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Subject: Reduction In Force (RIF) For NASA Employees

Responsible Office: Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer

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P.1 Purpose

- a. This NASA Interim Directive (NID) implements regulations to conduct Reduction in Force (RIF), Transfer of Functions (TOF), and Furlough of more than 30 days in a manner that minimizes adverse impact on employees and limits disruption to critical Agency missions, programs, operations, and organizations, consistent with employees' assignment and displacement rights.
- b. Management will proactively consider and evaluate the use of programs such as Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (VSIP), Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA), waiver of qualifications, and retraining programs and authorities under pre-RIF actions to minimize involuntary separations.
- c. Management is responsible for planning work and organizing the workforce to achieve agency objectives within available resources. This includes assessing whether there is a surplus of employees in specific roles or locations, determining the necessary positions, their locations, and when they should be filled, abolished, or vacated. Management will decide if a RIF is necessary, due to internal factors (e.g., reorganization) or external factors (e.g., lack of funding), and when it will occur.
- d. The need to apply RIF or TOF procedures does not suspend NASA authority and responsibility to take other legitimate employee actions.
- e. All decisions will be made in accordance with applicable laws and regulations and negotiated bargaining agreements.

P.2 Applicability

- a. This NID is applicable to NASA Headquarters and NASA Centers, including Component Facilities and Technical and Service Support Centers, and all NASA employees with the exception of employees excluded by law.
- b. Any reference to Center Director(s) or Centers includes the Officials-in-Charge of Headquarters Organizations, and the Executive Director of the NASA Shared Services Center (NSSC).
- c. This directive does not apply to the Office of the Inspector General.
- d. In this NID, all mandatory actions (i.e., requirements) are denoted by statements containing the term "shall". The terms: "may" denotes a discretionary privilege or permission, "can" denotes statements of possibility or capability, "should" denotes a good practice and is recommended, but not required, "will" denotes expected outcome, and "are/is" denotes descriptive material.
- e. In this directive, all document citations are assumed to be the latest version unless otherwise noted.

P.3 Authority

- a. Title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.), Part III, Subpart B, Chapter 35, Subchapters I and V.
- b. Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Parts 330, 351, 359, 430, 530, 531, 536, and 550.

P.4 References

- a. OPM Workforce Reshaping Operations Handbook, dated March 2017.
- b. OPM Workforce Reshaping Appendices, dated March 2017.
- c. OPM Memorandum dated January 21, 2025, RE: Initial Guidance Regarding DEIA Executive Orders.
- d. OPM Memorandum dated February 5, 2025, RE: Further Guidance Ending DEIA Offices, Programs and Initiatives.
- e. OPM Senior Executive Service (SES) Desk Guide.
- f. NPD 3000.1, Human Capital Management.
- g. NPR 3330.1, NASA Career Transition Assistance Plans (CTAPs).
- h. NPR 3530.1, NASA Pay and Compensation Policy.
- i. NPR 3831.1, Phased Retirement.

P.5 Measurement/Verification

- a. Compliance with this directive will be evaluated through the following means:
 - (1) Internal reviews conducted by the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (OCHCO) Accountability Program Office, other OCHCO management officials, or servicing Human Capital Offices (HCOs).
 - (2) Internal control reviews required by NASA policies or service delivery guides; or
 - (3) Any reviews conducted by authorized external stakeholders with a need to know.
- b. OCHCO and HCOs shall ensure sufficient documentation and recordkeeping, as required by applicable regulatory and policy guidance, is established, maintained, and safeguarded in accordance with the NASA policy and records retention schedule.

P.6 Cancellation

None.

Chapter 1. Responsibility

1.1 Administrator

Unless otherwise delegated, the Administrator retains the authority to approve the following:

- a. The need for a RIF.
- b. All RIF actions.

Chapter 2. Reduction in Force (RIF), Transfer of Function, and Furlough for more than 30 days

2.1 Definitions

Unless otherwise noted, the definitions for terms used in this chapter may be found in 5 CFR Part 351.

2.1.1. Administrative authority - is used for the purposes of establishing a minimum competitive area:

2.1.1.1 Is the administrative authority to take or direct personnel actions (including the authority to establish positions, abolish positions, assign duties, etc.) rather than the issuance or processing of the documents by which these decisions are effected;

2.1.1.2 Means that the organizational unit is separately organized and clearly distinguished from other organizational units within the same local commuting area in regard to operation, work function, staff, and personnel management;

2.1.1.3. Recognizes that individual organizational components may be under separate administration even though final approval of certain personnel actions to a higher level in the agency (including classification of positions, filling of higher-graded positions, processing of personnel actions, etc.); and

2.1.1.4. Is evidenced by the organizational manual and delegations of authority that document where, in the organization, final authority rests to make decisions such as establishing positions, abolishing positions, assigning duties, etc. This is the standard for a minimum competitive area in a local commuting area, in either a headquarters organization or field component.

2.2 RIF Planning

2.2.1. The Human Resources Director (HRD) is responsible for notifying the Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) of any workforce adjustments that may result in the application of RIF, transfer of function, or furlough procedures.

2.2.2 The HRD is responsible for designating a primary point of contact and an alternate, to the CHCO. This person will provide information necessary to satisfy inquiries from within NASA and those authorized external to the agency, and to provide information between the Center and the Human Capital Office during the RIF.

2.3 Competitive Areas

2.3.1 Unless otherwise specified, and in accordance with 5 CFR 351.402, a competitive area is comprised

of NASA activities within a commuting area under the same administrative authority. When two or more activities within a commuting area are under different administrative authorities, they constitute separate competitive areas even though they may share the same physical location.

2.3.2 Remote positions outside the commuting area may be in separate competitive areas based on the official remote worksite codified on the Standard Form 50, Notification of Personnel Action.

2.3.3 The determination of the competitive area(s) and any changes to a competitive area must be approved by the CHCO or designee. Any change that would occur within 90 days of the effective date of a RIF must be approved by OPM.

2.3.4 The CHCO or designee will ensure that designations of competitive areas, including any changes, are made available.

2.4 Competitive Levels

2.4.1 The CHCO or designee will establish competitive levels, respective competitive level codes (CLCs) and maintain documents to describe them in accordance with 5 CFR 351.403. Each competitive level will consist of all positions in a competitive area which are in the same pay plan, grade, or occupational level, and classification series. These positions must be sufficiently similar in terms of duties, qualification requirements, pay schedules, and working conditions so that an incumbent in one position could successfully perform the critical elements of any other position in the level upon entry. This should occur without any loss of productivity beyond what is typically expected in the orientation of any new, fully qualified employee. This determination is made on the basis that the jobs are so similar that the agency may readily assign an employee in one position to any of the other positions in the competitive level without changing the terms of the employee's appointment and without unduly interrupting the agency's operations.

2.4.2 No RIF action may be taken until every position in the affected competitive area is assigned to a competitive level.

2.5 Transfer of Function (TOF)

2.5.1 A TOF moves work from one competitive area to another, thereby ceasing the work being performed in the losing area and continuing that work in an identical form in the gaining competitive area. It can also be the movement of the entire competitive area to a different local commuting area. (5 CFR 351.302)

2.6 Furlough for more than 30 days

A furlough of more than 30 continuous calendar days, or of more than 22 discontinuous workdays, is also a RIF action.(5 CFR 531.203, 5 CFR 351.604)

Chapter 3. Reduction-in-Force (RIF) in the Career Senior Executive Service

3.1 Definitions

3.1.1 A RIF includes the elimination or modification of a position due to reorganization, lack of funds, curtailment of work, or any other factor. This would include OPM withdrawal of SES allocations, a total agency shutdown, or the determination that a position no longer meets the criteria for inclusion in the SES.

3.2 RIF Planning

3.2.1 The Administrator or designee shall determine which positions will be removed from the SES in a RIF.

3.2.2 A review of SES positions, considered in the RIF, will be conducted to determine how each may be affected along with a plan to address and minimize negative impacts to agency missions and operations. If an SES position is abolished, the individual can be reassigned to another SES position for which qualified. In coordination with OPM, the agency may also consider other appropriate authorities, such as discontinued service retirement or a voluntary “early out” retirement authority.

3.2.3 The reductions in positions will be distributed among its career, noncareer, and limited appointees in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 3133 and 5 U.S.C. 3134 (e.g., the 25 percent limit on noncareer authorities), and consultation with OPM on any necessary adjustments.

3.3 Competitive Areas

3.3.1 Unless otherwise specified, competitive areas may be broadly defined such as the full agency or major component of the agency in accordance with 5 CFR 359.

3.3.2 Remote positions outside the commuting area may be in separate competitive areas based on the official remote worksite codified on the Standard Form 50, Notification of Personnel Action.

3.3.3 Changes to a competitive area must be approved by the Administrator or designee.

3.4 Transfer of Function (TOF)

3.4.1 TOF means the transfer of the performance of a continuing function from one agency to one or more other agencies in accordance with 5 CFR 359.608.