



NFFE News Story

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NFFE FOREST SERVICE COUNCIL CHALLENGES AGENCY OVER SHAMEFUL HIRING PRACTICE

Amidst active contract negotiations, and after months of urging the U.S. Forest Service to end flawed hiring practices which limit who can apply for jobs in the Agency, NFFE's Forest Service Council (FSC) decided they needed to take a new approach with negotiations. And on June 7, 2016, the FSC took their fight to the streets of Olympia, Wash. to conduct an informational hand-billing outside of a Forest Service hiring event—one that required applicants to be physically present to apply.



NFFE-IAM FSC Members and IAM brothers from nearby Districts Lodges opposing FS hiring event

At Tuesday's hiring event, the Forest Service was hiring for jobs across the country— as far away as South Dakota and Kentucky. However, to be considered for the vacant positions, applicants were required to appear and submit their applications in person in Olympia, Wash. Applicants unable to attend in person were not considered for these jobs, regardless of their experience. This requirement effectively eliminates many current Forest Service employees—many of whom have a great deal of experience and are the most qualified to fill these vacancies—that simply do not have the means or cannot get away from their current obligations to apply for these jobs in person.

"By requiring interested applicants to appear in person, the Forest Service has effectively eliminated applicants from the rest of the country. That is not fair to current employees or other applicants living in those areas. It also makes it impossible for the Forest Service to field the best pool of applicants. Anyone who cares about healthy forests or having an effective government workforce should want to see this hiring practice stopped immediately," said Lisa Wolfe, NFFE Forest Service Council Vice President.

To make matters worse, in April, Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell was asked about this practice of hiring events requiring in-person applications to be considered for jobs in different states. Chief Tidwell assured Congress that applicants should be able to send applications in to be considered during job fairs. However, at Tuesday's event, that simply was not the case. The Forest Service continues to use a closed process that eliminates from consideration some of the most qualified candidates.

"We cannot stand idly by as the Forest Service continues a hiring practice that is unfair to potential applicants, is bad for the agency, and ultimately short-changes American taxpayers," said Lisa Wolfe. "People should not be expected to travel halfway across the country to compete for a job that pays less than 14 dollars an hour. This hiring practice is ridiculous, and it needs to stop."