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# HRDG 4500 - Recruitment and Retention Incentives - Section G

Last Modified:

## **Subchapter 4500 - Recruitment and Retention Incentives** **Section G - Pay for Critical Positions**

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In exceptional circumstances, you may request authority to fix the rate of basic pay for one or more positions designated as critical positions.

Critical position pay (CPP) (up to the rate for level I of the Executive Schedule) will be granted **only** for positions that:

**Conditions**

- Require expertise of an extremely high level in a scientific, technical, professional, or administrative field,
- Are critical to the agency's successful accomplishment of an important mission, and
- Are necessary to recruit or retain an individual exceptionally well- qualified for the position (5 U.S.C. 5377 [b]).

CPP may be requested only after you have determined that the position cannot be filled with an exceptionally well-qualified person through the use of other personnel systems and pay authorities at your disposal.

Note: An employee receiving CPP is not eligible for locality based comparability payments or interim geographic adjustments.

To justify to OMB that a position should be designated as a critical position, you must first evaluate, with the help of HRD and your SPO classifier, the need to designate the position as critical by assessing:

- The kinds of work required by the position and the context within which it operates;
- The range of positions and qualification requirements that characterize the occupational field including those that require extremely high levels of expertise;
- The rates of pay reasonably and generally available in the public and private sectors for such positions; and,
- The availability of individuals who possess the qualifications to do the work.

Gather data illustrating your experiences (and other organizations, as appropriate) and efforts to recruit or retain exceptionally well-qualified persons for the position or for a position in a similar occupational field. To provide a reliable comparison, include qualifications required for the position and other pertinent factors.

Provide an assessment of why you could not, through diligent and comprehensive recruitment efforts and without using CPP, fill the position within a reasonable period with an individual who could perform the duties and responsibilities in a manner sufficient to ensure successful performance of the agency's mission.

This assessment must include a justification as to why you could not, as an effective alternative to CPP, use:

- Other personnel systems and pay authorities at your disposal;
- Other incentives, such as recruitment bonuses, to fill the position with an individual from outside the Federal Government and promotion or reassignment to fill the position from within the Federal Government; or
- A retention allowance if the position is currently occupied.

**Justification  
Criteria**

Explain why the position should be granted CPP within its organizational context (i.e., relative to other positions in the organization) and, when applicable, how it compares with other critical positions in the agency. Include an explanation of how your program will deal with the problem of perceived inequities among agency personnel (e.g., situations in which personnel receiving CPP

You should follow this process to request CPP:

<b>Process for Requesting Pay for Critical Positions</b>	<b>Step</b>	<b>When:</b>	<b>Then:</b>
	<b>1</b>	Requesting approval	Consult the Justification Criteria in this section.
	<b>2</b>	Pay authority is tentatively justified	Contact HRD/HREB and work with HRD to compile the required information listed in "Justification Criteria" in this section and to prepare a formal request. HRD will send the request to OMB (copy to OPM) through the agency's Administrator and USDA Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM).
	<b>3</b>	Request is approved	Activate payment by sending documentation of approval to the SPO.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB), in consultation with Office of Personnel Management (OPM), has the authority to approve CPP up to the rate for level I of the Executive Schedule.

### **Approval Authority**

Requests to set pay in an amount greater than level I of the Executive Schedule require Presidential approval.

If HRD (in consultation with management) initially sets the pay for a critical position at less than that authorized by OMB, then subsequent pay adjustments, up to the maximum amount authorized by OMB, may be made without additional OPM approval.

The SPO must maintain the following information:

- Employee Name
- Organizational Title
- Date of Appointment
- Position Title
- Series , Grade & Step
- Annual (Starting) Salary
- Copy of Signed Justification (including AD-1073)
- Copy of the SF-171 (or equivalent) of any incumbent of the position, copy of the position description, and copy of the qualification standard.
- Appointment authority for the position (for Senior Executive Service positions, appointment authority for the incumbent).
- Occupational series of the position.
- Current salary of position or incumbent.
- Name of incumbent or "Vacant."
- Length of time incumbent has been in position. (If vacant, enter length of time position has been vacant.)

## **Records**

Note: Programs submit above information to the SPO within 60 calendar days.

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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