

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

When I got the word back in March (only 6 months ago, but somehow it seems like years) that we were shifting the vast majority of USDA employees who work in offices to 100% telework, I was sitting at my desk as Chief of Staff to the Chief Operating Officer (COO) in the Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) mission area, preparing for my son's high school graduation, and excited for my daughter's competitive lacrosse recruitment season. When I left the Whitten Building on that beautiful, sunny afternoon, I figured we would probably be back by early April. I had no idea I would not be returning to my old office; however, in May, I was soon looking forward to transitioning into my new position - Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP) Human Resources Division (HRD) Director. I never thought I would be doing that at home.

It's been an unconventional transition into my dream job within this amazing mission area! When I gladly accepted the offer back in March, I never conceived, in my wildest dreams, that we would find ourselves moving into October still working from home, wearing masks at the grocery store with the cashiers behind plexiglass, and having our kitchens doubling as virtual classrooms for our school-aged kids. All these months later, I'm still sad that I haven't met our team in person. Instead of focusing and tackling some of the really exciting work, we're balancing those projects with everything that COVID has brought.

Like all of you, COVID has impacted my life. For example, after 12 years of his hard work (you really have no idea! LOL), I did not get to attend my son's high school graduation. Instead, I sent him to college with just a one hour drop off before I had to say goodbye to my baby! In addition, my daughter missed her entire lacrosse season, which bummed her out. I know you understand all of these challenges because you have your own stories and probably even greater challenges. So much changed in what seems like an instant; however, I am thankful that my family remains safe and healthy. I hope that all your families are the same. I know we will survive this pandemic.

Part of what has helped me adjust to all of this change is thinking of it as our "new normal", and I know we all will be stronger as we get out of this pandemic. I know there are many of you who view the pandemic in different terms, as an extended anomaly, looking forward to things gradually returning to where life was at the beginning of March. Both perspectives are healthy since they both help all of us cope; however, I think both will likely shift and evolve over time for all of us. I know it is not the challenge, but it's how we adapt to the challenges. I know we are all learning to embrace each day as it comes.

Continue reading on next page...

positive thoughts



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<u>Director's Corner</u>	<u>1-2</u>
<u>HRD Info</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Policy</u>	<u>4-5</u>
<u>Staffing</u>	<u>6-11</u>
<u>Benefits</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Leave and Comp</u>	<u>13-15</u>
<u>CTOD</u>	<u>16-18</u>

We hope that the HR Broadcast is meeting your needs and communicating topics of interest, but if there are items you would like to see included in future issues, please contact our HR Broadcast Layout Editor Christina Furnkranz, at 301-851-2884 or at Christina.S.Furnkranz@usda.gov



HR BROADCAST

Continued from page 1...

In our last edition, I spoke of "HumanKind" and the need to be both – human and kind. In this Broadcast, I want to speak of resiliency, which Merriam-Webster defines as "an ability to recover from or adjust easily to adversity or change."

As a mission and as individuals, I see that we continue to get the work done and continue to exceed what is asked of us for our country and our family. We do this as we navigate this new world with a true integration of balancing home, work, and social lives; however, because at the moment, there appears to be very few boundaries among the three. To help us adapt, we MUST continue to wear protective gear, work with social distancing, work with our school-aged children, care for higher risk family members and others, and embrace the occasional child walking into Zoom meetings and the barking dogs! We can all laugh in the moment, which is very healthy! We need to support one another as fellow human beings, and we will continue to get our work done in this environment because we are resilient.

I know that we can expect more changes - from the weather and the change of seasons - to moving forward in the phased re-opening process of our offices or temporarily stepping back to other changes that might bring more impacts to our work and/or our families and friends. As an MRP family, the Human Resources Division is here to assist you, to support you, and to help set you up for success in the work that you do. We will continue to bring you updated information on laws, regulations, and policies and develop training that gives you the tools to manage these times, both from a work and life wellness perspective.

Finally, I want to reiterate my wish that you all stay safe and resilient, laugh often, and breathe deeply. We will get through this together and be stronger for the experience!

keep going

Terri Meighan

Terri Meighan, HR Director



HR BROADCAST

EMPLOYEE EXIT SURVEY

By **Patricia Flower** (Patricia.A.Flower@usda.gov, 202-799-7082)

As part of USDA's ongoing employee engagement effort, significant emphasis has been placed within MRP on gathering employee opinions through listening sessions, websites and portals, the Employee Viewpoint Survey, and various other methods. Information is also needed from employees who leave the MRP agencies, and because of that, a web-based process is in place for individuals to complete an online exit survey. The exit survey gives employees the opportunity to communicate their reasons for leaving, perceptions of the work environment, and overall satisfaction with their agency. Exit survey results are confidential and provided to agency leadership on an aggregate level only.

To ensure that departing employees are notified of the exit survey, HRD has an exit survey coordinator to facilitate the process. Pat Flower of the Human Resources Division, HR Systems and Reporting Branch, is the exit survey coordinator and can be reached at 202-799-7082, or by email at Patricia.A.Flower@usda.gov.

The following procedure should be followed:
(1) supervisors, administrative officers, assigned designees, or departing employees should contact the exit survey coordinator to obtain the link to the exit survey website, and (2) the exit survey link is then sent directly to the departing employee for completion.



Technology At Work

Persons with disabilities who need program information in alternate formats (braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 or 844-433-2774 (voice and TTY). <https://www.targetcenter.dm.usda.gov/>



FY2021 PERFORMANCE PLAN DEADLINE EXTENSION AND ePMA

By **Gwen Montgomery** (Gwen.Montgomery@usda.gov, 301-851-2928)

On October 1, 2020, USDA transitioned to the 2-tier performance evaluation system for eligible General Schedule and Wage Grade employees. Along with this change in policy, USDA also implemented the automated Enterprise Performance Management Application (ePMA). To assist with the transition, the Department extended the deadline for establishing and issuing FY2021 performance plans to **November 30, 2020**. As a reminder, performance plans under the 2-tier system include:



- A mission results-oriented performance element which includes the mandatory MRP civil rights standards, and customer perspective standards in a stand-alone element or incorporated in an existing element.
- Supervisory plans which require the General Supervision/Leadership performance element to include the mandatory standards written by the Department and MRP.
- Additional performance elements and standards that are necessary for the position.
- All performance elements to be designated as critical.
- Performance standards that are written at the Fully Successful performance level.

Supervisors must refer to the collective bargaining agreements for information regarding FY2021 performance plans for bargaining unit employees.

Appraisal Forms and ePMA

The transition to ePMA will occur in a 2-step process. Step One will require supervisors to immediately prepare FY2021 performance plans on the recently released AD435-E and AD-435S performance appraisal forms and issue the plans to their employees. USDA and agency strategic goals and mandatory performance standards have been preloaded on the performance appraisal forms. Step Two involves supervisors, program contacts, and Human Resources working together to load the recently issued FY2021 performance plans into ePMA. Training and other resources for using the ePMA system will be available in mid to late October.

For questions regarding performance management, please contact Gwen Montgomery. For questions regarding ePMA, please contact the Human Resources Systems and Reporting Branch at HR.System.Access@usda.gov.





FEDERAL EMPLOYEES PAID LEAVE ACT (FEPLA)

By Nella Roberts (Nella.H.Roberts@usda.gov, 301-851-2910)



FEPLA, also commonly referred to as paid parental leave, is a new leave benefit available to eligible employees beginning October 1, 2020. It entitles eligible employees up to 12 weeks (480 hours) of paid parental leave. Generally, full-time and part-time employees who are eligible for unpaid leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and have a qualifying event are eligible for FEPLA. A qualifying event is defined as a birth or placement (adoption / foster care) of a child with the employee on or after October 1, 2020. It is the date of this event that creates the "parental" role and the FEPLA entitlement.

To use FEPLA, an employee must meet the requirements above and invoke unpaid FMLA for which FEPLA may be substituted. There are no carryover provisions for any unused FEPLA. FEPLA may only be used during the 12-month period following the birth or placement. An employee may not be paid for unused or expired FEPLA.

Employees are not required to use annual or sick leave before FEPLA. Additionally, employees may use annual or sick leave without invoking FMLA in order to preserve their FEPLA entitlement.

Employees are required to sign (in writing / electronically) a 12-week service agreement (SA) **prior** to the start of the FEPLA leave. The SA is fulfilled by working for 12 weeks once the use of FEPLA time-off ends. Any periods of paid or unpaid leave, time-off, or other periods of nonduty status (e.g., furlough, AWOL) do not count towards the completion of the 12-week SA obligation. The 12-week work obligation is in law and applies regardless of the actual amount of FEPLA used (i.e., an employee who uses less than 12 weeks of FEPLA is still obligated to work 12 weeks). Any periods of work between intermittent uses of FEPLA do not count toward completion of the 12-week work obligation.

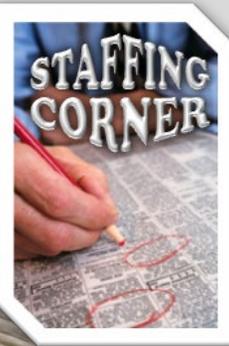
Beginning pay period 20, 2020, the following WebTA codes will be available for use.

TRANSACTION CODE	PREFIX	DESCRIPTION
62	70	Biological birth
62	71	Placement for adoption
62	72	Placement for foster care



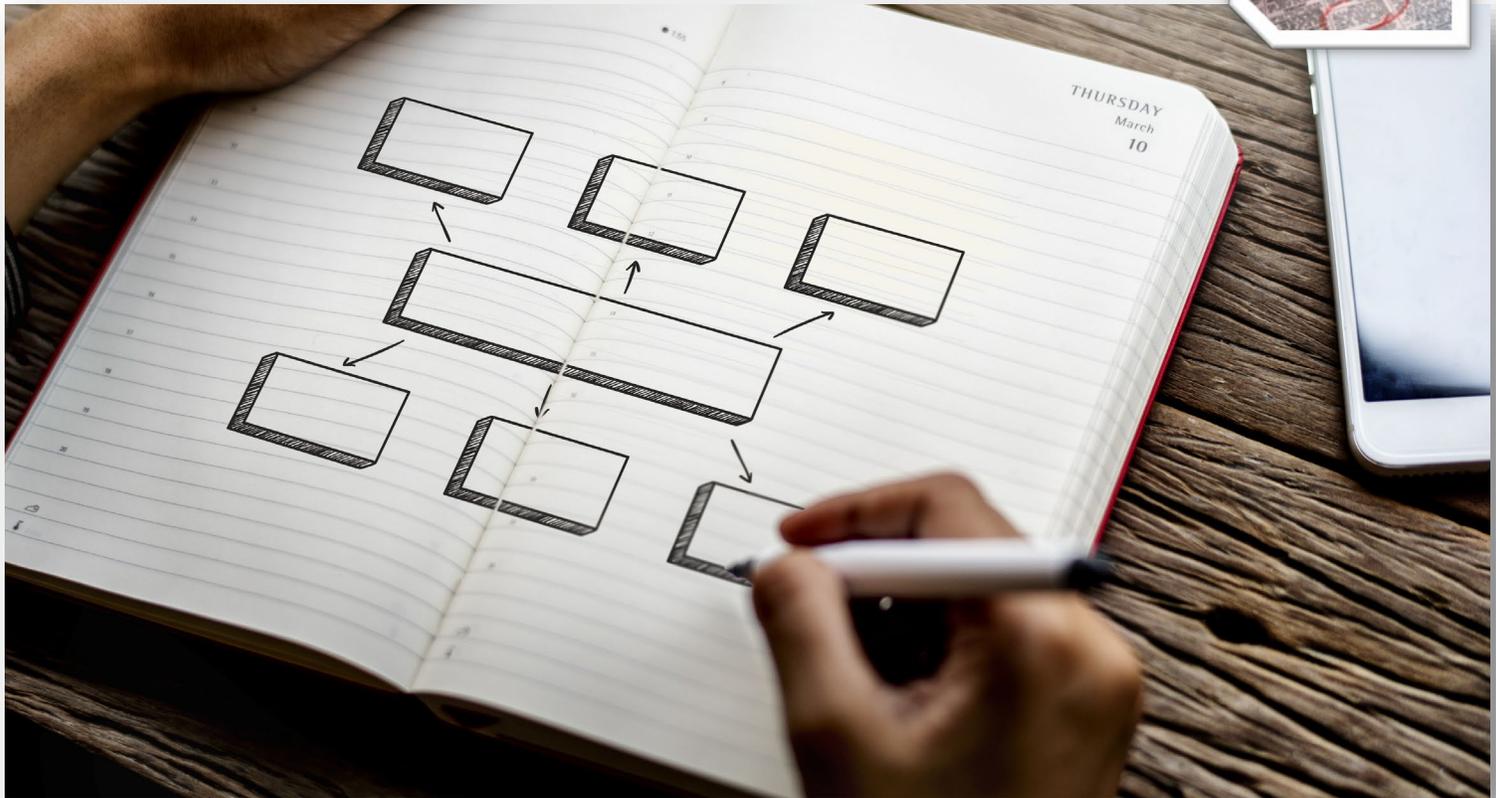
The Human Resources Division's Policy Branch is updating the Human Resources Desk Guide, Subchapter 4630, Absence and Leave, Section F – Family and Medical Leave Act, to include FEPLA guidance.





WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A REASSIGNMENT AND REALIGNMENT?

By **Katie Henry** (Katie.L.Henry@usda.gov, 612-336-3329)



Organizations sometimes need to change employee assignments due to new business requirements. When doing so, there may be a personnel action required to align the employee to the appropriate organization or position. When initiating these actions, it is important to understand the difference between a reassignment and a realignment so the right action can be requested. In order to determine the action to be taken, we need to review the situation in terms of the position and the employee.

In the case of a **Realignment**, the employee moves with his/her position to a new organizational structure. If the employee and an unchanged position move to a new organization and the position will not exist in the former organization, it is considered a **realignment** action.

In the case of a **Reassignment**, the employee moves to a new position. This is considered a **reassignment** action because the change is to document the movement of the employee to a different position description and duties. This could be with or without a change in the assigned organizational structure.

In addition to the two situations above, if you find you have employees in the wrong organizational unit/code, it could mean that a correction to a previous action may need to be completed rather than requesting a new action. To determine the action needed, if you are unsure, please contact your HR Staffing Specialist and/or Classification Specialist for assistance.

Any questions? Please contact your [HR](#) service provider.





DIRECT HIRE FOR HIRING MANAGERS

By **Keith McFarlin** (Keith.Mcfarlin@usda.gov, 612-336-3408)

As a hiring manager, what does Direct Hire mean for you?

A Direct-Hire Authority (DHA) is a hiring authority that the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) may grant to Federal agencies for filling vacancies in specific occupations, grade levels, and locations when it can be proven that there is a critical hiring need or a severe shortage of candidates. Positions announced under DHA forego the need for the hiring manager to complete a question library. It also allows all applicants that meet the OPM basic requirements and specialized experience needed for the position to be referred and considered for selection. This helps ensure that in the designated hard-to-fill series, hiring managers have the opportunity to consider all qualified candidates who apply, hopefully yielding the widest applicant pool.

How is using a DHA different from filling jobs through case examining procedures?

- Applicant caps are not used to limit the number of applications
- DHA should be the only method used to recruit for a position (e.g., no separate merit promotion announcement)
- Cannot be used for an interdisciplinary position if one or more of the occupations and/or grade levels is not covered by a DHA, e.g., Interdisciplinary GS-403/401/701 – the GS-403 is not covered by a DHA so the job must be announced under case examining procedures
- Applicants aren't scored, so there are no assessment questions or ratings assigned by a panel, i.e., no use of Model A, B, or C
- Applicants are only required to meet minimum (basic) qualifications, including specialized experience, for the announced position instead of being assigned to quality categories
- Veterans' preference doesn't apply in either the referral or selection process
- All qualified applicants are referred on the certificate in alphabetical order
- The hiring manager can select any of the candidates referred on the certificate

How is using a DHA the same as filling a job under case examining procedures?

- Position descriptions must be classified
- Selection priority applies to applicants eligible under the USDA Reemployment Priority List, Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan, and the USDA Career Transition Assistance Plan
- Vacancy announcements must be posted on USAJOBS for a minimum of 5 business days
- Applicants must apply to the announcement during the open period
- HRO evaluates applications and issues certificates by grade level
- Certificates are valid for 90 days

Current Governmentwide Direct Hire Authorities

Scientific, Technical, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) Occupations – This DHA was approved in 2018 and applies nationwide for the specific occupations/grade levels listed below. This authority expires October 11, 2023.

Continue reading on next page...



HR BROADCAST



Continued from page 7...

Position Title	Occupational Series	Grade Levels
Economist	GS-0110	GS-11 through 15
Biological Scientist	GS-0401	GS-11 through 15
Fishery Biologist	GS-0482	GS-11 through 15
General Engineer	GS-0801	GS-11 through 15
Civil Engineer	GS-0810	GS-11 through 15
Physical Scientist	GS-1301, 1306, 1310, 1320 only	GS-11 through 15
Actuary	GS-1510	GS-11 through 15
Mathematician	GS-1520	GS-11 through 15
Mathematical Statistician and Statistician	GS-1529, 1530	GS-11 through 15
Acquisitions Specialist	GS-1102	GS-11 through 15

***These positions must require IT knowledge and IT competencies. The work must be coded to include cybersecurity functions as supported by the job codes in the [Guide to Data Standards](#) and the [NICE Cybersecurity Workforce Framework, 2017](#), and the cybersecurity work must be performed the majority of the time.*

Cybersecurity and Related Occupations – This DHA was approved in 2018 and applies nationwide for the specific occupations/grade levels listed below. This authority may be used indefinitely or until OPM terminates the authority.

Position Title	Occupational Series	Grade Levels
Computer Engineers (Cybersecurity)	GS-0854	GS-12 through 15
Computer Scientists (Cybersecurity)	GS-1550	GS-12 through 15
Electronics Engineers (Cybersecurity)	GS-0855	GS-12 through 15
IT Cybersecurity Specialist**	GS-2210	GS-12 through 15

Information Technology Management (Information Security and Cybersecurity) – Applies to the GS-2210-09 and above in all geographic locations. This authority may be used indefinitely or until terminated by OPM.

Veterinary Medical Officer – Applies to GS-0701-11 and above in all geographic locations. This authority may be used indefinitely or until terminated by OPM.

Medical Occupations – Applies to all grade levels in all locations for Diagnostic Radiologic Technologist, GS-0647; Medical Officer, GS-0602; Nurse, GS-0610, GS-0620; and Pharmacist, GS-0660. This authority may be used indefinitely or until terminated by OPM.

Agency Specific Direct Hire Authority

Agricultural Commodity Graders and Technicians – Applies to GS-5/7 Ag Commodity Graders (GS-1980) and GS-3/4/5 Ag Commodity Technicians (GS-1981). OPM approved the request for DHA based on a critical hiring need. The authority may be used nationwide and is currently effective September 25, 2019, through September 30, 2021.

Appointment Options

Agencies may use any of these DHAs to make competitive service career-career conditional, term, or temporary appointments.

Non-Competitive Appointments

This authority is not used for non-competitive appointments. The series above must still be announced on USAJOBS to use the authority for appointment.

Please contact your Staffing Specialist with any questions by clicking [here](#).





UNDERSTANDING YOUR APPOINTMENT

By Amy Miller (Amy.Miller3@usda.gov, 612-336-3596)

Career advancement is important. Moving ahead in your Federal career often means applying for positions at higher grade levels or positions with an expanded opportunity or career ladder. When applying for positions on USAJOBS.gov you need to understand what type of position/appointment you currently hold to ensure that you are eligible for those announcements and supply the supporting documentation.

Understanding your Appointment:

Are you on an Excepted Service appointment? Examples include, but are not limited to: Pathways appointments, **Veterans' Recruitment Appointment (VRA)** appointments, and various Schedule A appointments.

Knowing your appointment type can help you determine whether you can apply through Merit Promotion announcement procedures. There are many types of Excepted Service appointments that employees may hold that limit the announcements for which they can be considered.

One easy way to determine what type of appointment you hold is by looking at your SF-50. Two blocks that are important to review are the Tenure (Block 24) and Position Occupied (Block 34.) These can be found in the Employee Data and Position Data sections of your SF-50. This will help you understand the type of appointment you currently hold (Ex: Competitive or Excepted) and what your tenure is (Ex: Permanent, Conditional, etc.).

Note: Your SF-50 can be accessed here from a Government IP address:

<https://eopf.opm.gov/usdalanding/>

EMPLOYEE DATA							
23. Veterans Preference		24. Tenure		25. Agency Use		26. Veterans Preference for RIF	
1	1 - None 2 - 5 Point 3 - 10 Point/Disability 4 - 10 Point/Compassionate 5 - 10 Point/Other 6 - 10 Point/Compassionate/30%	2	1 - Permanent 2 - Subfield 3 - Non-Competitive 4 - Conditional			YES	X NO
27. FEGLI		28. Administrative Appointment		29. Pay Rate Determinant			
C0	BASIC	9	NOT APPLICABLE	0	NOT APPLICABLE		
30. Retirement Plan		31. Service Comp. Date (Leave)		32. Work Schedule		33. Part-Time Hours: Per Biweekly Pay Period	
KF	FERS (FRAE)	08/04/19	F	FULL TIME			
POSITION DATA							
34. Position Occupied		35. FLSA Category		36. Appropriation Code		37. Bargaining Unit Status	
2	1 - Competitive Service 2 - Excepted Service 3 - SES General 4 - SES Career Reserved	E	E - Except S - Nonexcept			8888	

Am I Eligible to Apply for this Vacancy?

Announcements on USAJOBS.gov are full of great information about the position you may want to apply for, details about who can apply, and what documents are required. We recommend that applicants **read the complete announcement** prior to applying. Two key sections to review before completing your application are the "This job is open to" and "Required Documents" sections.



"This job is open to" section will list the hiring paths set up by USAJOBS and will also contain agency specific clarification text to help you determine who can apply for a vacancy. The clarification text is extremely important for applicants to have a full understanding of who is eligible to apply.

Continue reading on next page...



HR BROADCAST

Continued from page 9...

The "Required Documents" section will detail which documents need to be submitted to ensure your application is complete. This section will also specify what needs to be filled in for blocks 24 and 34 on your most recent SF-50 (highlighted below):

[Help](#)

This job is open to

- Career transition (CTAP, ICTAP, RPL)**
Federal employees who meet the definition of a "surplus" or "displaced" employee.
- Internal to an agency**
Current federal employees of this agency.
- Special authorities**
Individuals eligible under a special authority not listed above, but defined in the federal hiring regulations.

Clarification from the agency

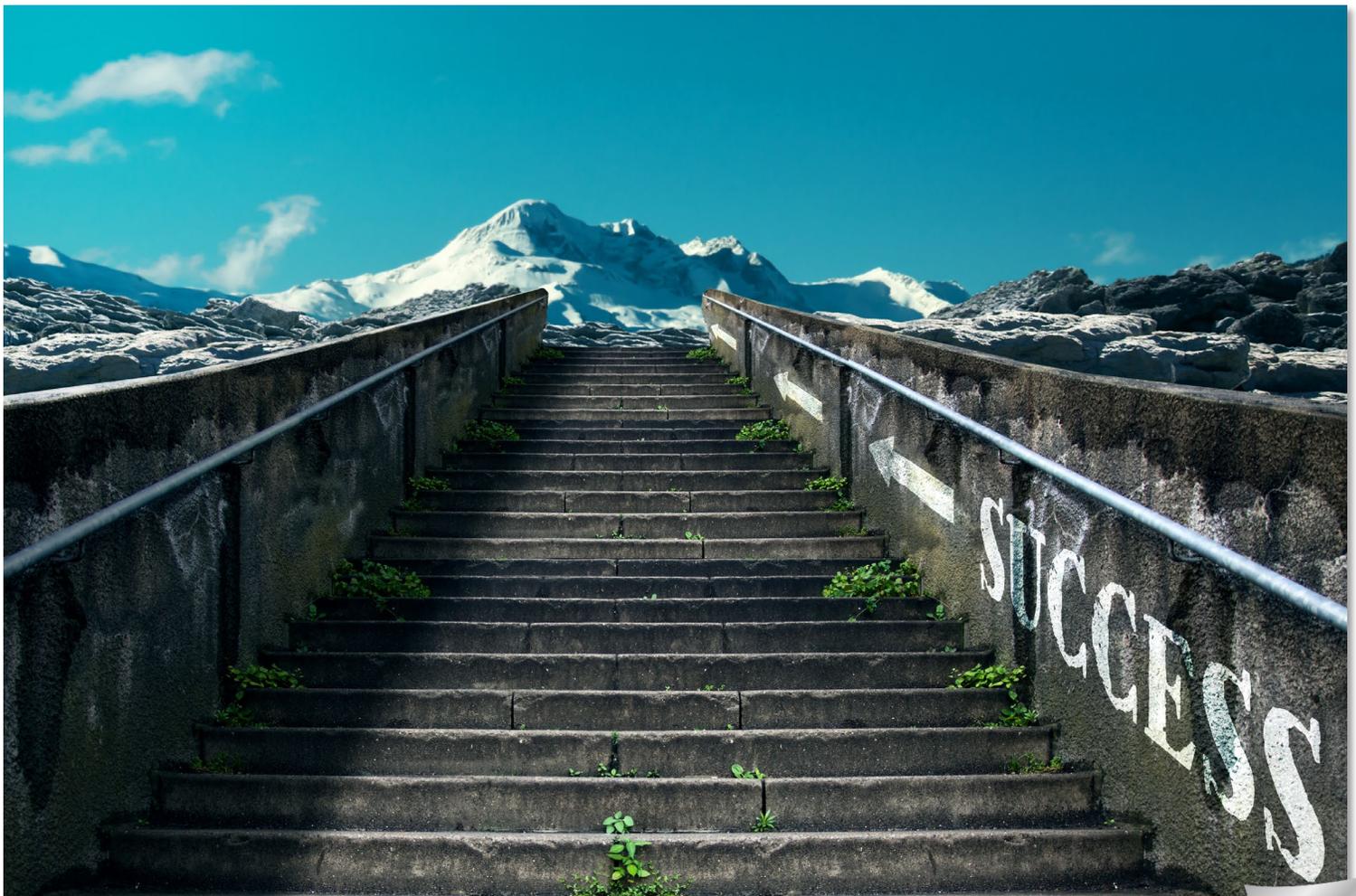
Applications will be accepted only from current permanent USDA employees with competitive status; and CTAP/RPL eligible candidates and permanent Farm Service County Office employees.

Current and former career/career-conditional Federal employees:

- Most recent non-award Notification of Personnel Action (SF-50) showing you are/were in the competitive service (block 24 must contain a 1 or 2 and block 34 must contain a 1), highest grade held (or promotion potential) on a permanent basis, position title, series and grade. If your current grade is not your highest permanent grade, submit an additional SF-50 showing your highest grade.

We want you to feel confident about applying for jobs on USAJOBS, and we want you to continue to grow within the agency. We also hope that having more understanding of your Federal appointment will help you be successful when applying to vacancies on USAJOBS.gov.

Any questions? Please contact your Staffing service provider.





HIRING MANAGER HANDBOOK

By **Rebecca Meyer** (Rebecca.Meyer@usda.gov, 612-336-3426)

Are you a new supervisor or a manager who hasn't filled a vacant position recently? Are you in an administrative and/or resource management position and support managers with the hiring process? We know the hiring process can involve a lot of steps and/or a variety of options for meeting your specific hiring needs. In addition to having your HR Specialist as a great resource, you can also find answers and resources to your hiring questions in our **Hiring Manager Handbook**.

The newly updated **Hiring Manager Handbook** walks through the hiring process step-by-step and provides information about topics such as:

- Noncompetitive recruitment and hiring authorities that don't require an announcement on USAJOBS;
- Definitions and differences between competitive recruitment methods that are announced on USAJOBS (e.g., Merit Promotion, Direct Hire Authority, Case/Delegated Examining);
- Guidance on the paperwork and information your HR Specialist may need to open a competitive announcement;
- How to develop specialized experience examples used to evaluate applicant qualifications;
- How to conduct interviews, check references, and document applicant declinations and failures to respond; and
- Orientation and onboarding of your new employee.

The **Hiring Manager Handbook** can be found by clicking the following link:

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/publications/Hiring-Manager-Handbook.pdf>

For additional questions and/or clarification on information in the **Hiring Manager Handbook**, please contact your servicing HR Specialist. https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/business-services/HRD/Contact_Us





UPCOMING BENEFITS INFORMATION

By **Stephanie Niemi** (Stephanie.M.Niemi@usda.gov, 612-336-3403)



EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

BENEFITS OPEN SEASON 2020

Open season is quickly approaching. This is your annual opportunity to review and change your enrollment in the Federal Employees' Health Benefits (FEHB) program, the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Programs (FEDVIP), and to enroll in the Federal Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAFEDS) for health care and/or dependent care for 2020. The 2020 Open Season will run from November 9, 2020 to December 14, 2020. When premiums for 2021 are posted they can be found at our website: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/business-services/HRD/Benefits>

Watch for the all-employee emails and check our website for more information as Open Season draws near.

TSP Changes for New Employees Hired after October 1, 2020

Beginning Oct. 1, 2020, new hires to the Federal service will have their employee contribution rate into their Thrift Savings Plan accounts set to an automatic 5%. This is an increase from the current 3% and automatically sets up employees up to receive the maximum contribution from agencies. New employees that wish to change this contribution amount can visit their Employee Personal Page at www.nfc.usda.gov/epps or complete the TSP-1, Election Form, and send it to the Human Resources office. You may specify a whole percentage of basic pay that you want to contribute each pay period, or you may specify a whole dollar amount. Whether you specify a percentage or dollar amount of your pay, your total contributions for the year cannot exceed the Internal Revenue Code's elective deferral limit for the year. Your contribution election will remain in effect until you make another election to change the amount of your contributions or to stop them.



TIMEKEEPER TIPS

By **Kris Wagner** (Kristine.L.Wagner@usda.gov, 612-336-3317)

New to being an MRP timekeeper? Here are the answers to some frequently asked timekeeper questions.

T&A Contact Point Numbers

Q: How do I update my **new** employee's T&A Contact Point Number within webTA?

This can be done by using the Timekeeper Profile from your Timekeeper Main Menu in webTA. The contact information is stored in the timekeeper's assigned employee's timesheet profiles.

To update your T&A Contact Point Number, complete the following steps:

1. Click **Timekeeper Profile** from the Delegates/Reassignment section on the Timekeeper main menu.
2. Type your contact information – be sure to complete **all** of the fields.
3. Click **Save**.

Once this information is saved, any new employee that is moved to your list will automatically be updated with the number you've stored. The NFC database will be updated after payroll runs.

Q: How do I update my **existing** employee's T&A Contact Point Number?

To make this update, please contact your Leave and Compensation service provider. Changes to an existing employee can only be made at the HR level.

T&A Contact Point Number Key

- **Agency:** The Timekeeper's assigned agency. This will automatically populate based on the agency you're under in webTA.
- **State Code:** The Timekeeper's assigned State.
- **Town:** The Timekeeper's assigned town.
- **Unit:** The Timekeeper's assigned town.
- **Timekeeper:** The Timekeeper's assigned ID.



Takeover Function

With the most recent update to webTA, employees who have the Timekeeper role now have the capability to take over employees within webTA who are within their same agency.

To take over a new employee or one who is transferring from another program within your same agency, complete the following steps:

1. Click **Takeover Employee** from the Delegates/Reassignment section on the main menu.
2. Enter the name of the employee you want to take over and hit **Search**. You must search by last name only.
3. Click **Select** on the row that identifies the employee you want to take over. The employee is assigned to your employee group.
4. Click **Cancel** to go back to the main menu.

Q: What do I do if I need to take over an employee who is coming from another agency?

You must first wait for the personnel action to apply. Remember, we process in arrears, so the new/transferring employee won't be available to take over until the 2nd week of his/her first pay period with you.

Continue reading on next page...



HR BROADCAST

Continued from page 13...

Corrected Timesheets (PPT Attached)

In general, corrected timesheets may be completed to change hours, TC codes, FMMI codes, etc. within the past 26 pay periods. If corrections are needed going back further than 26 pay periods, please reach out to your Civilian Pay Technician for assistance.

To validate a corrected timesheet, two remarks are required. An **Action Remark and a Pay Period Remark**. Corrected timesheets should be completed prior to the current pay period timesheet.

Schedule	Totals	Remarks (0)	Leave Balances
Pay Period Remark			
Add	Date	Ent	
+			
Action Remarks: <input type="text"/>			
Characters Remaining: 242			

If multiple corrections are needed for an employee, **a maximum of 5 corrected timesheets may be submitted during a given pay period**. If more than 5 corrected timesheets are completed in webTA for an employee, the additional corrected timesheets will not fully process at the NFC level and will need to be completed again. For example, if you need to do 8 corrected timesheets for a single employee, 5 may be completed in pay period 23 and then the remaining 3 corrected timesheets may be completed during pay period 24.

If a corrected timesheet is completed to change leave types or the numbers of hours used, the employee's **leave balances should update in webTA after payroll has been completed by NFC**. The employee and the timekeeper should be able to see the updated leave balances the following Monday (payday). If the updated leave balances cannot be seen at that time, a leave audit (HRO 717) will need to be completed and sent to the HR Leave Audit mailbox (HR.Leave.Audits@usda.gov) to demonstrate the correct leave balances. When the leave audit has been reviewed, you'll be contacted with further information/instructions.

If a corrected timesheet is completed to accrue or earn credit hours, regular compensatory time, or travel compensatory time, these hours cannot be used until the corrected timesheet has been fully processed with payroll for the current pay period. These hours may be used *after* they apply to the webTA and NFC payroll system. For example, a corrected timesheet is needed to add 5 hours of regular compensatory time worked during pay period 13. The correction will be processed during pay period 15. These 5 hours **may not** be used on the timesheet for pay period 15. They will be available for use on the timesheet processed for pay period 16.

Any questions? Please contact your Leave and Compensation service provider.

These tips can also be found on our website at the following location:
https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/busin-ess-services/HRD/Leave_Compensation_Team/lc-timekeeper-tips





OASDI TAX DEFERRAL

By **Kris Wagner** (Kristine.L.Wagner@usda.gov, 612-336-3317)

On August 8, 2020, the President signed an Executive Order to temporarily defer employees' Old Age Survivors and Disabilities Insurance (OASDI - also known as Social Security) deductions due to COVID-19. Beginning with pay period 18, 2020, if your wages (subject to OASDI) are less than \$4,000, Social Security taxes are not withheld.

Q: How can I determine if I'm an "eligible employee" for the Social Security Tax Deferral?

For those employees who would normally have OASDI withheld, the National Finance Center will automatically calculate your eligibility on a pay period by pay period basis. The payroll tax deferral will be implemented for all Executive Branch agencies and their eligible employees, and if you are eligible for the deferral, you will automatically see a change in your paycheck.

Q: How do I determine my Social Security (OASDI) wages?

To determine your wages subject to Social Security, identify your total gross pay for the pay period and subtract your Federal Employees' Health Benefits (including any dental and vision insurance) and Flex fund deduction (if applicable). If the result of your Social Security wages is under \$4000, OASDI will not be deducted.

Q: Can I opt out?

No. Federal employees are not eligible to opt-out of the deferral if their Social Security wages fall within the stated limits. The deferral will happen automatically.

Q: How long will the deferral last?

The deferral is for wages paid during the period of September 1, 2020, through December 31, 2020. The Human Resources Division will provide additional information as it is received. Any questions should be forwarded to your servicing Leave and Compensation service provider. Please click [here](#) to find your contact.





CAREER DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

By **Carol Roller** (Carol.A.Roller@usda.gov, 301-851-2892)
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Center for Training and
Organization Development

The beginning of the new fiscal year is the ideal time to reflect on developing your career. After meeting with your supervisor for your annual performance review, plan to schedule another meeting to discuss your Individual Development Plan (IDP) within the new few weeks.

The IDP Meeting

Before your IDP meeting, take some time to reflect on your career goals and the feedback you received. Consider the following:

- What are your strengths and how might you use them in new ways next year?
- What are the three most important leadership competencies that you would like to improve upon?
- What are some learning activities that would help you develop the desired competencies?
- How might you leverage the virtual workspace to build your professional network?
- Who else can support you on your journey?

The IDP meeting is an opportunity to discuss your goals as well as identify strategies for development. Bring your ideas to the meeting! Your supervisor may also suggest learning activities, let you know of funds and time available for training, as well as any upcoming priorities that might require new skills.

After the meeting, you will be responsible for scheduling agreed upon learning activities. Throughout the year, share your progress with your supervisor. Your IDP is a “living document.” As conditions change throughout the year, you may have to adjust your IDP, too.

Based on your circumstances, you may want to expand your competencies in your current role, or perhaps you want to prepare for a position with greater scope and responsibility. Whichever road you choose, the APHIS Center for Training and Development (CTOD) can help point you in the right direction.

CTOD Career Development Services

CTOD offers four key services that can be useful at different points throughout your career. Each service is outcome-focused, designed to help you achieve specific goals such as finding your dream job, learning new skills, or identifying and strengthening your own unique talents. Our online Career Development Center (CDC) is available to all AMS and APHIS employees, and Career Counseling and Coaching services are specific to APHIS at this time. Both AMS and APHIS employees have access to agency-specific Mentoring Programs; more details are below.

The CDC includes definitions and self-assessment tools for each of the 28 OPM leadership competencies, and points you to suggested learning activities for each competency. Your plan may be a combination of:

- CTOD's classroom training, webinars, or leadership development program (see offerings [here](#))
- Recommended AgLearn courses, books, pocasts, and TedTalks
- Development assignments and self-designed learning activities
- Suggestions for personal improvement

Continue reading on next page...



HR BROADCAST

Continued from page 16...

Additional services are available to help you further explore your goals and support you in your professional development. Here's a quick comparison of CTOD's career development services:

Service	Purpose (Why)	Method (How)	Best Fit (When)
<p>Career Development Center (CDC) For more information, refer to Career Development Center SharePoint Site</p> <p>(APHIS/AMS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online tool to help you identify goals • Determine skills needed to attain the goals • Find learning resources to build the skills identified • Create an IDP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the self-guided tool to determine your goal, assess competencies, and locate learning resources • Consider formal training and other development strategies • Review recommended AgLearn courses and other web-based content 	<p>Anytime! For example, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self assess or request feedback on a particular skill • Brainstorm formal and informal ways to develop a skill in a competency • Create an IDP
<p>Mentor For more information: APHIS employees contact: APHIS_Mentoring@usda.gov AMS employees contact: AMS Mentoring Program</p> <p>(APHIS/AMS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new and/or improve skills, knowledge, and abilities • Seek advice and learn responsibilities of a new job • Build institutional knowledge and understanding of how things get done • Build network of professional colleagues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guides and encourages professional growth • Shares advice and knowledge based on past experiences • Teaches skills to enhance development needs • Partners to problem solve • Explains being politically savvy and identifies key leaders of the organization • Leverages diversity and experience to promote learning and development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Employee • Career/leadership development needs • New Supervisors ** • Pathways Recent Graduate Program ** • Pathways Internship Program ** • Presidential Management Fellows Program ** • Senior Executive Candidate Development Program ** <p><i>** Mentors are mandatory for participants in these programs</i></p>
<p>NOTE: Supervisors, Managers, and Senior Executives participating in a mentoring partnership counts toward the required supervisor, manager, and executive self-development activities.</p>			
<p>Career Counselor For more information, APHIS employees contact: career.counseling.service@usda.gov</p> <p>(APHIS Only)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore talents and interests • Discover new career goals • Design a career path and develop an IDP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses various assessments to discover strengths, values, skills, personality type, and work environment • Guides you on job research, resumé writing, and interview skills • Counsels you through various stages of career development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early in your career • Anticipating a career transition • No clear career path • Not sure what to put on your IDP
<p>Coach For more information, APHIS employees contact: aphis.coaching@usda.gov</p> <p>(APHIS Only)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore talents and interests • Discover new career goals • Design a career path and develop an IDP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asks questions to encourage self-awareness • Shifts perspective to future focus for breakthrough results • Offers strategies, tools, and distinctions to promote changes in thinking, behavior, and actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New to leadership or role • Tackling a major challenge or initiative • Preparing for career advancement • Need for more balance or resilience

If you would like to discuss your IDP or any of the above services in greater detail, please contact the corresponding mailbox. Stay tuned for more details about each of these career development services!





NOT YOUR ORDINARY GOVERNEMENT TRAINING – EXPERIENCED SUPERVISOR APPLIED WORKSHOP

By **B.J. Whetstine** (William.Whetstine@usda.gov, 301-851-2654)
and **Mary Lu Schweitzer** (Mary.Lu.Schweitzer@usda.gov, 301-851-2822)

Not Your Ordinary Government Training

Whether it's responding to a pest or disease outbreak, writing regulations, or developing training to help employees learn and grow in their careers – you don't have to look far to find great work happening in APHIS. The Association for Talent Development's magazine recently featured some of that great work by two of APHIS' Center for Training and Organization Development (CTOD) consultants, B.J. Whetstine and Mary Lu Schweitzer, for their role in developing an innovative training program for APHIS supervisors. The Experienced Supervisor Applied Workshop directs managers to focus on the spirit and practice of effective management as well as current policy changes.



Take some time [to read about this new approach](#) to supervisory training here in APHIS. And, if you're a supervisor, [sign up](#) for the workshop and get a firsthand look!

