



NWSEO and NWS agree to implement Sixth Lead Forecaster at WFOs

(April 11, 2023) Earlier this week, NWS and NWSEO agreed to proceed with the implementation of a Sixth Lead Forecaster at all Weather Forecast Offices (WFOs) that are staffed with GS-13 lead forecasters.

Pending Agency Head Review approval of the implementing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the initial advertisement of a sixth lead forecaster vacancy at each WFO office will be Local Commuting Area only, with no PCS authorized. If no selection is made from the initial vacancy announcement, the position will be subsequently advertised with PCS authorized as per the usual lead forecaster vacancy procedures.

The Sixth Lead Forecaster Implementation Plan was proposed by the NWS-NWSEO Shiftwork Flexibility Team to provide better equity in shift rotations, improve work life balance, allow for more shift flexibility, and to increase the number of candidates applying for the Lead Forecaster position by allowing for more employee friendly work schedules.

The Sixth Lead Forecaster implementation will be accomplished through a phased approach, by converting one vacant GS5-12 Meteorologist billet at each WFO to a GS-13 Lead Meteorologist position, and hiring to fill that vacancy when budget and priorities permit. There will be up to thirty Sixth Lead Meteorologists positions filled during FY 2023. In offices that currently have a full complement of GS5-12 Meteorologists, the creation of a Sixth Lead Meteorologist billet will occur through attrition.

In FY 2024 and beyond, converted Sixth Lead Meteorologists will continue to be filled as budget and priorities permit following a similar implementation plan. Strategies will also be developed to address special circumstances at WFO Honolulu, HI and NCEP Centers in order to address any shift imbalances.

The signed MOU has now been sent to Agency Head Review, which may take up to 30 days to complete.