

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION  
Washington, DC 20405

HRM 9334.3A  
November 13, 2023

GSA ORDER

SUBJECT: Surge Capacity Force (SCF) Volunteer Participation

1. Purpose.

This Order issues and transmits the General Services Administration's (GSA) policies and procedures for the Surge Capacity Force (SCF) to establish volunteer participation requirements and expectations.

2. Background.

- a. The Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-295) established the Surge Capacity Force (SCF) to deploy Federal employees in the aftermath of a catastrophic event to help support response and recovery efforts. FEMA manages this program that relies on federal employees from DHS components and Other Federal Agencies (OFA's) to support its mission of helping people before, during, and after disasters. See *6 USC § 711* and *42 U.S.C. § 5121*. Congress's stated intent is to provide an orderly and continuing means of assistance by the Federal Government to State and local governments in carrying out their responsibilities to alleviate the suffering and damage which result from such disasters, including through achieving greater coordination and responsiveness of disaster preparedness and relief programs.
- b. GSA is responding to growing demand to solicit volunteer participation in SCF missions conducted by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), DHS Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

3. Scope and Applicability.

- a. The provisions of this Order apply to GSA Federal employees who participate in the SCF.

- b. The provisions of this Order do not apply to GSA Federal employees in part-time and temporary positions as they are ineligible for SCF assignment.
- c. The provisions of this Order do not apply to contractors as they are ineligible for SCF assignment.
- d. The OIG has independent personnel authority. See Section 6 of the Inspector General Act of 1978, (5 USC. App. 3), as amended (Inspector General is authorized “to select, appoint, and employ such officers and employees as may be necessary for carrying out the functions, powers, and duties of the Office of Inspector General”). Also see, GSA Order, ADM 5450.39D CHGE 1, GSA Delegations of Authority Manual, Chapter 2, Part 1, the “Inspector General has independent authority to formulate policies and make determinations concerning human capital issues within the [OIG].” GSA’s determinations and delegations do not limit that authority. GSA defers to OIG authority and guidance regarding the applicability of this Order to its workforce. Similarly, GSA specifically recognizes that the Inspector General has independent authority to formulate policies and make determinations concerning training, employee development, and career management. OIG has coordinated with GSA to establish shared volunteer participation requirements and expectations for volunteers on SCF assignments.

4. Cancelation. This Order cancels and supersedes GSA Order HRM 9334.3.

5. Revisions. The following changes have been made to the Order:

- a. Additional background information regarding authorities relevant to the SCF have been provided.
- b. Volunteer participation is limited to 120 calendar days.

6. Policy.

GSA establishes SCF volunteer requirements and expectations for participation, application, deployment, and pay and time off across assignments. This is in accordance with GSA’s aim to promote best practices and efficient government operations through the development of governmentwide policies. The policy contributes to achieving greater coordination and responsiveness of disaster preparedness and relief programs.

7. Responsibilities.

a. Participation.

- (1) Participation in SCF assignments is voluntary. Volunteers may return from assignment at their own discretion.

(2) Participation is limited to no more than two SCF assignments per fiscal year.

(3) Participation is limited to no more than 120 calendar days per fiscal year.

b. Application.

(1) Volunteers must receive supervisory approval.

(a) Supervisory approval will be confirmed through a completed and signed Supervisor Approval Form.

(b) Assignment extensions or re-deployments must be approved by the volunteer's supervisor with an updated Supervisory Approval Form.

(2) Volunteers' last rating of record must be no lower than a level 3 in the APPAS rating process.

(3) Volunteers may be subject to additional security clearance and background investigations as required by assignments per hosting organization guidance.

c. Travel.

(1) Volunteers who perform official travel are required to use the GSA Travel Card (U.S. Bank) for official travel expenses. Follow instructions [here](#) to obtain a travel card.

(2) The process for authorizing travel and reimbursement of travel related to SCF can vary depending on the agency hosting the project.

(a) If GSA is authorizing and reimbursing travel, volunteers will follow all [GSA travel policies](#). Travel authorizations in GSA's E-Gov Travel Service (ETS) must be fully approved before departure. Vouchers for reimbursements must be submitted to the approving official within five business days after travel is completed or at least once every 30 calendar days while on a continuous or long term travel status. It is the responsibility of the cardholder to ensure the travel card balance is paid in-full by the statement billing due date.

(b) If the host agency is authorizing and reimbursing travel, the participant will follow the guidelines and policies of the host agency. Volunteers must ensure reimbursements from the host agency are processed regularly and travel card balances are paid timely. It is

the responsibility of the cardholder to ensure the travel card balance is paid in-full by the statement billing due date.

d. Deployment.

- (1) Volunteers must adhere to the on-site rules and regulations of their assignment's hosting organization.
- (2) Volunteers must refrain from posting or sharing information or visual media that demonstrates the purpose or duties of the assignment.
- (3) Volunteers must refrain from performing any GSA work if their work assignment is funded by an external source such as the hosting organization.

e. Payment & Time-Off.

- (1) If the SCF assignment work is determined to be Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) non-exempt by the hosting organization and GSA, then exempt volunteers will be changed to non-exempt for payroll purposes for the period of their deployment.
- (2) Volunteers will not receive administrative or special time off for participating in SCF assignments.
  - (a) Volunteers may request the use of regular leave upon return to work at GSA in accordance with their GSA supervisor prior to their return from SCF assignment.

8. Signature.

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JEFFREY LAU

Acting Chief Human Capital Officer (C)

Office of Human Resources Management