

Collections Regional Director Interview Questions

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AWG Hearing Process

<p>1. Describe the AWG Hearing Process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Accounts for AWG identified by PCAs and entered into the AWG subsystem. Letter sent by subsystem to borrower notifying them of our intent to garnish and giving them opportunity to make voluntary payment arrangements, request documents, claim legal exclusion, or request a hearing to either dispute the debt or claim that the garnishment would create a financial hardship▪ If the borrower requests a hearing, the PCAs gather the supporting documentation from the borrower.▪ If the borrower requested a written hearing decision, the PCAs then forward the hearing request and supporting documentation to PIC who prepares a draft hearing decision. The draft is reviewed and finalized by a Loan Analyst (Hearing Official) in the Hearings Branch.▪ If the borrower requested an in-person or telephone hearing decision, the PCAs forward the hearing request and supporting documentation to the Hearings Branch. A Loan Analyst (Hearing Official) conducts the in-person or telephone hearing, analyzes all data held by ED and provided by the borrower and prepares a hearing decision. If the Loan Analyst is a new employee, the decision is reviewed by either a Senior Loan Analyst or the Branch Chief prior to issuance.▪ Most hearings are based on financial hardship▪ The loan analysts are the hearing officials. Their decisions are final. The only appeal the borrower can do is in Federal Court.▪ When the PCA's receive hardship hearing requests, they sometimes work out a reasonable and affordable payment plan with the borrower and eliminate the hearing request.▪ After hearing decisions have been issues if the borrower does not voluntarily pay within a short time frame, the order for garnishment is issued to the borrower's employer and is deducted from every paycheck until the account is paid in full.▪ The borrower can request a hardship hearing at any time even after garnishment has begun. Sometimes borrowers financial situation changes - medical problems not covered by insurance, change in position, cut back in hours worked, etc.
<p>2. What processes are internal vs. contracted?</p> <p>CSC provides primary support?</p>	<p><u>Contracted</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ PCAs gather supporting documents. Prior to the hearing request being forwarded to Hearings Branch or PIC. This is done at no cost to ED.▪ The Public Inquiry contractor prepares draft hearing decisions on requests for written hearings which are reviewed and approved or disapproved by the Hearings staff.

	<p><u>Internal</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review and approval of draft hearing decisions ▪ Conducts all phases of oral hearing requests
3. Is this a repeatable process or does it change from borrower to borrower?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It changes for each individual borrower. Each borrower has his/her own objections or hardship case. There are some common objections, but each hearing is individualized.
4. Is this process the same for every region, or does it change for GA and TOP Hearings?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Only Atlanta conducts AWG Hearings. TOP is a different process and is conducted in the Chicago Service Center.
5. On average, how many hearings are processed each week/month/year?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 150-200/week ▪ 800-1000/month ▪ 10,000-12,000/year
6. How long is the cycle time from when a hearing is requested to when it is completed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 13-15 FTE's ▪ Usually 60-90 days ▪ Average – 55 days with assistance from PIC/PCA's ▪ Great deal of time spent gathering information
7. Is this process automated or manual and what does that look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manual ▪ Use Microsoft Access database to track the status of the borrower's hearing request
8. How are cases assigned to employees?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work is distributed equally except to new employees. ▪ Second or third requests will be directed to original employee to handle
9. How many employees are involved in a case at a time?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Usually 1 loan analyst (hearing official)/case. For new employees, there will be the new employee and either a Senior Loan Analyst or the Branch Chief.
10. What skills/knowledge do employees processing hearings require?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Knowledge of AWG Laws and Regulations, our internal process, ability to analyze differing data and reach sound decisions, ability to negotiate, and writing skills.
11. What oversight does HQ have in this process, if so how?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is no oversight by HQ. When there are system requirements or changes in the Laws, we Work with Marian Currie in HQ. ▪ IF we have questions, we typically work with OGC which is usually about legal issues. We also worked with OGC on ED's draft AWG Regulations.
12. Is travel involved? (If so, where and why?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limited travel
13. Other questions	

Other Comments

Loan Services

<p>1. Describe the Loan Services process (5 tier approach)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Similar function across regions ▪ LSB is the primary customer service problem-solving branch for defaulted borrowers. • PIC often refers to regions if they don't have the authority to address mail or address complex issues • Receive calls from borrowers, schools, etc - All branches work on the same phone system – calls come in from borrowers, employers, regardless of branch location • Calls come in from borrowers who have called us before or obtained the number from directory assistance or the internet.
<p>2. What activities take place?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Responding to phone calls from borrowers, schools, and Guaranty Agencies. ▪ Answering correspondence from customers ▪ Portfolio management – monitor portfolio and examine accounts that have been residing in various location codes with no activity for a period of time. Review and analyze to determine if accounts need further work, work was completed and accounts just need to be moved back to active collections, accounts should be written off and closed. If accounts need further work, determine goals and complete work. ▪ Analyze accounts from the National SSA Death Match reports. Make determinations on accounts where there are not exact matches - some will be written off and closed others will be rejected after a thorough audit of the file for additional information. ▪ Weekly conduct conference calls with counterparts in other 2 regions
<p>3. Are these activities consistent with the other regions and are the processed the same from region to region?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • yes
<p>4. What activities are completed in house vs. by contract support?</p>	<p><u>Contract</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PIC fields general calls/mail, with referrals to the region of those issues they are not authorized to deal with <p><u>Internal</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Handle correspondence and calls that PIC does not handle ▪ All portfolio management ▪ Handle inquiries from GA & School
<p>5. What parts of the process are automated vs. manual?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Automated phone call routing system ▪ Manual – the auditing for portfolio management and SSA Death research
<p>6. What is the average cycle time for processing a loan from the time you receive a request to when it is complete?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Currently they are responding within 7 days to customer inquiries (Goal is no more than 30 days) ▪ Goal is to answer 95% of incoming calls ▪ 200-300 calls/day ▪ Higher phone call volume in spring during tax refund season and in fall when its time to go back to school - if their FAFSA is rejected.

7. How are contacts assigned?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ROLM – Siemens telephone routing system routes calls to employees based on who has been in the "available" mode the longest ▪ Call routing system checks first for an available loan analyst and if not available routed to Sr. loan analyst or branch chief ▪ Correspondence is batched, entered into the tracking system and assigned to loan analysts
8. Is the loan service a one-to-one ratio of employees to borrowers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No. We have 12 FTE's (includes 1 clerical, 1 senior loan analyst and 1 branch chief)
9. What skills/knowledge is required to process a loan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiation skills. Knowledge of the Title IV programs, ED's data base, NSLDS data base, credit bureau reporting requirements, good analytical skills, writing skills and good presentation skills
10. Is training provided to acquire necessary skills or is it more "OJT"?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mostly OJT and mentoring– some classroom ▪ All loan analysts must have basic knowledge of loan processing
11. Is travel involved? (If so to where and why?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limited travel unless special circumstances (some organizations request their presence)
12. What oversight does HQ provide?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HQ sets the objectives or goals of customer satisfaction and reducing unit cost and the regions determine how best to meet those objectives
13. Who are your customers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Borrowers, borrower's representatives, Congressional Offices, the general public and our business partners

Other Comments

Treasury Off-Set Program (TOP) – Once a borrower's account is certified they are certified until someone manually takes them out or the debt is resolved.

New Responsibilities

Portfolio Management

- Location codes tell you something about an account (i.e. death, disability, closed school)
- Make decision what needs to happen to that account

Contract Services

<p>1. Describe the PCA contract process (we have a high-level process flow for this, we are more interested in what SFA does)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lynda's specialty – working in area since 1978 ▪ At the regional level, we help identify, refine, and write requirements for new solicitations. Have also had input into the criteria used to evaluate offers and have participated in the evaluation process ▪ COTR (Contracting Officer Tech. Rep)– Freda Heppner ▪ Contracting Officer – Located in Wash. DC
<p>2. What processes are internal vs. <u>contracted</u>?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dunn & Bradstreet was used to evaluate some aspects of performance ▪ Other processes in the branch are internal
<p>3. Is this a repeatable process or does it change much from borrower to borrower?</p>	
<p>4. What processes are automated vs. manual?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like all four branches in ASC, the phone system routes incoming calls • Most review and approval work is manual, although we are able to review for some requirements with database queries
<p>5. How many PCAs are you working with currently and what are future plans? Transition Period</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 17 old PCA's awarded in fall 1997 –these contracts are winding down. After December 2001, they will retain only those accounts that are currently in repayment ▪ 13 new PCA's awarded in fall 2000 (8 are from the old 17 and 5 are brand new) ▪ Currently working with 30 total PCA's ▪ At one point – PCA's will be reduced to 13
<p>6. What is the working relationship of PCAs to SFA employees?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Loan analyst assigned to PCA as a POC and works to address mostly technical assistance questions ▪ Loan analyst oversees, reviews, audits PCA processes to verify compliance ▪ PCA's paid a percentage of what they collect and also paid a fee for accounts resolved through death, disability, bankruptcy or litigation ▪ PCA's made initial analysis and determine if the cost of collections exceeds potential recovery
<p>7. Is there any overlap in the work you provide and that of the contractor?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The only overlap would be working with a borrower who may refuse to work with the agency
<p>8. On average, how many loans are processed in a week/month/year?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Approx 21 FTE's
<p>9. How are assignments made to employees?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone calls from PCAs are routed to the loan analyst who is their point of contact. Other work items are distributed as equally as possible to all staff with new employees given a smaller share • Staff may also be members of a team performing a special project
<p>10. What skills/knowledge do SFA employees require?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Knowledge of PCA contracts and general knowledge of procurement process, Title IV regulations, negotiation skills, writing skills, presentation skills

11. Is training provided or are these skills acquired On The Job (OJT)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ OJT and mentoring ▪ Overview of Contracting, Contract Admin. Training, and Performance Based Training
12. What oversight does HQ have in this process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HQ sets the broad goals and objectives and we determine how best to meet those objectives
13. Is travel involved? (If so where and why?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Travel to PCA's ▪ Old Goal is 1 visit/agency/quarter ▪ Reality is 1 visit/year ▪ Currently trying to assign travel costs to PCA's

Other Comments

Mentorship Program

- More informal now
- New employees are assigned a mentor

Administrative Wage Garnishment

<p>1. Describe the AWG process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accounts are identified and loaded into the AWG subsystem. The system sends a notice to the borrower advising him of our intent to garnish if he does not enter into repayment or request a hearing within 30 days. If there is no response to the notice, a garnishment order is sent to the employer, and the borrower is sent a letter advising the order has been sent. If there is no response from the employer, a second order is sent approx 36 days after the first order. If employer still does not respond he identified as a non-compliant employer ▪ PCA's have most of these accounts and are responsible for follow-up with the employer to determine reason for non-compliance. If the PCA is unable to get the employer into compliance, they are responsible for preparing a litigation case against the employer, or the borrower depending on whether it meets the criteria established by DOJ ▪ PIC & PCA answer general employer questions although many want to speak directly with ED ▪ Work mostly with calls/letters from employers • We established a Web Site for the employers. It contains an Employee Handbook and Frequently Asked Questions and Answers
<p>2. What processes are internal vs. contracted?</p>	<p><u>Contracted</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PCA prepare case to be litigated ▪ PCA & PIC can answer general questions ▪ Branch handles employer calls and correspondence and inquiries on the Web Site as well as reviewing and approving or disapproving litigation cases against non-compliant employers. We are also responsible for providing assistance to DOJ as needed
<p>3. Is the process automated or manual?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ AWG subsystem is automated ▪ Preparation and review of the litigation cases is manual
<p>4. Is this a repeatable process or does it change much from borrower to borrower?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Repeatable
<p>5. Is there any <u>overlap</u> in what you do vs. what the contractor is doing with the accounts? YES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PCA contacts non-compliant employers ▪ SFA makes follow-up calls
<p>6. On average, how many accounts are processed weekly/monthly/yearly?</p>	
<p>7. How are accounts assigned to employees?</p>	

8. What is the cycle time from when you receive an account to when it is closed (in your area)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 20-30 days for the more difficult employer cases. ▪ For phone calls and web site inquiries we complete same day to 3 days
9. How many employees are involved in an account at any given time?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 6-7 FTE's (smallest branch)
10. What skills/knowledge is required for processing an account?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Knowledge of AWG Laws and Regulations, subsystem and program requirements. Ability to negotiate, good presentation skills, good writing skills, knowledge of all Title IV programs, knowledge of ED's data base, NSLDS data base, etc
11. Is training provided or is it mostly OJT?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ OJT
12. Is travel involved? (If so, where and why?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limited travel. ▪ (Contract Services travel the most for PCA meetings/conferences, etc)
13. What oversight does HQ provide in this process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Typically work with OGC since most questions are of a legal nature
14. Other questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪

Other Comments