

Don't Go Away... Go Part-time!

Is juggling work and family responsibilities getting you down?

Do health problems make it hard for you to work a 40-hour week?

Could you go back to school if there were extra hours in the day?

At this time in your life, are some non-work hours more valuable than \$\$\$?

Would a part-time work schedule help you balance competing demands?

What is a permanent part-time employee?

A permanent part-time employee has a career or career-conditional appointment (or a permanent appointment in the excepted service), is eligible for fringe benefits, and works between 16 and 32 hours each week on a prearranged schedule. For employees who cannot continue to work full-time, part-time is a way to maintain a career and income.

What is job sharing?

Job sharing is a form of part-time employment in which the schedules of two part-time employees are arranged to cover the duties of a single full-time position. For example, job sharers can each work a portion of the day or week.

What positions and grade levels are suitable for part-time employment and/or job sharing?

Part-time employees are currently working in a wide variety of positions at all levels. (Job sharers, though fewer in number, also work in clerical, technical, administrative and professional jobs.) Any job may be filled by a part-time employee or a team of job sharers when the arrangement meets the needs of the office--and the employee(s).

Why do employers offer job sharing?

In addition to providing the opportunity for employees to work part-time in positions where full-time coverage is required, job sharing provides management with extra flexibility: team members may have different strengths; they may be able to fill in for each other's absences; and both may be able to work extra hours when there are unexpected workload surges.

How can a full-time employee change to a part-time or job sharing schedule?

Although procedures vary from agency to agency, the first step is for an employee to discuss the idea with his or her immediate supervisor. If a part-time schedule is not appropriate for the employee's current position, job sharing may be feasible. Agency personnel offices may be able to help the employee identify other positions in the agency which could be filled on a part-time or job-shared basis.

For more information, call your agency contact:

Do personnel rules treat part-time and job-sharing employees in the same way? Although the job sharing arrangement adds an extra dimension, job-sharers are part-time employees and are treated as such. In the following information, the term *part-time employee* also includes job sharers.

Are fringe benefits available? Part-time employees under permanent appointments are eligible for the same benefits as full-time employees: leave, retirement, health and life insurance coverage. Part-time and job-sharing employees who participate in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program receive the same coverage as full-time employees but pay a greater percentage of the premium because the Government's share is prorated based on the number of hours the employee is scheduled to work each week. For example, an employee on a 20-hour per week schedule receives one-half the Government contribution toward the premium.

What about pay, leave, and holidays? Gross pay is computed by multiplying the employee's hourly rate by the number of hours worked during the pay period. Overtime rates apply only to the hours in excess of 8 in a day or 40 in a week. Non-overtime hours above those normally scheduled are paid at the basic rate.

Annual leave is earned according to the number of hours worked per pay period. An employee with less than 3 years of service earns 1 hour of leave for each 20 hours worked; with from 3 to 14 years of service, the employee earns 1 hour for each 13 worked; and with 15 or more years of service earns 1 hour for each 10 hours worked. All part-time and job sharing employees earn 1 hour of sick leave for each 20 hours worked and are also eligible for other kinds of leave.

If a holiday falls on a day the employee normally works, the employee is paid for the number of hours he or she was scheduled to work.

Can part-time employees compete for other positions? Part-time employees are eligible to compete for part-time as well as full-time positions in accordance with their agency's merit promotion plan. Part-time employees who are job sharing may apply and be considered as a team, but each must be among the best qualified in order for the team to be selected. (An employee may apply individually and as a member of a job sharing team.)

Is there any flexibility in work scheduling?

To meet the needs of the office or the employee, an agency may temporarily or permanently change the hours of a part-time employee. Although part-timers must have schedules within the 16 to 32 hour-per-week range, they may work more than 32 hours for up to two consecutive pay periods.

How is service credited?

A part-time employee earns a full year of service credit for each calendar year worked (regardless of schedule) for the purpose of computing dates for retirement eligibility, career tenure, completion of probationary period, within-grade pay increases, change in leave category, and time-in-grade restrictions on advancement. Part-time work is prorated for determining qualifications; for example, an employee who works 20 hours per week would have 6 months of experience at the end of 12 months.

Does part-time service affect retirement annuities? Each year of part-time service counts as 1 full year toward the length of service requirement but is prorated for purposes of the annuity calculation. Under Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) rules, all part-time service is prorated. For employees under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS), part-time service performed on or after April 7, 1986, is prorated.

How are performance ratings handled? Part-time employees are rated on their performance in the same way as full-time employees. Depending on the arrangement, job-sharing employees may have the same or different performance standards.

What rights exist for adverse actions and RIF? Part-time employees have the same rights as full-time employees when disciplinary action is taken against them. The reduction in scheduled hours is not subject to adverse action procedures. In a reduction in force, part-time and job sharing employees have assignment rights only to part-time positions. (Similarly, full-time employees have assignment rights only to full-time positions.)

For more information, see Federal Personnel Manual (FPM) Chapter 340 and Letters in the 340 series--available in Federal agency personnel offices.