

NOAA Conservation Corps Act Direct Hiring Authority

What is a Direct Hiring Authority (DHA)? An appointing authority the Office of Personnel Management offers to Federal agencies to fill vacancies when a critical hiring need or severe shortage of candidates exists.

Why use DHA? To expedite the hiring process and allow for greater chance of hiring qualified applicants by eliminating competitive rating and ranking with other Federal employees and by removing veterans' preference.

Conservation Corps Act Direct Hire Authority (CCA DHA). NOAA was granted Direct Hire Authority under the Conservation Service Corps Act – *“with respect to the National Marine Sanctuary System, coral reefs, and other coastal, estuarine, and marine habitats, and other land and facilities (scientific mission -critical occupations) administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in order to place recent graduates in national service positions to conserve, restore, and enhance the great outdoors and other purposes”*. NOAA’s Administrator is committed to utilizing the CCA DHA to increase recruitment of graduates supported by NOAA scholarship, fellowship, and internship programs to its early career workforce. Particular emphasis is placed on identifying qualified candidates from traditionally underrepresented and historically excluded communities.

FAQs	Responses in reference to CCA DHA
What is my eligibility for CCA DHA?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate program during the completion of the rigorous internship (i.e. summer internship, NERTO, or graduate fellowship). AND 2. Graduate from the degree program enrolled in while completing the internship and supported by the approved NOAA program.
What is required to obtain the Certificate of Eligibility for CCA DHA?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completion of a minimum 10 week rigorous internship while supported by an approved NOAA program (i.e. NERTO or undergraduate internship). 2. Submit the required NERTO or internship report within the time period specified by the Cooperative Science Center (CSC). 3. Proof of graduation from the degree program. A request for early release of the certificate may be submitted by CSC leadership (see below).
How can I apply to a job using the CCA DHA?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Apply for an open Direct Hire announcement via USAjobs.gov or through an announcement shared via email. 2. Talk directly with potential employers within NOAA. 3. If an open position exists and the candidate meets the requirements, the hiring manager may work with the OHCS business manager to onboard the student to an available position. 4. The Certificate of Eligibility must be uploaded at the time of application to claim CCA DHA eligibility. If the certificate is not included in the employment application package, CCA DHA eligibility will not be considered for that position.
How long, and from what point am I eligible for the CCA DHA?	Eligibility extends 2 years beyond the graduation date and renews upon the completion of subsequent degrees.

What agencies use the CCA DHA?	All NOAA Line Offices, US Fish & Wildlife Service and some other Department of Interior agencies
Are there any limitations for band level?	There are certain band level restrictions for the CCA DHA. These positions are limited to Band 2/3 (NOAA) or GS 5-11 equivalent.
When should CCA DHA eligibility certificates be requested?	Eligibility certificates may be requested once students graduate. If students wish to apply to a NOAA Federal position prior to graduation, the Center must contact EPP/MSI to request early release of the eligibility certificate. Early release of the eligibility certificate is contingent upon successful NERTO completion and the CSCs certification that the student will graduate within the semester that the request is being made. If the student does not graduate during the semester as indicated on the early release request, the certificate will remain valid (unless the graduation <u>year</u> changes), however students cannot utilize CCA DHA eligibility until the degree is conferred.
When should students begin to apply for Direct Hire opportunities?	Students may begin applying for Federal job opportunities using their CCA DHA eligibility in the semester of graduation. Students may apply for Federal career opportunities using their CCA DHA eligibility prior to graduation. However, the degree must be conferred and posted to the official transcript before the final job offer is made.
Who should I contact for more information?	Contact Natasha White (Natasha.White@noaa.gov) with a copy to oad.epp10@noaa.gov for additional information and questions. Additionally, hiring managers should coordinate with the OHCS business manager early in the process.
Are there other Direct Hire Authorities available to EPP/MSI supported students?	EPP/MSI students may meet the requirements for other direct hiring authorities depending on individual experiences and specific requirements. Currently, NOAA has the authority to use Schedule A(r)* to hire students to Federal Term positions.

Programs Currently Eligible for CCA DHA at NOAA:

- EPP/MSI Cooperative Science Centers
- EPP/MSI Undergraduate Scholarship Program
- Ernest F. Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship Program
- Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship
- Lapenta NOAA Internship Program
- Woods Hole Partnership Education Program
- Internships in Marine Geography
- Margaret A. Davidson Graduate Fellowship
- NMFS – Sea Grant Population Dynamics Fellowship

** The Schedule A(r) hiring authority is used for term appointments between one and four years. Employees who are appointed under Excepted Service term appointments do not earn competitive status, and the roles do not have to be posted on USAjobs.gov.*