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.
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 will be made to ensure its accuracy. Should you find any errors or outdated information, please notify the Office of Organizational and Employee Development (OED) at: gs_oed-tel@usgs.gov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 1, Updated November 2018
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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!

James F (Jim) Reilly, II

17th USGS 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
Feedback

The USGS strives to continuously improve information provided to new employees. Our goal is to ensure you’re provided with the right information at the right time, making your transition into our Agency easier. Please help us meet this goal by providing your feedback via a 3 minute survey found at: https://goo.gl/obKS4K
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. Utilize 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://goo.gl/WM9ifx](https://goo.gl/WM9ifx).

**Benefits Webinar**

The Office of Human Resources conducts benefits information sessions regularly via webinars. Access the schedule for the current calendar year at: [https://goo.gl/pWqVYX](https://goo.gl/pWqVYX).

**Safety Training**

You can access guidance on safety training, as well as complete any required safety training applicable to your position at [https://goo.gl/NhmM2c](https://goo.gl/NhmM2c).

**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.

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Amphibian Research - Dr. Erin Muths, a scientist with the ARMI program (Amphibian Research and Monitoring Initiative), samples frogs at a field site on Mt. Evans, Colorado. **Credit:** Don Campbell, USGS.
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, the foundation of the USGS Guiding Principles which include:

- Be Respectful
- Be Accountable
- Communicate
- Value Differences
- Encourage
- Focus
- Collaborate
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://goo.gl/BKZaKJ

Access the most recent USGS Organizational Chart here: https://goo.gl/MJGe9h

What We Do

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.

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, we provide 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, the USGS provides 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.

**Land Resources Mission Area (LRMA)**

https://goo.gl/AixbmL

The USGS LRMA delivers data, tools, techniques, and analyses that advance understanding of landscapes, the forces that shape them, and the interactions of plants, animals, and people that live within them. LRMA scientists and engineers are world leaders in the research, monitoring, and remote sensing necessary to understand and detect changes that affect land resources and processes essential to the Nation’s economic growth and societal well-being. The resulting data and research products of the LRMA provide an unbiased scientific foundation for decisions about the management of natural and built landscapes and how they might be adapted to secure the Nation’s interests.

The information and applications produced by the LRMA are widely used by DOI, other governmental entities at all levels, and the public to reduce the adverse impacts of natural and man-made change and support beneficial outcomes. These efforts, broadly framed as adaptation, are important to the DOI as the largest manager of the Nation’s land, water and biological resources. The LRMA research, modeling and forecasting supports adaptive management efforts, such as managing forests during severe droughts; anticipating changes in permafrost, glaciers, and wildfire patterns in the Arctic; and understanding flood-related risks.

The LRMA delivers observations, scientific understanding, and decision support for land resource management in the U.S. through its three subactivities:

- **National Land Imaging Program**  
  https://goo.gl/8jRpY9
  The National Land Imaging (NLI) Program delivers remote sensing observation capacity, data, and research to understand how landscapes and associated natural resources are changing at global and regional scales. It collects, archives, and distributes a broad array of data from near-earth and satellite based remote sensing platforms. The NLI Program provides long-term records of changes in landscapes, real-time change-detection capabilities, and associated interpretive tools that decision makers use for land and resource management decisions. It also provides resource managers with analysis to apply land and natural resources research, monitoring, and action-related resources where they are most likely to be meaningful and relevant.

- **Land Change Science Program**  
  https://goo.gl/SMwUTL
  The Land Change Science Program (LCSP) conducts fundamental and applied research to understand the forces that shape landscapes and their potential uses, to distinguish between land surface change resulting from natural forces and those that are associated with land use decisions, and to provide the scientific basis for land use decisions that affect the safety of communities, economic prosperity, and natural resources of the Nation. The program delivers research products, information, and computer programs that help decision makers apply the knowledge and data gained from on-the-ground and remote sensing observation systems to land use planning, natural resource management, and adaptation planning decisions.
National and Regional Climate Adaptation Science Centers
https://goo.gl/WVnugH
The National and Regional Climate Adaptation Science Centers (NRCASCs) deliver on-the-ground observations and research to understand how changes in climate, land use, and associated changes in land cover are affecting land resources and associated populations of fish and wildlife species essential to the Nation's natural heritage. They provide information essential to the development of tools and applications that help resource managers understand which observed changes are meaningful, what the observations suggest about the condition and sustainability of natural resources, and what can be done to support conservation priorities of the Nation. The NRCASCs serve essential roles in adaptation planning initiatives across the Nation, supporting regional and nationwide monitoring of key indicators of the environmental variability of terrestrial, freshwater, and coastal habitats, along with the abundance and distribution of biota, invasive species, wildlife disease, and other ecological features. They likewise serve as an essential interface between Federal researchers, land managers, and front line stewards of natural resources.

Core Science Systems
https://goo.gl/oqwLEK
Core Science Systems (CSS) leads the USGS’s mission as the civilian mapping agency for the Nation and supports the conduct of detailed surveys and the resulting distribution of high-quality and highly accurate topographic, geologic, hydrographic, and biogeographic maps and data. Mapping accuracy through cutting-edge technology allows for precise planning for energy development, transportation and pipeline infrastructure projects, urban planning, flood prediction, emergency response, and hazard mitigation. CSS builds on the core strengths of the USGS in characterizing and understanding complex Earth and natural systems. CSS products provide foundational geospatial data for the Nation; underpin the work of all USGS mission areas; and are essential enablers for meeting the USGS’s priorities in addressing America’s growing energy, mineral resource, water, and infrastructure improvement needs. The CSS Mission Area has three subactivities:

National Geospatial Program
https://goo.gl/HfGjPN
The National Geospatial Program organizes, updates, and publishes the geospatial baseline of the Nation’s topography, natural landscape, and built environment through The National Map, and conducts geospatial research to discover new approaches for updating and using geospatial data and for reducing costs of these activities. The National Map is a compilation of the foundational data layers for the entire Nation, and is maintained in the public domain.

National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program
https://goo.gl/jvndyZ
The National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program advances the understanding of the nature of the materials—rocks, energy resources, water—and processes such as characterization, containment, and flow. This nationwide program of geologic research produces abundant, high-impact peer-reviewed journal articles annually on surficial and bedrock geology, mapping, and multidimensional models that provide fundamental research and data for assessing energy, mineral, and water resources.

Science Synthesis, Analysis, and Research Program
https://goo.gl/zrXCnN
The Science Synthesis, Analysis, and Research Program (SSAR) provides analysis and synthesis of scientific data and information, and long-term preservation of scientific data and library collections. This program strives to accelerate research and decision making through data science, information delivery, advanced computing, biodiversity analytics, and preserved geoscientific assets. SSAR ensures that data are strategically managed, integrated, and available to decision makers and others as they focus on issues associated with Earth and life science processes. The SSAR Program includes the Core Science Analytics, Synthesis, and Libraries program (CSAS&L); the
National Geological and Geophysical Data Preservation Program (NGGDPP); the Core Research Center; and the J.W. Powell Center for Analysis and Synthesis (Powell Center). These activities provide an integrated suite of critical data, services, and applications to empower USGS and its collaborators to effectively manage, steward, and analyze key scientific priorities.

Ecosystems
https://goo.gl/DdbxLj

Through the Ecosystems Mission Area, the USGS provides scientific information and decision support to meet DOI’s shared responsibility for land and species management, to fulfill treaty obligations with tribes and foreign governments, to develop energy and mineral resources on DOI lands and the outer Continental Shelf, and to supply water for irrigation and other human needs. USGS science protects and conserves the Nation’s fish and wildlife heritage by bridging the gap between science and management for at-risk species and species of management concern. The USGS works with many partners to sustain the hunting, fishing, and wildlife-related recreation needs of the public by providing data, science research, and monitoring that informs and supports the hunting and recreational fishing sectors. The USGS also identifies conservation measures designed to preclude the need for listing species as endangered or threatened; help listed species recover; prevent or control invasive species and wildlife disease outbreaks; and apply decision science so that management and policy actions are transparent and durable. To accomplish the USGS’s science mission, the Ecosystems Mission Area has six subactivities:

- **Status and Trends**
  https://goo.gl/ygQL8u
  Credible information about the status and trends of natural resources is required at a variety of spatial and temporal scales to detect changes that may signal degradation or improvement of natural systems, or to identify new or emerging conditions that signal the need for management action or further investigative research. An understanding of the status and trends of natural resources is also critical to adaptive resource management, a sequential decision-making process for continually improving management policies and practices by learning from the outcomes of previous decisions and management actions.

- **Fisheries Program**
  https://goo.gl/Gh6AS8
  Over 46 million recreational fishers annually generate approximately $48 billion for the American economy in equipment, fuel purchases, guide services, and travel and lodging (American Sportfishing Association, 2015). However, almost 40 percent of the Nation’s freshwater species are at risk of decline or are vulnerable to extinction. Thriving fisheries and healthy watersheds are vital to America’s food supply, outdoor recreation, and diverse and abundant ecosystems. The USGS Fisheries Program provides science and technology to support protection and enhancement of the Nation’s fisheries and aquatic resources, with particular focus on DOI trust responsibilities for protected species, migratory species, and species managed through tribal and other international treaties. USGS’s capacity and expertise are applied to the priorities of species conservation, habitat restoration, disease prevention and management, energy development, and water quantity and quality needs.

- **Wildlife Program**
  https://goo.gl/sQeWNF
  Abundant wildlife populations and the habitats upon which they depend are an enduring part of the rich natural heritage of the U.S. Their presence boosts the economy directly through hunting, bird watching, and other recreational opportunities, and they contribute to food security, medical research, and genetic diversity. Healthy habitats that support wildlife also provide healthy soils, clean water, and storm mitigation. The USGS Wildlife Program provides science, technology, and decision support to inform management of migratory birds, terrestrial and marine mammals, amphibians and reptiles, and terrestrial plants, with particular focus on DOI trust responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), Bald
and Golden Eagle Protection Act, and other Federal statutes. USGS science spans all aspects of wildlife biology and ecology needed by DOI and other Federal, State, and tribal managers to make informed, cost-effective, and balanced decisions of economic, social, ecological, and cultural importance.

**Environments Program**
https://goo.gl/W4JSdy

The USGS Environments Program provides science to understand natural and human influences on the ecosystems, lands, and waters under management responsibility of DOI bureaus and other Federal, State, and tribal partners. This information helps land managers balance land uses, resolve and prevent resource management conflicts, restore and maintain trust resources for future generations, and keep communities safe. To facilitate this process, USGS scientists analyze data collected over many decades to predict and assess the effects of threats like wildfire and drought on existing and projected land uses, and develop tools to help managers understand risk and make cost-effective resource management decisions. USGS scientists develop new techniques to improve the condition of degraded lands, and provide information on costs and return on those investments. Information and tools resulting from USGS studies help streamline energy and mineral development permitting processes by helping managers select the most cost-effective and least impactful alternative.

**Invasive Species**
https://goo.gl/v7Nhlf

Fighting the economic, ecologic, and health threats posed by more than 6,500 plant and animal invaders costs the U.S. economy over $120 billion annually. Invasive plants and animals cause significant economic losses and damage forests, croplands, rangelands, and aquatic resources. Examples of issues and damages include blocked water facilities and waterways, increased fire vulnerability and diminished grazing value, harm to the fisheries industry, and wildlife diseases that threaten human health and agriculture. Invasive species are contributing factors in 42 percent of all threatened and endangered species listings under the Endangered Species Act. The USGS Invasive Species Program develops tools, technologies, and decision support systems to detect, monitor, assess risk, and control aquatic and terrestrial invasive species, including invasive wildlife diseases, across the U.S. and its Territories.

**Cooperative Research Units**
https://goo.gl/ZtKaBk

The Cooperative Research Unit (CRU) program meets the science and technical assistance needs of Federal, State, and local natural resource managers. Each of the 40 CRUs, located in 38 states, is a partnership of the USGS, other DOI bureaus, other Federal agencies, a State fish and wildlife agency, a host university, and the Wildlife Management Institute. The Fish and Wildlife Service is a formal cooperator in most of the CRUs. Since 1935, this cooperative relationship has provided a strong connection between the USGS, Federal and State management agencies, and the national university community. The CRU structure leverages cooperator resources to deliver program outcomes that exceed what any cooperator could achieve alone.

**Energy and Minerals**
https://goo.gl/pzC18C

Energy and mineral resources are a critical component of the Nation’s economy. The U.S. has not achieved energy independence and is completely dependent upon foreign nations for 20 different mineral commodities, including several that are critical for national security. The Nation depends on energy to power homes and businesses, as well as minerals to manufacture products such as cellphones, laptops, and cars. As demands for energy and mineral resources grow, USGS research and assessments become increasingly critical to understand the occurrence, quality, supply, and use of national and global resources. The impartial, in-depth science provided by the USGS Mineral Resources Program (MRP) and the Energy Resources Program (ERP) facilitates resource discovery and responsible natural resource development as well as providing information and analyses for strategic, evidence-based economic and geopolitical decisions. The energy and mineral resources mission area is organized into two subactivities:
• **Mineral Resources Program**  
  [https://goo.gl/Kv1ERT](https://goo.gl/Kv1ERT)  
The USGS Mineral Resources Program (MRP) is the sole Federal source of scientific information and unbiased research on nonfuel mineral potential, production, consumption, and interaction with the environment. The MRP supports data collection and research on a wide variety of nonfuel mineral resources that are important to the economic stability and national security of the U.S. The USGS has served as a trusted source of information on mineral resources since Congress established it in 1879. In the intervening years, the Nation has evolved significantly, but the need for mineral resources and the science and tools to understand them is greater than ever.

• **Energy Resources Program**  
  [https://goo.gl/T1HRUf](https://goo.gl/T1HRUf)  
The USGS Energy Resources Program (ERP) is the sole provider of unbiased, publicly available estimates of geological energy resources for the U.S. (exclusive of the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf), and provides publicly available estimates related to global oil and gas resources. The ERP addresses the challenge of increasing demand for energy sources by conducting basic and applied research on geologic energy resources and on the environmental and economic impacts of their use. Among the geologic energy resources that the ERP studies are the following: oil, natural gas, coal, coalbed methane, gas hydrates, geothermal resources, uranium, oil shale, bitumen, and heavy oil. ERP science informs decision making related to domestic and foreign energy resources, as well as the management of energy resources on Federal lands.

• **Contaminant Biology Program**  
  [https://goo.gl/QBBt5j](https://goo.gl/QBBt5j)  
The USGS Contaminant Biology Program (CBP) supports specialized teams of biologists, toxicologists, and biochemists who develop and apply advanced laboratory methods and field investigations to understand potential biological health effects from exposures to contaminant and pathogen hazards in the environment. In collaboration with the Toxic Substances Hydrology Program CBP works with our stakeholders within and outside DOI, including other government agencies, industry, NGOs, academia and others, who tell us we are uniquely capable of helping them protect that most precious of resources, health. We do this by filling the data gaps they have prioritized for us.

• **Toxic Substances Hydrology Program**  
  [https://goo.gl/Tsf2BA](https://goo.gl/Tsf2BA)  
The USGS Toxic Substances Hydrology Program (TSHP) supports specialized teams of hydrologists, geologists, and chemists who develop and apply advanced laboratory methods and field investigations to understand how contaminants and pathogens enter and move through the environment. In collaboration with the Contaminant Biology Program TSHP works with our stakeholders within and outside DOI, including other government agencies, industry, NGOs, academia and others, who tell us we are uniquely capable of helping them protect that most precious of resources, health. We do this by filling the data gaps they have prioritized for us.

**Environmental Health**  
[https://goo.gl/9DZjBs](https://goo.gl/9DZjBs)  
The Environmental Health Mission Area works to safeguard the Nation’s health, economy, and resources by leading science to understand and minimize exposures to toxic and infectious disease agents in the environment. The Environmental Health Mission Area consists of two subactivities:

**Natural Hazards**  
[https://goo.gl/ji9W1N](https://goo.gl/ji9W1N)  
Every year in the U.S., natural hazards threaten lives and livelihoods and result in billions of dollars in damage. The Natural Hazards Mission Area works 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. The Natural Hazards Activity consists of six subactivities:
• **Earthquake Hazards Program**  
  [https://goo.gl/hcuJri](https://goo.gl/hcuJri)  
The USGS provides the scientific information and knowledge necessary to reduce deaths, injuries, and economic losses from earthquakes and earthquake-induced tsunamis, landslides, and soil liquefaction. The USGS is the only U.S. agency that routinely and continuously reports on current domestic and worldwide earthquake activity. Through the Advanced National Seismic System (ANSS), the USGS and its State and university partners monitor and report on earthquakes nationwide. The USGS National Seismic Hazard Maps form the basis for seismic provisions in the Nation’s building codes.

• **Volcano Hazards Program**  
  [https://goo.gl/sfYYoK](https://goo.gl/sfYYoK)  
Volcanic eruptions are among the most destructive phenomena of nature, and even small events can have a significant social and economic impact. Unlike many other natural disasters, however, volcanic eruptions can be predicted well in advance of their occurrence if adequate in-ground instrumentation is in place that allows earliest detection of activity providing the time needed to mitigate the worst of their effects. Despite these successes, the Nation’s existing volcano monitoring infrastructure cannot provide warning of eruptions from all volcanoes that threaten lives and property. Many volcanoes, including some of the most threatening, lack the instrumentation necessary for effective forecasting and have had only rudimentary geologic study. The Volcano Hazards Program has evaluated all of the Nation’s volcanoes to determine the monitoring commensurate with the threat they pose. This national threat level assessment was conducted in 2005 and is currently being updated. The USGS and affiliated partners used this threat assessment to design a national-scale plan, the National Volcano Early Warning System (NVEWS), to detect unrest at the earliest stages using in-ground monitoring instrumentation deployed on the Nation’s most threatening volcanoes.

• **Landslides Hazards Program**  
  [https://goo.gl/FvMm4W](https://goo.gl/FvMm4W)  
Landslides occur in all 50 states and around the world in mountainous and hilly areas. Where landslides impact human activities, lives may be lost and property and infrastructure damaged. The Landslide Hazards Program (LHP) is the only Federal program dedicated to landslide science and conducts targeted studies to understand landslide initiation and mobility processes. This understanding is used to develop methods and models for landslide hazard assessment, develop and deploy systems to monitor threatening landslides, and develop methods and tools for landslide early warning and situational awareness. Program activities are targeted toward the types of landslides that result in human and economic losses in the U.S., such as those with long travel distances, those initiated by heavy rainfall, and those exacerbated by the effects of wildfire.

• **Global Seismographic Network**  
  [https://goo.gl/E89u2e](https://goo.gl/E89u2e)  
The Global Seismographic Network (GSN), consisting of more than 150 globally distributed stations, is designed to provide high-quality seismic data needed for earthquake alerts and situational awareness products, tsunami warnings, national security (through nuclear test treaty monitoring and research), seismic hazard assessments and earthquake loss reduction, as well as research on earthquake sources and the structure and dynamics of the Earth.

• **Geomagnetism Program**  
  [https://goo.gl/4pSsGX](https://goo.gl/4pSsGX)  
Magnetic storms are caused by the dynamic interaction of the Earth’s magnetic field with the Sun. While magnetic storms often produce beautiful aurora lights that can be seen at high latitude, they can also wreak havoc on the infrastructure and activities of our modern, technologically based society. Large storms can induce voltage surges in electric-power grids, causing blackouts and the loss of radio communication, reduce GPS accuracy, damage satellite electronics and affect satellite operations, enhance radiation levels for astronauts and high-altitude pilots, and interfere with directional drilling for oil and gas. In order to understand and mitigate geomagnetic hazards, the USGS Geomagnetism Program has monitored and analyzed the Earth’s dynamic magnetic field. The Geomagnetism Program provides data to
the U.S. National Space Weather Program agencies, oil drilling services companies, geophysical surveying companies, and several international agencies. USGS data, products, and services are also used by the electric-power industry to evaluate geomagnetic storm risk.

- **Coastal/Marine Hazards and Resources Program**
  https://goo.gl/q8asXg
  The Coastal/Marine Hazards and Resources Program (CMHRP) provides surveys, knowledge and tools to characterize the hazard and resource potential of the Nation's offshore and coastal landscapes. CMHRP data, research, and technical expertise provides managers with the information and tools to anticipate and reduce the risk of natural hazards and coastal change, and to assess and manage marine and coastal resources to meet current needs and to respond to changing demands. As the only Federal science program focused on the geology and processes that form, maintain, and alter coastal and marine landscapes, CMHRP addresses a wide range of issues in locations from the shallow waters of estuaries to the deep sea. CMHRP responds to immediate local and regional priorities across these environments, while simultaneously addressing the needs of the Nation for comprehensive, long-term coastal and marine science-based products on a national scale.

**Water**
https://goo.gl/4V15fX

Since 1879, the USGS has addressed issues of water availability and quality, drought, and flood hazards. Today, covering all 50 States and Puerto Rico, hydrologic professionals and support staff continue this legacy of providing the Nation with critical water information. As the primary Federal science agency for water information, the USGS monitors and assesses the amount and characteristics of the Nation’s water resources, assesses sources and behavior of contaminants in the water environment, and develops tools to improve management and understanding of water resources. The USGS provides critical information during times of drought and floods. The Water Resources Mission Area is organized into four Programs:

- **Water Availability and Use Science Program (WAUSP)**
  https://goo.gl/4UEhMe
  The Water Availability and Use Science Program (WAUSP) provides scientific information on water availability and use nationally to inform the public and decision makers about the status of water resources and how they are changing. This program also establishes a national water availability and use assessment program. The WAUSP synthesizes and reports information at regional and national scales, with an emphasis on compiling and reporting information in a way that is useful to States and others responsible for water management and natural resource issues.

- **Groundwater and Streamflow Information Program (GWSIP)**
  https://goo.gl/3at4AX
  Monitoring networks that generate hydrologic data are the foundation of situational awareness and understanding of the Nation’s water resources. The 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 local, State, tribal, regional, and national stakeholders. The continuous real-time water data supplied by the program are used for decisions such as emergency response, flood forecasting, reservoir releases, water-use restrictions, drinking-water deliveries, permit compliance, water-quality studies, and recreational safety. The long-term data supplied by the program are used for decisions such as water-supply planning, aquifer storage and recovery, infrastructure design, floodplain and ecosystem management, energy development, and resolution of water disputes. Access to water information is increasingly critical as climate patterns, land use, and population change, add to the challenge of managing competing water priorities.

- **National Water Quality Program (NWQP)**
  https://goo.gl/ew3KHY
  Water-quality challenges are increasing in number and complexity, and solutions are becoming
more difficult and costly. Increased population accompanied by increased development and use of fertilizers and pesticides for food production, will increase pressure on existing resources to supply water of suitable quality for irrigation, drinking water, energy development, and healthy ecosystems. The NWQP investments in monitoring, assessment, and research provide the data and scientific information needed to address current and future water-quality challenges. The NWQP includes water-quality monitoring, assessment, and research activities accomplished by the Water Mission Area that include the following:

- Assess the current quality of the Nation's freshwater resources and how it is changing over time.
- Explain how human activities and natural factors such as land use, water use, and climate variability are affecting the quality of surface-water and groundwater resources.
- Determine the relative effects of important sources of impairment including contaminants, excess nutrients and sediment, and altered streamflow on aquatic ecosystems.
- Predict the effects of human activities, climate variability, and management strategies on future water-quality and ecosystem conditions.

**Water Resources Research Act Program (WRRA)
[https://goo.gl/UXpsoE](https://goo.gl/UXpsoE)**

The Water Resources Research Act, authorized by section 104 of the Water Resources Research Act (WRRA) of 1984, is a Federal–State partnership that plans, facilitates, and coordinates water resources research, education, and information transfer through a matching grant program. The WRRA authorized the establishment of State Water Resources Research Institutes (National Institutes for Water Resources) at land grant universities across the Nation. There are currently 54 Institutes: one in each State, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam. The Institute in Guam serves the Federated States of Micronesia and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The WRRA Program provides an institutional mechanism for promoting State, regional, and national coordination of water resources research, promotes student education and training, and is a focal point for research coordination and information and technology transfer.
Science Support

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 science Senior Executive Leadership establishes program direction and goals for programs and the science centers, and serve as science advisors to the Director in their respective program areas.

The Office of Budget and Performance Management (BPM) 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)

At USGS, we use robots like JASON, (in partnership with other organizations), to study how upstream land-use changes (e.g., runoff from plowing, drainage, irrigation, fertilizer, etc) affect downstream habitats like deep-sea coral systems.

Credit: Christina Kellog, USGS
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.

USGS colleagues collaborate during a GIS Workshop conducted at the National Training Center in Denver, CO.
• **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.

**The 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.

USGS geologist David Rubin of the USGS Pacific Coastal and Marine Science Center investigates longitudinal dunes in China’s Qaidam Basin.
About You

Your Rights and Responsibilities

As an Employee of DOI 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, yours 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://goo.gl/vrWRmM.

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. https://goo.gl/qo75mc

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, they 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.

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.

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, sex, age, or handicap

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
**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.

**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.

**Equal Opportunity—It’s the Law.**

- Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended in 1972: [https://goo.gl/WZ69d1](https://goo.gl/WZ69d1)
- Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, as amended: [https://goo.gl/e6RYBY](https://goo.gl/e6RYBY)
- Civil Rights Act of 1991: [https://goo.gl/z5wT9t](https://goo.gl/z5wT9t)
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.

Find more information on Diversity in the USGS, Diversity Training and Conferences, Diversity News, USGS Diversity Council at: https://goo.gl/TdSRWM

Role of Supervisors and Managers in a Diverse Work Environment

The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) published a report (GAO-05-90) titled Diversity Management - Expert Identified Leading Practices and Agency Examples (https://goo.gl/kw9FRf). 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 co-workers’ 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.

Credit: Patrick Kelley, U.S. Coast Guard
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.

For more information visit: https://goo.gl/jEgKC6

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, sexual orientation, handicap, GINA, or reprisal) of the matter.

An EEO Counselor Will:
• Conduct an inquiry in the 30 calendar days following the initial interview.
• Seek resolution. A reasonable and timely solution acceptable to both you and management is the best outcome of the counseling process.
• 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 appellant 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.

For more information on the DOI non-discrimination policy visit: https://goo.gl/jEgKC6

**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.

Former Associate Director of the USGS Coastal and Marine Geology Program, Susan L. Russell-Robinson receives the DOI’s Distinguished Service Award, the highest honorary award for DOI employees.
**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, or 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.

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**Climate Change and Bear Foods** - Tabitha Graves, USGS research ecologist, studies at potential effects of climate change on bear foods such as huckleberries.
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 a number of 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 (WGIs), 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 at: [https://goo.gl/CC3Piq](https://goo.gl/CC3Piq).

**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, 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, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, genetic information, or non-disqualifying handicap.

Qualification requirements for General Schedule positions are described in the OPM “Qualification Standards” at: [https://goo.gl/n1pjZr](https://goo.gl/n1pjZr).

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*Cubism, Landsat Style* - Startling red patches sprout from an agricultural landscape that looks almost like a Cubist painting. Fields in this part of eastern Kazakhstan follow the contours of the land—long and narrow in mountain valleys, and large and rectangular over the plains. The image was acquired by Landsat 8. Satellite sensors record infrared as well as visible wavelengths of light revealing “hidden” details of the Earth’s land surface.
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. Keep a copy of your position description and refer to it as needed. As you continue, make notes on your copy when your job changes so you can discuss such changes 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 nonsupervisory 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.

Additional information about your position description can be found at https://goo.gl/hgcBFg:

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).

The 2009 Atlanta floods forced a crew of USGS Georgia Water Science Center hydrologic technicians to use “alternate” transportation on Interstate 20. Ten lives were lost during the flood, and FEMA reported that 23 counties were declared disaster areas. 16,981 homes and 3,842 businesses were affected by the floodwaters. Credit: Alan Cressler, USGS.
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).

• **Minimally Successful**: DOI has not developed a benchmark standard for the minimally successful level. However, managers and supervisors should develop a minimally successful standard at the development and issuance of the performance plan and/or at the time it is determined that you have not achieved fully successful performance (2 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 an annual rating of minimally successful or 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 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 (https://goo.gl/dKjgiC). Agencies can use the rating of record as the sole basis for granting a performance award.

- **Reduction in Force**: If there is a Reduction In Force (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).

- **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.

For more information visit the Human Capital Services and Support website at https://goo.gl/mMXvQF.

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 Talent, 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.
**What is a leadership-centered culture?**

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.

**Continuous Learning Opportunities**

**Mentoring Program**

The 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://goo.gl/opB5H5

**Leadership Program**

The 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://goo.gl/AoE55D

**Learning Management**

DOI Talent is currently 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 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://goo.gl/qnsRgT.

**Instructor-Led Class Catalog**

For a list of all USGS Instructor-led classes scheduled in the next 90 days visit: https://goo.gl/ydPfkD

**SkillSoft Online 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://goo.gl/JFbcoc

**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://goo.gl/vVPV54
Planning for your Future - Webinar
Whether you are just starting your Federal career or are near retirement, you should consider ways to enhance your retirement options. Register for a scheduled webinar and begin or continue planning for your Federal retirement. https://goo.gl/ZbsQHv

Lending Library
The OED Lending Library offers titles in Kindle format. Visit: https://goo.gl/JyNN1g

Other Development Opportunities

Career Development Program
The 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://goo.gl/D4aqCv

Upward Mobility Program
The 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).

Measuring Stream Discharge in Grand Teton National Park - USGS Hydrologic Technician Bob Reaves collects streamflow measurements from the cableway at the USGS streamgage on the Snake River near Moran, WY. Jackson Lake Dam is visible in the background. Credit: Nathan “Jake” Jacobson, USGS
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://goo.gl/ZBzo3A

Training Support Services

National Training Center (NTC)
The National Training Center in Denver, Colorado, offers 5 technology enabled classrooms and 3 conference rooms for use by Federal, State, and local government. Classrooms are equipped with state-of-the-art audio/visual equipment featuring ceiling mounted projectors, flat panel presentation screens, sound systems, CD-DVD equipment, and white boards. Conference rooms feature a PC with sound cards and speakers for the presenter. All rooms have additional network hubs where participants can use their own laptops to check their email during course breaks. All event rooms are also wireless (wifi) enabled. For more information: https://goo.gl/kPg2af

Deployable Laptops
To support instructional events at any location, the OED offers a deployable laptop service. This service saves staff time rounding up local office computers. OED staff install a base image and pre-load any provided software on each machine. OED offers initial consulting and real-time support during your training event. For more information: https://goo.gl/X7pKUv

Audience Response System
The Audience Response System (ARS) provides the capability of instantaneous feedback during a meeting, conference, or training event allowing participants to vote on topics or respond to specific questions. Each attendee is provided with a small keypad to make their selections. Keypads communicate with a computer (included) via an electronic receiver. After participants provide input, the system automatically tabulates the results in real time. Typically, the results are instantly available to the participants via a bar graph display. For more information: https://goo.gl/tQ49WC

Distance Learning Program
The Distance Learning Program was developed in 2004 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://goo.gl/95eGMh

How to Host a Webinar that WOWS
Will you be facilitating a webinar? OED has information to help you provide a webinar that delivers your content in the best way possible. https://goo.gl/7nb7PC

Water samples are taken from a well developed in the Upper Floridan Aquifer as part of the USGS’s National Water Quality Assessment (NAWQA) program. 40 public supply wells were sampled in Florida and 16 in Georgia that were developed in the Upper Floridan Aquifer. Photo Credit: Alan Cressler
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://goo.gl/qBGA7W

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 https://goo.gl/2Gd1dt.

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 https://goo.gl/2Gd1dt.

Federal Employee Benefits Statement
The Federal Employee Benefits Statement provides a good summary of all your benefits, let’s 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 https://goo.gl/2Gd1dt.

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: https://goo.gl/NZqjAt

- **Medicare** - All wages are taxed for Medicare Part A, Hospital Insurance. Additional information can be found at: https://goo.gl/1pDHFH

- **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 https://goo.gl/CvR5dp.
• **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 elect to enroll in an Health Care and/or Dependant Care account will have contributions 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.

**Locality Pay**

Employees in General Schedule (GS) positions receive an additional percentage to their salary to compensate for differing costs of living areas. 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://goo.gl/oL1SWm](https://goo.gl/oL1SWm)

**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)). View more information at: [https://goo.gl/jE51Rx](https://goo.gl/jE51Rx)
Within-Grade Increases (WGIs)

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 as follows:

**WGI Minimum Waiting Period**

- Advancement to Steps 2, 3, & 4 - 52 calendar weeks
- Advancement to Steps 5, 6, & 7 - 104 calendar weeks
- Advancement to Steps 8, 9, & 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. Payment for overtime hours is determined by the Fair Labor Standards Amendment of 1974. 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.

It is your supervisor’s responsibility to be aware of the hours you are working, particularly if you’re 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 (comp time) is time off from duty earned in lieu of paid overtime for work performed outside of your regular work hours. Comp time for travel may also be earned (for more information, go to [https://goo.gl/qhBRsH](https://goo.gl/qhBRsH)). Employees who are exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act whose rate of basic pay exceeds a GS-10 may be required to take comp 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 comp time off in lieu of overtime. 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.

Employees must use any comp time accrued by the 26th pay period after the pay period in which it was earned. If not, exempt employees will forfeit any remaining comp time. Nonexempt employees will be paid for any expiring compensatory time as overtime pay.

Lava Sampling — A USGS geologist at the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory (HVO) get fresh lava samples as close to the vent as possible.
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 at: https://goo.gl/m9YedD.

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 at: https://goo.gl/pWqVYX

Should you have any questions contact your servicing Benefits Specialist at: https://goo.gl/CfpPhG

Federal Benefits

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 at: https://goo.gl/WHZAzf

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 1987 and chose to remain with CSRS in lieu of switching to FERS. To learn more about the CSRS retirement benefits, visit the OPM website at: https://goo.gl/8LwALh.

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.

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://goo.gl/eLPhv8.

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: https://goo.gl/NZqjAt
**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 5% 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. Contributions above 5% will not be matched. 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 [https://goo.gl/CvR5dp](https://goo.gl/CvR5dp).

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 Colorado River from Moab Rim - More than half of the streamflow in the Upper Colorado River Basin originates as groundwater, according to a new USGS study. Groundwater and surface water are considered a joint resource.
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. https://goo.gl/CvR5dp

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 plan, 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 at: https://goo.gl/EDAZLw

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: https://goo.gl/YScZ4e

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 Program, visit: https://goo.gl/rk6dQK

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 or at: https://goo.gl/RNpEqR

USGS divers establish a transect for measuring the species diversity of kelp, algae, invertebrates, and fish. Credit: Ian Miller, USGS
**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 [https://goo.gl/3PcCD1](https://goo.gl/3PcCD1).

**Long Term Care Insurance (FLTCIP)**
The Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP) provides long-term care 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.

Long term care insurance protects your income and assets should you need long-term care services at home, a nursing home or assisted living facility, or other settings. Most health insurance programs, including the FEHB Program, TRICARE, and TRICARE for Life, provide little or no coverage for long-term care. 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, waiver of premium, inflation protection, and others.

New employees have 60 days to sign up using the Abbreviated Underwriting Application Form. Current USGS employees eligible for the FLTCIP may enroll at any time using the Full Underwriting application process. In addition to employees, current spouses, adult children, parents, parents-in-law, and step-parents are also eligible. For more information on The FLTCIP, visit: [https://goo.gl/MYkoRK](https://goo.gl/MYkoRK).

**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 at: [https://goo.gl/YmGfEb](https://goo.gl/YmGfEb)

**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://goo.gl/hfRH9j

**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://goo.gl/H1nJMr

**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://goo.gl/3GwZZx

**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 ESPYR to provide you with comprehensive EAP services. ESPYR offers 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://goo.gl/exQcQu

Red in the River - USGS river scientists conduct a large-scale collaborative study to improve understanding of the fate of pallid sturgeon larvae on the Upper Missouri River.
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://goo.gl/sht7hP

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. Learn more at: https://goo.gl/4Pz3qb

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://goo.gl/jy4Ndq

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://goo.gl/V6xuyr

Anna McKee filters water at the Hillabahatchee Creek to capture environmental DNA to study the aquatic invertebrate community. Behind her Jeff Riley samples algae. Photo Credit: Alan Cressler.
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Creditable Service</th>
<th>Pay Period Accrual Rate</th>
<th>Total Annual Accrual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 3 years</td>
<td>4 hours</td>
<td>13 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 15 years</td>
<td>6 hours</td>
<td>20 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 years or more</td>
<td>8 hours</td>
<td>26 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

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.

The following holidays are observed:

- 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
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://goo.gl/nLarp4

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.

Where We Work — Another day, another measurement.

USGS hydrotech, Alvin Sablan, can be seen here streamgaging in the Owyhee River near Rome, Oregon.

Credit: John Wirt, USGS.
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 to 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.

Enhanced Landsat 8 Image: Western Australia - This image is a portion of the first Landsat 8 scene acquired in Western Australia. Water and land is masked, separately enhanced, and reassembled.

The water patterns are the result of an RGB display of the Landsat 8 red, blue, and ultra-blue bands (bands 4, 2, 1. Land is shown using SWIR, NIR, and green (bands 6, 5, 3). The resulting image displays impressive sediment and nutrient patterns in the tropical estuary area, and the complex patterns and conditions in the vegetated areas.

Credit: Geoscience Australia, a Landsat International Cooperator.
**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://goo.gl/KRrvKU

**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://goo.gl/prKGE
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.

Reframing the Definition of Rewards

**Basic Workplace Rewards** - Essential to an employee’s security, safety, and success on the job. If employees do not feel that basic workplace rewards exist, other types of rewards are meaningless. Workplace rewards include things such as pay and benefits; clear performance expectations and feedback; open communication; effective leadership and management; a competent, committed, and caring supervisor; respect and trust; and appropriate space, facilities, funding and equipment.

**Intrinsic Rewards** - Give employees a personal sense of meaning and satisfaction in their work. While pay and benefits are important in attracting employees to work for an organization, it is intrinsic rewards that make them want to stay. Intrinsic rewards come in many forms including meaningful and challenging work, USGS stature and reputation, quality colleagues, professional development and skills enhancement, personal fulfillment, satisfaction in serving the public, autonomy, and participation in decision making.

**Quality of Work-Life Rewards** - Enable employees to manage their jobs and balance their work and home lives. Quality of work-life rewards increase employee morale and satisfaction and provide a powerful recruitment and retention tool in a competitive market for talent. Visit the Work Life Benefits section of this handbook for more information.

**Extrinsic Rewards** - Come from others and range from simple expressions of appreciation to formal awards. Praise and appreciation are easy to do, cost little, and have a powerful impact in motivating employees. Extrinsic rewards can come as praise, “thank you” and other expressions of appreciation, non-monetary recognition, length of service recognition, monetary awards, honor awards and awards and recognition from external organizations.

Henry Gannet Award — TNM Users Conference attendees awarded the Henry Gannet Award to two USGS colleagues.
**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://goo.gl/x1XtvY](https://goo.gl/x1XtvY)

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.

Five of twelve USGS employees who received the DOI’s highest honor—the Distinguished Service Award: (left to right) Rama Kotra, Peter Lyttle, James Hein, David Oppenheimer, and David Lockner.
Other Things to Know

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 automatically 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://goo.gl/cnQgHi](https://goo.gl/cnQgHi), but only with a government issued computer. 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.

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.

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 [https://goo.gl/2Gd1dt](https://goo.gl/2Gd1dt). Email [eexhelp@opm.gov](mailto:eexhelp@opm.gov) for assistance with technical issues.

Employee Committees

Employee organizations are voluntary, employee-led groups that can help employees thrive and improve workplaces. At DOI, employees can join three types of employee organizations:

- **Employee Resource Group (ERG)** members share a common interest and work toward advancing relevancy, diversity, and inclusion throughout an organization.
- **Professional Associations** seek to advance a particular profession and engage individuals in that profession.
- **Civic Groups and/or Networking Clubs** offer support or social networks for employees and create opportunities for an inviting workplace. 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.

Visit the Human Capital Crossroads website to learn more: [https://goo.gl/vUqdfA](https://goo.gl/vUqdfA)

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://goo.gl/vh2Nk4](https://goo.gl/vh2Nk4)

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.

Employee and Career Development

The USGS Office of Organizational and Employee Development (OED) serves the educational, informational, training, and development needs of the USGS and other DOI agencies. OED provides a wide variety of science and technical, professional, managerial, and administrative development opportunities. In-person, instructor-led classes are supported at the National Training Center in Denver, Colorado, and other USGS office locations across the nation. OED also facilitates science and technical classes via distance learning. All scheduled USGS classes for the next 90 days are available on the Human Capital website at https://goo.gl/77nAUh. OED also addresses the organizational needs of the USGS by providing facilitation, consulting, and coaching. We invite you to work with us to help identify science, technical, business, and leadership development needs throughout the Bureau. Learn more at: https://goo.gl/hdnrsk

Safety

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 SafetyNet at: https://goo.gl/c1ktEX

As a new employee, your initial occupational safety and health responsibility is to complete applicable training and comply with established safety rules and regulations.

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.)

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

• Safety procedures are followed

• Proper safety equipment is used for the task at hand
• Unsafe or unhealthful working conditions are reported and abated

General safety orientation is required of all bureau employees. To learn more about safety requirements as a new employee, see: https://goo.gl/bLz679

Accident Reporting

If you have an accident in the workplace, contact your immediate supervisor and/or safety officer. Incidents/accidents are recorded in the Safety Management Information System (SMIS). The SMIS is managed by the Office of Occupational Health and Safety (OHS), with administrative support provided by the USGS Safety and Environmental Management Branch. https://goo.gl/SqL6L1

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 at: https://goo.gl/BTKjPf

Anti-Harassment Policy

The Department of Interior (DOI) and U.S. Geological Survey (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 conduct 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.

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://www2.usgs.gov/humancapital/ah/index.html). Employee can also find additional information regarding the discrimination complaints process at https://internal.usgs.gov/ops/eeo/.

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 DOI 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://goo.gl/tUKZn4.

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://goo.gl/JtGbKD
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. https://goo.gl/xMjEuK

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. https://goo.gl/zfhoNr

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. https://goo.gl/A8q1gR

Multimedia - The USGS Gallery web page offers links images, videos and animations, audio and podcasts. https://goo.gl/rgMZTt

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/

The Garden Wall Weather Station is situated below the Garden Wall and adjacent to the Haystack Creek avalanche path in Glacier National Park. It provides meteorological data for avalanche forecasting and research, including wind speed and direction, air temperature, relative humidity, and net radiation measurements.
Useful Websites

**theCore** - The official USGS Intranet site - [https://atthecore.usgs.gov](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: [https://goo.gl/i4ygPx](https://goo.gl/i4ygPx)

**Employee Express** - Employee Express puts Federal employees in control of their payroll information. [https://goo.gl/2Gd1dt](https://goo.gl/2Gd1dt)

**Quicktime** - The USGS's time and attendance portal. You can easily manage your leave requests and document your time and attendance in this system. [https://goo.gl/RVTXTn](https://goo.gl/RVTXTn)

**eOPF** - The Electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF) is a file containing records that cover a civilian Federal employee’s employment history [https://goo.gl/cnQgHi](https://goo.gl/cnQgHi)

**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/](https://itsupport.usgs.gov/)

**Human Capital Services and Support Portal** - A consolidation of all Human Capital information providing relevant, timely, and regularly updated information. [https://goo.gl/WM9ifix](https://goo.gl/WM9ifix)

**DOI Talent** - The enterprise-wide learning management system for DOI employees. [https://doitalent.ibc.doi.gov/](https://doitalent.ibc.doi.gov/)

**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://goo.gl/qo75mc](https://goo.gl/qo75mc)

**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://goo.gl/GLCv7r](https://goo.gl/GLCv7r)

**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://goo.gl/XQSsDf](https://goo.gl/XQSsDf)

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Pathways intern student, Ann McGowan shadowing hydrotech Sylas Daughtrey (pictured), to learn the procedures for servicing a gage station and maintaining the site.
New Employee Checklist

The USGS - Science for a Changing World

Today, the USGS is tackling some of the world’s greatest scientific challenges. Based out of science centers and satellite locations, USGS scientists are scattered throughout the 50 states and territories. Researchers collect and interpret data from thousands of sampling sites, conduct hundreds of research projects and utilize extensive remote sensing capabilities. Out of that work, complex science becomes understandable, invaluable knowledge for the public and critical to decision making.

Introduction

As part of the new employee onboarding process, this checklist was created to assist you through your first few days, weeks and months as a new employee with the USGS. Using this checklist and accessing the helpful websites in this document will assist you through the entire orientation process. Visit the New Employee Information page on the intranet site to download the USGS Employee Handbook and obtain other helpful resources and information regarding your orientation and employment with USGS.

Human Resources and Entrance on Duty Paperwork

As a USGS employee, you will be supported by a Servicing Human Resources Office (SHRO). Your designated SHRO is available to assist you with HR activities such as employee relations, benefits, recruiting, classification, compensation, etc.

Ask HRO Contacts: https://www2.usgs.gov/humancapital/hr/askhro.html

Benefits for New Hires Webinar

Each month the Human Resources office hosts a Webinar to assist new hires with questions and information. Recordings of previous Webinars are available. https://www2.usgs.gov/humancapital/pb/eodbenefitsinfo.html

Key Websites

US Geological Survey
https://www.usgs.gov/

@theCore
https://atthecore.usgs.gov

New Employee Information Website
https://www2.usgs.gov/humancapital/ne/index.html

IT Helpdesk
https://itsupport.usgs.gov/

Quicktime (time and attendance)
https://goo.gl/GzYQJa

Human Capital Services and Support
https://www2.usgs.gov/humancapital/

DOI Talent (Training)
doitalent.ibc.doi.gov
How to use this checklist

This document provides a list of activities for you to complete with corresponding timelines. While many of the items listed below are transactional (i.e., completing a form), most involve important discussions with your supervisor in order to equip you with the foundational knowledge of the USGS mission, history, culture, and organization. Use this document in partnership with your supervisor to ensure you receive all of the necessary beneficial tools and information.

Your First Day

• Complete and return Entrance on Duty form to the individual identified on your Firm Offer Letter:
  • Appointment Affidavit, SF-61
  • Declaration of Appointee, OF-306
  • Employment Eligibility Verification, Form I-9: you will need to present verification of your identity and employment eligibility. The most common forms of identification used are passports OR a state issued driver’s license along with a birth certificate. For a complete list of acceptable documents, please open the Form I-9 at https://www.uscis.gov/system/files_force/files/form/i-9-paper-version.pdf and refer to the last page.
• Complete other employment and Science Center administrative forms. If eligible, you have 60 days to return health benefits (SF-2809) and life insurance election (SF-2817) forms
• Meet your supervisor and the rest of your department.
• Take a tour of the building with your supervisor, or other colleague to find out where communal office equipment is located. Also review security and safety procedures for the building.
• If you haven’t already, take the Federal Information Systems Security Awareness training to obtain a network user ID, password and email access.

Your First Week

• Schedule time with your supervisor:
  • Discuss your specific work schedule, lunch breaks, and hours of operation.
  • Review inclement weather procedures. Sign up for emergency notifications, if available.
  • Review pay and leave policies and understand how to request leave, overtime, compensatory time, and credit hours.
  • Review and discuss position description and performance standards with your supervisor.
  • Discuss how to report injuries at work and the Office of Workers Compensation.
• Schedule an appointment to pick up your Department of Interior identification and building access card. Talk to your supervisor about the purpose and use of these cards.
• Work with your supervisor and IT Department to determine IT equipment and needs.
• Review the following Federal Government policies and Programs, information can be found in the Employee Handbook:
  • Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
  • Prevention of Sexual Harassment
  • Zero Tolerance of Discrimination
  • Workplace Violence
  • Illegal Drug Use
  • Employee Relations Policies including CorePlus
  • Whistleblower Protection
Congratulations, you’ve made it through your first week! Use this checklist as a reference for forms to complete and important conversations to have, ensuring you’re on your way to a fulfilling career at the USGS.

**Your First Month**

- Review your electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF).
- Sign into Employee Express:
  - Review your first Leave and Earnings Statement (LES).
  - Add your Emergency Contact information.
  - Review the site and see what other changes to your benefits and allotments you can make.
  - You should receive your password and username in the mail about 3-4 weeks after your first day on the job.
- Review the [Federal holiday schedule](https://www2.usgs.gov/humancapital/ecd/mentoropportunities.html).
- Login to DOI Talent.
- Complete the DOI purchase/travel credit card application and create a profile in Concur, if applicable.
  - You must complete mandatory training for access. Be aware you cannot travel without authorization.
- Talk with your supervisor about your eligibility for career ladder promotions, step increases and Telework in the future.
- Talk with your supervisor about your role and performance expectations. Work with your supervisor to develop an Individual Development Plan (IDP) [https://goo.gl/UCdtzN](https://goo.gl/UCdtzN).
- Review the goals and mission of your work unit and the USGS by reading strategic plans, business plans, management policies, etc. Discuss with your supervisor how your work contributes to the local and USGS mission.
- Review the mandatory training sidebar. Check with your supervisor to see which are applicable to your position and timeframes for completion.
- Review information about the USGS Mentoring Program: [https://www2.usgs.gov/humancapital/ecd/mentoropportunities.html](https://www2.usgs.gov/humancapital/ecd/mentoropportunities.html)

**Mandatory Training**

**For All Employees**

- Cyber Awareness Challenge (FISSA)
- DOI Rules of Behavior
- IMT: Privacy Act, Records Management, and Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) Awareness Training
- Scientific Integrity
- Discrimination and Whistleblowing in the Workplace (No FEAR Act)
- Prohibited Personnel Practices and Whistleblower (PPP) Training
- Ethics Orientation Training - you will receive an email for this monthly training.

**Some Employees, based on need**

- Telework Fundamentals - Employee Training
- Defensive Driving
- Transit Benefit Integrity Training
- Charge Card Users
- Contracting Officer (CO)
- Contracting Officer’s Representative (COR)
- Role Based IT Security Training (RBST)
- Role Based Privacy Training (RBPT)
- Federal Acquisition Certification for Program and Project Managers (FAC P/PM)
- Safety Training
Your First 60 Days

- Access the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) website with the pin information you received in the mail.
- Meet with your supervisor at the end of your first 60 days to discuss progress, any surprises, challenges, areas for improvement, etc.
- Self-certify that you have received and read the USGS Anti-Harassment Policy - Use the following link to access the self-certification SharePoint site [https://insight.usgs.gov/aei/offices/oa/WebApps/P/AHPC](https://insight.usgs.gov/aei/offices/oa/WebApps/P/AHPC)

Your First 90 Days

- Meet with your supervisor at the end of your first 90 days to discuss how things are going, any surprises, challenges, areas for improvement, etc.

Your First Year

- Provide your supervisor with your accomplishments for the fiscal year. The fiscal year ends on Sept. 30th of each year.
- The annual Health Insurance Open Season takes place from mid-November to mid-December. It provides you the opportunity to make changes in your Health, Dental, and Vision each year using Employee Express. You must re-enroll in the Flexible Spending Account (FSA) each year.
- The end of the year is a good time to review your Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) contribution elections. Go on the TSP website to make any adjustments to your contributions.

Mandatory Training (cont.)

Additional Training for New Supervisors

- Managing for Diversity - 4 hours annually, FY
- EEO for Supervisors/Managers
- Supervisory Training
- Civil Treatment for Leaders
- Veteran Employment Training for Hiring Managers
- Veteran Employment Training for Human Resource Professionals
- Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA)
- Telework Fundamentals - Manager Training

Some Supervisors, based on need

- Charge Card Approving Officials
Supervisor/Manager Onboarding Checklist

How to use this checklist

This document serves as a list of activities for you to complete with your new employee, including corresponding time lines and a list of tasks HR will complete. You may also access the Supervisor’s Toolkit for additional helpful resources: https://www2.usgs.gov/humancapital/hr/supervisorstoolkit.html

Before first day

- Contact the employee – welcome them onboard and discuss first day logistics including where, when and to whom to report to. Provide information about your office/work site.
- Prepare office space
  - Setup computer and phone
- Ensure access to Active directory, email, bureau systems (FBMS, FPPS, Travel, Quicktime, etc) as applicable.

First Day

- Show employee the workplace, their workstation and equipment.
- Introduce the new employee to key officials, fellow workers, and if applicable, to those whom they will supervise.
- Provide information about Health Unit, First Aid facility, Physical Fitness Center, Credit Unions, Cafeteria and eating places, etc.
- Talk about pay and pay periods, time and attendance, types and accumulation of leave, and how to request leave.
- Explain layout of the building, facilities (elevators, stairways, emergency exits, evacuation routes, fire extinguishers, fire drills etc.), information on parking areas and restrictions, building and office security, and issue parking pass if required.
- Share the New Employee Orientation website and review Employee Handbook.
- Ensure Entrance on Duty forms are returned to the SHRO including: Appointment Affidavit, SF-61; Declaration of Appointee, OF-306 and Employment Eligibility Verification, Form I-9.

HR Task List

These duties may be performed by HR/Admin Office or Supervisor

Before first day

- Provide information for their Government Identification Card.
- Provide EOD packet. https://www2.usgs.gov/human capital/hr/eodlist.html#eod_forms

First Day

- Administer the Oath of Office
- Provide the “Ethics Guide for Department of the Interior Employees” and a copy of the USGS Ethics Office of Contact and Specialization Chart.
- Provide instructions and help the employee complete EOD documents.
- Explain the nature and reasons for the appointment and eligibility for conversion (permanent/term/temp)
- Explain the probationary period, if appropriate.
- Explain the right to elect benefits including the retirement system, and deadlines for elections. TSP.
- Discuss Employee Express
During first week

- Provide and explain the Position Description, job duties and expectations, etc.
- Explain the confidential nature of work, if applicable.
- Explain the role of the administrative office and the types of assistance available.
- Discuss procedures like emergency phone tree, smoking policy, and inclement weather policy as appropriate.
- Advise the employee of any office rules, policies, or practices and provide copies in writing, if available.
- Explain the role of the HR Office and points-of-contact.
- Explain the training policy and the process to access their account in DOI Talent.
- Provide labor-management relations information, if appropriate.
- Provide written safety policy, procedures, or booklet as available in your office. Discuss safety policy to include safe working habits, worker’s compensation, and accident reporting.
- Discuss alternate work schedules and complete form, if applicable. Discuss Teleworking if appropriate.
- Mail handling rules – show where mailboxes are located and review process for incoming and outgoing mail.

During first 30 Days

- Talk to employee about eligibility for career ladder promotions, step increases and telework. Discuss Merit Promotion policy.
- Establish performance standards and develop an Individual Development Plan (finalize within 60 days of entrance on duty). Assign a mentor if required as part of appointment. Check with your servicing HR Specialist.
- Discuss Government credit card and use policy, if applicable.
- Discuss Government Vehicle use and assign Defensive Driving Course if employee will drive a government vehicle.
- Discuss mandatory training, which is listed on the New Employee Checklist.

A Supervisor’s Role

You may have heard the saying, “People don’t leave organizations; they leave leaders.” Responsibility for a successful new employee orientation rests with the Human Resources Office, the supervisor, and the new employee. The supervisor’s role cannot be overemphasized, especially since the most important relationship within any organization is the one between employees and their immediate supervisor. The relationship generally begins before orientation and is most important during the first few weeks and months of employment.

Here are some things to remember during the orientation process:

- Work closely with the Human Resources Office to ensure a new employee’s smooth transition.
- Be enthusiastic, and engage the new employee.
- Align the new employee’s work with the USGS mission, vision, goals, and plans.
- Help the new employee assimilate as quickly as possible.
- Provide guidance to ensure proper training and development.
- Consider a mentor, which is different than a Sponsor.
- Consider the Leadership Intensive program.

We know that, as USGS supervisors, you already have to juggle many projects, responsibilities, and priorities. The onboarding program is not about giving you something more to do. Rather, its purpose is to provide you with a process to create a more engaging and effective experience for both you and your new employee.