

## AFMC Referral Bonus Guide

**Eligibility:** Referral bonuses are granted, as with other awards, at the discretion of management and are not an entitlement. All Direct Air Force (DAF) employees who are eligible for monetary awards in accordance with DoDI 1400.25, Volume 451, are eligible for referral bonus awards, except for:

- Employees whose assigned duties include the recruitment of candidates for civilian positions (e.g., all human resources practitioners, organizational human resources liaisons, and functional recruiters).
- Hiring managers, selecting officials or other persons associated with the selection and appointment of the candidate (filling the position).
- Any individual prohibited from advocating for the employment of the candidate by section 3110 of Title 5, United States Code, Employment of Relatives;
  - The term “relative” means, with respect to a public official, an individual who is related to the public official as father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, first cousin, nephew, niece, husband, wife, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, stepfather, stepmother, stepson, stepdaughter, stepbrother, stepsister, half-brother, or half-sister.

Referral of a candidate to the following appointment types cannot lead to a referral bonus for an eligible employee:

- Current/former DoD employee (Only payable for employee’s first appointment with DAF regardless of any break in service)
- Temporary appointments of less than 1 year to include student appointments (e.g. Premier College Intern Program)
  - Palace Acquire and Copper Cap Programs are eligible
- DRIVE (Develop, Redistribute, Improve, Vault, and Expose) program candidates during transition assistance duties

**NOTE:** There is no limit on the number of referral bonus awards an employee may receive within a year; however, in accordance with 5 CFR 530.203, monetary awards are factored into the aggregate limitation on pay within a calendar year. Time-off granted as a referral bonus award will count toward the established maximum time-off award limit of 80 hours granted to any one individual in any one leave year (or the average number of hours the employee generally works during a 2-week period for those with an uncommon tour of duty). It is the immediate supervisor’s responsibility to track time-off awards allotted annually.

**Award Limitations:** Referral bonus award limits are set up to \$2,000, up to 24 hours’ time-off or, when approved, a combination of both. Any disbursement will be based on budgetary constraints and will require coordination with applicable Financial Management (FM)/Unit Resource Advisors (RAs).

Factors to consider when awarding a referral bonus should include the percentage of cost savings by avoiding certain recruiting expenses; efforts put forth by the employee to recruit an individual; the difficulty in filling the position(s); fiscal constraints, etc.

Referral bonuses may not be split amongst employees and only one referral bonus will be paid per accession. Employees may receive more than one referral bonus award within a year (if all eligibility criteria are met for each accession for which a referral bonus award is granted).

**Procedures:** DAF provides a list of approved Mission Critical Occupations (MCOs) (Appendix 1), which alone does not deem a position eligible for receipt of a referral bonus award.

Designation of hard-to-fill positions may vary by local market conditions and will be determined by the applicable Center DP subject to labor market data. For HQ AFMC, this responsibility will reside with HQ AFMC/A1KK.

Consider factors such as candidate quality and availability, success/results of recent recruitment and retention initiatives, mission impact if the position remains vacant, salaries paid by competitors for like talent, turnover rates for similar positions, employment trends, labor-market factors, unique skills/competencies required for the position, desirability of the positions and geographic location, and/or other supporting documentation that demonstrates recruitment challenges. Additional consideration may be made using the DHA Matrix Authorities Listing found on myFSS: <https://myfss.us.af.mil/USAFCommunity/s/view-file?id=069t000000hNZ65AAG>

Center DPs identify, in writing, management officials authorized to approve referral bonus awards. Designated approval authority must be an Authorized Management Official at least one level higher than the hiring manager who is filling the position. HQ AFMC/A1KK will maintain a listing of each Center's authorized management official.

Center DPs will determine eligibility IAW DODI1400.25V451\_DAFI36-1004, Civilian Recognition Program, Enclosure 3, Referral Bonus for Recruitment and Hiring.

The AFMC Staffing Operations Teams will ensure position solicitations indicate the position(s) being filled is one for which a referral bonus award may be approved. Organizations must identify on the Request for Personnel Action (RPA) Checklist if the position is eligible for a referral bonus.

The applicant must apply to the designated hard-to-fill or MCO position while open. If the position is eligible for a referral bonus, the Tentative Job Offer (TJO) will include a request that the employee submit the HQ AFMC Candidate Referral Certification Form (Appendix 2). The referring employee, who must be a current DAF employee on the Entrance on Duty (EOD) date of the referred applicant, must complete Section I of the form. The applicant must complete Section II of this form and return it to their Staffer. This form must be submitted within the timeline provided during the TJO to be considered for referral bonus eligibility.

The Hiring Manager, Human Resource Liaison or designee will provide the Authorized Management Official with a signed HQ AFMC Candidate Referral Certificate Form completed

by the referring employee and referred candidate if the applicant is selected.

The Authorized Management Official will document their written justification using AF Form 1768, Staff Summary Sheet, or an electronic Staff Summary Sheet including the following:

Details of the position being filled (Organization, PP-SRS-GR, MPCN, etc.) and a determination the position is hard-to-fill or MCO with a supporting rationale.

- Prior difficulty filling the position to include unsuccessful efforts – include labor market challenges and any special qualifications required
- Difficulty retaining employees and recent turnover data
- Estimate of cost savings by eliminating certain recruitment expenses
- A description of the referring employee's efforts leading to the recruitment (include their name, office symbol, PP-SRS-GR, position details, etc.)
- Justification for the award amount
- Properly coordinated/quality reviewed by both FM/Unit Resource Advisor (RA) and the Authorized Management Official prior to submission

Referral bonus awards will be processed as cash awards using the Nature of Action Code (NOA) 848. Time-Off awards submitted as referral bonuses will use NOA 846 with a remark "Time-Off award is being granted under the DAF Policy on Referral Bonuses for Recruitment and Hiring."

Each determination to pay a referral bonus or a time-off award must be documented and maintained by the Authorized Management Official in accordance with the Air Force Records Disposition Schedule, which is in the Air Force Records Information Management System.

**Payment:** Properly documented and approved referral bonuses will be paid in one lump sum at the time of hire of the referred candidate. The Request for Personnel Action should be submitted within two pay periods of the recruited employee's EOD.

**Funding:** Referral bonus awards are not factored in as part of the awards spending as they are neither performance nor contribution awards.

As with the other incentives, to include relocation, retention, and recruitment, the resources for referral bonuses will come from the civilian resource management operating budget managed at organizational levels. This budget includes all things civilian pay to include overtime use, and civilian hiring. Keep in mind the bonus can be a time-off award.

Management officials must consult with FM/Unit RA(s) to validate funds are available for the referral bonus award. Funding resources should be identified up front and set aside until they are paid out. Due to the processing timeframe for the referral bonus awards, funding may cross fiscal years.

In situations where the referring employee is outside of the Center where the referral bonus eligible position exists, please have your servicing Center FM consult with HQ AFMC/FMA before moving forward.