

# The Merit System Principles

Adapted from Title 5, United States Code, Section 2301(b).

#	Merit System Principle
1	Recruit qualified individuals from all segments of society; conduct fair and open competition; select and advance employees based solely on merit.
2	Treat employees and applicants fairly and equitably, with proper regard for their privacy and constitutional rights.
3	Provide equal pay for work of equal value and recognize excellent performance.
4	Maintain high standards of integrity, conduct, and concern for the public interest.
5	Manage employees efficiently and effectively.
6	Address inadequate performance fairly and decisively and separate poor performers, as appropriate.
7	Educate and train employees to improve individual and organizational performance.
8	Protect employees against favoritism, political coercion and arbitrary action and prohibit abuse of authority.
9	Protect employees against reprisal for the lawful disclosure of information that is reasonably believed to evidence: (1) a violation of any law, rule, or regulation; or (2) mismanagement, a gross waste of funds, an abuse of authority, or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety.

The MSPB report *The Merit System Principles: Guiding the Fair and Effective Management of the Federal Workforce* (September 2016), available at [www.mspb.gov/studies](http://www.mspb.gov/studies), provides the full text of each MSP with an explanation of its intent, a discussion of Federal employee perceptions of adherence to the principle, related MSPB findings and recommendations, and a brief discussion of illustrative MSPB cases.



# The Prohibited Personnel Practices

*Adapted from Title 5, United States Code, Section 2302(b).*

An employee who may take, influence, or recommend a personnel action **may not**—

#	Prohibited Personnel Practice
1	Discriminate on any protected basis, such as race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status, or political affiliation.
2	Consider any reference or recommendation for employment that is not directly related to skills of the candidate and the job to be performed.
3	Coerce political activity or base a personnel action on political activity or inactivity.
4	Obstruct any person's right to compete for employment.
5	Influence any person to withdraw from competition.
6	Give an unauthorized employment advantage to improve or injure any person's employment prospects.
7	Hire, promote, or advocate for the employment or advancement of a relative.
8	Retaliate or threaten retaliation against a whistleblower.
9	Retaliate or threaten retaliation for engaging in protected activity such as filing a complaint or appeal.
10	Discriminate on the basis of conduct that does not adversely affect job performance.
11	Take, fail to take, or influence a personnel action that violates any veterans' preference requirement.
12	Take or fail to take a personnel action in violation of a law, rule or regulation that concerns the merit system principles.
13	Impose a nondisclosure agreement or policy that doesn't allow whistleblowing.
14	Access medical records to commit another PPP.

