


USGS Employee Handbook



A glacial aquifer system in the Midwest, near Canton, IL. Bill Morrow, USGS, gets into the field early. This system includes all unconsolidated aquifers above bedrock north of the line of continental glaciation.

Revised January 2022

Notice

This handbook is for informational purposes only; it is not a policy document.

Information contained herein is presumed to be current and correct. Because information changes frequently, every effort is made to ensure its accuracy. Should you find any errors or outdated information, please notify the **Office of Employee Development (OED)** at: gs_oed-tel@usgs.gov

This handbook is not intended to, nor does it create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable by law or equity by a party against the U.S., its departments, agencies, instrumentalities or entities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

Version 2.0, Updated April 2020

Table of Contents

Notice	2
Table of Contents.....	3
Welcome	4
Oath of Office.....	5
Overview of the Onboarding Process	6
About USGS.....	7
Our Organization.....	8
About You	17
Your Communications.....	26
Your Career.....	30
Your Job and Performance	32
Your Career Development	35
Your Pay	39
Your Benefits.....	42
Your Leave.....	48
Your Awards and Recognition	52
Other Things to Know	54
Useful Websites/Quick Links	56

Welcome

Welcome to the USGS! You are now a part of a unique bureau within the Department of the Interior. Founded in 1879 as part of the Organic Act, the US Geological Survey is charged with "classification of the public lands, and examination of the geological structure, mineral resources, and products of the national domain" and combined the efforts of three separate surveys of the west into a national science presence that now extends across the planet and into space. As a new member to the team you will find it is our shared commitment to unbiased science that connects us and unites us in our mission. We are glad you are here and look forward to joint contributions providing reliable scientific information that helps understand the Earth; minimize loss of life and property from natural disasters; manage water, biological, energy and mineral resources; and enhance and protect our quality of life. This USGS Handbook is the first in a series of informational products designed to facilitate our new employees in understanding our organization so that they may begin to contribute their skills to the USGS mission. The Handbook not only outlines your rights and responsibilities as a federal employee, it also provides important information about benefits along with multiple resources to help guide your Federal career.



I personally believe this information is valuable for employees of any tenure. As our organization evolves, so will this document, and I hope you refer to it periodically.

Again, welcome to the USGS! I know you are going to enjoy your time with us!

Dave Applegate

Associate Director for Natural Hazards

Exercising the Delegated Authority of the Director

Oath of Office

As Federal civil servants, we are required to take an oath of office by which we swear to support and defend the Constitution of the U.S. of America. This oath will be signed and retained in your personnel record.

I, [name], do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God.

5 U.S.C. §3331

Overview of the Onboarding Process

Onboarding is not just something you accomplish on the first few days on the job. Think of it more as a process throughout your first few months. Use these resources during your initial months at the USGS:

Employee Handbook

You should receive either a link or a hard copy of the Employee Handbook upon accepting your position. The Handbook provides answers to many of the questions new employees ask about human resources and administrative matters. The Handbook is a reference guide. It is not meant to be read all at once. Instead, as questions arise, use it to locate answers using the [Table of Contents](#) as your guide. You are also encouraged to visit the Human Capital Support Services website for HR and Administrative resources:

<https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/human-capital>

Entrance on Duty Packet

Along with the Handbook, you will receive a packet of forms to complete from your Human Resources Team, either electronically or in hard copy. If you need assistance in completing any of these forms, please [contact the Human Resources Team member](#) who sent them to you.

Benefits Webinars

The Office of Human Resources conducts benefits information sessions regularly via webinars. Access the [schedule](#) for the current calendar year at: <https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/human-capital/entrance-duty-benefits-information-new-hires>

Mandatory Training

You will receive login information for DOI Talent, the enterprise wide learning management system for DOI, once your account is created. Account creation automatically takes place after your first two-week pay period. If you have received your second paycheck and haven't yet received your account information contact the DOI Talent Team at doitalent@usgs.gov.

To see a list of mandatory training, visit <https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/human-capital/mandatory-training-topic>

You can access guidance on safety training, as well as complete any required safety training applicable to your position at <https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/human-capital/mandatory-safety-training>.

Other Training

Your office may require that you take additional training.

About USGS

Who We Are

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is the sole science agency for the DOI. It is sought out by thousands of partners and customers for its national science expertise and vast earth and biological data holdings. The USGS was established in 1879 (43 U.S.C. 31) for "the classification of the public lands and examination of the geological structure, mineral resources, and products of the national domain." President Theodore Roosevelt declared in a 1907 State of the Union address that conservation (of forests, wildlife, minerals—including energy minerals and water) was "the fundamental problem which underlies almost every other problem of our national life" and established the doctrine that science is the proper tool to discharge conservation policy. This principle underpins USGS science to this day, as the USGS has developed a reputation as a source of sound, unbiased science for natural resource development and conservation.

Today, the USGS leads the Nation in providing unbiased Earth science research and integrated assessments of natural resources and hazards; supporting the stewardship of public lands and waters; as well as promoting science to protect public safety, health, property, and U.S. economic prosperity. Our Nation faces unprecedented challenges: increasing demand for limited energy and mineral resources, losing critical and unique ecosystems, changing land resources, increasing vulnerability to natural hazards, growing uncertainty of water security and availability, and emerging diseases that threaten wildlife and human health. The USGS also provides the science to support exploration and development of energy and mineral resources; sustain healthy fish and wildlife populations; monitor changes to land resources; improve resilience to natural hazards and enhance community safety and well-being; improve water resource decision making; and provide accurate, high-resolution geospatial data.

Our Mission

The USGS serves the Nation by providing reliable scientific information to describe and understand the Earth; minimize loss of life and property from natural disasters; manage water, biological, energy, and mineral resources; and enhance and protect our quality of life.

Our Vision

The USGS is a world leader in the natural sciences through our scientific excellence and responsiveness to society's needs.

Our Guiding Principles

The goal of the USGS is that all employees maintain a high degree of integrity, which is the foundation of the USGS Guiding Principles, which include:

- Be Respectful
- Be Accountable
- Communicate
- Value Differences
- Encourage
- Focus
- Collaborate

Our Code of Conduct

The purpose of the USGS Code of Conduct is to restate important principles and expectations for professional conduct and acceptable behavior by all personnel. This Code is a shared statement of commitment to uphold the ethical, professional, and legal standards required to fulfill these principles and objectives.

<https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/human-capital/us-geological-survey-code-conduct>

Our Organization

The USGS is a bureau within the Department of the Interior (DOI). The DOI manages approximately 20 percent of the land in the U.S. and adjacent coastal waters. DOI management and stewardship responsibilities include migratory, threatened, and endangered species; national parks, wildlife refuges, monuments, and other public lands; water resources; Native American Trust resources; and the U.S. freely associated States and insular territories. Within the DOI, there are 9 bureaus, each with their own mission. The Director of the USGS reports to the Assistant Secretary for Water and Science at the departmental level.

We employ the best and the brightest experts from a range of earth and life science disciplines. By integrating our diverse scientific expertise, we provide an understanding of complex natural science phenomena and scientific products that lead to solutions. Every day more than 8,000 USGS scientists, technicians, and support staff are working in more than 400 locations across the U.S.

View profiles of Key Officials here: <https://www.usgs.gov/about/key-officials>

Access the most recent USGS Organizational Chart here: <https://www.usgs.gov/media/images/usgs-organizational-chart>

What We Do

As the Nation's largest water, earth, and biological science and civilian mapping agency, USGS collects, monitors, analyzes, and provides science about natural resource conditions, issues, and problems. Our diverse expertise enables us to carry out large-scale, multidisciplinary investigations and provide impartial scientific information to resource managers, planners, and other customers.

Our Nation's Natural Resources

The USGS produces topographic and geological maps, geophysical and geochemical surveys, together with scientific research on water, energy, and mineral resources to produce resource assessments vital to understanding the natural wealth of the Nation. These analyses inform decision makers about the Nation's resource assets as well as those outside our borders that may impact our economy and security.

The USGS's assessments increasingly include economic analysis. Private industry and government alike use USGS data to make informed decisions about energy and mineral resource management. A variety of USGS programs provide science to support energy and mineral resource management, including oil, gas, coal, geothermal, uranium, and gas hydrate energy resource activities. We also provide critical information about mineral resource potential, production, and consumption, which is important to the economic stability and the national security of the U.S. The USGS maintains the core functions related to energy and mineral resource assessments. This includes the underlying geological, geophysical, and geochemical research and mapping capability that underpins accurate assessment results, while also yielding valuable information on the impacts of energy development. The USGS maintains other bureau programs and activities including biological and water resource studies related to energy production.

Land and Water Stewardship

The USGS provides science on the complex human, economic, and ecological dimensions of land and water stewardship to help decision makers balance economic development with the Nation's conservation ethos regarding resources such as fish and wildlife, clean and abundant water, and thriving communities. USGS science serves to protect and conserve our Nation's fish and wildlife heritage; and bridges the gap between science and management for at-risk species and other species of management concern.

Protect Public Safety, Health, and Property

The USGS protects public safety, public health, and property by effectively delivering natural hazards and environmental health science. Every year, the U.S. faces natural and man-made disasters that threaten the Nation through loss of life and property, as well as threats to America's national security and economic vitality. In such events, the Nation's emergency managers and public officials look to our science to inform them of the risks hazards pose to human-built and natural systems and how to reduce losses and improve response. Faced with rising expectations for rapid, robust information in response to these events, the USGS has the science and mapping capabilities to meet these needs both before and after disasters strike.

Our natural hazards science informs a broad range of disaster planning, situational awareness and response activities at local to global levels. Responsibilities in natural hazards include issuing warnings and advisories for earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, landslides, and coastal erosion; informing warnings issued by other agencies for floods, tsunamis, and wildfires; providing timely information to emergency managers and response officials, the media, and the public to inform and educate communities during, between, and after crises.

Science Collaboration

Created by an Organic Act of Congress in 1879, the USGS has evolved over the last 138 years into a bureau with a mission to deliver integrated scientific understanding and forecasts of natural systems to improve the Nation's economic well-being; reduce societal risks to hazards; support resilient infrastructure and natural resource security; and inform strategies for adapting to changing landscapes. The USGS provides reliable scientific information for the common good of its Federal, State, tribal, and local partners and the American people. Scientific coordination and collaboration is central to our science mission.

The USGS is the sole science agency for the DOI. Thousands of Federal, State, local, and tribal governments, the private sector, and non-governmental organization partners seek out the USGS for its natural science expertise; its vast Earth and biological data holdings; and unbiased scientific analyses and publications. As a non-regulatory entity, the USGS provides objective, credible scientific research and analysis that Federal agencies and DOI bureaus with regulatory responsibilities use to make informed decisions based on sound science. The USGS contributes valuable expertise to these collaborations, filling in the knowledge gaps that the USGS is uniquely capable of addressing. By leveraging efficiencies across various Federal, State, local, tribal, and industry sectors, we provide thorough and accurate science—tailor-made to address some of America's most pressing challenges of the 21st century. The USGS also enters into scientific partnerships, making the best use of limited resources to further national priorities.

Science Mission Areas

Changes to the natural world combined with growing human demands may often put our health and safety, national security, and economy at risk. The USGS is focused on some of the most significant issues society faces, and our science is making a substantial contribution to the well-being of the Nation and the World. Our work is organized by these seven major topics, called Mission Areas: Land Resources, Core Science Systems, Ecosystems, Energy and Minerals, Environmental Health, Natural Hazards, and Water.

Core Science Systems (CSS)

CSS leads USGS's mission as the civilian mapping agency for the Nation. We conduct detailed surveys and develop high quality, highly accurate topographic, geologic, hydrographic, and biogeographic maps and data. Our maps allow precise planning for critical mineral assessments; energy development; infrastructure projects; urban planning; flood prediction; emergency response; and hazard mitigation.

3D Elevation Program (3DEP) To respond to growing needs for high-quality elevation data, the goal of 3DEP is to complete acquisition of nationwide lidar (IfSAR in AK) by 2023 to provide the first-ever national baseline of consistent high-resolution elevation data – both bare earth and 3D point clouds – collected in a timeframe of less than a decade.

<https://www.usgs.gov/core-science-systems/ngp/3dep>

Core Research Center (CRC) was established in 1974 by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to preserve valuable rock cores for use by scientists and educators from government, industry, and academia. The cylindrical sections of rock are permanently stored and available for examination and testing at the core storage and research facility in Denver, Colorado.

<https://www.usgs.gov/core-science-systems/nggdp/core-research-center>

Science Analytics and Synthesis (SAS) synthesizes and delivers Earth system data and information. We strive to accelerate research and decision making through data science, information delivery, advanced computing and biodiversity analytics. SAS has developed a Five Year Science Strategy that outlines our organization's goals, research questions, and strategic activities. <https://www.usgs.gov/core-science-systems/science-analytics-and-synthesis>

Hydrography The National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) and Watershed Boundary Dataset (WBD) are digital geospatial datasets that map the surface water of the United States and are a part of The National Map. Together, the NHD and WBD, along with data from the 3D Elevation Program (3DEP), are processed to create the NHDPlus High Resolution (NHDPlus HR). <https://www.usgs.gov/core-science-systems/ngp/hydrography>

John Wesley Powell Center for Analysis and Synthesis Offering the opportunity for emergent knowledge in Earth system science through collaborative analysis and synthesis. <https://powellcenter.usgs.gov/>

National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program (NCGMP) is the primary source of funds for the production of geologic maps in the United States and provides accurate geologic maps and three-dimensional framework models that help to sustain and improve the quality of life and economic vitality of the Nation and to mitigate natural hazards.

<http://ncgmp.usgs.gov/>

National Geological and Geophysical Data Preservation Program The Energy Policy Act of 2005 established the National Geological and Geophysical Data Preservation Program (NGGDPP) to preserve and expose the Nation's geoscience collections (samples, logs, maps, data) to promote their discovery and use for research and resource development. The National Digital Catalog describes geoscience collections managed by USGS and state geological agencies. <http://datapreservation.usgs.gov/>

National Geospatial Program provides a foundation of digital geospatial data representing the topography, natural landscape, and built environment of the United States. These data and derived products and services can be accessed through The National Map Data Download and Visualization Services. <https://www.usgs.gov/core-science-systems/national-geospatial-program>

USGS Library Established in 1879 to build and organize a collection of scientific materials in the earth sciences, the U.S. Geological Survey Library is now the largest library for earth sciences in the world. The Library includes four central libraries and is part of Core Science Systems within the USGS. <https://www.usgs.gov/core-science-systems/usgs-library>

Ecosystems

The Ecosystems Mission Area provides impartial science information and tools to the Nation's natural resource managers, with particular focus on the science needs of the Department of the Interior (DOI) and DOI bureaus to manage species, lands and priority ecosystems; fulfill treaty obligations; respond to and reduce threats to natural resources; and manage mineral and energy resources.

Cooperative Research Units Established in 1935, our mission is our hallmark: meet the actionable science needs of our cooperators, provide technical assistance, and develop the future workforce through graduate education/mentoring. The

Coop Units are located on 40 universities in 38 states. They are called Coop Units because each cooperator plays a role in the staffing, funding and directing the units. <https://www.usgs.gov/ecosystems/cooperative-research-units>

Energy & Wildlife Energy development is booming across the United States, helping to secure plentiful energy to meet our nation's needs. Yet energy generation can sometimes have adverse effects on ecosystems and wildlife. USGS scientists are studying the effects of energy infrastructure on wildlife, and are working to develop the technical and management options that can reduce risks to wildlife and industry. <https://www.usgs.gov/ecosystems/energy-wildlife>

Environments Program scientists conduct research for the restoration and management of 500 million acres managed by DOI. Scientists work in estuaries, coastlines, deserts, grasslands, rivers and forests from Alaska to Florida to predict how systems respond to change, evaluate restoration, improve habitat for biodiversity and provide services including clean water, food, and storm protection. <https://www.usgs.gov/ecosystems/environments-program>

Fish & Wildlife Disease USGS is the lead Federal agency for wildlife disease research and surveillance. Our wildlife health capabilities provide research, information, and technical assistance needed to manage wildlife through disease events. Congress and our partners rely on our science to make informed decisions about fish and wildlife disease policy, planning and management. <https://www.usgs.gov/ecosystems/fish-wildlife-disease>

Fisheries Program Our fisheries researchers are world-class scientists. They conduct cutting-edge research to provide fisheries resource managers the scientific information they need to protect, restore, and enhance our Nation's fisheries and their habitats. <https://www.usgs.gov/ecosystems/fisheries-program>

Invasive Species Program More than 6,500 nonindigenous species are now established in the United States, posing risks to native plants, animals, microorganisms, valued ecosystems, and human and wildlife health. In fact, the current annual environmental, economic, and health-related costs of invasive species exceed those of all other natural disasters combined. <https://www.usgs.gov/ecosystems/invasive-species-program>

Sage-grouse & Sagebrush Ecosystem USGS has been a leader in sagebrush ecosystem research and continues to meet the priority science needs of management agencies. We bring a diversity of expertise and capabilities to address a wide variety of science needs at multiple spatial scales and are committed to providing high quality science to our management partners. <https://www.usgs.gov/ecosystems/sage-grouse-sagebrush-ecosystem>

Status and Trends To protect, conserve, and restore the living resources—plants, animals, habitats, ecosystems—entrusted to their care, land and resource managers must understand the condition, or status (e.g., abundance, distribution, productivity, health), of those resources as well as their trends (i.e., how these variables change over time). <https://www.usgs.gov/ecosystems/status-and-trends-program>

Wildlife Program We provide rigorous and unbiased information on migratory birds, terrestrial and marine mammals, amphibians and reptiles, terrestrial plants, threatened and endangered species, wildlife disease, and on wildlife issues resulting from human activities. Our science contributes toward a more complete understanding of the Nation's ecosystems and landscapes. <https://www.usgs.gov/ecosystems/wildlife-program>

Energy and Minerals

The Energy and Minerals Mission Area conducts research and assessments that focus on the location, quantity, and quality of mineral and energy resources, including the economic and environmental effects of resource extraction and use.

Energy Resources Program conducts research and assessments on the location, quantity, and quality of mineral and energy resources, including the economic and environmental effects of resource extraction and use.

<https://www.usgs.gov/energy-and-minerals/energy-resources-program>

Mineral Resources Program delivers unbiased science and information to understand mineral resource potential, production, consumption, and how minerals interact with the environment. <https://www.usgs.gov/energy-and-minerals/mineral-resources-program>

Science and Decisions Center provides a cross-cutting framework to link the USGS mission areas to natural resource decision making. <https://www.usgs.gov/energy-and-minerals/science-and-decisions-center>

SHRIMP-RG Lab is at Stanford University as a result of a partnership between the U.S. Geological Survey and Stanford School of Earth, Energy & Environmental Sciences. <https://shrimprg.stanford.edu>

USGS TRIGA Reactor (GSTR) is a low-enriched uranium-fueled, pool-type reactor. The mission of the TRIGA® is to support USGS science by providing information on geologic, plant, and animal specimens to advance methods and techniques unique to nuclear reactors. <https://www.usgs.gov/core-science-systems/crc/gstr>

Environmental Health

The Toxic Substances Hydrology and Contaminant Biology Programs work collaboratively to assess and differentiate the environmental contaminant and pathogen exposures that cause actual health risks versus those that are only perceived. Specialized teams of hydrologists, geologists, chemists, biologists, and geographers work together in the field and laboratories across the United States.

Contaminant Biology Program scientists develop and apply advanced laboratory methods, field investigations, and modeling capabilities to understand toxicity and effects of environmental contaminant exposure. They are integrated with Toxic Substances Hydrology Program Scientists who determine sources, movement, and exposure pathways of contaminants in the environment. <https://www.usgs.gov/environmental-health/contaminant-biology-program>

Toxic Substances Hydrology Program scientists develop and apply advanced analytical methods, field investigations, laboratory studies, and modeling capabilities to understand sources, movement, and exposure pathways of chemical and microbial contaminants in the environment. They are integrated with Contaminant Biology Program Scientists who then determine the toxicity and effects of contaminants. <https://www.usgs.gov/environmental-health/toxic-substances-hydrology-program>

Land Resources Mission Area (LRMA)

Land Resources programs deliver the data and products needed to provide a scientific foundation for decisions concerning the management of and investments in natural and built landscapes, and how they might be adapted to secure the Nation's interests. This includes providing continued access to high-quality remote sensing data related to risk-management decisions for the Nation.

National Land Imaging Program (NLI) program delivers remote sensing observation capacity, data, and research to inform land and resource managers around the Country while improving understanding of how landscapes and associated natural resources are changing at global and regional scales. It directly and in coordination with operators of other satellites and Earth-imaging platforms, collects, archives, processes and distributes a broad array of data from near-Earth and satellite-based remote sensing platforms. <https://www.usgs.gov/land-resources/national-land-imaging-program>

Land Change Science Program Changes in the environment, land use, and climate can have significant impacts on our Nation's economy, natural resources, infrastructure, and water, food, and energy security. To strengthen our Nation's ability to respond and adapt to these stressors, the USGS Land Change Science Program conducts research to improve understanding of rates, causes, and consequences of climate and land use change. <https://www.usgs.gov/land-resources/land-change-science-program>

Climate Adaptation Science Centers (CASCs) work with natural and cultural resource managers to gather the scientific information and build the tools needed to help fish, wildlife and ecosystems adapt to the impacts of climate change. The domain of the CASC network covers the entire continental U.S., Alaska, Hawai'i, the U.S. Affiliated Pacific Islands, and the U.S. Caribbean. <https://www.usgs.gov/land-resources/climate-adaptation-science-centers>

Natural Hazards

Every year in the United States, natural hazards threaten lives and livelihoods and result in billions of dollars in damage. We work with many partners to monitor, assess, and conduct targeted research on a wide range of natural hazards so that policymakers and the public have the understanding they need to enhance preparedness, response, and resilience.

Earthquake Hazards Program The USGS monitors and reports on earthquakes, assesses earthquake impacts and hazards, and conducts targeted research on the causes and effects of earthquakes. We undertake these activities as part of the larger National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP), a four-agency partnership established by Congress. <https://www.usgs.gov/natural-hazards/earthquake-hazards>

Volcano Hazards Program There are 169 potentially active volcanoes in the U.S. The mission of the USGS Volcano Hazards Program is to enhance public safety and minimize social and economic disruption from volcanic unrest and eruption. We accomplish this by delivering effective forecasts, warnings, and information about volcano hazards based on scientific understanding of volcanic processes. <https://www.usgs.gov/natural-hazards/volcano-hazards>

Landslides Hazards Program The primary objective of the National Landslide Hazards Program is to reduce long-term losses from landslide hazards by improving our understanding of the causes of ground failure and suggesting mitigation strategies. <https://www.usgs.gov/natural-hazards/landslide-hazards>

Global Seismographic Network (GSN) is a permanent digital network of state-of-the-art seismological and geophysical sensors connected by a telecommunications network. The GSN provides, worldwide monitoring of the Earth, with over 150 modern seismic stations distributed globally. https://www.usgs.gov/natural-hazards/earthquake-hazards/gsn-global-seismographic-network?qt-science_support_page_related_con=4#qt-science_support_page_related_con

Geomagnetism Program monitors the Earth's magnetic field. Using ground-based observatories, we provide continuous records of magnetic field variations; disseminate magnetic data to various governmental, academic, and private institutions; and conduct research into the nature of geomagnetic variations for purposes of scientific understanding and hazard mitigation. <https://www.usgs.gov/natural-hazards/geomagnetism>

Coastal/Marine Hazards and Resources Program scientists and staff study coastal and ocean resources and processes from shorelines and estuaries to the continental shelf and deep sea. <https://www.usgs.gov/natural-hazards/coastal-marine-hazards-and-resources>

Water Resources

Water information is fundamental to national and local economic well-being, protection of life and property, and effective management of the Nation's water resources. The USGS works with partners to monitor, assess, conduct targeted research, and deliver information on a wide range of water resources and conditions including streamflow, groundwater, water quality, and water use and availability.

Water Availability and Use Science Program (WAUSP) assists in the determination of water that is available for human and ecological uses, now and in the future. This includes evaluating the quantity and quality of water, identifying long-term trends in water availability, and developing an improved ability to forecast water availability for economic, energy production, and environmental uses. <https://www.usgs.gov/water-resources/water-availability-and-use-science-program>

Groundwater and Streamflow Information Program (GWSIP) serves as the national source of impartial, timely, rigorous, and relevant data for short- and long-term water decisions by stakeholders across the United States. In 2018, the USGS began piloting the Nation's next-generation integrated water observing system that will provide high-fidelity, real-time data on water quantity and quality. <https://www.usgs.gov/water-resources/groundwater-and-streamflow-information>

National Water Quality Program (NWQP) provides an understanding of water-quality conditions; whether conditions are getting better or worse over time; and how natural features and human activities affect those conditions. <https://www.usgs.gov/water-resources/national-water-quality-program>

Water Resources Research Act Program (WRRRA) is a Federal-State partnership that plans, facilitates, and conducts research that helps resolve State and regional water problems; promotes technology transfer; promotes dissemination and application of research; trains scientists through participation in research; and awards competitive grants under the Water Resources Research Act. <https://www.usgs.gov/water-resources/water-resources-research-act-program>

The Science Support Activity provides the functions that make it possible to conduct USGS science. The Science Support Activity provides business and information services and systems including acquisitions and grants; finance; internal controls; communications; budget; monitoring and evaluation of science quality and integrity; training and employee development; information assurance; Information Management and Technology (IMT) services; and human capital, each of which are crucial to conducting quality science. Science Support also includes the executive leadership and management providing guidance, direction, and oversight for all USGS science activities.

Administration and Management

The Administration and Management subactivity provides bureau-wide leadership and direction; establishes organizational vision, mission, goals, and scientific priorities; develops and enforces standards for scientific rigor and integrity; plans, obtains, and manages necessary resources, including people, budget authority, facilities, and equipment; resource management systems; implements statutory and regulatory requirements and monitors and enforces compliance; and communicates the USGS mission and science to Congress and the public. Administration and Management consists of the following areas:

The USGS **Office of the Director** performs chief executive officer and chief operating officer responsibilities.

The **Regional Directors** establishes program direction and goals for their respective regions, which include science centers, and serve as science advisors to the Director.

The Office of Budget, Planning, and Integration (BPI) secures funding resources needed for the USGS to perform its mission goals, facilitates information sharing internally and externally, provides oversight of the internal controls process and the USGS Working Capital Fund, and provides in-depth analysis of USGS goals, strategies, performance, and budget data for the USGS to understand, anticipate, and respond to the changing demands resulting from public policy decisions and science needs.

The Office of Communications and Publishing (OCAP) guides and conducts public affairs, legislative relations, customer service, internal communications, external stakeholder, and provides publishing and web development services. The Science Publishing Network (SPN) provides services including technical writing, editing, design, and illustration to prepare scientific reports and maps for publication. These publications are widely used across the Nation by members of Congress and their staff, other natural resource planners and managers, recreational hunters and hikers, emergency response officials, and the media.

The Office of Science Quality and Integrity (OSQI) establishes and implements bureau-wide standards for scientific integrity and quality and administers offices and programs for ethics; fundamental science practices (FSP); research evaluation, review, and recognition; and tribal relations, including the USGS Office of Ethics, the Youth and Education in

Science program, the Mendenhall Postdoctoral Fellowships, the Research Grade Evaluation (RGE) and Equipment Development Grade Evaluation (EDGE) program, the Scientist Emeritus program, and the Office of Tribal Relations.

The Office of International Programs (OIP) enhances the USGS scientific mission by providing opportunities for USGS scientists to interact with scientific partners abroad and extend research and investigations to other countries. The OIP supports the development of, and conducts a broad spectrum of international activities involving scientific cooperation and assistance in geological, hydrological, biological, and geospatial research and scientific investigations. The OIP provides guidance and representation to domestic and international agencies and organizations in matters pertaining to international scientific activities of the USGS.

The Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity (DEO) develops policies and procedures, administers the federally mandated EEO and Diversity related programs, facilitates early resolution of discrimination complaints, and develops guidelines to ensure proper implementation of Equal Opportunity laws and regulations. DEO staff chair the USGS Diversity Council, coordinate outreach and recruitment events focused on minorities with the various mission areas, and develop and submit required/mandatory reporting on EEO Complaints and Diversity. The office is also responsible for ensuring the USGS provides reasonable accommodations to employees/applicants with disabilities.

The Office of Administration (OA) establishes policies, manages, coordinates, provides oversight, and conducts operations in the areas of accounting and fiscal services, general services, security, safety and occupational health, acquisitions and grants, internal controls, technology transfer, facilities and property, environmental protection, human capital programs, including human resources, employee and organizational development. The Associate Director is the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Designated Agency Safety and Health Official (DASHO). The following offices reside within the Office of Administration:

- **The Office of Acquisition and Grants (OAG)** is responsible for award and administration of acquisition and financial assistance actions; management of the bureau charge card program; acquisition and financial assistance policy and compliance; and contracting officer/contracting officer representative training, certification, maintenance and monitoring.
- **The Office of Accounting and Financial Management (OAFM)** provides bureau-wide financial management and administrative support for payments, collections, and travel; technical support and management control for the users of the Financial and Business Management System (FBMS) and Budget and Science Information System Plus (BASIS+); oversight and monitoring of fiscal programs, financial reporting; and internal control reviews.
- **The Office of Human Capital (OHC)** is responsible for all Human Resources (HR) support functions including classification, staffing, employment and recruitment, benefits and labor relations. OHC provides Collaborative Action and Dispute Resolution (CADR) services, works on policy and special projects, provides guidance on executive resources, strategic initiatives and accountability, organizational development facilitation for healthy teams and offices, and supports employee development opportunities including leadership and supervisory development, formal mentoring, and the facilitation of science and technical training.
- **The Office of Management Services (OMS)** includes five branches and one program office. The OMS is responsible for the development and implementation of bureau-wide policies, procedures, programs, and systems for space facilities, safety, environmental, security, transportation, supplies, mail, property, energy conservation, and other general services. The OMS provides operational support services for all identified program areas to all USGS staff and office locations.
- **The Office of Policy and Analysis (OPA)** manages the bureau's directives systems including the Survey Manual; implements the bureau's Technology Transfer Program, including review and approval of Cooperative Research and Development Agreements (CRADAs); and manages the bureau's patents and licensing program. OPA is also responsible for reviewing non-standard agreements and providing USGS headquarters and field offices with policy guidance, analysis and clarification to support decision-making by management and offices.

Office of Enterprise Information

The Office of Enterprise Information is funded through the Information Services subactivity under Science Support and provides the critical Information Management and Technology (IMT) foundation for the USGS science mission by implementing advances in IMT and using them to facilitate research, data gathering, analysis and modeling, scientific collaboration, knowledge management, and work processes. The following offices reside within the Office of Enterprise Information:

- **Enterprise Infrastructure** provides fully integrated and secure, end-to-end telecommunications services for wide area and local area networking, wireless, voice, video, and radio to the USGS; provides both enterprise level and local USGS Science Center support via service level agreements for a variety of IT services including data storage solutions, SharePoint development and maintenance, and web infrastructure; and provides cloud hosting services.
- **End User Services** provides Active Directory, configuration management and asset management services; manages the USGS Service Desk; provides desktop support at most major USGS locations, provides development and maintenance of administrative electronic forms and applications.
- **Information Security** assists the USGS science mission by protecting the integrity of information provided to mission functions of the USGS, partner organizations, and the public. Helps assure the integrity, availability, and confidentiality of the USGS scientific data by overseeing implementation of security controls and requirements balanced with science mission needs.
- **Information Management and Delivery** oversees USGS compliance with mandates defined by public law, the Office of Management and Budget, the National Archives and Records Administration, DOI and other official sources. Manages distribution of science and business partner products through the USGS Online Store. Also serves as the USGS contact for Freedom of Information Act, Federal records, and Section 508.
- **Chief Technology Office** provides strategic direction on IMT as well as coordination of enterprise activities across the Bureau, serves as liaison on mission requirements, service catalog, and service level agreements.

About You

Your Rights and Responsibilities

As an Employee of the Department of the Interior, you are expected to maintain especially high standards of honesty, integrity, impartiality, and conduct to ensure the proper performance of Government business and the continual trust and confidence of citizens in their Government. You are expected to comply with all Federal statutes, Executive Orders, Office of Government Ethics (OGE) regulations, Office of Personnel Management regulations, and Departmental regulations. Your conduct should reflect the qualities of courtesy, consideration, loyalty to the U.S., a deep sense of responsibility for the public trust, promptness in dealing with and serving the public, and a high standard of personal behavior, which will be a credit to the individual. These principles apply to official and private conduct which affects, in any way, your or the Department's ability to effectively accomplish the work of the Department.

Scientific Integrity

The USGS is dedicated to preserving the integrity of the scientific activities it conducts and that are conducted on its behalf. The USGS will not tolerate loss of integrity in the conducting of scientific activities, their use or communication of results. USGS Survey Manual chapter [SM 500.25](#) explains our scientific integrity policy, our scientific code of conduct, and procedures for reporting, investigating, and adjudicating allegations of scientific misconduct. Additional scientific integrity information, including the DOI, Departmental Manual (DM) chapter [305 DM 3](#) (Integrity of Scientific and Scholarly Activities) and, the DOI [Scientific Integrity Procedures Handbook](#) and its Appendices are at <https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/elips/documents/SCIENTIFIC%20INTEGRITY%20PROCEDURES%20HANDBOOK.pdf>.

Ethics and Personal Conduct

Public Service is a Public Trust

The USGS is rightfully proud of its reputation as a highly respected Government research and data gathering organization. A variety of statutory, regulatory, and policy requirements affect your conduct both at work and in outside activities.

Ethical behavior increases public confidence in the integrity of Federal employees. Ethical behavior is important in the USGS in order to:

- Maintain the credibility and objectivity of USGS science; and
- Ensure that USGS science is used to serve the whole public and not special interests.

Ethical requirements are governed by the USGS Organic Act, Federal criminal statutes, Federal regulations, Executive Orders, Office of Government Ethics (OGE) regulations, and DOI and USGS policies. Important information on ethics, such as the Ethics Guide for DOI Employees, the [Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch](#), criminal ethics statutes, the Financial Guide for USGS Employees, Ethics subject areas A-Z, and contact information for the Ethics Office is on the [Ethics Office website](#).

The Director and members of the USGS shall have no personal or private interests in the lands or mineral wealth of the region under survey, and shall execute no surveys or examinations for private parties or corporations (43 U.S.C. § 31(a), 43 U.S.C. § 20.401(b), and 5 C.F.R. § 3501.104).

USGS employees are prohibited from holding financial interests in the mineral wealth of the U.S. and from executing any surveys or examinations for private parties. Prohibited interests include stocks and bonds in oil, gas, and other mining companies that hold significant leases on Federal lands. Annually, the USGS publishes a list of prohibited financial holdings in a Financial Guide for USGS Employees. Additionally, the USGS Conflict of Interest Policy sets limits on the ability of

employees, their spouses, and minor children to have financial interests in entities engaged in mining activities on private land in the U.S.

To ensure that newly hired USGS employees do not hold financial interests that violate the USGS Organic Act or the USGS Conflict of Interest Policy, they must complete and file a USGS Employee Financial Interest Certification (USGS Form 9-1909) before they start work. By signing the Form 9-1909, employees certify their awareness that employment with the USGS establishes certain restrictions on their personal financial holdings as well as those of their spouse and minor children. Employees must acknowledge they understand that the USGS Organic Act prohibits their holding any financial interest (direct or indirect) in oil, gas or mining activities on Federal lands and that the USGS Conflict of Interest Policy sets certain “limited amounts” of financial interests they may hold in oil, gas, or mining activities on private lands in the U.S. The form explains that the Financial Guide for USGS Employees contains specific, by-name information on companies, stocks and mutual funds that employees, their spouses and dependent children are absolutely prohibited from owning, as well as those which may be owned in only limited amounts. On the form, employees also certify they are in compliance with the USGS Organic Act and the USGS Conflict of Interest Policy as explained in the Financial Guide for USGS Employees.

USGS employees are also required to obtain Ethics Office approval via Form 9-1510 to engage in outside work or activities that are related to their USGS job duties or the USGS mission.

General Principles of Ethical Conduct

DO

- Place loyalty to the Constitution, the laws, and ethical principles above private gain
- Act impartially to all groups, persons, and organizations
- Give an honest effort in the performance of your duties
- Protect and conserve federal property
- Disclose fraud, waste, and abuse, and corruption to appropriate authorities
- Fulfill in good faith your obligations as citizens, and pay your Federal, State, and local taxes
- Comply with all laws providing equal opportunity to all persons, regardless of their race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age (40+), or disability

DON'T

- Use public office for private gain (for yourself or for people or entities whose interests are imputed to you)
- Use nonpublic information to benefit yourself or anyone else
- Solicit or accept gifts from persons or parties that do business with or seek official action from DOI or USGS (unless permitted by a regulatory exception listed in the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch, 5 C.F.R. 2635)
- Use Federal property for unauthorized purposes
- Make unauthorized commitments or promises that bind the Government
- Take jobs or hold financial interests that conflict with your Government responsibilities
- Take actions that give the appearance that they are illegal or unethical

Diversity and Equal Opportunity (DEO)

The Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity (DEO) manages the Equal Opportunity (EO) Program for the USGS in compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and amended in 1991, primarily Titles VI and VII; the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967; the Equal Pay Act of 1963; the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, specifically Sections 501, 504, and 508; numerous Executive Orders; DOI, Department of Justice, and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) directives; minority higher education requirements; and other related statutes, regulations, orders, and court decisions.

DEO's Purpose:

- Ensure a discrimination-free workplace.
- Ensure that all employees and applicants are provided a full and fair opportunity to contribute to the fullest extent of their abilities in pursuing a career at USGS.
- Establish, develop, implement, oversee, and evaluate USGS policies, principles, and practices aimed at promoting equal opportunity in all bureau activities and programs.

Equal Opportunity – It's the Law!!

- Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended in 1972
- Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, as amended
- Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1992 to incorporate the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- Civil Rights Act of 1991

DEO's Responsibilities:

- Developing USGS policies, programs, and guidelines to ensure proper implementation of EO laws and regulations.
- Providing guidance and assistance on EO related matters to managers, supervisors, and employees.
- Developing and delivering EO-related training for managers, supervisors and employees.
- Managing the discrimination complaints programs, including providing equal employment opportunity counseling and mediation, investigating complaints of discrimination, ensuring implementation of settlement agreements, tracking complaints activities, reviewing reports of investigation for completeness, and coordinating hearings and appeals with DOI, EEOC and the Office of the Solicitor.
- Developing and monitoring implementation of the Affirmative Employment Plans (AEP) for Women, Minorities, and People with Disabilities.
- Developing and managing USGS' Special Emphasis Programs, including Federal Women's Program, Hispanic Employment Program, and African American Employment Program.
- Developing and managing the Disability Program, including advising, guiding, monitoring, implementing, and evaluating requirements for and the effectiveness of reasonable accommodations, and conducting accessibility reviews of USGS facilities, as well as facilities that receive USGS financial assistance.
- Managing minority and disability outreach efforts and coordinating partnerships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and other higher educational institutions with high concentrations of minorities, women, and people with disabilities.

- Collecting, analyzing, and disseminating workforce data, conducting analysis of workforce trends, issuing reports on workforce-related data, including AEP, diversity, and complaints trends, and other types of EO-related information.
- Developing and managing the bureau's Civil Rights program to ensure that all USGS funds are used internally or externally in a discrimination-free manner.

Managing Cultural Diversity

Managing diversity encourages managers to enable, empower, and influence employees to mitigate challenges and maximize opportunities to create a harmonious and productive working environment in which each employee may achieve his or her full potential. Managing diversity is inclusive, addresses workplace behaviors, understand differences, and focuses on an organization's culture and climate. Diversity allows organizations to adapt to future change. Proactively managing diversity enhances our understanding of the needs of our employees and customers so our employees have a better capacity to perform their jobs, reach professional goals, and achieve the USGS mission.

Role of Supervisors and Managers in a Diverse Work Environment

In January of 2005, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) published a report (GAO-05-90) titled Diversity Management - Expert Identified Leading Practices and Agency Examples (<https://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0590.pdf>). According to the report, "A high-performance organization relies on a dynamic workforce with the requisite talents, multidisciplinary knowledge, and up-to-date skills to ensure that it is equipped to accomplish its goals. Such organizations typically (1) foster a work environment in which people are enabled and motivated to contribute to mission accomplishment and (2) provide both accountability and fairness for all employees. To accomplish these objectives, high-performance organizations are inclusive, drawing on the strengths of employees at all levels and all backgrounds - an approach consistent with diversity management." Leveraging diversity makes the USGS a more effective organization by helping us attract and retain a highly skilled workforce.

Role of Employees in a Diverse Work Environment

- Assist in maintaining an environment in which diversity is regarded as an ASSET.
- Attend diversity training.
- Offer different approaches, wherever applicable, to accomplishing work tasks.
- Listen to coworkers' ideas and concepts, especially when they are different than your own.
- Recognize that differences are only that...*different* and avoid making value judgments regarding them.

Prohibited Discrimination Factors

- **Age:** Age discrimination involves treating someone (an applicant or employee) less favorably because of their age. The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) forbids age discrimination against people who are age 40 or older. It does not protect workers under the age of 40, although some states do have laws that protect younger workers from age discrimination. It is not illegal for an employer or other covered entity to favor an older worker over a younger one, even if both workers are age 40 or older. Discrimination can occur when the victim and the person who inflicted the discrimination are both over 40.
- **Disability:** Disability discrimination occurs when an employer or other entity covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, or the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, treats a qualified individual with a disability who is an employee or applicant unfavorably because he or she has a disability. Disability discrimination also occurs when a covered employer or other entity treats an applicant or employee less favorably because she has a

history of a disability (such as cancer that is controlled or in remission) or because she is believed to have a physical or mental impairment that is not transitory (lasting or expected to last six months or less) and minor (even if she does not have such an impairment).

- **Race/Color:** Race/color discrimination also can involve treating someone unfavorably because the person is married to (or associated with) a person of a certain race or color or because of a person's connection with a race-based organization or group, or an organization or group that is generally associated with people of a certain color; for example, skin color, or certain facial features. Color discrimination involves treating someone unfavorably because of skin color complexion. Discrimination can occur when the victim and the person who inflicted the discrimination are the same race or color.
- **Religion:** Religious discrimination involves treating a person (an applicant or employee) unfavorably because of his or her religious beliefs. The law protects not only people who belong to traditional, organized religions, such as Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism, but also others who have sincerely held religious, ethical, or moral beliefs. Religious discrimination can also involve treating someone differently because that person is married to (or associated with) an individual of a particular religion or because of his or her connection with a religious organization or group.
- **Sex:** Sex discrimination involves treating someone (an applicant or employee) unfavorably because of that person's sex. Sex discrimination also can involve treating someone less favorably because of his or her connection with an organization or group that is generally associated with people of a certain sex.
- **National Origin:** National origin discrimination involves treating people (applicants or employees) unfavorably because they are from a particular country or part of the world, because of ethnicity or accent, or because they appear to be of a certain ethnic background (even if they are not). This protection extends to individuals because they are married to (or associated with) a person of a certain national origin.
- **Genetic Information (GINA):** The law forbids discrimination on the basis of genetic information when it comes to any aspect of employment, including hiring, firing, pay, job assignments, promotions, layoffs, training, fringe benefits, or any other term or condition of employment. An employer may never use genetic information to make an employment decision because genetic information is not relevant to an individual's current ability to work.
- **Retaliation:** It is illegal to fire, demote, harass, or otherwise "retaliate" against people (applicants or employees) because they filed a charge of discrimination, because they complained to their employer or other covered entity about discrimination on the job, or because they participated in an employment discrimination proceeding (such as an investigation or lawsuit). For example, it is illegal for an employer to refuse to promote an employee because she filed a charge of discrimination with the EEOC, even if EEOC later determined no discrimination occurred.
- **Harassment:** It is unlawful to harass a person (an applicant or employee) on the basis of any protected category. Harassment can include "sexual harassment" or unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature. Harassment does not have to be of a sexual nature, however, and can include offensive remarks about a person's sex. For example, it is illegal to harass a woman by making offensive comments about women in general. Both victim and the harasser can be either a woman or a man, and the victim and harasser can be the same sex. Although the law doesn't prohibit simple teasing, offhand comments, or isolated incidents that are not very serious, harassment is illegal when it is so frequent or severe that it creates a hostile or offensive work environment or when it results in an adverse employment decision (such as the victim being fired or demoted). The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or someone who is not an employee of the employer, such as a client or customer.

Informal Discrimination Resolution

What You Must Do:

If you believe you have been discriminated against, you must first contact an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) counselor to try to resolve the matter informally. EEO Counseling provides channels of communication through which you may raise questions, discuss allegations, get timely information, and seek solutions. You have 45 calendar days following an alleged discriminatory action or, if the matter concerns a personnel action, from the effective date of the action to contact an EEO Counselor.

What EEO Counselors Do:

Record the issues (actions the agency has taken that cause you to believe you have been discriminated against) and the basis (race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age (40+), sexual orientation, disability (physical or mental), GINA, or reprisal) of the matter.

An EEO Counselor Will:

- Conduct an inquiry within the 30 calendar days following the initial interview.
- Seek a resolution acceptable to both, you and management.
- Document the resolution or advise you of your right to file a formal discrimination complaint.

What EEO Counselors Do Not Do:

- Act as advocates either for you or for management.
- Determine if discrimination has occurred.

When Counseling Doesn't Resolve the Matter

If the problem has not been resolved by the end of the counseling period, the Counselor must hold a final interview with you and issue a Notice of Final Interview (NOFI). The Notice provides information on how to file a formal complaint along with the names and addresses of persons authorized to receive complaints. You then have 15 days to file a written formal complaint with the appropriate official. It is in everyone's best interest to try and reach a resolution informally as issues can be resolved at the lowest level possible, there isn't an admission of guilt, it restores morale and productivity, and saves resources.

Formal Discrimination Resolution

In order to file a formal complaint, the employee or applicant for employment must: (1) have contacted an EEO Counselor prior to filing formal; (2) sign and date the Notice of Final Interview, and return it to the Departmental or bureau EEO Office; and (3) sign and file a formal written complaint, using Form DI-1892, within 15 days of receiving the NOFI. The complainant or their authorized attorney must sign the formal complaint.

Formal EEO complaints must be filed in writing with the Director, Office of Civil Rights, DOI; or the Chief, Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO), USGS National Center. Formal complaints can also be filed with the Office of the Secretary of the Interior. When the USGS receives a properly filed formal complaint of discrimination, it must acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing and determine which claims(s) shall be accepted or dismissed based on the requirements set forth in 29 CFR 1614. The merits of the case (whether discrimination occurred) are not considered when the 'accept/dismiss' determination is made. The OEO must ensure that a thorough and unbiased investigation of the accepted claim(s) of discrimination is completed within 180 days from the filing date of the formal complaint. The complainant will be notified when the investigation has been completed. A Report of Investigation (ROI) will be issued to the complainant with a notice

that the complainant may, within 30 days of receipt of the investigative report, request a hearing before an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) Administrative Judge, or a Final Agency Decision (FAD) from the DOI Office of Civil Rights. If the complainant does not make a selection, the DOI Office of Civil Rights will issue a FAD.

If a complainant does not agree with the FAD issued by the Departmental Office of Civil Rights, the complainant may appeal said decision to the Office of Federal Operations at the EEOC. This administrative appeal must be filed within 30 days of receipt of the FAD. An appellate review by the Office of Federal Operations of the Final Agency Decision will be conducted and a final decision rendered. If the complainant disagrees with the final administrative appeal decision, the complainant may then file a civil action in Federal District Court.

Reasonable Accommodation for Individuals with Disabilities

Reasonable accommodation is a logical change or adjustment to a job or worksite that makes it possible for qualified employees with disabilities to perform the essential functions of the position in question. DOI bureaus/offices are required to make reasonable accommodation for a qualified individual with a disability unless it can be demonstrated that the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the operations of the DOI. Such a determination must be made on an individual basis. Alternatives will be explored to determine if the accommodation is most effective for both the individual with the disability and the bureau/office.

The DOI Departmental Manual (373 DM 15) specifies the purpose, authorities, policy, scope, definitions, responsibilities, guidelines, and other important information about reasonable accommodation for individuals with disabilities.

The two categories of reasonable accommodation are (1) modifications or adjustments to a job application process to permit an individual with a disability to be considered for a job, and (2) modifications or adjustments that enable employees with disabilities to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment. A request for accommodation is a verbal or written statement to the supervisor that identifies the employee's needs for an adjustment or a change at work or in the application process for a reason related to a medical condition.

Anti-Harassment

The Department of the Interior (DOI) and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) are committed to creating and maintaining a work environment where all employees have a fair and equal opportunity to succeed. Workplace harassment is a serious issue that prevents any organization from achieving its goals. The DOI and USGS are committed to providing a work environment free of discrimination and harassment based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy and gender identity), sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, genetic information (including family medical history), status as a parent, marital status, or political affiliation, and free from illegal retaliation. The DOI and USGS will not tolerate offensive sexual or non-sexual harassing behavior against any employee, intern, volunteer, contractor or other non-Federal employee, visitor, or other member of the public. The Department and the Bureau also will not tolerate adverse treatment of employees because they report harassing misconduct or provide information related to such complaints.

The USGS cannot correct harassing misconduct if a supervisor or management official is not aware of it. Employees are expected to report any incidents of harassment they know of or have witnessed to a supervisor or other management official, their servicing Employee Relations Specialist, the USGS Anti-Harassment Program Manager, or the DOI Office of Inspector General. Employees may also contact the USGS Office of Diversity and Employment Opportunity or an EEO Counselor directly, if they believe they have experienced discriminatory harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, genetic information, disability or age (over 40), and/or reprisal. Any employee who has been subjected to harassing misconduct is encouraged to inform the person(s) responsible for the misconduct that it is unwelcome and offensive, and request that it cease. If the misconduct continues, is severe, or if the employee is uncomfortable addressing the responsible person(s) about the misconduct, the employee is encouraged to report the matter

to one of the offices/officials identified above. Both the DOI policy on the Prevention and Elimination of Harassing Conduct ([Personnel Bulletin No. 18-01](#)), and the USGS Anti-Harassment Policy, [Survey Manual Chapter 370.734.1](#), detail how to report and respond to allegation of harassment.

This topic and the processes for addressing all forms of harassment, including discriminatory harassment, can be complex and confusing at times. To assist employees, the USGS has developed a website that serves as a single source for information regarding the Anti-Harassment Program (<https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/human-capital/anti-harassment-program>). Employee can also find additional information regarding the discrimination complaints process at <https://internal.usgs.gov/ops/eeo/>

The Department of the Interior's Equal Opportunity and Workplace Conduct website provides information outlining the Department's efforts related to discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, as well as providing resources to any employee or manager who has experienced, witnessed, or been made aware of harassing behavior in the workplace.

For more information regarding the Anti-Harassment Policy and resources, visit the Equal Opportunity and Workplace Conduct website at: <https://www.doi.gov/employees/anti-harassment>

Collaborative Action and Dispute Resolution (CADR)

The CADR Office offers impartial and confidential assistance to USGS employees seeking to improve and/or resolve workplace issues and concerns. Services are available for all USGS employees and managers and include confidential consultation, mediation, facilitation, conflict management for teams, conflict coaching, climate assessment, cooperative problem solving (self-help), reconciliation, and training and workshops. Learn more at:

<https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/human-capital/cadr-tools-resources>

Alternative Dispute Procedures

Alternative dispute procedures include using the CORE (Conflict Resolution) Program. CORE can assist with any workplace conflict. Please visit the Workplace CONflict RESolution (CORE) PLUS Program page to learn about services offered:

<https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/human-capital/workplace-conflict-resolution-core-plus-program-0>

Union Representation

Employees have the right to form, join, or assist a union or to refrain from doing so. Employees shall be free to exercise this right without fear of penalty or reprisal and shall be protected in exercising this right. Employees have the right to

- Act as a union representative, and in that capacity, to present union views to agency management, Congress, or other authorities.
- Negotiate conditions of employment through their chosen representative.
- Decide whether to be a union member, and if a union member, how actively engaged.

Merit System

The merit system is the process of promoting and hiring government employees based on their ability to perform a job, rather than on their political connections or other non-merit factors. The merit system principles are law. They guide all Federal government human-resource activities and protect your rights and outline your responsibilities as a Federal employee.

Merit System Principles

- Recruitment should be from qualified individuals from appropriate sources in an endeavor to achieve a workforce composed of all segments of society, and selection and advancement should be determined solely on the basis of relative ability, knowledge, and skills, after fair and open competition, which ensures that all receive equal opportunity.
- All employees and applicants for employment should receive fair and equitable treatment in all aspects of personnel management without regard to political affiliation, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age (40+), or disability (physical or mental) handicapping condition, and with proper regard for their privacy and constitutional rights.
- Equal pay should be provided for work of equal value, with appropriate consideration of both national and local rates paid by employers in the private sector, and appropriate incentives and recognition should be provided for excellence in performance.
- All employees should maintain high standards of integrity, conduct, and concern for the public interest.
- The Federal workforce should be used efficiently and effectively.
- Employees should be retained on the basis of adequacy of their performance, inadequate performance should be corrected, and employees should be separated who cannot or will not improve their performance to meet required standards.
- Employees should be provided effective education and training in cases in which such education and training would result in better organizational and individual performance.
- Employees should be
 - protected against arbitrary action, personal favoritism, or coercion for partisan political purposes, and
 - prohibited from using their official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the result of an election or a nomination for election.
- Employees should be protected against reprisal for the lawful disclosure of information which the employees reasonably believe evidences:
 - a violation of any law, rule, or regulation, or
 - mismanagement, a gross waste of funds, an abuse of authority, or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety.

As a Federal employee, you are responsible for the following:

- Maintaining standards of integrity, conduct, and concern for the public interest.
- Using the Federal workforce efficiently and effectively.
- Not using your official authority in the USGS to influence an individual's vote in any election

Your Communications

The bureau's all-employee communication channels are designed to ensure that you have the information and knowledge you need as an employee at the USGS.

There are three primary ways you will receive communications from senior leaders and offices:

- **The Bureau's intranet:** [@theCore](#)
- **The weekly NeedToKnow (NTK) digest**
- **All employee meetings such as town hall events and informal information exchanges**

[@theCore](#)

@theCore is your one-stop shop for accessing resources, websites, and messages from senior leaders. Everything found on @theCore will be relevant to all-employees, regardless of your location or position.

Accessing @theCore

You can access @theCore at the URL AtTheCore.usgs.gov. Upon your first visit to the site, you will be prompted to log in with your Active Directory credentials. Make sure that your Personal Identity Verification (PIV) card is inserted into your computer so that the system recognizes you. After this initial sign-in, the site will automatically remember you—you will not have to log in again if you are using your work computer. If you receive an “access forbidden” error message when you try to access the site, make sure you are connected to the USGS Network, either by an ethernet connection or by signing into Pulse Secure when using Wi-Fi.

Navigation

The site-wide main menu at the top of each page gives you easy access to messages from leadership, information about the various offices in our organization, hyperlinks to popular tools and tasks, the A-Z Index, your profile, and the search bar.

Homepage

The @theCore homepage features a carousel slider that is regularly updated to highlight important, timely information. The homepage also shows the five most recent messages from leadership, eight of the most frequently used services under the “I want to...” section, the All-Employee Calendar, and a section with links to pages by which employees can “Get Engaged.” You can always get back to the homepage by clicking on the USGS identifier or @theCore logo in the top left of every page.

A-Z Index

The A-Z Index is accessible via the main navigation menu and the “I want to...” section on the homepage. This index is an exhaustive list where you can find links to resources, forms, office websites, and more. The A-Z Index is a great starting place to find what you are looking for.

Messages from Leadership

When you click on “From Leadership” in the main menu, you will be brought to a page with four tabs in a side menu for the various kinds of messages from USGS senior leaders: Leaders Blog posts, All-employee Memos, All-employee Announcements, and the Director's Staff Meeting notes.

[Leaders Blog posts](#) are the most frequent way by which senior leaders, and in particular the Director and Deputy Director, communicate with all employees. These posts range in topics, including bureau priorities, congressional outreach, and budget updates.

[All-employee Memos](#) are formal messages from various USGS offices or leaders about policy-related or overarching topics. All-employee emails are posted as All-employee Memos.

[All-employee Announcements](#) are messages from various USGS offices or leaders about upcoming events, trainings, and initiatives. Announcements range from weekly updates from the Congressional Affairs team, special posts recognizing employee accomplishments called Recognition Round-Ups, and more.

Each office has an [@theCore Liaison](#) who publishes All-employee Memos and Announcements directly to @theCore.

[Notes from the Director's monthly staff meeting](#) with the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) are published to @theCore the week following the meeting. These notes give employees the opportunity to read about what is happening across the bureau and the decisions leaders are making.

Posts from Employees

The final type of all-employee message found on @theCore is on the Science Spotlights Blog. You can access the Science Spotlights Blog via the “Get Engaged” section of the homepage or via the A-Z Index. These informal accounts of current projects or recently completed work can be authored by any USGS employee with supervisory approval. You can submit a post by clicking on the “Submit a Spotlight” tab on the side menu.

All-employee Calendar

The All-Employee Calendar is accessible via the @theCore homepage, which features a thumbnail image of the calendar that links to the full calendar. Everything on the calendar will be relevant to all-employees. Items include town halls, webinars, mandatory deadlines, and federal holidays. By clicking on one of the events, you can view more details or copy the event to your personal Bison Connect calendar.

@theCore Profiles

Your personal @theCore Profile keeps track of your interactions with the site. Profiles are accessible through the main navigation menu and the homepage. You can populate your profile with your job title, address, and picture. Your picture and a link to your profile will accompany any comments you leave and any Science Spotlight Blog posts you author. While these profile pages are internal-only, you can choose to include on your profile a link to your public [USGS Staff Profile](#). Learn how to populate your @theCore Profile [here](#).

The NeedToKnow (NTK) Digest

The NeedToKnow digest captures all the information—Leaders Blog posts, All-employee Memos, All-employee Announcements, and more—published on @theCore over the course of the previous week and puts that content directly in your email inbox in an easy to read format. **By browsing the NTK each week, you can be assured that you are not missing any important information or messages from leaders.**

There are a few sections of the NTK that feature content that does not come from @theCore. For example, each week the NTK highlights the most recent job and detail postings on the bureau's Shared Workforce Ad Portal (SWAP). The NTK also highlights the upcoming week's webinars, which are located on the All-Employee Calendar, and features scientists and support staff from various centers through the Social Corner.

You will receive the NTK digest on Mondays around 5pm ET. The email is sent from announcements@usgs.gov. You can view the [NTK Archive](#) here or search your inbox to see NTK emails you have already received.

Town Halls

Town halls are typically-focused all-employee events that are usually hosted by the Director, Deputy Director, and relevant subject matter experts. The Director's Office hosts multiple town halls each year, which are broadcasted to employees across the bureau via a live video and sound feed. A portion of every town hall is dedicated to questions and answers for employees who are in the room and those attending remotely.

You will be informed of upcoming town halls via an All-employee Announcement on @theCore, which will be included in the NeedToKnow (NTK) digest in the weeks leading up to the event. A calendar invite to the town hall will also be placed automatically on your Bison Connect calendar. Attendance at town hall events is voluntary.

Town halls are recorded and the recordings are posted on @theCore in the days following the event. You can view current and past [town hall pages](#) on @theCore via the link in the "Get Engaged" section of the @theCore homepage.

In addition to town halls, senior leaders periodically host informal question and answer (Q&A) sessions in person and online. These sessions have no set agendas, and are designed to give employees the opportunity to interact with senior leaders and ask questions that are on their minds.

Giving Feedback

USGS Leadership has prioritized fostering a two-way dialogue with employees. As such, there are a number of ways by which you can engage in communications. Messages in the From Leadership section of @theCore have commenting features you can use to ask follow up questions or offer your perspective on the topic at hand.

Additionally, most pages on @theCore have a "Was this helpful?" question at the bottom of the page. This one-question poll is an easy way to give your feedback on the content being presented to you.

You can also "like" other employee's comments on @theCore, or write your own Science Spotlights Blog post, which will be included in the NeedToKnow (NTK) digest and seen by your USGS colleagues.

Director Reilly established the email address ContactJim@usgs.gov so that employees can send him their thoughts and suggestions. He reviews these employee messages to understand what issues are important to employees and where he should focus his communication efforts.

Finally, you can email the [Internal Communications Team](#), which manages the bureau's all-employee communications effort, with any questions, concerns, or comments.

Communicating our Science

In order to fulfill our Mission - Serving the Nation by providing reliable scientific information to describe and understand the Earth; minimize loss of life and property from natural disasters; manage water, biological, energy, and mineral resources; and enhance and protect our quality of life.

We must communicate our science. There are several ways we do this. The USGS provides scientific information intended to help educate the public about natural resources, natural hazards, geospatial data, and issues that affect our quality of life. This information is provided to the public through web pages, CD-ROMs, USGS Reports, Data Reports, presentations, podcasts, RSS Feeds, presentations, and more!

Social Media

The USGS has a strong presence on Social Media sites. We have accounts on Twitter, Flickr, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and various podcasts.

USGS and Science Education

The USGS and Science Education web page is an excellent resource for the public and USGS employees. This page has links to online lectures, lessons and activities for community outreach, and more. <https://education.usgs.gov>

USGS Newsroom

The USGS Newsroom web page hosts news releases, congressional items, and more.

Science Topics

The Science Topics web page lists priority science topics with related links to other web pages. Although not an exhaustive list of all USGS science topics, it does provide a thesaurus level categorization of related terms with definitions and links to science content for a structured approach to discovery.

Multimedia

The USGS Gallery web page offers links images, videos and animations, audio and podcasts.

Publications

Some of the best methods by which we communicate our science includes publications, journal articles, and maps. <http://pubs.er.usgs.gov/> The USGS also publishes: Formal Series Reports, Mineral Information, Biological Sciences, Topographic Maps, the National Map, and National Databases.

USGS Libraries Program

The USGS Library is one of the largest earth science libraries in the world! <http://library.usgs.gov/>

Natural Hazards

The Natural Hazards web page hosts links to real-time data and alerts, etc., for natural hazards, such as volcanoes, floods, fires, and more. http://www.usgs.gov/natural_hazards/

Your Career

Your Appointment

Federal agencies may use a variety of competitive and noncompetitive hiring authorities when bringing individuals into the Federal workforce. Appointments can be made on a permanent, temporary, or time-limited basis in both the competitive and excepted service. The type of appointment you hold determines your eligibility for several employee benefits such as retirement, health and life insurance, as well as reinstatement into the federal service should you decide to leave.

Types of Appointments

Career-Conditional Appointments

A career-conditional appointment is a permanent appointment that leads to career tenure after completing 3 years of service. Career-conditional employees are eligible for promotions, within-grade increases (WGs), and benefits. Under career-conditional appointments, typically a 1-year probationary period is required. Generally, employees on a career-conditional appointment may not be promoted, reassigned, or transferred until 3 months after their initial competitive appointment.

Employees who leave their federal jobs while under career-conditional appointments have reinstatement eligibility for 3 years from their date of separation. Employees who are also entitled to veterans' preference have reinstatement eligibility for life. As a reinstatement eligible, an individual may be reemployed with a Federal agency without competing with the general public for vacant positions.

Career Appointments

Employees who have completed 3 years under career-conditional appointments acquire career tenure. If a career employee leaves the federal service, they have reinstatement eligibility for life.

Temporary Appointments

Temporary appointments are used to fill short-term employment needs of an organization, are made for periods not to exceed 1 year or less and may be extended for 1 additional year for a total of up to 2 years. Certain temporary appointments may be terminated at any time upon written notice. Temporary employees in positions classified under the General Schedule (GS) are ineligible for promotions and within-grade increases. Temporary employees in positions classified under the Federal Wage System are ineligible for promotions; however, they are eligible for within-grade increases. Service under a temporary appointment does not confer competitive status for career or career-conditional appointments.

Term Appointments

Term appointments are normally used to fill project work of a limited nature expected to last for a period of at least 13 months but not more than 4 years. Term employees are eligible for within-grade increases, retirement coverage, and health and life insurance. The first year under a term appointment is considered a trial period. There is no guarantee of employment beyond the established not-to-exceed date of the term appointment. Service under a term appointment does not confer competitive status for career or career-conditional appointments, or for reinstatement.

Excepted Appointments

Excepted appointments are used to fill positions that are exempt by law from the competitive system. Examples of excepted service hiring authorities include those applicable to students, persons with disabilities, and certain veterans. Excepted appointments can be made on a permanent, time-limited, or temporary basis as specified in the specific authority.

Probationary/Trial Periods

Upon your initial appointment, you may be required to serve a probationary or trial period. Employees on competitive service appointments may be required to serve a 1-year probationary period. Employees serving under excepted service appointments may be required to serve a 1 or 2-year trial period depending on the type of appointment. This period allows you to demonstrate successful job performance. During this period, your supervisor will assess your conduct as well as work-related performance.

An employee who does not meet acceptable standards of conduct and/or performance may be removed at any time during the probationary or trial period. If you are separated during the probationary period for unsatisfactory conduct or performance, you will be informed of any rights you may have to appeal that decision. If you believe the separation action is discriminatory, you have the right to file a discrimination complaint through the EEO complaint process. For more information, contact your local EEO program manager, found here: <https://internal.usgs.gov/ops/eo/counselors.html>.

Merit Promotion

When a vacancy occurs, the hiring manager may fill the position through merit promotion procedures or any other means within the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) regulations. Under a merit promotion vacancy announcement, candidates eligible to apply are identified in the “Who Can Apply” section. Under the USGS Merit Promotion Plan, vacancy announcements are published. As an interested employee you may submit an application. Vacancy announcements give the job title, series, and grade; describe the duties; outline the qualification requirements; state other knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) that are required for the job; and provide application procedures, including an assessment questionnaire used to assess your knowledge, skill, or ability for the position. Candidates who are determined to be the best qualified are then referred to the selecting official for consideration. Selections for jobs are determined by merit without regards to race, color, religion, age (40 +), sex, national origin, sexual orientation, genetic information, or non-disqualifying handicap.

Electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF)

The electronic official personnel folder (eOPF) is automatically created and maintained by the Office of Human Resources. Within a few weeks of your start date, you should receive via email, your user ID and password along with instructions for accessing your eOPF. The eOPF contains important documents pertaining to your employment, such as SF-50 Notifications of Personnel Actions, benefits election forms, position description, resume, transcripts, designation of beneficiary forms etc. You may access your eOPF at <https://eopf.opm.gov/doi/>, but **you must be connected to a DOI network**. If you haven't received your user ID and password or if you've forgotten either, use the eOPF self-retrieval method by following the instructions on the login page. **You can also contact the eOPF Help Desk via email (eopfhelpdesk@opm.gov) or via telephone (1-866-275-8518) for assistance.**

It is important that you review your eOPF information regularly for accuracy and to ensure important documents are available. For any discrepancies, contact your servicing Human Resources Team.

Your Job and Performance

Your Duties

Shortly after you enter on duty, your supervisor will give you a copy of the position description for your job. This position description is the official record of your major duties, title, occupational series, and grade level. These factors are used to determine your pay. It is to your benefit to read it carefully and discuss any questions you may have about your position description with your supervisor to be sure that you both have the same understanding of the duties and responsibilities assigned to you.

Your supervisor will review your position description with you at least once a year to ensure it is accurate and complete. Your position description may not list each and every duty you are expected to perform, but instead identifies regular and recurring responsibilities. Refer to your position description as needed. Keep notes about changes in your job so can discuss with your supervisor.

Understanding Your Position Description (PD)

The method for determining an occupational series is the same for all positions, but the methods for determining grades differ according to the basic job evaluation approach used. The Factor Evaluation System (FES) is the method most often used to assign grades to nonsupervisory positions under the General Schedule. FES includes nine factors common to most non-supervisory positions in General Schedule occupations including knowledge required by the position, supervisory controls, guidelines, complexity, scope and effect, personal contacts, purpose of contacts, physical demands, and work environment.

Employee Performance Appraisal Plan (EPAP)

The DOI performance management policy is designed to document the expectations of individual and organizational performance, provide a meaningful process by which you can be rewarded for noteworthy contributions to the organization, and provide a mechanism to improve individual/organizational performance as necessary.

Your supervisor will explain your duties to you and discuss what is expected for satisfactory performance. Planning performance requirements include establishing critical elements and performance standards that are documented in the Employee Performance Appraisal Plan (EPAP).

Critical Elements

Critical elements (at least one, but not more than five) must be established at the start of each appraisal year. A critical element is an assignment or responsibility of such importance that unsatisfactory performance in that element alone will result in a determination that your overall performance is unsatisfactory. Through these elements, you are held accountable for work assignments and responsibilities of your position.

Performance Standards

Performance standards identify the performance threshold(s), requirement(s), or expectation(s) that must be met for each critical element at a particular level of performance. Benchmark performance standards may be used to describe general parameters of the standards, but they must be augmented by specific, measurable criteria such as quality, quantity, timeliness, and/or cost effectiveness for the “fully successful” level for each critical element. You should be able to understand how the results you are held responsible for accomplishing are linked to the strategic and/or mission goals of the organization.

Benchmark performance standards are defined as:

Exceptional: Particularly excellent performance in all aspects of the position that is of such high quality that organizational goals have been achieved that would not have been otherwise (5 points).

Superior: Unusually good performance that exceeds expectations in critical areas and exhibits a sustained support of organizational goals (4 points).

Fully Successful: Good, sound performance that meets organizational goals. Effectively applies technical skills and organizational knowledge to get the job done (3 points).

Unsatisfactory: Quality and/or quantity of work are not adequate for the position. Work product does not meet the minimum requirements identified for minimally successful performance (0 points).

The Fully Successful performance standard must be augmented by additional standards. Other performance levels may also be augmented. If you have questions about your critical elements and performance standards, discuss them with your supervisor immediately. Do not wait until you have been formally rated against them.

Appraisal Period

The appraisal process has two important goals: (1) to increase individual productivity by giving you the information needed to do your job effectively, and (2) to improve organizational productivity by promoting communication between employees and supervisors about job-related matters so that more efficient methods of operation can be developed. Appraisals should fairly reflect your overall performance.

Under the DOI appraisal system, the appraisal period begins October 1 and ends September 30 the following calendar year. The minimum period on which an appraisal may be based is 90 calendar days. Your supervisor will conduct a progress review with you approximately midway through the rating period. This mid-year review is an opportunity to check on your progress, review your position description, identify any training needs or improvements, or revise your critical elements and/or performance standards.

It is important to note that unsatisfactory performance will result in denial of a within-grade increase. An unsatisfactory performance rating may also provide the basis for reduction in grade or removal from your job and the federal service.

Feedback

Your supervisor wants you to succeed. Partner with your supervisor to help you learn your job. One good way to do this is to ask for frequent feedback. Feedback will help you know if you are learning your job, and identifies what you are doing well and any areas needing improvement. Employees who actively seek feedback from their supervisors learn their jobs more quickly with fewer wrong turns than employees who shy away from feedback. You will also spend less time redoing work and submit work with fewer mistakes. As a result, your work performance will improve quickly.

Receiving and using feedback is one of the most important keys to learning your job. As you do your work, ask for feedback from your supervisor to confirm you are on track. In the beginning, you may feel uncomfortable asking for feedback; however, you will soon feel more comfortable as you master your job.

Performance Ratings Are Linked To Human Resources Decisions

Performance Improvement: If you have a performance problem, it is your supervisor's responsibility to identify the problem, discuss the problem with you, and assist in improving your performance. It is your responsibility to improve your performance.

If you do not improve, your supervisor will initiate a written “Performance Improvement Plan” (PIP) that offers an opportunity to demonstrate acceptable performance. If there is still no improvement, your supervisor may deny your Within-Grade Increase (WGI), demote you, or initiate action for removal from the Federal workforce.

Performance Awards: Performance awards can be in the form of cash or time-off and can be given to employees who earn a rating of record of Level 4 (Superior or equivalent) or higher. Rating-based performance awards are included among the various types of awards available under Part 451 of Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations. Agencies can use the rating of record as the sole basis for granting a performance award.

Reduction in Force (RIF): If there is a [RIF](#), additional years of service credit are added to your length of service based on your three most recent ratings of record during the 4 years prior to the RIF. Additional service credit is computed by averaging the three most recent ratings of record given in the previous 4 years using the following values: 20 years of service for each Level 5; 16 years of service for each Level 4; and 12 years of service for each Level 3.

Quality Step Increase: A quality step increase (QSI) is a faster than normal within-grade increase used to reward employees at all General Schedule grade levels who display high quality performance. A quality step increase can only be granted when your most recent rating of record is Level 5 (Exceptional or equivalent).

Career Ladder/Full Performance Level (FPL)

All positions in the Federal service are assigned a career ladder or what is also referred to as a full performance level (FPL). The grade range assigned to a position’s career ladder is simply a measure of the work typically available in an organization to be performed in order to accomplish the mission. Noncompetitive career ladder promotions may be made up to and through the highest grade level in the career ladder. Movement from a position with one career ladder to a position with a higher career ladder requires open and fair competition, such as a vacancy announcement or comparable competitive process.

FPL is shown on your Position Description. In order to advance to the next grade level in your career ladder, the following criteria must be met: work must exist at the higher grade level, the job must be classified, you must perform satisfactorily and meet time-in-grade and qualifications requirements, and your supervisor must recommend the promotion. Identification of a higher FPL does not constitute a commitment or an obligation on the part of management to promote you at some future date.

Your Career Development

Continuous Learning

The USGS is committed to world leadership in the natural sciences through scientific excellence and responsiveness to society's needs. We are faced with an increasingly broad and complex spectrum of science issues under study, the need for an integrated approach to study and disseminate scientific information, a growing requirement for external communication and collaboration, and the associated organizational systems necessary to support a workforce of over 8,000 employees.

For our workforce to continue to acquire and sustain the necessary skills for science excellence, provide continued science leadership, and provide robust science support, we must continue to be a learning organization that invests in the development of our most important resource, our people. The USGS empowers employees to take a personal responsibility for their own learning and development. We expect managers and supervisors to enable the continual development of our employees. We understand that continuous learning is about embracing a variety of opportunities, especially those aligned with our strategic science direction. We also recognize that leadership, supervisory, and managerial skills are essential to maintaining a world-class organization.

Continuous learning takes many forms and includes formal classroom training, technology-enabled training (video, audio, web-based, and CD-ROM), correspondence courses, developmental assignments, mentoring, job aids, and on-the-job training among others. Continuous learning also includes attending approved conferences, workshops, and even short-term details to other positions.

The Employee's Role

As an employee, you are encouraged to take personal responsibility for your own learning by: assessing your skills, strengths, and gaps; preparing an [Individual Development Plan \(IDP\)](#); setting measurable goals and defining the steps to meet your career goals; seeking out training and developmental assignments; reading books, periodicals, and journals that address issues and developments in your field allowing you to maintain and/or develop critical skills; working with your supervisor to align your learning to USGS goals; and capturing your training and development in DOI Learn, the enterprise-wide learning management system for all DOI employees.

The Manager's Role

If you are a manager or supervisor, you are responsible for planning current and future skill needs by using a wide range of approaches to acquire, develop, and retain skills. Examples include reviewing your strategic plans and objectives and defining employees' learning needs in relation to organizational goals; setting priorities for training; discussing strategic plans with employees and helping them plan for their future through the use of IDPs; using a variety of programs and opportunities to promote learning; consulting with the Office of Organizational and Employee Development (OED) to identify sources for learning; discussing the results from learning experiences and providing coaching and feedback; equitably investing a minimum of 40 hours of training for each employee on an annual basis; and ensuring that the Learning Management System is used to capture training and development activities.

Leadership-Centered Culture

To ensure that the USGS continues to be recognized as a world leader in the natural sciences, every employee is expected to develop and nurture leadership characteristics in carrying out the functions assigned to them. The concept of "leading from every chair" includes taking responsibility, embracing change, personal and professional integrity, inspiring trust, vision, and passion.

The USGS Guiding Principles establish a foundation for behaviors that foster a high-performance environment. Employees should be respectful; be accountable; communicate; value differences; encourage; focus; and collaborate so the employees and the organization can develop to their full potential. The expected outcomes of a leadership-centered culture are to create a high-performance work environment; increase productivity; attract and retain high quality employees; proactivity; energizing people; sharing vision and values; integrating sciences/disciplines for greater awareness and approaches to problem solving; and unleashing the talents of employees by promoting responsible risk-taking.

USGS Continuous Learning Opportunities

Office of Employee Development

The Office of Employee Development (OED) serves the educational, informational, training, and development needs of the USGS employees. OED provides a wide variety of scientific and technical, professional, managerial, and administrative development opportunities. Instructor-led classes are supported at the [National Training Center](#) in Denver, Colorado, and other USGS office locations across the nation. OED also offers live streaming of classes for remote attendees of scientific and technical classes. We invite you to let us know about any science, technical, business, and leadership development needs throughout the bureau.

Mentoring Program

The USGS Mentoring Program provides a cost-effective developmental opportunity, which encourages professional and personal growth. Mentoring partnerships provide an effective form of knowledge transfer with a personal connection providing unique benefits to both mentoring partners. The USGS supports mentoring and devotes considerable resources to ensure the availability of regular mentoring opportunities. Formal and informal mentoring is a unique tool for growth and development. It is also an effective way to implement succession planning. Mentoring benefits all who are involved, and ultimately the USGS. Protégés benefit from having a trusted source to guide them. Mentors benefit by gaining renewed energy and a fresh perspective. The USGS benefits from employees who are more productive and effective and have increased job satisfaction. Learn more at <https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/human-capital/mandatory-training-topic>.

Leadership Program

The USGS Leadership Program was initiated in 1999 to provide leadership training to USGS employees. The vision is to create a leadership-centered culture throughout the USGS that emphasizes the importance of people in the USGS, to ensure high-quality science for the benefit of society. Current Leadership courses include Leadership 101 (GS-12 through 15); Leadership 201 (open to graduates of the Leadership 101 course); and the Leadership Intensives course (all grade levels). Descriptions of USGS Leadership Courses are at <https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/human-capital/usgs-leadership-courses>.

Supervisory Development Program

The Supervisory Development Program provides learning opportunities for both new and experienced supervisors. The USGS Supervisory Challenge class satisfies the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) requirement for all new supervisors to receive initial supervisory training within 1 year of their appointment to a supervisory position. This includes those newly hired into federal supervisory jobs from private sector and the military. Graduates of Supervisory Challenge are also offered the opportunity to be mentored by an experienced supervisor who will support them as they put their newly acquired skills to use. Experienced supervisors can take advantage of refresher training options and 360-degree feedback assessments for their ongoing personal and professional development. Information on Supervisory Development including

the Supervisory Challenge class description and schedule are available at <https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/human-capital/usgs-supervisory-development>.

Learning Management

DOI Talent is the enterprise-wide learning management system for DOI employees, volunteers, emeritus, and contractors. The system provides detailed information on both instructor-led and online courses. Courses managed through DOI Talent include a wide range of topics including supervisory, leadership, and scientific and technical topics such as Hydrology, Information Technology, Geographic Information Systems, Safety, as well as courses to address personal and professional development. To receive course announcement emails on course topics of interest, consider signing up for a Listserv at <https://www.usgs.gov/atom/77187>.

Instructor-Led Class Catalog

Find a list of all USGS Instructor-led classes scheduled in the next 90 days at: <https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/human-capital/current-usgs-seminars-and-free-online-training-doi>.

USGS Distance Learning Program

The Distance Learning Program was developed to assist USGS subject-matter experts (SMEs), course developers, and course coordinators to redevelop existing science and technical classroom courses, and create new courses, for classroom, online or blended delivery. OED facilitates in the development of effective, accessible, and interactive distance learning in all scientific and technical topical areas. Distance learning reduces barriers to accessing needed training and lowers travel and training costs. SMEs are encouraged to submit online-course development proposals, annually.

<https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/human-capital/usgs-distance-learning-dl-program>

A list of available courses can be viewed at: <https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/human-capital/available-ld-offerings>

SkillSoft Online Learning Library

All courses in the SkillSoft Online Learning Library are tuition free through DOI Talent. SkillSoft's library of over 2,000 online courses is available 24/7 covering a myriad of topics, including project management, supervisory/leadership skills, human resources development, budget/financial management, acquisition, and information technology (including Microsoft Office and Adobe applications). SkillSoft offers courses that satisfy a number of mandatory training requirements including Diversity/EEO and Role-Based Security Training (RBST). Find more information at: <https://www.skillsoft.com/catalog/>.

USGS Library

Established in 1879 to build and organize a collection of scientific materials in the earth sciences, the USGS Library has the largest holdings of earth science information in the world. The Library includes four central libraries as an integral part of Core Science Systems. <https://usgs.libguides.com/home>.

OED Lending Library

The OED Lending Library offers titles in Kindle format. To access this resource, visit: <https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/human-capital/oed-kindle-lending-program>

Other Development Opportunities

USGS Career Development Program

The USGS Career Development Program is a unique training opportunity that enables managers to provide career change opportunities for DOI and/or USGS employees GS-9 through GS-15 (or equivalent wage grade). When offered, eligible employees may apply for entry-level positions. If selected, they are placed in entry positions, and receive a planned series of classes designed to qualify them for a specific target position. Upon successful completion of this program, the employee is then reassigned or promoted to the target position. If the target position has a career ladder, the employee may then be promoted non-competitively to the next grade in the career ladder, up to the highest grade level of the career ladder, depending on eligibility. Learn more at: <https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/human-capital/career-development-program>.

USGS Upward Mobility Program

The USGS Upward Mobility Program enables managers to provide career development and growth opportunities to employees in positions at the GS-9 level or below (or equivalent wage grade) and have a career ladder of GS-10 or below (or equivalent wage grade). Through the Upward Mobility Program, eligible employees apply for entry level positions. If selected, they are placed in that position and receive training specifically designed to qualify them for the target position upon successful completion of the training program. Employees may then be reassigned or promoted to the target position. If the target position has a career ladder, the employee may then be promoted non-competitively to the next grade in the career ladder, as eligible, up to the highest grade level of the career ladder. Learn more at: <https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/human-capital/upward-mobility-program>.

Your Pay

Pay Information

Normally, there are 26 pay periods each year, with salary disbursements occurring every 2 weeks. Your first payday will be 12 days after the close of the pay period in which you start work. Find [payroll calendars](#) at:

<https://www.doi.gov/ibc/resources/payroll-calendars>

Direct Deposit

The DOI requires that all new employees arrange for direct deposit of their net pay to a financial institution within 30 days of first reporting to work. A Direct Deposit Sign-up Form will be provided by your Human Resources Team before your entrance on duty. Be sure to complete this form and return it as soon as possible. You may request a waiver of the direct deposit requirement if you believe that extenuating circumstances exclude you from participating in the program. Submit requests for a waiver in writing to your Human Resources Team. If you want to change where your check is deposited, you may make the change using [Employee Express](#).

Leave and Earnings Statement

You may access your biweekly Leave and Earnings Statement (LES) electronically through the [Employee Express portal](#). This statement provides a breakdown of your gross pay, deductions, leave balances, and other important information. You are responsible for reviewing your LES to ensure all information is correct. Contact your Human Resources Team with questions. Access the Employee Express portal at www.employeeexpress.gov

Federal Employee Benefits Statement

The Federal Employee Benefits Statement provides a good summary of all your benefits, lets you know when your next WIG is due, and total compensation, etc. Contact [your Benefits Specialist](#) for specific details or needed additional information. You can access it through the [Employee Express portal](#) at www.employeeexpress.gov.

Deductions From Your Pay

Your pay, after deductions, is your net (take-home) pay. Some deductions are required by law and others are authorized by you. Common deductions include the following:

Taxes - Federal income taxes are withheld from your gross pay. Most States will also deduct State income taxes. Some will also be subject to a local tax. The amount withheld is determined by your income and the information you provide on the [W-4 form](#) and/or state equivalent form you completed during the entrance on duty process. At the end of each calendar year, you will receive a W-2 statement with your earnings and all taxes withheld for use in preparing your income tax returns.

Social Security (will appear as OASDI or FICA) - Deductions for [Social Security](#) are dependent upon the retirement plan under which you are covered and your appointment type. Withholdings for Social Security tax will continue until the maximum taxable earnings is reached. Additional information can be found at: www.ssa.gov

Medicare - All wages are taxed for [Medicare Part A](#), Hospital Insurance. Additional information can be found at: www.medicare.gov

Retirement - The type of appointment determines if you are eligible to be covered under a retirement plan. A percentage of your basic pay is deducted and deposited into your retirement account if eligible. The amount deducted is based on the retirement plan under which you are covered.

Thrift Savings Plan - The [Thrift Savings Plan](#) is a retirement savings and investment plan offering the same type of savings and tax benefits that many private corporations provide under 401(k) plans. Additional information can be found at www.tsp.gov/index.html.

Life Insurance - Eligible employees are automatically enrolled in the Basic coverage. One may elect additional coverage or to waive it. Those who elect coverage under the [Federal Employees Group Life Insurance \(FEGLI\) Program](#) will have premium costs deducted through automatic payroll deductions.

Health Benefits - Eligible employees who elect coverage under the [Federal Employees Health Benefits \(FEHB\) Program](#) will have premium costs deducted through automatic payroll deductions.

Dental and/or Vision Benefits - Eligible employees who elect to enroll in the [Federal Employees Dental and Vision Program \(FEDVIP\)](#) will have premium costs deducted through automatic payroll deductions.

Flexible Spending Accounts - Employees eligible for the FEHB Program are able to enroll in a [Health Care and/or Dependent Care account](#) with pre-tax contributions to help pay for out-of-pocket health care and/or dependent care costs deducted through automatic payroll deductions.

Long Term Care - Eligible employees who elect to apply in the [Federal Long-Term Care Insurance Program \(FLTCIP\)](#) may have premium costs deducted through automatic payroll deductions.

Savings Bonds - If you choose to purchase [U.S Savings Bonds](#) through payroll deductions, the amount deducted depends upon the size and number you wish to purchase in a given period of time. At your request, the purchase of bonds may be changed or canceled at any time.

Combined Federal Campaign - The [Combined Federal Campaign \(CFC\)](#) is an annual voluntary program allowing employees to contribute to the charity (or charities) of their choice. You may make regular contributions to the CFC through the payroll deduction plan.

Union Dues - Members of unions that have been granted exclusive recognition rights and have negotiated dues withholding agreements may elect to have monthly dues paid through automatic payroll deductions. As a union member you may sign up to have dues taken out at any time; however, discontinuance of automatic dues deduction may occur only during a specified time frame each year. For more information, review your union contract or contact [your Human Resources Team](#).

Government Contributions to Benefits

The Government, as your employer also contributes to Social Security, Medicare, retirement, TSP, health, and life insurance if you are eligible. Your compensation is about 20-30% of your salary.

Locality Pay

Employees in General Schedule (GS) positions receive an additional percentage to their salary to reflect the higher private and other government salaries in the area. Each year OPM publishes locality pay area definitions that identify the locality payment percentage for each area. Locality pay rates are based on your official work duty station, not where you live. If you change duty stations, your locality pay may change. See locality pay rates here: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/>

Hazardous Duty Pay

Hazardous duty pay is additional pay for the performance of hazardous duties or duties involving physical hardship. Hazardous duty pay is payable to employees in General Schedule positions covered by chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of title 5, U.S. Code. Prevailing rate (wage) employees are eligible to receive environmental differential pay in certain circumstances under a separate statutory provision (5 U.S.C. 5343(c)(4)).

Within-Grade Increases (WGI's)

Within-grade increases (WGIs) are periodic increases in a GS employee's rate of basic pay from one step of the grade of his or her position to the next higher step of that grade. Each GS-1 through GS-15 position has 10 pay steps. You may receive step increases within your grade level once the minimum waiting period is served and your performance is at an acceptable level. Step increases are not automatic but require certification from your supervisor that your job performance is at an acceptable level of competence. Under normal circumstances, the minimum waiting periods for step increases for GS employees are shown in the chart to the right.

WGI Minimum Waiting Period

Advancement to Steps 2, 3, and 4 - 52 calendar weeks

Advancement to Steps 5, 6, and 7 - 104 calendar weeks

Advancement to Steps 8, 9, and 10 - 156 calendar weeks

Overtime

Your supervisor must authorize overtime work in advance. Overtime is time worked that exceeds 40 hours in a workweek or 8 hours in one day. The Fair Labor Standards Amendment of 1974 determines payment for overtime hours. Some employees are exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act. See your Administrative Staff for further clarification.

Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)

All Federal positions are classified as either exempt or nonexempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). It is important that you and your supervisor know which category your position falls under as it impacts your entitlement to receive overtime compensation and/or compensatory time off. Your exemption from the FLSA is determined by your position and will be noted on both your position description and SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action.

It is your supervisor's responsibility to be aware of the hours you are working, particularly if you are in a position that is FLSA non-exempt. Supervisors must ensure you are not performing work outside of your regular work hours unless such work is ordered/authorized by your immediate supervisor or higher-level management. Employees covered by the provisions of FLSA (non-exempt employees) are not permitted to work any time outside of their scheduled work hours without prior supervisory approval. This includes working during scheduled breaks.

Compensatory Time

Compensatory time is time off from duty earned in lieu of paid overtime for work performed outside of your regular work hours. Compensatory time for travel may also be earned. Employees who are exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act whose rate of basic pay exceeds a GS-10 may be required to take compensatory time off in lieu of paid overtime. Employees in positions that are non-exempt from the FLSA will receive payment for authorized overtime, unless they request compensatory time off in lieu of overtime. Employees must use any compensatory time accrued by the 26th pay period after the pay period in which it was earned. If not, exempt employees will forfeit any remaining compensatory time. Nonexempt employees will be paid for any expiring compensatory time as overtime pay.

Your Benefits

The offer letter you received from your Human Resources Team will indicate your retirement plan and which insurance benefits you may elect. If you are eligible, you may wish to explore the benefits package afforded to you. Begin by reviewing the [New Hire Benefits Fact Sheet](#).

Mark your calendar for an **Entrance on Duty (EOD) Benefits Information for New Hires Webinar**, scheduled every month. You may access the webinar and schedule here: <https://usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/human-capital/new-hire-pay-and-benefits-information>.

Should you have any questions contact your servicing Benefits Specialist <https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/human-capital/human-resources-contacts>.

Retirement

Retirement benefits are among the most important benefits of federal employment. It is never too early to start planning for your retirement, as it requires active participation on your part. Attend the [next scheduled "Planning for the Future" webinar](#).

The Federal government maintains two retirement systems. The Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) and the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS). Most federal employees are automatically enrolled in FERS. CSRS is only available to federal workers who were in the plan before 1984 and chose to remain with CSRS in lieu of switching to FERS. To learn more about the CSRS retirement benefits, [visit the OPM website](#).

Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS)

The [FERS](#) is a three-tiered retirement plan consisting of the Basic Benefit pension, Social Security benefits, and the Thrift Savings Plan.

Basic Benefit Pension

The Basic Benefit pension portion of your retirement system is a defined-benefit plan, which means you will be eligible for a pension from the Federal Government based on years of creditable service, age requirements, and your High-3 Average Salary. You must work at least 5 years with the Federal Government as a civilian before you are eligible. The benefit is at least 1% of your High-3 Average Salary prorated on a monthly basis. Automatic deductions based on a percentage of your basic pay will be used to fund your [Basic Benefit plan pension](#). To learn more about FERS, visit the OPM website at: <https://www.opm.gov/retirement-services/fers-information/>

Should you meet the age and service requirement to retire on an unreduced immediate annuity before age 62, you may also be eligible for the [FERS Annuity Supplement](#). This special retirement supplement, paid by the Office of Personnel Management, is a bridge to Social Security. It is calculated based on the amount of Social Security earned while covered under FERS. The FERS Supplement ends at age 62 when you become eligible to collect Social Security.

Those with [Peace Corps](#), [Federal temporary](#) or [military service](#) should contact [your Benefits Specialist](#) about **making a deposit for the time to count toward your future retirement benefit**.

Social Security

The [Social Security](#) portion of your retirement system is an additional retirement benefit that you may apply for as early as age 62 in most cases. Your benefit amount is based on your earnings averaged over most of your working career. Higher lifetime earnings result in higher benefits. Your Social Security benefit amount also is affected by your age at the time you start receiving benefits. If you start receiving your Social Security benefits at age 62, your benefit will be lower than if you wait until your full retirement age. Most people need 40 credits (10 years of work) to qualify for Social Security retirement

benefits. As a federal employee, you pay full Social Security taxes equal to 6.2% of your salary up to the maximum taxable earnings. Create an account to obtain your most recent Social Security statement at: www.ssa.gov/.

Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)

The TSP is a defined-contribution plan and a long-term savings plan that allows you to control how much and where your money is invested. It offers federal civilian employees the same type of savings and tax benefits that many private corporations offer their employees under 401(k) plans. The TSP has both a traditional contribution option (pre-tax contributions) and Roth contribution option (after tax contributions) for eligible federal employees.

- **Traditional Contributions**

These contributions are tax-deferred. Tax-deferred contributions allow you to reduce the amount of income tax you pay annually. Your investment earnings will also grow tax-deferred; this allows you to delay paying taxes on your TSP account earnings until you start to withdraw from your TSP account. When you withdraw your savings, you pay taxes on both the contributions and their earnings.

- **Roth Contributions**

Roth contributions are deducted from your paycheck after your income is taxed. When you withdraw savings from your Roth account, they are tax-free because you have already paid taxes on the contributions. You will not pay taxes on any investment earnings, as long as you are at least age 59½ (or disabled) and your withdrawal is made at least 5 years after the beginning of the year in which you made your first Roth contribution. The TSP Roth feature provides flexibility in the tax treatment of contributions made now and in the future.

Both FERS and CSRS employees are eligible to participate in the TSP, and each has the same IRS [elective deferral limits](#), types of funds to invest in, and withdrawal options.

FERS employees receive matching contributions on the first 4% of pay that you contribute each pay period. The first 3% of pay you contribute is matched dollar-for-dollar; the next 2% is matched at 50 cents per dollar. If you stop making regular employee contributions, your matching contributions will also stop. Agency matching contributions are not taken out of your pay. The agency will contribute automatically 1% of your basic salary whether you contribute or not. Both the automatic and matching contributions will be placed in your TSP account by your agency.

TSP offers the choice of investing by percentage of salary or by dollar amount per pay period. Once you are enrolled, you may change contributions and reallocate funds using the [TSP website](#). You also have the option of investing in five different funds, or “L” (lifecycle) funds. Lifecycle funds use professionally determined investment mixes tailored to meet investment objectives based on various time horizons.

If you were recently hired, your agency automatically enrolled you in the TSP at a 3% contribution rate. Each pay period, 3 percent of your basic pay is deducted from your paycheck and deposited into your TSP account, unless you have made an election to change or stop your contributions. Your funds will automatically be placed in the “L” Funds based on your date of birth. You can make changes to how your funds are invested using your TSP account on www.tsp.gov.

If you had a 401(k) from a previous employer or an eligible IRA, you may be eligible to roll savings over from such accounts into your TSP using a [TSP 60](#) form.

Regardless of your retirement system, participating in the TSP can significantly increase your retirement income and starting early is important. Contributing as soon as possible ensures more growth by compounding earnings. As a TSP participant, you may be eligible for credit towards your federal taxes for up to \$1,000 (up to \$2,000 if filing jointly) of your TSP contributions. Eligibility depends on the amount of your modified adjusted gross income. See [IRS Form 8880](#) for more details.

[TSP website has informative videos](#) on the program as well as other useful information. You may sign-up to receive updates via Twitter [here](#).

Health Care

Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB)

The Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program can meet the health care needs of you and your family. Federal employees may choose from a wide selection of health plans. The FEHB Program offers health plans with better rates and better protection than you might acquire individually. Under the FEHB Program, you cannot be denied coverage due to a preexisting condition. You can choose from among Consumer-Driven and High Deductible plans that offer catastrophic risk protection with higher deductibles, health savings/reimbursable accounts and lower premiums, or fee-for-service plans (FFS) their Preferred Provider Organizations (PPO) or Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO) if you live (or sometimes if you work) within the area serviced by the plan. Each year federal employees may change plans, cancel, or enroll in the FEHB Program during the open season, occurring in the fall. Employees may also make changes during the year based on a qualified life event.

New employees have 60 days from their appointment to enroll in the FEHB Program. To research health insurance plans and compare premiums, visit the Program's [website here](#).

Federal Dental and Vision Program (FEDVIP)

The [Federal Dental and Vision Program \(FEDVIP\)](#) is a separate and supplemental plan to the FEHB Program. It provides dental and vision coverage through a variety of insurers. Federal employees can choose among several dental plans and vision plans. New employees have 60 days from their appointment date to sign up for dental or vision insurance. The FEDVIP Program is offered during the same annual open season as the FEHB Program. For more information on this Program or to enroll, visit www.benefeds.com

Federal Employees' Life Insurance (FEGLI)

The [Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance \(FEGLI\) Program](#) is the largest group life insurance program in the world, covering over 4 million federal employees and retirees, as well as many of their family members. Most employees are eligible for FEGLI coverage. FEGLI provides group term life insurance. As such, it does not build up any cash value or paid-up value. It consists of basic life insurance coverage with three options. In most cases, as a new federal employee, you are automatically covered by basic life insurance and your payroll office deducts premiums from your paycheck unless waived. In addition to the basic, there are three forms of optional insurance. You must have basic insurance in order to elect options. Unlike basic, enrollment in optional insurance is not automatic - you must elect options.

For more information on the FEGLI, [visit OPM's Life Insurance page](#).

Special Agent Mutual Benefits Association (SAMBA)

The DOI has made arrangements with SAMBA to provide two life insurance options. SAMBA is a non-profit association. [Contact SAMBA directly for enrollment](#) at 1-800-638-6589.

Flexible Spending Account (FSA)

The [Federal Flexible Spending Account \(FSA\) Program](#) offers three types of accounts for: health care, limited expense health care, and dependent care. The FSA Program allows you to set aside money on a pre-tax basis for certain health care and dependent care expenses.

New employees must elect to enroll in this program within 60 days after they become eligible, before October 1st of the calendar year. Current enrollees must re-enroll each year. The FSA Program is offered during the FEHB Program open season. For more information on the FSA Program, visit www.FSA.com.

Long Term Care Insurance (FLTCIP)

The [Federal Long-Term Care Insurance Program \(FLTCIP\)](#) provides long-term care (LTC) insurance to assist in paying for costs of care when enrollees need help with day-to-day activities or if enrollees have a severe cognitive impairment such as Alzheimer's.

LTC insurance protects your income and assets should you need LTC services. Most health insurance programs, including the FEHB Program, TRICARE, and TRICARE for Life, provide little or no coverage for LTC. Long-term care is care that you may need for the rest of your life. This type of care can span many years and be costly depending on the type of care and location where care is provided.

The John Hancock Life & Health Insurance Company is the provider for the FLTCIP group policy. The Federal Government has worked closely with this company to ensure coverage provides benefits and features valuable of the federal workforce. The FLTCIP is a comprehensive plan. You may choose to receive care at home, in an assisted living facility, in a nursing home, or in other settings. Additional features include respite care, bed reservations, portability, caregiver training, guaranteed renewability, inflation protection, and others.

New employees have 60 days to apply using the Abbreviated Underwriting Application Form. Current USGS employees eligible for the FLTCIP may apply at any time using the Full Underwriting application process. In addition to employees, current spouses, adult children, parents, parents-in-law, and stepparents are also eligible. For more information on the [FLTCIP](#), visit: www.ltcfeds.com

Designation of Beneficiaries

There are four benefits someone is entitled to should you pass away: Retirement (FERS or CSRS), TSP, FEGLI, and Unpaid Compensation (monies the USGS owes you e.g., last salary and unused annual leave.) Each benefits' [Order of Precedence](#) works well in most situations. Many employees file a designation of beneficiary form and then never think about it again. However, it is a good practice to take the time periodically to review these forms, especially when you have a significant change in your life such as a marriage, birth of a child, or a divorce. FEGLI, FERS, and Unpaid Compensation designation forms are filed in your electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF) if they have been submitted. TSP maintains their form if it was submitted. These types of events do not automatically change a beneficiary election on file. Your original designation remains in force whether it still reflects your wishes or not, until you submit another form to cancel prior designations or to designate a new beneficiary. Forms are available to customize your wishes for the following benefits: Life Insurance, TSP, Retirement, and Unpaid Compensation. Forms and additional information are [here](#).

Medicare

Most Federal employees are eligible for Medicare beginning at age 65. The Medicare tax deducted from your salary pays for future [hospital insurance](#). For information on Medicare vs FEHB visit [OPM's Medicare information page](#).

Work-Life Benefits

Telework

The DOI encourages use of telework program in which all eligible agency employees may be authorized to do so. Telework, as defined by Office of Personnel Management (OPM), is a work arrangement in which you regularly perform officially

assigned duties at home or at other work sites geographically convenient to your residence. A telework arrangement is documented in a formal Telework Agreement that is signed by you and your first-level supervisor.

DOI provides eligible employees the maximum opportunity to telework in an alternate workplace when consistent with the bureau/office mission and where employees must have at least fully successful performance appraisal, require minimal supervision, and responsibilities that are not dependent on location. Supervisors and employees may elect to set up a trial arrangement initially.

Telework is not an employee entitlement and certain duties may make employees ineligible. Employees are not eligible to telework if they have been officially disciplined. Find more information at: <https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/human-capital/telework>

Alternative Work Schedule (AWS)

An alternative work schedule (AWS) is any one of several available work schedules other than the traditional work schedule of 8 hours per day, 40 hours per week. By allowing employees to vary the hours of their workday and/or workweek, AWS offers maximum flexibility, yet ensures office coverage as most forms of AWS require employees to either work, or account for absences with approved leave, during designated core hours. See Chapter 1 “Work Schedules” in the Attendance and Leave Handbook for more information. <https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/human-capital/usgs-attendance-and-leave-handbook#AWS>

Credit Hours

Employees who work certain alternative work schedules may be eligible to earn credit hours. Credit hours are hours that an employee elects to work, with supervisory approval, in excess of the employee’s basic work requirement.

Credit hours are earned when work is available and as circumstances support continuing work (i.e., meeting deadlines, reducing backlogs, increasing productivity and efficiency). The following requirements apply:

- Credit hours must be earned during the basic workday from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and outside of core hours.
- Employees must complete their daily basic work requirement before they can earn credit hours.
- Credit hours must be earned and used in no less than 15-minute increments. Check with your supervisor for additional requirements.
- An employee may not accumulate and carryover more than 24 credit hours.

Child Care

USGS offers child care assistance with access to Flexible Spending Accounts, the Employee Assistance Program, and onsite day care at some USGS locations. For more information visit: <https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/human-capital/child-care-options>

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Everyone has personal problems from time to time. DOI's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offers professional, confidential counseling and consultation that can help you resolve such issues. Services are available at reduced or no cost to you or members of your family. DOI has contracted with a vendor to provide you with comprehensive EAP services. Services offered include assessment, short-term counseling, and referral services for a wide range of personal problems, as well as a variety of work/life issues. Learn more at: <https://www.doi.gov/pmb/hr/eap>

Physical Fitness Program

The USGS is committed to providing opportunities to achieve and maintain fitness to the fullest extent possible. The USGS Physical Fitness Program is intended to assist in minimizing the risks of premature morbidity, mortality, and disability, foster healthy lifestyles, and support a healthy work environment. Interested employees are supported in fitness activities in a

variety of forms and sources. Learn more at: <https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/3707924-physical-fitness-program>

Smoking Cessation

Are you ready to quit smoking? All FEHB plans include free access to smoking cessation services. If you elected FEHB coverage, you can get help with no copays or deductibles.

Student Loan Repayment

The purpose of the student loan repayment benefit is to help agencies recruit and retain highly skilled workers for positions that are difficult to fill. This tool may be leveraged by managers as necessary. This benefit is not an entitlement nor is it something for which you can apply. Learn more at: <https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/human-capital/student-loan-repayment-benefit>

Transit Subsidy

[Transit Subsidy Executive Order 13150](#) dated April 21, 2000, established the Mass Transportation and Vanpool Transportation Fringe Benefit Programs. Under these programs, federal employees may receive transit passes in amounts approximately equal to employee commuting costs, not to exceed the maximum level allowed by law.

Bicycle Subsidy

The Bicycle Subsidy Benefit Program is based on an Executive Order requiring reduced vehicular traffic congestion and air pollution in areas where DOI has a large contingent of employees. It also promotes health and wellness by encouraging employees to use non-motorized (self-propelled) bicycles as a primary means of commuting to and from work. Learn more at: <https://www.doi.gov/ofas/bicycle-subsidy-benefit-program>

Your Leave

All Federal Government employees, except those on intermittent work schedules, earn leave, including annual, sick, and other leave types. All periods of absence from work must be covered by an approved leave type.

Annual Leave

Annual leave is provided for USGS employees with an established tour of duty or work schedule whose appointment is for 90 days or longer. Full-time employees earn annual leave each pay period in increments of 4, 6, or 8 hours, depending upon their total years of federal service. Both creditable civilian and military service are used in determining time increments for leave purposes. The rates of annual leave accrual are as follows:

Years of Creditable Service	Pay Period Accrual Rate	Total Annual Accrual
Less than 3 years	4 hours	13 days
3 to 15 years	6 hours	20 days
15 years or more	8 hours	26 days

Normally you may not carry over to the next year, more than 30 days (240 hours) of annual leave. Any earned annual leave exceeding 240 hours must be used by the end of the leave year or it will be forfeited. Annual leave may be donated to the Federal Leave Share Program. Annual leave may or may not be granted when requested, depending on the effect of your absence on assigned workload. Requests for annual leave must be submitted to, and approved by, your immediate supervisor in advance, except in an emergency. If an emergency requires absence from work without prior approval, you must notify your supervisor as soon as possible on the first day of your absence. The minimum charge for use of annual leave is 15 minutes.

When you leave federal service, you will be paid a lump sum for unused annual leave, at your current hourly rate of pay.

Part-time employees earn leave based on the number of hours worked. Part-time employees with less than 3 years of service earn 1 hour of annual leave for each 20 hours in pay status. Those with 3 years up to 15 years of service earn 1 hour of annual leave for every 13 hours in pay status. Those with 15 or more years of service earn 1 hour of annual leave for each 10 hours in pay status.

Sick Leave

Full-time employees earn 13 days of sick leave each year, at the rate of 4 hours per pay period. Employees working on a part-time basis earn sick leave at the rate of 1 hour for each 20 hours of duty. Credit may not be earned in excess of 4 hours of sick leave for 80 hours of duty in any pay period. There is no limit on the amount of sick leave you may accumulate. Sick leave may be charged in increments of 15 minutes for the following purposes: inability to work because of sickness or injury, personal medical appointments, family care or bereavement, care of a family member with a serious health condition, and adoption related purposes. Some limitations apply; please check with your supervisor or servicing Human Resources Team if you have questions. Locate the HR Team assigned to your office at: <https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/human-capital/human-resources-contacts>

These simple rules must be followed in using sick leave (also review your office's policies):

- Use sick leave as little as possible and only for the proper reasons. Sick leave cannot be used to supplement annual leave.
- If you are too sick to work, notify your supervisor in accordance with your local policy.
- Ask your supervisor in advance when using sick leave for scheduled personal medical needs.
- Submit written certification signed by your medical practitioner for periods of sick leave lasting more than three days or upon request by your supervisor for any other sick leave period.

If you violate any of these rules, your leave may be charged as absent without leave (AWOL), rather than sick leave. Abuse of your sick leave may be cause for disciplinary action. In case of serious disability or ailment, you may need to deplete all of your earned sick leave. Should this occur, at the discretion of your supervisor or manager, up to 240 hours (30 days) of sick leave may be advanced if under permanent appointment or, if under a time-limited appointment up to the amount of sick leave earned during the remaining period. Any request for advanced sick leave must be accompanied by medical certification.

Leave without Pay

Leave without pay (LWOP) may be granted under certain conditions when your annual leave or sick leave is exhausted and doesn't cause undue interruption to the work of the USGS. Your request for leave without pay may be for personal reasons, illness, or other reasons that are in the interest of the government such as educational purposes. While on LWOP you will be responsible for continuing to pay your portion of your [health insurance \(FEHB\) premiums](#) if enrolled.

Administrative Leave

This is an administrative determination whereby your absence from work will not cause you to lose pay or be charged leave. Administrative leave may include returning to civilian employment after active duty military service, donating blood, voting, or experiencing adverse environmental conditions or emergency conditions such as bad weather.

Absence without Leave (AWOL)

The absence of an employee who does not secure approval of annual leave, sick leave, or leave without pay is recorded as absent without leave (AWOL). The employee receives no pay for the period of unauthorized absence. Absence without leave may also result in disciplinary action.

Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993

Under the [Family and Medical Leave Act \(FMLA\)](#), most federal employees are entitled to 12 workweeks (480 hours) of unpaid leave during any 12-month period for the following purposes:

- The birth of a son or daughter of the employee and the care of such son or daughter.
- The placement of a son or daughter with the employee for adoption or foster care.
- The care of spouse, son, daughter, or parent of the employee who has a serious health condition.
- A serious health condition of the employee that renders the employee unable to perform the essential functions of his or her position.
- Any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the spouse, son, daughter, or parent of the employee is on covered active duty (or has been notified of an impending call or order to covered active duty) in the Armed Forces.

Accrued leave may be substituted for leave without pay.

Sick Leave for Family Care or Bereavement

Employees may use up to 104 hours of sick leave, each year, to care for an eligible family member who is incapacitated or receiving medical, dental, or optical examination or treatment, or to arrange for or attend the funeral of a family member. Check with your Human Resources Team for information and assistance.

It is important to note that if some of the 104 hours available for bereavement or other care of family members have been used; those hours must be deducted from the 480 hours available under the provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act.

Funeral Leave

Attendance at funerals is generally a private matter, and your absence from work must be charged to annual leave or sick leave. There are three exceptions when there is no charge to an employee's leave account: (1) an employee may have up to 3 days of funeral leave for the funeral or memorial service of an immediate relative whose death results from military service in a combat zone; (2) a military veteran may be excused from duty for up to 4 hours to serve as a pallbearer or guard of honor at the funeral of a member or veteran of the armed services; or (3) federal law enforcement officers or firefighters can be excused from duty to attend the funeral of a fellow law enforcement officer or firefighter.

Bone Marrow or Organ Donor Leave

An employee may use up to 7 days of paid leave each calendar year to serve as a bone-marrow donor. An employee also may use up to 30 days of paid leave each calendar year to serve as an organ donor. Leave for bone marrow and organ donation is a separate category of leave that is in addition to annual and sick leave.

Court Leave

Employees are eligible for court leave when called to serve on a jury or as a witness in a judicial proceeding in which the federal, state, or local government is a party. Employees will be placed on administrative leave while serving in this capacity. If you are a witness on behalf of a private party, you must request annual leave or leave without pay. Any pay received for serving on a jury must be turned over to the Finance Office for disposition unless you request to be placed on annual leave. If placed on approved annual leave, you may retain any pay received from serving on a jury. Immediately inform your supervisor if you are summoned for jury duty or as a witness in a judicial proceeding.

Military Leave

Employees are entitled to time off at full pay for certain types of active or inactive duty in the National Guard or as a reserve of the armed forces. Employees accrue 15 days of military leave each fiscal year and may carry over 15 days from a prior fiscal year. Military leave depends on the type of appointment and work schedule of the employee. Advance notice of military orders is required so that your supervisor may make appropriate work adjustments. Learn more at:

<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/pay-administration/fact-sheets/military-leave/>

Voting

As a general rule, where the polls are not open at least 3 hours before or after your regular work hours, you may be permitted to report to work 3 hours after the polls open or leave work 3 hours before they close, whichever requires the least amount of time off. Coordinate such time away from your duty station with your supervisor.

Voluntary Leave Transfer Program

Employees who have a medical emergency and have exhausted all of their sick, compensatory time, and annual leave may request to become leave recipients under the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program. This program enables employees to donate their annual leave to designated leave recipients. Learn more at: <https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/human-capital/voluntary-leave-transfer-program>

Federal Holidays

All legal holidays recognized by the Federal Government are considered non-working days by the USGS. If a holiday falls on a weekend, the previous Friday or following Monday will be considered the holiday. When a holiday falls on your scheduled day off, you are entitled to 8 hours “in lieu of” holiday pay. The “in lieu of” holiday will be Tuesday when a scheduled day off is Monday and will be Thursday if the scheduled day off is Friday. Working on holidays must be directed and approved by your supervisor. See your Administrative Officer or supervisor for assistance, if needed. The table at the right shows holidays observed in the federal service:

- New Year’s Day, January 1
- Martin Luther King Jr.’s Birthday, Third Monday in January
- George Washington’s Birthday, Third Monday in February
- Memorial Day, Last Monday in May
- Independence Day, July 4
- Labor Day, First Monday in September
- Columbus Day, Second Monday in October
- Veterans Day, November 11
- Thanksgiving Day, Fourth Thursday in November
- Christmas Day, December 25

Your Awards and Recognition

The USGS is committed to creating a rewarding environment as part of our bureau strategy for ensuring that we can continue to recruit, retain, and motivate a highly qualified and diverse workforce to accomplish our mission and strategic goals. We want to ensure employees view the USGS as “a rewarding place to work;” that managers spend time on rewarding and recognizing employees; and that the USGS has a celebration culture.

A rewarding environment provides a robust mechanism to help focus the workforce on the Bureau's strategic goals and build the capacity to achieve them. A "rewarding environment" is one in which employees are motivated and energized to produce outstanding science and science support, and they are valued and recognized for their contributions.

The Purpose of Creating a Rewarding USGS Environment:

- Rewarding behaviors, attitudes, and outcomes aligned with our strategic direction enhance the quality of our science programs, the vitality of our relationships with customers, and the efficiency and effectiveness of our business practices.
- Motivating and energizing employees in pursuit of science and business excellence can be directly linked to employee motivation, quality of work, and improved customer service. A rewarding environment encourages a work experience that not only exceeds employees' expectations, but encourages them to put forth extra effort.
- To attract the best and brightest employees with competitive pay and benefits; provide an opportunity to be affiliated with a world-class science organization and colleagues; an opportunity to perform meaningful and important work; opportunities for professional growth and development; and a flexible, family-friendly work environment.
- Retaining employees begins by developing an environment where they can grow and excel, understand USGS strategic goals and awareness of their role in assuring USGS success. When an organization helps its employees grow, develop their skills, and balance their work and personal lives, employees feel a stronger commitment to the organization.
- Demonstrating to all employees that they are part of an organization that recognizes and rewards them highlights their importance and value to the organization.

Manager Responsibilities:

- Demonstrating through their actions that they are committed to creating a rewarding environment.
- Using rewards fairly to recognize exceptional contributions and accomplishments in support of USGS strategic goals.
- Holding subordinate managers and supervisors accountable for also creating a rewarding environment.
- Rewarding subordinate managers and supervisors for their successes in creating a rewarding environment.

Supervisor Responsibilities:

- Identifying, communicating, and recognizing contributions and accomplishments that support USGS strategic goals;
- Budgeting a minimum of 1 percent of salary for monetary awards;
- Motivating employees using the rewards that employees value most;
- Using rewards fairly and recognizing employee contributions and accomplishments in a timely manner; and
- Holding inclusive celebrations to recognize employees and publicize their contributions and accomplishments.

Employees Responsibilities:

- Learning what they can do in their jobs to further the strategic goals of the USGS; and
- Striving for exceptional performance.

STAR Award

Special Thanks for Achieving Results (STAR) Awards are cash or time-off awards based on a specific achievement or contribution. They may also be given for exceptional accomplishments over a period of time. STAR awards may be given individually or to a group. The amount of the award should be commensurate with the value of the individual or team accomplishment, considering the overall benefit to the government. STAR awards are paid through the normal payroll process.

Performance Awards

Employees may be given a cash or time off award based on their performance rating. The rating must be at a level 4 or 5 and supported by the final rating of record (performance appraisal). Performance awards are given at the discretion of supervisors and may be affected by current budgets.

A quality step increase is a performance award that grants a faster than normal within-grade increase. It is used to reward employees at all GS grade levels who display high quality performance. To be eligible for a quality step increase, employees must achieve an overall rating of exceptional (level 5) on their employee performance appraisal plan (EPAP) and display exceptional performance that is expected to continue.

Length of Service

Length of service emblems are awarded by the DOI for 10, 20, 30, 40, and 50 years of employment.

Honor Awards

There are a variety of Honor Awards at the DOI and USGS level. For more information visit:

<https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/human-capital/awards>

Creating a rewarding environment is an investment in the USGS. The return on the investment is: enhanced individual and organizational performance directed toward achieving USGS strategic goals; positive changes in employee attitudes, leading to higher levels of employee satisfaction; and a decrease in unwanted turnover and a reduction in expenditures for recruitment activities

Other Things to Know

Employee Express

[Employee Express](#) is the system used to access your Earnings and Leave Statement, Federal Employees Benefits Statement and to change a variety of discretionary payroll transactions electronically that will help you make payroll changes and review your current information. This is a good tool to help you manage your pay and benefits. This service is provided by the Office of Personnel Management. Access Employee Express from any computer using a password or PIV Smartcard at www.employeeexpress.gov. Email eexhelp@opm.gov for assistance with technical issues.

Employee Committees

Offices often have a variety of standing committees such as safety, computer, wellness, and welfare. Check with your supervisor for information on any committees within your office or science center.

Safety

Ensuring a safe work environment for every USGS employee is one of the Director's top priorities. To see more about the Director's expectations for safety, view his Bureau Safety and Health Policy [memo](#). There are a variety of potential safety and health hazards in the workplace. Because of these risks, it is important that employees develop a safety mindset. Visit the USGS Safety & Health homepage at: <https://internal.usgs.gov/ops/safetynet/index.html>

As a new employee, your initial occupational safety and health responsibility is to complete applicable training and comply with established safety rules and regulations. The U.S. Geological Survey Occupational Safety and Health Guide for New Employees can be viewed here: <https://internal.usgs.gov/ops/safetynet/NewEmployeeGuide.pdf>

Please communicate with your local Collateral Duty Safety Program Coordinator (CDSPC) to learn about any site-specific procedures and plans. (i.e. Occupant Emergency Plan, Hazard Communication, Chemical Hygiene, Check-in/Check-out Procedures, etc.) In addition to your local CDSPC, your Regional Safety Manager or Mission Area Safety Manager is available for guidance and assistance as well. USGS Safety and Health Directories, Charts, and Contacts can be found here: <https://internal.usgs.gov/ops/safetynet/contactsandresponsibilities.html>

Every employee is responsible for carrying out the USGS mission in a manner that minimizes risk to the health and wellbeing of themselves, co-workers, and the general public. It is critical that employees:

- Observe all safety precautions and practices applicable to their assignments and report any hazardous conditions or procedures to their immediate supervisors.
- Wear required PPE and use provided safety equipment, as applicable.
- Immediately report to their supervisors any accident or incident that results in, or could result in, personal injury or property damage.
- Participate in all aspects of the occupational safety and health program, including safety training, inspections, occupational safety and health committee activities, and collateral duty safety program coordinator activities, as appropriate.
- Exercise rights and responsibilities as granted by the Bureau OSH Program without fear of restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination, or reprisal for reporting an unsafe or unhealthful condition, or otherwise participating in the Program.
- Actively participate in occupational safety and health education and training activities.

General safety orientation is required of all bureau employees. To learn more about safety requirements as a new employee, see: <https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/human-capital/mandatory-safety-training>

A complete list of USGS safety requirements is detailed within [Survey Manual 445-2-H](#), Occupational Safety and Health Program Requirements.

Field employees should reference the Safety and Health for Field Operations Handbook 445-3-H to assist in incorporating occupational safety and health into the planning of all field projects and tasks.

Accident Reporting

If you have an accident in the workplace, contact your immediate supervisor and/or CDSPC. Incidents/accidents are recorded in the [Safety Management Information System \(SMIS\)](#). The SMIS is managed by the U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Occupational Health and Safety (OHS), with administrative support provided by the USGS Occupational Safety and Health Management Branch (OSHMB).

Workers' Compensation

If you sustain injuries, including occupational disease, as a result of your employment with the Federal Government, you may be entitled to monetary compensation, medical care and assistance (attendant's allowances), vocational rehabilitation, and employment retention rights. Learn more about DOI's Worker's Compensation Program at:

<https://www.doi.gov/workerscompensation/> To document an work-related injury or illness go to: <https://www.smis.doi.gov/>

Workplace Violence Handbook

The USGS is committed to ensuring adequate safety for the security of its employees. While the USGS is proud of our safe workplaces, we are concerned about the reality of violence in society and its potential occurrence in our workplaces.

Please view the linked handbook, providing guidance for responding appropriately to violence, threats, reports of threats, or questions that arise in these situations. Appendices provide additional guidance on dealing with violent situations, a list of resources for additional information, and a sample emergency contact information sheet.

<https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/human-capital/workplace-violence-handbook>

Organizational Ombuds Services

Organizational Ombuds services offers a safe place for all employees (management and non-management) to discuss concerns and understand their options in a confidential setting. An ombudsman is an independent and neutral person with whom all employees may speak confidentially, informally and off-the-record about work-related concerns or questions. Services include consultation, training, coaching and facilitation.

For additional information regarding Ombuds Services, please contact the DOI Organizational Ombuds Office, 202-494-2907.

Drug-Free Workplace Program:

The Department of the Interior adheres to Executive Order 12564 with a Drug-Free Workplace Program since 1991. Currently, employees occupying Testing Designated Positions (TDP) are routinely tested for illegal drugs, as are applicants. Employees not in a TDP are subject to testing when a reasonable suspicion of drug use exists, after an accident, or as part of a rehabilitation program. For more information, refer to the DOI Policy. The DOI Employee Assistance Program is available to employees and family members for substance abuse related assistance. The EAP can provide confidential advice, referrals and counseling call (800) 869-0276 or go to <https://www.doi.gov/pmb/hr/eap>.

Useful Websites/Quick Links

@theCore - The official USGS Intranet site - <https://atthecore.usgs.gov/>

Helpful Pay and Benefits Links - [This USGS benefits website](#) provides links to the most current information. There is a wealth of information and tools of all available benefits, frequently used forms, and resources for frequently asked questions: www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/human-capital/helpful-links

Quicktime - The USGS's time and attendance portal. You can easily manage your leave requests and document your time and attendance in this system. qtime.ibc.doi.gov/proweb/qtime1538/login

Information Technology (IT) Helpdesk - Need IT support? Contact the IT Helpdesk via phone 703-648-HELP (4357) or 1-866-447-4375, web chat, or email ServiceDesk@usgs.gov. See: <https://itsupport.usgs.gov/>

Human Capital Services and Support Portal - A consolidation of all Human Capital information providing relevant, timely, and regularly updated information. www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/human-capital?preview=1

DOI Talent - The enterprise-wide learning management system for DOI employees.
<https://doitalent.ibc.doi.gov/index.php?redirect=0>

Ethics Guide for DOI Employees - Important information on ethics, such as the Ethics Guide for DOI Employees, the Financial Guide for USGS Employees, Ethics Subject Areas A-Z, and contact information for the Ethics Office.
https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/ethics_pocket_guide_for_doi_employees_2017_0.pdf

USGS Classifieds - Have something too good for surplus, but you don't need it anymore? Post it to the USGS Classifieds! Post or find items such as computer equipment, electronics, furniture, and office supplies.
<https://collaboration.usgs.gov/community/usgs/Classifieds/SitePages/Home.aspx>

Visual Identity System - USGS has specific branding requirements including use of colors, fonts, and logos for presentations, publications, and web communications. Find more information along with useful templates at:
<https://atthecore.usgs.gov/special-groups/visual-identity-system>