CALIFORNIA STATE PERSONNEL BOARD
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ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, Governor

DATE: NOVEMBER 12, 2008

TO: ALL STATE AGENCIES, EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATIONS, AND MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNOR'S CABINET

SUBJECT: USE OF SELECT FLAGS (PROFICIENCY VS PREFERENCE)

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide departments with direction on the purpose and use of Select Flags in the examination and certification process. Select Flags assist departments in identifying eligibles with the experience and/or interest in specific program areas or specialties within a classification. The use of Select Flags provides candidates with the opportunity to specify the type of work they have experience in, and/or to designate their interest and/or willingness to work in specific program areas or specialties.

Select flags are generally utilized in two different ways – as Proficiency Flags and as Candidate Preference Flags (conditions of employment). Proficiency Flags are the most commonly used Select Flags and departments have been accustomed to using them for many years. In an effort to promote better job-person matches, and to provide a mechanism by which candidates and departments can communicate their needs and/or desire for experience in specific program areas, the State Personnel Board (SPB) would like to clarify the purpose and use of Candidate Preference Flags. It is expected that the use of Candidate Preference Flags will prove to be especially beneficial in examinations for servicewide classifications and/or for classifications which are used to fill positions requiring a wide range of knowledge, skills and abilities.

The following Select Flag procedures are consistent with the proposed Human Resources Modernization strategic plan:

Proficiency Select Flags

Proficiency Select Flags allow candidates, during the examination process, to identify those program areas or specialties in which they possess a certain level of proficiency. When a department is recruiting for a particular position, departmental staff can order the certification list so that the names of successful candidates who have indicated that they possess experience in the specific proficiencies will appear at the top of their rank when the eligible list is certified for the position under recruitment. Departments may not, however, bypass an eligible simply because he/she does not have the desired Proficiency Select Flag on his/her record.

Departments do not need to contact SPB when utilizing Proficiency Select Flags. The on-line examination and certification system will accurately reflect the correct certification for the eligible list without SPB intervention.

Candidate Preference Select Flags

Candidate Preference Select Flags are used essentially to designate an eligible's conditions of employment. During the examination process, candidates are asked to indicate the type of work they are interested in, as opposed to providing information regarding their past work experience. This process is similar to asking candidates for their location and tenure/timebase preferences. Candidates are not required to have work experience in a particular program area or specialty in order to obtain the flag, only an interest in performing the requisite work. Candidates need to be specifically notified of the consequences if they fail to select one or more areas of interest, as described below.

When a department certifies from the eligible list using one or more Candidate Preference Select Flags, only those eligibles who marked the designated Select Flag(s) are certified in rank order. As a result, candidates who did not express an interest in working in the specified program area(s) or specialties are not certified, and are therefore not contacted in reference to the vacant position. This method ensures that eligibles will not need to waive contacts and risk being placed on inactive list status, (for failure to respond to inquiry letters or for rejecting offers of employment), for positions which do not interest them.[1] For example, when a department requests a certification list with the names of those eligibles with an interest in Human Resources, only those candidates who marked the Human Resources functional area will appear, in rank order, on the certification list. If there are five eligibles in Rank 1, and none expressed an interest in Human Resources, and there are ten eligibles in Rank 2 with five of the ten interested in Human Resources, then Rank 2 would become Rank 1 on that particular certification list.

Eligibles may change their Candidate Preference Select Flags at any time, just as they can change their location and tenure/time base preferences. Candidate Preference Select Flags are deemed conditions of employment and are used in the spirit of Government Code Sections 19057-19057.4, and California Code of Regulations Section 261.

If a department chooses to utilize Candidate Preference Select Flags, assistance from SPB is required in order to ensure that the eligible list certifies correctly. SPB will review the requesting department's use of the Candidate Preference Select Flags to ensure that they are being utilized appropriately. Once approved, SPB will update the eligible list to allow for the use of the Candidate Preference Select Flags.

The following should be taken into consideration when using Candidate Preference Select Flags:

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[1] See Gov. C. § 18935(k) and (l) and 2 CCR §§ 153, 258, 260 and 262.

- Proficiency Select Flags and Candidate Preference Select Flags cannot both be used in an exam administration.
- Departments cannot use more than ten (10) Candidate Preference Select Flags in a single examination (i.e. Accounting, Human Resources, Budgets, etc.). [If early entry flag(s) are also being utilized, they must be included as a part of the ten flags due to system capacity.]
- The use of Candidate Preference Select Flags as conditions of employment is optional and is left to the discretion of the testing department.
- All candidates are to be asked what type of work they are interested in, not what type of work they have performed or are proficient in.
- All candidates must be offered the same choices.
- When certifying from an eligible list that contains Candidate Preference Select Flags, departments may choose on a case by case basis whether they want to certify using the select flags.
- Hiring Departments should be sure that when utilizing the Candidate Preference Select Flags for ordering a certification list that the work type is properly represented, to ensure an illegal hire does not occur.
- When Candidate Preference Select Flags are utilized, only those eligibles whose eligible records reflect the select flag at the time of certification will appear on the certification list.
- The certification list will not contain the names of eligibles who did not express an interest in the specific program area or specialty, (i.e. if no one in Rank 1 is interested in Human Resources work, then Rank 2 becomes Rank 1 for that certification).
- Eligibles must have the ability to change/add/delete their Candidate Preference Select Flags during the life of their list eligibility.
- When merging eligibles onto an existing eligible list, the select flag type may not be changed unless all eligibles from all administrations are contacted and given the same selection opportunities.

Questions regarding this memorandum may be directed to the SPB Exam Services Team at (916) 653-1502 or TTY (916) 654-6336.

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