

**Army Implementation Procedures for Civilian Incentive Programs
(Recruitment, Relocation, and Retention Incentives), dated 16 Feb 21
Questions & Answers
April 2021**

Q1. When should the service period begin for a recruitment incentive?

A1. The service agreement should be signed either prior to the first day of employment or the first day of employment and the service period for a recruitment incentive should begin on the first day of employment unless it meets one of the exceptions:

- If the employee does not begin work on the first day of the pay period, the service period will begin on the first day of the next pay period.
- If the employee is required to complete a probationary period or an initial period of formal training, the authorized management official may elect to delay the employee's service period until the beginning of the pay period following the completion of the probationary or training period.

Q2. What do implementation plans consist of?

A2. Command implementation plans should consist of responsibilities within the command in terms of who the approving authority is, the process for incentive approvals, along with verification of budget for the incentive.

Q3. Do you have a sample checklist you can share?

A3. AG-1CP established a quality control checklist and attached along the Q&A.

Q4. How often are we required to review retention incentives for bi-weekly payments? Is that still an annual requirements?

A4. Retention incentives are not required to be reviewed for employees receiving bi-weekly payments. However, if situations arise where commands need to terminate the incentive, they will be reviewed as necessary.

Q5. Is there a specified timeline that organizations are to retain determination and support documentation?

A5. The documents should be kept for at least 3 years after the incentive has ended.

Q6. Is the processing cell going to follow the "No service agreement required" when a retention incentive is being paid bi-weekly? The processing cell has required us to submit service agreements for the past 3 years?

A6. Army Implementation Procedures for Civilian Incentive Programs (Recruitment, Relocation, and Retention Incentives), dated 16 February 2021 states that service requirements are not required for bi-weekly payments. A statement of understanding is required for bi-weekly payments.

Q7. Please define "activity head or equivalent" and provide examples?

A7. According to Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army Civilian Personnel (DASA-CP), the activity head or equivalent is not lower than a GS-15 or an O6.

Q8. Do the commands or CHRA calculate the payments?

A8. Commands determine the percentage or amount of the incentive, CPAC will coordinate with commands to calculate the amounts. CPAC will review and ensure that the amount does not exceed 25% of the employee's basic pay and locality.

Q9. Will there be a process to obtain appraisal rating and disciplinary action information?

A9. This depends on how the Command's internal policy is established, as these documents are part of the supporting documentation of the request. This should be part of the command's internal process.

Q10. Is there a template or example of a packet to request a higher group retention incentive such as a 25% group retention incentive?

A10. There is the option to request a higher incentive, and the final approving authority is OPM. OPM has templates on their website at the following links. AG-1CP Benefits and Compensation Division can also provide the templates.

<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/recruitment-relocation-retention-incentives/fact-sheets/recruitment-incentive-waiver-template.pdf>

<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/recruitment-relocation-retention-incentives/fact-sheets/relocation-incentive-waiver-template.pdf>

<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/recruitment-relocation-retention-incentives/fact-sheets/retention-incentive-waiver-template.pdf>

Q11. For bi-weekly payments, how is it determined when the payments will end? What is the notification to CHRA for ending payments?

A11. Bi-weekly payments will end upon the employee leaving the position or when the employee receives the total amount of the incentive offered. A servicing Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC) should be tracking when payments end

Q12. Will a tasker be sent each year to provide plans or acknowledge no changes?

A12. AG-1CP will send a tasker through TMT annually

Q13. Must the 3Rs, be listed on the job announcement in order to pay it?

A13. Neither OPM nor DoD requires information about possible payment of an incentive to be included in a JOA, however, it is highly encouraged.

Q14. Will AG-1 CP send out a TMT tasker requesting annual reporting requirements for reviewing implementation plans (e.g. revised plans or acknowledge no changes were made by 31 Oct each year) Or is it the ACOMs responsibility to inform Army?

A14. Yes AG-1CP will send a tasker through TMT annually

Q15. AG-1 had put out guidance in 2016 that due to issues with retention incentives service agreements WOULD be required for all retention incentives, to include bi-weekly. This new guidance is now just requiring an SOU be signed. Is that correct?

A15. Yes, the Army Memorandum, Assistant G-1 for Civilian Personnel (AG-1CP), subject: Recruitment, Relocation, Retention Incentives Plans and Service Agreements, 13 May 2016, has been rescinded and replaced with the information in the Army Implementation Procedures for Civilian Incentive Programs (Recruitment, Relocation, and Retention Incentives), dated 16 February 2021. According to the new guidance, service agreements are not required for retention incentives receiving bi-weekly payments, however, Statement of Understanding are required.

Q16. What is the process to terminate a retention incentive?

A16. This is an internal process, but the terms of terminating the incentive are shown in the Implementation Guidance, (7. Service Agreement Criteria for Retention Incentives). Also these terms are listed within DoDI 1400.25, Volume 575, and Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 575, Subparts A, B, and C.

Q17. Are plans required for all commands or just the ones that have the approval authority?

A17. Implementation plans are required by commands with approving authority at the headquarters level, and the subordinate commands should follow internal procedures established by HQ.

Q18. How should incentives be handled when employees transferred within DoD? Should that be also part of the service agreement conditions, etc.?

A18. Service agreements should conform to the requirements for the different types of incentives, as specified in 5 CFR 575, which include the terms and conditions under which a Command must or may terminate a service agreement. Therefore, the service agreement should specify how to handle such a situation. Commands need to ensure that the negotiated service agreements are only valid within Department of Army and do not transfer to DoD.

Q19. If using DHA no announcement is required. Can management choose to offer an Incentive using a Non-Comp DHA?

A19. Yes, this can be offered, because OPM has designated DHA as hard to fill positions. Please refer to Army Implementation Procedures for Civilian Incentive Programs (Recruitment, Relocation, and Retention Incentives), date 16 February 2021.

Q20. Please provide updated link and/or template from slide 25. I got "page cannot be found" and wasn't able to find it searching the OPM website.

A20. <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/recruitment-relocation-retention-incentives/#url=Fact-Sheets>

Q21. There appears to be many questions that require clarification before Command plans can be finalized. Will the suspense for the submission of the implementation plans to AG-1 CP be extended?

A21. The extension has been granted and a TMT tasker has been sent out with a suspense of 30 May 2021.

Q22. Can you please provide more information on the Group Retention Incentives that were mentioned on the slides? Can a blanket Group Retention Incentive be approved for similar positions (i.e. IT) that are deemed hard to fill and meet retention incentive criteria?

A22. Information regarding group incentives can be found in the DoDI <https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/140025/1400.25-V575.pdf?ver=2018-02-02-110404-583>

Q23. Is the new implementing memo dated 16 FEB 2021 under revision? Assistant G-1 for Civilian Personnel (AG-1CP), subject: Army Implementation Procedures for Civilian Incentive Programs (Recruitment, Relocation, and Retention Incentives), 16 FEB 2021; was not mentioned under references on the 30 MAR briefing.

A23. The session on 30 March was meant to provide an overview of the Army Implementation Procedures for Civilian Incentive Programs (Recruitment, Relocation, and Retention Incentives), date 16 February 2021 that was released 16 February.

Q24. What is the extent of the CHRA's responsibility for "Perform quality control checks, and verify command quality control checks"?

A24. The Army Implementation Procedures for Civilian Incentive Programs (Recruitment, Relocation, and Retention Incentives), dated 19 February 2021 states that CHRA will perform quality control checks to ensure Commands are submitting requests properly before being processed. Commands will be responsible for submitting the quality control checklists are part of the request package.

Q25. Must the 3Rs be listed on the JOA in order to pay it? CHRA has a guidance memo which states "While there is no OPM, DoD or Army specific guidance requiring the inclusion of a statement notifying applicants of the potential offering of an incentive, it is highly recommended this information be present in the JOA." Will policy now make this a requirement on the JOA?

A25. Neither OPM nor DoD requires information about possible payment of an incentive to be included in a JOA, however, It is highly encouraged.

Q26. For a recruitment incentive, if the service agreement is signed on or after EOD, what are examples of sufficient documentation to show that the determination to pay a recruitment incentive was made prior to EOD? Email from management? JOA that says "recruitment incentive MAY be authorized"?

A26. Commands are required to make a determination of approving the recruitment incentive and notify a servicing CPAC before the prospective employee enters on duty. The documentation provided by commands should address that the determination was made prior to the employee's EOD, based on the internal procedures that the commands should have in place.

Q27. Who should be identifying service agreement issues prior to it coming to the CivPRC and what is the correct way to address with the Command? (i.e., EOD was January, service period started in February and the agreement was not signed until March. Based on guidance, the determination (written) should be prior to their entrance on the job for a recruitment).

A27. For recruitment incentives, the service agreement should be signed on or before the EOD, or the beginning of the pay period (if applicable). As a servicing CPAC is responsible for quality

checks on all command's incentive requests, the servicing CPAC should identify these issues to commands.

Q28. Since the new guidance do not require service agreements for employees receiving bi-weekly payments for retention incentives, will this be at the discretion of the commands? Sometimes their policy requires Service Agreement for all approved 3Rs incentives to ensure the proper execution of approved service agreements prior to payment of an incentive (i.e., MEDCOM), so does CivPRC prior to processing.

A28. Service agreements requiring a period of service are not mandatory for retention incentives receiving bi-weekly payments, however, a statement of understanding indicating reasons for termination of incentives should be developed and signed by the employee.

Q29. AG1CP numbered message says that payments may be made in lump sum or periodic, the DFAS system only allows for processing lump sum or "biweekly" payments. Has this been addressed or will an update to the guidance be provided?

A29. DFAS pays bi-weekly payments, and lump sum payments automatically. Installment payments are initiated manually by submitting remedy tickets.