



Tips and Tidbits  
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**Question: What is the difference between a screened and an unscreened referral list? What advantage, if any, would be afforded to a manager who opted to receive either version? Can a selecting official request to review all submitted resumes *before* any review by the HR staff has taken place?**

Screened referral lists are those for which the majority of candidate/applicant checks have been accomplished *before* the referral is issued. When selecting officials request and receive screened referrals, they receive a list of candidates that have been determined to be among the Best Qualified (BQ) in terms of matching job-related skills and those candidates have also been determined to be within the area of consideration (AOC); have met time in grade and specialized experience requirements, all of which must be satisfied before eligibility [for appointment] is conferred. Traditionally screened lists are requested and even though it may take a little longer to receive, Managers can be reasonably assured that their selection(s) will be processed without incident and a job offer made upon final verification of supporting documentation (i.e. DD-214, transcript, certification, etc) and EEO concurrence.

Unscreened referral lists are a little different, and even though “unscreened” implies no review of the applicants has occurred, that is not entirely the case. When selecting officials receive an unscreened list, they receive a list of candidates who have been determined to be among the best candidates in terms of matching job-related skills but who have **not** been screened for additional eligibility criteria – for instance, area of consideration or time-in-grade. Accordingly, when a candidate is selected from an unscreened list, a job offer can only be made if/when all eligibility requirements have been confirmed. As with a screened list, if appropriate, supporting documentation must be provided as well as EEO occurrence obtained. Consequently, an unscreened list dictates more verifications be conducted *after* selection; whereas, the reverse is true with a screened list. The advantage to requesting an unscreened list is that it may be received more quickly and the number of candidates referred is larger; however, a selection could be prevented from occurring altogether if the tentatively selected applicant can not satisfy the other requirements (be within the AOC for example). In **no** instance after a screened referral list has been issued may an unscreened list be subsequently requested. For most Army Commands the decision as to whether an unscreened referral list may be requested has already been rendered. With few exceptions, unscreened referral lists are not permitted; however, if you are unsure and are contemplating requesting one, please contact your servicing HR Specialist.

Frequently the question arises as to whether all the applicants who applied against a vacancy can be forwarded to the selecting official for review. This is not permissible. As required by law, candidates are rated and ranked using differentiating criteria to ensure only the BQ are referred to the selecting official for consideration. Candidates with a number of skills matches above the natural break or break point represent the “short list” of best qualified candidates. In every case, Management will **only** receive BQ applicants from which to make selections. Exceptions will not be granted as this requirement can not be waived.

The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) requires:

300.102(b) competitive employment practices will result in selection from among the best qualified candidates;

335.103b (1) actions under a promotion plan – whether identification, qualification, or selection of candidates shall be solely on job-related criteria;

335.103b (4) selection procedures will provide for management’s right to select or not select from among a group of best qualified candidates.

The local Labor Management Agreement, commonly referred to as the Union Agreement, also echoes this requirement. Specifically, Article XXIV, Section 2 reads in part “is found to rank among the best qualified”.

The Fort Benning Merit Promotion and In Service Placement Regulation, USAISC 690-335 stipulates “the overall objectives of the evaluation process are to narrow the number of and to assure the selection is made from among the best qualified”.

The requirement to consider only best qualified applicants for position vacancies is firmly steeped in law and further supplemented through various local directives. This ensures merit is a factor in selections, directly contributes to mission success, and, as would be the case if all applicants were released for review, insulates selecting officials from the appearance of a prohibited personnel practice.

For additional information, please contact your servicing Human Resources Specialist at the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center.

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