



# USA Hire Training

**October 2025**

Created by the Office of Personnel  
Management, USA Hire Program Office



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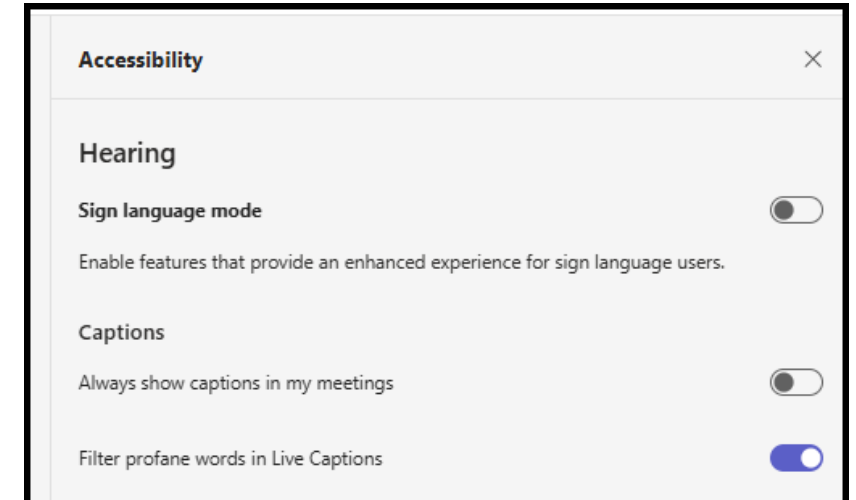
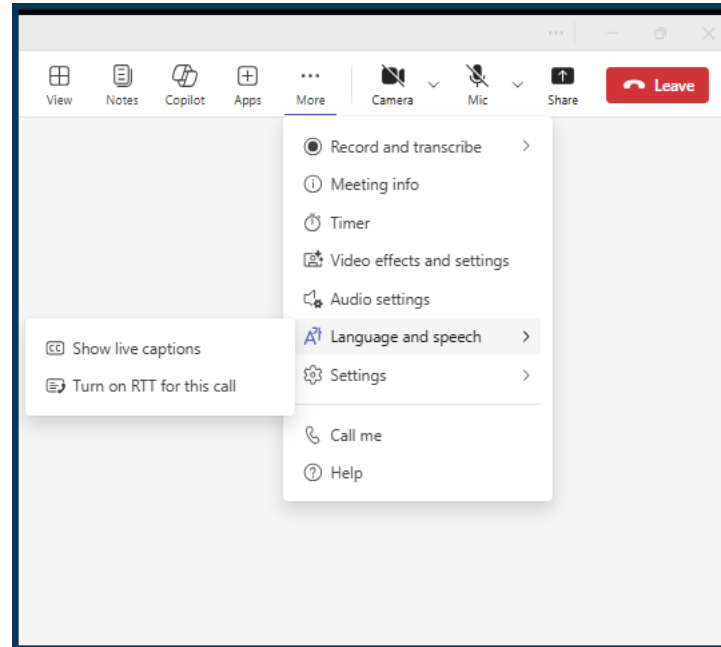
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<https://resourcecenter-usahire.opm.gov/>

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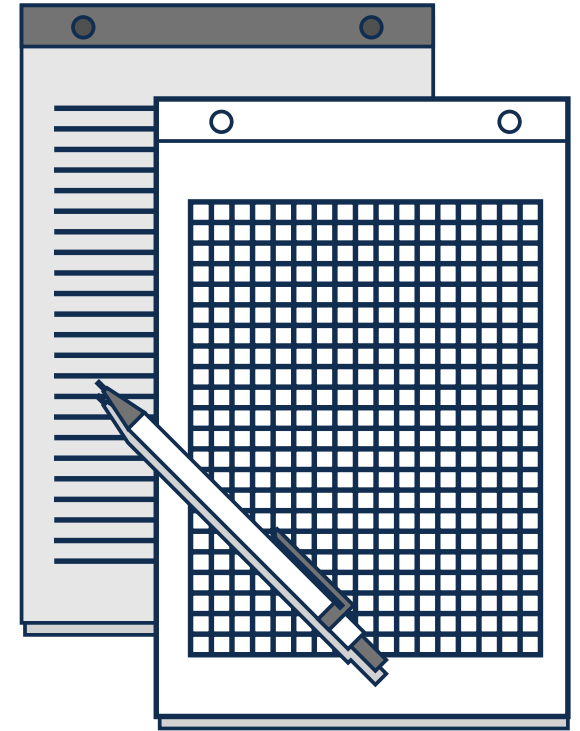
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2. Choose "**Language and speech**" to select "**Show live captions**"
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# Training Guidelines

- A copy of these presentation materials is on the [USA Hire Agency Resource Center](#).
- Ask questions in the Q&A. Please wait until a topic is covered, so you're not posting a question that's already been answered.
- We'll respond to as many questions as we can; however, we cannot answer agency-specific questions.
- A recording of this training will be posted on the [USA Hire Agency Resource Center](#).



# Training Agenda

- Chance to Compete Act
- Assessments and the Merit Hiring Plan
- USA Hire Overview & Demo
- USA Hire Resources
- Setting Up USA Hire in USA Staffing
- Applicant Resource Center
- Cut Scores
- Reasonable Accommodations
- Assessment Strategy

# Chance to Compete Act

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# USA Hire and the Chance to Compete Act, EO 14170 assessment requirements



“An examining agency shall preference the use of a technical assessment, to the maximum extent practicable, to assess the job-related skills, abilities, knowledge, and competencies of an applicant for a position in the competitive service.”

## USA Hire:

- Measures job-related competencies
- Is based on government-wide job analysis
- **Does not rely on an applicant’s self-evaluation.**
- Uses professionally developed, **reliable, and valid government-wide assessments** that can be used off-the-shelf.
- **Offers assessments for:**
  - a) Occupational specific non-supervisory positions
  - b) Supervisory and Management positions
  - c) Executive positions
  - d) Writing ability
  - e) Program/project management
  - f) Custom assessments tailored for unique agency needs

# Technical Assessment Definition

Technical Assessment definition (Section 2.a.9): A position-specific tool that is relevant to the position for which the tool is developed that –

- A. Allows for the demonstration of job-related skills, abilities, knowledge, and competencies;
- B. Is based upon a job analysis; and
- C. Does not solely include or principally rely upon a self assessment from an automated examination.

USA Hire assessments meet the Chance to Compete Act's definition of technical assessment.

# Assessments and the Merit Hiring Plan

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# Seven Goals of Memo

1. **Prioritize recruitment of individuals committed to improving the efficiency of the Federal government**, passionate about the ideals of our American republic, and committed to upholding the rule of law and the United States Constitution;
2. **Prevent the hiring of individuals based on their race, sex, or religion, and prevent the hiring of individuals who are unwilling to defend the Constitution or to faithfully serve the Executive Branch;**
3. **Implement**, to the greatest extent possible, **technical and alternative assessments** as required by the Chance to Compete Act of 2024;
4. **Decrease** government-wide **time-to-hire to under 80 days;**
5. **Improve communication with candidates** to provide greater clarity regarding application status, timelines, and feedback, including regular updates on the progress of applications and explanations of hiring decisions where appropriate;
6. **Integrate modern technology to support the recruitment and selection process**, including the use of data analytics to identify trends, gaps, and opportunities in hiring, as well as leveraging digital platforms to improve candidate engagement; and
7. **Ensure Department and Agency leadership**, or their designees, **are active participants** in implementing the new processes and **throughout the full hiring process.**



The Director

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT  
Washington, DC 20415

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Heads and Acting Heads of Departments and Agencies  
**FROM:** Vince Haley, Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy  
Charles Ezell, Acting Director, U.S. Office of Personnel Management  
**DATE:** May 29, 2025  
**RE:** Merit Hiring Plan

The American people deserve a Federal workforce dedicated to American values and efficient service. Yet, Federal hiring criteria long ago abandoned any serious need for technical skills and adherence to the Constitution. Instead, the overly complex Federal hiring system overemphasized discriminatory "equity" quotas and too often resulted in the hiring of unfit, unskilled bureaucrats. The American people, who deserve a government that works for them, have suffered.

In his January 20, 2025 Executive Order 14170, [Reforming the Federal Hiring Process and Restoring Merit to Government Service](#) ("Restoring Merit") President Trump directed that "recruitment and hiring processes" become "more efficient and focused on serving the Nation" and that hiring be based on "merit, practical skill, and dedication to our Constitution." These changes will "ensure that the Federal workforce is prepared to help achieve American greatness, and attract the talent necessary to serve our citizens effectively."

President Trump directed the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy to "develop and send to agency heads a Federal Hiring Plan that brings to the Federal workforce only highly capable Americans dedicated to the furtherance of American ideals, values, and interests." President Trump stated that this Merit Hiring Plan must achieve seven goals:

1. Prioritize recruitment of individuals committed to improving the efficiency of the Federal government, passionate about the ideals of our American republic, and committed to upholding the rule of law and the United States Constitution;
2. Prevent the hiring of individuals based on their race, sex, or religion, and prevent the hiring of individuals who are unwilling to defend the Constitution or to faithfully serve the Executive Branch;
3. Implement, to the greatest extent possible, technical and alternative assessments as

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# Four Key Elements of the Merit Hiring Plan

1. Reforming the Federal recruitment process to ensure that only the most talented, capable and patriotic Americans are hired to the Federal service.
2. Implementing skills-based hiring, eliminating unnecessary degree requirements, and requiring the use of rigorous, job-related assessments to ensure candidates are selected based on their merit and competence, not their skin color or academic pedigree
3. Streamlining and improving the job application process
4. Reducing time-to-hire to under 80 days by emphasizing the use of talent pools and shared certificates and streamlining the background check process.

# USA Hire Overview

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# USA Hire Assessments

This "What is USA Hire?" video can be a great resource for your agency stakeholders.

<https://youtu.be/ZLcw8NEgosc>





**USA Hire is fully integrated with USA Staffing and may be used in combination with other assessments.**



### Standard

- 135 Job Series
- Non-Supervisory
- General competencies
- Off-the-shelf
- Specific to series/grade

Includes Early Career Talent Assessment for xx99 series.

- Mobile-first design
- Covers grades 3-11 (grades 6, 8, 10 soon)



### Premium

- **Leadership**
  - Federal Supervisor Assessment
  - Supervisory Situational Judgment Test
  - Executive Assessment
- **Critical Skills**
  - Writing
  - Program/Project Management
  - Data Skills (*coming soon!*)
- **1801/1802 Job Series**



### Custom

- Agency-specific
- Mission critical
- New content



### USA Hire Interview

- Conduct virtual structured interviews
- Raters' notes, rating, and consensus recorded on the platform
- Applicant self-scheduling available

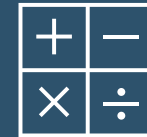
# USA Standard Assessments

Note: Assessments used and competencies measured depend on the job series and grade.



## Interaction

- Accountability
- Attention to Detail
- Customer Service
- Flexibility
- Influencing/Negotiating
- Integrity/Honesty
- Interpersonal Skills
- Learning
- Self-Management
- Stress Tolerance
- Teamwork



## Mathematical Reasoning

- Arithmetic
- Mathematical reasoning



## Reading

- Reading



## Judgment

- Decision making



## Reasoning

- Reasoning

**USA Hire Assessments help agencies maximize the value of their hiring process.**



Quality Assessments



Easy Implementation



Advanced Technology



“Whole Person”  
Assessment



Federal HR & Assessment  
Expertise



Better Hires!



## USA Hire Key Features Include:



CAT Engines –  
Assessment item pool



Branching Role Play



Cut Scores – Minimum  
proficiency level



Proctored or Un-proctored  
Testing



Reasonable Accommodation



# Typical USA Hire Process

\*USA Hire can help to find the best and brightest applicants for referral

Applicants submit application:

1. Resume
2. Other documents
3. Minimum Qualification (MQ) Questionnaire responses

Applicants who self-report meeting MQs receive USA Hire battery link

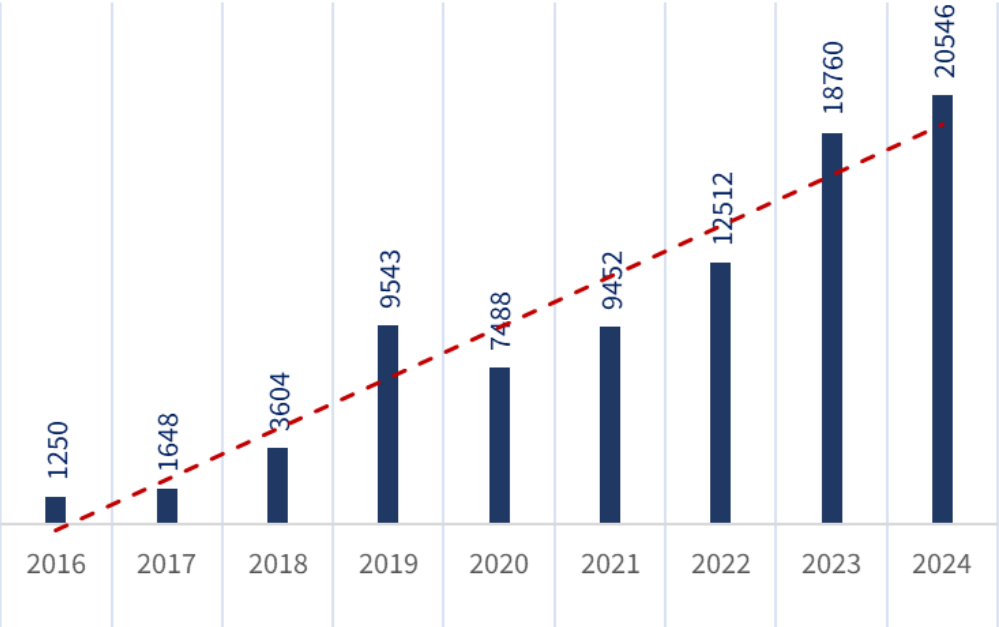
Applicants complete USA Hire Assessments

USA Staffing automatically calculates applicant final scores when assessment window closes

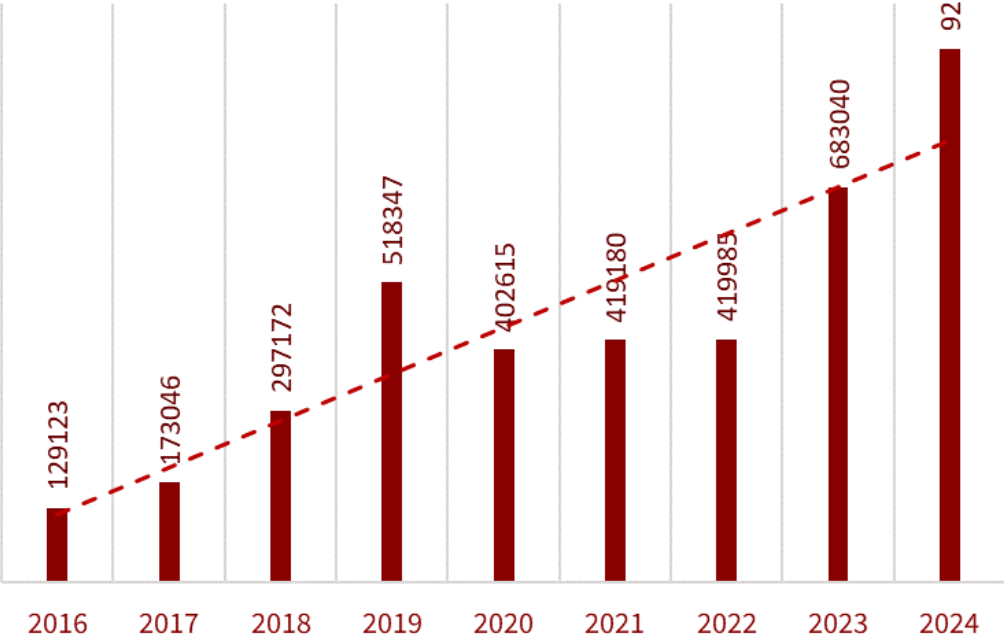
HR verifies MQs and other screen outs to refer applicants, as applicable.\*

# USA Hire Use Metrics

## JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS USING USA HIRE



## USA HIRE ASSESSMENTS COMPLETED



### Assessment Completion Rates

Assessments Started	91%
Assessments Started & Completed	68%

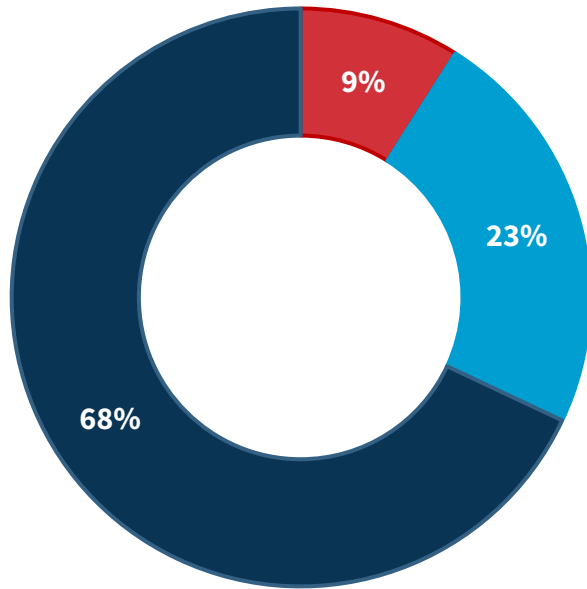
### Applicant Feedback

Assessment Process User-Friendly	89%
Satisfied with Assessment Process	71%

# USA Hire Completion Rate Comparison

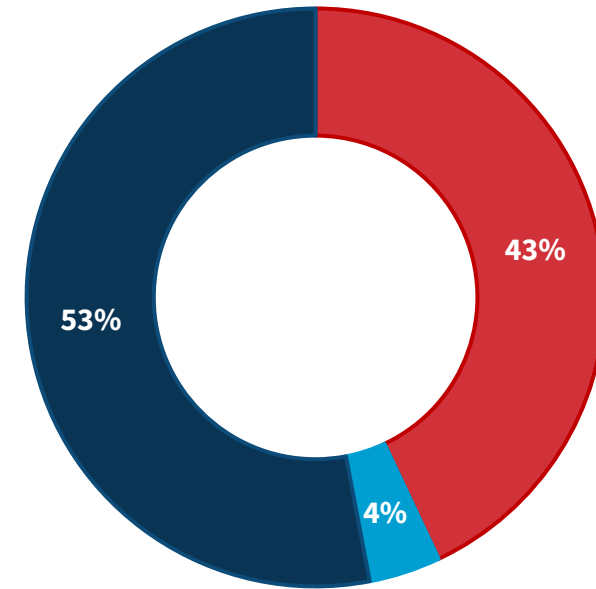
\*Data for all visualizations as of 5/14/25

## Applicant Behavior – Past 12 Months



■ Did Not Start ■ Started, Did Not Finish ■ Completed Assessments

## Applicant Behavior – FY15



■ Did Not Start ■ Started, Did Not Finish ■ Completed Assessments

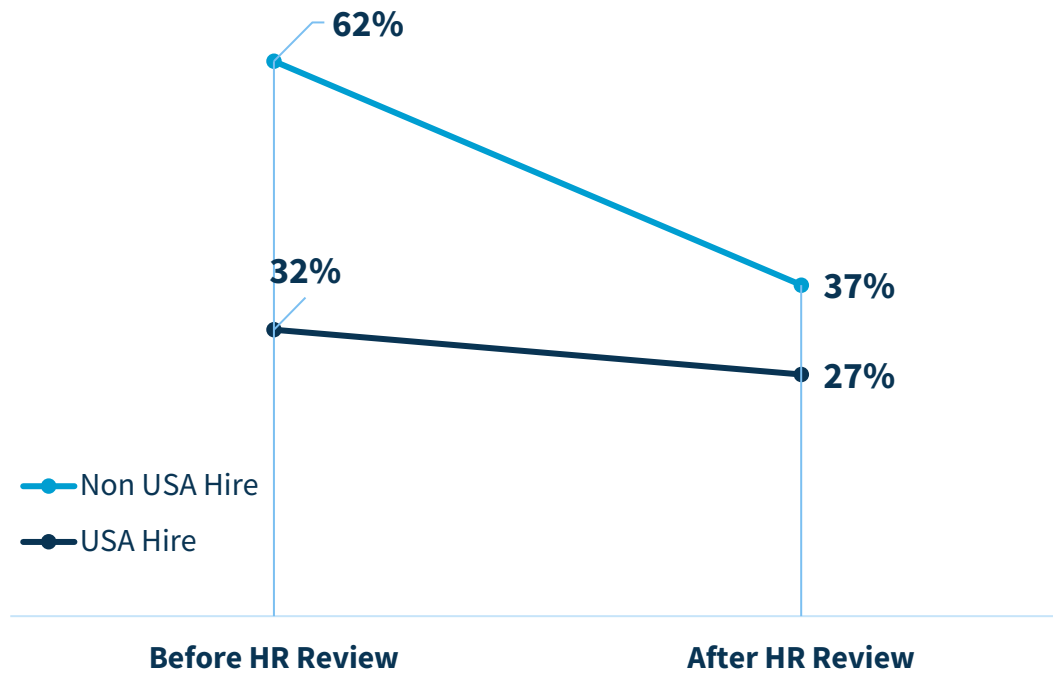
Recent enhancements have resulted in increased applicant participation in the testing process.

- Automatic reminder emails
- Mobile Enablement
- Immediate testing after submitting application

# Case Study: Applicant Volume Before/After HR Review

Using USA Hire has been found to reduce the burden on HR Specialists.

**% Of Eligible Applicants in Applicant Pool**



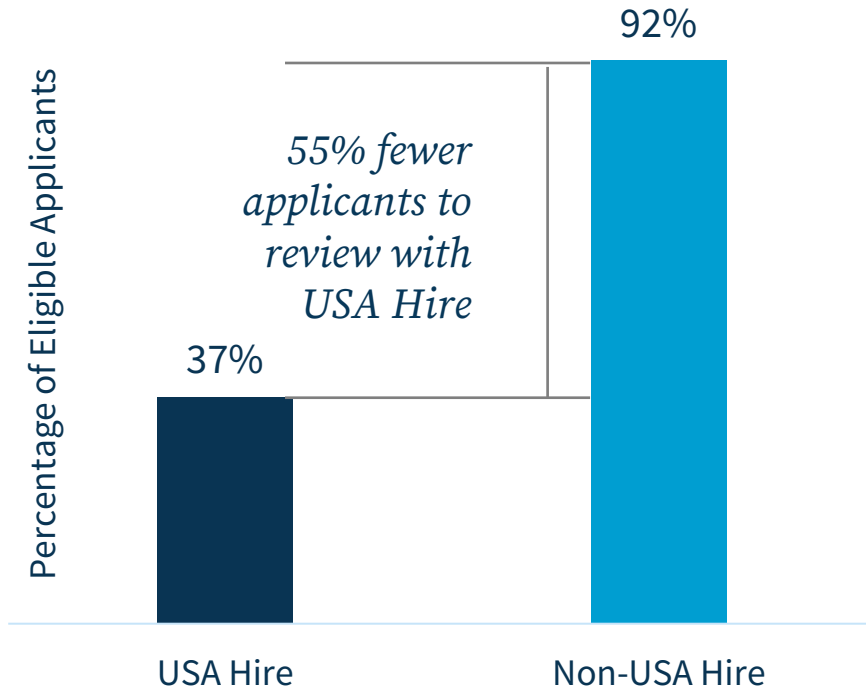
*“It would be a benefit to implement USA Hire across the board because you get a **higher quality of referred applicants.**”*

*- HR Staff*



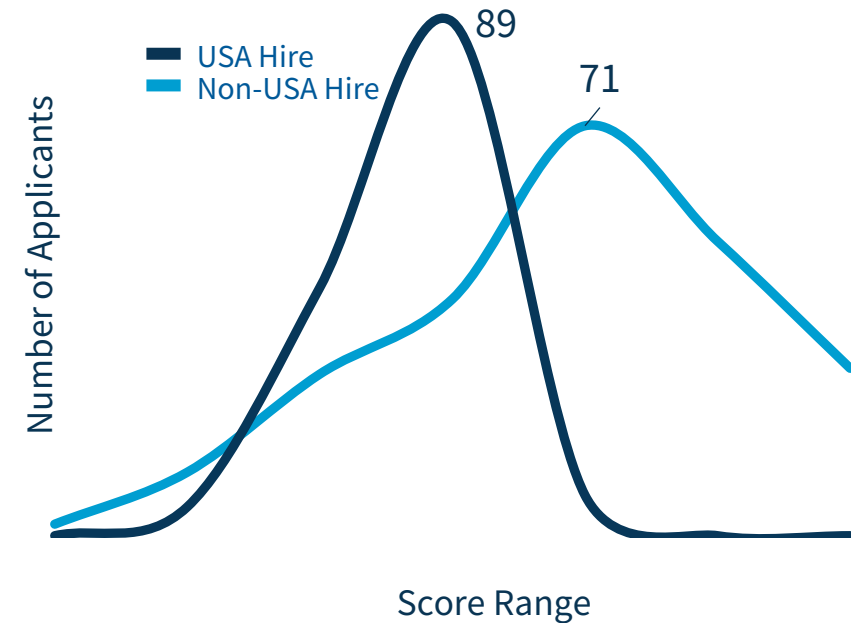
# Case Study: USA Hire vs. Non-USA Hire

## % Best Qualified After Assessment



Findings: USA Hire results in significantly fewer applicants for HR review, reducing the time required to review applicants by 10 hours.

## Score Distribution



USA Hire provides a more 'normal' score distribution. Self-assessment skews scores to high end of range.



## What Hiring Managers are Saying

*“I have used USA Hire as a secondary assessment since its inception and have continued to be impressed with the **quality of candidate**. The selections have gone on to become **vital members of my team**.”*

*“I use it for entry-level positions to measure **general competencies** versus technical skills.”*

*“The process was **quick and saved me time** doing it. It got me the people I needed.”*

*“The USA Hire assessments **allowed the best people to get to the interview**.”*

*“The only thing that was difficult was picking the one applicant we thought was the best out of the top five because they were **all so well qualified**.”*

# Why Use USA Hire?

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# The Impact of Better Assessments



## The USA Hire Difference

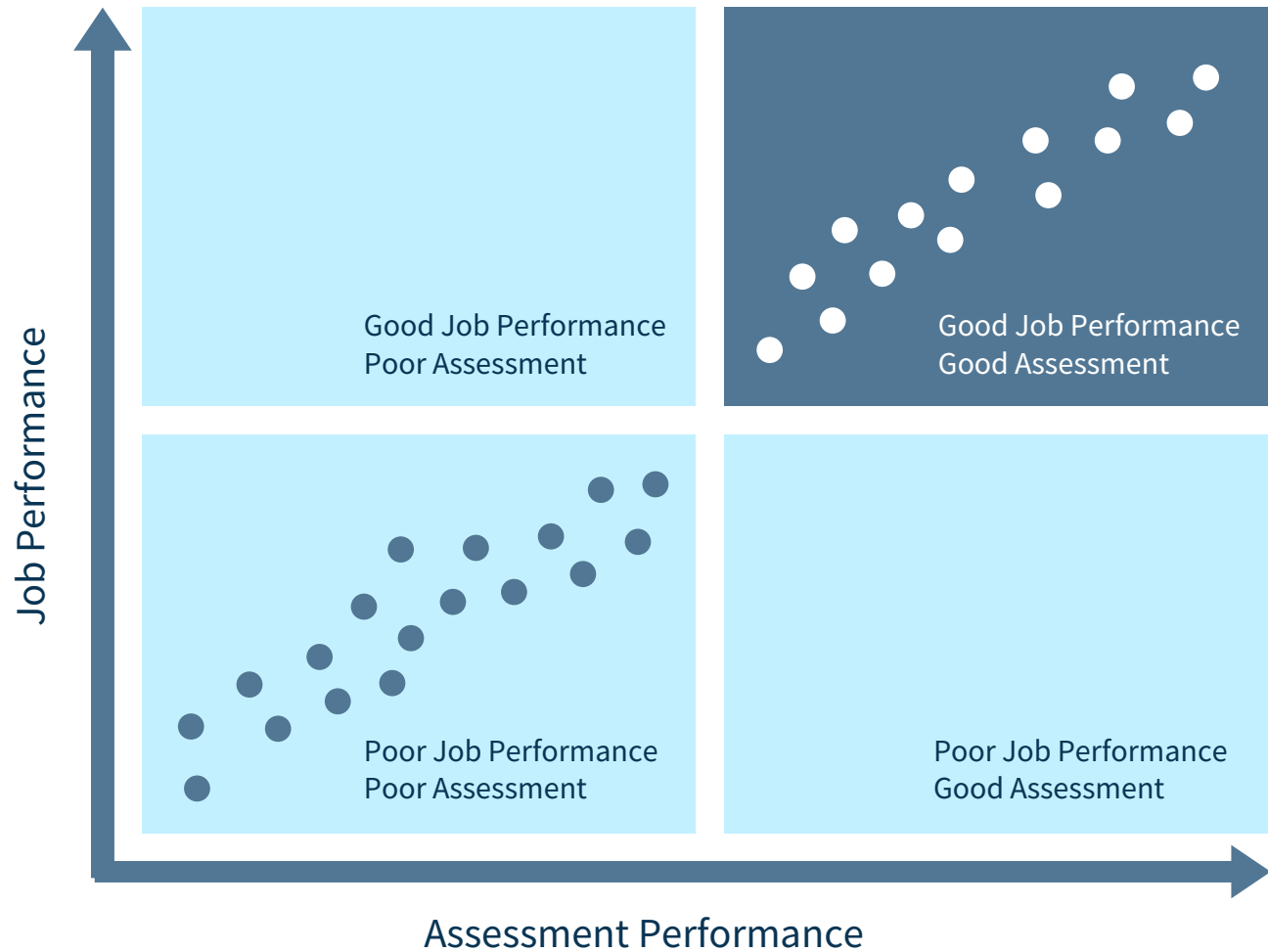
USA Hire is a high-quality assessment tool that can be utilized to find top talent and make better hires. Better hires help build a stronger workforce which in turn can lead to becoming a high-performing organization. This leads to your agency being equipped to meet its mission.

## Poor-Quality Assessment Example



A Poor-quality Assessment does not accurately indicate job fit.

## High-Quality Assessment Example

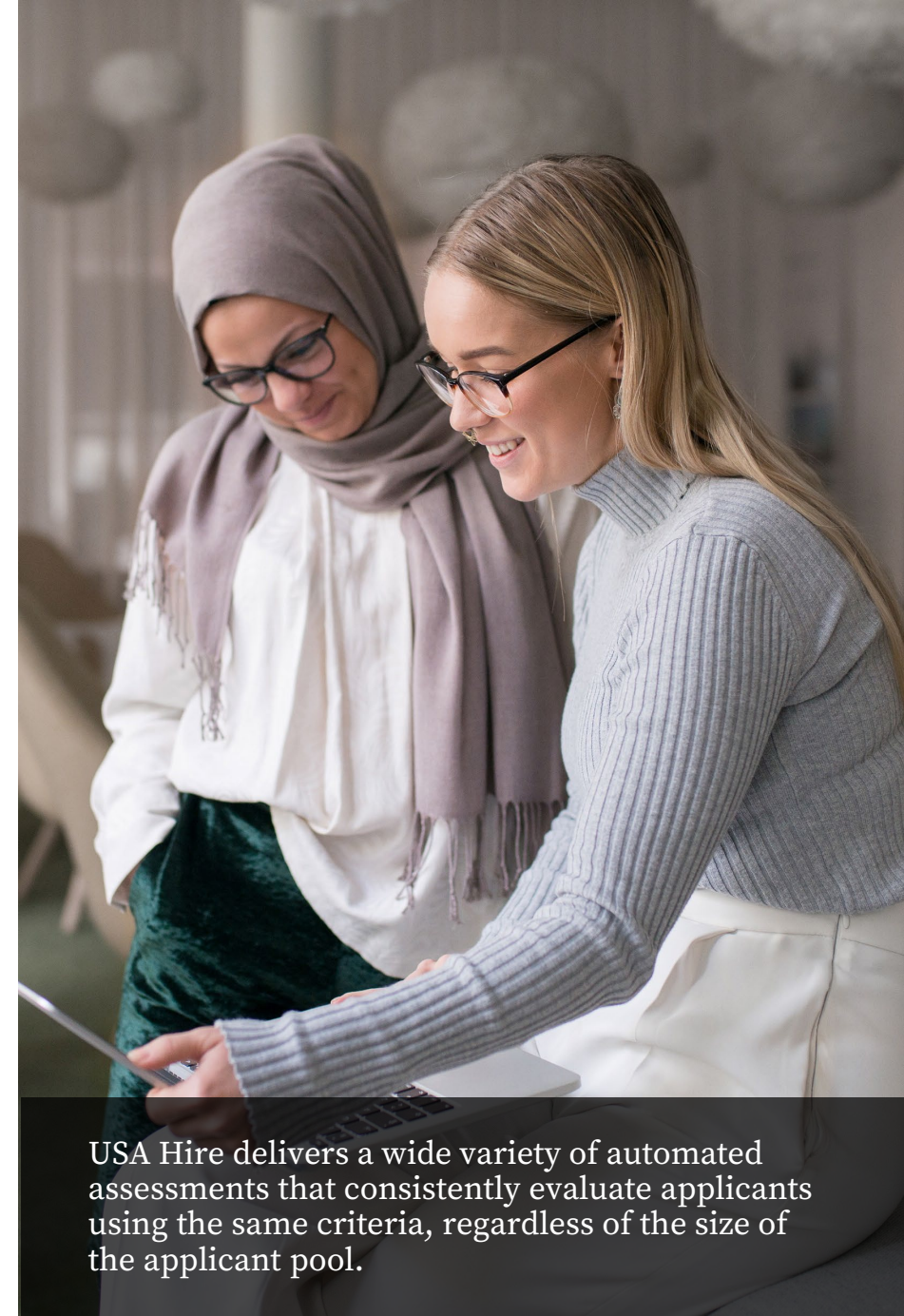


A high-quality assessment more accurately depicts an applicants fit for the job.

# Merit-Based Hiring with USA Hire

## USA Hire assessments help facilitate merit-based hiring by:

- Adding structure to the hiring process
- Providing equal opportunity to applicants to demonstrate job-related competencies
- Rating all applicants consistently and objectively
- Measuring relevant competencies, critical for success on the job
- Providing an objective measure of an applicant's competency level
- Using a “Whole Person” approach



USA Hire delivers a wide variety of automated assessments that consistently evaluate applicants using the same criteria, regardless of the size of the applicant pool.

A man in a white shirt and glasses is sitting at a desk, looking at a document with a green bar chart. He is holding a pen to his chin, appearing thoughtful. On the desk, there is a laptop, a spiral notebook, and a small potted plant. The background is a blurred office setting.

# HR Perspective Benefits

- Reduced number of applicants requiring review prior to certificate issuance
- Decreased time spent evaluating repeat applicants who may lack genuine interest
- Opportunity to shorten time-to-hire at critical stages of the recruitment process
- Improved time efficiency, resulting in potential cost savings
- Enhanced ability to conduct comprehensive assessments based on targeted competencies
- Increased potential for clearer differentiation between candidate in quality categories



# USA Hire Assessment Demo

Practice Assessments: <https://support-usahire.opm.gov/hc/en-us/categories/31903938714772-Practice-Assessments>

# USA Hire Resources

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# USA Hire Resource Center

<https://resourcecenter-usahire.opm.gov>

# USA Hire User Guide

**OPM | USA Hire** Agency Resource Center

Agency Resource Center > Implementation Resources > USA Hire User Guide

## USA Hire User Guide

*Comprehensive implementation guidance.*

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Getting Started
- Chapter 3: Announcement Types
- Chapter 4: Prepare the Vacancy
- Chapter 5: Build the Assessment Package
- Chapter 6: Create the Announcement
- Chapter 7: Await Applications
- Chapter 8: Review Applicants
- Chapter 9: Create and Issue Applicant Lists
- Chapter 10: Cancelling a USA Hire Vacancy
- Chapter 11: USA Hire Reports



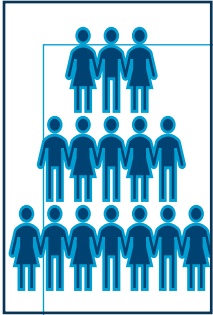
# Applicant Resource Center

<https://support-usahire.opm.gov/hc/en-us>

# Cut Scores

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# Cut Scores



## **Public**

Cut score setting defaults to *enabled* and can not be adjusted.



## **Status/Internal Merit Promotion:**

Cut score setting defaults is *not enabled* but may be turned on manually.

*Automatic score reuse applies to all USA Hire assessments, including those with cut scores.*

- 0080** Security Administration
- 0201** Personnel/HR Management
- 0203** Personnel Clerical & Assistance
- 0303** Misc. Clerk & Assistance
- 0318** Secretary
- 0343** Management & Program Analyst
- 0501** Financial Administration & Programs
- 0510** Accountant
- 0560** Budget Analysis
- 0861** Aerospace Engineering
- 0962** Contact Representative
- 1102** Contract Specialist
- 2210** Information Technology

# Cut Score Scenario: Meet Alec

Alec applied to a DoD HR Specialist, GS-201-12 (DE) and took a USA Hire assessment. Alec didn't meet the cut score, so was ineligible.

Alec applies the next week to an HHS GS-0201-12 (**DE**) JOA and his scores were automatically reused. Alec was ineligible.

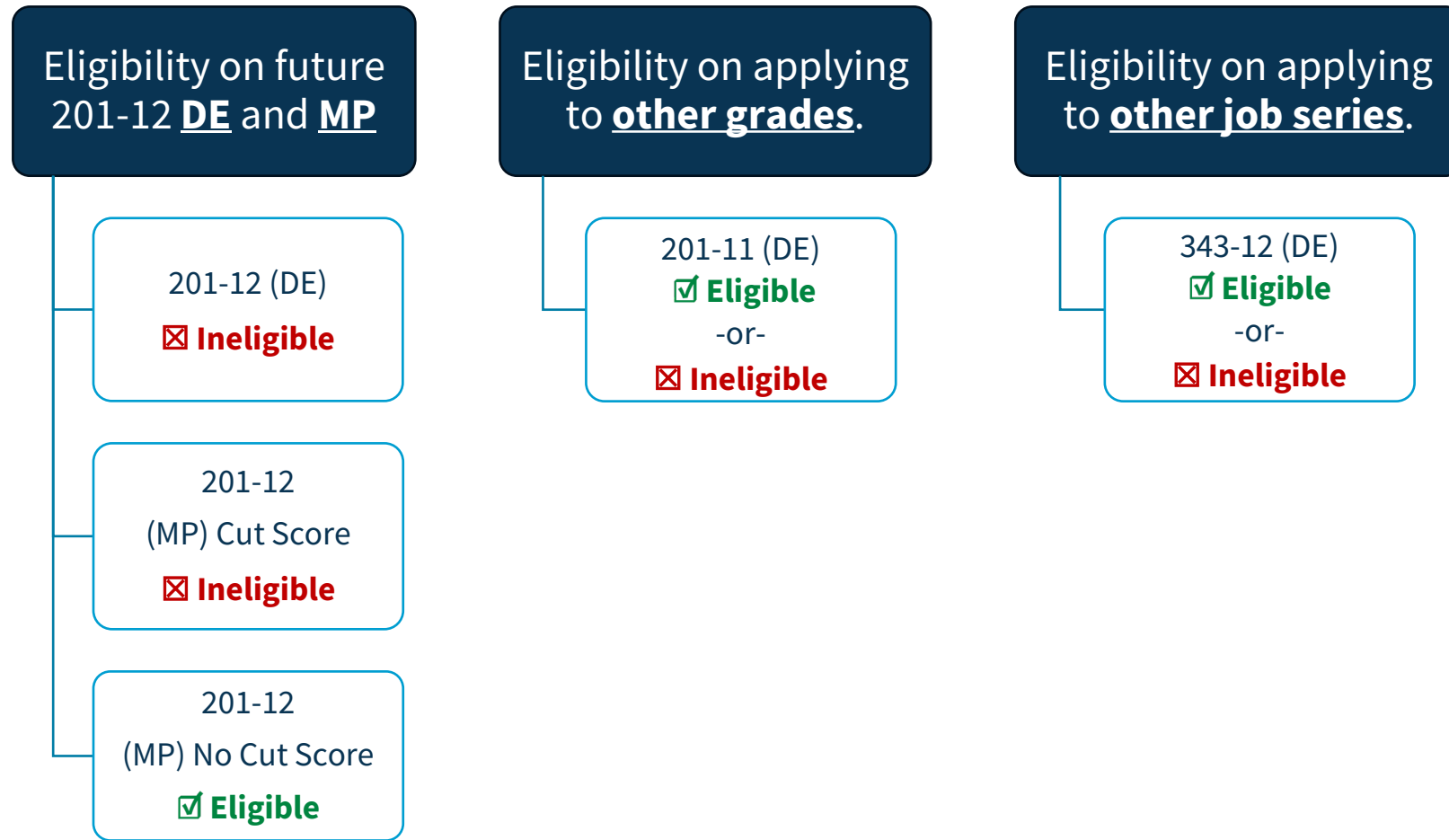
Alec applied to a DHS GS-0201-12 (**MP** – no cut score), was eligible, and referred!

Alec applied to a DOE GS-0201-**11** (DE), was eligible, referred and selected!



# Cut Score Reuse Scenario

Applicant applies to a 201-12 (DE) announcement and doesn't meet the cut score. The score is automatically reused for one year from the date of the assessment and may impact future applications based on factors such as competencies assessed and if a cut score was utilized.



# Reasonable Accommodations

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# Reasonable Accommodations

Reasonable Accommodations for taking the online assessments are provided on a case-by-case basis only to qualified individuals with a disability covered by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

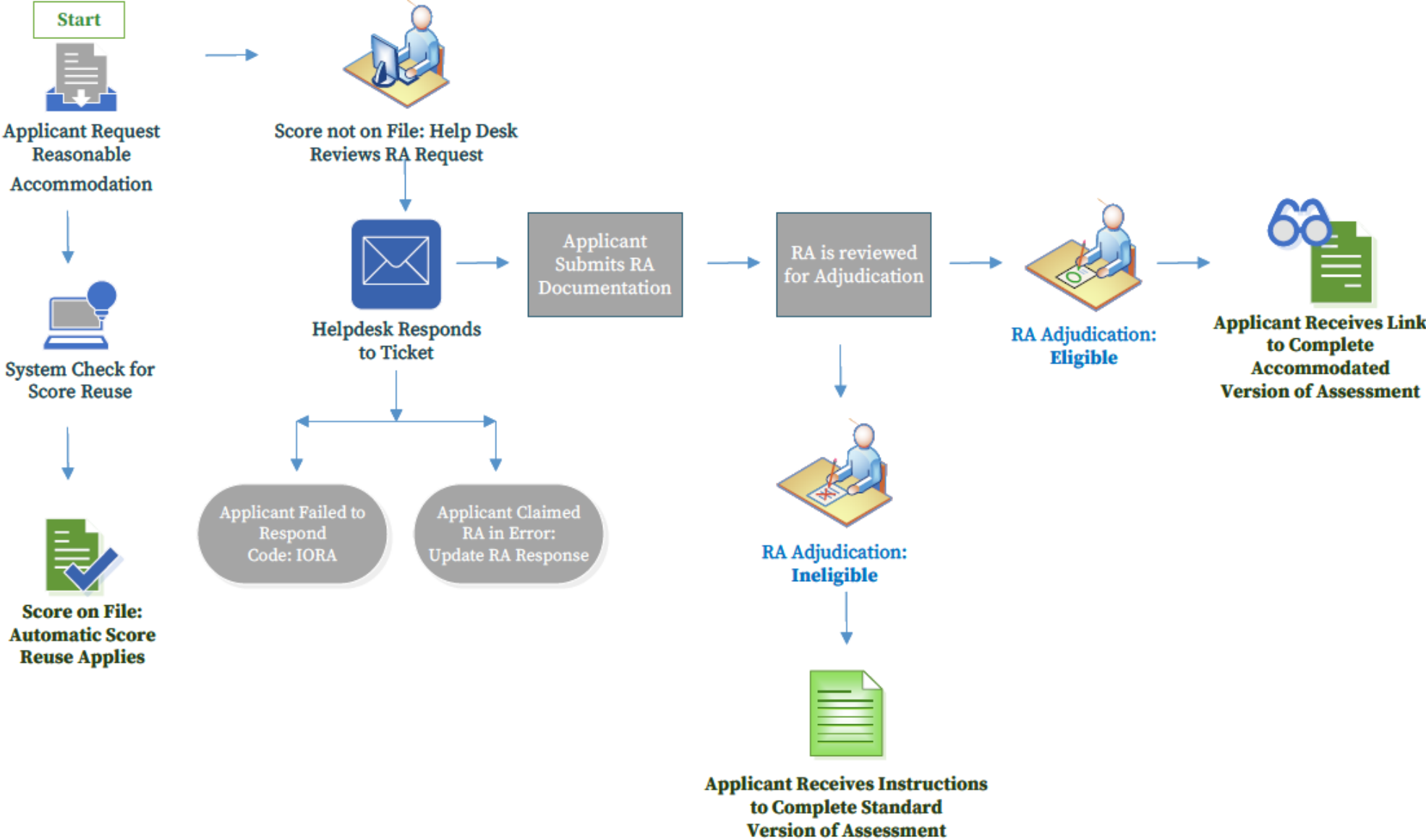
**Do you have a disability (physical or mental) that you believe will interfere with completing the online assessments and require a Reasonable Accommodation?**

**⚠ Reasonable Accommodation** ×

*You have responded "Yes" to the question asking if you require a reasonable accommodation for the online assessments required for this position. Please note, you will need to provide documentation to substantiate this request. For more information, please see [Reasonable Accommodations for USA Hire](#).*

Okay

# Reasonable Accommodations Process





# Assessment Strategy

Is your position in the competitive service and subject to an assessment under the Merit Hiring Plan (excluding seasonal, wage-grade, and GS-1-4 positions) or other agency guidance?



Yes

Is this position supervisory or in the executive service?

Yes



Consider

Federal Supervisor Assessment\*  
-OR-  
Supervisory Situational Judgment Test\*  
-OR-  
Executive Assessment\*

No

Is the job series and grade covered by a USA Hire Standard assessment?

Yes

Is this position pay banded or non-GS?

No

Refer to your agency guidance on positions that do not require an assessment. If an assessment will be used, start the decision tree with yes.

No

No



Consider

Yes



Yes

Is the anticipated applicant pool small or the job hard to fill?

Consider

No

Other Assessment Options\*    USA Hire Interview\*    USA Hire Custom\*    USA Hire Premium\*

USA Hire Standard\*



\*Are you considering multi-hurdle assessments for your vacancy?

You may be able to pair multiple USA Hire assessments or other assessment types to create a multi-hurdle process for your vacancy.

Note: USA Hire Standard measures general competencies; additional assessments may be needed to measure technical skills. Using a USA Hire assessment may also require a questionnaire for minimum or basic qualifications.

# USA Hire Decision Tree

Know When Using USA Hire Assessments are Effective

# Hiring Manager Resources

- Standard USA Hire Assessments – Available Series and Grades
- USA Hire Decision Tree
- USA Hire Practice Assessments
- Videos
  - *How Federal Managers Make Better Hires with USA Hire*
  - *What is USA Hire?*





# Differences for Hiring Managers

## Preparing the Announcement

- No Review of USA Hire Questions
- No additional documentation needed for USA Hire usage
- Measure general competencies with USA Hire
- Measure technical competencies (resume, panel review, interview, etc.) through USA Staffing, etc.

## Receiving the Certificate

- Fewer applicants referred
- Higher quality of referred applicants
- Decrease in time to referral
- Decrease in time to hire

# Getting Started with USA Hire Assessments



## PERSONAL PREPARATION

- Complete USA Hire Training
- Complete Training Practice Exercise
- Read the USA Hire User Guide
- Read Agency Assessment Guidance (e.g. policy)

## SYSTEM PREPARATION

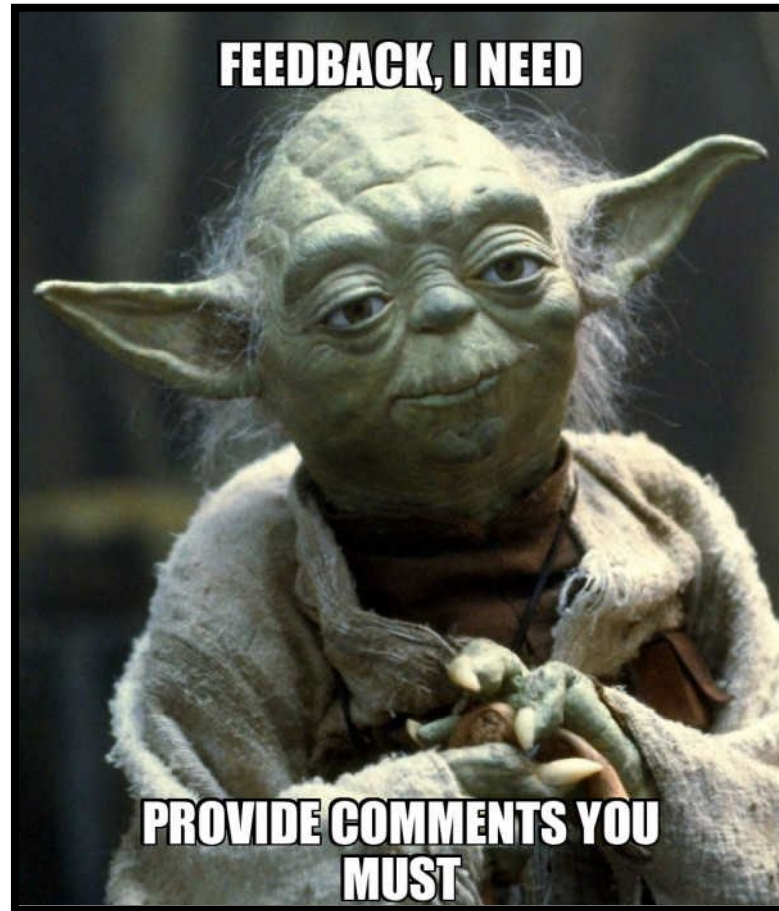
- USA Hire Assessments Available in USA Staffing
- Up-to-date USA Hire Announcement Template(s)
- Up-to-date USA Hire Application Received Template
- New Agencies: 5 JOA Reviews

# *What to Expect: Adjusting to Changes*

- This is new – there will be questions. Ask them!
- Adjust to new processes, like waiting until the assessment window closes to conduct a quals review.
- New resources to find answers to all those questions.
- Remember the “Why” of USA Hire – helping agencies make better quality hiring decisions.
- Change takes time.



# Feedback Survey



Survey Link: <https://surveys.opm.gov/se/5B55584E6A1492FF>

# Questions?

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or visit <https://www.opm.gov/usahire>

