

CEO *Communiqué*

A Message to Our Clients From the Avue Co-Chief Executive Officers

Date: August 21, 2003

Subject: Inquiries Related to Job Postings on USAJobs

We have received a number of inquiries from our clients concerning the adverse impact on their recruitment operations because of problems associated with OPM's new version of USAJobs. It is becoming increasingly apparent that, despite OPM's positive spin campaign in the press, the new USAJobs site is a step backward and has deep-seated problems that are not likely to be completely cured for the foreseeable future. As a result, we believe it is imperative for agencies to adopt procedures that take into account the significant disabilities of the new USAJobs site. The purpose of this message is to provide you with background information and alternatives that help keep your job postings viable and your recruitment actions on track.

Two continuing issues illustrate the point. First, the USAJobs site does not allow agencies to make any adjustments to job postings, including cancellations or extensions. Second, there is continuing frustration with the inability of HR staff to find their job postings on the site notwithstanding receiving a confirmation that the posting has occurred.

As you know, posting positions to USAJobs fulfills a regulatory requirement for "public notice" posting affecting external staffing actions. USAJobs is not a recruitment site but, rather, a public notice site. These regulations have not changed under the new USAJobs Recruitment One Stop program. We mention this because agency personnel offices are reporting concerns about USAJobs system limitations affecting job postings. Specifically, USAJobs no longer permits agencies to cancel job postings, extend the closing dates, or modify information related to jobs. While OPM may eventually fix these problems, the interim affect is problematic and frustration levels in agency HR offices are quite high. Because agency operating personnel offices may perceive the USAJobs posting requirement as more significant than it actually is, we think agencies are adopting unnecessary steps to work around the USAJobs deficiencies.

For example, because the USAJobs site does not allow agencies to extend the closing date of a job posting, agencies are waiting until the closing date and then re-posting the position again which starts an entirely new cycle. To do this, they also must notify any applicants they received under the old posting that the position has been reposted. Our review of the regulation did not find any

requirement to synchronize changes to postings when USAJobs itself cannot accommodate these changes. We think it is important to advise your staffs that they may adjust the posting in Avue without concern about synchronizing updates to USAJobs. This avoids a tremendous amount of unnecessary labor and promotes more applicant satisfaction with the process.

We think one of the other reasons agencies may be concerned is related to recent press releases by OPM regarding site usage numbers. This is promoting the site as a recruitment source rather than the public notice site that it is. We believe the numbers are not representative of site usage by applicants, but instead, are caused by agency personnel specialists attempting to learn about the site, post jobs to it, and verify their job postings. In addition, the site has an unusually large number of “failures” where the user is dropped off the site or waits an undue amount of time for pages on the site to display. This forces users to log back in and this, in turn, shows an inflated number of hits to the site. OPM may not be aware of this fact, but clearly, from our tracking capability, USAJobs site statistics are misleading and its success in attracting site traffic significantly overstated. Based on our tracking, the number of actual job applicants is down from prior levels and the percentage of applicants referred to you is down considerably.

For example, prior to loading the new version of USAJobs, site usage statistics showed that Avue’s client agencies received about 20% of their applicants by referral from USAJobs. Fully 80% of your applicants are referred to you through other means. Of that 80%, a full 60% or better are from referred from your agency’s website. The week of July 28th, at the end of which the USAJobs site came down to upload the new site, referrals from USAJobs to agency job postings dropped to 18%. The week of August 4th, when the new site went up, the referrals dropped to less than 7%. This illustrates the importance of keeping your job postings available through other sites and your agency’s website in particular – so that you will continue to get a rich supply of applicants when OPM has failures or problems with the USAJobs site.

Due to persistent problems with the USAJobs search engines a number of agencies are reporting they cannot find their jobs once transmitted to USAJobs. This is not the email job posting transmission. So, this should not be confused with a failure to post to the site. Unless your staffs are receiving error messages back from USAJobs, the positions were most probably posted somewhere on the site. The search engines are difficult to use and, as an example, a search on “US-Virginia” does not yield the same job postings as a search on “Virginia-Throughout” produces. In addition, we continue to hear reports that the organizational listing still does not function correctly and is also difficult for both applicants and HR professionals to use. As a result, when your staffers go to USAJobs to verify postings, they may not be able to find the posting. It is important that your HR offices understand that once you transmit the posting, unless you receive an error message requiring corrective action, you have,

again, fulfilled your regulatory public notice requirement. This illustrates our prior point that you should continue to ensure your agency's website contains the most up-to-date and correct information so your applicants are aware of available opportunities and any changes or adjustments you have made to postings.

We also believe it would be in your best interest for you to request that OPM post a notice on the USAJobs site that more recent and up to date information may be found on your agency's website and include your Avue Applicant Intake site URL. This will certainly help applicants keep track of your job opportunities. If we can be of any assistance to you or your staffs on any matters, we urge you to call us or your agency's Avue client services representative for assistance.