



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Animal and  
Plant Health  
Inspection  
Service

Marketing &  
Regulatory  
Programs Business  
Services

Human Resources  
Division

1400 Independence  
Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC  
20250

DATE: November 7, 2012

SUBJECT: Notice of Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA)

TO: Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA)  
Employees

FROM: *Marsha A. Wiggins for*  
Marsha A. Wiggins,  
Director, Human Resources  
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As you may be aware, there is a significant level of uncertainty about the funding levels that will be provided to Federal agencies during FY 2013. To assist its agencies in addressing potential budget reductions, USDA is making available a variety of tools to minimize the impact on employees and ensure equitable treatment among those involved.

One such tool that GIPSA has chosen to use is Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA), also known as “early out.” This authority expands the normal retirement eligibility to allow employees to voluntarily retire, with an immediate annuity, with 20 years of service at age 50, or at 25 years of service regardless of age. The early out authority is only offered to eligible GIPSA employees in the following organizational units:

- Office of the Administrator-Civil Rights Staff;
- Office of the Administrator- Information Technology Staff;
- Office of the Administrator- Management and Budget Services; and
- Packers and Stockyards Program

Please note that employees in occupations for which the agency has direct-hire authority are excluded from this opportunity, which in GIPSA means employees in Information Technology Specialist (Security), GS-2210, positions at grade 9 and above.

If you wish to take advantage of the VERA opportunity, please submit your Application for VERA between November 13, 2012, and December 7, 2012. Please read the application carefully before signing it. Employees who submit an application will be notified by email of acceptance of their application, and will be provided with instructions for the next steps in the retirement process. The effective date for early retirement must be no later than December 31, 2012.

This early retirement opportunity does **not** include any buyout offer.

It is critical that you understand your decision to separate by early retirement is entirely voluntary. This is an important decision and you are encouraged to seek retirement information from your servicing Human Resources Benefits Specialist, Barbara Watry, at (612) 336-3301, or via email to [Barbara.J.Watry@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:Barbara.J.Watry@aphis.usda.gov) , as well as use the links below to obtain the documents you need for your decision making.

Please review the information in the enclosures thoroughly.

**Enclosures:**

Enclosure 1: How to Request Retirement Information, so that you can make an informed decision:

[www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/hr/benefits/downloads/How\\_to\\_Request\\_Retirement\\_Calculation\\_GIPSA\\_VERA.doc](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/hr/benefits/downloads/How_to_Request_Retirement_Calculation_GIPSA_VERA.doc)

Enclosure 2: Frequently Asked Questions on VERA, so that you better understand this benefit:

[www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/hr/benefits/downloads/GIPSA\\_VERA\\_FAQ.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/hr/benefits/downloads/GIPSA_VERA_FAQ.pdf)

Enclosure 3: Other Considerations for VERA, so that you take appropriate steps to be prepared:

[www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/hr/benefits/downloads/GIPSA\\_VERA\\_Other\\_Considerations.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/hr/benefits/downloads/GIPSA_VERA_Other_Considerations.pdf)

Enclosure 4: GIPSA Application for VERA, should you choose to take advantage of this early retirement opportunity:

[www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/hr/benefits/downloads/Application\\_for\\_GIPSA\\_VERA.doc](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/hr/benefits/downloads/Application_for_GIPSA_VERA.doc)