

GLOSSARY OF HUMAN RESOURCES TERMS

Welcome to the SHRM Glossary of HR Terms, developed by the SHRM Knowledge Center. These are commonly used terms and definitions that are significant to the profession of human resource management. The glossary is continuously updated to include new human resource management terms as they emerge.

This glossary is not an all-inclusive listing of HR and general business terminology, but it includes terms in daily use by HR professionals. An alternative desk reference is “*The Human Resources Glossary, 3rd Edition*”, by William R. Tracey, Ed.D., available for purchase at the SHRM Store, www.shrm.org/shrmstore.

Legal terminology often seems inscrutable, even though the legal terms bandied about by lawyers frequently have very straightforward meanings. SHRM's Workplace Law [LegalEase](#) provides plain English definitions of common legal terminology for HR professionals to put relevant legal developments into sharp focus for your HR practice.

We invite you to submit any term(s) that should be added to the glossary along with a working definition to [Naomi Cossack](#), Manager of Online Content, for placement consideration.

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A

<i>Ability test</i>	An assessment instrument used to measure an individual's abilities, mental or physical skills level (i.e. problem solving, manual dexterity, etc.).
<i>Ability</i>	Aptitude or competence, the skill or proficiency needed to perform certain tasks.
<i>Absenteeism</i>	Referred to as the habitual failure of employees to report for work when they are scheduled to work.
<i>Absolute ratings</i>	A rating method where the rater assigns a specific value on a fixed scale to the behavior or performance of an individual instead of assigning ratings based on comparisons between other individuals.
<i>Abstract reasoning</i>	The process of perceiving issues and reaching

conclusions through the use of symbols or generalizations rather than concrete factual information.

Academic

An educator who is a faculty member at a college or university. Also referred to as Academician.

Accessibility

The extent to which a contractor's or employer's facility is readily approachable and does not inhibit the mobility of individuals with disabilities, particularly such areas as the personnel office, worksite and public areas.

Accessible format

Materials that are designed in alternate formats such as Braille, audiotape, oral presentation or electronically for individuals with visual impairments.

Accountability

The responsibility placed on an individual or group for their own or others' actions, conduct, performance, projects, etc.

Accreditation

A process of external quality review and certification by a recognized body that evaluates individuals, colleges, universities and educational programs to assure they are performing the functions that they claim to be performing in a competent manner.

Achievement test

A standardized testing instrument used to measure how much an individual has learned or what skills he or she has attained as a result of education, training or past experience.

Acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS)

Caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) which kills or damages cells of the body's immune system by progressively destroying the body's ability to fight infections and certain cancers. People diagnosed with AIDS may get life-threatening diseases called opportunistic infections, which are caused by microbes such as viruses or bacteria that usually do not make healthy people sick.

Acquisition

The process of acquiring control of another corporation by purchase or stock exchange.

<i>Action learning</i>	A learner-driven, continuous learning process where learning revolves around the need to find solutions to real problems.
<i>Active learning</i>	The process of learning new knowledge, skills and behaviors through taking specific actions or performing specific tasks.
<i>Activities of daily living (ADL)</i>	The personal care activities which are essential to an individual's everyday living, including eating, bathing, grooming, dressing, mobility and toileting.
<i>Adjunct program</i>	A supplemental training tool that applies programming principles to existing instructional modules, materials, texts, manuals, etc., that are designed to direct the learner to specific areas within the module.
<i>Adult learner</i>	Individuals who are beyond postsecondary education age, are employed on a full- or part-time basis and are enrolled in a formal or informal educational program.
<i>Adverse action</i>	Any act by an employer that results in an individual or group of individuals being deprived of equal employment opportunities.
<i>Adverse impact</i>	A substantially different rate of selection in hiring, promotion or other employment decision that works to the disadvantage of a race, sex or ethnic group.
<i>Adverse selection</i>	An employer's selection practices or policies that result in discriminatory or unfavorable treatment toward an individual or individuals who are members of a protected group.
<i>Advisory committee</i>	A group or panel of internal or external members with no decision- making authority, assembled to identify and discuss specific issues and make recommendations.
<i>Affected class</i>	Groups of employees, former employees or applicants who have experienced and/or continue to experience the loss of employment opportunities or benefits due to

discriminatory practices or policies of the employer.

Affirmative action (AA)

Any program, policy or procedure that an employer implements in order to correct past discrimination and prevent current and future discrimination within the workplace.

Affirmative action clauses

The clauses set forth in 41 C.F.R. §§ 60-250.4 and 60-741.4 that must be included in federal contracts and subcontracts of \$10,000 and over. These two clauses outline the affirmative action requirements for special disabled veterans, Vietnam-era veterans (41 C.F.R. § 60-250.4) and individuals with disabilities (41 C.F.R. § 60-741.4). These clauses are a part of covered contracts regardless of whether they are physically incorporated into the contract and whether the contract is written.

Affirmative Action plan (AAP)

A written set of specific, results-oriented procedures to be followed by all federal contractors holding contracts of \$50,000 or more and employing 50 or more people and intended to remedy the effects of past discrimination against or underutilization of women and minorities. The effectiveness of the plan is measured by the results it actually achieves rather than by the results intended and by the good faith efforts undertaken by the contractor to increase the pool of qualified women and minorities in all parts of the organization.

After-acquired evidence

Used in litigation of employment discrimination disputes, after-acquired evidence is evidence that the employer discovers after it has already discharged an employee which proves that even if the discharge in question is found to be illegal, the employer would have dismissed the employee anyway in light of discovering the misconduct.

Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) of 1967

The ADEA protects workers age 40 and over by prohibiting discrimination against workers 40 and over in any employment or employment-related decision. The Act applies to most employers with 20 or more employees. One of the main provisions of the Act is that employers, with very few exceptions, can no longer force an employee to retire.

<i>Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990</i>	The ADA is a federal anti-discrimination law which prohibits private employers, state and local governments, employment agencies and labor unions from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities in job application procedures, hiring, firing, advancement, compensation, job training and other terms, conditions and privileges of employment. This law (covering employers with 15 or more employees) is designed to remove barriers that prevent qualified individuals with disabilities from enjoying the same employment opportunities that are available to persons without disabilities. When an individual's disability creates a barrier to employment opportunities, the ADA requires employers to consider whether a reasonable accommodation could remove the barrier.
<i>Alternation ranking</i>	A rating method used in job evaluation and performance evaluation whereby the rater is asked to select the best and worst employees from a listing of all employees and then rank them accordingly.
<i>Alternative assessment</i>	Nontraditional procedures and techniques used within the framework of instructional programs to evaluate a student's educational achievement.
<i>Alternative dispute resolution (ADR)</i>	A voluntary procedure used to resolve disputes or conflicts between individuals, groups or labor-management. This procedure utilizes the services of a neutral third party to facilitate discussion and assist the parties in reaching an agreement which is binding.
<i>Alternative worksite</i>	Any location other than the employer's physical worksite where employees are allowed to perform their jobs.
<i>Analysis of variance</i>	A statistical method used to determine whether a relationship exists among two or more variables by formulating concurrent comparisons of the variables.
<i>Analytical thinking</i>	The ability to analyze facts, generate a comparison and draw correct inferences or conclusions from available information.

<i>Anecdotal</i>	Information that is based on observations or indications of individual actions instead of any organized process.
<i>Anti-nepotism policy</i>	An employer's policy that restricts the employment of two or more family members at the same time.
<i>Annual goal</i>	An annual target for the placement of underutilized groups of protected class members in job groups where underutilization exists.
<i>Apparent authority</i>	The appearance that an individual has the authority or power to act as an organization's agent, even though the organization has bestowed no such authority or power to that individual.
<i>Applicant</i>	A person who seeks work at a certain employers' facilities who meets certain prescribed standards, as defined by the employer.
<i>Applicant files</i>	Application forms/resumes and other relevant items maintained by an employer and used during the selection process.
<i>Applicant flow data</i>	Records of hiring, promotion and other related employment actions used for the purpose of monitoring selection and employment practices.
<i>Applicant flow log</i>	A chronological listing that records each applicant who applies for employment or promotion. Data includes applicant's name, race, national origin, gender, referral source, date of application, job title applied for and disposition.
<i>Applicant pool</i>	The sum total of all individuals who have applied for a position either by submitting a resume or application for employment which the employer uses to select candidates for employment.
<i>Applicant tracking</i>	Any paper or computerized system that tracks the organization's data such as resumes/applications and internal job posting information.

<i>Application service provider (ASP)</i>	A third-party organization that delivers software applications and related services over the Internet allowing an organization to outsource some or all of its information technology needs.
<i>Apprenticeship</i>	A system used to train a person in a recognized trade or craft in accordance with specific standards. The apprenticed individual obtains his or her skills by performing the related duties for a specified period of time under the tutelage of an experienced craft or tradesman.
<i>Aptitude testing</i>	A standardized testing instrument used during the selection process that is intended to measure and predict an individual's abilities.
<i>Arbitration</i>	An alternative dispute resolution method that uses a neutral third party (i.e. arbitrator) to resolve individual, group or labor-management conflicts and issue a binding decision.
<i>Architectural barriers</i>	The physical attributes or design of a building, structure or facility that prevent individuals with physical disabilities from accessing or freely using the building, structure or facility. The Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 requires any building constructed or leased in whole or in part with federal funds be made accessible to and usable by the physically disabled.
<i>Assessment center</i>	A testing location where a candidate being considered for assignment or promotion to managerial or executive-level position is rated by a team of experienced evaluators over a series of days using standardized activities, games and other simulations to predict the candidate's future job performance.
<i>Attendance policy</i>	An employer's written standards regarding the requirement for employees to be on time and present at work during regularly scheduled work periods.
<i>Attitude survey</i>	A tool used to solicit and assess employee opinions, feelings, perceptions and expectations regarding a variety of managerial and organizational issues.

<i>Attorney</i>	A professional individual who is authorized to practice law and can be legally appointed by either a plaintiff or a defendant to provide legal advice or act as a legal agent on their behalf during legal proceedings.
<i>Attrition</i>	A term used to describe voluntary and involuntary terminations, deaths and employee retirements that result in a reduction to the employer's physical workforce.
<i>Auxiliary aids</i>	Defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as including "a wide range of services and devices (necessary) for ensuring that equally effective communication" takes place with regard to persons with hearing, speech and vision disabilities. Such aids include, but are not restricted to, providing interpreters, assistive listening devices, materials in Braille, closed caption, telecommunication devices for the hearing impaired, etc.
<i>Availability analysis</i>	The process of determining the number of qualified minorities and women in the relevant available workforce who possess or have the ability to acquire the required skills or qualifications for any available position within the organization

B

<i>Baby boomers</i>	The term used to describe those individuals born between 1945 and 1970.
<i>Baby busters</i>	The term used to describe those individuals born between 1961 and 1972.
<i>Background check/investigation</i>	The process of verifying information supplied by applicants who are being considered for employment, including, but not limited to, contacting former employers, obtaining educational records and requesting criminal or consumer credit reports.
<i>Baldrige National Quality Award</i>	The Baldrige Award is given by the President of the United States to businesses—manufacturing and

service, small and large—and to education and health care organizations that apply and are judged to be outstanding in seven areas: leadership; strategic planning; customer and market focus; measurement, analysis and knowledge management; human resource focus; process management; and results.

Balanced scorecard

A popular strategic management concept developed in the early 1990s by Drs. Robert Kaplan and David Norton. The balanced scorecard is a management and measurement system that enables organizations to clarify their vision and strategy and translate them into action. The goal of the balanced scorecard is to tie business performance to organizational strategy by measuring results in four areas: financial performance, customer knowledge, internal business processes, and learning and growth.

Bankruptcy

A federal law consisting of different chapters (i.e. chapter 7, chapter 11 or chapter 13) that allows individuals and businesses that are experiencing extreme financial duress and are unable to meet their financial obligations to eliminate or restructure their debts.

Barrier analysis

The process of reviewing an organization's policies and procedures to identify and eliminate impediments in recruitment, selection, transfer, or promotion of protected class individuals throughout the organization.

Behavioral-based interview

An interview technique that focuses on a candidate's past experiences, behaviors, knowledge, skills and abilities by asking the candidate to provide specific examples of when he or she has demonstrated certain behaviors or skills as a means of predicting future behavior and performance.

Behaviorally anchored rating scale (BARS)

An appraisal that requires raters to list important dimensions of a particular job and collect information regarding the critical behaviors that distinguish between successful and unsuccessful performance. These critical behaviors are then categorized and appointed a numerical value used as the basis for rating

performance.

<i>Behavioral risk management</i>	The process of analyzing and identifying workplace behavioral issues and implementing programs, policies or services most suitable for correcting or eliminating various employee behavioral problems.
<i>Behavior modification</i>	A conscious attempt to change or eliminate an individual's undesirable behavior by specifying expected behavior and reinforcing and rewarding desired behavior.
<i>Bell-shaped curve</i>	The curve representing the normal distribution of a rating or test score.
<i>Benchmarking</i>	The systematic process of comparing an organization's products, services and practices against those of competitor organizations or other industry leaders to determine what it is they do that allows them to achieve high levels of performance.
<i>Benchmarks</i>	The standards used as a basis for comparison or measurement.
<i>Benefits</i>	A benefit is a form of indirect compensation designed to provide employees added protection, promote goodwill and reward employment. It usually takes a form other than money. Benefits are typically extended to employees as well as their immediate family members. Who is covered, what type of benefits are offered, how costs are computed and distributed and how the value is captured and communicated are all important questions the employer must answer.
<i>Bereavement leave</i>	An employer policy that provides a specific number of paid days off following the death of an employee's spouse, parent, child, grandparent or in-law so that the employee may attend funeral proceedings, etc.
<i>Best practices</i>	Defined in a variety of ways, but typically refers to the practices of an organization that enables them to achieve superior organizational performance results.
<i>Bidding</i>	The practice of posting all job openings internally so

that current employees may be allowed the opportunity to apply for vacant positions prior to the employer seeking qualified candidates through other external recruitment measures.

Blended workforce

A workforce is comprised of permanent full-time, part-time, temporary employees and independent contractors.

Blind ad

A job advertisement placed in a newspaper, trade journal/publication, magazine or Internet job board that contains no identifying information about the employer placing the ad.

Blood-Borne Pathogens Standard

An OSHA standard that sets forth requirements for employers with workers exposed to blood or other potentially infectious materials. In order to reduce or eliminate the hazards of occupational exposure, an employer must implement an exposure control plan for the worksite with details on employee protection measures. The plan must also describe how an employer will use a combination of engineering and work practice controls, ensure the use of personal protective clothing and equipment, provide training, medical surveillance, hepatitis B vaccinations, and signs and labels, among other provisions. Engineering controls are the primary means of eliminating or minimizing employee exposure and include the use of safer medical devices, such as needleless devices, shielded needle devices and plastic capillary tubes.

Blue collar workers

Hourly paid workers employed in occupations that require physical or manual labor.

Bona fide occupational qualification (BFOQ)

A very narrowly interpreted exception to EEO laws that allows employers to base employment decisions for a particular job on such factors as sex, religion or national origin, if they are able to demonstrate that such factors are an essential qualification for performing a particular job.

Bonus plan

An incentive pay plan which awards employees compensation, in addition to their base salary, for achieving individual or group performance and

productivity goals.

Boundaryless organization

Defined as an organization that removes roadblocks to maximize the flow of information throughout the organization.

Branding

The process of identifying and differentiating an organization's products, processes or services from another organization by giving it a name, phrase or other mark.

Breach of contract

Occurring when an individual who is a party to a contract or agreement does not uphold or violates the terms of the contract.

Break-even analysis

A measure used to determine the approximate sales volume required to cover the costs associated with producing a particular product or service.

Broadbanding

A pay structure that consolidates a large number of narrower pay grades into fewer broad bands with wider salary ranges.

Buddy system

A form of employee orientation whereby a newly hired employee is assigned to another employee (typically within the same department) who shows the new employee the ropes, introduces him or her to coworkers, gives personal assistance and answers questions on an as-needed basis.

Budget

A numerical summary of an organization's available resources and how those resources are to be allocated based on anticipated future expenditures for various items, such as equipment, training and development programs, benefits, implementing new processes or services, etc.

Bumping

The practice of allowing more senior level employees whose positions have been slotted for elimination or downsizing the option of accepting an alternative position within the organization, for which they may be qualified to perform and which is currently occupied by another employee with less seniority.

Burden of proof

The burden placed on an employer, as a result of a claim of discriminatory treatment, to provide a verifiable, legitimate and nondiscriminatory reason for any employment action taken which may have resulted in adverse treatment of a member(s) of a protected group.

Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)

The principal fact-finding agency for the federal government in the broad field of labor economics and statistics. The BLS is an independent national statistical agency that collects, processes, analyzes and disseminates essential statistical data to the American public, the U.S. Congress, other federal agencies, state and local governments, business and labor. BLS also serves as a statistical resource to the Department of Labor.

Burnout

Physical or emotional exhaustion, lack of motivation or decreased morale resulting from an individual being exposed to excessive or prolonged stress and frustration caused by personal problems, work pressures, financial difficulties, etc.

Business continuity planning

Broadly defined as a management process that seeks to identify potential threats and impacts to the organization and provide a strategic and operational framework for ensuring the organization is able to withstand any disruption, interruption or loss to normal business functions or operation.

Business literacy

The knowledge and understanding of the financial, accounting, marketing and operational functions of an organization.

Business necessity

A defense available when the employer has a criterion for selection that is facially neutral but which excludes members of one sex, race, national origin or religious group at a substantially higher rate than members of other groups, thus creating adverse impact. The employer must be able to prove that the challenged practices effectively carry out the business purposes they are alleged to serve and that no alternative, nondiscriminatory practices can achieve the safe and

efficient operation of its business.

Business plan

A document that provides relevant information about a company by outlining items such as the company's business description, market or industry, management, competitors, future prospects and growth potential, etc.

C

C-Suite

A term used to describe members of the executive team, i.e. CEO, CFO, CIO, COO, etc.

Call center

The area in an organization responsible for screening, forwarding and logging large volumes of customer-related calls at the same time through the use of technology and other resources.

Cafeteria plan

A benefit plan which allows employees to choose between one or more qualified tax-favored benefits and cash.

Career center

An office set up within an organization to be used for the purpose of providing outplacement counseling and job placement services to displaced workers.

Career counseling

Guiding individuals through the career planning and career decision-making process by helping them to make informed decisions regarding educational and occupational choices, as well as providing resources needed to further developing job search and placement skills.

Career development

The process by which individuals establish their current and future career objectives and assess their existing skills, knowledge or experience levels and implement an appropriate course of action to attain their desired career objectives.

Career ladder

The progression of jobs in an organization's specific occupational fields ranked from highest to lowest based on level of responsibility and pay.

<i>Career mobility</i>	The propensity to make several career changes during an individual's lifetime instead of committing to a long-term career within a specific occupational field.
<i>Career path</i>	The progression of jobs in an organization's specific occupational fields ranked from lowest to highest in the hierarchal structure.
<i>Career planning</i>	The process of establishing career objectives and determining appropriate educational and developmental programs to further develop the skills required to achieve short- or long-term career objectives.
<i>Career plateau</i>	Occurs when an employee has reached the highest position level he or she can possibly obtain within an organization and has no future prospect of being promoted due to a lack of skills, corporate restructuring or other factors.
<i>Case study</i>	A case study uses real scenarios that focus on a specific issue(s). It looks deeply at a specific issue, drawing conclusions only about that issue and only in that specific context.
<i>Casual dress</i>	Refers to attire such as jeans, casual slacks, t-shirts, sport and polo shirts and other apparel used for leisure.
<i>Casual employment</i>	The practice of hiring employees on an as-needed basis, either as a replacement for permanent full-time employees who are out on short- and long-term absences or to meet employer's additional staffing needs during peak business periods.
<i>Caucus</i>	A labor relations term used to define periodic suspensions of negotiations in order to provide both sides with an opportunity to consider their relevant positions.
<i>Centralization</i>	The process of consolidating all decision-making authority under one central group or location.

<i>Change agent</i>	A term used to define an individual or group of individuals who directly or indirectly cause or accelerate social, cultural, or behavioral change.
<i>Change management</i>	The systematic approach and application of knowledge, tools and resources to deal with change. Change management means defining and adopting corporate strategies, structures, procedures and technologies to deal with changes in external conditions and the business environment.
<i>Child-labor law</i>	Provisions under FLSA are designed to protect the educational opportunities of youth and prohibit their employment in jobs that are detrimental to their health and safety. FLSA restricts the hours that youth under 16 years of age can work and lists hazardous occupations too dangerous for young workers to perform.
<i>Civil rights</i>	The rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and federal and state statutes enacted to protect a wide range of individual rights, such as right to vote, freedom of speech, the right to assemble, the right to equal treatment, etc.
<i>Civil Rights Act of 1964</i>	A federal statute enacted to further guarantee the constitutional rights of individuals and prevent employment discrimination based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin or age.
<i>Civil Rights Act of 1991</i>	A federal statute that amended the Civil Rights Act of 1964 enacted to strengthen and improve federal civil rights laws by providing for damages in cases of intentional employment discrimination, clarifying provisions regarding disparate impact actions and for other purposes.
<i>Class action suit</i>	A lawsuit filed by one party on behalf of themselves and other people in a group who share the same complaint.
<i>Climate survey</i>	A tool used to solicit and assess employee opinions, feelings, perceptions and expectations regarding a variety of factors pertinent to maintaining the organizations climate, such as opportunities for growth, management, working relationships and environment,

etc..

Coaching

A training method in which a more experienced or skilled individual provides an employee with advice and guidance intended to help him or her develop skills, improve performance and enhance the quality of his or her career.

Co-commission

A commission sharing arrangement between sales professionals when engaged in team, cross-territory or cross-product line sales.

Co-employment

The relationship between a Professional Employer Organization (PEO) or employee leasing firm and an employer, based on a contractual sharing of liability and responsibility for employees.

Color discrimination

color discrimination occurs when a person is discriminated against based on the lightness, darkness, or other color characteristic of the person. Even though race and color clearly overlap, they are not synonymous

Cognitive ability testing

A testing instrument used during the selection process in order to measure the candidate's learning and reasoning abilities.

Common law employment test

Refers to the IRS's 20-question common law test which examines the level of control exercised over a worker by an employer in order to determine whether the individual is an employee or an independent contractor.

Communicable disease

Any condition that is transmitted directly or indirectly to a person from an infected person or animal through the agency of an intermediate animal, host or vector or through the inanimate environment. Communicable diseases include, but is not limited to, influenza; tuberculosis; conjunctivitis; infectious mononucleosis; acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), AIDS-related complex (ARC) and positive HIV antibody status; hepatitis A, B, C and D; meningitis; SARS; and sexually transmitted diseases.

Compa ratio

The ratio of an actual pay rate to the midpoint for the

respective pay grade used for comparing actual rates of pay with the midpoint for a particular pay grade within the salary structure.

Comparative rating

A rating method that determines ratings by making comparisons between the individuals being rated.

Compensatory time-off plan

The practice of giving employees paid time off that can be used in the future in lieu of paying them overtime for hours worked in excess of 40 per week. While an acceptable practice in the public sector, the FLSA places very strict limitations on the use of compensatory time off for private sector employers.

Competency-based pay

A compensation system that recognizes employees for the depth, breadth and types of skills they obtain and apply in their work. Also known as skill-based and knowledge-based pay.

Competencies

The knowledge, skills and abilities required to perform a specific task or function.

Compliance

Meeting the requirements and obligations of affirmative action imposed by Executive Order 11246, Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act, Section 4212 of the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act and their implementing regulations.

Compliance Officer

An employee of the OFCCP engaged in the investigation of employment discrimination charges and conducting compliance reviews. The former name for this position was Equal Opportunity Specialist (EOS).

Compressed workweek

An alternative scheduling method that allows employees to work a standard workweek over less than a five-day period in one week or a 10-day period in two weeks.

Conciliation agreement

A binding written agreement between a contractor and OFCCP that details specific contractor commitments to resolve major or substantive violations of Executive Order 11246, the Rehabilitation Act or the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act.

<i>Concurrent validity</i>	The means of determining a test's or other assessment tool's validity by comparing test scores against actual job performance.
<i>Condition of employment</i>	An organization's policies and work rules that employees are expected to abide by in order to remain continuously employed.
<i>Confidentiality agreement</i>	A contract restricting an employee from disclosing confidential or proprietary information.
<i>Conflict of interest</i>	Refers to situations when an individual has other competing financial, professional or personal obligations or interests that interfere with his or her ability to adequately perform required duties in a fair and objective manner.
<i>Consideration</i>	A benefit or other item of value given to an individual who is asked to sign an employment contract or agreement (i.e., release agreement) that is above and beyond what the individual would have been entitled to, had he or she not been asked to sign a contract or agreement.
<i>Consolidated Omnibus Reconciliation Act (COBRA) of 1985</i>	Under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985, if an employee terminates employment with the company, the employee is entitled to continue participating in the company's group health plan for a prescribed period of time, usually 18 months. (In certain circumstances, such as an employee's divorce or death, the length of coverage period may be longer for qualified dependents). COBRA coverage is not extended to employees terminated for gross misconduct.
<i>Constructive discharge</i>	Occurs when a manager/supervisor or employer makes working conditions so unbearable or abusive that a reasonable person believes that resignation is the only appropriate action to take.
<i>Construct validity</i>	The extent to which a test or other assessment instrument measures a particular trait.
<i>Consultant</i>	An individual who works independently to assist and

advise client organizations with various organizational functions and responsibilities on a fee-for-service basis.

Consumer Credit Protection Act of 1968

Prohibits employees from being terminated for garnishments for any one indebtedness. Although two or more do allow an employer to terminate, care should be exercised to prevent disparate impact if the employees being terminated are mostly women and minorities.

Consumer credit report

The Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) defines a consumer report as any communication of any information by a consumer reporting agency bearing on a consumer's credit worthiness, credit standing, credit capacity, character, general reputation, personal characteristics or mode of living, which is used, or expected to be used, or collected, in whole or in part, for the purpose of serving as a factor in establishing the consumer's eligibility for credit or insurance to be used primarily for personal, family or household purposes or employment purposes.

Consumer Price Index (CPI)

An index of prices used to measure the change in the cost of basic goods and services in comparison with a fixed base period. Also called *cost-of-living index*.

Content validity

The degree to which a test or other assessment instrument used during the selection process measures the skills, knowledge and abilities or other related job qualifications.

Contingency planning

The process of identifying an organization's critical information systems and business operations and developing and implementing plans to enable those systems and operations to resume following a disaster or other emergency situation.

Contingent worker

Refers to an individual employed in a job that does not have an explicit contract for long-term employment (i.e., independent contractor or temporary employee)

Contractor

A contractor is a firm that does business with the federal government. A prime contractor receives \$50,000 or more in contracts each year and employs more than 50 people in total employment. A subcontractor performs

part of the contract at the direction of the prime contractor and receives \$10,000 or more in subcontracts each year.

Core competencies

The skills, knowledge and abilities which employees must possess in order to successfully perform job functions that are essential to business operations.

Core work activities

The tasks or functions within an organization considered essential to the organization's business operations.

Core workers

Employees who are considered to be vital to the organization's successful business operations.

Corporate citizenship

'Corporate Citizenship is the contribution a company makes to society through its core business activities, its social investment and philanthropy programs, and its engagement in public policy. The manner in which a company manages its economic, social and environmental relationships, and the way it engages with its stakeholders (such as shareholders, employees, customers, business partners, governments and communities), has an impact on the company's long-term success.' (*World Economic Forum*)

The term is also used interchangeably with other similar terms such as Corporate Governance and/or Corporate Social Responsibility.

Corporate culture

The beliefs, values and practices adopted by an organization that directly influence employee conduct and behavior.

Corporate image

The way in which an organization is viewed by clients, employees, vendors or the general public.

Corporate values

The prescribed standards, behaviors, principles or concepts that an organization regards as highly important.

Corrective action

Correction of deficiencies identified during a compliance review of an affirmative action plan.

Cost-benefit analysis

A means of measuring the costs associated with a specific program, project, activity or benefit compared with the total benefit or value derived.

Cost of labor

The total payments in the form of gross salary and wages, bonuses, and other cash allowances paid to employees and salaries, allowances, fees, bonuses and commissions paid to working directors and fees paid to non-working directors for their attendance at the Board of Directors' meetings.

Cost of living

The amount of money needed to buy the goods and services required to maintain a specific standard of living. The cost of living is closely tied to rates of inflation and deflation. In estimating such costs, food, clothing, rent, fuel, lighting, and furnishings as well as expenses for communication, education, recreation, transportation, and medical services are generally included. The Consumer Price Index (CPI), a measurement of the cost of living prepared by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, tracks changes in retail prices of an average "market basket." Changes are compared to prices in a previously selected base year, from which figures the percentage increase or decrease in the cost of living can be calculated.

Cost of living adjustment (COLA)

An annual adjustment in wages to offset a change in purchasing power, as measured by the Consumer Price Index. The Consumer Price Index is used rather than the Producer Price Index because the purpose is to offset inflation as experienced by the consumer, not the producer.

Cost-per-hire

The direct and indirect costs that are calculated to measure the costs associated with filling a vacancy. Direct costs include, but are not limited to, advertising, employment agency fees, job fairs, employee referrals, credit and reference checking costs, examination and testing costs during the selection process, signing bonuses, relocation costs, human resource overhead costs, college recruiting costs, Internet costs and training and communication costs. Indirect costs can include, but are also not limited to, lower productivity, costs of turnover, morale impacts, safety (if there is a higher number of accidents as a result of the vacancy),

disruption of regular business functions, overtime (to compensate for the vacancy) and hiring to maintain production.

Counseling

Actions or interactions in one or serial form which serve to provide direction, guidance or advice with respect to recommendations, decisions or courses of action.

Craft worker

An individual employed in a profession or activity that uses experienced hands to make something. Apprenticeships are often required and post secondary vocational schools also offer such craft oriented training. Training time can be over a course of years and require certification examinations. Examples: electrician, plumber, tool; and die maker, machinist, HVAC specialist, journeyman carpenter, cabinet maker.

Crisis management

A broad term that refers to an organizations pre-established activities and guidelines, for preparing and responding to significant catastrophic events or incidents (i.e., fire, earthquake, severe storms, workplace violence, kidnapping, bomb threats, acts of terrorism, etc.) in a safe and effective manner. A successful crisis management plan also incorporates other organizational programs such as , emergency response , disaster recovery, risk management, communications, business continuity, etc.

Crisis planning

A formal written plan establishing specific measures or actions to be taken when responding to catastrophic events or tragedies (i.e., fire, earthquake, severe storms, workplace violence, kidnapping, bomb threats, acts of terrorism, etc.) in the workplace.

Crisis prevention

The process of an organization implementing specific plans and procedures designed to circumvent certain disasters or emergencies.

Critical success factors

The key items that must be met in order to successfully achieve a specific objective.

Critical tasks

The job tasks or functions essential to the proper performance of a particular job.

<i>Cross-functional teams</i>	Work teams comprised of individuals who represent the various organizational functions, departments or divisions.
<i>Cross training</i>	The process of developing a multi skilled workforce by providing employees with training and development opportunities to ensure they have the skills necessary to perform various job functions within an organization.
<i>Cybersmear</i>	Using Web sites, listservs, chat rooms or bulletin boards to post insulting or defamatory statements regarding former employers.
<i>Cultural differences</i>	The diverse behaviors, beliefs, customs, traditions, language and expressions that are characteristic to groups of people of a particular race, ethnicity or national origin.
<i>Cultural integration</i>	The process of bringing people of different racial or ethnic backgrounds into equal association.
<i>Curriculum vitae (c.v.)</i>	Used in the United States to describe, a longer, more detailed version of a resume. Internationally is synonymous with resume.

D

<i>Daily work records</i>	A daily log of job tasks being performed by individual employees over a certain period of time. Used often as a form of job analysis.
<i>Damages</i>	The amounts awarded by a court to be paid by one party to another as a result of violating a contract or agreement.
<i>Deauthorization</i>	The termination of union representation over a specific bargaining unit following a decertification election.
<i>Debarment</i>	An order declaring a contractor ineligible for the award of future contracts or cancellation of current contracts. Debarment is one of the sanctions that can be imposed

on a contractor found to be in violation of Executive Order 11246, Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act or Section 4212 of the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act.

Decentralization

The process of assigning decision-making authority to lower levels within the organizational hierarchy.

Decertification

Allows members of a particular bargaining unit to terminate their union representation through a voting process.

Deductive reasoning

The ability to extract certain rules based on a sequence of experiences or observations and apply those rules to other similar situations.

Defamation

Injury caused to an individual's character or reputation resulting from another individual(s) issuing false or malicious statements either verbally or in writing.

Deferred compensation

Payment for services under any employer-sponsored plan or arrangement that allows an employee (for tax-related purposes) to defer income to the future.

Deficiency

Failure to fulfill a requirement of Executive Order 11246, Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act or Section 4212 of the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act, including implementing rules, regulations and orders. "Deficiency" and "violation" are often used interchangeably.

Defined benefit plan

A retirement plan that is not an individual account plan and pays participants a fixed periodic benefit or a lump-sum amount, calculated using specific formulas that include such items as age, earnings and length of service.

Defined contribution plan

An individual account plan in which the employer contributes a specific amount of money into each year that is to be distributed among the accounts of each plan participant.

<i>De-layering</i>	An organizational restructuring strategy meant to reduce the organization's existing levels of managers or supervisors.
<i>Delegation</i>	The process of assigning tasks or projects to subordinates and clearly dictating expected outcomes and timeframe for completion.
<i>De minimis rule</i>	Described by IRS guidelines as any benefit, property or service provided to an employee that has so little value (taking into account how frequently similar benefits are provided to employees) that accounting for it would be unreasonable or administratively impracticable. Cash, no matter how little, is never excludable as a de minimis benefit, except for occasional meal money or transportation fare.
<i>Demographics</i>	The physical characteristics of a population, such as age, sex, marital status, family size, education, geographic location and occupation.
<i>Demotion</i>	A permanent reassignment to a position with a lower pay grade, skill requirement or level of responsibility than the employee's current position.
<i>Departmentation</i>	The process of dividing an organization's labor, functions, processes or units into separate groups.
<i>Department of Labor (DOL)</i>	The federal agency responsible for administering and enforcing a large quantity of federal labor laws, including, but not limited to, overtime pay, child labor, wages and hours, workplace health and safety, FMLA, and various other employee rights.
<i>Dependent care assistance plan</i>	An employer benefit plan that provides employees with dependent care assistance, such as paying for or providing qualified child and dependent care services necessary for them to seek or obtain gainful employment or remain gainfully employed.
<i>Deposition</i>	The process of one party, accompanied by his or her legal counsel, answering questions under oath about pertinent facts regarding a case put forth by another

party's legal counsel; conducted outside of a courtroom.

Desk audit

A review of a contractor's documents and materials to determine compliance with affirmative action practices and equal employment obligations as they relate to workforce structure, personnel policies and procedures, good-faith efforts and areas of potential discrimination. The Standard Compliance Review Report (SCRR) provides instructions for conducting a desk audit, which takes its name from the fact that this review and analysis is done at the desk of the compliance officer assigned to conduct the audit.

Descriptive scale

Any rating scale that uses adjectives or phrases to determine performance ratings.

Developmental counseling

A form of shared counseling where managers or supervisors work together with subordinates to identify strengths and weaknesses, resolve performance-related problems and determine and create an appropriate action plan.

Developmental disabilities

Defined as a severe, chronic disability of an individual that: is attributable to mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments; is manifested before the individual attains the age of 22; is likely to continue indefinitely; results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity: self-care, receptive and expressive living, and economic self-sufficiency; and reflects the individual's need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary or generic services, individualized support or other forms of assistance that are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated.

Development program

Training or educational programs designed to stimulate an individual's professional growth by increasing his or her skills, knowledge or abilities.

Direct compensation

All compensation (base salary and/or incentive pay) that is paid directly to an employee.

<i>Direct costs</i>	The costs directly attributed to a particular products, programs or activities.
<i>Direct labor</i>	The workers who actually produce a product or provide a service.
<i>Disability</i>	Defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of an individual's major life activities (i.e., walking, talking, standing, sitting, etc.)
<i>Disability management</i>	The process of coordinating efforts between employees, management, physicians, rehabilitation service providers and insurance carriers to reduce the impact of work-related injuries or illnesses and assisting injured employees in continuing to successfully perform their jobs.
<i>Disabled individual</i>	Under the ADA guidelines, an individual with a disability is a person who: has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; has a record of such impairment; or is regarded as having such impairment. Disability under Social Security rules are defined as an individual who is unable to perform work that he or she was previously able to perform and the individual cannot adjust to other work because of his or her medical condition(s), which is expected to last for at least one year or to result in death.
<i>Disabled Veteran</i>	A person whose discharge or release from active duty was for a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty and who is entitled to a 30 percent or more disability payment under the regulations of the Office of Veteran's Affairs.
<i>Disaster recovery plan</i>	A set of guidelines and procedures to be used by an organization for the recovery of data lost due to severe forces of nature, such as earthquakes, fires, tornadoes, floods or hurricanes.
<i>Discharge</i>	The termination of an employee based on previous disciplinary proceedings or for violating a major work

rule or policy.

Disciplinary action

The means of reprimanding employees who fail to abide by the organization's performance standards, policies or rules.

Disciplinary layoff

A disciplinary measure in which employees are suspended without pay for a specified period of time due to violations of a company work rule or policy.

Disclosure

The process of disclosing information to employees or the general public regarding any business practices or processes that contain the propensity to be hazardous to the environment or the health and safety of individuals.

Discretionary bonus

A form of variable pay where an employer provides additional cash compensation to an employee for reasons that are not pursuant to any prior contract, agreement or promise that would lead the employee to expect the payments regularly.

Discrimination

Any policy or action taken related to recruiting, hiring, promotion, pay or training practices that result in an unfair disadvantage to either an individual or group of individuals who are considered part of a protected class.

Disqualifying income

Commonly used as an offset when coordinating income from multiple sources.

Disparate impact

Under Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) law, a less favorable effect for one group than for another. A disparate impact results when rules applied to all employees have a different and more inhibiting effect on women and minority groups than on the majority.

Disparate treatment

Such treatment results when rules or policies are applied inconsistently to one group of people over another. Discrimination may result when rules and policies are applied differently to members of protected classes.

Displaced workers

Individuals who have lost their jobs due to a plant closing, relocation, downsizing or position elimination.

<i>Dissatisfiers</i>	Factors, such as working conditions, job functions, pay and benefits or organizational policies and practices, that contribute to employee dissatisfaction.
<i>Distance learning</i>	The process of delivering educational or instructional programs to locations away from a classroom or site to another location by using technology, such as video or audio conferencing, computers, Web-based applications or other multimedia communications.
<i>Distractors</i>	Refers to incorporating incorrect items or answers into a testing instrument where the testee is asked to select from a group of items or answers (i.e., multiple choice exams).
<i>Diversity</i>	A broad definition of diversity ranges from personality and work style to all of the visible dimensions of diversity such as race, age, ethnicity or gender, to secondary influences such as religion, socioeconomics and education, to work diversities such as management and union, functional level and classification or proximity/distance to headquarters.
<i>Diversity training</i>	A fundamental component of a diversity initiative that represents the opportunity for an organization to inform and educate senior management and staff about diversity. The purpose of training is not only to increase awareness and understanding of workplace diversity, but also to develop concrete skills among staff that will facilitate enhanced productivity and communications among all employees.
<i>Documentation</i>	Refers to written notices, records, forms, memos, letters and so forth used during disciplinary proceedings.
<i>Domestic partner benefits</i>	Benefit plan provided by an employer that recognizes individuals who are of the same or opposite sex as spousal equivalents for purposes of health care coverage. Domestic partners are typically defined as individuals that have lived together in the same residence for a specified period, are responsible for each other's financial welfare, are not blood relatives, are at

least 18 years of age, are mentally competent, are life partners and would get legally married should the option become available, are registered as domestic partners if there is a local domestic partner registry, and are not legally married to anyone else.

Downgrading

The practice of moving an employee to a job that has a lower pay grade or level of responsibility or skill.

Downshifting

Refers to employees who choose to accept or remain in lower level or lower paying jobs in order to satisfy their personal and family needs.

Downsizing

The process of reducing the employer's workforce through elimination of positions, management layers, processes, functions, etc.

Dress code

An organizational policy or rule to be used by employees as a guideline as to what is considered appropriate attire for the workplace.

Drug abuse/substance abuse

Habitual and excessive use of a drug for purposes other than what was medically intended.

Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988

Requires some federal contractors and all federal grantees to agree that they will provide drug-free workplaces as a precondition of receiving a contract or grant from a federal agency. Although all covered contractors and grantees must maintain a drug-free workplace, the specific components necessary to meet the requirements of the Act vary based on whether the contractor or grantee is an individual or an organization.

Drug testing

The process of testing employees to detect the presence of illegal drugs or alcohol within their system. Drug testing can be conducted on a pre-employment, random or post-accident basis, as well as for cause or suspicion, in accordance with the employer's policy and any governing state law.

Dual career ladders/tracks

An employee career development plan allowing employees to alternate between technical, professional or managerial positions over the course of their careers while they simultaneously receive higher compensation

and gain higher status levels within the organization.

Due diligence

A critical component of mergers and acquisitions, it is the process of conducting an investigation and evaluation in order to examine the details of a particular investment or purchase by obtaining sufficient and accurate information or documents that may influence the outcome of the transaction.

E

E-learning

The delivery of formal and informal training and educational materials, processes and programs via the use of electronic media.

Early retirement plan

A benefit plan offered by an organization providing incentives geared toward encouraging employees who are approaching retirement age to voluntarily retire prior to their normal retirement age.

Early return to work program

Modified work programs designed to get employees who have been out of work due to injury or illness to return to the workforce sooner by providing them with less strenuous alternative jobs until they are able to resume their full regular duties.

EEO-1 category

One of nine broad job categories used on the EEO-1 Report. They are officials & managers, professionals, technicians, sales workers, office & clerical, craft workers, operatives, laborers and service workers.

EEOC guidelines

Interpretations of Title VII expressed by the EEOC that don't have the force of law, but tend to be supported by the courts. These positions are outlined in various EEOC publications ("Discrimination Because of Religion," etc.)

Eighty-percent rule

Method of determining adverse impact. Selection rates for any group that are less than 80 percent (four-fifths) of the rate for other groups is evidence of a violation of this rule.

<i>Electromation</i>	Used to refer to a NLRB ruling declaring that, in nonunion companies, labor management cooperation (i.e., quality circles, employee involvement programs, etc.) is illegal because the committees through which such cooperation takes place are equal to a labor organization, as defined by the NLRA.
<i>Electronic monitoring</i>	An employee surveillance practice where items such as telephone calls or e-mail/Internet usage are observed for general business, training or performance-related reasons.
<i>Emergency planning</i>	The process of establishing specific measures or actions to be taken when responding to catastrophic events or tragedies (i.e., fire, earthquake, severe storms, workplace violence, kidnapping, bomb threats, acts of terrorism or other emergency situations) in the workplace.
<i>Emotional intelligence</i>	Describes the mental ability an individual possesses enabling him or her to be sensitive and understanding to the emotions of others, as well as to manage his or her own emotions and impulses.
<i>Employee assistance program (EAP)</i>	A work-based intervention program designed to identify and assist employees in resolving personal problems (i.e., marital, financial or emotional problems, family issues, substance/alcohol abuse) that may be adversely affecting the employee's performance.
<i>Employee-driven idea system</i>	A type of suggestion program where employees are rewarded for being ultimately responsible for the management and implementation of any idea they submitted.
<i>Employee engagement</i>	The means of creating a work environment that empowers employees to make decisions that affect their jobs. Also referred to as employee involvement. Further defined by the Corporate Leadership Council in the in their 2004 study, "Driving Performance and Retention Through Employee Engagement" as "the extent to which employees commit to something or someone in their organization, how hard they work,

and how long they stay as a result of that commitment.”

Employee handbook

A written or electronic document containing summaries of the employer’s policies and benefits designed to familiarize employees with various matters affecting the employment relationship.

Employee leasing

A staffing alternative whereby employers form a joint-employment relationship with a leasing agency or professional employer organization (PEO) that takes on the responsibility for various HR-related functions, such as labor law compliance, compensation and benefits administration, record-keeping, payroll and employment taxes.

Employee Polygraph Protection Act of 1988

Prohibits most private employers from requiring employees or candidates for employment to submit to a lie detector test. The only time an employer may ask (but not require) an employee to take a polygraph test is in the conduct of an ongoing investigation into theft, embezzlement or a similar economic loss; or if the employee had access to property that was lost and the employer has a reasonable suspicion that the employee was involved. Employees who take a polygraph test may not be discharged or suffer any other negative consequences solely on the basis of the test, without other supporting evidence. The Act strictly mandates how polygraph tests may be administered and how the results are used.

Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) of 1974

ERISA sets requirements for the provision and administration of employee benefit plans. Employee benefit plans include health care benefits, profit sharing and pension plans, for example.

Employee referral program

A recruiting strategy where current employees are rewarded for referring qualified candidates for employment.

<i>Employee relations</i>	A broad term used to refer to the general management and planning of activities related to developing, maintaining and improving employee relationships by communicating with employees, processing grievances/disputes, etc.
<i>Employee retention</i>	Organizational policies and practices designed to meet the diverse needs of employees and create an environment that encourages employees to remain employed.
<i>Employee self-service</i>	A trend in human resource management that allows employees to handle many job-related tasks normally conducted by HR (such as benefits enrollment, updating personal information and accessing company information) through the use of a company's intranet, specialized kiosks or other Web-based applications.
<i>Employee stock ownership plan (ESOP)</i>	A trust established by a corporation that operates as a tax-qualified defined contribution retirement plan, but unlike traditional defined contribution plans, employer contributions are invested in the company's stock.
<i>Employee stock purchase plan</i>	An employer-sponsored plan that allows employees to purchase company stock below the fair market value.
<i>Employer of choice</i>	A term used to describe a public or private employer whose practices, policies, benefits and overall work conditions have enabled it to successfully attract and retain talent because employees choose to work there.
<i>Employment agency</i>	An organization that provides job placement assistance, either on a temporary or permanent basis, to individuals seeking employment opportunities.
<i>Employment-at-will</i>	A legal doctrine that states that an employment relationship may be terminated by the employer or employee at any time and for any or no reason.

<i>Employment agreement/contract</i>	A formal, legally binding agreement between an employer and employee outlining terms of employment such as duration, compensation, benefits, etc.
<i>Employment branding</i>	A combination of marketing, communication and technology used by an organization intended to give it greater visibility amongst a large population within a short timeframe.
<i>Employment cost index</i>	Conducted annually as part of the Department of Labor's National Compensation Survey program, the Employment Cost Index measures the relative changes in wages, benefits and bonuses for a specific group of occupations.
<i>Employment displacement</i>	Occurs when an employee is terminated as a result of position elimination.
<i>Employment practices liability audit</i>	An assessment of an employer's current policies and practices to determine potential areas of liability (i.e., discrimination, wrongful discharge and other violations of employee rights) typically conducted by an outside consulting or legal firm.
<i>Employment practices liability insurance (EPLI)</i>	An insurance plan that provides employers with protection against claims of discrimination, wrongful termination, sexual harassment or other employment-related issues made by employees, former employees or potential employees.
<i>Employment torts</i>	The grounds on which a lawsuit is based, such as wrongful discharge, negligence or invasion of privacy.
<i>Employment visas</i>	An immigration-issued document that allows aliens to obtain temporary residency for the purpose of pursuing employment opportunities within the United States.
<i>Employer</i>	Under EEOC Policy Guidelines, a person or persons engaging in an industry affecting commerce who has 15 or more employees for each working day in each

of the 20 or more weeks in the preceding year or any agent thereof. Includes state and local governments, any federal agency subject to the provisions of Section 717 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. Also includes any federal contractor or subcontractor or federally assisted construction contractor covered by Executive Order 11246, as amended.

***Employer information report
EEO-1***

Also known as Standard Form 100, this annual report shows the representation of female and minority employees in an employer's total workforce as well as in standard job groupings (i.e., officials and managers, professionals, etc.). This report must be filed each year by any employer with 100 or more employees (50 or more for government contractors).

Employment practice

Any recruitment, hiring, selection practice, transfer or promotion policy, or any benefit provision or other function of the employer's employment process that operates as an analysis or screening device.

Empowerment

Enabling an individual to have responsibility, control and decision-making authority over the work he or she performs.

English-only rules

An employer policy or work rule that requires employees to only speak in the English language at all times while on the job or in the workplace.

***English as a second language
(ESL)***

English language training provided to individuals who do not speak English as their primary language.

Environmental Scanning

A process that systematically surveys and interprets relevant data to identify external opportunities and threats.

***Equal employment opportunity
(EEO)***

A policy statement that equal consideration for a job is applicable to all individuals and that the employer does not discriminate based on race, color, religion, age, marital status, national origin, disability or sex.

Equal opportunity clause

The seven subparagraphs in Section 202 of Executive

Order 11246, as amended. These paragraphs are required to be part of all contracts covered by the executive order.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

The federal agency responsible for publishing guidelines, enforcing EEO laws and investigating complaints of job discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age or disability.

Equal opportunity survey

This report is sent to a substantial portion of all non-construction contractors each year. It requires them to provide to the OFCCP information regarding applicants, hires, promotions, terminations, compensation and tenure by race and gender. Non-construction contracts can expect to receive and complete this report every other year.

Equal Pay Act of 1963

A federal law prohibiting employers from discriminating between male employees and female employees in terms of pay when they are performing jobs that are essentially the same or of comparable worth.

Equal Treatment

A legal doctrine used in discharge cases to determine whether an employer's policies and practices are applied in a fair, consistent and nondiscriminatory manner.

Equivalent position

According to section 825.215 of the FMLA regulations, an equivalent position is one that is virtually identical to the employee's former position in terms of pay, benefits and working conditions, including privileges, perquisites and status. It must involve the same or substantially similar duties and responsibilities, which must entail substantially equivalent skill, responsibility and authority.

Ergonomics

The design of the equipment, furniture, machinery or tools used in the workplace that promotes safety, efficiency and productivity and reduces discomfort and fatigue.

<i>Error of central tendency</i>	A rating error occurring when the rater displays a propensity to assign only average ratings to all individuals being rated.
<i>Error of contrast</i>	An error occurring when raters assign ratings based on comparisons between individuals being rated instead of using previously established organizational standards.
<i>Error of halo</i>	A rating error occurring when the rater assigns a rating based on individuals' positive or negative characteristics.
<i>Error of inconsistency</i>	Occurs when no established organizational standards for rating an individual exist, and raters use different strategies for assigning ratings.
<i>Error of projection</i>	An error in rating, which occurs when raters are inclined to allow their own personal characteristics or values to affect the ratings they assign.
<i>Error of recency</i>	Occurs when raters assign a rating based on the individual's short-term versus long-term job performance.
<i>Error of standards</i>	Occurs when a rating is assigned based on impracticable standards established by the rater.
<i>Errors and omissions insurance</i>	An insurance policy providing businesses with coverage and protection against potential lawsuits from clients or customers.
<i>Essay appraisal</i>	An appraisal strategy requiring the rater to provide a narrative description of an individual's performance based on the rater's performance observations.
<i>Essential functions</i>	The primary job functions or tasks that an individual must be able to perform with or without a reasonable accommodation.
<i>Ethical Leadership</i>	Broadly defined, as the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and

interpersonal relationships, and promotion of such conduct among followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making processes (M.E Brown and L.K. Trevino, *Measures for Leadership Development Ethical Leadership Scale*)

Ethics

A philosophy principle concerned with opinions about appropriate and inappropriate moral conduct or behavior by an individual or social group.

Ethnic categories

A grouping of individuals who are of the following descent: American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; Black or African American; Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; and White.

Executive

A term used to define the highest-ranking individual or group of individuals reporting to a board of directors who have managerial or administrative authority for the business operations of the entire organization, business unit, or function.

Executive compensation

Compensation packages specifically designed for executive-level employees that include items such as base salary, bonuses, perquisites and other personal benefits, stock options and other related compensation and benefit provisions.

Executive development

Training and educational programs designed to increase performance and further the development of leadership skills for executive and senior-level managerial employees.

Executive Order

An official presidential directive that has the same force as a law.

Executive Order 11246 of 1965

Administered and enforced by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP), Executive Order 11246 prohibits federal contractors and federally-assisted construction contractors and subcontractors, who do over \$10,000 in government business in one year, from discriminating in employment decisions on the basis of race, color,

religion, sex or national origin. The Executive Order also requires government contractors to take affirmative action to ensure that equal opportunity is provided in all aspects of their employment.

Executive outplacement

A program designed to provide displaced senior-level managerial and professional employees with career management and transition services that go above and beyond what is typically offered through a customary outplacement program.

Executive retreat

A team building and development approach designed for executive-level managers; conducted off-site and typically lasts from a few days to a week.

Executive search firm

An agency or organization used by employers to assist them with the selection and placement of candidates for senior-level managerial or professional positions.

Exempt employees

Employees who meet one of the FLSA exemption tests and who are paid on a fixed salary basis and not entitled to overtime.

Exit interview

An interview conducted at the time of an employee's resignation, used to identify the underlying factors behind an employee's decision to leave.

Expatriate

An employee who is transferred to work abroad on a long-term job assignment.

Expectancy theory

A motivational theory concluding that individuals feel a sense of pleasure and gratification when they have completed a challenging task and therefore are generally more motivated.

Expedited arbitration

A dispute resolution method used by the American Arbitration Association to resolve cases in accordance with a prescribed set of guidelines.

External benchmarking

The process of comparing an organization's current policies and practices to that of a competitor

organization(s) to determine current and future trends in areas of employment and business practice (i.e., compensation, benefits, HR practices).

Extrinsic motivator

Organizationally controlled incentives, such as pay, benefits, incentives, achievement awards, etc., used to reinforce motivation and increase performance.

Extrinsic reward

Work-related rewards that have a measurable monetary value, unlike intrinsic rewards, such as praise or satisfaction in a job well done.

F

Face validity

Making a decision regarding the appropriateness of a test or other assessment instrument based on appearance rather than objective criteria.

Facilitator

A trainer who assists a group in learning or reaching a specific goal by directing and controlling the group process and allowing the group to work collectively to resolve problems and come up with solutions.

Fact finding

The process of utilizing an impartial third party, not employed by the organization, to examine all pertinent facts surrounding a complaint.

Fact-finding conference

An informal meeting directed by the EEOC to settle discrimination complaints between an employer and the plaintiff.

Factor comparison

A job comparison process involving ranking each individual job by certain selected compensable factors to establish appropriate values to be used in determining pay rates.

Factor weight

Used in the job evaluation process, it is the process of assigning a weight to compensable factors to determine their relative worth.

Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) of 1969

The FCRA requires employers that use credit reports and that deny employment on the basis of a credit report

to so notify the applicant and to provide the name and address of the consumer reporting agency used.

Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) of 1938

An act that covers public agencies and businesses engaged in interstate commerce or providing goods and services for commerce. The FLSA provides guidelines on employment status, child labor, minimum wage, overtime pay and record-keeping requirements. It determines which employees are exempt from the Act (not covered by it) and which are nonexempt (covered by the Act). It establishes wage and time requirements when minors can work. It sets the minimum wage that must be paid and mandates when overtime must be paid.

Fair representation

This term means that a trade union, so long as it continues to be entitled to represent employees in a bargaining unit, may not act in a manner that is arbitrary, discriminatory or in bad faith in the representation of any employees in the unit.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) allows employees who have met minimum service requirements (12 months employed by the company with 1,250 hours of service in the preceding 12 months) to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave per year for: (1) a serious health condition; (2) to care for a family member with a serious health condition; (3) the birth of a child; or (4) the placement of a child for adoption or foster care.

Family-friendly

A policy or practice designed to help families spend more time together and/or enjoy a better quality of life.

Family status change

Used to define changes to an individuals existing family standing. Typically found in health care benefit plans covered by section 125 of the Internal Revenue Code. IRC 125, does not allow individuals enrolled in a covered benefit plan to make election changes to their existing benefits coverage outside of the plans annual open enrollment period, unless a qualifying change in family or employment status, defined by the IRS as a "Qualified Family Status Change" has occurred (i.e. marriage, divorce, legal separation, death,

birth/adoption, changes in employment status, cessation of dependent status, or a significant change in cost or reduction of benefits.)

Fast-trackers

A term used to describe employees who have exhibited strong potential for promotion and are being primed for higher level professional or technical positions within the organization.

Fat organization

An organization with a structure consisting of several layers of management.

Feasibility study

A study designed to discover if a business, product, project or process justify the investment of time, money and other resources.

Featherbedding

An unfair labor practice occurring when a union requires an employer to pay an employee for services he or she did not perform.

Feedback

Positive or negative information provided to an individual in the form of coaching or counseling regarding his or her performance or behavior.

Fetal protection policy

An employer policy meant to protect a pregnant woman's unborn fetus by excluding pregnant women from engaging in jobs requiring exposure to or the use of hazardous chemicals or materials.

Field interview

An employment interview conducted away from the employer's actual worksite.

Financial statement

A report containing financial information derived from an organizational accounting record.

Fiscal environmentalism

Refers to company practices which are self sustaining and environmentally friendly.

Fitness for duty

A document provided by a medical practitioner following a post-offer medical examination containing information used by the employer to determine a candidate's ability to perform the functions of a job. Also used to refer to documents or notes from medical

providers releasing individuals under their care to resume full or modified duties following a leave of absence due to illness or injury.

Fixed year

A term used to describe an invariable year such as a calendar or fiscal year.

Flat organization

An organization characterized by having only a few layers of management from top to bottom

Flexible benefit plan

A benefit program regulated under IRC 125 that offers employees a choice between permissible taxable benefits (including cash) and nontaxable benefits such as life and health insurance, vacations, retirement plans and child/dependent care. Although a common core of benefits may be required, the employee may determine how his or her remaining benefits dollars are allocated for each type of benefit from the total amount offered by the employer.

Flexible scheduling

An alternative work arrangement providing employees with greater flexibility in meeting their own personal needs by allowing them to work nontraditional schedules (i.e., compressed workweek, summer hours or flextime).

Flexible staffing

The practice of utilizing temporary employees, independent contractors or part-time employees to fill vacancies instead of hiring a traditional full-time permanent employee workforce.

Flextime

Variable work hours requiring employees to work a standard number of core hours within a specified period of time, allowing employees greater flexibility in their starting and ending times.

Focus group

A small group of individuals who are interviewed through structured facilitator-led discussions in order to solicit opinions, thoughts and ideas about a particular subject or topic area.

Forced-choice

In test construction, used to define multiple-choice tests or questionnaires requiring the testee to choose an answer from a collection of possible answers. Also

refers to a performance appraisal strategy where the appraisal is divided into several sections, and the rater is then provided with a few performance descriptors for each section and asked to select the most and least characteristic statement.

Forced distribution

An appraisal rating method intended to prevent rater errors by requiring the rater to force ratings into a bell-shaped curve.

Forced ranking

A performance appraisal system where raters are asked to identify a certain percentage of employees who are top performers ready for advancement and those employees falling into the bottom percentage who must improve or leave the organization.

Forecasting

A business analysis conducted in order to assess what future trends are likely to happen, especially in connection with a particular situation, function, practice or process that is likely to affect the organization's business operations.

Fractional bargaining

Bargaining that takes place at a department or unit level which may lead to an unwritten consensus to ignore certain provisions of a collective bargaining agreement.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) of 1966

A federal law providing guidelines for access and disclosure of government documents and materials to the general public.

Fringe benefit

Employment benefits granted to employees in addition to their current base salary or [wages](#) (i.e., cash, [merchandise](#), [services](#), health insurance, [pension](#) plans, holidays, paid vacations, etc.).

Full-time equivalent (FTE)

A value assigned to signify the number of full-time employees that could have been employed if the reported number of hours worked by part-time employees had been worked by full-time employees instead.

Fully insured plan

A benefit plan where the employer contracts with another organization to assume financial responsibility

for the enrollees' medical claims and for all incurred administrative costs.

Functional team

A group of employees who are responsible for a particular function within the organization.

G

Gag clause

Refers to the employment contract restrictions used as a means of protecting the organization's trade secrets or proprietary information.

Gainsharing plan

A group incentive plan used to enhance productivity by sharing with a group a percentage of the gains the organization realizes from specific group efforts.

Garnishment

A court order requiring an employer to withhold a certain percentage from an employee's pay in order to settle a debt with a creditor.

Generalist

An individual who possesses the capabilities to perform more than one diversified function, rather than specializing in or having responsibility for one specific function.

Generation I

The term used to describe children born after 1994 who are growing up in the Internet age.

Generation X

The term used to describe individuals born between 1965 and 1980.

Generation Y

The term used to describe individuals born between 1985 and the present.

Genetic-based discrimination

The practice of requesting or requiring genetic testing information during the hiring process or using genetic testing information to base any other employment decisions or actions.

Geographical differential

The variance in pay established for same or comparable jobs based on variations in labor and costs of living among other geographic regions.

<i>Glass ceiling</i>	Used to describe the invisible barrier keeping women from advancing into executive-level positions.
<i>Glass Ceiling Act of 1991</i>	An act meant to raise public awareness regarding the underutilization of females and minorities in certain positions within the U.S. workforce and eliminate barriers preventing advancement.
<i>Globalization</i>	The term used to describe increasingly mobile organizations that are performing their operations in foreign countries.
<i>Global compensation</i>	Pay practices relating to employees who are working on assignments in international locations. A service premium and additional incentives are often included in the compensation package to offset differences in taxes and cost of living.
<i>Global relocation</i>	The process of transferring an individual's residence from the United States to a foreign country for the purpose of completing an international job assignment.
<i>Goal</i>	A statement outlining the long-term results, accomplishments or objectives an organization seeks to attain.
<i>Goal achievement</i>	How well a contractor has progressed toward meeting employment or promotion targets set to correct underutilization of protected class members.
<i>Goal setting</i>	The process of setting and assigning a set of specific and attainable goals to be met by an individual, group or organization.
<i>Gold-collar employee</i>	The term used to describe individuals such as scientists, engineers and other highly skilled employees who are in high demand and short supply.
<i>Good -faith bargaining</i>	The principles applied to conducting negotiations where two parties meet and confer at reasonable times with open minds and the intention of reaching an agreement.

<i>Good faith effort</i>	The effort and action an organization puts forth to correct goals and specific problem areas.
<i>Graded vesting</i>	A schedule used for vesting purposes, in which the vesting occurs over a period of five to 15 years.
<i>Grapevine</i>	An informal communication channel used to transmit information or rumors from one person to another.
<i>Green card</i>	A card issued in accordance with immigration laws to an alien granting him or her the right to become a lawful permanent resident of the United States, including the right to work legally.
<i>Greenfield Operation</i>	A new operation that is built from “the ground up”.
<i>Grievance</i>	A formal complaint or allegation by an employee or group of employees made to unfair treatment or violation of a union contract.
<i>Grievance procedures</i>	The process and guidelines to be followed by employees, management or the union when resolving differences or conflicts.
<i>Gross product margin</i>	The difference between the price a certain product is sold at and the cost of producing the product.
<i>Group dynamics</i>	The social manner in which people interact with each other within a group.
<i>Group interview</i>	An interviewing method where a prospective employee is interviewed by a small group of his or her peers.
<i>Group outplacement</i>	Used as a cost-cutting measure, it incorporates the same principles as individual outplacement benefits (i.e., providing job counseling, training and other services to displaced employees) with the exception that counseling is performed on a group vs. individual basis.

H

Halo/horn effect

A form of interviewer bias, occurring when the interviewer rates or judges an individual based on the individual's positive or strongest traits, allowing their overall perception of the person to overshadow any negative traits. Referred to as the "halo effect" when it works in the candidate's favor or the "horn effect" when it works against the candidate.

Handicapped individual

Based on the definition provided by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, an individual is "handicapped" if he or she has: a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities; has a record of such; is regarded as having such impairment. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 amended this definition to exclude individuals who are currently engaged in the use of illegal drugs. Individuals who are rehabilitated drug users or engaged in a supervised drug rehabilitation program and are no longer using drugs are also covered by the definition. The term "individual with handicaps" does not include any individual whose current use of alcohol prevents such an individual from performing the duties of the job in question or whose employment, by reason of such current alcohol abuse, would constitute a direct threat to property or the safety of others.

Harassment

Conduct or actions, based on race, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, military membership or veteran status, severe or pervasive enough to create a hostile, abusive or intimidating work environment for a reasonable person. State laws may further define harassment to include additional protections, such as sexual orientation, marital status, transsexualism or cross-dressing, political affiliation, criminal record, prior psychiatric treatment, occupation, citizenship status, personal appearance, "matriculation," tobacco use outside work, Appalachian origin, receipt of public assistance or dishonorable discharge from the military.

Hawthorne effect

A term produced as a result of an experiment conducted by Elton Mayo whereby he concluded that expressing

concern for employees and treating them in a manner that fulfills their basic human needs and wants will ultimately result in better performance.

Hazard Communication Standard of 1988

An occupational safety and health standard intended to comprehensively address the issue of evaluating the potential hazards of chemicals and communicating information concerning hazards and appropriate protective measures to employees. Such communication may include, but is not limited to: developing and maintaining a written hazard communication program for the workplace, including lists of hazardous chemicals present; labeling of containers of chemicals in the workplace, as well as of containers of chemicals being shipped to other workplaces; preparation and distribution of material safety data sheets to employees; and development and implementation of employee training programs regarding hazards of chemicals and protective measures.

Hazard pay

A special payment made in addition to an individual's salary for accepting assignments at locations where there is threat of physical danger or for performing positions that are hazardous to the individual's health and well-being.

Head count

Refers to average number of people employed directly by the company on a full-time and part-time basis.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996

The Act was enacted to make health insurance more "portable" from one employer to another. The law mandates procedures for both new hires and for existing employees who are leaving the company. Employees who are new to a company can use evidence of previous health care coverage that is provided by their former employer to reduce or eliminate the new employer's preexisting condition requirements. Employees who are leaving a company must be provided a certificate of prior creditable health care coverage to use for this purpose. The law includes other provisions regarding restrictions on preexisting conditions, special enrollment rights and privacy rights and protections.

Health care flexible spending account (FSA) A benefit plan designed to allow employees to set aside pre-tax dollars to pay for eligible medically related expenses, such as medical, vision or dental exams, copays and deductibles, as well as other out-of-pocket expenses.

Health savings accounts (HSA) A tax-free account that can be used by employees to pay for qualified medical expenses. Contributions do not have to be spent the year they are deposited. Money in the account earns interest and accumulates tax free, so the funds can be used now and in the future. If an employee leaves the job, he or she can take the account with him or her and continue to use it to pay for qualified healthcare expenses. To be eligible for a Health Savings Account, an individual must be covered by a High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP), must not be covered by other health insurance (does not apply to specific injury insurance and accident, disability, dental care, vision care, long-term care), is not eligible for Medicare and can't be claimed as a dependent on someone else's tax return.

Hidden disabilities Disabilities which are not of a visible nature, such as learning disorders, alcohol abuse, depression, etc.

Hierarchy of needs A psychology theory ascribed to Abraham H. Maslow, in which he proposed that people will constantly seek to have their basic needs (sleep, food, water, shelter, etc.) fulfilled and that such needs ultimately determine behavior.

Highly compensated employee For the purposes of retirement plans, a highly compensated employee is defined by the IRS as an employee who owns 5% or more of a company or receives [compensation](#) in excess of a predetermined amount. To qualify for tax advantages, retirement plans cannot be overly favorable to highly compensated employees. The definition of HCE is crucial in determining whether plan benefits are allocated to HCEs in a discriminatory manner compared to non-highly compensated employees.

Home-based worker An employee who works from a home office rather than at a physical workspace at the employer's location.

<i>Honesty/integrity testing</i>	Tests used to assess an individual's propensity for dishonest conduct or behavior (i.e., stealing or lying).
<i>Horizontal integration</i>	Also known as job rotation, it is a job enlargement method whereby employees are shifted between various comparable jobs in an effort to prevent boredom and boost morale.
<i>Horizontal organization</i>	A flat organizational structure that consists of fewer hierarchal levels. Such organizational structures often rely on the use of cross-functional teams.
<i>Hostile environment harassment</i>	Sexual or other discriminatory conduct that is so severe and pervasive that it interferes with an individual's ability to perform the job, creates an intimidating, offensive, threatening or humiliating work environment or causes a situation where a person's psychological well-being is adversely affected.
<i>Hostile takeover</i>	A leveraged purchase of a company that goes against the wishes of the target company's management and board of directors.
<i>Hot-desks</i>	A method of saving office space in which workers do not have their own desk but share the same desk at different times during the day or week.
<i>Hoteling</i>	The practice of not assigning offices on a permanent basis to individuals who telecommute. Instead, offices are assigned by calling in and reserving an office or workstation in advance.
<i>Hourly employee</i>	An employee who is paid by the hour and who must be paid overtime under the FLSA or a state wage hour statute.
<i>Huddle group</i>	A training method whereby participants are divided into small groups, given a specific problem to handle within a short period of time (typically less than 10 minutes) and then report their findings back to the larger collective group.

<i>Human capital</i>	The collective knowledge, skills and abilities of an organization's employees.
<i>Human resources</i>	The function dealing with the management of people employed within the organization.
<i>Human resource auditing</i>	The process of assessing HR programs and services to determine effectiveness or efficiency.
<i>Human resource development</i>	A set of planned activities intended to provide the organization with the skills it requires to meet current and future business demands.
<i>Human resource information system (HRIS)</i>	A computer database used to gather, store, maintain and retrieve relevant employee and HR-related information.
<i>Human resource management</i>	The formal structure within an organization responsible for all the decisions, strategies, factors, principles, operations, practices, functions, activities and methods related to the management of people.
<i>Human resource management system</i>	A software application combining various human resource functions, such as benefits, payroll, recruiting, training, etc., into one package.
<i>Human resource metrics</i>	Measurements used to determine the value and effectiveness of HR strategies. Typically includes such items as cost per hire, turnover rates/costs, training and human capital ROI, labor /productivity rates and costs, benefit costs per employee, etc.
<i>Human resource planning</i>	The process of anticipating future staffing needs and ensuring that a sufficient pool of talent possessing the skills and experience needed will be available to meet those needs.
<i>Human Resource Specialist</i>	A term used to define an individual who has expertise and responsibility for a specific area or function in the field of Human Resources (i.e. compensation, benefits, employee relations, etc.)

Hybrid organization

An organization whose structure is comprised of both vertical and horizontal models.

Hygiene theory

Studies conducted by Frederick Herzberg used to better understand employee attitudes and motivation and what factors cause job satisfaction and dissatisfaction

I

Icebreaker

A beginning exercise, game or simulation used as a means to reduce tension and create a more relaxed atmosphere during training programs.

Identity theft

Regulated by federal and state statutes, identity theft occurs when a person fraudulently obtains and uses another person's personal information, such as name, Social Security number, credit card number, etc., without that person's authorization, consent or knowledge.

Illegal immigrant/alien

An individual who is not a U.S. citizen and who has entered the United States without proper documentation and without complying with legally required U.S. immigration and naturalization procedures.

Image consulting

The practice of counseling and advising individuals regarding items such as personal appearance, dress, manner of speaking or style.

Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986

The Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) prohibits the employment of individuals who are not legally authorized to work in the United States or in an employment classification that they are not authorized to fill. The IRCA requires employers to certify (using the I-9 form) within three days of employment the identity and eligibility to work of all employees hired. IRCA also prohibits discrimination in employment-related matters on the basis of national origin or citizenship.

Impairment

A physical or mental condition resulting from injury or illness, which diminishes an individual's faculties such as ability to hear, see, walk, talk, etc.

<i>Impatriate</i>	Foreign nationals who are hired by U.S. employers under the H1-B visa program to fill highly skilled vacancies due to a labor shortage of skilled U.S. applicants.
<i>Impact ratio</i>	Selection rate, for an employment opportunity, for a group of people in a protected class, divided by the selection rate for the group with the highest selection rate. For an adverse employment situation, the impact ratio is the rate of the group with the lowest rate divided by the rate of the group in question. Impact ratios are compared to the 80 percent rule to determine adverse impact.
<i>Incentive pay</i>	Additional compensation used to motivate and reward employees for exceeding performance or productivity goals.
<i>Incentive pay plan</i>	A plan providing additional compensation intended to serve as an incentive for excellent performance, exceeding productivity goals or standards, as well as other contributions in accordance with prescribed goals or standards.
<i>Incentive stock option</i>	An employee stock option plan that allows options to be granted or exercised on a tax-deferred basis. All gains on options are taxed only when the holder sells the stock.
<i>Incidence rate</i>	Indicates the number of workplace injuries/illnesses and the number of lost work days per 100 employees.
<i>In-company/in-house counseling</i>	An EAP program which is conducted by a trained professional counselor hired as an employee by the employer to handle all aspects of the company's EAP.
<i>Independent contractor</i>	A self-employed individual who performs a service for an employer under an express or implied agreement and who is not subject to the employer's control, or right to control, regarding the method and means in which the service is performed.

<i>Indirect compensation</i>	Compensation that is not paid directly to an employee and is calculated in addition to base salary and incentive pay (i.e., health/dental/vision insurance, vacation, retirement benefits, educational benefits, relocation expenses, etc.).
<i>Indirect costs</i>	Expenses, such as fringe benefits, overhead, utilities, rent or equipment, that have been incurred for the purpose of common general activities and cannot be identified or charged directly to the production of a specific project.
<i>Indirect labor</i>	Used to define labor that is necessary to support the manufacturing of a product, but is not directly involved with the actual process of manufacturing the product.
<i>Induction program</i>	Programs designed to introduce and acclimate newly hired employees into the organization.
<i>Industrial democracy</i>	The involvement and empowerment of employees in decision-making within the organization by such methods as joint labor-management committees, work teams, quality circles, employee task forces, etc.
<i>Industrial psychology</i>	Applied psychology concerned with the study of human behavior in the workplace and how to efficiently manage an industrial labor force and problems encountered by employees.
<i>Industrial rehabilitation</i>	Programs designed to get employees who have been injured on the job back into the workforce and off workers' compensation.
<i>Informed consent</i>	An individual's agreement to allow something to transpire subsequent to the individual having been informed of associated risks involved and alternatives.
<i>Injunction</i>	A court-issued order requiring a party to either do or refrain from doing a certain act.
<i>Inpatriate</i>	A foreign national transferred to the United States on a long-term assignment.

<i>Inplacement counseling</i>	A form of employee counseling geared toward acclimating recently promoted or transferred employees into their new positions or providing current employees guidance on the steps they need to take to be considered for promotion or transfer to alternative positions.
<i>Insourcing</i>	Refers to the process of internally administering employee benefit plans or other programs, as opposed to utilizing the services of a third-party provider.
<i>Instructor-to-trainee ratio</i>	The maximum number of trainees assigned per trainer.
<i>Insubordination</i>	The willful or repeated disobedience to an order or directive from a higher level manager or superior to a subordinate.
<i>Intangible rewards</i>	Nonmonetary reinforcing, such as praise, given to an employee in recognition of a job well done or a particular achievement.
<i>Integrity testing</i>	A pre-employment psychological assessment tool used to gauge an applicant's honesty.
<i>Intellectual property</i>	Property which is protected under federal law, including trade secrets, confidential or proprietary information, copyrightable or creative works, ideas, patents or inventions.
<i>Intelligence quotient (IQ)</i>	The measure of an individual's cognitive abilities, as measured by an intelligence test.
<i>Intermittent/reduced schedule leave</i>	Under FMLA, intermittent and reduced schedule leave is used to describe leave that is not taken on a consecutive basis but rather taken in increments of days or hours.
<i>Internal audit</i>	The process of conducting an in-house examination of one or more of an organization's processes, functions, programs, etc.
<i>Internal equity</i>	A term used to refer to employees' perceived fairness of a company's pay structure as it relates to their

responsibilities, compensation, benefits, and working conditions compared with those of other employees in similar or like positions.

Internal recruitment

The practice of assessing the employer's current workforce to determine whether or not current employees possess the required skills or qualifications to fill specific vacancies either through promotion or transfer.

Internal temporary pool employee

A pool of former employees who are called upon and hired to fill temporary staffing needs on an as-needed basis.

Internship

A partnership between an organization and an educational institution, whereby students are hired by an employer for a specified period of time into a professional or technical position that correlates with their area of study in order to provide them with hands-on experience and prepare them for the workforce.

Interpersonal communications

Refers to the process of communicating with another person or group to express feelings, thoughts or information by means of physical gestures or verbal exchanges.

Interpretive Guidelines on Sexual Harassment

EEOC issued guidelines defining sexual harassment and the employer's responsibility for maintaining a workplace environment which is free from sexual harassment or intimidation.

Intersectional discrimination

Discrimination not just because of one protected trait (e.g., race), but also because of the intersection of two or more protected bases (e.g., race and sex), i.e., Title VII prohibits discrimination against African American women even if the employer does not discriminate against White women or African American men

Interview

Used during the selection process, an interview is a face-to-face meeting with an individual or group, which involves asking questions to elicit information from the applicant to determine whether or not an applicant is suitable for a position of employment.

<i>Interview to offer ratio</i>	The ratio of the numbers of individuals interviewed to actual offers extended.
<i>Intrinsic reward</i>	A reward given to an employee for achievement of a particular goal, objective or project.
<i>ISO 9000</i>	Developed by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), it is a set of standards for quality management systems that is accepted around the world. Organizations that conform to these standards can receive ISO 9000 certification. The standard intended for quality management system assessment and registration is ISO 9001. The standards apply uniformly to organizations of any size or description.
<i>Invitation to self-identify</i>	An invitation by an employer extended to all employees who believe they are covered by Section 402 or 503 to identify themselves as having a disability, being a disabled veteran, a Vietnam-era veteran or other eligible veteran for purposes of making reasonable accommodation and taking affirmative action. Applicants may no longer be asked to self-identify prior to an offer of employment being extended to them by the employer.
<i>Job Accommodation Network (JAN)</i>	A service of the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) of the U.S. Department of Labor. JAN's mission is to facilitate the employment and retention of workers with disabilities by providing employers, employment providers, people with disabilities, their family members and other interested parties with information on job accommodations, self-employment and small business opportunities and related subjects.
<i>Job aids</i>	A document consisting of information or instructions used to guide the user on how to perform a task correctly.
<i>Job analysis</i>	The systematic process of gathering and examining and interpreting data regarding the specific tasks comprising a job.

<i>Job bank</i>	Refers to pools of retired employees who are used by employers to fill part-time or temporary position needs.
<i>Job classification</i>	A method of evaluation used for job comparisons, which groups jobs into a prearranged number of grades, each having a class description and a specified pay range.
<i>Job codes</i>	Identification numbers assigned to specific jobs or job tasks.
<i>Job description</i>	A written description of a job which includes information regarding the general nature of the work to be performed, specific responsibilities and duties, and the employee characteristics required to perform the job.
<i>Job displacement</i>	Occurs when an employee's position is eliminated.
<i>Job enlarging</i>	A method used to keep workers motivated, the process involves adding new tasks which are of the same level of skill and responsibility to a job.
<i>Job enrichment</i>	The practice of adding tasks to a job as a means of increasing the amount of employee control or responsibility.
<i>Job evaluation</i>	Used for compensation planning purposes, it is the process of comparing a job with other jobs in an organization to determine an appropriate pay rate for the job.
<i>Job grade</i>	The group into which jobs of the same or similar worth are placed for determining appropriate rates of pay.
<i>Job group</i>	A division within the contractor's workforce for the purposes of analyzing the workforce for underutilization. Job grouping is done to group job titles together based on similarity of job content, pay rates and opportunities for advancement.

<i>Job offer letter</i>	A formal written document that is provided by an employer to a candidate selected for employment which outlines information regarding the employment terms, such as the date employment is to commence, the position the individual is being hired to perform, the agreed upon salary, benefits to be provided, etc. The employer usually requires the candidate to sign and return the letter as a formal acceptance of employment.
<i>Job posting</i>	The method of advertising for vacancies internally by posting a notice of the opening on a bulletin board, etc.
<i>Job pricing</i>	The process of determining pay rates for jobs within the organization by analyzing industry or regional salary survey data in order to establish appropriate job pay rates.
<i>Job ranking</i>	The process of ranking all jobs within the organization in order of importance or worth.
<i>Job redesign</i>	The process of restructuring a job by adding, changing or eliminating certain tasks or functions in order to make the job more satisfying or challenging.
<i>Job reference immunity statutes</i>	Laws enacted in several states meant to provide employers with protection from liability when disclosing information regarding current or former employees. Typically for an employer to be immune from liability the reference provided must be factual and truthful, based on documented information and not be given with malicious intent.
<i>Job-relatedness</i>	The requirement that an employer be able to demonstrate that a particular action, policy or job requirement is related to the actual job.
<i>Job rotation</i>	The practice of transferring employees for temporary periods of time between varying jobs within an organization. Often used as a training and development method.
<i>Job sampling</i>	During the selection process, the term refers to the practice of observing and measuring how an applicant actually performs certain selected job tasks.

<i>Job satisfaction</i>	Used to define how an employee feels regarding their job, work environment, pay, benefits, etc.
<i>Job scraping</i>	Refers to the process of migrating job listings to a job board from job boards where they were initially posted to enhance job site listings or hits.
<i>Job shadowing</i>	A temporary, unpaid work experience opportunity where students learn about a particular job (typically in a field of interest) by walking through the work day as a shadow to an employee.
<i>Job sharing</i>	The practice of two different employees performing the tasks of one full-time position.
<i>Job title</i>	A specific name given to a particular job which is used to distinguish that job from other jobs within the organization.
<i>Johari Window</i>	A leadership disclosure and feedback model which can be used in performance measurement and features the four quadrants (windows) of “knowing”. Quadrant I – represents the area of free activity or public area, refers to behavior and motivation known to self and known to others. Quadrant II – represents the blind area, where others can see things in ourselves of which we are unaware. Quadrant III – represents the avoided or hidden areas, represents things we know but do not reveal to others, (e.g., a hidden agenda, or matters about which we have sensitive feelings). Quadrant IV - represents the areas of unknown activity, in which neither the individual nor others are aware of certain behaviors or motives.
<i>Joint employment</i>	The relationship between a Professional employer organization or employee leasing firm and an employer, based on a contractual sharing of liability and responsibility for employees.
<i>Joint/labor management</i>	A panel comprised of management and union

committee

representatives whose purpose is to address problems, resolve conflicts and build on relationships.

Just cause

A legal term used as the guiding principle utilized by employers whenever engaging in some form of corrective action or discipline for employees. Just cause is determined by examining the reasonableness of the discipline according to a set of guiding principles (i.e. was the employee adequately forewarned that the particular behavior would result in discipline or termination; management conducted a fair and objective investigation of the facts prior to administering any discipline; rules, orders, and disciplinary action must be applied in a consistent and non-discriminatory manner; discipline must be reasonably related to the seriousness of the offense and the employee's past work record, etc.)

K

Key employee

Under FMLA statutes, a key employee is defined as a salaried employee who is among the highest-paid 10% of all workers employed by the employer within a 75-mile radius. Under ERISA, a key employee is defined as a plan participant who is a highly compensated officer or company owner.

Key performance indicators (KPI)

Key Performance Indicators are quantifiable, specific measures of an organization's performance in a certain area(s) of its business. . The purpose of KPI's is to provide the company with quantifiable measurements of things it has determined are important to the organizational or business long-term goals and critical success factors . Once uncovered and properly analyzed, KPI's can be used to understand and improve organizational performance and overall success. Also referred to as Key success indicators.

Key result areas

Used to establish standards and objectives, key result areas are the chief tasks of a job identified during the job evaluation process.

Knowledge assets

The parts of an organization's intangible assets that relate specifically to knowledge, expertise, information,

ideas, best practices, intellectual property and other capabilities.

Knowledge-based pay

A salary differentiation system that bases compensation on an individual's education, experience, knowledge, skills or specialized training. Also referred to as skill-based pay.

Knowledge broker

The individual who facilitates the creation, sharing and use of knowledge in an organization by linking individuals with providers.

Knowledge Integration

Knowledge integration is broadly defined as the assimilation, extraction, transformation and loading of information from disparate systems into a single more unified, consistent and accurate data store used for evaluating, manipulating and reporting information.

Knowledge management

The process of creating, acquiring, sharing and managing knowledge to augment individual and organizational performance.

Knowledge mapping

A process used to create a summation of the knowledge an organization will need in order to support its overall goals, objectives, strategies and missions.

Knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA's)

The attributes required to perform a job; generally demonstrated through qualifying experience, education or training.

Knowledge worker

Employees whose job functions are primarily of an intellectual nature.

L

Labor certification

Labor certification is a statement from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) that a particular position at a particular company is "open" because no U.S. workers who satisfy the minimum requirements for the job are available. Alien labor certification programs are generally designed to assure that the admission of aliens to work in the United States on a permanent or temporary basis will not adversely affect the job opportunities, wages and working conditions of U.S.

workers.

Labor force

The number of employed individuals in the civilian workforce and armed services.

Labor law posting

Federal and state regulations requiring employers to post in conspicuous places a variety of labor law posters, including, but not limited to, information regarding employee rights under EEO, FMLA, OSHA, ADA, FLSA, as well as other labor laws.

Labor-management contract

A binding agreement governing wages, benefits, representation rights and other working conditions between a labor union and management.

Labor productivity

The correlation between a given output and the percentage of labor time used to produce the output.

Layoff

A temporary termination of employees, or the elimination of jobs, during periods of economic downturn or organizational restructuring.

Leadership

The process, by which an individual determines direction, influences a group and directs the group toward a specific goal or organizational mission.

Leadership development

Formal and informal training and professional development programs designed for all management and executive-level employees to assist them in developing the leadership skills and styles required to deal with a variety of situations.

Learning Style

Learning styles are defined, classified, and identified in various ways. Broadly speaking, they are overall patterns that provide direction to learning and teaching. Learning style can also be described as a set of factors, behaviors, and attitudes that facilitate learning for an individual in a particular situation.

Leave sharing

A leave program allowing employees to donate unused sick leave to a coworker who has exhausted all available sick leave and is out due to a long-term illness or injury.

<i>Leave stacking</i>	Used to define the practice of scheduling leave under FMLA in such a manner that the employee's leave allowance for two consecutive calendar years is uninterrupted. Typically occurs when an employer uses the calendar-year method for determining the 12-month period under FMLA.
<i>Libel</i>	Defaming or harming an individual's reputation in writing.
<i>Life activity</i>	For purposes of Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act and ADA, functions that are limited by a person's disability such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working.
<i>Life cycle recruitment</i>	A process that begins with an identifiable work need, and then continues through a sourcing and search strategy, then progresses to a pre-qualification and assessment strategy, and concludes with hire. The cycle repeats itself again with next vacancy.
<i>Line of progression</i>	A series of related jobs in a promotional sequence generally starting with less difficult, lower-paying jobs and progressing to more difficult, higher-paying jobs. Often, the lower jobs provide required training for movement to the higher-level jobs.
<i>Litigation</i>	A legal proceeding occurring in a federal or state court of law to determine and enforce legal rights.
<i>Living wage</i>	A wage rate that is sufficient for a worker and his or her family to exist comfortably.
<i>Localization</i>	The strategy of applying locale-specific terminology and data to a specific product or application in order to meet the language, cultural and other requirements of a specific market.
<i>Lockout/tagout rule</i>	An OSHA standard helping safeguard employees from hazardous energy while they are performing service or maintenance on machines and equipment. The standard

identifies the practices and procedures necessary to shut down and lock out or tag out machines and equipment, requires that employees receive training in their role in the lockout/tagout program and mandates that periodic inspections be conducted to maintain or enhance the energy control program.

Long-term care insurance

An insurance plan that provides coverage for individuals with long-term illnesses or disabilities by paying in whole or in part for long-term medical and nonmedical care services.

Lost workdays

Refers to the particular number of days an employee is absent from work due to an injury or illness or the number of days which the employee is on restricted duty.

Lump-sum payment

A fixed negotiated payment that is not typically included in an employee's annual salary; often times given in lieu of pay increases.

M

Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award

The Baldrige Award is given by the President of the United States to businesses—manufacturing and service, small and large—and to education and health care organizations that apply and are judged to be outstanding in seven areas: leadership; strategic planning; customer and market focus; measurement, analysis and knowledge management; human resource focus; process management; and results.

Management by Objective (MBO)

A performance appraisal strategy in which subordinates determine and set goals for themselves based on the overall goals and objectives for the organization.

Management consultant

An individual who works independently to assist and advise clients with managerial responsibilities regarding various organizational issues.

Management development

Training and developmental programs designed to provide new managers and existing managers with the resources needed to become more effective in their

roles.

Management employee

An employee who meets the salary basis test and regularly manages or supervises two or more employees.

Mandatory Retirement Age Law of 1978

A statute which prohibits (with the exception of exempted employees and positions) employers from having policies or practices that call for mandatory retirement of employees under the age of 70.

Manpower planning

The process of assessing an employer's current workforce content and composition in order to anticipate future staffing requirements needed to meet business goals and requirements.

Material safety data sheet (MSDS)

Required by OSHA, an MSDS is a detailed description of each hazardous chemical located in the workplace, which includes information regarding potential health risks, symptoms and treatment measures to be taken if exposure occurs.

Matrix organization

An organizational structure where employees report to more than one manager or supervisor.

Mean wage

The average wage for a worker in a specified position or occupation, which is determined by adding together the total wages for all incumbents in a specific position or occupation and then dividing it by the total number of incumbents.

Median

The middle value in a series of values arranged in rank order.

Median wage

The margin between the highest paid 50 percent and the lowest paid 50 percent of workers in a specific position or occupation.

Mediation

A private negotiation and decision-making process in which a mediator assists individuals or groups in finding a resolution to a particular issue or conflict.

<i>Medical savings account (MSA)</i>	A savings account funded by employees through pre-tax contributions; can be used to pay for copayments, deductibles or medical expenses not covered by a health insurance benefit plan.
<i>Medical examinations/testing</i>	A medical evaluation conducted on a post-offer basis by a company physician or an independent physician to ascertain whether or not a candidate is able to perform the physical requirements of a particular job.
<i>Medical savings accounts (MSA)</i>	Savings accounts designated for out-of-pocket medical expenses. In an MSA, employers and individuals are allowed to contribute to a savings account on a pre-tax basis and carry over the unused funds at the end of the year. One major difference between a Flexible Spending Account (FSA) and a Medical Savings Account is the ability under an MSA to carry over the unused funds for use in a future year, instead of losing unused funds at the end of the year. Most MSAs allow unused balances and earnings to accumulate. Unlike FSAs, most MSAs are combined with a high-deductible or catastrophic health insurance plan.
<i>Medicare</i>	A health insurance program administered by the Social Security Administration which is broken into two distinct categories: 1) Medicare Part A helps with hospital costs; and 2) Medicare Part B requires a monthly fee and is used to pay medical costs for people 65 years of age and older, some disabled people under 65 years of age and people with end-stage renal disease (permanent kidney failure treated with dialysis or a transplant).
<i>Mental Health Parity Act (MHPA) of 1996</i>	Prohibits group health plans and insurance companies that offer mental health benefits from setting annual or lifetime limits on mental health benefits that are lower than those limits set for any other condition.
<i>Mentoring</i>	A career development method whereby less experienced employees are matched with more experienced colleagues for guidance either through formal or informal programs.
<i>Merger</i>	The joining of two or more different organizations

under one common owner and management structure.

Metrics

A measure used to determine the effectiveness and value of implemented HR programs in increasing performance and profits.

Merit pay

A compensation system whereby base pay increases are determined by individual performance.

Minimum qualifications

The attributes of a job description which establishes a baseline for meeting the qualifications for a particular position.

Minimum wage

The smallest hourly wage that an employee may be paid for all hours worked, as mandated by federal or state law.

Minorities

Men and women of those minority groups for whom EEO-1 reporting is required; that is, black, Hispanic, Asian or Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaskan Native. The term may refer to these groups in the aggregate or to an individual group.

Minority business enterprise

A small business enterprise that is at least 51 percent owned by one or more minorities or, in the case of a publicly owned business, at least 51 percent of all classes or types of the stock is owned by one or more minorities and whose management and daily business operations are controlled by one or more minorities.

Mission statement

A statement illustrating what the company is, what the company does and where the company is headed.

Moonlighting

Working one or more full- or part-time jobs in addition to an individual's regular full-time job.

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

A psychological test used to assess an individual's personality type.

N

North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)

An agreement reached by the United States, Canada and Mexico that instituted a schedule for the phasing out of

tariffs and eliminated a variety of fees and other hindrances to encourage free trade between the three North American countries.

National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) of 1947 The National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), passed in 1935, provides that all employees have the right to form, join and assist labor organizations and to bargain collectively with their employers.

National origin The country--including those that no longer exist--of one's birth or of one's ancestors' birth. "National origin" and "ethnicity" often are used interchangeably, although "ethnic group" can refer to religion or color, as well as country of one's ancestry.

Naturalization The process by which an alien is made a citizen of the United States of America and relinquishes citizenship to any other country.

Needs analysis A method of analyzing how employee skill deficits can be addressed through current or future training and professional development programs, as well as determining the types of training/development programs required and how to prioritize training/development.

Negligent hiring A claim made against an employer based on the premise of an employer's obligation to not hire an applicant the employer knew or should have known was unsuitable and likely to behave inappropriately toward other employees.

Negligent referral Negligent referral is defined as the failure of an employer to disclose complete and factual information about former or current employee to another employer.

Negligent retention The act of failing to take appropriate disciplinary action (i.e., termination) against an employee the employer knew or should have known was unsuitable.

Nepotism Favoritism shown to relatives by individuals in a position of authority, such as managers or supervisors.

<i>Netiquette</i>	Refers to Internet use rules of conduct, involving respecting others' privacy and not doing anything online that is offensive, annoying or frustrating to other people.
<i>Newborns' and Mothers' Health Protection Act (NMHPA) of 1996</i>	Requires a minimum length of hospital confinement in conjunction with childbirth. This requirement applies to health plans and health insurance companies that provide hospital stays for childbirth in their policies. The law provides that coverage for a hospital stay following a normal delivery may not be limited to less than 48 hours for both the mother and newborn, and for a cesarean section not less than 96 hours.
<i>Nominal group technique</i>	A consensus planning tool used to identify the strengths of an organization, department or division, whereby participants are brought together to discuss important issues, problems and solutions.
<i>Noncompete agreement</i>	A contract restricting an employee from obtaining employment with a competitor within a specified industry, distance and/or time frame.
<i>Noncompliance</i>	Failure to follow equal employment opportunity or affirmative action guidelines and the regulations applicable to them.
<i>Nondisclosure agreement</i>	A contract restricting an employee from disclosing confidential or proprietary information.
<i>Nondiscrimination</i>	The practice of not discriminating against members of disadvantaged or protected groups in hiring practices, policies, benefits or conditions of employment.
<i>Nonexempt employee</i>	An employee who does not meet any one of the Fair Labor Standards Act exemption tests and is paid on an hourly basis and covered by wage and hour laws regarding hours worked, overtime pay, etc.
<i>Nontraditional employment</i>	Used to define occupations or specific fields where women typically comprise less than 25 percent of the workforce.

Normative forecasting A method of projecting future needs in order to determine what developments will be required to meet those needs.

Notice In wrongful discharge cases, this doctrine is used to determine whether or not an employer gave an employee adequate advanced notice of the potential consequences if a specific behavior or conduct was not improved upon.

O

Objective A specification of what is to be accomplished, the timeframe in which it is to be accomplished and by whom.

Observation interview The process of observing employees while performing their respective jobs or tasks, used to collect data regarding specific jobs or tasks.

Occupational illness/disease Defined by OSHA as "any abnormal condition or disorder, other than one resulting from an occupational injury, caused by exposure to factors associated with employment."

Occupational groups Used to classify specific occupations into a specific category, such as professionals, technical/hi-tech, administrative/clerical, sales, service, retail, etc.

Occupational injury An injury sustained during the course of employment, which results in the employee requiring medical treatment other than minor first aid and which results in the employee being absent from work as a result of such injury for one or more work days or results in work restrictions.

Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) of 1970 A law setting forth standards that employers must comply with in order to provide working conditions that are safe and free from any health hazards for all employees. Additionally, the law also requires employers to provide employees with protection against workplace hazards that could result in illness, injury or death to an individual, as well as to communicate to

employees the information on hazardous materials or chemicals they may be required to handle.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration

A Department of Labor office responsible for overseeing and assuring the safety and health of America's workers by setting and enforcing standards; providing training, outreach and education; establishing partnerships; and encouraging continual improvement in workplace safety and health.

Off-duty hours

Used to define the periods of time during which an employee is totally and completely relieved of any and all job duties and is free to attend to his or her own personal activities.

Office of Federal Contract Compliance (OFCCP)

Division of the Employment Standards Administration in the Department of Labor responsible for enforcing three statutes for federal contractors and subcontractors: Executive Order No. 11246, the Rehabilitation Act, and the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act. OFCCP enforces the three laws through the use of compliance reviews, complaint investigations, administrative procedures and judicial procedures.

Offshoring

The practice of relocating business processes, such as production/manufacturing, to a lower cost international location.

Older Workers Benefit Protection Act (OWBPA) of 1990

OWBPA amended the ADEA prohibiting all employers from age discrimination in employee benefits programs by either providing equal benefits for older and younger workers or by spending an equal amount on benefits for both groups. It also provides specifications on the requirements for ADEA waivers.

Ombudsperson

A neutral third party that helps individuals or groups in conflict resolve disputes by mediating, coaching and facilitating communication between the parties and recommending an appropriate resolution.

On-call pay

Additional compensation awarded to employees who are required to remain on call during off-duty hours.

<i>On-call time</i>	Used to define periods of time when an employee is off duty but is required to remain on or close to the company premises or to respond to a call or page within a specified period of time, resulting in the employee being unable to effectively use such time to attend to his or her own personal activities.
<i>O*Net (Occupational Information Network)</i>	Administered and sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration, the Occupational Information Network--O*NE--is a database that replaced the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT) as the nation's primary source of occupational information.
<i>On-the-job training</i>	Training provided to employees by managers and supervisors; conducted at the actual worksite utilizing demonstration and actual performance of job tasks to be accomplished.
<i>Open-book management</i>	A management strategy emphasizing employee empowerment by making the organization's financial data available to all employees. The goal of this type of management program is to make employees view themselves as more of a business partner and increase their awareness of how their actions and decisions affect the organization's bottom line.
<i>Open enrollment period</i>	The period of time designated by the employer's health or other benefit plan when employees may enroll in new benefit plans or make changes to existing benefit plans.
<i>Open shop</i>	An organization that hires workers without regard to their membership in a labor union.
<i>Operating budget</i>	A detailed projection of all projected income and expenses during a specified future period.
<i>Opinion letter</i>	A written document issued by government agencies used to provide a ruling on a particular issue.
<i>Opinion survey</i>	A tool used to solicit and assess employee opinions, feelings, perceptions and expectations regarding a variety of managerial and organizational issues.

<i>Opt-out provision</i>	An employer benefit plan provision that offers cash, extra benefits or additional credits in return for an employee reducing the level of benefits he or she selects under a flexible benefit/cafeteria-style program or providing extra cash compensation to those employees who choose not to elect any benefit coverage.
<i>Oral reprimand</i>	A verbal warning given to an employee by a manager or supervisor as a means of correcting inappropriate behavior or conduct.
<i>Organizational behavior modification theory</i>	A motivational theory suggesting that an individual will behave in a manner that helps him or her avoid potential negative outcomes and achieve agreeable outcomes.
<i>Organizational transformation</i>	Refers to organization-wide changes, such as restructuring operations, introducing new technologies, processes, services or products, implementing new programs, re-engineering, etc.
<i>Organization chart</i>	A graphic representation outlining how authority and responsibility are distributed within an organization.
<i>Organization culture</i>	An organization's attitude and values regarding itself, employees, customers and the general public. It encompasses the manner things are done within the organization based on defined policies and practices.
<i>Organizational design</i>	The process of establishing and arranging the elements of an organization's structure.
<i>Organization development</i>	A planned organization-wide effort to improve and increase the organization's effectiveness, productivity, return on investment and overall employee job satisfaction through planned interventions in the organization's processes.
<i>Organization planning</i>	The process of transforming an organization's goals, objectives, philosophy and mission into practices and policies.

Organizational display

An organizational display is a detailed graphical or tabular chart, text, spreadsheet or similar presentation of the contractor's organizational structure. It must identify each organizational unit in the establishment and show the relationship of each organizational unit to the other organizational units in the establishment.

Organizational profile

An organizational profile is a depiction of the staffing pattern within an establishment. It is one method contractors use to determine whether barriers to equal employment opportunity exist in their organizations. It provides an overview of the workforce at the establishment that may assist in identifying organizational units where women or minorities are underrepresented or concentrated.

Organizational structure

The design of an organization that identifies the organization's hierarchal reporting and authority relationships.

Organizational survey

The process of evaluating and analyzing an organization's structure and other major components to determine whether they are suitably meeting the organization's current and future needs.

Organizational unit

An organizational unit is any component that is part of the contractor's corporate structure. In a more traditional organization, it might be a department, division, section, branch or group. In a less traditional organization, it might be a project team or job family.

Orientation

The introduction of employees to their jobs, co-workers and the organization by providing them with information regarding such items as policies, procedures, company history, goals, culture and work rules.

Other eligible Veteran

Other eligible veterans are those individuals who served on active duty in the U.S. military, ground, naval or air service during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized.

Outcomes assessment

A strategy used to evaluate and measure the results of

an instructional method or program.

Outplacement

A benefit offered by the employer to displaced employees that may consist of such services as job counseling, training and job-finding assistance.

Outsourcing

A contractual agreement between an employer and an external third-party provider whereby the employer transfers responsibility and management for certain HR, benefit or training-related functions or services to the external provider.

Outreach programs

A method of keeping employees informed of company programs and services available to them by utilizing such things as postings, newsletters, memos or meetings.

Overtime

In accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), it is the term used to define work that is performed in excess of 40 hours per week.

P

Paid leave bank

A benefit program granting employees a bank consisting of a specific number of paid days that can be used for absences related to sickness, vacation or personal reasons.

Paid time off (PTO)

A benefit program granting employees a specific number of vacation or personal days off which that are paid by the employer. The number of days is generally based on the employer's policy for accrual of paid time off.

Paired comparison

A form of rating, in which the rater compares, one by one, the performance of each member in a group with the performance of every other member in the group.

Parental leave

A benefit designed to provide employees with approved paid or unpaid time off following the birth or adoption of a child or to care for a dependent.

<i>Pareto chart</i>	A bar graph used to rank in order of importance information such as causes or reasons for specific problems, so that measures for process improvement can be established.
<i>Partial disability</i>	An illness or injury that prevents an individual from performing one or more functions of his or her job.
<i>Participative management</i>	A management style, developed by Motorola, that involves employees in the decision-making process.
<i>Part-time employee</i>	An individual who continually works less than 40 hours per week (standard workweek hours are based on individual employer policy, therefore, a 40-hour workweek is only a guideline; this number could be higher or lower).
<i>Paternity leave</i>	A benefit designed to provide fathers of newborn children with paid or unpaid time off from work following the birth of the child.
<i>Pay adjustment</i>	Any change made to the pay rate of an employee, such as an increase or decrease to the rate of pay.
<i>Payback agreement</i>	An agreement between an employer and an employee used primarily for relocated employees, stating that an employee will not voluntarily terminate his or her employment with the organization for a specified duration of time, effective from the date of relocation. Failure to abide by the terms of the agreement results in the employee being responsible for paying back a portion of any and all costs incurred by the employer on the employee's behalf. Also used by employers that pay for expensive job-related or professional development training or educational courses.
<i>Pay compression</i>	A situation occurring when only a small difference in pay exists between employees, regardless of their knowledge, skills, abilities or experience. Oftentimes, it is the result of a market-rate for a given job surpassing the increases historically awarded to long-term employees.

<i>Pay grades</i>	A method used to group jobs together that have approximately the same relative internal worth and are paid at the same rate.
<i>Pay range</i>	Associated with pay grades, the range sets the upper and lower compensation boundaries for jobs within that range.
<i>Payroll records</i>	Documentation created and maintained by the employer, which contains information regarding hours worked, salaries, wages, commissions, bonuses, vacation/sick pay, contributions to qualified health and pension plans, net pay and deductions for all employees on the employer's payroll for the year.
<i>Pay structure</i>	A structure of job grades and pay ranges established within an organization. May be expressed as job grades or job evaluation points.
<i>Peer appraisal</i>	A performance appraisal strategy whereby an employee is reviewed by his or her peers who have sufficient opportunity to examine the individual's job performance.
<i>Pension plan</i>	An employer benefit plan funded through insurance, a trust, general assets or other separately maintained funds designed to provide employees with a monthly income benefit upon retirement.
<i>Perceived disability</i>	A person who does not meet the definition of a disabled individual in accordance with the Americans With Disabilities Act but is regarded by his or her employer as having a mental or physical disability .
<i>Performance appraisal</i>	A periodic review and evaluation of an individual's job performance.
<i>Performance-based pay</i>	A variable pay strategy that pays employees based on their individual performance and contributions, rather than the value of the job they are performing.
<i>Performance counseling</i>	The process of improving employee performance and

productivity by providing the employee with feedback regarding areas where he or she is doing well and areas that may require improvement.

Performance improvement plan A plan implemented by a manager or supervisor that is designed to provide employees with constructive feedback, facilitate discussions between an employee and his or her supervisor regarding performance-related issues, and outline specific areas of performance requiring improvement.

Performance management The process of maintaining or improving employee job performance through the use of performance assessment tools, coaching and counseling as well as providing continuous feedback.

Performance monitoring The practice of monitoring employees while they perform their jobs through the use of surveillance cameras, telephone or computer monitoring.

Performance standards The tasks, functions or behavioral requirements established by the employer as goals to be accomplished by an employee.

Perquisites A form of incentives generally given to executive employees granting them certain privileges or special consideration, such as memberships in clubs, physical fitness programs, financial counseling, etc.

Personal days A benefit designed to provide employees with an allotment of paid days off in addition to holidays, sick days or vacation days, which they can use to attend to personal matters.

Personality test A test instrument usually involving a standardized series of questions that are used to evaluate an individual's personality characteristics.

Personal protective equipment Clothing and other work accessories (i.e., safety glasses, hearing protection, etc.) designed to create a barrier against potential workplace hazards.

<i>Personnel records</i>	All information pertaining to individual employees, which is collected and maintained by the employer and is essential to the employer for handling various employment-related matters.
<i>Phased retirement</i>	A work schedule arrangement that allows employees to gradually reduce their full-time hours over a period of time.
<i>Physical ability test</i>	A test instrument used to determine an individual's ability to perform the functions or tasks of a job where physical strength or endurance is required.
<i>Physical examination</i>	A medical examination performed by a company physician or an independent physician to ascertain whether or not an individual is able to perform the physical requirements of a particular job.
<i>Piece rate</i>	A per-piece rate system that pays employees based on the number of pieces produced.
<i>Pink slip</i>	A written or verbal notice given to employees who are being terminated or laid-off.
<i>Placement goals</i>	Other eligible veterans are those individuals who served on active duty in the U.S. military, ground, naval or air service during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized.
<i>Plan administrator</i>	An individual or plan sponsor designated by the instrument under which the plan is operated to be responsible for the administration of pension and welfare benefit plans.
<i>Premium only plan (POP)</i>	Considered to be the most basic type of Section 125 plan, a POP is a benefit plan that is designed to allow employees to elect to make premium contributions on either a pre-tax or post-tax basis.
<i>Policy</i>	A written statement that reflects the employer's standards and objectives relating to various employee activities and employment-related matters.

<i>Position control</i>	A workforce planning tool that imposes certain rules or restrictions on the creation, and filling of positions as a means to manage and control the costs associated with any given position within the organization.
<i>Positive discipline</i>	A disciplinary strategy geared toward reducing and improving an individual's unfavorable behavior or conduct by rewarding positive behavior rather than focusing on and punishing negative behavior.
<i>Positive reinforcement</i>	The process of acknowledging specific behaviors with positive feedback, such as a smile, praise or reward.
<i>Post-accident testing</i>	The process of testing an employee involved in a workplace accident for the presence of drugs or alcohol.
<i>Post- tax contributions</i>	Contributions made to a benefit plan that are subject to applicable state or federal tax withholding requirements.
<i>Practitioner</i>	An individual who practices a learned profession.
<i>Predictive validity</i>	Used in the test validation process to measure the relationship between test scores and actual job performance.
<i>Pre-employment testing</i>	The practice of issuing tests to potential employees on a pre-employment basis in order to determine an applicant's suitability for a certain position. These tests may include, but are not limited to, drug and alcohol tests, medical examinations, skills tests, physical agility tests, honesty/integrity tests or personality tests.
<i>Preexisting condition</i>	Any condition for which a person is currently receiving treatment, has been advised to receive treatment or for which a prudent person would seek treatment.
<i>Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA) of 1978</i>	An amendment to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibiting discrimination on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, requiring pregnancy or related conditions to be treated in the same manner as any other temporary disability.

<i>Pre-tax contributions</i>	Contributions made to a benefit plan that are exempt from all applicable state or federal tax withholding requirements.
<i>Premium pay</i>	Additional compensation paid for work performed outside of regularly scheduled work hours.
<i>Prepaid group legal plan</i>	A benefit plan that provides employees, their spouses or dependents with assistance in obtaining legal services, which have been prepaid in whole or in part by the employer.
<i>Pre-sacking</i>	Refers to the use of resume boards to determine which current employees are looking for a job online
<i>Prescription drug benefits</i>	Typically a provision included in a group health plan designed to provide covered employees and their dependents with payment assistance for medically prescribed drugs.
<i>Prevailing wage</i>	A rate of pay determined by the U.S. Department of Labor based upon the geographic area for a given class of labor and type of project.
<i>Prima facie case</i>	Latin for “at first view” or “at first appearance,” a prima-facie case is a lawsuit that requires an employer to articulate a reason that sufficiently proves that any decision or action taken was made based on legitimate and nondiscriminatory factors.
<i>Privacy</i>	Refers to information about an employee which he or she regards as personal or private (i.e., medical information, financial data, etc.) and the right of that individual to not have such information shared with others.
<i>Private letter ruling</i>	A formal document issued by the Internal Revenue Service announcing tax decisions or changes.
<i>Probation</i>	Used as a form of discipline, it is a specified period of time during which an individual’s performance or

conduct is closely monitored.

Probationary period

A specified period of time (typically 30-90 days) where a newly hired, promoted or transferred employee's job performance is evaluated. Primarily used by supervisors to closely observe an employee's work, help the employee adjust to the position and reject any employee whose performance does not meet required standards.

Pro forma

The term pro forma comes from the Latin phrase meaning, "as a matter of form". The term is very broad and its meaning depends on the context in which it is being used. Basically it is a term used to describe the presentation of data, usually financial statements, where the data reflects information as if the state of the world were different from that which is in fact the case.

Policy/procedures manual

A detailed written document designed to assist managers and supervisors in carrying out their day-to-day responsibilities by acquainting them with all of the organization's policies and the procedures required to implement those policies.

Process reengineering

The process of improving business practices or methods by creating and implementing new processes or making changes to existing processes.

Professional Employer Organization (PEO)

An organization that enters into a joint-employment relationship with an employer, by leasing employees to the employer, allowing the PEO to share and manage many employer-related responsibilities and liabilities. Employers outsource their human resource functions, such as employee benefits, compensation and payroll administration, workers' compensation and employment taxes.

Profit sharing plan

A qualified retirement plan established and maintained by an employer which enables employees and their beneficiaries to participate in the profits of the employer's business.

Progressive discipline

A form of discipline whereby increasingly harsher

penalties are awarded each time an employee is disciplined for the same or a different performance infraction or policy or work-rule violation. Generally, the sequence is an oral warning to written warnings to suspension and finally termination.

Promotion

Career advancement within an organization, which includes increased authority, level of responsibility, status and pay.

Proprietary information

Information associated with a company's products, business or activities, including such items as financial data; trade secrets; product research and development; product designs; marketing plans or techniques; computer programs; processes; and know-how that has been clearly identified and communicated by the company as proprietary, a trade secret or confidential.

Protected characteristics

Legal terminology referring to areas protected by federal or state statutes.

Protected class

A legal term describing certain groups, such as women, older and disabled individuals, Vietnam-era veterans and minorities.

Psychological test

A written, visual or verbal assessment administered to determine cognitive and emotional skills.

Q

Qualified disabled person

A qualified disabled person is an individual with a disability who is capable of performing a particular job, with or without reasonable accommodation.

Qualified domestic relations order (QDRO)

An order, decree, judgment or administrative notice (including a settlement agreement) that establishes the rights of another person (the "alternate payee") to benefits; issued by a domestic relations court or other court of competent jurisdiction or through an administrative process established under state law.

Qualified medical child support An order, decree, judgment or administrative notice

<i>order (QMCSO)</i>	(including a settlement agreement) requiring health coverage for a child; issued by a domestic relations court or other court of competent jurisdiction or through an administrative process established under state law.
<i>Qualified plan</i>	A defined benefit or defined contribution pension plan covered by ERISA and IRS regulations qualifying for certain tax advantages for both the employer and the participant.
<i>Qualified special disabled veteran</i>	A special disabled veteran who satisfies the requisite skill, experience, education and other job-related requirements of the employment position such veteran holds or desires and who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of such position.
<i>Quality assurance</i>	Activities or programs whose purpose is to demonstrate and ensure that products and services meet specifications and are consistently of high quality.
<i>Quality audit</i>	The process of examining the elements of a quality management system in order to evaluate how well they comply with quality system specifications.
<i>Quality circle</i>	A carefully selected group of employees who voluntarily meet on a regular basis to identify problems and make recommendation by using various techniques for analyzing and solving work-related problems.
<i>Quality control</i>	Activities or programs whose purpose is to ensure that all quality specifications for products or services are being met and are of consistently high quality.
<i>Quality improvement</i>	Any system or process designed to enhance an organization's ability to meet quality requirements.
<i>Quid pro quo</i>	Legal terminology essentially meaning “what for what” or “something for something.” It is the concept of getting something of value in exchange for giving something of value.

Quid pro quo harassment Quid pro harassment involves expressed or implied demands for sexual favors in exchange for some benefit (a promotion, pay increase, etc.) or to avoid some detriment (termination, demotion, etc.) in the workplace. By definition, it can only be perpetrated by someone in a position of power or authority over another (i.e., manager or supervisor over a subordinate).

Quit A voluntary resignation from employment that is initiated by the employee.

Quota system In affirmative action systems, it is a means of attempting to achieve workplace balance by hiring and/or promoting specified numbers or ratios of minorities or women in positions from which they have been excluded.

R

Race Race is a division of humankind with certain distinguishing characteristics in common which indicate distinctive origins.

Race-norming The practice of adjusting employment test scores to compensate for racial differences.

Random testing Drug and alcohol tests administered by an employer that selects employees to be tested on a random basis.

Rank order A rating method where the performance of a group, process or product is arranged in a particular order, such as highest to lowest.

Reasonable accommodation Modifying or adjusting a job process or a work environment to better enable a qualified individual with a disability to be considered for or perform the essential functions of a job.

Reasonable person standard A standard used in sexual harassment suits, referring to conduct or behavior so offensive in nature that any reasonable person, regardless of sex, would agree the conduct or behavior should be illegal.

<i>Reasonable suspicion testing</i>	A drug or alcohol test administered to an employee due to a performance or policy infraction or poor or erratic behavior.
<i>Reassignment</i>	Transferring individuals to alternative positions where their talents or skills may be best utilized to their own or the organization's benefit or where they are better able to perform the job in accordance with required standards.
<i>Reciprocity</i>	A relationship between states or other taxing jurisdictions whereby privileges granted by one are returned by the other under a reciprocal agreement.
<i>Reciprocal review</i>	An appraisal method where the subordinate and the manager are evaluated by each other based on agreed-upon performance criteria.
<i>Recognition</i>	An acknowledgement of an employee's exceptional performance or achievements expressed in the form of praise, commendation or gratitude.
<i>Recordable illness/injury</i>	All occupational injuries and illnesses that require more than basic first aid treatment, or deaths that occurred in the workplace.
<i>Recruitment</i>	The practice of soliciting and actively seeking applicants to fill recently vacated or newly created positions using a variety of methods (i.e., internal job postings, advertising in newspapers or electronic job boards/sites, utilizing search firms, or listing position with trade and professional associations, etc).
<i>Red circle rate</i>	A pay rate that is above the maximum range assigned to the job grade. Employees are usually not eligible for additional pay increases until the range maximums exceed the individual pay rate.
<i>Redeployment</i>	The reassignment of employees to other departments or functions as an alternative to laying them off.

<i>Reduction in force</i>	An involuntary separation of an employee or groups of employees due to economic pressures, lack of work, organizational changes or other reasons of business necessity that require a reduction in staff.
<i>Reengineering</i>	The redesigning of business and work processes, policies or organizational structure.
<i>Reference checking</i>	The process of verifying information supplied by applicants on an application or resume.
<i>Regression analysis</i>	A statistical measure used to discover relationships between variables such as performance ratings and promotions.
<i>Regular full/part-time employee</i>	An individual who has been hired by an employer to work a predetermined amount of hours per week in a position/appointment of indefinite duration.
<i>Rehabilitation Act of 1973</i>	A federal statute requiring federal agencies to ensure that electronic and information technology systems are accessible to individuals with disabilities when their jobs require the use of electronic or information technology systems.
<i>Reinforcement</i>	The practice of providing positive feedback to an individual or groups of individuals after completion of a particular project or achievement of a particular goal.
<i>Release agreement</i>	A type of legal written document executed by an employer and signed by an employee whereby the employee relinquishes certain rights in exchange for some form of consideration, such as a benefit the employee would not have otherwise received had he or she not been discharged.
<i>Reliability</i>	A measure of the ability of a test or other appraisal instrument to evaluate what is being measured on a consistent basis.
<i>Religion</i>	Includes all aspects of religious observance and practice and religious beliefs.

<i>Religious accommodation</i>	An accommodation made for an employee, such as time off from work, so that he or she may observe a religious holiday or attend a religious ceremony or their day of Sabbath such as Saturday or Sunday.
<i>Relocation assistance</i>	A type of benefit offered to employees who accept work assignments in new locations. Typically takes the form of assistance with moving costs, travel expenses, temporary lodging and home-buying/selling.
<i>Remedial counseling</i>	A type of employee counseling used to correct performance or behavior-related issues.
<i>Remedial training</i>	Describes a method of teaching intended to help people who have basic skills deficiencies, such reading or writing.
<i>Remediation</i>	A strategy designed to conquer a deficiency in an employee's behavior, performance or skills.
<i>Remote employees</i>	Employees who work off company premises and are removed from their supervisors or managers.
<i>Remote managers</i>	A manager who supervises employees who perform their work at a site other than the employer's premises.
<i>Repatriate</i>	The process of returning to the United States after being placed on a long-term international assignment.
<i>Reprimand</i>	An oral or written reproach given to an employee as part of disciplinary action.
<i>Request for proposal (RFP)</i>	A document an organization sends to a vendor inviting the vendor to submit a bid for a product or service.
<i>Resident alien</i>	A resident alien is a lawful permanent resident of the United States at any time if he or she has been given the privilege, according to the immigration laws, of residing permanently as an immigrant. This status usually exists if the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services has issued a green card.

<i>Resolution</i>	The disposition of a disagreement or grievance through alternative dispute resolution methods.
<i>Restrictive covenant</i>	A contract clause requiring executives or other highly skilled employees to refrain from seeking and obtaining employment with competitor organizations in a specific geographical region and for a specified period of time.
<i>Restructuring</i>	Changing an organizational structure in order to make it more efficient and cost effective.
<i>Resume</i>	A written document outlining an individual's work experience, skills, educational background, accomplishments and other related information supporting his or her career goal.
<i>Retaliatory discharge</i>	A form of discriminatory discharge that occurs when an employer dismisses an employee as retaliation against the employee for a specific action.
<i>Retention bonus</i>	An incentive payment used to entice employees from leaving the organization. Typically employees are asked to sign an agreement stating they will remain employed for a specific duration or until the completion of a particular task or project in order to be eligible for the bonus.
<i>Retiree skill bank</i>	A pool of retired former employees who are rehired on a temporary or contractual basis.
<i>Retirement plan</i>	A written qualified or nonqualified benefit plan, funded by employer and employee contributions, that provides retirement income benefits for employees.
<i>Retraining</i>	Training that is provided for a certain job to enable an employee to acquire the necessary skills to work with new processes, procedures or equipment.
<i>Return on investment (ROI)</i>	A ratio of the benefit or profit derived from a specific investment, compared with the cost of the investment itself.

<i>Reverse discrimination</i>	Employment policies or practices that result in discriminatory treatment against applicants or employees who are not minorities or members of a disadvantaged group.
<i>Reward system</i>	A formal or informal program used to recognize individual employee achievements, such as accomplishment of goals or projects or submission of creative ideas.
<i>Rightsizing</i>	An approach to reducing staff, whereby jobs are prioritized in order to identify and eliminate unnecessary work. This method uses a selection criteria based on individual jobs, rather than people, in order to avoid possibly laying off the wrong employees.
<i>Right-to-know</i>	An OSHA standard providing workers with protection from hazardous substances in the workplace by requiring employers to keep employees informed of any hazardous substances that they may be working with, as well as the hazards and symptoms associated with the substance.
<i>Right-to-sue letter</i>	A letter issued by the EEOC, once a charge has been recorded and processed, informing individuals who filed the charge that they have the right to further pursue their charges in a federal or state court.
<i>Right-to-work</i>	A state law preventing labor-management agreements requiring an individual to join a union as a condition of employment.
<i>Risk management</i>	The use of insurance and other strategies in an effort to minimize an organization's exposure to liability in the event a loss or injury occurs.
<i>Role playing</i>	A training method in which each participant purposely acts out or assumes a particular character or role.
<i>Rolling year</i>	Under FMLA regulations, a rolling year is defined as a 12-month period measured backward from the date an employee first uses leave.

Rotational training A training method where employees are rotated among a variety of different jobs, departments or company functions for a certain period of time.

Rural sourcing An outsourcing method that is based on transferring jobs away from higher cost urban areas to lower cost rural areas.

S

Sabbatical A voluntary arrangement whereby an employer allows an employee paid or unpaid leave for a specified duration of time in order for the employee to pursue a course of advanced training, teach or perform a public service. In education, it is a period of time college or university teachers are allowed to stop their usual work in order to study or travel, usually while continuing to be paid (typically every seven years).

Safe Harbor Regulations Guidelines regulated by the Department of Labor, which, when fully complied with, may reduce or limit the liability of a plan fiduciary.

Safety training A teaching tool used to help employees become more safety-conscious in all aspects of safety.

Salary compression Pay differentials too small to be considered equitable. The term may apply to differences between (1) the pay of supervisors and subordinates; (2) the pay of experienced and newly hired incumbents of the same job; and (3) pay-range midpoints in successive job grades.

Salary grade A compensation level expressed as a salary range, which has been established for each position within the organization.

Salary range A range of pay rates, from minimum to maximum, set for a specific pay grade.

Salary structure A structure of job grades and pay ranges established

within an organization. May be expressed as job grades or job evaluation points.

Sales compensation

A compensation system designed for individuals employed in managerial sales or sales representative positions. Individuals are paid on a commission or percentage of sale basis, in accordance with achieving specified sales goals.

Salting

Refers to paid union organizers who apply for jobs with an employer for the purpose of organizing the employer's workforce.

Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002

The Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 was enacted to increase accountability of corporations to their shareholders in the wake of recent accounting scandals. There are many financial provisions that are not germane to HR basics. Two provisions are of special interest to HR professionals--the whistleblower protection provision and the 401(k) blackout notice provision.

Scalability

The degree to which a computer application or component can be expanded in size, volume or number of users served and continue to function properly.

Scanlon Plan

A gainsharing program in which employees share in specific cost savings that are due to employee effort. The Scanlon Plan involves much employee participation, predating quality circles with most of the same techniques.

Schedule interview

An interviewing format in which each candidate is asked for the same exact information.

School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994

A national effort to develop a school-to-work system to assist students in making the transition from school to the adult workforce. The goal of the Act is to create well-marked paths students can follow to move from school to good first jobs or from school to continued education and training. The Act focuses on broadening educational and career opportunities for all students by encouraging state and local partnerships between

businesses and educational institutions.

S corporation

Business enterprise allowed by the IRS for most companies with 75 or fewer shareholders, enabling the company to enjoy the benefits of incorporation while being taxed as if it were a partnership.

Screening

Usually the first step taken during the interviewing process, involving reviewing prospective candidate applications/resumes, verifying information supplied by the candidate, conducting interviews and examining test results.

Search firm

An organization or individual consultants working on a retainer or fee basis who provide the service of searching and screening potential candidates for prospective employers. Typically search firms are retained for higher-level professional or managerial positions.

Selection process

Any step, combination of steps or procedure used as a basis for any employment decision, including, but not limited to, informal or casual interviews, unscored application forms, paper and pencil tests, performance tests, training programs, probationary periods and physical, education and work experience requirements, as well as the decision-making process used in determining whether or not to hire or promote.

Self-directed teams

A multi-skilled, cross-functional group of employees possessing full empowerment who share responsibilities for producing a particular service or product.

Self-employed

An individual who has earned income for the current or preceding year from self-employment, within the meaning of I.R.C. §401(c) (2), or an individual who would have had such income, except for the fact that the relevant business did not incur a profit for the year.

Self-funding/self-insurance

A benefit plan whereby the employer assumes all the risk, paying out for claims but saving the cost of any associated premiums.

<i>Seminar</i>	A facilitator-directed meeting or conference consisting of groups of individuals gathered to study a specific subject matter.
<i>Semi-skilled Worker</i>	Semi-skilled workers have to be able to read, write and communicate but are usually not required to have educational or apprenticeship credentials to qualify for jobs. Training time is short, task specific and generally doesn't require much in terms of reasoning skills.
<i>Seniority</i>	Status determined by the length of time an employee has worked for a specific employer, department or position within the organization.
<i>Sensitivity training</i>	A form of individual counseling geared toward increasing self-awareness and sensitivity to others. It aims to assist key employees in developing their leadership skills surrounding issues of diversity and harassment prevention.
<i>Serious health condition</i>	An illness, injury, impairment or physical or mental condition that involves inpatient care in a hospital, hospice or residential medical care facility; or continuing treatment by a health care provider.
<i>Service award</i>	Part of a formal or informal recognition program that rewards employees based on length of service.
<i>Severance pay</i>	A form of short-term salary continuation awarded to employees who are being terminated. Severance payments often equal one week's pay for each year of service.
<i>Sex</i>	The classification of people as male or female.
<i>Sex Discrimination Act of 1975</i>	The Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 prohibits discrimination against individuals based on sex or marital status in areas of employment, education, the provision of goods, facilities and services or in the management of premises.

<i>Sex discrimination</i>	Discriminatory conduct or actions based on sex or pregnancy, as it relates to conditions of employment, benefits, pay and opportunities for advancement.
<i>Sex reassignment</i>	Refers to surgical alteration, which is a part of "transition."
<i>Sexual harassment</i>	Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.
<i>Sexual orientation</i>	The scientifically accurate term for an individual's enduring physical, romantic, emotional and/or spiritual attraction to members of the same and/or opposite sex, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual orientations. (Closeted describes a person who is not open about his or her sexual orientation.)
<i>Shareholder</i>	An individual or corporation that owns shares in the corporation.
<i>Shift differential</i>	Additional compensation, usually expressed as cents per hour, paid as an incentive for employees to accept working a less-than-desirable work shift (i.e., 2 nd or 3 rd shift).
<i>Short-term disability</i>	A benefit designed to provide temporary income replacement for worker absent due to illness or injury, but who is expected to return to work within a specified timeframe.
<i>Sick leave</i>	Paid time off granted to employees who are out of work due to an illness or injury.
<i>Simulation</i>	An instructional method used to teach problem solving, procedures or operations by placing learners in situations akin to reality.

<i>Situational leadership</i>	A management theory stating that different situations call for different leadership styles and that essentially there is no one best way to lead.
<i>Six Sigma</i>	Six Sigma is a disciplined, data-driven methodology used to eliminate defects and improve processes and cut costs from manufacturing to transactional and from product to service.
<i>Skill</i>	Ability to perform a mental or motor activity that contributes to the effective performance of a job task.
<i>Skill-based pay</i>	A salary differentiation system that bases compensation on an individual's education, experience, knowledge, skills or specialized training.
<i>Skill gap</i>	A deficiency in basic writing, reading, mathematical or oral communication skills.
<i>Skills inventory</i>	A list of skills or competencies possessed by an individual.
<i>Skills training</i>	Training provided to employees to help them ascertain the skills and knowledge necessary to perform their current jobs; also used as a retraining method when new systems or processes are introduced.
<i>Slander</i>	False defamation expressed as spoken words, signs or gestures, which cause damage to the character or reputation of the individual being defamed.
<i>Slow learner</i>	A term used to describe individuals with mental disabilities and an IQ of between 75 and 90.
<i>Snowbird program</i>	A term used to describe a form of alternative work arrangement whereby employees (typically retired individuals) move to warmer climates in the winter months and return to work only during the Spring/summer months.
<i>Social Security</i>	A federal program under the Social Security Act which provides for retirement, disability and other related

benefits for workers and their eligible dependents.

Social Security card

A card issued by the Social Security Administration displaying an individual's full legal name and social security number assigned to the individual.

Soft skills

Skills required to perform a certain job where the job is defined in terms of expected outcomes, but the process to achieve the outcome varies.

Sole proprietorship

A business enterprise in which an individual is fully and personally liable for all the obligations of the business, is entitled to all profits and exercises complete managerial control.

Span of control

A management principle expressing that a limit exists to the number of people an individual can effectively and successfully manage.

Special disabled veteran

A person entitled to disability compensation under laws administered by the Veterans Administration for disability rated at 30 percent or more; or rated at 10-20 percent in the case of a veteran who has been determined to have a serious employment handicap under 38 USC 3106; or a person whose discharge or release from active duty was for a service-connected disability incurred.

Specialization

A principle stating that, as an organization grows, work within the organization needs to be divided in order to keep jobs from becoming so specialized or complex that they require a greater range of skills that essentially can not be performed by one individual.

Spot rewards

Cash and noncash awards given to employees for ideas submitted or accomplishments benefiting the organization.

Staffing

The function within an organization responsible for recruitment, screening and selection of employees. Oftentimes, this function may also be responsible for other areas of employment, such as orientation, retention, training and termination of staff.

<i>Staffing metrics</i>	Measures used to determine costs associated with recruitment and hiring, time to fill/start for open positions and recruiter workload/activity.
<i>Staff leasing</i>	The practice of an employer directly hiring an employee on a temporary basis for an indefinite period of time instead of utilizing the services of a temporary staffing agency.
<i>Stakeholder</i>	Someone with a vested interest in the successful completion or outcome of a project.
<i>Standard deviation</i>	A statistic used as a measure of the dispersion or variation in a distribution, equal to the square root of the arithmetic mean of the squares of the deviations from the arithmetic mean.
<i>Standard error</i>	Statistical estimate of possible size error present in a test score or other group measure.
<i>Standardization</i>	Design and implementation of consistent specifications for procedures, practices, materials, machinery or other equipment or other types of products and services.
<i>Standardized interview</i>	A form of interviewing that uses the same subject matter and identically sequenced questions, then evaluating responses to determine the differences between candidates.
<i>Standardized testing</i>	A written test, the scores of which are interpreted by referencing the scores of a norm group that has taken the test and which is considered to be representative of the population that takes the test.
<i>Standard score</i>	A score derived from the mean performance of a group on a test, as well as the comparative performance of all the individuals who took the test.
<i>Standard operating procedures</i>	A prescribed written procedure outlining how recurring tasks, duties and functions are to be performed organization-wide.

<i>Statute of limitation</i>	Laws prescribing deadlines for filing lawsuits within a certain time after events, which are the source of the claim, occur.
<i>Statutory benefits</i>	Benefits that are mandated by federal or state laws, such as Social Security, unemployment insurance and workers' compensation.
<i>Stock option plan</i>	An organizational program that it that grants employees the option of purchasing a specific number of stock in the company at a future date.
<i>Stop loss insurance</i>	A contract established between a self-insured employer and an insurance provider providing for carrier coverage if a claim incurred exceeds a specified dollar amount over a predetermined period of time.
<i>Strategic HR</i>	The process of taking a long-term approach to Human Resource Management through the development and implementation of HR programs that address and solve business problems and directly contribute to major long-term business objectives.
<i>Strategic planning</i>	The process of identifying an organization's long-term goals and objectives and then determining the best approach for achieving those goals and objectives.
<i>Strategic staffing</i>	The practice of hiring smaller core numbers of permanent employees and utilizing temporary employees to fill more highly specialized positions within the organization.
<i>Stress interview</i>	An interviewing style whereby the interviewer subjects a candidate to pressure or stress to ascertain how the candidate reacts under such conditions.
<i>Stress management</i>	The design and implementation of workplace programs and services intended to combat employee stress and improve overall employee morale, effectiveness and productivity.

<i>Strike</i>	Occurs when employees deliberately refuse to perform their jobs and/or form picket lines outside the employer's premises to prevent or discourage others from working in their place or conducting business with the employer.
<i>Structured interview</i>	A structured interview asks the same questions of each candidate, so that valid comparisons of the quality of responses can be obtained. The questions generally take four job-related forms: situational, observational, personal and behavioral.
<i>Subject matter expert</i>	An individual who has expertise in a business process or specific area.
<i>Subordinate appraisal</i>	An appraisal system whereby managerial employees are evaluated by their subordinates.
<i>Subsidiary</i>	A company having more than half of its stock owned by another company or is completely owned by another company.
<i>Substance abuse</i>	Defined as a destructive pattern of substance (i.e., narcotics or alcohol) use leading to clinically significant social, occupational or medical impairment.
<i>Succession planning</i>	The process of identifying long-range needs and cultivating a supply of internal talent to meet those future needs. Used to anticipate the future needs of the organization and assist in finding, assessing and developing the human capital necessary to the strategy of the organization.
<i>Suggestion system</i>	A system allowing employees to voice complaints, make recommendations or submit ideas regarding company policies, procedures, working conditions, benefits, etc.
<i>Summary annual report</i>	A summarized report containing information on the financial status of an employee benefit plan.
<i>Summary material</i>	A summary of modifications or changes made to an

<i>modifications</i>	employee benefit plan that is not included in the summary plan description.
<i>Summary plan description</i>	A written statement that contains information regarding participation, coverage and employee rights for any ERISA-covered benefit plan.
<i>Summer hours</i>	A type of compressed work week scheduling arrangement which allows employees to work longer hours Monday through Thursday and fewer hours on Friday during the summer months.
<i>Supervisory/management development</i>	Training provided to employees with the potential for promotion into supervisory or managerial-level positions within the organization or as a remedy for performance-related issues.
<i>Supplemental Unemployment Benefits (SUB)</i>	Typically found in collective bargaining agreements. SUB pay benefits are taxable payments from a fund which can be combined with state unemployment insurance benefits during periods of temporary layoff to provide a higher level of unemployment benefits during the term of layoff.
<i>Supranational</i>	Involving more than one country or having authority which transcends one country, i.e., the European Union is a supranational organization.
<i>Survey</i>	A data collection method used to assist organizations with problem identification, measuring employee morale or expectations and determining areas of concern.
<i>Suspension</i>	A form of disciplinary action resulting in an employee being sent home without pay for a specified period of time (the Fair Labor Standards Act contains stricter rules relating to suspending salaried exempt employees without pay).
<i>SWOT Analysis</i>	A SWOT Analysis is a strategic planning tool used to collect and evaluate information on an organization's current Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved in a specific project or business

venture.

Systemic discrimination

A pattern of discrimination that on the surface appears neutral but in reality is systemic or through its application of policies and practices.

T

360-degree feedback

An appraisal process whereby an individual is rated on his or her performance by people who know something about the individual's work. This can include direct reports, peers, managers, customers or clients; in fact, anybody who is credible to the individual and is familiar with his or her work can be included in the feedback process. The individual usually completes a self-assessment exercise on his or her performance, which is also used in the process.

Talent Management

Broadly defined as the implementation of an integrated strategies or systems designed to increase workplace productivity by developing improved processes for attracting, developing, retaining and utilizing people with the required skills and aptitude to meet current and future business needs.

Tangible rewards

Rewards that can be physically touched or held (i.e., a gift certificate, gifts in the form of merchandise or a savings bond.)

Task analysis

Involves defining standards and conditions of a particular task and identifying the distinguishing factors between tasks.

Task competencies

The specific activities and tasks that make up a particular job.

Team building

A training program designed to assist a group of people to work together as a team while they are learning.

Teamwork

Described as the practice of individuals working together in order to bring a variety of talents and experiences to achieve a common goal.

<i>Telecommuting</i>	Working from a remote location (often one's home workstation) using computers, telephones, facsimile machines and other remote capabilities, rather than commuting via automobile or other mode of transportation to and from an employer's work site to perform equivalent work.
<i>Teleconferencing</i>	A conference established between two or more people or groups of people who are in different locations; made possible by the use of such telecommunications equipment as closed-circuit television
<i>Temporary employee</i>	An individual who works on either short- or long-term assignments with an employer without being treated as a permanent employee and lacking the benefits of permanent employees. Normally utilized by employers to meet seasonal or other demands that they do not have the internal resources to meet.
<i>Temporary restraining order</i>	Restraining and/or protective orders are examples of orders issued by a court restraining the conduct of an individual and protecting a victim from the activities of an abusive person.
<i>Temp-to-perm</i>	The process of hiring employees on a temporary basis, usually through a temporary staffing agency, with the understanding that if the individual's performance meets or exceeds expectations, he or she will be offered a permanent position within the organization.
<i>Termination</i>	Separation from employment due to a voluntary resignation, layoff, retirement or dismissal.
<i>Termination-at-will</i>	A rule allowing an employee or employer to terminate the employment relationship at any time for any or no reason at all.
<i>Termination Date</i>	Normally the last date actually worked by an employee; however, for employers with accrued leave programs, paid leave programs, benefit continuation programs or severance pay programs which go beyond the last day worked, the termination date would be the date at which

accruals, paid leave, benefit continuation or severance continuation ceases.

Test security

An individual's right to privacy, as it relates to information regarding test results, providing for informed consent of how test results are used.

Theory X

States that some people have an inherent dislike for work and will avoid it whenever possible. These people need to be controlled and coerced by their managers to achieve production.

Theory Y

Assumes that people have a psychological need to work and want achievement and responsibility. A manager's role with these people is to help them achieve their potential.

Think tank

A group organized for the purpose of intensive research and problem solving, especially in the areas of technology, social or political strategy, or demographics.

Third-party sexual harassment

Harassment of an employee by someone other than another employee, such as a client, customer, vendor or service provider.

Time management

The discipline of utilizing time efficiently and well in order to achieve professional, personal or organizational objectives.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Title VII is a provision of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that prohibits discrimination in virtually every employment circumstance on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, pregnancy or national origin. In general, Title VII applies to employers with 15 or more employees. The purpose of Title VII's protections is to "level the playing field" by forcing employers to consider only objective, job-related criteria in making employment decisions. Title VII must be considered when reviewing applications or resumes, when interviewing candidates, when testing job applicants and when considering employees for promotions, transfers or any other employment-related benefit or

condition.

Total compensation

The complete pay package awarded employees on an annual basis, including all forms of money, benefits, services and in-kind payments.

Total quality management

A structured system that satisfies internal and external customers and suppliers by integrating the business environment, continuous improvement and breakthroughs with development, improvement and maintenance cycles.

Total remuneration

The amount of monetary and nonmonetary value to an employee of all the elements in the employment package, as well as any other intrinsic or extrinsic rewards of value to the employee.

Trade secret

A trade secret consists of any formula, pattern, device or compilation of information used in one's business, which gives the business an opportunity to obtain an advantage over competitors who do not know or use it.

Trailing spouse

A term used to describe the spouse of an employee who has been transferred or relocated.

Training aids

Any form of audio or visual materials used for training purposes.

Training and development

A process dealing primarily with transferring or obtaining knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to carry out a specific activity or task.

Training needs analysis

A method used to determine what people need to learn and which training programs may be beneficial. The result of the analysis is a training needs report identifying training needs and the interventions needed to reduce key performance gaps.

Transfer

Moving an employee from one position, shift or department to another within the organization.

Transformational leadership

A systematic form of leadership focusing on change and

innovation. According to Bernard Bass, it is a form of leadership occurring when leaders “broaden and elevate the interests of their employees, when they generate awareness and acceptance of the purposes and the mission of the group and when they stir their employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group”

Transitional employment

Provides alternative work arrangements, such as temporary light or modified duty, for employees who have been absent from the workplace as a result of illness or injury and who have been released by their medical provider to return to work.

Transsexual

An older term that originated in the medical and psychological communities. Many transgender people prefer the term "transgender" to "transsexual."

Transgender

An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. The term may include, but is not limited to, transsexuals, cross-dressers, and other gender-variant people. Transgender people may identify as female-to-male (FTM) or male-to-female (MTF). They may be heterosexual, lesbian, gay, or bisexual. For example, a man who becomes a woman and is attracted to other women would be identified as a lesbian. Transgender people may or may not decide to alter their bodies hormonally and/or surgically.

Transition

A complex process altering one's birth sex that occurs over a long period of time. Transition includes some or all of the following cultural, legal, and medical adjustments:

*Telling one's family, friends and/or co-workers;
Changing one's name and/or sex on legal documents;
Hormone therapy; and possibly (though not always)
some form of surgical alteration.*

Trend analysis

The process of forecasting an organization’s staffing needs by analyzing past employment patterns in order to identify trends that may be expected to continue.

<i>Tuition assistance</i>	A program designed to provide financial assistance to employees taking educational courses at an accredited college or university.
<i>Turkey trot</i>	A term used to describe the practice of transferring problem or performance-challenged employees from one position or department to another with the expectation that the employee may improve under a new supervisor or in a different work atmosphere.
<i>Turnover</i>	Describes changes in the work force resulting from voluntary or involuntary resignations.
<i>Turnover costs</i>	Costs associated with a separation of employment, including items such as unemployment compensation, COBRA benefits continuation costs, the cost of conducting exit interviews, as well as costs associated with replacing an employee, such as advertising, pre-employment testing, time and materials for new hire orientation, training and lost productivity.
<i>Turnover rate</i>	The number of separations during a month, including both voluntary and involuntary terminations (excluding layoffs). The turnover rate is calculated by taking the number of separations during a month divided by the average number of employees on the payroll multiplied by 100.

U

<i>Underutilization</i>	As part of the affirmative action process, this report is used to determine whether certain members of protected groups are being inadequately represented within the workforce. The report uses information based on the geographic area and positions within the organization.
<i>Undue hardship</i>	For an employer to legally refuse to accommodate an applicant's or an employee's disability or religious beliefs, the employer must be able to show that such an accommodation would place a severe burden

on the operation of the business.

Unemployment insurance (UI)

A statutory benefit. Unemployment insurance is designed to provide workers who have been laid off a weekly income during short periods of unemployment. The system is run and funded by state and federal taxes paid by employers.

Unemployment rate

The number of individuals unemployed as a percentage of the labor force.

Unfair labor practice (ULP)

An unfair labor practice (ULP) is a violation of a right protected by the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute. The ULP procedures provided by the Statute are part of the basic mechanisms by which the parties are protected in the exercise of their rights.

Unfairly discriminatory

An action or policy resulting in members of protected groups becoming disadvantaged in relation to the employer's selection, hiring, promotion, pay and training opportunities, when said person(s) are as equally qualified and have the same potential to be successful.

Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures of 1978

The Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures address the use of interviewing, testing, training and other employee selection tools and their impact on discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin. Specifically addressed is adverse impact, measured by the 80% test, which states that if a selection practice yields less than 80% of a protected group, as compared with the most frequently selected group, there may be evidence of discrimination. The guidelines also require employers to maintain records, for an unspecified period of time, on their selection procedures and any adverse impact noted, as well as records of the employer's workforce broken down by race and ethnic groups.

Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) of 1994 The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA, or the Act), signed into law on October 13, 1994, clarifies and strengthens the Veterans' Reemployment Rights (VRR) Statute. USERRA is intended to minimize the disadvantages to an individual that can occur when that person needs to be absent from his or her civilian employment in order to serve in the uniformed services. USERRA makes major improvements in protecting service member rights and benefits by clarifying the law and improving enforcement mechanisms. USERRA expands the cumulative length of time that an individual may be absent from work for uniformed services duty and retain reemployment rights.

Union A formal organization certified by the National Labor Relations Board and authorized to act on behalf of employees regarding wages, benefits, working conditions, conditions of employment and job security.

Union Shop A form of union security that requires employees to join the union, within a certain time after they are hired or after a compulsory-unionism contract is executed, and to maintain their membership as a condition of employment.

Unlawful employment practice Any policy or practice that has discriminatory intent or effect and cannot be shown to be essential to the successful performance of the job in question.

Unretirement The practice of hiring retired former employees whose skills or qualifications are in need.

Unsafe acts Any action, such as horseplay, fighting, failing to abide by a safety rule, etc., that results in accident or injury to another.

<i>Unsafe conditions</i>	Hazards, such as faulty equipment or tools, improper safety procedures, failure to improperly guard equipment, etc., that result or have the potential to result in an accident or injury to another.
<i>Unskilled worker</i>	Someone who is not required to use reasoning in their work: Examples: packager, assembler, laborer, hand, apprentice
<i>Unwelcome behavior/conduct</i>	Conduct or behavior by peers, subordinates or supervisors that is objectionable or unacceptable to an individual.
<i>Upward mobility</i>	The process of preparing minorities for promotion into higher-level jobs, such as managerial positions.
<i>Utilization management</i>	Review and analysis of health care programs to determine cost control methods. Involves reviewing claims for potential utilization problems.
<i>U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)</i>	On March 1, 2003, service and benefit functions of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) transitioned into the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The USCIS is responsible for the administration of immigration and naturalization adjudication functions and establishing immigration services policies and priorities.

V

<i>Vacation buy-back plan</i>	A program that allows an employee to sell back to the employer any unused vacation time balances.
<i>Vacation buying/selling/trading</i>	A program that allows employees to buy additional vacation time from another employee or sell additional time they may have available to another employee. Some programs also allow for trading of future vacation

time.

Vacation carryover

A policy allowing employees to transfer a portion of their current year vacation balances for use in the next year. The amount of time that can be carried over is based on the employer's policy.

Validation

The study of an employer's test or selection standards that proves that they are significant predictors of successful job performance (those who score high turn out to be successful on a job and those who score low turn out to be unsuccessful). The study requires a large sample of applicants and must include representatives of groups--such as minorities and women--who may be suffering adversely from such standards.

Validity

The general concept of validity is traditionally defined as "the degree to which a test measures what it claims, or purports, to be measuring." Validity is normally subdivided into three categories: content, criterion-related and construct validity. Validity is an essential characteristic for all tests and test ratings.

Value-added work

Work that increases the value of a service or product to the employer's customers.

Value statement

A document outlining and representing the core priorities in the organization's culture.

Variance forecasting

A measure that utilizes a demand and availability forecast to determine whether an organization has the ability to meet future manpower needs.

Vertical disintegration

Used to describe organizations that over time shed layer after layer of full-time permanent employees and replace them with temporary workers until their workforce primarily consists of temporary employees.

Vertical management

A traditional organizational structure consisting of primary functions (i.e., engineering, manufacturing, finance, etc.), with each function having its own manager.

<i>Vertical organization</i>	An organizational structure consisting of many layers of management or other positions of authority.
<i>Vesting</i>	An employee's right to receive present or future pension benefits, even if the employee does not remain in the service of the employer.
<i>Vestibule training</i>	A form of training conducted outside of the workplace to acclimate newly hired employees with procedures and equipment or tools to be used in their jobs.
<i>Veterans Benefit Improvement Act of 2004</i>	An act signed into law by President Bush on December 10, 2004 that amended portions of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), imparting certain reemployment and benefit protections to individuals who are and employees engaged in military service. The act requires that employers extend the period for continuation of health care coverage and requires employers to provide covered employees with appropriate notice of their rights, benefits and responsibilities under USERRA.
<i>Veterans Employment Opportunities Act</i>	This statute extended the affirmative action and reporting responsibilities of federal contractors and subcontractors, which previously protected veterans of the Vietnam era and special disabled veterans, to include any other U. S. veteran who served on active duty during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge was authorized. It also raised the reporting threshold from \$10,000 to \$25,000 and added the requirement to report the maximum and minimum number of persons employed on the VETS-100 report.
<i>Vietnam Era Veteran</i>	Defined as an individual who served on active duty for more than 180 days, any part of which occurred during the period between August 5, 1964, and May 7, 1975, and who received other than a dishonorable discharge, as defined in the regulations implementing the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974.
<i>Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974 (VERA)</i>	Federal law requiring federal contractors or subcontractors with contracts of \$10,000 or more to take affirmative action to employ and advance in

employment disabled veterans or those who served during the Vietnam era.

Virtual HR

The use of technology to provide HR programs via an employee self-service platform. Typically includes use of such items as voice response systems, employee kiosks, etc.

Virtual mentoring

A form of mentoring whereby the mentor and mentored communicate from a distance, utilizing either e-mail or other forms of electronic conferencing.

Virtual office/workplace

The work site of employees such as sales reps or other types of employees who work off company premises and communicate with their respective workplaces via telephone or computer.

Vision statement

A vision statement is a description of what an organization wants to become or hopes to accomplish in the future (typically in the next 10 years).

Voluntary leave/layoff

Leave without pay that is taken on a voluntary basis by employees for specified duration. Often used as an alternative to layoff.

Voluntary reduction in hours

Allows employees to voluntarily reduce their working hours as well as their pay for a specified duration. Also used as an alternative to layoff.

Volunteerism

Organizational support, often in the form of paid leave or sponsorship, for employees pursuing volunteer opportunities or performing community services.

V-time

An alternative work schedule that allows employees to voluntarily agree to reduce their work time and pay.

W

Wage and salary administration

Procedures used for planning and administering organization-wide compensation programs for all levels of employees.

Wage and salary survey

A benchmark report consisting of market pay data for a variety of jobs conducted either on a local or nationwide basis. Used to evaluate an organization's own current pay structures and as a future compensation planning tool.

Wage curve

Depicts pay rates currently being paid for each job within a pay grade in relation with the rankings awarded to each job during the job evaluation process.

Wage gap

The difference in pay between female employees and male employees who are performing the same or comparable jobs.

Wage garnishment

Usually in the form of a court order, a garnishment requires withholding a portion of an employee's earnings for repayment of a debt.

Wage differential

Differences in wage rates for similar jobs occurring either due to the location of company, hours of work, working conditions, type of product manufactured or other circumstances.

Wage structure

Depicts the range of pay rates to be paid for each grade for various positions within the organization.

Waiver

A document signed by either an employee or prospective employee in which he or she renounces certain specified rights or considerations.

Weingarten Rule

The U.S. Supreme Court upheld a decision by the Labor Board that employees have a right, protected by Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act, to insist upon union representation during an investigatory interview by the employer, provided the employee "reasonably believes" the interview "might result in disciplinary action." This right arises from Section 7's "guarantee of the right of employees to act in concert for mutual aid and protection."

The right applies to unionized employees and is limited to situations where the employee specifically requests representation. The employer is not legally required to advise the employee of this right, and it applies only to investigatory meetings.

Welfare plan

A plan designed to provide employees with coverage for medical or hospital care and surgical procedures. May also include other benefits, such as vacation or scholarship programs.

Welfare-to-Work Tax Credit

The Welfare-to-Work Tax Credit is a federal income tax credit that encourages employers to hire long-term family assistance recipients, who begin to work any time after December 31, 1997, and before January, 2004. Established by the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997, the tax credit can reduce employers' federal tax liability per new hire.

Well child care

Health care benefits that provide payment for routine office visits and physical examinations, immunizations and laboratory tests for dependent children.

Wellness program

Programs, such as on-site or subsidized fitness centers, health screenings, smoking cessation, weight reduction/management, health awareness and education, that target keeping employees healthy, thereby lowering employer's costs associated with absenteeism, lost productivity and increased health insurance claims.

Whistleblower Protection Act of 1989

Whistleblower protection is the federal law that provides protection to employees against retaliation for reporting illegal acts of employers. An employer may not rightfully retaliate in any way, such as discharging, demoting, suspending or harassing the whistle blower. Employer retaliation of any kind may result in the whistle blower filing a charge with a government agency and/or filing a law suit against the employer.

White collar employees

Employees who are paid on a salaried basis and whose jobs do not require the performance of work of a manual nature. Such individuals are normally employed in the capacity of managers, supervisors, salespeople, clerical or technical workers and meet the criteria of the FLSA white collar exemption test.

Willful misconduct

Willful misconduct is defined as any action, taken by an employee consciously and willfully, that is deliberately malicious or violates a company policy. Willful misconduct can include such things as: willful or deliberate behavior inconsistent with the continuation of employment; conduct causing imminent and serious risk to a person's health, safety, reputation or the viability or profitability of the employer's business; theft, assault or fraud; being under the influence of drugs or alcohol at work; or refusing to carry out a lawful and reasonable instruction consistent with an employment policy.

Women-owned business enterprise

A woman-owned business is a for-profit enterprise, regardless of size, located in the United States or its trust territories, that is owned, operated and controlled by women. Ownership by women means the business is at least 51% owned by such individuals or, in the case of publicly owned business, at least 51% of the stock is owned by one or more such individuals. Further, women control the management and daily operations.

Work and family programs

Work programs and benefits, such as adoption benefits, dependent care assistance, leave programs, flextime, compressed workweeks, telecommuting, etc., implemented to provide employees with greater flexibility to meet both work and family demands.

Work/life balance

Having a measure of control over when, where and how individuals work, leading to their being

able to enjoy an optimal quality of life. Work/life balance is achieved when an individual's right to a fulfilled life inside and outside paid work is accepted and respected as the norm, to the mutual benefit of the individual, business and society.

Workers Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN) of 1988

WARN requires employers (with 100 or more employees) that are planning a plant closing or a mass layoff to give affected employees at least 60 days' notice of such an employment action. While the 60-day period is the minimum for advance notice, this provision is not intended to discourage employers from voluntarily providing longer periods of advance notice. Not all plant closings and layoffs are subject to the Act. WARN sets out specific exemptions and provides for a reduction in the notification period in particular circumstances.

Workers' compensation

State laws enacted to provide workers with protection and income replacement benefits due to an illness or injury suffered on the job. Employers must carry appropriate workers' compensation insurance, as required by state law, or have a sufficient source of funding for claims incurred.

Work hardening

A program, typically lasting four to six weeks, that provides workers who were injured on the job and who have undergone physical or occupational therapy the strength to be able to resume normal work functions and therefore getting them back to work.

Workforce analysis

A listing of each job title as the title appears in applicable collective bargaining agreements or payroll records ranked from the lowest paid to the highest paid within each department including department or unit supervision. For each job title, the following information must be given: the total number of male and female employees; the total number of male and female employees who are Black (not Hispanic), Hispanic, American Indian/Alaskan Native and

Asian/Pacific Islander; and the wage rate or salary range.

Workforce planning

The assessment of current workforce content and composition issues used to determine what actions must be taken to respond to future needs.

Work Opportunity Tax Credit

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), authorized by the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-188), is a federal tax credit that encourages employers to hire nine targeted groups of job seekers by reducing employers' federal income tax liability by as much as \$2,400 per qualified new worker; \$750, if working 120 hours or \$1,200, if working 400 hours or more, per qualified summer youth.

Workplace bullying

Persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating or insulting behavior or unfair actions directed at another individual, causing the recipient to feel threatened, abused, humiliated or vulnerable.

Workplace flexibility

Defines workplaces who provide employees with flexibility in matters such as scheduling of hours worked, as well as providing the ability to address unanticipated family and personal needs as they arise.

Workplace violence

Assaults and other violent acts or threats that occur in or are related to the workplace and entail a substantial risk of physical or emotional harm to individuals or damage to company resources or capabilities.

Work sampling

The measurement of how employees spend their time and the number of work units being produced by employees over a specific period of time. This is accomplished by randomly observing employees while they are performing their jobs and then using mathematical formulas to determine the sample size.

Work simplification

The process of making a job easier and simpler

to perform. Involves analyzing various job tasks by compiling work process, work flow and work distribution charts. The information is then reviewed, and new methods are introduced and tested to determine the most suitable and efficient method to be implemented.

Work stoppage

A work stoppage occurs when employees cease to perform their jobs as a means of showing their support for a specific cause or as a way of voicing a grievance.

Written warning

Written documentation given to an employee describing specific disciplinary infractions, such as inappropriate conduct, poor performance or violation of work rules/policies. Such documentation normally includes information regarding past infractions and what action will be taken if employee fails to improve.

Wrongful discharge

An exception to the at-will employment doctrine, wrongful discharge/termination is the unjust or unfair termination of an employee based on breach of a written or oral implied contract or a violation of public policy.

Y

Yellow dog contract

An employment contract or agreement, either oral or in writing, that forbids employees from joining or continuing membership in any labor union as a condition for continuing or obtaining employment.

Z

Zero-based bonus

A plan design feature that establishes a pre-assigned class, ratio, or ranking for a specified class of employees who will receive zero bonus awards.

Zero-based budgeting

A budgeting system that starts with no authorized funds as a starting point. In a zero-based budget, each activity or program to be

funded must be justified every time a new budget is prepared and resources are allocated accordingly.