

A Word About Ethics

SEEKING EMPLOYMENT OUTSIDE THE GOVERNMENT

ARE THERE ANY RULES BARRING ME FROM LOOKING FOR A JOB OR LIMITING WHO I MAY CONTACT ABOUT A FUTURE JOB?

- No. You are free to look for a job at any time with anyone.

ARE THERE ANY RESTRICTIONS ON ME BECAUSE I AM IN A JOB SEARCH?

- Yes. Once you start to look for non-Federal employment you must stop working on anything that will affect a prospective employer—meaning anyone you have contacted, or who has contacted you, about a job.

WHEN DOES THIS DISQUALIFICATION REQUIREMENT BEGIN?

- Disqualification begins as soon as:
 - you contact the prospective employer about a possible job, such as by sending a résumé;
 - a prospective employer contacts you about a possible job; or
 - you learn from a headhunter or other agent about a contact with the prospective employer on your behalf.

WHEN DOES THE DISQUALIFICATION END?

- Disqualification ends when:
 - either you or the prospective employer notifies the other of the end of employment discussions or
 - two months have elapsed without response after you sent an application.

DO I NEED TO NOTIFY MY SUPERVISOR OR ANYONE ELSE ABOUT A JOB SEARCH?

- Yes, in some cases. You must provide notice of employment contacts:
 - to an ethics official within 3 days of any communication with a prospective employer, in writing with a disqualification notice, if you are an SES member, political appointee, or otherwise required to file a public financial disclosure report (OGE Form 278e), in which case you can use the Notice of Employment Negotiations form found on the Ethics Law and Programs Division webpage at www.commerce.gov/ethics;
 - to your supervisor if the disqualification requirement prevents you from working on an assigned task;
 - to a supervisor or ethics official if you receive a travel payment to attend a job interview from a prospective employer; or
 - to a supervisor and an ethics official if you are a procurement official for a contract of \$150,000 or more and have contacted or been contacted by a bidder on the contract (even if neither of you pursues employment discussions).

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