

IRS HIRES EXECUTIVE SEARCH FIRM TO SEEK OUT NEW ADVOCATE

WASHINGTON -- As part of its efforts to improve customer service, the Internal Revenue Service is for the first time looking outside the agency for a new Taxpayer Advocate. The Taxpayer Advocate reports directly to the Commissioner, and acts as the "voice of the taxpayer." Toward that end, the IRS has hired Korn/Ferry International, a worldwide executive search firm specializing in management searches at the senior level, to provide the IRS with qualified candidates for the position.

The Taxpayer Advocate is a crucial position in the IRS, as it gives taxpayers an avenue for resolving problems that have not or cannot be resolved through normal channels. The advocate is also responsible for providing an independent report to Congress each year identifying the most significant problems facing taxpayers and actions (including legislation) proposed for addressing those problems.

In awarding yesterday's contract, the IRS is breaking tradition with hiring internally. In the past, the advocate position has been filled from the IRS's executive ranks. "We are casting the widest net possible for qualified candidates, and we are also ensuring the taxpayers' perspective is truly represented," said IRS Commissioner Charles O. Rossotti. "I'm very pleased that the agency has moved ahead so quickly to fulfill my commitment to Congress to select an advocate from outside the IRS," he said.

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The agency is looking for an independent-minded person with significant customer service experience and a creative approach to problem-solving. The contract calls for Korn/Ferry to provide the IRS with at least two qualified candidates within 120 days.

The current Taxpayer Advocate, Lee Monks, has been selected to be the new district director of the Arkansas/Oklahoma district.

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