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HRDG 4500 - Recruitment and Retention Incentives - Section K

Last Modified:

Subchapter 4500 - Recruitment and Retention Incentives Section K - Special Salary Rates

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You may request approval to pay a special base salary to an employee, or group of employees, in any civilian position(s), under any pay system established by or under Federal statute within the executive branch, for which recruitment or retention problems exist, or are likely to exist.

Description The **maximum** special salary rate (SSR) at which an employee may be paid is limited to:

- **Thirty percent** above the maximum rate payable for the employee's particular grade or level, and
- The maximum rate payable for level V of the Executive Schedule.

To justify a need to pay employees an SSR, you as the manager and/or supervisor must prove that recruitment or retention problems exist, or are likely to exist, within the employee's geographic area, location, occupational group, or class of positions because of:

- Significantly higher rates of pay offered by non-Federal employers,
- The remoteness of the area or location,
- The undesirability of the working conditions,
- The nature of the work involved (including exposure to toxic substances other occupational hazards), or
- Any other justifiable reason.

To prove that recruitment or retention problems exist, you - - in partnership with HRD and the SPO - - must provide specific information and numerical data: (**Note:** OPM forms for gathering this data are available on the web at: www.opm.gov)

**Justification
Criteria**

- Describe any efforts to relieve the problems through the use of retention allowances, recruitment bonuses, relocation bonuses, or the authority to make superior qualifications appointments.
- Describe any other actions taken by you to relieve the problems such as initiatives to redesign jobs, to establish training programs, to improve working conditions, to use appropriate appointment authorities, or to develop an aggressive recruiting program.
- Describe the IMPACT of the recruitment and retention problems on the agency's MISSION.
- Any other applicable anecdotal evidence.

To prove that recruitment or retention problems are likely to exist in the future, you must provide evidence such as:

- Reputable projections of potential knowledge and skill shortages in pertinent occupations,
- Reputable projections of the labor market's effect on the supply of and demand for employees in the pertinent occupations, and
- Any other applicable evidence.

Approval Authority OPM retains the authority to establish an SSR for an employee of group of employees.

You must follow this process to request an SSR:

	Step	If:	Then:
Process for Requesting Approval to Pay Special Salary Rates	1	Requesting Approval	Consult the Justification Criteria in this section.
	2	Request is justified	Determine if funds will be available to cover the increased expenditures for salaries and benefits resulting from approval of the request.
	3	Funding is determined to be available	Contact Human Resources Division (HRD), Human Resources Enhancement Bran (HREB) for help in compiling the required information listed in Justification Criteria in this section. HRD will prepare and forward the request to OPM.
	4	Request is approved	Coordinate with HRD-HREB to activate payment by sending documentation of approval to the Servicing Personnel Office (SPO).
	5	OPM conducts the annual review	Coordinate with HRD-HREB to determine whether paying employees at a special salary rate should be continued.
Annual Review	HRD must conduct an annual review of any SSRs to determine whether the rates need to be increased, decreased, or maintained at the current level. HRD will conduct the review in conjunction with OHRM, USDA, and OPM.		

In addition to the records requirements on the Records/Reports Chart, **Section A**, HRD must keep records of the following information about each employee who is paid an SSR:

Records

- Copy of the complete initial data package sent to OPM (requesting approval to establish a new SSR).
- All subsequent data for approved SSRs maintained by the SPO.

Records may be destroyed by the SPO three (3) years after the date of approval, upon completion of the service agreement, or upon termination of the incentive or differential payment, whichever is later. Longer retention is permitted if required for business use. (See: [DAA-GRS2016-00150011](#).)

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