

AFSA's Position

WAE "Centralized" Registry and Reform of the WAE System

- In August 2013 the Department of State launched a so-called "centralized" WAE registry maintained by the HR Service Center (HRSC) in Charleston.
- Unfortunately, the HRSC-maintained registry neither replaces nor complements current bureau-managed WAE system.
 - The "centralized" registry not designed to create a database of annuitant experience and skills.
 - Does not serve as centralized repository for CVs or annuitant EP+ profiles.
 - As currently configured, registry simply is list of names and contact info.
 - Value of generic "skill sets" questionable.
 - Registry does not address annuitant concerns about perceived cronyism and opaqueness.
 - WAE vacancy announcements, including position requirements, not listed.
 - Registry does not provide a security clearance mechanism to facilitate the WAE hiring process.
 - Does not eliminate labor transfer paperwork.
- Centralized system as configured offers little incentive and no benefit for bureaus to utilize it.
 - No requirement that bureaus search the centralized registry for position candidates.
 - Bureaus remain reliant on own stable of people and own EX-driven and bureau-funded processes.
 - Although current system is costly to maintain, bureaus are not relieved of their resource burden by centralized registry.
- WAE registry/hiring process ought to:
 - Ease process for bureaus to bring best available WAE personnel on-board in timely fashion.
 - Better identify candidate experiences and skills to meet specific needs of WAE positions to be filled.
 - Provide bureaus widest population of potential candidates with requisite skills.
 - Reduce operational costs to bureaus.

- Be flexible.
 - Be transparent and fair for WAE annuitants *to the maximum extent possible*.
 - More effectively publicize vacancies to WAE universe.
 - Encourage networking among WAE candidates and bureaus.
- For a more robust centralized registry, AFSA recommends that HR:
 - Introduce electronically searchable annuitant CV and/or EP+ profile database.
 - List available WAE positions, including hard-to-fill, and assure list is kept up-to-date.
 - Amplify networking procedures that encourage interested annuitants to communicate with appropriate WAE coordinators.
 - Assure non-State Foreign Service annuitants (USAID, FAS, FCS) access to HRSC-maintained registry.
 - Designate a HRSC point of contact responsible for keeping all WAE webpage content current.
 - Relieve for bureaus the burden of decentralized WAE processing.
 - Seek appropriate funding for centralizing registry responsibilities including the processing of security clearances and badges.
- AFSA urges that Department bureau WAE coordinators:
 - Provide HRSC with requisite vacancy information and potential WAE positions to update Global Registry *weekly or as available*.
 - Specific skill sets (language, geographic area, etc.) in particular demand.
 - Specific functions, e.g. FMOs, IMOs, GSOs, most in demand.
 - Information submitted in a consistent structure set by HRSC.
 - Designate “back-up” WAE coordinators and provide contact info to HRSC.
 - Be familiar with how to access and utilize HRSC database.
 - Identify positions where waiver of annuity limitations may apply.
- AFSA requests that the Department:
 - Centralize the WAE security clearance process and other paperwork burdens within HR and fund accordingly.
 - Encourage other Foreign Affairs agencies to develop WAE-type programs.

- Seek modification of rules on WAE caps and dual compensation that frustrate bureaus.
- Highlight the budgetary benefits of utilizing WAE personnel versus contractors.
- Extend clearances, as appropriate, to ease re-clearance process for annuitants.
- In coordination with the bureaus and HR, create a WAE database that includes numbers and types of reemployed annuitants and utilize information to improve the WAE system.