



Hiring an NSEP Award Recipient

A Guide to Non-Competitively
Appointing NSEP Award Recipients
to Federal Jobs

Prepared by:
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Points of Contact

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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in hiring a National Security Education Program (NSEP) award recipient! This guide provides a step-by-step overview of non-competitively appointing NSEP award recipients (e.g. Boren Scholars, Boren Fellows, and English for Heritage Language Speakers (EHLS) Scholars) to federal positions.

All active NSEP award recipients with an unfulfilled federal service requirement are eligible for non-competitive hire. Federal agencies have the authority to conduct non-competitive hiring in accordance with the David L. Boren National Security Education Act (50 U.S. Code § 1902), as amended by the National Defense Authorization Acts of Fiscal Year 2013 and Fiscal Year 2018, and Schedule A 213.3102 (r). The text of and references to both legal authorities are included in this guide.

To facilitate the recruitment and hiring of NSEP award recipients, the NSEP Service team at DLNSEO offers a number of free services to federal agencies, including the hosting of exclusive recruitment events, advertising positions on the NSEPnet Job Board, and an annual career fair.

This guide was developed by DLNSEO's NSEP Service team within the U.S. Department of War.

If you have questions about the NSEP hiring process, please contact the NSEP Service Team at nsep@nsep.gov, or reach out directly to Ms. Rachel Jovert at rachel.f.jovert.civ@mail.mil or Ms. Alison Patz at alison.m.patz.civ@mail.mil.

Chapter 1: The National Security Education Program (NSEP)

NSEP was established by the David L. Boren National Security Education Act (NSEA) of 1991 to address the need for U.S. citizens to possess advanced language and regional skills. As a condition of their Scholarship or Fellowship, NSEP award recipients agree to work in qualifying national security positions for at least one year. NSEP's programs and award recipients create a steady pipeline of highly skilled, motivated professionals proficient in languages critical to the National Defense Strategy to work national security missions within the Department of War (DoW) (Military and Civilian), the Intelligence Community (IC), and across key partner organizations.

DLNSEO manages the National Security Education Program and assures coordination and integration in the Defense Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture (LREC) Program, a coordinated set of Defense-wide programs essential to National Defense Strategy implementation. Through its multifaceted LREC portfolio, DLNSEO supports key DoW priorities, including rebuilding U.S. military readiness and reestablishing deterrence. More information about DLNSEO and NSEP can be found on the DLNSEO website at [DLNSEO.mil](https://dlnseo.mil).



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FAQs – About NSEP

Who receives awards/support from NSEP?

NSEP provides funding and training opportunities for critical languages to students at US institutions of higher education through the **Boren Awards** program (**Boren Scholarships** for undergraduates and **Boren Fellowships** for graduate students), the **Regional Language Flagship Initiative**, and the **Language Flagship**. The **English for Heritage Language Speakers (EHLS)** Scholarship program provides funding for native speakers of critical languages to complete intensive, professional-level English studies and complete an open-source research project with a federal mentor.

More information about NSEP's programs is available at [DLNSEO.mil](https://dlnseo.mil).

Are NSEP award recipients U.S. citizens?

Yes, all NSEP award recipient – Boren Scholars, Boren Fellows, and EHLS Scholars – are U.S. citizens.

What languages do NSEP award recipients study?

NSEP award recipients study a wide variety of languages critical to U.S. interests that are not commonly taught at U.S. institutions of higher education. Preferred NSEP languages include Mandarin Chinese, Russian, Farsi, Arabic, Korean, Swahili, and Portuguese.

What academic backgrounds do NSEP award recipients have?

Boren Scholars (undergraduate students) and Boren Fellows (graduate students) possess degrees in multi-disciplinary fields, including STEM, international affairs, political science and public policy studies, social sciences, and language and area studies. EHLS Scholars are mid-career professionals and possess professional degrees in fields ranging from law and medicine to business and STEM.

Why should I hire an NSEP award recipient?

In addition to their commitment to public service, NSEP award recipients are top academic achievers, possess valuable language skills and overseas experience in regions vital to U.S. interests, and are strong candidates for entry-level, developmental, and mid-level positions.

How many NSEP award recipients are currently looking for qualifying employment?

As of spring 2026, there are approximately 1,000 NSEP award recipients with active service requirements seeking qualifying employment. Most awardees have extensive overseas experience, making them flexible, adaptable, and capable future employees.

Chapter 2: The NSEP Hiring Authorities

Hiring authorities assist federal organizations in non-competitively appointing Boren Scholars, Boren Fellows, and EHLS Scholars. An individual with Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE) may be hired outside of the competitive process, without respect to the standard hiring provisions of Title 5 hiring regulations.

Candidates with NCE do not need to apply for positions advertised to the public on USAJOBS.gov or other hiring sites and can be hired through a streamlined process. Some other programs that afford NCE to program alumni include the Peace Corps, the Department of State's Critical Language Scholarship (CLS), and certain groups such as family of military service members.

There are **two distinct special hiring authorities** (also known as "hiring exemptions") that confer NCE upon NSEP award recipients:

1. **The National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2013 (NDAA'13)**
2. **Schedule A(r)**

Under the **National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2013 (NDAA'13)**, designated federal agencies with national security responsibilities may non-competitively appoint an NSEP award recipient to the excepted service. Under this authority, they may also later convert that appointee after 2 years of continuous employment to a career or career-conditional status in the competitive service.

The NDAA'13 hiring authority can only be utilized by federal agencies with national security responsibilities. A full list of the organizations currently approved to hire and convert NSEP award recipients under NDAA'13 is included on pages 13-15 of this guide. New organizations may also petition the National Security Education Board (NSEB), which oversees NSEP programs, to be authorized to use this appointing authority. For more information about the petition process, reach out to the NSEP Service Team at nsep@nsep.gov.

Under **Schedule A (5 CFR 213.3102(r))**, any federal agency without exception can appoint an NSEP award recipient to a term position in the excepted service, not to exceed (NTE) four years. The term position may be for a duration of anywhere from one to four years, depending on the needs of the hiring agency.

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Summary of NSEP Hiring Authorities

References:

- A. Section 802 (k) of the David L. Boren National Security Education Act of 1991 (50 U.S.C. 1902 (k)), as amended by Section 956 - **Expansion of Persons Eligible for Expedited Federal Hiring Following Completion of National Security Education Program Scholarship**, Public Law 112-239 (NDAA FY 2013), dated 2 January 2013
- B. Section 802 (k) of the David L. Boren National Security Education Act of 1991 (50 U.S.C. 1902 (k)), as amended by Section 1625 - **Consideration of Service by Recipients of Boren Scholarships and Fellowships in Excepted Service Positions as Service by such Recipients Under Career Appointments for Purposes of Career Tenure**, Public Law 115-91 (NDAA FY 2018), dated 12 December 2017
- C. Excepted Service Appointing Authority, Schedule A - 5 CFR 213.3102 (r), dated 28 November 1997

Guidelines

1. Under NDAA' 13, any federal agency with national security responsibilities may non-competitively appoint an NSEP award recipient to the excepted service and later convert that appointee to career or career conditional status in the competitive service. Those eligible for appointment under this expanded authority are:
 - NSEP award recipients who have successfully completed their academic scholarship or fellowship program and who owe an existing service requirement to the federal government.
2. Under 5 CFR 213.3102 (r), any federal agency may non-competitively appoint an NSEP Scholarship or Fellowship recipient to a term position lasting up to four years. The only restriction is that appointees must have an unfulfilled NSEP service requirement.

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NDAA'13

Modifies the David L. Boren National Security Education Act of 1991, Chapter 50 of the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations (§ 1902)

Section (k) Employment of program participants

(1) Appointment authority

The Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Secretary of State, or the head of a Federal agency or office identified by the Secretary of Defense under subsection (g) as having national security responsibilities-

(A) may, without regard to any provision of title 5, governing appointments in the competitive service, appoint an eligible program participant-

(i) to a position in the excepted service that is certified by the Secretary of Defense under clause (i) of subsection (b) (2) (A) as contributing to the national security of the United States; or

(ii) subject to clause (ii) of such subsection, to a position in the excepted service in such Federal agency or office identified by the Secretary; and

(B) may, upon satisfactory completion of two years of substantially continuous service by an incumbent who was appointed to an excepted service position under the authority of subparagraph (A), convert the appointment of such individual, without competition, to a career or career-conditional appointment.

Full text of 50 U.S.C. § 1902 is available at the official House of Representatives website:

<https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid:USC-prelim-title50-section1902&num=0&edition=prelim>

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Schedule A (r)

§ 213.3102 Entire executive civil service.

- (s) Positions established in support of fellowship and similar programs that are filled from limited applicant pools and operate under specific criteria developed by the employing agency and/or a non-Federal organization. These programs may include: internship or fellowship programs that provide developmental or professional experiences to individuals who have completed their formal education; training and associateship programs designed to increase the pool of qualified candidates in a particular occupational specialty; professional/industry exchange programs that provide for a cross-fertilization between the agency and the private sector to foster mutual understanding, an exchange of ideas, or to bring experienced practitioners to the agency; residency programs through which participants gain experience in a Federal clinical environment; and programs that require a period of Government service in exchange for educational, financial or other assistance. Appointments under this authority may not exceed 4 years.

Full text of 5 CFR Section 213.3102 may be found in the electronic CFR, maintained by the National Archives and Records Administration: <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-5/chapter-I/subchapter-B/part-213/subpart-C/subject-group-ECFR2a2db745208d125/section-213.3102>

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Which authority to use: Schedule A (r) or NDAA'13?

Two of the most common questions NSEP gets from hiring managers are: 1) what are the differences between Schedule A (r) and NDAA'13? and 2) which authority should I use to hire an award recipient?

Generally, NSEP recommends that if an organization is authorized to use NDAA'13 and they intend to keep a new hire on long-term, they should initially appoint that new hire under the NDAA'13 authority. Organizations that are not authorized to use NDAA'13 may use Schedule A (r) to hire an NSEP award recipient into a term appointment, but under that authority they cannot retain the new hire for more than 4 years.

Organizations who have a short-term hiring need can hire NSEP award recipients for 1 to 4 years using Schedule A (r). **If you have a short-term hiring need, be sure to specify that the position will be time-limited when advertising the vacancy.** NSEP award recipients who do not have past federal service may not know what a term appointment is and may need clarification on this.

Below is a chart that compares the two authorities side-by-side so you can best determine which fits your hiring needs.

Authority:	Schedule A (r)	NDAA'13
Appointment Type:	Excepted service, time limited	Excepted service, not time limited
Time limit:	Appointment can last 1-4 years	None
Non-competitive conversion option?	No	Yes, option to convert from the excepted service to the competitive service after 2 years
Best for:	Short-term hiring needs	Long-term hiring needs (at the discretion of the agency)
May be used by:	Any federal organization, without exception	Only orgs that have national security responsibilities, listed on pages 13-15
Personnel/staffing numbers:	For some agencies, term Schedule A (r) appointments might not count against personnel/staffing numbers. Coordinate with your organization's HR on this.	Usually counts against personnel/staffing numbers and a billet needs to be available for the initial hire. Coordinate with your organization's HR on this.

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Organizations Authorized to Use NDAA'13

Below, you will find the list of federal agencies and offices that have national security responsibilities and are authorized to appoint NSEP award recipients using the NDAA'13 hiring authority, as determined by the National Security Education Board (NSEB). New agencies can petition the NSEB to be added to this list. For information about the petition process, contact the NSEP Service Team at nsep@nsep.gov.

List of Federal Agencies with National Security Responsibilities

Department of War

- All departments, agencies, commands, and activities

Department of State

- All bureaus, agencies and offices including the following:
 - Bureau of Intelligence and Research
 - U.S. Embassies
 - National Foreign Affairs Training Center
 - Regional and functional bureaus
 - U.S. Agency for International Development

Department of Homeland Security

- All agencies and offices

Intelligence Community

- All agencies and offices

Department of Commerce

- Bureau of Industry and Security
- International Trade Administration
- Commercial Law Development Program

Department of Energy

- National Nuclear and Security Administration
- Office of Nuclear Energy, Science and Technology
- Office of Policy and International Affairs
- National laboratories

Department of Health and Human Services

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Assistant Secretary of Public Affairs

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List of Federal Agencies with National Security Responsibilities (Continued)

Department of Housing and Urban Development

- Office of Field Policy and Management

Department of Justice

- Criminal Division
- Drug Enforcement Administration
- Federal Bureau of Investigation
- National Drug Intelligence Center
- National Virtual Translation Center

Department of Labor

- Bureau of International Labor Affairs

Department of Transportation

- Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

Department of the Treasury

- Office of Foreign Assets Control
- Office of International Affairs

Department of Veterans Affairs

Environmental Protection Agency

Executive Office of the President

- National Security Council Staff
- Office of Management and Budget - National Security and International Affairs Division
- Office of National Drug Control Policy
- Office of Science and Technology Policy
- Office of the U.S. Trade Representative

Independent Agencies

- Export-Import Bank of the U.S.
- Overseas Private Investment Corporation
- Millennium Challenge Corporation
- National Labor Relations Board
- Office of Personnel Management - National Background Investigations Bureau
- Peace Corps
- United States International Trade Commission
- United States African Development Foundation

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List of Federal Agencies with National Security Responsibilities (Continued)

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

- Office of International and Interagency Relations

United States Congress

- Congressional Budget Office: Defense and International Affairs
- Congressional Research Service
- United States Congressional Committees
 - Senate
 - Appropriations
 - Armed Services
 - Commerce, Science, and Transportation
 - Energy and Natural Resources
 - Finance
 - Foreign Relations
 - Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
 - Judiciary
 - Select Committee on Intelligence
 - House of Representatives
 - Appropriations
 - Banking and Financial Services
 - Budget
 - Commerce
 - Foreign Affairs
 - National Security
 - Resources
 - Science
 - Transportation and Infrastructure
 - Ways and Means
 - Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
 - Select Committee on Homeland Security

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NCE and the NSEP Service Requirement

NSEP award recipients sign a formal service agreement that stipulates that they will work for the federal government upon completion of their NSEP-funded program. This term of service is referred to by DLNSEO as the “service requirement”.

The majority of NSEP award recipients have a service requirement equal to 12 months of full-time work for the federal government. Award recipients have several years from the time they complete their studies until they need to start fulfilling this requirement, with the NSEP Service Team providing job search support along the way.

One important criterion for NCE under the NSEP special hiring authorities is that **for an NSEP award recipient to be hired non-competitively under either NSEP special hiring authority, they must still have some portion of their service requirement unfulfilled.** Award recipients who have been working for the federal government full-time for more than 12 months have effectively fulfilled their service requirement and need to report their service to DLNSEO under the terms of their service agreement.

In other words, NCE under the NSEP special hiring authorities does not expire on a fixed date; it expires once the award recipient has fulfilled this service requirement through qualifying service.

DLNSEO verifies NCE for award recipients by providing Letters of Certification (shown at right). These letters are on official letterhead, include a date of issue, and they expire 6 months after the date of issue. They also include more detail about the Schedule A (r) and NDAA’13 hiring authorities.

If you would like to verify a candidate’s NCE, please reach out to the NSEP Service Team at nsep@nsep.gov.



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
NATIONAL SECURITY EDUCATION PROGRAM
4800 MARK CENTER DRIVE, SUITE 08P05-02
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22304-7008

Letter Issued: [Current Date]
Letter Valid Until: [180 days after Letter Issued Date]

[Department]
[Bureau]
[Office]
[Recipient Street Address]
[Recipient Office/Room/Suite Number]
[Recipient City], [Recipient State] [Recipient Zip Code]

Dear [Point of Contact Title] [Point of Contact Name],

This letter is to confirm the status of [Title] [First Name] [Last Name] as the recipient of a National Security Education Program (NSEP) [Award Name] with all the rights and privileges thereof.

As an NSEP award recipient, [Title] [Last Name] may be hired under the Schedule A Excepted Service Appointing Authority. This authority is specified in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 5, Volume 1, Section 213.3102 (c).

Additionally, [Title] [Last Name] may be appointed to the excepted service with non-competitive conversion eligibility to a career or career-conditional appointment upon completion of two years of substantially continuous service. This authority is specified in Section 802 of the David L. Boren National Security Education Act of 1991 (50 U.S.C. 1902) as amended by Section 1101 of Public Law 111-84, National Defense Authorization Act Fiscal Year 2010 (NDAA FY 2010) and Section 956 of H.R. 4310-268 National Defense Authorization Act Fiscal Year 2013 (NDAA FY 2013). Further, under NDAA FY 2018, Section 802 (k) of the David L. Boren National Security Education Act of 1991 (50 U.S.C. 1902 (k)), as amended by Section 1625 of Public Law 115-91, all time served by [Title] [Last Name] prior to conversion to career or career-conditional status is creditable toward career tenure in the competitive service.

If you have further questions about [Title] [Last Name]'s appointment eligibility, or if you would like to verify their eligibility any time after the date of validity in this letter, please do not hesitate to contact the NSEP Service Team via email at nsep@nsep.gov.

Sincerely,

Associate Director, Outreach and Service
Boren Awards

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Conversion under NDAA'13

Guidelines

Under NDAA' 13, any federal agency with national security responsibilities may non-competitively appoint an NSEP award recipient to the excepted service and later convert that appointee to career or career conditional status in the competitive service. Those eligible for conversion under this expanded authority are:

- Award recipients who have completed their service requirement and are currently employed by the federal government in temporary or term appointments in the excepted service; or
- Award recipients who have been separated from federal service for less than one year, and, at the time of separation, were serving in temporary or term appointments in the excepted service.

The conversion occurs after the appointee has completed two years of continuous federal service. Under NDAA' 18, Reference C, all time served prior to conversion to career or career-conditional status is creditable toward career tenure in the competitive service. Candidates must meet all qualification requirements, in addition to special selective factors for the position.

The Schedule A (r) appointing authority does not have a non-competitive conversion option at the conclusion of the appointment period. However, individuals serving under Schedule A (r), who have not completed their NSEP service obligation, may be reappointed under NDAA' 13 to take advantage of the eligibility for non-competitive conversion to career or career-conditional status.

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Under the NDAA'13 hiring authority, you may non-competitively convert an NSEP award recipient into a career or career-conditional position, as outlined below:

Example: Approximately 21 months ago, you hired an NSEP award recipient into an excepted service appointment using NDAA'13. For the past 21 months, they have performed well and are a fit for your organization. You would like to keep them on long-term and make them a permanent federal employee.

Good news! You can use NDAA'13 to non-competitively convert them from their excepted service appointment to career or career-conditional status in the competitive service after 2 years of substantially continuous employment.

If you plan to exercise the conversion option under NDAA'13, start following these steps for conversion about 2-3 months before their 2-year anniversary of work:

1. Have a conversation with your employee about conversion and explain what this means. Let them know that the agency would like to exercise the option to make them a permanent federal employee under NDAA'13.
2. If they have not already done so, have them submit their final Service Agreement Report (SAR) form (also called a DD 2753) to NSEP through their NSEPnet.org profile. This is the form that award recipients use to report completion of their service requirement.
3. NSEP will process their SAR. This process can take 4-6 weeks, so it's important that they submit their final SAR early.
4. Once their SAR is approved by the NSEP Service Committee, have the award recipient reach out to the NSEP Service Team via email at nsep@nsep.gov to request the following documents:
 - i. Their final, approved DD 2753 (SAR)
 - ii. A letter from NSEP verifying their eligibility for non-competitive conversion
5. NSEP will send these documents to the award recipient directly. Once they pass them along to you, prepare an SF-52 Request for Personnel Action (or other personnel form as appropriate for your agency) for their conversion action.
6. Provide these documents to your agency's human resources staff for processing.

If you are unsure when conversion should happen or at what point to process various personnel actions, Appendix A includes a sample personnel action event timeline for hiring and converting a candidate under NDAA'13. A flow chart of various possible personnel actions is included in Appendix B. Always coordinate with your agency's HR representative regarding personnel actions.

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FAQs – NSEP Hiring Authorities

What special hiring authorities do NSEP award recipients possess?

NSEP award recipients with an active service requirement have two special hiring authorities: **NDAA'13** and **Schedule A (r)**. See pages 9 to 12 of this guide for more detail on each authority.

Do the NSEP special hiring authorities expire?

NSEP award recipients retain their special hiring authorities if they have an unfulfilled federal service requirement. If the award recipient has a remaining service requirement, they can continue to apply and be appointed non-competitively to federal positions. If you would like to verify the non-competitive eligibility of a particular candidate, please feel free to reach out to nsep@nsep.gov.

My federal agency is not recognized as having national security responsibilities. Can I still hire an NSEP award recipient?

Yes. Any federal agency without exception can utilize the Schedule A (r) hiring authority to non-competitively appoint an NSEP awardee to a term position NTE four years. However, unlike NDAA'13, the Schedule A (r) appointment does not offer a conversion option. Please be aware that hiring an NSEP awardee into a position with no national security responsibility may not fulfill the federal service requirement for that individual.

Can my organization be added to the NSEP List of Federal Agencies with National Security Responsibilities?

Yes. The National Security Education Board (NSEB) reviews all agency requests to be added to the national security list. Please reach out to nsep@nsep.gov for more information on how to submit a petition requesting that your office or agency be added to the list.

My organization is on the NSEP List of Federal Agencies with National Security Responsibilities. Are there advantages to hiring an NSEP award recipient using Schedule A (r) instead of NDAA'13?

Possibly, depending on your agency's hiring needs. Organizations that are authorized to use NDAA'13 may still choose to use Schedule A (r) to appoint NSEP award recipients for several reasons, including:

1. **Short-term appointments for specific projects or hiring needs.** Since Schedule A (r) leads to a term appointment NTE 4 years, organizations may hire NSEP award recipients under this authority for any length of time between 1 and 4 years.
2. **Schedule A (r) appointments may not count against hiring ceilings for some federal organizations.** Most agencies have a limit on the number of civilian staff they may hire; however, if funds and an agency's regulations allow, a Schedule A (r) hire may be brought on board without counting against that limit. Consult with your HR department on what your agency's specific regulations on staffing numbers are, and whether Schedule A (r) hires might be a potential advantage in this way.

However, Schedule A (r) does not have a conversion option and does not lead to a permanent position. For this reason, if you are planning to keep an award recipient employed long-term, DLNSEO recommends using NDAA'13 for their initial hiring action.

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Could my organization initially appoint an NSEP award recipient under Schedule A (r), and then later decide to keep them on as a permanent federal employee?

Yes. Individuals serving under Schedule A (r), who have not completed their NSEP federal service obligation, may be reappointed under NDAA'13 to take advantage of the non-competitive conversion to career or career-conditional status after two years of service. All time served under Schedule A (r) may count towards the 2 years of service for non-competitive conversion under the NDAA'13 authorities.

Reappointment (officially a conversion to a different excepted service appointment) may be completed by filling out a new SF-52 Request for Personnel Action and submitting it to your Human Resources office.

Can I reappoint an NSEP award recipient under NDAA'13 if they have already completed their federal service requirement?

Some NSEP award recipients who have already completed their federal service requirement to NSEP under a Schedule A (r) appointment or a different, non-permanent appointment may still take advantage of reappointment under NDAA'13 if they are currently employed by the federal government in temporary or term appointment in the excepted service.

What happens if an NSEP award recipient serving on a Schedule A (r) appointment reaches their NTE date after 4 years?

Schedule A (r) does not offer a conversion option and is time limited NTE 4 years. The NSEP awardee would not be eligible to extend that position or utilize NDAA '13 authorities after the term of employment expires.

Is conversion under NDAA'13 required after 2 years? Does this happen automatically?

No, conversion under NDAA'13 is not required or automatic; it only takes place at the discretion of the hiring office. Once an NSEP award recipient has been serving for close to 2 years, it would be helpful to have a conversation with them about the conversion option if the agency is willing to exercise that.

When conversion happens, does the award recipient get career-conditional or career status in the competitive service?

Awardees receive career-conditional status upon conversion under NDAA'13. Most award recipients will not have prior federal service, and so after 2 years of work under NDAA'13, their agency can convert them and then proceed with a change in tenure group for full career status after 1 additional year (i.e. 3 years total) of employment. If the award recipient had one or more years of qualifying federal work experience prior to their NDAA'13 hiring action, the agency may be able to grant full career status upon conversion.

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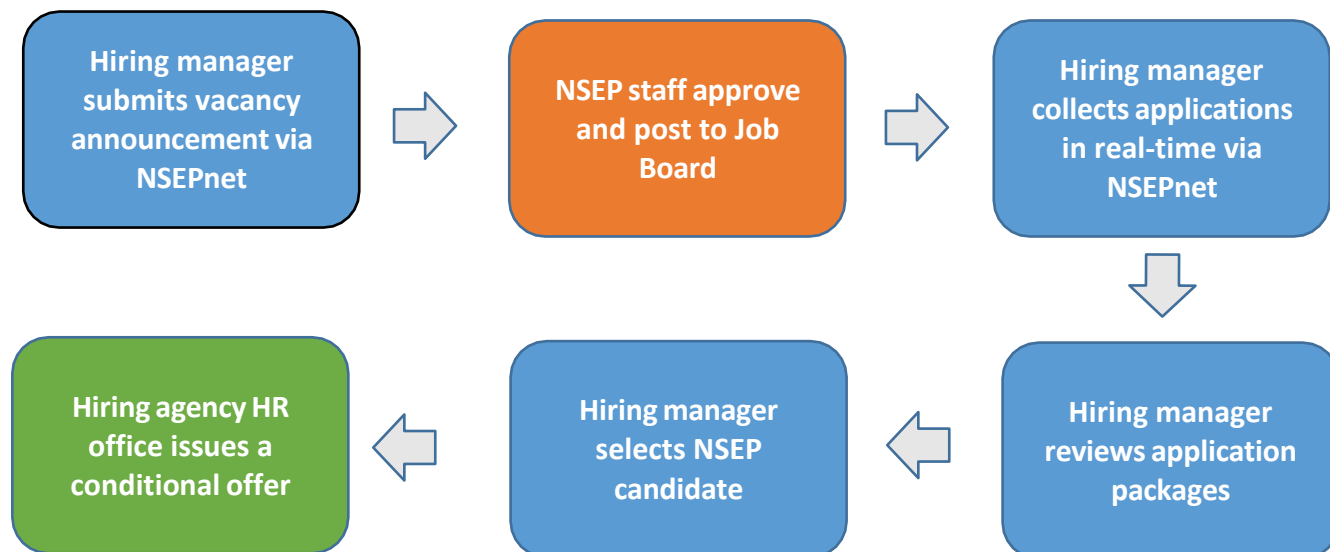
Chapter 3: Hiring Process

This chapter addresses the specific logistics of how to use NSEPnet.org to advertise your vacancy and the steps you will need to take from there. NSEP award recipients' NCE will allow you to streamline the hiring process.

Hiring managers can advertise vacancies with the NSEP Service team through our online platform, NSEPnet.org. You can post a vacancy announcement at any time and also access submitted applications in real time so you have full control over the hiring process.

Hiring Process Overview

The flow chart below outlines the basics of how a federal agency can hire an NSEP awardee non-competitively. The blue boxes contain tasks for the agency hiring manager, the orange boxes show tasks that the NSEP Service team handles, and, lastly, the green box includes the hiring agency's responsibility of issuing a conditional offer of employment.



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Detailed Steps for Hiring an NSEP Award Recipient

Below, you will find a step-by-step guide that describes the above non-competitive hiring process in more detail. These steps follow a start-to-finish model that dozens of federal agencies have used to hire NSEP award recipients.

Developing and Distributing the Vacancy Announcement

1. The agency hiring manager develops a vacancy announcement in accordance with their agency-specific guidance, and with input from their Human Resources staff.
2. Once the announcement is ready, the hiring manager posts the vacancy announcement to the NSEP Job Board through the NSEPnet portal. (New hiring managers can register for NSEPnet hiring official account using this link: <https://www.nsepnet.org/OfficialRegister.aspx>)
3. NSEP reviews and approves the vacancy announcement. Once the announcement is approved by the NSEP Service team, the vacancy is posted to the NSEP Job Board and an automatic mass email is sent to all eligible award recipients notifying them of the opportunity. This email includes the vacancy announcement, instructions about how to apply for the vacancy, and contact information for questions. The NSEP Service team will answer technical questions about applying through NSEP.NET posed by applicants, but will forward specific inquiries regarding the job posting to the hiring manager.

Reviewing Applications and Selecting a Candidate

4. Agency hiring managers can view and download application packages in real-time from their NSEPnet portal. Hiring managers have the option to download the application packages individually or in bulk.
5. The application should include a Letter of Certification from NSEP that certifies that the candidate is eligible for non-competitive hiring.
6. After downloading the application package, the hiring manager at the selecting office reviews the applications and conducts interviews. The hiring manager then selects a candidate for hire.
7. The hiring office should notify the NSEP Service team of their selection via an email to nsep@nsep.gov to confirm whether the candidate still retains non-competitive eligibility for federal hiring if needed.

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After Issuing the Conditional Offer of Employment

8. If you have questions about the NSEP hiring process after selecting a candidate, please contact Rachel Jovert at rachel.f.jovert.civ@mail.mil or Alison Patz at alison.m.patz.civ@mail.mil.

Consult the Personnel Action Event Timelines in Appendix A to learn more about how to hire your NSEP candidate under either of the two the NSEP hiring authorities, and for information about additional non-competitive personnel actions.

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How to Post a Vacancy Announcement to NSEPnet

Follow these steps to post an NSEP Exclusive or featured job announcement as appropriate.

NSEP Exclusive announcements are jobs only open to NSEP award recipients, and for which the hiring manager intends to appoint a candidate using the NSEP special hiring authorities.

Featured job announcements are advertised elsewhere, such as on USAJOBS, and are generally open to the public. NSEP cross-lists them on the NSEP Job Board for increased visibility.

Posting a Vacancy Announcement

1. Login to your NSEPnet hiring official account at NSEPnet.org. If you don't have an NSEPnet account, you can register here: <https://www.nsepnet.org/OfficialRegister.aspx>
2. Click the 'Post a Job' link on the homepage of your NSEPnet portal. Fill out all **required** vacancy template fields including: Position Title, Employer Type, Office/Organization, Open Date, Closing Date, Work Schedule, Appointment Type, State, Position Summary, Minimum Requirements, Security Clearance, Required Materials, and Application Instructions.
3. Please note that once logged in to the NSEPnet portal, the server will automatically log out your account after a period of twenty minutes. Any job posting not submitted within that time period will be lost. To counter this, NSEP has created a word document template of the job board which hiring managers can first complete to copy and paste their position's details in a timely manner. Please find attached the editable version with this email. For additional assistance with the NSEP Job Board or to request a blank copy of the template, please contact nsep@nsep.gov.
4. For the 'Who May Be Considered' field, select "NSEP award recipients who have not completed the service requirement in full" if posting an NSEP Exclusive vacancy. If posting a Featured vacancy, select "Open to the Public".
5. If you would like to collect applications via the NSEPnet site, select 'NSEPnet Portal' in the Application Instructions field. To instead direct applicants to USAJOBS or an external site, select 'External Agency Website.' You can also enter an email address instead of a URL to collect applications via email. If entering a URL, please remove the <https://>; otherwise, the link will not work. For example, instead of entering "https://nsepnet.org" you should enter "nsepnet.org".
6. Click 'Submit' to send your vacancy announcement to the NSEP staff for review and approval, or click 'Save and Exit' to save your progress and return later.
7. You will receive a confirmation email once NSEP has approved your vacancy announcement. Live announcements can be viewed on the NSEP Job Board: <https://www.nsepnet.org/JobBoard.aspx>

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Accessing the Application Package

- 8.** Click 'Manage Jobs' on the homepage of your NSEPnet portal to download application packages in real-time. Hiring managers have the option to download the application packages individually or in bulk.
- 9.** Review resumes, schedule interviews, and make your selection. Notify NSEP of your selected candidate(s) and ask NSEP to verify their Letter of Certification.
- 10.** As always, please notify the NSEP Service team if you have any issues with the site.

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FAQs – Hiring NSEP Award Recipients

How long does the hiring process usually take when advertising a vacancy on NSEPnet?

This depends on the needs of the hiring office and the specifics of the position. The hiring manager can post a vacancy announcement on NSEPnet for as little as a few days to a year or more. They can also set the position to close up to a year later if they would like to collect applications on a rolling basis. Generally, most vacancies are posted to NSEPnet for about 14 days. Once the applications have been collected, the timeline for reviewing resumes, scheduling interviews, making a selection, and extending an offer is up to the hiring office. Anecdotally, NSEP Exclusive vacancies are often filled within 3-6 months of posting the announcement, depending on whether a security clearance investigation is required.

Who can post a vacancy announcement to NSEPnet?

Any staff member with an NSEPnet Hiring Official profile may post a vacancy announcement to NSEPnet. This could be a Human Resources staff member, the position supervisor, or the person managing the hiring action.

How quickly are requests for NSEPnet Hiring Official profiles approved?

Within 2-3 business days.

At what points in the hiring process should I check in with the NSEP Service team?

Please feel free to reach out to the team at any time if you have any questions during the hiring process. However, the only time we will specifically request that you contact our office is to notify us when you have selected a candidate so we can verify their NCE under the NSEP hiring authorities.

Who provides the funding to pay NSEP award recipients?

The hiring agency provides the funds to pay the salaries of NSEP award recipients. NSEP does not provide funding for federal agencies to hire NSEP award recipients but does provide hiring and recruitment services to federal agencies at no cost.

Are NSEP award recipients eligible for employment benefits such as monetary bonuses, awards, quality step increases, training, tuition reimbursement, recruitment incentives, etc.?

Yes. In accordance with your agency's policies regarding these benefits, individuals appointed under the NSEP special hiring authorities are eligible to receive the same employment benefits as other excepted service employees at your agency.

Can NSEP award recipients be appointed to career ladder developmental positions?

Yes. In accordance with your agency's policies on career ladder developmental positions, NSEP award recipients can (and frequently are) appointed to developmental positions on career ladders in the excepted service.

Does NSEP provide a suitability review or make eligibility determinations on applications for NSEP Exclusive jobs advertised on NSEPnet?

No. NSEP can advise on whether candidates still have non-competitive eligibility under the NSEP special hiring authorities, but NSEP does not conduct suitability reviews on applications for NSEP Exclusive job announcements.

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Appendix A: NSEPnet Job Board Template

This template of the NSEPnet Job Board is designed to help you post your position quickly and smoothly. All of the highlighted fields are mandatory. Non-highlighted fields are non-mandatory, but the more information, the better! Items in parentheses represent drop-down menus, of which only one option can be selected.

Position Title:

Employer Type: (Federal/Contractor/Education)

Office/Organization:

Department (if applicable):

Open Date:

Closing Date:

Series:

Pay Grade(s):

Promotional Potential:

Salary Range Low:

Salary Range High:

Work Schedule: (full-time/part-time/intermittent/shift/other)

Appointment Type: (internship/permanent/temporary/term/volunteer/other)

Location State(s):

Position Summary:

Duties:

Minimum Requirements:

Preferred Requirements:

Who May Be Considered: (Open to the public/NSEP awardees who have not yet completed their service in full)

Non-Compete Eligibility: (None/Schedule A (r) and or NDAA'13)

Qualifications:

Security Clearance Requirement: (required/not-required)

Type:

Guidance:

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Required Application Materials:

Resume

Cover Letter

Academic Transcripts

DD-214 (veterans or active-duty military only)

SF-50 (current or former federal employees only)

NSEP Letter of Certification

Writing Sample

Applications should be submitted via: (NSEP Portal/External Agency Website)

Instructions:

Letter of Certification: (Yes/No)

Questions? Please contact nsep@nsep.gov

Appendix B: Sample Personnel Action Event Timelines

Unsure of when or how to take specific personnel actions related to your NSEP award recipient candidate or employee? This appendix contains two sample personnel action event timelines to illustrate which actions should be taken at what points after the initial hiring action.

Please reference this and share these resources with supervisors of NSEP award recipients, or anyone else responsible for managing personnel actions in your organization.

More information on processing personnel actions can be found at the Office of Personnel Management informational page here: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/data-analysis-documentation/personnel-documentation/#url=Personnel-Actions>.

Actions under Schedule A (r)

Personnel Action Event Timeline

Action	Time Elapsed Since Employee Start Date	SF-52 Tenure Status	Nature of Action Code (Chapter #, Rule #)	Nature of Action	Authority Code	Authority Citation
Non-competitive appointment to the excepted service, NTE 4 years	N/A (This is the initial hiring action)	Indefinite (3)	171 (Chapter 11, Table 11-A, Rule 3) ¹	Exc Appt NTE (date)	W9S (Chapter 11, Figure 11-1 Legal Authority Codes) ²	Sch. A, 213.3102(r)
Non-competitive conversion to excepted service appointment under NDAA'13*	While award recipient is still in non-permanent appointment	Conditional (2)	570 (Chapter 11, Table 11-A, Rule 53) ³	Conv to Exc Appt	ZLM	Sec 802(k) David Boren NS Act [50 USC 1902(K)]; Sec 956, PL 112-239 (NDAA '13) dtd 01-02-13

*This action is **OPTIONAL**, and only possible for federal organizations with national security responsibilities listed on pages 14-16. Once the award recipient has been converted to NDAA'13 appointment, follow steps in table on next page for conversion to the competitive service.

¹The Guide to Processing Personnel Actions. (Revised March 2017). [Chapter 11, Table 11-A, Page 11.](#)

²The Guide to Processing Personnel Actions. (Revised March 2017). [Chapter 11, Figure 11-1, Page 40.](#)

³The Guide to Processing Personnel Actions. (Revised March 2017). [Chapter 11, Table 11-A, Page 17.](#)

Actions under NDAA'13

Personnel Action Event Timeline

Action	Time Elapsed Since Employee Start Date	Time Elapsed Since Last Action	SF-52 Tenure Status	Nature of Action Code (Chapter #, Rule #)	Nature of Action	Authority Code	Authority Citation
Non-competitive appointment to the excepted service	N/A (This is the initial hiring action)	N/A (This is the initial hiring action)	Conditional (2)	170 (Chapter 11, Table 11-A, Rule 52) ¹	Exc Appt	ZLM	Sec 802(k) David Boren NS Act [50 USC 1902(K)]; Sec 956, PL 112-239 (NDAA '13) dtd 01-02-13
Non-competitive conversion to competitive service with career-conditional* status	2 years	2 years	Conditional (2)	501 (Chapter 9, Table 9-G, Rule 72) ²	Conv to Career-Cond Appt	ZLM	Sec 802(k) David Boren NS Act [50 USC 1902(K)]; Sec 956, PL 112-239 (NDAA '13) dtd 01-02-13
Change in tenure group; career status	3 years	1 year	Permanent (1)	880 (Chapter 26, Table 26, Rule 1) ³	Chg in Tenure Group	KMM	Reg. 315.202; Completed service requirement for career tenure from (date) to(date).

*If the individual has accrued a total of 3 years or more of federal service at the time of conversion, they would be converted to a competitive service appointment with **career status**, instead of career-conditional status. This would make their SF-52 Tenure Status “(1) Permanent”. See Appendices B and C for more detail.

¹The Guide to Processing Personnel Actions. (Revised March 2017). [Chapter 11, Table 11-A, Page 17](#).

²The Guide to Processing Personnel Actions. (Revised July 14, 2022). [Chapter 9, Table 9-G, Page 36](#).

³The Guide to Processing Personnel Actions. (Revised March 2017). [Chapter 26, Table 26, Page 7](#)