occur during the hiring process.***

5) When will hiring decisions be made?

Hiring dates will be posted in the outreach. The outreach will list the last day to apply for vacancies, when the selection process will take place, and timeframes to expect a selection phone call.

6) How will I be notified if I was successful in getting a job?

If you are selected for a position, a Forest Representative will contact you by phone and notify you. If you are not selected for a position, an e-mail will be generated by Avue notifying you of non-selection.

7) What happens if I turn down a job offer?

Declining a job offer could result in not being selected during this hiring timeframe, although your application will be returned to the applicant pool for consideration.