



HR Broadcast

The MRPBS web site has been redesigned! You may have noticed our new look. Be sure to check out the Human Resources pages, and save it as a favorite! <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/hr/index.shtml>

HR CALENDAR

The Human Resources Division has put together what we hope you'll find to be a useful tool in helping you manage and respond to actions, activities and information related to a variety of HR-related functional areas. For example, what type of personnel actions do I need to remember to initiate each month?, when does the annual reminder on "use or lose" annual leave come out?, when are those financial disclosures reports due? The HR Calendar provides you with this and lots more information!

Coming in the October Issue:

- More Hiring Manager Hints
- More Linc Pass FAQ

The Calendar will be kept up-to-date as information changes and will be available on our web site (http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/hr/downloads/hr_calendar.pdf) for easy access by all our customers. We hope you will find this helpful!!

Be sure and check the calendar for the months of July, August, and September!!!



The Benefits Buzz

Attention: All current or former military service members! Make your military service deposit for retirement credit now!



If you have performed honorable active duty military service after 1956, and you want that service to count in your Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) benefit, you need to make a payment (called a deposit) to credit that service to the FERS retirement fund before you leave Federal employment. If you are an employee covered by the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) who will be eligible for a Social Security benefit, this information is also important to you.

It's easy to do:

- Find out if this applies to you by reading the [Post-1956 Military Service Deposit information](#).
- Use the form RI 20-97 to request your earnings from your military finance center (the form is provided in the link above).
- When you have received the military earnings statement, fax it to your [servicing HR Benefits Specialist](#), who will provide you with a calculation of the amount you need to pay for service credit, and further instructions.

Consider this:

- Even if you do not plan to retire, or leave the Federal service soon, you should at least find out how much your military deposit is. It is almost always more beneficial for you to pay the deposit now than to forfeit the military service credit in your retirement benefit.
- Making the deposit early in your career avoids or minimizes the additional interest charges.
- Payment is easy – as little as \$25 per pay period could be deducted from your salary until paid in full.
- There is no opportunity to make the payment after you leave Federal service, even if you are eligible for a retirement benefit. The deposit must be made to your agency *while you are employed*.

Processing Tidbits

EMPLOYEE PERSONAL PAGE

Experiencing problems with your ID and Password for the National Finance Center's (NFC) Employee Personal Page (EPP)? Now you can contact the Operations and Security Center at NFC for help resolving these problems. The number is 1-800-767-9641, or you can email them at OSC.ETIX@usda.gov. For any other issues with the EPP, please contact Margaret McKinney at HRO-Minneapolis at 612-336-3334.

eOPF – What's Happening Now?

All Official Personnel Folders (OPF's) for employees of the Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP) are now electronic. Earlier this spring, all hard copy OPF's had been scanned and were uploaded into the eOPF electronic database. Human Resources is currently using these folders in the performance of their daily work and is also conducting a quality review of those files. Access to eOPF for MRP employees is projected to start at the end of calendar year 2008.

eAuthentication Employee Registration Process

Effective July 8, 2008, the eAuthentication Employee Registration Process will be streamlined for the purpose of meeting several goals, including:

- Shortening the registration process from 2-4 to **2-3 days**
- Compliance with the USDA's new electronic pay stub system
- Increasing employee productivity by allowing them to create an eAuthentication account sooner
- Making registration easier for employees
- Allowing for future integration with other enterprise systems, such as HSPD-12

The **new** registration is as follows:

1. A new employee's data will be entered into his/her agency's Human Resources (HR) system
2. The data in this record will be shared with the eAuthentication system
3. An email will be sent to the new employee containing a Registration Code link
4. The employee will click on the link and will be prompted to enter the last 4 digits of the Social Security Number and Date of Birth
5. From there, the employee will be asked to confirm if their information is correct
6. The employee will create a User ID and Password and then enter their security questions/answers
7. The account will be created and no further steps are required. **The employee will no longer need their SF-50 or Leave and Earnings Statement to register.**



Summer Deployment of Mobile Enrollment Stations for LincPass Credentials

In response to the presidential mandate in 2004 requiring that all MRP federal employees be issued a secure and reliable form of identification (HSPD-12), USDA has partnered with the General Services Administration in the administering and delivery of the new LincPass IDs. Coordination of this effort for employees in remote field locations is challenging. This Summer GSA will utilize portable enrollment stations and will be setting up these stations, for a brief period, at numerous locations. This may be the only opportunity employees will have to enroll for the new ID without having to travel a great distance. Please look at the locations and schedule and see what location makes the best sense for your enrollment. The LincPass Mobile Enrollment Schedule is posted at: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/hr/classification/downloads/summer2008mobilestationschedule.pdf>.

Prior to the scheduled mobile station deployments the APHIS Personnel Security Staff will ensure field employees are sponsored in the GSA system, and ready to enroll. Employees sponsored will then receive an email from **HSDP12Admin@EDS.com** or **GSA** providing them with further guidance on this process. **PLEASE DO NOT DELETE THE MESSAGE** and follow the instructions in the e-mail for enrollment. **Please remember that the location of your mobile enrollment station may not be listed on the web scheduling tool until at least a week prior to its deployment so it's imperative you look first at the scheduling document referenced above and make note of its scheduled opening.** If you need to travel for your enrollment make sure to coordinate and obtain supervisory approval as this is considered official travel. All LincPass credentials (the new ID cards) will be sent to a central USDA depository located in Fort Collins, Colorado for further distribution to the employees. The LincPass credential activation process for employees enrolling at mobile stations has not yet been determined. More information will be forthcoming.



LINC PASS FAQ's

I'm getting married in the next year, how do I change my name on my LincPass?

Soon after you are married, have your Program administrative point of contact submit an SF-52 (Request for Personnel Action) for a name change. Once that is completed, notify the Agency's Personnel Security Office in Minneapolis and they will provide you with further instructions.

Will seasonal employees need a LincPass? If yes, what is the process? Seasonal employees who need regular access to facilities and computers requiring the LincPass will be issued a provisional ID badge.

Will cooperators and contractors need a LincPass? If yes, what is the process and length of time before termination? Note the answer to the previous question. Cooperators would be issued provisional IDs and contractors (based on the length of their contract) would follow the same procedures required of regular employees. Expiration dates would coincide with the contract.

Most facilities have vendors coming into the building to do some work, or to provide pick up and delivery services and need a pass to be able to get in, move about, and get out of the building, will we have visitor LincPass or something along this line as an ID for them or will we have to provide escort or keep opening doors for them? Most facilities will provide visitor IDs or provide an escort, if necessary.

Will we be able to use LincPass at other USDA locations or would we still need a local pass for a specific office? Yes and yes. The pass will be compatible with USDA and eventually other government agencies. That process will take several years to accomplish.

Will it be possible for a LincPass to be coded to provide a specific employee be given 24 hours access into a facility? Will APHIS personnel be able to make this sort of modification to the LincPass, or will every change need to go through DHS or GSA? APHIS will be in charge of access control and can extend access to employees for any hours needed. No one other than APHIS/Security can add or remove access to a badge except for the Riverdale parking access which is under the control of the building management.

Can the cards be revised once we get them to include parking status and secure room access (some space at Riverdale, Regional Office and BSLs have limited access)?

The cards will function as the current cards do and we can extend or restrict access as the supervisors require. Riverdale parking access will also be coded on the card.

Will it be possible for identified APHIS personnel to deactivate a former employee's or lost LincPass ID? Yes. Currently the APHIS Security Officer and the Personnel Security Officer can suspend the badge for physical and logical access. When an employee stops getting paid by NFC, the badge will automatically be deactivated.

What happens if an employee is unable to clear the required background check? The employee's supervisor will be notified through the HR Employee Relations Branch. A process has been approved for employees in this situation.

What exceptions, if any, are being made for employees that are unable to clear the required minimal background investigation? An approved process for employees in this situation exists. It is not an exception or exemption process but a formal process to ensure that employee rights and privacy are protected.

Will all employees receive clear, updated information related to visitors/guests/work colleagues who may come to this building and need access? Yes. Each APHIS facility has its own policy or procedure on dealing with the public, temporary employees and visitors. They vary by facility and what functions that facility performs. It is the facility manager's responsibility to make sure all building personnel know these policies and procedures.

Will my pass get me into any federal building once I receive it? Yes and No. The badge will be accepted as valid identification but you are still subject to those local facilities procedures regarding access.

Will the pass still work the same way as our current passes work with the turnstiles? Yes, the badge works but there is a small change in that the security features built into the badge require you to actually touch the badge to the reader for it to read.

How will we know who will be calling us from GSA, and when we are ready to schedule enrollment? You will receive E-mail notifications from the HSPD-12 team. The e-mail address will be HSPD12Admin@eds.com, with a subject line of "USAccess – Sponsorship Complete. This E-mail will provide instructions to follow to schedule enrollment. DO NOT schedule an enrollment appointment until you receive notification.

Will this pass be accepted as legitimate identification at airports? The trusted traveler program has yet to be implemented at airports. Once it is in place USDA can negotiate with TSA to accept the badge.

What forms of ID are going to be accepted for the PIV process? You will need two forms of ID to register for your USAccess credential. Two forms are required to validate your identity, one of which must be a Government-issued photo ID.

STAFFING NEWS

New Assessment Process for APHIS Supervisors: Applying the *APHIS Leadership Roadmap* to the Application Process



A few weeks ago, APHIS introduced the *Leadership Roadmap* as part of its renewed focus on succession planning. The *Leadership Roadmap* is a tool to be used to advance the succession planning effort in at least two ways: 1) it is a guide to be used for employee development, and 2) it is the basis for evaluating applicants for APHIS supervisory and management positions. Focusing on applicant proficiency in the leadership competencies will allow us to select candidates who have a good balance of both the leadership and technical skills required of our leaders.

MRPBS has now integrated the leadership competencies into the question libraries APHIS managers use to develop vacancy announcements and evaluate applicants. This is a fundamental change in the application and evaluation process for supervisory positions, because traditional KSA statements will no longer be used to gauge the leadership skills of candidates for supervisory positions.

Hiring managers in APHIS will play a grassroots role in this shift in applicant evaluations. Hiring managers will decide which competencies are essential to a leadership position and will determine the importance of each of those essential competencies. Specialists from the MRPBS, Human Resources operations offices recently started leading hiring officials seeking to fill a supervisory position through the following process:

- Hiring managers with a vacant supervisory or management position to fill will start by reviewing the *APHIS Leadership Roadmap*. The [roadmap](#) will guide you to the core competencies the agency believes are critical for advancement to and success in supervisory and management positions.
- Review the position description of the job to be filled. As you review the position description, jot down the critical leadership competencies (refer back to the roadmap) required to do the work documented in the position description.
- After you decide the critical leadership competencies needed, you will select specific questions from a library of questions that have been created by the MRPBS, Human Resources Division. The library of questions for leadership competencies is similar to the technical library of questions currently used for many of the primary occupations in APHIS, and the leadership competency questions will eliminate the use of supervisory and management KSAs. The questions in the leadership competency library are based on the core leadership competencies identified for supervisors and managers in the *APHIS Leadership Roadmap*. (See the attached sample questions related to the supervisory competency for Developing Others.)
- Once you have selected the questions, they will be loaded into a vacancy announcement; applicants for supervisory and management jobs will be asked to answer the specific, competency-based questions you chose. Their responses will then be evaluated to measure their proficiency in each of the identified competencies. This will help distinguish candidates with the best leadership capabilities from other applicants and will, in the long term, ensure that the agency has a pool of talented, competent employees to select for leadership positions.

Along with the leadership competency question library, the Human Resources Division has created the [APHIS Leadership Roadmap Toolkit for Hiring Managers](#) to assist agency supervisors and managers work through the hiring process using the leadership competencies. Officials who submit personnel actions to fill supervisory and management positions receive a copy of the toolkit when they are contacted by their servicing staffing specialist. The toolkit is posted on the HR website for review at: http://inside.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/hrd/hiring_managers.shtml

- If you have additional questions or wish to discuss this in more detail, contact your servicing [staffing specialist](#).

SAMPLE

LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY QUESTIONS – DEVELOPING OTHERS

1. Can you site a situation where you had to give negative feedback to a subordinate and used the feedback to chart a course of skills development or performance improvement by the subordinate?

Please describe the situation, the development activities that were charted, and the accomplishments made by the employee.

2. Which of the following development activities have you personally conducted for the benefit of persons engaged in professional learning activities or serving as members of your organization?

- Developed and delivered presentations, lectures, seminars
- Wrote professional papers and presented them at scientific or professional conferences
- Developed formal academic coursework and conducted classes accredited by colleges or universities
- Served as a guest lecturer in classes held by colleges, universities, or formal in-service training programs
- Conducted on the job training for members of my work group or larger organization
- Assisted individuals prepare and implement individual development plans (IDPs)
- None of the above

Please describe your experience that supports your answer choices. Include specific assignments in your response.

3. Have you planned for, budgeted, and assigned specific developmental opportunities for staff assigned to your organization?

Please describe your experience that supports your answer choices. Include specific assignments in your response.

SAMPLE

Monster Government solutions, the proprietor of the on-line application system, has changed the system name from "QuickHire" to "Hiring Management." Consequently, we have changed the name of this column to "Hiring Management Hints." This is our only change. You can expect the same helpful guidance to continue in this column.

Hiring Management Hints:

Q: I forgot my USAJOBS Username and/or Password!

Follow these instructions to reset/access your USAJOBS Username and/or Password:

1. Go to the USAJOBS website: <http://www.usajobs.gov/>.
2. At the website, select MY USAJOBS.
3. In the USAJOBS Username and Password log in section, follow the link, "**Did you forget your Username and/or Password,**" located below **[Log In]**.

4. Follow the on-screen USAJOBS prompts to reset/retrieve your account information. Step #1 requires you input your registered e-mail address.
5. Step #2 requires you input the answer to your selected secret question.
6. USAJOBS allows you three opportunities to enter the answer to your secret question correctly. If you are unable to recall the answer to your selected secret question after three tries, the system will prompt you to complete a series of questions about your account. Correctly matching 4 of these questions will allow you access to your account and the opportunity to set a new password.
7. Once you have changed your password, you will be logged into your account. At this point we recommend accessing your profile information to verify your Username and stored account information.

If you are unable to successfully reset your password and access your USAJOBS account using the above steps, send an email requesting help accessing your account to mayday@fedjobs.gov.

Q: How do I check the status of my application through the USAJOBS website?

If you wish to check the status of your application (no formal notification will be sent), you may do so on-line 24 hours a day from any computer with internet access. In addition, your status is updated as soon as determinations have been made, giving you the most up to date information available. To check your status:

1. Go to the USAJOBS website: <http://www.usajobs.gov/>.
2. At the website, select MY USAJOBS.
3. Fill in your USAJOBS Username and Password and click **[Log In]**.
4. Once logged in, select MY Applications.
5. You will see a complete list of vacancies to which you have applied and the USAJOBS status of your application. A more detailed description of your status for USDA positions is available by following the **More Information** link located in the application status column. The **More Information** link will be located below your USAJOBS status.
6. Following the **More Information** link will transfer you to the USDA system.
7. Once at the USDA system, "View Detailed Status of applications with this agency" will be selected, click **[Continue]**.
8. The position for which you are seeking a status update will be listed on this page. Detailed information regarding your status is located in the comments column. (**Note:** Clicking **[e-mail]** located at the end of each row will e-mail a copy of your answers to the vacancy questions for the selected vacancy announcement to your stored e-mail address.)
9. To return to USAJOBS, click **[Return to ROS]** located at the bottom of the web page.

Additional Information:

If you have additional questions about any of the information above, or other questions related to applying through USAJOBS, contact your staffing service provider. You may also e-mail questions to our dedicated application help e-mail address: apphelp@aphis.usda.gov