

War Department Continues to Encourage Civilians to Augment Homeland Security Border Mission

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Last year, the War Department announced a unique opportunity for department civilians to serve at the Department of Homeland Security and support DHS as it works to keep America safe.



Six months in, Secretary of War Pete Hegseth wants department civilians and their supervisors to know this opportunity still exists; DHS still needs help. Supervisors across the department should ensure interested employees can participate whenever possible.

"I encourage all who are interested to volunteer for this detail opportunity. Supporting interior immigration enforcement actions, apprehending illegal aliens and securing our borders are vital to the national security of the United States," Hegseth said in a Feb. 19 memorandum. "I expect every supervisor to encourage their civilian employees to volunteer. Leadership must continue to promote this detail program and educate their civilian employees on its importance."

The secretary noted that supervisors must approve any volunteer requests that do not conflict with mission-essential functions. Any DOW civilian can volunteer, regardless of their job or skills; no resume is needed.

Department employees can sign up on the USAJobs website, where they will complete a short questionnaire and upload required documents. Details to Homeland Security last about 60 days, though volunteers have the opportunity to do a total of three 60-day details with the agency.

"Securing our border and defending the homeland are a whole-of-government effort that benefits from the diverse skill set of the department's civilian workforce," said Tim Dill, assistant secretary of war for manpower and reserve affairs. "We thank all employees who have answered the call to support our partners at DHS and encourage others to explore this opportunity."

Since the opportunity was announced in August 2025, nearly 1,000 DOW civilians have been added to the roster to assist DHS, and more than 200 have already been deployed.

Michael A. Cogar, the deputy assistant secretary of war for civilian personnel policy, noted those War Department civilians who have stepped up to help DHS have returned and said the experience was rewarding.

"I've gotten feedback from the department civilians who've returned from their deployments on how meaningful it has been for them to be a part of this mission," Cogar said.

War Department civilians who volunteer to work with DHS will be assigned to support roles within U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and U.S. Customs and Border Protection, focusing on data entry, operational planning support, processing and throughput logistics, and logistical support.

Detailed employees may be deployed to a variety of locations in the U.S., including San Diego; Williston, Vermont; Chicago; and El Paso, Texas. Right now, Cogar said, the biggest need voiced by DHS is for volunteers to work at the call center tipline in Vermont.

The War Department and DHS both defend the homeland, he said. This makes War Department civilians well-suited for details at ICE and CBP.

"This detail program is unique to the Department of War and DHS," Cogar said. "It really goes back to what our Department of War civilians are capable of. They are out there every day supporting the warfighter in critical national security missions. They know exactly how to execute when it comes to supporting this requirement from DHS, to make sure that their agents have everything they need when it comes to logistics and administrative support, so they can go out there and execute in the field and help secure our nation's borders to protect our American citizens."