



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DOJ OIG Releases Management Advisory Memorandum Regarding Lack of Policy or Guidance Concerning the Recruitment of Friends or Family Under ATF's Schedule B Special Agent Hiring

Department of Justice (DOJ) Inspector General Michael E. Horowitz announced today the release of a [Management Advisory Memorandum](#) to the Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) identifying concerns regarding a lack of clear procedures, policies, guidance, and training to ATF employees concerning the recruitment of friends or family under ATF's Schedule B recruitment process.

The Office of Personnel Management has granted ATF Schedule B excepted service appointing authority to recruit and hire Special Agents. Schedule B allows ATF to perform targeted recruitment to ensure that it has a pool of qualified applicants who possess required skills and characteristics or otherwise meet the agency's specific mission needs. As part of its efforts under Schedule B, ATF encourages its employees to act as informal recruiters.

The DOJ Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has found that it is common for ATF employees to recruit from among family and friends. Recruitment from among family and friends is not in and of itself improper, and ATF has numerous mechanisms in place to ensure that ultimate hiring decisions under Schedule B comply with federal law. Nevertheless, even if the ultimate hiring decision is free of nepotism, recruitment of friends and family can, in some circumstances, potentially give rise to issues under the federal merit-based hiring laws or the Standards of Ethical Conduct set forth in 5 C.F.R. Part 2635. Although ATF trains its employees about avoiding nepotism issues at the interview and selection stage, ATF does not have a written policy governing the recruitment of friends and family, nor does it provide training or guidance to employees regarding potential ethical, appearance, or merit-based hiring issues that can arise during the recruitment stage. The OIG is concerned that, in the absence of such policy, process, or guidance, ATF employees could unwittingly run afoul of the federal merit principles and ethics standards as they engage in recruitment actions under Schedule B.

The DOJ OIG made one recommendation to ATF to address the concerns we identified. ATF agreed with the recommendation.

Memorandum: Today's memorandum is available on our website at the following link:
<https://oig.justice.gov/reports/management-advisory-memorandum-recommendation-atf-add-its-existing-schedule-b-policies>

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