



**Tips and Tidbits**  
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**Question: What is the Area of Consideration (AOC) and how does it affect the quality of applicants referred for vacant positions? How is an AOC determined? Who is responsible for this determination?**

The Area of Consideration (AOC), also known as “Who May Apply” or “Who May be Considered” on vacancy announcements, is the group/set of groups of individuals from whom resumes are accepted. The AOC may be broad or limited to a small group of applicants and could vary widely from one vacancy to another depending on whether recruitment occurs within the current workforce, applicants at large are permitted to apply, or the unusual requirements of the recruited position so dictate.

The scope of an AOC plays a vital role in the number and quality of candidates ultimately referred for consideration. Making the AOC too large can result in inordinately large numbers of referred candidates while scoping the AOC too small or to an inappropriate applicant pool could result in an insufficient number of qualified candidates. MCoE Regulation 690-335, Merit Promotion and Inservice Placement Plan, provides the framework for the minimum AOC. Provisions exist for expanding the AOC as well as adopting other AOCs in their entirety when they are established by higher headquarters and when recruitment pertains to a particular Career Program position. Typically, Human Resources (HR) Specialists, in consult with Management determine the area of consideration ensuring that it is within the parameters of the local Merit Promotion Plan (MPP); supports EEO affirmative action needs; and, is broad enough an area to ensure high quality candidates are included. Factors considered in tailoring an AOC include knowledge of availability of candidates, difficulty in recruiting for the position, past recruitment attempts, and the ability of managers to review the number of candidates in a prompt and efficient manner.

Notwithstanding the local MPP, AR 690-300 chapter 335, dictates that competitive status applicants who apply **must** be referred\* even if those applicants are *not* within the AOC. [Competitive status is acquired by completion of a probationary period under a career-conditional or career appointment following open competitive examination, or by statute, Executive order, or the Civil Service rules, without open competitive examination]. For instance, if a vacancy announcement prescribes recruitment from within a Division in a specified Activity, any “outside” applicant who applies, whether external to the Division, Activity, or the Installation, must be given the opportunity to compete equally for referral with those in the *intended* AOC/work force.

There are many categories of applicants who may be included in the area of consideration. Examples include, but are not limited to, applicants eligible under the following appointments, programs, and authorities - Executive Orders (EOs) 12721 and 13473; the Interagency Career

Transition Assistance Program (ICTAP); reinstatement; the NAF/AFEES Interchange; the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act (VEOA) of 1998; and the Veterans Recruitment Appointment (VRA). Short synopses of some of these groups follow.

Military Spouses under EO 13473: Those eligible for this authority must be spouse of a service member (SM) who has received orders to relocate; the spouse of SM whose disability resulted from active duty in the armed forces; or, an un-remarried widow/widower of a SM killed while on active duty in the armed forces (it does not have to be combat related).

Interagency Career Transition Assistance Program (ICTAP) Eligibles: Employees who are surplus or have been displaced from another Federal agency may apply under this Program whenever the AOC includes applicants outside the agency in which the position is being filled. Eligibility expires one year after separation or when the employee receives a career, career conditional, or excepted appointment without time limit in any agency at any grade level.

Reinstatement Candidates: Eligible applicants include those employees who no longer work for the Federal government but who previously held a career or career conditional appointment as a Federal employee on a permanent basis. Spouses hired overseas under local dependent hiring authorities are also included in this category. There is no time limit on the reinstatement of a veteran's preference eligible or a person who has completed the service requirement for career tenure; however, former employees without a preference eligible who have not attained career tenure can normally only be reinstated within 3 years of the date of their separation.

Veterans Recruitment Appointment (VRA) Eligibles: Applicants eligible under this appointment may apply against and be selected for positions up to and including General Schedule (GS) 11 or equivalent. These candidates must meet the basic qualification requirements of the position and if selected, are initially hired for a 2-year period, at which time if successful completion occurs, are converted to a career or career-conditional appointment. There is no minimum military service requirement but the individual must have served on active duty, not active duty for training.

Veterans Employment Opportunity Act of 1998 (VEOA) Eligibles: These candidates are eligible to apply against permanent positions for which the agency is accepting resumes from outside its own workforce. To be eligible for appointment under this Act/authority, a candidate must be a preference eligible or veteran separated after substantially completing at least three years of continuous active duty service performed under honorable conditions.

For additional information, please contact your servicing CPAC Human Resource Specialist.

\*Provided these applicants meet established qualification, certification, and/or licensing requirements.

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