

**USDA Forest Service
Presidential Management Fellowship (PMF)
Handbook for Hiring Managers
FALL 2019**



PMF PRESIDENTIAL
MANAGEMENT
FELLOWS PROGRAM

**This Handbook Contains
I. FAQs for Hiring Managers
II. An Example Completed Proposal**

This guidance was compiled by the 2019 PMF Recruitment Committee with input from the PMF Advisory Board and PMF Coordinator. It is intended to be used as a resource and a guide, and is subject to change. The PMF Coordinator will consult with each hiring manager after a proposal is submitted and may go over many of these questions in more depth.

I. FAQs for Hiring Managers

- 1. What is the Presidential Management Fellowship?** The Presidential Management Fellowship (PMF) is a prestigious 2-year fellowship that brings recent graduate students into public service at the GS-9, 11, or 12 level across the federal government. It is a non-USA jobs hiring pathway that taps into a streamlined hiring pool identified by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Through a national competitive process, OPM gauges competency in critical thinking, interpersonal skills, and commitment to public service to determine the selection of PMF Finalists. The Forest Service PMF Program, in its current form, was established in 2002, and has earned a strong reputation for recruiting excellent talent. The Forest Service typically hires at the GS-9 or GS-11 level into a career ladder position. However, the level of each position posting will be considered on a case-by-case basis with the PMF Coordinator.
- 2. What kinds of positions can I hire through the PMF Program?** PMFs can be hired across all levels of the agency in many job series. PMFs in the past have been biologists, environmental coordinators, assistant Forest Planners, accountants, social scientists, partnership coordinators, public affairs specialists, ecologists, and more. Positions have been filled in every deputy chief area and at the district, forest, regional, and Washington Office level. Every year, the Forest Service strives to hire PMFs all across the nation, and typically brings in 10 – 20 PMFs per year.
- 3. What is the expected role of a PMF supervisor?**
The expected role of the PMF supervisor includes:
 - Guiding and supporting the employee throughout their fellowship;
 - Ensuring the OPM training and rotation requirements are met;
 - Performing regular bi-annual Forest Service employee evaluations to communicate employee performance and confirm expectations;
 - Supporting the PMF in determining appropriate rotations and training opportunities, as well as overall career planning; and
 - Identifying conversion opportunities or identifying and facilitating networking opportunities which may lead to communicated conversion goals.

4. What is the timeline for hiring a PMF?

OPM typically announces PMF finalists in late November. In order to reach the highest number of candidates, the Forest Service aims to advertise several PMF positions in early January to account for the holiday season and finals schedules. Thus, proposals for Forest Service PMF positions are requested by mid-November. The PMF coordinator will have a consultation call with each hiring manager who submits an application to go over questions and concerns, and finalize details of the position posting. Once finalized, the positions are posted on a portal for PMF Finalists, called the “Talent Management System” (TMS).

Following the posting on TMS, interested applicants will send their resumes directly to the appropriate hiring manager and the PMF coordinator, and will communicate with the hiring manager to schedule interviews. Finalists may begin applying for positions as soon as they are posted, but they may not begin their position until they have completed their graduate degree. Generally, finalists graduate in June and hope to begin their PMF position in the summer or fall following graduation. However, a PMF finalist is eligible to apply for a position as Presidential Management Fellow for up to one year after becoming a finalist. Thus, proposals for PMF positions can be accepted and PMFs may be hired year round.

5. What grade level should the positions be at? PMFs enter into federal service across the government at the GS-9, GS-11, or GS-12 levels, depending on qualifications and experience. At the Forest Service, typically PMFs enter into a career ladder position beginning at the GS-9 or GS-11 level. When submitting a proposal for a PMF position, the target GS level listed for the position is the highest grade level the fellow will be eligible to convert into after their fellowship. For example, listing a target conversion grade of GS-12 allows the PMF to convert into a GS-12 position, but will not allow them to convert into a GS-13 position. A target conversion grade at the GS-12 or GS-13 level may ensure competitiveness with other agencies. The Forest Service PMF Coordinator will provide further guidance to hiring managers after their PMF position proposal is submitted.

6. What do I need to take into consideration for the series of the job? Select the series based on what is most applicable to your position. Keep in mind, if the PMF would like to convert into a different series, they may need to spend time in their desired series to be able to convert. For example, if a PMF is hired into a 301 series but desires to convert into a 401 series, they may choose to do a detail in a 401 position to fulfill the needed requirements for a 401 position. The FS PMF HR specialist can provide further guidance to hiring managers regarding series requirements.

7. Can I offer incentive-based recruitment tools? There are optional incentive-based recruitment tools available to PMF supervisors that may be applied to enhance recruitment opportunities. These tools must be used according to agency or departmental policy, which often puts forth very specific requirements. These incentives include non-monetary flexibilities, transfer of station cost reimbursement, recruitment and relocation bonuses, tuition reimbursement, and creditable service for annual leave accrual. Some managers choose to utilize these tools. Utilizing them are not required or necessary.

8. Who is responsible for paying for the PMF’s salary, the OPM hiring fee, and training throughout the year? The hiring unit is responsible for all salary and OPM hiring costs, which includes a \$7,000 one-time hiring fee. The hiring unit is also responsible for all costs related to the PMF’s training and associated travel throughout the fellowship.

9. What requirements must the Presidential Management Fellow meet?

- a. One 4-6 month detail/rotation inside or outside of the Forest Service;
- b. 80 hours of formal, interactive training each year;
- c. Participation in the PMF Orientation (likely a combined PMF and National New Employee Orientation in October in Albuquerque; serves as 40 hours of required training); and
- d. Involvement in PMF Cohort Committees.

9.1 What kind of detail could or should the PMF complete? OPM requires completion of at least one four to six month detail as part of the fellowship’s requirements. PMFs may do one long detail, or break it up into smaller details totaling at least four months, provided these details are directly related to each other. PMFs can use this detail to rotate to a different level of the agency (i.e. a PMF on a forest could rotate into a Regional Office) or may wish to explore other opportunities outside of the agency. This is entirely up to the PMF and their supervisor, and must be in a different position and with a different supervisor than their normal PMF position.

9.2 What kind of trainings could or should the PMF complete? According to OPM, “the content of training should be tailored to the specific learning objectives which will qualify the PMF for the target position at the end of the PMF internship.” In general, the requirement may be met with various types of training as long as it is agreed upon by both the supervisor and PMF. Note that the 80-hours of annual training the PMF completes must be formal and interactive, not self-guided online training. PMFs can learn about recommended trainings through their PMF Community and OPM recommendations. PMFs are welcome to do more than 80 hours of training, but 80 hours is the required amount. Some types of trainings PMFs have attended include: the required Orientation in Albuquerque (counts for 40 hours of training for the first year), Leadership Development Training, Facilitation Training, Project Management Training, Basic Firefighter Trainings, Congressional Briefing Training, in-person NEPA courses, and courses at the Northern Research University.

9.3 What Orientation do PMFs receive? Every year, the PMF cohort attends an orientation to meet their cohort and receive an introduction to the agency. Typically, this PMF Orientation will be combined with the National New Employee Orientation (NNEO) in early October.

9.4 What are PMF Cohort Committees? At the PMF Orientation, the PMF will choose to participate in two to three PMF Cohort Committees to maintain PMF-specific communication and program development over the year. These committees focus on topics including recruitment, retention, communication, orientation, and more. Current PMFs have a responsibility to support the subsequent year’s hiring of PMFs and the continuation of the program within the Forest Service. Thus, each committee is integral to maintaining the strength of the PMF program.

10. What resources exist to support a PMF?

1. Individual Development Plan (IDP) that is submitted to the PMF Coordinator
2. PMF Advisory Board
3. PMF HR Coordinator
4. PMF Mentors

10.1 What is the Individual Development Plan? Every year the PMF is required to submit an Individual Development Plan signed by both their supervisor and the fellow. This is a helpful tool for the PMF’s career development to document trainings and details they’d like to pursue.

10.2 Who is the PMF Advisory Board? The PMF Advisory Board exists to provide advice on matters in the PMF community and serve as a resource. It is chaired by the Chief of the Forest Service, and the Associate Deputy Chief of Business Operations. Additional board members include Leanne Veldhuis (Leanne.Veldhuis@usda.gov), National Partnership Coordinator, and Melissa Jenkins (Melissa.L.Jenkins@usda.gov), Innovation Manager in Wood Innovations.

10.3 Who is the PMF Hiring Coordinator? The PMF Coordinator can be reached at SM.FS.FSPMF@usda.gov, and is available throughout the year for HR questions.

10.4 Who are PMF Mentors? Each PMF will receive a second year PMF as a mentor as well a PMF alumni mentor. These mentors will touch base with the PMF throughout the year to offer guidance and support.

11. What do I need to know about conversion? PMFs are eligible to non-competitively convert into the competitive service at the completion of their two-year fellowship. While a PMF does not need to be on the organizational chart to participate in the fellowship, please keep in mind that they must convert into a position on an organizational chart. The PMF should start exploring conversion opportunities at least four to five months before the fellowship end date for a permanent position. It is the responsibility of the hiring manager to support the PMF in identifying conversion positions.

12. How do I submit a position to be considered for the PMF program? Please email your position proposal using the provided template to SM.FS.PMFproposals@usda.gov. An example proposal template is completed below. For any questions or concerns, please contact the PMF Coordinator at SM.FS.FSPMF@usda.gov. The Coordinator can also put you in touch with the current members of the PMF recruitment committee, if you would like to speak to a current PMF directly to learn more about the program firsthand.

For more information, please find federal government-wide PMF resources below:

- PMF FAQs: <https://www.pmf.gov/agencies/faqs.aspx>
- Pathways Program Handbook (updated August 2016): <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/hiring-information/students-recent-graduates/reference-materials/pathways-programs-handbook.pdf>

II. Example Proposal Template

Supervisor Information <i>Please include name, title, phone number, and email</i>	Smokey Bear, Ranger, 202-205-1380, smokey.bear@usda.gov
Sponsoring Unit	Edgewood Ranger District, Smokey National Forest
I agree that the hiring unit will be responsible for all costs associated with the PMF including salary, training and associated travel, and hiring, which includes the \$7,000 OPM hiring fee.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
I agree that the PMF will attend in-person Orientation as part of their training.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
PMF Position <i>The PMF's full promotion level (FPL) for conversion into the federal government will be the listed target conversion grade. All PMF opportunities must be posted in the Talent Management System, and must include the target grade in the posting.</i>	<u>Position Title/Series/Grade:</u> Natural Resource Specialist GS-401-9 <u>Target Conversion Grade:</u> 12 <i>The PMF Coordinator will work with hiring managers to finalize GS levels.</i>
Description of Duty Station (no more than a few paragraphs)	<u>Description:</u> The duty station for one position is Edgewood. Edgewood has a population of 2,500, is a full

<p><i>Please Provide the zip code for the duty station.</i></p>	<p>service community with grocery stores, sit-down and fast-food restaurants, several banks, a hardware store, churches of many denominations, a hospital, and a number of health-care providers. Schools offer K-12, plus there is a community college in a nearby town. Purchase prices of a nice three-bedroom house in the Edgewood area range from \$125,000 and up. Property values are likely to rise because of the construction of a new four-lane, east-west highway about 12 miles north of town.</p> <p><u>Zip Code:</u> 12345</p>
<p>Draft Position Overview</p>	<p>The PMF will be zoned across three ranger districts and will be involved in implementation of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act, program management, strategic and budget planning, grant management, partnership development, and website development. Specific duties include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisting in preparation of technical program plans, objectives, schedules, budget and other fiscal documentation. • Assisting in preparing a variety of issue or briefing papers and reports for the Forest Leadership Team, such as for budget documents. • Supporting the development, analysis and communication of program impacts for internal and external audiences.
<p>Unique Skills & Qualifications Required</p>	<p>Candidates that bring the following experience or background are especially suited to this position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and conducting prescribed burns on public lands • Facilitating public meetings • Writing NEPA documents • Knowledge of climate change science and ecosystem service markets
<p>Leadership Rotation/Development Opportunities</p> <p>5 CFR § 362.405(b)(4)</p> <p><i>(i) “Each Fellow must receive at least one developmental assignment of 4 to 6 months in duration, with management and/or technical responsibilities consistent with the Fellow’s IDP. As an alternative, a Fellow may choose to participate in an agency-wide initiative or other Presidential or Administration initiative that will provide the Fellow with the experience he or she would have gained through the 4-to-6-month developmental assignment.”</i></p> <p><i>(ii) The developmental assignment may be within the Fellow’s organization, in another component of the agency, or in</i></p>	<p>Examples of rotations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Washington Office, State and Private Forestry • North Central Research Station, Research and Development • Appeal Review, Regional Office

<p>another Federal agency.</p> <p>5 CFR § 362.405(b)(5)</p> <p><i>The Fellow may receive other short-term rotational assignments of 1 to 6 months in duration, at the <u>agency's</u> discretion.</i></p>	
<p>Training Examples</p> <p>5 CFR § 362.405(b)(2)</p> <p><i>“The agency must provide each Fellow a minimum of 80 hours of formal interactive training per year that addresses the competencies outlined in the IDP. Mandatory annual training, such as information security and ethics training, does not count towards the 80-hour requirement.”</i></p>	<p>Examples of Trainings for this PMF include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PMF & National New Employee Orientation/Training – 40 hrs • Forest Plan Implementation and NEPA 1900-1 – 40 hrs • S-190/L-130 Wildland Firefighter Training – 40 hrs • Supervisory Leadership Course, Eastern Management Development Center – 32 hrs • Congressional Briefing for the Forest Service offered by the Government Affairs Institute – 32 hrs
<p>Potential Conversion Positions</p> <p>5 CFR § 362.409(b)</p> <p><i>“An agency may convert, without a break in service, an ERB-certified Fellow to a competitive service term or permanent appointment.”</i></p>	<p>Potential conversion possibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation staff officer • NEPA coordinator (district/forest) • Deputy district ranger • Public affairs officer
<p>Leadership qualifications of the proposed supervisor</p>	<p>I have worked on the Edgewood Ranger District for 5 years, 2 as a District Ranger. I have supervised 48 employees (including one PMF) and am currently participating in the Forest Service Senior Leadership Program. I am committed to providing leadership and development opportunities and supporting eventual conversion to a permanent position.</p>
<p>What attributes specifically distinguish this position as a leadership development position?</p>	<p>The broad scope of work and opportunities to work on diverse district, forest and regional staffs. The position’s focus on key agency processes such as recreation and fire management, NEPA and appeals and program planning will facilitate effective development of skills and perspectives required for future agency leaders.</p>
<p>How does this position tie to your unit’s workforce planning needs?</p>	<p>A need exists for additional expertise in this area. Several employees on the unit with this experience will likely be retiring in the next 3 to 5 years.</p>