

Marketing & Regulatory Programs
HR BROADCAST

May 2013 Issue

**DIRECTOR'S
CORNER**

On April 16- 17, 2013, the HRD Senior Leadership Team participated in a leadership transition. The one and a half day session gave us the opportunity to learn from each other, discuss the HR mission, values, visions, and the way forward for the organization. We all learned something new about each other and it was a great positive learning experience for all of the leadership team.

The outcome for me was that I learned that we have a great leadership team who are all committed and dedicated to working together to provide excellent customer service through demonstrated integrity, empowerment, and responsiveness. We focused on priorities – at all levels - HRD, MRP, and USDA. The entire Human Resources staff is an integral part in making the organization what it is today.

I hope that you, our customers, share my same perspective and continue to partner with us as we strive to make HRD a “Center of Excellence.”

Marsha Wiggins, HRD Director



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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 Layout Editor, Christina Furnkranz, at Christina.S.Furnkranz@aphis.usda.gov

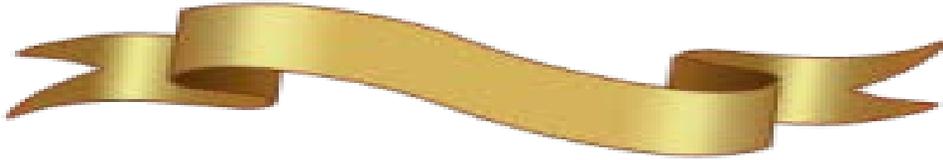


Technology At Work

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 (voice and TTY).

May 2013 Issue

HRD EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER (EOQ)



HRD - Employee of the Quarter (EOQ) is designed to highlight those individuals, or groups of employees, who exemplify the Division's values of Excellence, Professionalism, Customer Service, Diversity, and Inclusion.

Full program details are available at this site: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpb/hr/eoq.shtml>

Quarterly winners will be chosen from those employees nominated for the award by Customers, Peers, and Supervisors throughout MRP.

If you have any questions concerning the program or process, please direct them to Terry Zietlow at 612-336-3372.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Human Resources Division



Employee of the Quarter

awarded to

Rae Jones

Ms. Jones is recognized for her outstanding customer service and she continues to receive positive feedback regarding the assistance she has provided to employees and supervisors. As referenced by a customer, "Rae was remarkable in her ability to listen carefully, to understand fully, and to lead in a really productive direction. I can't think of anything in regard to these facilitated discussions that could have made them better... Thank you for this excellent service."





EmpowHR

By **Nancy Bradford** (Nancy.L.Bradford@aphis.usda.gov, 612-336-3391)
and **Kathy Slaga** (Kathy.M.Slaga@aphis.usda.gov, 612-336-3354)

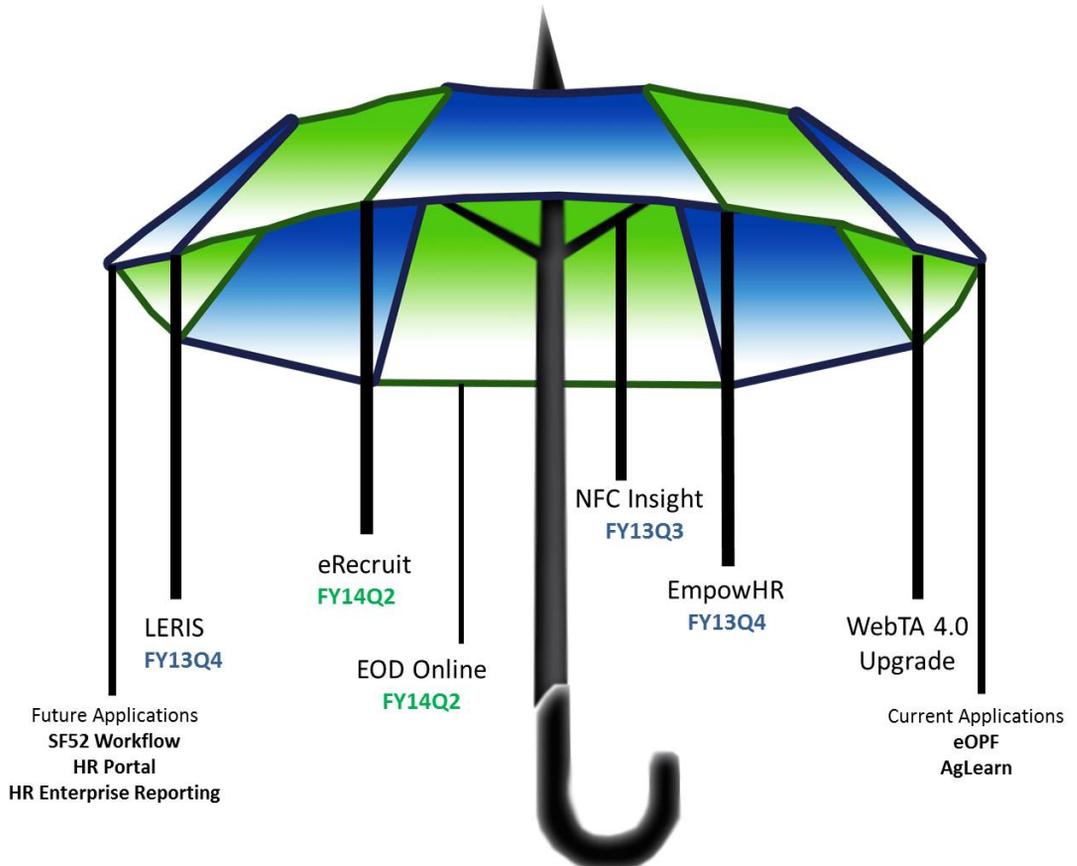
Prior to MRP's transition to EmpowHR in August 2013, the HRD Classification Team was working with the EmpowHR points of contact to evaluate every active organizational code.

USDA has determined that Agency organizational structures will be hierarchical with new organizational structures established at every new supervisory level. The HRD Classification Team is working closely with the APHIS Programs currently undergoing reorganizations so any recoding or realignment work will only be done once.

For most employees, this transition will not impact their daily work. As your positions are realigned into new organizational codes, an SF-50B, Notification of Personnel Action, will be generated and stored in your eOPF.

For more information on the ONE USDA effort, please contact Kathy Slaga or Nancy Bradford at 612.336.3354 or 3391, respectively.

ONE USDA – HR System Implementation





A Once In A Lifetime Opportunity...

By Dr. David Urso (David.E.Urso@aphis.usda.gov, 301-851-2940)

I am an investigator with the APHIS Administrative Investigations and Compliance Branch (AICB), MRPBS. Because of my role as a volunteer consultant and historian for the Chicago History Museum in Chicago, I was bestowed an honor that few people, including President Obama, have ever experienced. I was given the opportunity to personally hold and inspect President Abraham Lincoln's stove pipe hat in preparation for the upcoming anniversary of Lincoln's assassination and for my assistance to the Museum in preparing for a special exhibition of that event.

While on his way to Washington, DC, Abraham Lincoln was never without his notable stovepipe hat. Lincoln wore his hat on the train journey from his home in Springfield, Illinois, to his inauguration in Washington, D.C. Or at least he wore it until he reached New York, when he met an enterprising young hat maker. That young gentleman remarked upon the 'lived-in' nature or the conspicuous wear of Lincoln's chapeau, and offered to trade him the old for a new one since Lincoln was en route to his inauguration as President of the United States. This stovepipe hat, with a Springfield, IL maker's mark, is now property of the Chicago History Museum, located in Chicago's Lincoln Park. The stovepipe hat is not on display to the public.

During the 2012 NATO Conference in Chicago, President Obama requested that Lincoln's stovepipe hat be put on display for inspection and viewing by the heads of state from around the world. Because of the fragile state and age of the hat, museum curators would not allow anyone to handle the hat, including the U.S. Secret Service. The hat was displayed in a glass case to protect it.

As a USDA employee, this was a historic moment for me. I provided the museum with some background history on Lincoln and the USDA. Lincoln's own background was the pioneer farming and rural life typical of the outer edge of America's westward-moving frontier. The Homestead Act, approved by President Lincoln on May 20, 1862, provided for giving 160 acres of the public domain to any American or prospective citizen who was the head of a family or over 21 years of age. Title to the land was issued after the settler had resided on it for 5 years and made improvements on it. The settler could also gain title by residing on the claim for 6 months, improving the land, and paying \$1.25 per acre. The Homestead Act did not achieve all that its proponents had



hoped, but it stood as a symbol of American democracy and opportunity to native-born and immigrant alike. During President Lincoln's administration, his Cabinet consisted of the Departments of Interior, Navy, State and War plus the Postmaster General and the Attorney General. In the Spring of 1862, President Lincoln authorized a new Department of Agriculture, but without cabinet status. The Department of Agriculture was finally created when President Lincoln signed the Department of Agriculture Organic Act, on May 15, 1862. The first Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture, Issac Newton, outlined the primary objectives of the new Department as advancing and disseminating scientific research. It was not until 1889 that President Grover Cleveland signed a bill to elevate the Department of Agriculture to Cabinet level. The history of USDA's inception defines a major period in our nation.



Workplace Resolutions and Wellness Branch “Helping to Develop Others”

By *Charlotte Jones* (Charlotte.Y.Jones@aphis.usda.gov, 301-851-2888)

The mission of the Workplace Resolutions and Wellness Branch (WRWB) is to remove workplace barriers that hinder individual employees, supervisors, and teams from reaching their highest level of effectiveness and efficiency. This includes helping to develop others.

WRWB hosted Dr. Jose Urdaz, a Veterinary Medical Officer from Hato Rey, Puerto Rico, for a 2-week developmental assignment from March 18 – 29 as part of his participation in the Executive Leadership Program (ELP). The ELP required Dr. Urdaz to develop a schedule that included activities which would enhance his leadership competencies under the executive core qualifications. Conflict Management was one of these competencies, which is one of the services offered by WRWB under the Collaborative Resolution (CR) Program.

During those 2 weeks, Dr. Urdaz learned about the various services offered by CR as well as services offered by the Reasonable Accommodations Program and the Work Life Wellness Program. He conducted interviews with the mediation specialists and obtained information on mediation styles and techniques and supervisory strategies for addressing conflict among employees. Because Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) services are confidential, the CR team prepared a mock exercise for Dr. Urdaz to serve as an observer and the role of the mediator on two case scenarios. This included conflicting situations between an employee and supervisor and between two supervisors.

Upon completion of the assignment, Dr. Urdaz stated the following: *“My experience was great, informative, and fun. You have an excellent group of people working here. I highly respect and honor the mission of this office. I realize that without this new set of skills there will be so much conflict at work. I hope that as time passes, I will keep learning more and more on how to manage conflict and I will reach the high standards shown to me in these last 2 weeks.”*

For more information on the services offered by the Workplace Resolutions and Wellness Branch, please contact us at 301-851-2950, or visit the website at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/hr/hrd_workplace_wellness.shtml



Pre-Decisional Involvement (PDI)

By *Joanne Adams*, Labor Relations Specialist, (*Joanne.B.Adams@aphis.usda.gov*, 301-851-2942)

What is Pre-Decisional Involvement?

Pre-Decisional Involvement (PDI) is a collaborative approach where employees, through their unions, are provided an opportunity to influence management decisions on all workplace matters without regard to negotiability under §7106 of the Statute.

The idea of PDI originated with the Clinton Administration and is the cornerstone of the 1993 Executive Order 12872 “Labor Management Partnerships.” The concept of PDI is also a requirement under the 2009 Executive Order 13522, “Creating Labor Management Forums to Improve Delivery of Government Services.” The intent of PDI is to improve decisions made by management through direct input from the employees charged with performing the tasks and assignments that contribute to the achievement of the Agency’s mission.



What are the Benefits of PDI?

In addition to the benefit of improved quality of management decision-making, it is believed that PDI has a positive impact on the time it takes to implement workplace changes and initiatives through the “buy in” factor. That is, as a result of employee involvement in the decision-making process, employees are more supportive of the change, and because of their support, the time it takes to implement a change may be reduced.

In the event there is a need to engage in collective bargaining after the PDI process, it is likely that the parties have narrowed the issues, and better understand the others’ interest which may facilitate the collective bargaining process.

Other benefits of PDI may also include improved labor/management relations; improved communication between management and employees; increased trust between the union and management, and improved morale among all employees.

Are There Risks and Barriers to PDI?

While there are benefits to engaging in PDI, there are also some potential risks and barriers to successfully engaging in PDI. Some risks to engaging in PDI include:

- **An increased investment of time** – Often when additional participants (the union and employees) are included in the decision making process, the time it takes to reach a final decision takes longer.
- **Collective bargaining may still be necessary** – If the interests of the represented employees are not satisfied to the extent necessary, the union may still request to engage in collective bargaining. Without agreement, the Agency normally may not implement a change until collective bargaining has concluded.
- **Lack of problem solving skills** – Both parties must understand how to engage in problem solving and be willing to use their skills to resolve disputes and develop new approaches to look at problems differently.

Continue to page 7 “Pre-Decisional Involvement”



- **Lack of substantive knowledge of the subject matter** – It is difficult for union representatives to have expertise in all functional areas of the Agency. It is critical that union representatives be given the opportunity to learn the substantive areas and gain a better understanding of the issues involved.
- **Unrealistic expectations of the parties** – It is important that both parties have a mutual understanding of what each expects the result to be from PDI. If management expects PDI to be a substitute for collective bargaining, that expectation must be understood and agreed to by the union. Likewise, if the union expects PDI to be an opportunity to receive information while retaining its collective bargaining right, that expectation must be shared and understood by management.

When Should PDI be Initiated?

PDI should be initiated when an opportunity has been identified and a decision has been made to review, draft, modify, or rescind a program, policy, or directive. The following are some (but not all) topics that may be appropriate to initiate PDI:

- Change in conditions of employment/working conditions
- Significant workplace changes (relocations, closures, etc.)
- Methods and means of performing work
- New technology
- Training
- Safety and health issues
- Reorganizations
- Furloughs, RIFs
- Relocations
- Changes in job/position descriptions
- Changes in numbers, grades, or types



How is PDI Initiated?

When an MRPwide, APHIS, or Program policy or directive is being discussed, drafted, modified, or rescinded, Labor Relations should be contacted. The initial discussion with a representative from Labor Relations will typically address management's obligations for PDI and our statutory obligations to bargain over changes in the workplace.

If it is determined that PDI is appropriate, in most cases, Labor Relations will notify the unions directly when management initially begins its review or drafting process and ask the unions for their input or suggestions at that time, normally a 14-day process. Management should also follow up with a draft copy of the document during the drafting process or at least prior to the Agency's final approval process. This will ensure the unions' input is given appropriate consideration before final decisions are made and their questions may be answered early in the process.

If you have any questions related to PDI, please contact the Labor Relations Branch.
Branch Web Site: http://inside.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/labor_relations.shtml





By **Samantha Fedorko** (Samantha.R.Fedorko@aphis.usda.gov, 612-336-3433)



Q&A's for E-Verify

E-Verify is an electronic system which checks employee information obtained from the Employment Eligibility Verification form (I-9 form) against records maintained by both the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and the Social Security Administration (SSA). The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has directed ALL Federal agencies to verify employment eligibility for all new employees via E-Verify.

E-Verify Q&A

Q: How do I know if I need to send the I-9 for E-Verify?

A: If you have a new employee within your office, you will more than likely need to send the I-9 to the E-Verify fax number. This would include new hires from outside the Government, reinstatements, transfers, interns, or temporary appointments. If you have questions about whether a new employee needs to have an I-9 verified, refer to the last question.

Q: Who should fax the I-9 for E-Verify?

A: If you are a supervisor, acting supervisor, management, program contact, or you help with new hire paperwork, then you should be sure your office is complying with the OMB Directive. One person should be responsible for faxing the I-9 document to HR within your office.

Q: What is the fax number so I can send the I-9 for E-Verify?

A: 612-336-3551 Attention: E-VERIFY.

Q: Is there any information that should accompany the form?

A: Yes, a contact name, phone number, and employee's supervisor's name.

Q: Does the form need to be filled out in full?

A: Yes, this is required. Please be sure the ENTIRE form is filled out in full.

Q: When does HR need this form?

A: Within 3 days of the employee's entry-on-duty date.

Q: Since HR is receiving the I-9 via E-VERIFY, do I need to submit the I-9 along with the new hire paperwork package?

A: Yes! Your particular processing assistant will need you to include the I-9 with your new hire package.

Q: Who should I contact if I have questions?

A: Samantha Fedorko at 612-336-3433, or you may email her at Samantha.R.Fedorko@aphis.usda.gov



BIWEEKLY CAPS ON PREMIUM PAY

By *Mary Jo Yasgar* (Mary.J.Yasgar@aphis.usda.gov, 612.336.3331)



Have you ever heard someone say they didn't get paid for all of their overtime hours worked, or they didn't earn all of the compensatory time recorded in webTA? This is rare, but unfortunately, this can happen.

Under 5 U.S.C .5547(a) and 5 CFR 550.105, General Schedule (GS) employees may receive premium pay for a biweekly pay period only to the extent that the pay does not exceed the greater of the biweekly rate payable for:

1. GS-15, step 10, or
2. Level V of the Executive Schedule



This is called the biweekly cap on premium pay. How is the biweekly cap computed?

STEP ONE: Take the applicable annual salary rate of either #1 or #2 above (as applicable) listed at: <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/#url=2013> and divide it by 2087 hours.

The answer gives you the hourly rate of pay.

STEP TWO: Round the resulting hourly rate of pay to the nearest cent.

STEP THREE: Multiply the hourly rate of pay by 80 hours. The answer will give you the biweekly cap.

For example, in the Atlanta, GA, locality pay area - the annual salary of a GS-15, step 10, is \$154,501, per annum. To compute the biweekly cap, divide the annual salary rate by 2,087 ($\$154,501/2087=\74.03). Then, multiply by 80 to get the biweekly cap ($\$74.03 \times 80 = \$5,922.40$).

If the salary of an employee (in the Atlanta, GA locality pay area) exceeds \$5,922.40 during any pay period, the NFC system will not grant the additional overtime or compensatory time that has exceeded the biweekly cap.

Employees will still receive their regular pay each pay period, as appropriate. Please click on the following link for more information: <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/pay-administration/#url=Biweekly-Pay-Caps>

A notification is added to the remarks section on the Earnings and Leave Statement (E&LS) if any pay or compensatory time has exceeded the biweekly cap. Yet another good reason to review your E&LS every pay period. The remarks section is on the lower right side of the E&LS. An example of the remark is as follows: COMP HRS OVER EARN LIMIT 21.25. This remark notifies the employee that during the pay period he/she exceeded the biweekly cap by 21.25 hours of compensatory time, and NFC did not credit the employee with those hours.

NOTE: There is no right to restoration of any pay or compensatory hours lost as a result of exceeding the biweekly cap.

The following link will take you to the GS salary charts for 2013: <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/2013/general-schedule/>

If you have any questions regarding the biweekly caps, please contact the Leave and Compensation Team for assistance: http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpb/contact_us/downloads/lct.pdf

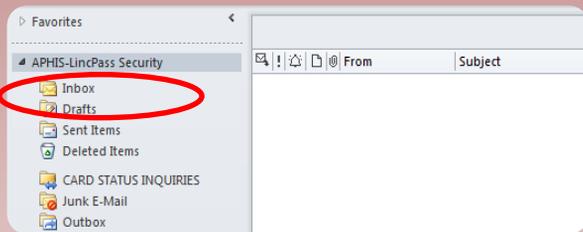




INTRODUCING... General Email In-Box for MRP Employee LincPass Questions

By **Dru Dukart**
(Dru.J.Dukart@aphis.usda.gov,
612-336-3289)

In an effort to provide better customer service and streamline our work processes, Personnel Security has teamed up with MRPBS ITD to establish a general email in-box for the LincPass questions relevant to our work unit. As an example, has your LincPass credential been **LOST, STOLEN, or DAMAGED?** Have you gone through the enrollment process but still haven't received any notification on where to pick your card up for **ACTIVATION?** Send these inquiries to: lincpass.security@aphis.usda.gov



HOWEVER, if you need assistance on any of the topics listed below; you **MUST** first contact **USDA's HSPD12 Help Desk** as they can further research and direct your question or issue to the appropriate point of contact for resolution.

- LincPass not working in your computer or facility/office door reader
- card re-routing from one credentialing site to another
- scheduling appointments
- expired digital certificates (or) expired LincPass credential

USDAHSPD12help@dm.usda.gov
(or) call **1-888-212-9309** (Direct Dial: **703-245-7888**)

Confused About the Difference Between a LincPass Certificate Recertification/Update and the LincPass Credential Renewal?

By **Dru Dukart**
(Dru.J.Dukart@aphis.usda.gov, 612-336-3289)

There is a BIG Difference!

LincPass Certificate Recertification/Updates ➤➤➤ **3 YEARS**



As you already know, your LincPass credential has digital certificates loaded on the chip (the part that makes the card a "smart" card), including an authentication certificate and a digital signature certificate.

These digital certificates expire **3 years after the issuance date**. Employees automatically receive an email from the HSPD-12 USAccess system (HSPD12Admin@usaccess.gsa.gov) of the need to recertify/update these digital certificates. This email will include further instructions on the recertification process.

If you do NOT renew the digital certificates, the LincPass credential automatically terminates, is no longer operable, and you will be required to re-enroll to receive a new functional card.

LincPass Credential Renewal ➤➤➤➤➤ **5 YEARS**

The LincPass card (or credential) itself, will expire **5 years** after the issue date (*the expiration month and year are shown on the face of your card*).



You will receive a system generated email notification from HSPD12Admin@usaccess.gsa.gov providing instructions on making arrangements to pick up and activate your new LincPass credential. You will keep your old LincPass until you pick up the new credential. The individual activating your new LincPass credential will dispose of the old card.





**BENEFITS
BUZZ**

What Does It Mean To Be Ready For Retirement?

By **Kim Kilde** (*Kim.M.Kilde@aphis.usda.gov, 612-336-3307*)

A happy retirement not only means having enough money to support yourself for the rest of your life, it also means being healthy enough to enjoy it, filling your time with pleasurable challenges, and connecting with people in meaningful ways. All of this is within your grasp if you actively plan for it throughout your entire career. So whether your retirement is decades or months away, there are things you can do right now to give you the future you want.

For your financial security, you should understand your Federal benefits, such as the amount of your retirement benefits, life, health, dental and vision insurance, Medicare, long term care insurance, and the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). If you are covered under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), a significant—and for many employees the largest—portion of your retirement benefit will come from the TSP. You simply cannot afford to wait until a year or two before retirement to learn what your benefits will be because by then it may be too late to accumulate the savings you will need.

To best utilize the TSP in achieving your financial goals, you should have a firm grasp of the rules and investment options in TSP, as well as the basic principles of investing. The TSP website, www.TSP.gov, has excellent, comprehensive information. Make it a favorite on your web browser and visit it often. Their ThriftLine (1-877-968-3778) is an around-the-clock automated response system which provides the latest information about the TSP as well as information about your account; option 3 will allow you to speak to a Participant Service Representative, Monday through Friday, 7 am to 9 pm (EST).

You will also need to educate yourself on calculating retirement income needs, financial planning, credit management, and estate planning. Our [HRD Benefits financial planning webpage](#) has links to many useful tools and resources. And, you can contact your [Benefits Specialist](#) for information, guidance, and counseling about your federal retirement and insurance benefits. We are here to help you.

Like financial security, your health and well-being in retirement will depend upon your lifelong investment. It is important to maintain a healthy lifestyle, become pro-active in preventative health care measures, and understand the aging process and how best to approach healthcare issues. You should also think about what your life will be like once you retire. What will you do with your time? Where will you live? Who will you spend time with? How will you find fulfillment and meaning during this phase of your life?

Although comprehensive planning for your retirement may seem daunting, there are many resources available to assist you. One resource is called “Retirement Readiness NOW Tips” provided by the Office of Personnel Management. These weekly tips address topics related to your total retirement well-being: networking, overall health, and wealth. The tips will be delivered to you as an email message.

Please take a few minutes out of your busy day to open the message and read it. It is a great way to keep retirement planning in the forefront of your mind.

Make a commitment today to learn and take the actions needed in order to achieve your retirement goals. Visit the TSP and HRD Benefits websites. Stay informed by reading the “Retirement Readiness NOW Tips” weekly emails. Take responsibility for your own analysis and decision-making because ultimately, the kind of retirement you have depends upon the one you create for yourself.



Federal Employees Group Life Insurance: It's Worth More Than You May Know

By **Laura Frantes** (Laura.L.Frantes@aphis.usda.gov, 612-336-3312)



While most employees understand Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) basics, not everyone is aware of some lesser known benefits that are part of the FEGLI program. In this article, we will provide a quick review of FEGLI basics and explore some additional FEGLI benefits that may be payable under specific circumstances.

The FEGLI program provides Basic coverage to all new employees eligible for coverage, or to employees that become newly eligible for coverage. An initial enrollment period allows employees to elect additional, optional FEGLI coverage within 60 days of their appointment, or eligibility date. Employees may also enroll in, or change, their FEGLI coverage within 60 days of a Qualifying Life Event (QLE), such as a marriage or birth of a child.



If you don't have a QLE, you may request to enroll in, or increase, FEGLI coverage by taking a physical and requesting approval for increased coverage from the Office of FEGLI. It is necessary to contact your Benefits Assistant prior to visiting your doctor to obtain the required form. If your request to increase your FEGLI coverage is approved and you are not already enrolled in Basic FEGLI coverage, you will be enrolled. Additionally, employees carrying Basic FEGLI, whether new coverage or prior coverage, will receive an opportunity to elect Option A, elect Option B, or to increase their Option B multiples. You cannot elect, or increase multiples of, Option C by taking a physical. You may drop or decrease any of your FEGLI coverage at any time.

Basic FEGLI provides a coverage amount of your salary rounded up to the nearest thousand dollars, plus an additional two thousand dollars.

This amount is known as the Basic Insurance Amount, or BIA. Optional FEGLI coverage includes Option A, worth \$10,000, Option B coverage, which is elected in 1 to 5 multiples with each multiple equivalent to your salary rounded up to the nearest thousand dollars, and Option C coverage which is also elected in 1 to 5 multiples. Option C coverage is life insurance you carry on your eligible family members and it is worth \$5,000 per multiple for a spouse, and \$2,500 per multiple for a child.

While it is important to understand the fundamentals of the FEGLI program, it is also important to be aware of additional benefits that FEGLI coverage provides to you at no additional cost. These benefits include Accidental Death and Dismemberment coverage (AD&D), the Extra Benefit, and Living Benefits.

Continue to page 13 "FEGLI..."



Continued from page 12 "FGLI..."



AD&D coverage is included in Basic and Option A coverage and can pay benefits up to double the amount of these coverages. If you die, lose the sight of an eye, or lose a hand, foot, or limb in an accident, you or your beneficiaries may be eligible for AD&D benefits. For benefits to be paid, the death or loss must occur within one year of the accident and be a direct result of the accident.

The Extra Benefit provided under the FGLI program is payable to the beneficiaries of employees who die under the age of 45. If you die under the age of 35, the Extra Benefit payable to your beneficiaries is twice your BIA. Once you reach age 35, the Extra Benefit is reduced by 10% each year until you turn 45, at which point there is no longer an Extra Benefit.

Additionally, if you are faced with a terminal illness and your life expectancy is 9 months or less, the FGLI program allows you to request a Living Benefit. A Living Benefit is a payment made to you, of all or part of your BIA, at the time you are approved for it. Optional insurance cannot be paid as a Living Benefit.

Most employees are aware that they are eligible to continue FGLI coverage into retirement, as long as they have carried that coverage for at least the 5 years prior to retirement. Were you aware though, that if you separate for purposes other than retirement, and you are not eligible to continue FGLI into retirement, or choose not to continue FGLI into retirement, that you may convert your FGLI coverage to a private life insurance policy? When you separate from Federal employment you will be provided the information and forms needed to convert your FGLI coverage and must make your conversion request within 31 days of your separation date.

To learn more about any of the above benefits, or for more information regarding the FGLI program, please visit the FGLI page at the Office of Personnel Management's website: <http://www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/life-insurance/>. For assistance in making changes to your FGLI coverage, conversion, or to make a claim, please contact your Benefits Assistant.



TRAINING



APHIS 360 Assessment Program

By *Kathy Trickey* (Kathy.Trickey@aphis.usda.gov, 301-851-2932)

Seventy-five percent of APHIS supervisors, managers, and executives are current with the requirement to take a 360 Assessment every 5 years. While taking the 360 is a requirement, supervisors are finding the Assessment, along with the individual feedback session on the resulting report, to be highly valuable. When asked the benefits of taking the APHIS 360 Assessment, some recent satisfied customers said:

- This will help me not only to advance my career, but to be more valuable to our Agency and constituents.
- The format of the report was great and useful. The review session was the aspect that was the most helpful for me. The conversation discussing the results revealed some great suggestions for what I can do to improve in the coming year and also, the facilitator provided me with some great resources.
- It allowed me see how my coworkers and other stakeholders assessed my competencies. This gave me encouragement in areas that were strong and incentive in areas I need to improve. The feedback session was the first time that I really understood how to look at competencies in relation to career and Agency goals and use them for an Individual Development Plan.

If you see in your AgLearn To-Do List that you are due for a 360 Assessment, please get in touch with the following program contacts:

For PPQ: ppqassessments@aphis.usda.gov

For VS: VS.360.Assessments@aphis.usda.gov

For all other programs: APHIS.360.Assessments@aphis.usda.gov

Or, contact the APHIS 360 Assessment Program Manager, Kathy Trickey, at 301-851-2932 or Kathy.Trickey@aphis.usda.gov.

REMINDER!

Annual 24-Hour Continual Learning for APHIS Supervisors, Managers, and Executives

By *Kathy Trickey* (Kathy.Trickey@aphis.usda.gov, 301-851-2932)



Each year, every APHIS supervisor, manager, and executive is required to complete 24 hours of continual learning activities related to the OPM leadership competencies. Certify that you have met this requirement by completing the item APHIS-4315 that you see on your AgLearn To-Do List. Contact Kathy Trickey, APHIS Center for Training and Organization Development, at 301-851-2932 or Kathy.Trickey@aphis.usda.gov.

