

(1) the unusually high or unique qualifications of the employee or a special need of the Administration for the employee's services makes it essential to retain the employee; and
 (2) the employee would be likely to leave in the absence of a retention bonus.

(b) If the position is described as addressing a critical need in the workforce plan under section 9802(b)(2)(A), the amount of a bonus may not exceed 50 percent of the employee's annual rate of basic pay (including comparability payments under sections 5304 and 5304a).

(c) If the position is not described as addressing a critical need in the workforce plan under section 9802(b)(2)(A), the amount of a bonus may not exceed 25 percent of the employee's annual rate of basic pay (excluding comparability payments under sections 5304 and 5304a).

(d)(1)(A) Payment of a bonus under this section shall be contingent upon the employee entering into a service agreement with the Administration.

(B) At a minimum, the service agreement shall include—

- (i) the required service period;
- (ii) the method of payment, including a payment schedule, which may include a lump-sum payment, installment payments, or a combination thereof;
- (iii) the amount of the bonus and the basis for calculating the amount; and
- (iv) the conditions under which the agreement may be terminated before the agreed-upon service period has been completed, and the effect of the termination.

(2) The employee's service period shall be expressed as the number equal to the full years and twelfth parts thereof, rounding the fractional part of a month to the nearest twelfth part of a year. The service period may not be less than 6 months and may not exceed 4 years.

(3) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), a service agreement is not required if the Administration pays a bonus in biweekly installments and sets the installment payment at the full bonus percentage rate established for the employee, with no portion of the bonus deferred. In this case, the Administration shall inform the employee in writing of any decision to change the retention bonus payments. The employee shall continue to accrue entitlement to the retention bonus through the end of the pay period in which such written notice is provided.

(e) A bonus under this section may not be considered to be part of the basic pay of an employee.

(f) An employee is not entitled to a retention bonus under this section during a service period previously established for that employee under section 5753 or under section 9804.

(g) No more than 25 percent of the total amount in bonuses awarded under subsection (a) in any year may be awarded to supervisors or management officials.

(Added Pub. L. 108-201, §3(a), Feb. 24, 2004, 118 Stat. 465.)

§ 9806. Term appointments

(a) The Administrator may authorize term appointments within the Administration under

subchapter I of chapter 33, for a period of not less than 1 year and not more than 6 years.

(b) Notwithstanding chapter 33 or any other provision of law relating to the examination, certification, and appointment of individuals in the competitive service, the Administrator may convert an employee serving under a term appointment to a permanent appointment in the competitive service within the Administration without further competition if—

(1) such individual was appointed under open, competitive examination under subchapter I of chapter 33 to the term position;

(2) the announcement for the term appointment from which the conversion is made stated that there was potential for subsequent conversion to a career-conditional or career appointment;

(3) the employee has completed at least 2 years of current continuous service under a term appointment in the competitive service;

(4) the employee's performance under such term appointment was at least fully successful or equivalent; and

(5) the position to which such employee is being converted under this section is in the same occupational series, is in the same geographic location, and provides no greater promotion potential than the term position for which the competitive examination was conducted.

(c) Notwithstanding chapter 33 or any other provision of law relating to the examination, certification, and appointment of individuals in the competitive service, the Administrator may convert an employee serving under a term appointment to a permanent appointment in the competitive service within the Administration through internal competitive promotion procedures if the conditions under paragraphs (1) through (4) of subsection (b) are met.

(d) An employee converted under this section becomes a career-conditional employee, unless the employee has otherwise completed the service requirements for career tenure.

(e) An employee converted to career or career-conditional employment under this section acquires competitive status upon conversion.

(Added Pub. L. 108-201, §3(a), Feb. 24, 2004, 118 Stat. 466.)

§ 9807. Pay authority for critical positions

(a) In this section, the term "position" means—

(1) a position to which chapter 51 applies, including a position in the Senior Executive Service;

(2) a position under the Executive Schedule under sections 5312 through 5317;

(3) a position established under section 3104; or

(4) a senior-level position to which section 5376(a)(1) applies.

(b) Authority under this section—

(1) may be exercised only with respect to a position that—

(A) is described as addressing a critical need in the workforce plan under section 9802(b)(2)(A); and

(B) requires expertise of an extremely high level in a scientific, technical, professional, or administrative field;

(2) may be exercised only to the extent necessary to recruit or retain an individual exceptionally well qualified for the position; and

(3) may be exercised only in retaining employees of the Administration or in appointing individuals who were not employees of another Federal agency as defined under section 5102(a)(1).

(c)(1) Notwithstanding section 5377, the Administrator may fix the rate of basic pay for a position in the Administration in accordance with this section. The Administrator may not delegate this authority.

(2) The number of positions with pay fixed under this section may not exceed 10 at any time.

(d)(1) The rate of basic pay fixed under this section may not be less than the rate of basic pay (including any comparability payments) which would otherwise be payable for the position involved if this section had never been enacted.

(2) The annual rate of basic pay fixed under this section may not exceed the per annum rate of salary payable under section 104 of title 3.

(3) Notwithstanding any provision of section 5307, in the case of an employee who, during any calendar year, is receiving pay at a rate fixed under this section, no allowance, differential, bonus, award, or similar cash payment may be paid to such employee if, or to the extent that, when added to basic pay paid or payable to such employee (for service performed in such calendar year as an employee in the executive branch or as an employee outside the executive branch to whom chapter 51 applies), such payment would cause the total to exceed the per annum rate of salary which, as of the end of such calendar year, is payable under section 104 of title 3.

(Added Pub. L. 108–201, §3(a), Feb. 24, 2004, 118 Stat. 467.)

§ 9808. Assignments of intergovernmental personnel

For purposes of applying the third sentence of section 3372(a) (relating to the authority of the head of a Federal agency to extend the period of an employee's assignment to or from a State or local government, institution of higher education, or other organization), the Administrator may, with the concurrence of the employee and the government or organization concerned, take any action which would be allowable if such sentence had been amended by striking "two" and inserting "four".

(Added Pub. L. 108–201, §3(a), Feb. 24, 2004, 118 Stat. 468.)

§ 9809. Science and technology scholarship program

(a)(1) The Administrator shall establish a National Aeronautics and Space Administration Science and Technology Scholarship Program to award scholarships to individuals that is designed to recruit and prepare students for careers in the Administration.

(2) Individuals shall be selected to receive scholarships under this section through a competitive process primarily on the basis of academic merit, with consideration given to financial need and the goal of promoting the participation of individuals identified in section 33 or 34 of the Science and Engineering Equal Opportunities Act (42 U.S.C. 1885a or 1885b).

(3) To carry out the Program the Administrator shall enter into contractual agreements with individuals selected under paragraph (2) under which the individuals agree to serve as full-time employees of the Administration, for the period described in subsection (f)(1), in positions needed by the Administration and for which the individuals are qualified, in exchange for receiving a scholarship.

(b) In order to be eligible to participate in the Program, an individual must—

(1) be enrolled or accepted for enrollment as a full-time student at an institution of higher education in an academic field or discipline described in the list made available under subsection (d);

(2) be a United States citizen or permanent resident; and

(3) at the time of the initial scholarship award, not be an employee (as defined in section 2105).

(c) An individual seeking a scholarship under this section shall submit an application to the Administrator at such time, in such manner, and containing such information, agreements, or assurances as the Administrator may require to carry out this section.

(d) The Administrator shall make publicly available a list of academic programs and fields of study for which scholarships under the Program may be utilized and shall update the list as necessary.

(e)(1) The Administrator may provide a scholarship under the Program for an academic year if the individual applying for the scholarship has submitted to the Administrator, as part of the application required under subsection (c), a proposed academic program leading to a degree in a program or field of study on the list made available under subsection (d).

(2) An individual may not receive a scholarship under this section for more than 4 academic years, unless the Administrator grants a waiver.

(3) The dollar amount of a scholarship under this section for an academic year shall be determined under regulations issued by the Administrator, but shall in no case exceed the cost of attendance.

(4) A scholarship provided under this section may be expended for tuition, fees, and other authorized expenses as established by the Administrator by regulation.

(5) The Administrator may enter into a contractual agreement with an institution of higher education under which the amounts provided for a scholarship under this section for tuition, fees, and other authorized expenses are paid directly to the institution with respect to which the scholarship is provided.

(f)(1) The period of service for which an individual shall be obligated to serve as an employee of the Administration is, except as provided in subsection (h)(2), 24 months for each academic