

## **Part 405 – Position Classification**

### **Subpart D – Job Sharing**

#### **405.30 Purpose**

The purpose of this part is to establish guidelines on job sharing in the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Job sharing is the filling of one position with two part-time employees. Generally, a job-sharing team is two employees at the same grade level, but other arrangements are possible. Job sharers are part time employees and re subject to personnel policies on that basis.

#### **405.31 Policy**

It is the policy of the Natural Resources Conservation Service to encourage employees who want extra time to care for their families, pursue additional education, accommodate health needs, or phase into retirement to seek flexibility in their work schedules by participating in job sharing.

#### **405.32 Authorities**

5 U.S.C. 3401-3408 and related provisions of Public Law 05-437 and 5 CFR Part 340 provide authority for the establishment of part-time career employment programs under the Federal Employees Part-Time Career Employment Act of 1978.

Each Regional Office, State, Center, and Institute, the Caribbean Area, Pacific Basin Area and National Headquarters will determine who will have approval authority within the organization (e.g., Regional Conservationist, State Conservationist, Directors of Centers and Institutes, Administrative Officer, Human Resources Manager, first-line supervisor, second-line supervisor).

#### **405.33 Jobs Eligible for Job Sharing**

There is no definite list of jobs "suitable" for job sharing, and no law or regulation limits part time or job sharing to specific jobs or grade levels. Any nonsupervisory job may be filled by a part-time employee or by a team of job sharers when the arrangement meets the needs of the agency and the employee(s). All supervisory positions that meet the classification definition are excluded from participating in this program.

#### **405.34 Guidelines for Implementing Job Sharing**

Each NRCS personnel office should publish a bulletin annually to all employees advising them of the job sharing program opportunity.

Management should review and consider positions for job sharing before issuing a vacancy announcement. This consideration is made in conjunction with other management decisions, such as filling the position through career enhancement; part time vs. full time; filling the position below the full performance level, etc. NRCS vacancy announcements for full-time positions identified as suitable for job sharing, will include the following statement: "Applications for job sharing will be considered."

The human resources office will ensure that all requests for participation in the job-sharing program are approved by the requesting official and an individual with delegated approval authority, (e.g., State Conservationist, State Administrative Officer, Human Resources Manager).

Employees participating in the job-sharing program who wish to return to full-time employment must apply and compete for a vacant full-time position in accordance with the NRCS Merit Promotion Plan, or may be reassigned to a vacant position with the same career potential.

The human resources office must accept applications from job-sharing teams within the area of consideration when filling identified job-sharing positions. Each member of the team must be among the best qualified in order for the team to be selected. In a situation where job sharing would not be workable, the selecting official is free to select a single individual from the best-qualified list.

The human resources office must monitor NRCS experiences with job sharing. In accordance with FPM Letter 296-109, dated March 22, 1990, the human resources office must identify job sharers with special codes and remarks on the SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action.

Management has the authority to terminate job-sharing arrangements at any time.

If one partner is unable to maintain the agreed-upon schedule, goes on extended leave, resigns, or takes another job, the remaining partner would be expected to work full-time until the other job sharer is replaced.

When it is necessary to end a particular job-sharing arrangement, the agency may reassign one or both of the job sharers to other part-time positions or to other full-time positions. NOTE: RIF procedures are not appropriate for separating a job sharer when the agency wishes to replace the two job sharers with one full-time employee (U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit 774 F. 2D 475).

#### **405.35 Position Descriptions**

When two job sharers at the same grade level are jointly responsible for all the duties and responsibilities of the full-time position, there is no need to restructure the position. Each team member should have a copy of the original position description to which a statement has been attached to show that the incumbent is a job sharer jointly responsible for carrying out all the duties and responsibilities of the position.

When the job sharers will be individually responsible only for portions of the job, or when the job sharers are at different grade levels, separate position descriptions are required to reflect the actual duties and responsibilities of each employee. Each job sharer must have a position description that accurately reflects his or her duties and responsibilities.

The decision on whether job sharers should be jointly responsible for the entire position or only for separate functions depends on the job and the abilities of the job-sharing team. To determine the arrangement for a particular job, the supervisor (with assistance from the personnel office) should examine the position description and decide which tasks will be shared; i.e., handled by whichever team member is on duty, and which will be assigned to a specific individual, based on skills and experience.

#### **405.36 Work Schedules**

Specific work schedules depend on the nature of the job and the needs of the office and the job-sharing team. Almost any reasonable arrangement is possible if it meets the needs of the supervisor and the job sharers. Scheduling should take advantage of the fact that two people rather than one are filling the job. These possibilities include overlapping time, split shifts, or working in different locations at the same time. Work schedules for job sharers can be from 16 to 32 hours per week and can be varied in the same way as those of other part-time employees. The amount of scheduled overlap time depends on the needs of the particular position. For example, positions may need to

overlap when there is a need to exchange views and discuss new ideas in order to produce a better work product.

#### **405.37 Performance Standards and Evaluation**

Each member of a job-sharing team must have his or her own performance standards. These will be identical if the job sharers are jointly responsible for the entire position. Each job sharer must be evaluated separately although the evaluation will often be based on work to which both have contributed. To make the supervisor's job easier, it would be wise to build in a mechanism for determining the relative contributions of each job sharer.

#### **405.38 Space and Equipment**

In some offices, the availability of space and equipment will be limited. Job sharers who use the same desk, telephone, computer, etc., will need to agree on the basics so they will not lose time searching for or rearranging items.

#### **405.39 Communications**

For job sharing to be successful, everyone with whom the job sharers have contact must be able to assume that any information given to one team member will reach the other. In other words, supervisors, coworkers, and clients expect to communicate with "the position" via the person on duty at the time. The job sharers must have a workable communication system that serves the purpose without detracting from their ability to get the work done.