

### Individual Development Plans (IDPs)

By Leslie Linneman ([Leslie.A.Linneman@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:Leslie.A.Linneman@aphis.usda.gov), 301-734-4990)

A basic tenet of the Secretary's Cultural Transformation effort is that USDA Agencies will encourage, support, and invest in the short and long-term development of their employees. To help support that philosophy, a new Departmental Directive was recently released providing Agency's with guidance on the creation and use of Individual Development Plans (IDPs).

Employees who currently have an IDP know that it can be an effective tool to guide your development. For example, as part of a career planning strategy, employees, supervisors and training managers can use IDPs to outline appropriate training and help close competency gaps related to work currently performed. Equally important, IDPs can help direct employees to activities that foster engagement, or encourage them to take on stretch assignments, thereby becoming better prepared for a possible promotion or simply assume new responsibilities. In this way, IDPs are an important component of both Agency succession and workforce planning efforts.

Although classroom-based training can be an effective form of development, other activities such as on-the-job-training, self-development, developmental activities (including shadowing, detail assignments, and task force assignments), development of job aids, and mentoring are just as beneficial and may be included in the IDP. If you are having difficulty deciding what to put in your IDP you should speak to your supervisor about possible options. He or she will ultimately be approving your choices, so it's important that you work together in its creation.

In addition, a tremendous amount of information related to personal and professional development is available in the APHIS Leadership Development Toolkit:

[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/esd/leadership\\_toolkit.shtml](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/esd/leadership_toolkit.shtml) or from the Department at: <http://www.idp.usda.gov>.

To further assist you in creating your IDP, the use of the "My Plan" feature in AgLearn is encouraged. The AgLearn system not only offers you an easy way to keep track of your progress towards completion of the various activities in your plan, but also helps to document your efforts, and simplifies the supervisory approval process. A quick reference guide for completing an IDP in AgLearn are available at the following website:

[http://inside.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/training/downloads/Instructions\\_for\\_AgLearn\\_IDP.pdf](http://inside.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/training/downloads/Instructions_for_AgLearn_IDP.pdf).

For employees who currently have a hard copy IDP in place, a supervisor can simply record completion of the course titled "APHIS-Paper Based Individual Development Plan (IDP)" in an employee's learning history by following the 9 steps below.

1. Open **AgLearn**
2. Select an Employee (you should see them to the top/right of your screen)
3. Select Record Learning from the Easy Links Box
4. When the search bar comes up type in "IDP" - this will return the Course Name (there is only 1 IDP course)



5. Click Next
6. Click the Select Button next to the Course Name
7. Click Next
8. In the Completion Status Box complete all required information related to the date, etc.
9. Click Next and Finish

If you have questions about this process or IDPs in general, please contact the Training and Development Branch at (301) 734-4949. If you would like to view the Departmental IDP Directive in its entirety, please visit <http://www.ocio.usda.gov/directives/doc/DR4040-410.pdf>.

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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 editor, Christina Furnkranz, at [Christina.S.Furnkranz@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:Christina.S.Furnkranz@aphis.usda.gov)

## OPM Management Satisfaction Survey: We value your opinion!

As part of on-going efforts to improve the hiring process and to meet the USDA requirements outlined for hiring reform and metrics reporting, HR asks hiring managers to participate in the OPM Management Satisfaction Survey. The survey asks hiring officials to rate their satisfaction with timeliness, quality of candidates, and the overall HR support provided. It is completely anonymous and should take less than five minutes to complete. OPM compiles the survey results and provides agency HR offices with valuable feedback that is used to improve the hiring process. Response to this survey is one of the accountability measures related to Hiring Reform. The target response rate is 90 percent of all supervisors and managers involved in the hiring process. Please respond to the survey when you return your selection certificates so that you have an opportunity to provide input on transforming the hiring process within MRP!



## USDA Veterans Advisory Council



The Department's Veterans Employment Program Manager has created a Veterans Advisory Council (VAC). Each mission area within the USDA is represented on this council. The purpose of the VAC is to provide advice to the Secretary of Agriculture on the following: development and advancement of veteran employees; identifying and reporting barriers to fair employment for veterans with USDA; advocating issues and concerns of veteran employees; serving as a liaison between veteran employees in USDA agencies and the

Secretary of Agriculture; and sponsoring activities to promote the value of veterans to USDA. **The MRP Mission Area representatives are Dr. David Urso** ([David.E.Urso@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:David.E.Urso@aphis.usda.gov), 301-734-8528) **and Mr. Stan McPeck** ([Stanley.D.Mcpeck@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:Stanley.D.Mcpeck@aphis.usda.gov), 612-336-3420), **from the Human Resources Division.**

## USDA Detail Opportunities

Your federal career ranks among your most prized investments, therefore, it is important to engage in short-term and long-term career development. The USDA recently launched a new career development opportunity for all employees. The USDA Detail Registry was developed as part of the 2010 Cultural Transformation Initiative and is designed to provide a central source for advertising available employee career development detail opportunities. Detail assignments provide employees with valuable work experience while serving in a new position on a temporary basis.

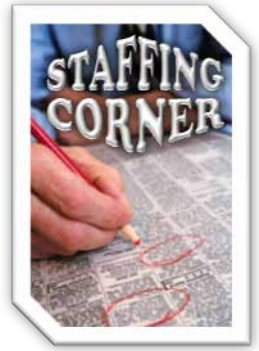


The Detail Registry allows agencies to post detail assignments and for employees to view and express interest in detail opportunities. MRP Human Resources is responsible for posting any MRP detail opportunities and verifying the selected employees meet all applicable requirements. The MRP contact for the USDA Detail Registry is Cindy Edmond, Human Resources Specialist, Recruitment & Placement, ([Cindy.G.Edmond@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:Cindy.G.Edmond@aphis.usda.gov), 612-336-3350). The Detail Registry is located on the following website: <http://opportunities.usda.gov/>



## OPM Shared Register: Pilot Helps Agencies Soar

By *Jacqueline Miles* ([Jacqueline.M.Miles@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:Jacqueline.M.Miles@aphis.usda.gov), 612-336-3362)



As the Nation's largest employer, the Federal Government is the model for promoting diversity and inclusion in the workforce. When the Executive Order to increase Federal employment of individuals with disabilities was enacted on July 26, 2010, Federal agencies vigorously expanded their efforts to recruit and hire highly qualified individuals with disabilities. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) contracted with Bender Consulting Services to establish a pilot to compliment the affirmative disability employment programs of Federal agencies. The following information provides an overview OPM Shared Register.

### Purpose of OPM Shared Register of Candidates with Disabilities:

- The OPM Shared Register of Candidates with Disabilities was created in response to Executive Order to increase the employment of individuals with disabilities in federal government.
- The Executive Order has a goal to hire 100,000 individuals with disabilities and targeted disabilities.

### How It Works:

- Each month, the Bender Consulting Services populates the Register with approximately 50 qualified candidates to support Federal agencies and their hiring objectives specific to the employment of individuals with disabilities.
- Twice a month, Bender Consulting Services distributes a spreadsheet describing the educational, professional, and employment background and geographical interest(s) of candidates who have successfully completed its screening process.
- The spreadsheet is available by request to Diversity and Chief Human Capital Officers and Federal hiring managers.

### Candidates:

- Each candidate on the Register has a disability or targeted disability.
- Each candidate meets the requirements under the Schedule A (u) excepted service hiring authority.
- Candidates on the Register have a variety of educational backgrounds and work experience.

### Advantages of the Register:

- No public vacancy announcements are required.
- The Register allows Federal agencies to streamline the hiring process and hire individuals with disabilities outside the competitive process.
- There is no cost to agencies to access and use the Register.

### Hiring Manager Tips:

- Identify type of position; location of position(s); number of positions to fill; grade level(s); and special conditions (e.g., physical requirements, security clearance, software knowledge, etc.), and your preferred hiring timeframe.
- Contact the servicing Staffing Specialist to discuss your needs and initiate Schedule A (u) hires from the Register:

AMS contact: [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/contact\\_us/downloads/HRO\\_AMS.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/contact_us/downloads/HRO_AMS.pdf)

APHIS contact: [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/contact\\_us/downloads/HRO\\_APHIS.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/contact_us/downloads/HRO_APHIS.pdf)

GIPSA contact: [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/contact\\_us/downloads/HRO\\_GIPSA.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/contact_us/downloads/HRO_GIPSA.pdf)



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 (voice and TTY).





**Mid-Year Performance Reviews**

**Spring is here and so are Mid-Year Performance Reviews!!**



The midpoint of the FY2011 performance cycle was **March 31, 2011**. Supervisors and managers are reminded to conduct mid-year performance reviews with all eligible employees. MRP has a “best practice” goal of **April 30, 2011** as the deadline for completing the mid-year reviews. Employees are advised to prepare and submit mid-year summary reports to supervisors to ensure their accomplishments are captured in the mid-year performance reviews.

To help meet our goal of ensuring that we utilize the feedback process to assist employees to reach their performance goals successfully, tracking the completion of mid-year progress reviews for all eligible employees is required. Certification related to completion is due to HR Policy Branch by **May 31, 2011** for tracking and reporting on the Human Resources metrics.

Additional information on performance management is available on the Intranet at [http://inside.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/performance\\_management/performance\\_appraisals.shtml](http://inside.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/performance_management/performance_appraisals.shtml), or you can contact Gwen Montgomery at (301) 734-6341 or via email at [Gwen.Montgomery@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:Gwen.Montgomery@aphis.usda.gov)

**New Guidance on Administrative Leave/Excused Absence**

New guidance on Administrative Leave and Excused Absence has been received from the USDA, Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM). Of significant importance is the change of definition applied to the two terms. Both continue to be defined as approved absence without a charge to leave and without a loss of pay. However, administrative leave is now categorized as a situation *where an employee is not acting within the employee/employer relationship and is not deemed to be subject to the control or responsibility of the government*. Excused absence, on the other hand, is granted *for the performance or participation in officially sanctioned government activities not within the scope of regular duties*. Administrative Leave is to be coded on the time & attendance report as TC 66. Excused absence is to be coded as TC 01, regular time.



Another important change resulting from the updated guidance is a limitation on delegated authority for granting administrative leave or excused absence for holiday-related dismissals. Only the Secretary of Agriculture (who may re-delegate to the Assistant Secretary for Administration or his designee) has the authority to grant dismissals for holiday-related purposes. This means programs may **not** grant any additional time off, e.g., 1 hour of administrative leave, for a holiday. In addition, when early dismissal is granted, employees cannot use their leave in order to depart earlier. If an employee chooses to use leave, they will forego the administrative leave or excused absence granted by the Secretary.

Please contact Nella Roberts for additional information at (301)-734-5382 or via email at [Nella.H.Roberts@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:Nella.H.Roberts@aphis.usda.gov)





# SECURITY AWARENESS

## Travel Outside the United States

By Dru Dukart

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Information provided by USDA,  
Personnel & Document Security Division



## Are you planning a trip outside the United States?

Whether you are traveling on business or pleasure, all employees are urged to visit the State Department's travel website (<http://travel.state.gov/>) for the latest travel warnings, consular information sheets, and trip registration. Registration at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate (in the country you are visiting) makes your presence and whereabouts known, in case it is necessary for a consular officer to contact you in an emergency. During a disaster overseas, American consular officers can assist in evacuation were that to become necessary.

To view the latest travel warnings, visit <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/home.asp>.

To register your trip, visit <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/home.asp>.

## Are you an MRP employee who holds a security clearance?

If so, all holders of a security clearance (Confidential, Secret, or Top Secret) must keep their security office informed about anything that might have a bearing on their continued eligibility for access to classified information or that might signal an increased vulnerability to foreign intelligence targeting. Employee cooperation in doing so is an important part of the "continuing evaluation" process.

You are *required* to report all foreign travel if you have been approved for access to Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI). The *Request to Pass a Clearance and Foreign Travel Reporting Form* (SCI only) is available at Personnel & Document Security Division's (PDSO) website: <http://www.dm.usda.gov/ohsec/pdsd/forms.htm>.

You should contact Karen Maguire, Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Coordination (OHSEC), PDSO, via email about your travel plans with two weeks advance notice, if possible. Karen can be reached at [Karen.Maguire@dm.usda.gov](mailto:Karen.Maguire@dm.usda.gov).



**Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program  
Open Season  
April 4<sup>th</sup> through June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2011**



**The Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP) is holding the first Open Season since the inception of the program in 2002!**

**What is long term care insurance?** It is insurance that helps pay for long term care services, such as nursing home care, assisted living facility care, formal and informal care in the home, adult day care, and other care that is not covered by health insurance or Medicare.

**Who needs this coverage?** According to the Department of Health and Human Services, Clearinghouse for Long Term Care Insurance, it is estimated that at least 70% of people over the age of 65 will require long term care services at some point in their lives. To read more on the basics of long term care insurance and the benefit of applying during Open Season, go to <http://www.ltcfeds.com/start/index.html>. This website will explain, in detail, the long term basics such as:

- ◆ What is long term care and who needs it?
- ◆ Where are long term care services received and who provides long term care?
- ◆ Common long term care myths.
- ◆ How much does long term care cost?
- ◆ Will health insurance or disability insurance cover long term care costs?
- ◆ Will Medicare cover long term care costs?
- ◆ How can I pay for long term care?
- ◆ Can I pay my long term care costs and insurance premiums through a Health Savings Account (HSA)?

**Will training be provided?** Yes – Informational webinars are scheduled, and are designed for employees that are not already enrolled in the FLTCIP and who are interested in learning more about long term care, FLTCIP plan options, and the application process. These seminars are scheduled for May 10<sup>th</sup> and May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011, starting at 2:00pm eastern standard time. Registration information will be emailed to all employees prior to each of these sessions.

**Who can enroll during Open Season?** Active Federal employees and their spouses/same sex domestic partners, who are not currently enrolled, may apply using an abbreviated underwriting application form in which applicants answer a limited number of questions. For employees who are going to retire soon; open season also provides a last chance opportunity to enroll in FLTCIP using the abbreviated form. An annuitant and other eligible family members may apply using the longer underwriting application form.

**How do I enroll?** You can request that a FLTCIP Open Season application be mailed to you by completing an [online information request form](#). You may also apply [online](#) beginning April 4, 2011.

Certified Long Term Care Consultants are available to assist you with your application or answer any questions by calling 1-800-LTC-FEDS (1-800-582-3337). You can also find additional information on the FLTCIP program at [www.LTCFEDS.com](http://www.LTCFEDS.com).

Benefits Specialists are available to assist employees with their federal benefit questions at every point in their career. Please contact the Specialist assigned to your program:

[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/contact\\_us/downloads/benefits.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/contact_us/downloads/benefits.pdf)



## Position Management and Vacancy Control Departmental Directive

By Mandy Olson –

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The USDA recently issued the Position Management and Vacancy Control Departmental Regulation DR 4020-250-002, which focuses on the hiring officials consideration of workforce planning and position management principles before filling any permanent vacancies. The options for implementing this comprehensive directive were discussed with Program Managers and Administrative Officers/Resource Management Officers through a series of meetings.

To read the Directive, go to  
<http://www.ocio.usda.gov/directives/doc/DR4020-250-002.pdf>

All questions on this requirement should be directed to the servicing HR Classification Specialist:

### AMS Service providers:

[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/contact\\_us/downloads/HRO\\_AMS.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/contact_us/downloads/HRO_AMS.pdf)

### APHIS Service providers:

[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/contact\\_us/downloads/HRO\\_APHIS.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/contact_us/downloads/HRO_APHIS.pdf)

### GIPSA Service providers:

[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/contact\\_us/downloads/HRO\\_GIPSA.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/contact_us/downloads/HRO_GIPSA.pdf)



## Grants Management – A New Job Series

By Thomas Lehner –

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The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) recently established the Grants Management Series, GS-1109 (November 2010). Grants management work involves implementing and managing Federal grants and cooperative agreements and providing grants-related assistance and services.

HR Classification Specialists are reviewing current position descriptions that involve grants management and cooperative agreements work as a regular and recurring part of the duties to determine if the position should be reclassified to the GS-1109 series. Classification Specialists will be contacting Programs directly if any of their positions are better suited to the GS-1109 series and to discuss the next steps in the process.

Please see the attached link for more information regarding this new series:

<http://www.opm.gov/fedclass/g1109.pdf>

