



The Four Winds

National Weather Service Employees Organization

NWSEO Grieves Failure to Offer Relocation Expense Reimbursement for Meteorologist/Hydrologist and Electronic Technician Vacancy Announcements

(August 17, 2021) On July 19, 2021, NWSEO filed a Union [grievance](#) over violations of two Articles of the NWS-NWSEO 2021 Collective Bargaining Agreement. On June 22, 2021, management issued a vacancy announcement through the Merit Assignment Program (MAP) for three GS-1340/1315 Interdisciplinary Meteorologist/Hydrologist (Hydrometeorological Analysis and Support or “HAS” Forecaster) vacancies in three River Forecast Centers in the Western Region. Additionally, on June 23, 2021, management issued another vacancy announcement through the MAP for eight GS-0856 Electronic Technician vacancies in the Western Region. Both Merit Assignment Program announcements stated that relocation expenses would not be reimbursed. These actions are violations of Article 1, section 3, which requires that all past practices not in conflict with the Agreement remain in effect, and Article 39, section 1, which guarantees that employees will be reimbursed for relocation expenses if the relocation is in the best interest of the government.

An unknown number of qualified bargaining unit hydrologists, meteorologists and electronic technicians have been harmed by this violation because they have been dissuaded from applying for these positions by the agency’s failure to offer relocation expenses; and the eventual selectee has been harmed by not having his or her relocation expenses reimbursed. The failure to offer relocation expenses on these Merit Assignment Program vacancies is a violation of past practice and therefore a violation of Article 1, section 3.

NWSEO demanded that these vacancy announcements be reissued noting that the relocation expenses will be authorized. NWSEO also demanded that the NWS inform all unit employees by email of this reissuance. If other than local candidates are selected in the interim, they shall be granted reimbursement of his or her relocation expenses, and additional vacancies at these locations should be announced properly. The selectees from these re-advertisements should be granted back pay retroactive to the date of the initial selections.

NWSEO is committed to fighting for fair opportunities for our employees. We appreciate all of our members who support our organization.

**No one cares more for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
employees than NOAA employees.**

No one works harder for NOAA employees than NOAA employees.

We are NOAA employees. We are NWSEO.

NWSEO proudly represents more NOAA employees than any other Union. NWSEO serves bargaining unit employees of the National Weather Service, NESDIS Office of Satellite and Product Operations, Office of General Counsel, Aircraft Operations Center, and Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory.