

GLOSSARY

Assignment Right	The right of an employee to be assigned by bump or retreat in the second round of competition to a position in a different competitive level held by an employee with lower standing on a retention register.
Career Transition Services	These services are available to all employees affected by downsizing, reorganization, or similar events in accordance with the provisions of the Agency Career Transition Assistance Plan .
Competing Employee	An employee in tenure group I, II, or III in either competitive or the excepted service.
Competitive Area	Organizational units and geographical locations that outline the boundaries of competition within which employees compete for retention under the RIF regulations. All employees within the organizational units and geographical locations defined are included in the competitive area. Employees compete for retention only with other employees in the same competitive area.
Competitive Level	A grouping of positions in a competitive area that are in the same grade (or occupational level) and classified series, and that are similar enough in duties, qualification requirements, pay schedule, and working conditions so that an agency may reassign the incumbent of one position to any other position in the level without undue interruption.
Competitive Service	All civil service positions in the Executive Branch, except: <ol style="list-style-type: none">(1) Positions which are specifically excepted from the competitive service by or under statute;(2) Positions to which appointments are made by nomination for confirmation by the Senate, unless the Senate otherwise directs; and(3) Positions in the Senior Executive Service.

DD 214	Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty.
Directed Reassignment	<p>The reassignment of an employee at his/her same grade level to a vacant position in another commuting area.</p> <p>NOTE: This type of action is not a RIF action and is encouraged by OPM as a tool to avoid RIF. An individual who declines a directed reassignment is separated under adverse action procedures and is not eligible for placement on the Reemployment Priority List (RPL).</p>
Excepted Service	Civil service positions that are not in the competitive service or the Senior Executive Service.
Furlough	Placement of an employee in a temporary nonduty and nonpay status for more than 30 consecutive calendar days, or more than 22 workdays if done on a noncontinuous basis, but not more than 1 year when the action is based on one of the RIF reasons and is not in accordance with pre-established conditions of employment.
Length of Service	The length of time in civilian service as a Federal employee and certain service in the Armed Forces is creditable for purposes of RIF.
Local Commuting Area	The geographic area that usually constitutes one area for employment purposes. It includes any population center (or two or more neighboring ones) and the surrounding localities in which people live and can reasonably be expected to travel back and forth daily to their usual employment.
Merit Systems Protection Board	The Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) is an independent, quasi-judicial agency in the Executive branch. MSPB carries out its statutory responsibilities and authorities primarily by adjudicating individual employee appeals.
Office of Personnel Management	The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is the Federal agency having responsibility for issuing regulations and supplementing Part 351 of Title 5, Code Federal Regulations, with instructions in its Workforce Restructuring Handbook.

Office of Human Resources Management	USDA, Department Management, Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM).
Program	A component of a MRP agency that is separately organized and clearly distinguished from other components in work function and operation.
Rating of Record	The performance rating prepared at the end of an appraisal period which results in assignment of a summary level of performance.
Reduction-In-Force	An agency must use the RIF regulations before the release of a competing employee from his or her competitive level by furlough for more than 30 days, or of more than 22 discontinuous workdays, separation, demotion, or reassignment requiring displacement of another employee. Normally, this release is required because of lack of work, shortage of funds, insufficient personnel ceiling, restructuring, or an employee's exercise of reemployment rights or restoration rights.
Retention Register	<p>The ranking of employees in the competitive level based on the four retention factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenure of employment (i.e., type of appointment); • Veterans' preference; • Total creditable Federal civilian and uniformed service; and • Performance ratings.
Retention Standing	An employee's position on a retention register after the agency applies the four retention factors, tenure, veterans' preference, and length of service augmented by performance credit.
RIF Notice Specific Notice	<p>A written communication issued by the Human Resources office to an individual employee to advise the employee of the RIF action. The notice will include information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reason for the RIF;

- The RIF action being taken and how it affects the employee;
- The effective date of the action;
- The employee's competitive area, competitive level, retention subgroup, service date;
- The three most recent ratings of record received during the last four years;
- The location where the employee may inspect the regulations and the records pertinent to his or her case;
- Entitlements, depending on the RIF action to be taken; and
- Rights to appeal or grieve the action.

Notice Period

The period of time between notification that a RIF action will be taken and the date of the action. Agencies may request from the OPM an exception to the 60-day minimum requirement when the RIF is caused by unforeseeable circumstances.

Reorganization

The planned elimination, addition, or redistribution of functions or duties in an organization.

Tenure Groups

Categories of employees by status under their current appointments. Groups are defined as follows:

Competitive Service:

Group I includes each career employee who is not serving a probationary period.

Group II includes each career-career conditional employee and each employee serving a probationary period following appointment from a competitive list of eligibles.

Group III includes all employees serving under indefinite appointments, temporary appointments, status quo appointments, term appointments, and other nonstatus,

nonpermanent appointments which meet the definition of provision appointments.

Excepted Service:

Group I includes each permanent employee whose appointment carries no restriction or condition.

Group II includes each employee serving a trial period and employees whose tenure is equivalent to a career-conditional appointment in the competitive service.

Group III includes each employee whose tenure is indefinite, but not actually or potentially permanent; whose appointment has a specific time limitation of more than 1 year; or who is currently employed under a temporary appointment limited to 1 year or less, but has completed 1 year of current continuous service under a temporary appointment without a break in service.

Veteran's Preference

Veterans' preference comes from the Veterans' Preference Act of 1944. By law, veterans who are disabled or who served on active duty in the Armed Forces during certain specified time periods or in military campaigns are entitled to preference over others in hiring from competitive lists of eligibles and also in retention during reductions in force.