



CPAC Newsletter

June 2003



Labor and Management-Employee Relations

The U.S. Army Medical Command (MEDCOM) Inspector General Office will administer a web-based Command Climate Survey at U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command, Fort Detrick, Maryland, during the period 20-30 May 2003. While individual participation is strictly voluntary, your participation and completion of the electronic command climate survey, as part of U.S. Army Medical Command's (MEDCOM) Organizational Assessment Program (OAP) is requested.

The purpose of the survey is to obtain an accurate assessment of command climate, to measure employee satisfaction with various job facets, and to help improve the organization. The survey is designed to elicit feedback from employees that may be used to improve Fort Detrick organizations. The survey focuses on the following topics: Leadership, Work Group, Supervisor, Resources, Care of People, Job Satisfaction, Quality of Life, Core Values, and Human Relations. The survey also has two write-in questions allowing you to provide recommendations to your Commander on what you think is going well and what needs improvement.

All employees will be provided access to a computer with Internet capability to complete the survey, and permitted to do so during duty hours. The survey will take approximately fifteen (15) minutes to complete and instructions with the web address will be sent to all employees via email on 20 May 2003. . Responses made by individuals to the survey are confidential and will not be seen by anyone in this command. After each survey is complete the data will go directly to a file that will be analyzed by the MEDCOM Inspector General Office.

Please give honest answers in the survey. Your individual survey is anonymous. After each survey is completed, the data automatically goes to a file that will be analyzed by the MEDCOM Inspector General Office. Subsequently, summarized trends and your written recommendations will be shared with commanders.

Your thoughts and comments are extremely important, and will provide insight as to how to make improvements at your local command and throughout the MEDCOM. If you have any questions or comments, please contact the MEDCOM Inspector General Office, DSN 471-6017.

USAJOBS Update

Great news! USAJOBS is being transformed. Through the E-Government initiative Recruitment One-Stop, the USAJOBS Federal Employment Information System is about to be redesigned and modernized to provide genuine one-stop service to Federal job seekers and enhanced recruiting tools to Federal human resources (HR) professionals. In late spring 2003, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management E-Government initiative, Recruitment One-Stop, will implement the first major milestone in the transformation process. At that time, both applicants and Federal recruiters will have access to a new, redesigned system that will offer all of the current functionality of USAJOBS as well as new technology available from our chosen service provider, Monster Government Solutions. The April unveiling is only the first milestone in a multi-phased project that will ultimately provide both job seekers and HR professionals with tools on par with the best practices found in the public or private sector.

Some key project enhancements and changes are as follows:

- **Vacancy Announcements:** Announcements will follow standard, concise formats, with more detailed information available by means of electronic "hyperlinks." Information common to all agencies is being revised and improved, and will be offered as a "standard language" capability. Agency job entry methods will be comparable to current capability, although the goal is to develop additional tools to make the process simpler and faster.
- **Resume and Application Process:** Applicants will use a new resume template covering all information normally needed to make basic qualifications and eligibility determinations. By project completion, this resume will serve as the basic application for all position open to outside applicants. As a result, agencies will be required to accept electronic resumes. Agencies may still require applicants to submit additional information/forms specific to agency needs - and USAJOBS will remind job seekers that the full application process requires more than information contained in the basic electronic resume.
- **Applicant Status Tracking:** From the USAJOBS web site, job seekers will be able to access basic information about the status of announcements for which they have applied. The application status tracker will address major milestones in the recruitment process, for example: closing and/or cancellation date, date of candidate referral, and point of selection.

Potential Workload Impacts

The Recruitment One-Stop initiative is focused on the front end of the hiring process - attracting candidates to the Federal Government and simplifying the initial application process. We are committed to successfully integrating with back end hiring tools such as RESUMIX, Quick Hire, USA Staffing, Avue, and COOL. Upon full realization of the Recruitment One-Stop enhancements (September 2003) we expect job postings, resumes, and applicant status tracking data to flow seamlessly between USAJOBS and agency-side systems. Where agencies do not have automated staffing and hiring systems in place, procedures will be established to allow for manual entry of required information.

What's NOT Changing

- The system name and website address will remain USAJOBS (www.usajobs.opm.gov).
- As in the past, agencies must continue to list all competitive service jobs open to non-agency employees on USAJOBS (5 U.S.C 3327 and 3330).
- Applicants without electronic access will still be able to access USAJOBS announcements through OPM's telephone system.
- Applicants may still submit paper or other non-Internet based applications to agencies. When the initiative is fully implemented, these applications will be submitted through OPM and subsequently be converted to an electronic format for transmission and integration with agency staffing tools.

Next Steps

Between now and September 2003, when the USAJOBS enhancements are scheduled for full implementation and availability, we will continue to provide you with the information and training. Shortly before migration of the current USAJOBS system onto the new platform, we will release a number of communications to both job seekers and Agency HR specialists. At "go live" we will have a variety of help mechanisms in place for job seekers. On the agency side, we will provide dedicated customer support via downloadable manuals; on-line tutorials; 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EST toll-free telephone assistance; remote desktop diagnosis and assistance; and, on a selected basis, live training.

If you have questions or would like to learn more about Recruitment One-Stop, please access our website at <http://apps.opm.gov/eGov/eRecruitment> or send an email to Recruitmentonestop@opm.gov.

We are excited about these improvements to the Government's recruitment service. We look forward to implementing these enhancements with you!

Flexible Spending Account (FSA) Open Season Coming

The Federal Flexible Benefits Plan ("FedFlex") enables eligible employees to pay for certain benefits with pre-tax dollars. The initial FedFlex benefit, Health Benefits Premium Conversion (HB-PC), was implemented in October 2000. In 2003, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) will expand FedFlex by offering a new type of pre-tax benefit called Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs). The initial open season for flexible spending accounts for Federal civilian employees across the executive branch is now only about a month away. This will be the first opportunity for most Federal employees to voluntarily allot pre-tax salary to a flexible spending account for medical/dental expenses and/or dependent care. The initial Open Season will run from approximately mid-May through June 20, with limited marketing. The initial plan year will run from July 1, 2003 through December 31, 2003.

Similar to the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP) implemented last year for the Federal government, a third-party administrator will run the FSA program. However, unlike the FLTCIP, monies must be allotted from pre-tax salary similar to HB-PC. OPM has selected SHPS, Inc. of Louisville, Kentucky to administer the program. SHPS, Inc. manages nearly a million FSAs and similar accounts for state and local governments, the Federal judiciary, Fortune 500 companies and other clients.

During the upcoming Open Season, employees will be able to determine if they want to have coverage in one or both of the two types of FSAs, as well as determine the amount to allot on a plan-year basis (deductions will be made from pay bi-weekly). The two types of FSAs are medical/dental accounts, with a \$3,000 annualized limit, and dependent care accounts, with a \$5,000 annualized limit. Employees will want to consider their FSA elections with care. The chosen salary deductions in the program will be irrevocable once a plan year has begun, unless the employee experiences a qualifying "change in status" event. The government has not yet announced what will qualify as a change in status, but for insurance purposes, events such as marriage, birth of a child or divorce commonly qualify as such events. Because of the tax advantages of FSAs, the IRS has strict guidelines for its use. One of these guidelines is commonly known as the "use it or lose it" rule. Put simply, if employees have not incurred enough eligible expenses during the plan year to equal the annual amount they have contributed to their FSA(s), they will lose the balance remaining in their account(s) when the plan year ends.

OPM has developed a new section for information on FSAs on their web site. The address is www.opm.gov/insure/pretax. Employees are advised to visit this site regularly, as it will be updated frequently. Open enrollment for the first full plan year (2004) will take place concurrent with the Federal Employees Health Benefit (FEHB) open season in November/December of 2003 and an extensive marketing plan is anticipated. All future FSA plan years will be January 1 through December 31 and employees must re-enroll each year to be eligible.

Reporting Completed Training

While it is true that we no longer file training forms or certificates in employee's personnel folders, it doesn't mean a copy shouldn't still be submitted when training is completed. All training of eight hours or more, and mandatory training of any length, is to be reported in the individual employee's training history. Of particular concern are the government courses for which a DD Form 1556 may not have been prepared, including:

Action Ofcr Dev Crs

Supervisor Dev Crs

Mgt Dev Crs

Pers Mgt for Executives

Organ Ldrshp for Execs

Sustaining Base Ldrshp Mgt

Senior Service Colleges

Defense Acquisition Univ

Army Formal Schools (ie., ALMC, USADACS, Finance/Signal/MP Schools)

Personnel Management courses from CPOCMA

Activity Training Coordinators should forward copies of DD Forms 1556, or in the absence of this form a copy of the employee's certificate of completion. Please enter the last four digits of the employee's social security number on the certificate so we may be sure to enter the completion in the correct record.

Probationary Period

An employee must serve a probationary period during the first year of his/her initial permanent Federal appointment to determine fitness for continued employment. An Agency may terminate the services of an employee if he/she fails to demonstrate fully the qualifications for continued employment during the initial one-year probationary period.

Prior Federal civilian service (including Nonappropriated Fund service) counts toward completion of the probationary period.

During the probationary period, the supervisor must continually evaluate the employee's job performance and work behavior, as well as his/her character, conduct, and attitude that directly affect job performance. The supervisor should document the employee's performance and conduct throughout the probationary period.

Prior to the end of the one-year probationary period, the Civilian Personnel Operations Center (CPOC) will notify management of the requirement for written certification of the employee's performance. If the supervisory certification is not timely, an employee who does not deserve continued employment may attain that status by default.

If an employee is failing to meet the requirements during the probationary period, the supervisor must take action early and consult with the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC) on available options such as:

(a) Reassignment: Reassigning an employee during the probationary period does not mean that he/she must begin a new one-year probationary period.

(b) Change to Lower Grade: Changing an employee to a lower grade during the probationary period does not mean that he/she must begin a new one-year probationary period.

(c) Termination: Probationary employees who are subject to administrative actions have very limited rights to have the action reviewed by outside third parties such as arbitrator or the Merit Systems Protection Board.

A probationary employee, whose performance and/or conduct are unsatisfactory, may be removed at any time during the probationary period. The supervisor does not have to wait until the end of the probationary period to initiate action. When initiating action, the supervisor should consult with the CPAC early in the process.

An employee is also required to serve a probationary period upon initial appointment to a supervisory or managerial position.

DOCUMENTATION FOR NEW POINT OF ENTRY (POE) MODULE

Effective 22 August 2001, the new Point of Entry (POE) module will be placed into production. It is anticipated that the new design will make it easier for employees to create their Point of Entry (POE) account, thus reducing the number of calls that ABC-C and the SWCPOC Help Desk currently receive regarding POE account creation.

The module has been thoroughly tested. The email notification of successful or unsuccessful attempts to change a password is not available yet. The contractor is working on it. When it is available, we will notify all. The following advisory will be placed on the EBIS home page, Wednesday, 22 August 2001.

WEB ADVISORY:

"Please be advised that a new log-on procedure has been implemented to allow access to the EBIS application.

If you are a new user, you will need to create a Point of Entry (POE) account. Please ensure you are entering the correct information to identify yourself as a user of this application. Additionally, please follow the guidance provided in creating your password. Your password must contain 8-10 characters, cannot match any portion of your SSN, and must contain at least 3 of the following 4 characters: an upper or a lower case letter, or a number, or a special character. Please review the examples that are provided.

If you are an existing user, your SSN will replace the "USER-ID" field. The password previously created is valid.

The feature to receive email notifications is not yet available when a successful or unsuccessful attempt in a password change has occurred.

If you have problems creating your POE, please contact an ABC-C counselor at 1-877-276-9287 or call the SWCPOC Help Desk at DSN 856-2000 or commercial 1-785-239-2000 during normal business hours for assistance."

NEW POE MODULE:

CHANGES

- (1) New screen designs have been created to provide examples of password combinations. See screen shots below.
- (2) Eliminated the need to create a "USER-ID". You will enter your SSN as the USER-ID.
- (3) SSN is masked. (The SSN does not appear on the screen - as it is typed, asterisks are seen vice numbers.)
- (4) If you forget your password, you can re-establish a new one.
- (5) You can choose to be notified of successful or unsuccessful attempts of a change to a password.

POE FUNCTIONALITY REMAINS THE SAME:

- (1) An eight-day waiting period between password changes is still in effect. (Compliance with DoD security measures.)
- (2) Expired passwords. You will receive a warning notice if your password has expired. You must reestablish your password. You cannot use the same password within a 6-month period.
- (3) Soon to expire. If you have a passwords between 80 to 89 days old you will receive a warning notice that you password must be changed every 90-days. You will be able to select, "Change password".

Reemployment of Annuitants

General Rules

Federal retirees may be reemployed in any position for which they are qualified unless they have accepted a "buyout" to retire. In that case, the law bars reemployment for five years unless the full (pre-tax) amount of the "buyout" is repaid. **Note:** former employees of the Department of Defense are only barred from accepting a "personal services" contract for one year.

In general, annuity payments and salaries of returning annuitants may not be combined. The salaries of those reemployed annuitants who retired voluntarily will be offset by the amount of the annuity. Those who retired early under a discontinued service retirement will have their annuity suspended for the period of reemployment.

Reemployed annuitants who have recovered from disability or who were involuntarily separated are subject to mandatory deductions under CSRS or FERS. CSRS reemployed annuitants whose annuities are subtracted from their pay may elect to have deductions made; retirement deductions are mandatory for FERS reemployed annuitants.

Reemployment to Meet Exceptional Needs

The Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act of 1990 permits OPM to authorize retired military and federal civilian personnel to be employed without offset of pay or annuity when such employment is needed to meet exceptional needs in recruiting or retaining qualified candidates for particular positions or under unusual circumstances. There are two conditions under which OPM may authorize exceptions to the reduction in pay or annuity normally required for either military or civilian retirees: (1) for temporary employment that is necessary due to an emergency involving a direct threat to life or property or other unusual circumstances (which may be delegated to agencies), and (2) on a case-by-case basis for employees in positions for which there is exceptional difficulty in recruiting or retaining a qualified employee.

Buyout Recipients

An individual who received a voluntary separation incentive, or buyout, payment and who comes back to work for the government of the United States within five years must repay the entire pre-tax payment. This includes employment with any part of the federal government, including the Postal Service. Repayment for reemployment with the federal government may be waived by the Office of Personnel Management only in rare

instances where the individual involved possesses unique abilities and is the only qualified person available. There is no authority to approve a waiver of repayment for buyout takers who wish to enter into personal services contracts with the federal government.

If you retired with a buyout payment and are considering returning to work with any part of the government, ask the agency where you want to work about the effect of reemployment payment you received.

The Department of Defense Priority Placement Programs (PPP)

How The PPP Can Help You!

Rights and Benefits of Civilian Employees Affected by Base Closures, Reductions and Consolidations

Placement Assistance in The Government

All career, career-conditional employees and excepted service employees are given maximum assistance in continuing their careers as employees of the Federal government through assignment to other positions in the Department of Defense (DoD), or other Federal agencies. In addition, in cooperation with the Department of Labor and State Employment Services, assistance will be given to employees in locating positions in private industry. Where appropriate, they will be given the opportunity to undertake retraining programs to qualify them for jobs available in their local labor markets.

Employees whose jobs are transferred to other locations may be given the opportunity to transfer with their jobs. The costs of transporting them, their families and households to new locations will be borne by the government. Among the costs that will be paid are moving and transportation of house hold effects, buying and selling a home, the cost of a "house hunting" trip to the new locations and temporary quarters subsistence expenses.

Employees whose jobs are eliminated will be given priority rights to other vacant positions in the Defense Department (and other Federal agencies). Employees demoted who are entitled to grade retention will be given priority rights to other DoD vacant positions in the commuting area at their retained grades.

The Department of Defense Priority Placement Programs provide the principal mechanism for placing affected employees elsewhere in the DoD. Through its Automated Stopper and Referral System (ASARS) the skills of displaced employees are matched with vacant positions at other DoD activities in the authorized area at which the employees are willing to work.

If the new job involves a move to another location, the costs of moving the employee and his/her household are borne by the government in accordance with the Joint Travel Regulations. If the new job is at a lower grade level, the employee's grade or pay is saved to the maximum extent permitted.

Employees may also register in the Defense Outplacement Referral System (DORS). Employees registered in the DORS will have their resumes referred to non-DoD Federal agencies, Private Sector employers, not for profit organizations and state and local governments. Registration in DORS is voluntary.

Employees may be given priority consideration for vacancies in other Federal agencies through the Interagency Career Transition Assistance Program (ICTAP). State employment services also provide placement and retraining assistance for employees desiring jobs in private industry.

Following are some specific questions and answers that provide additional detailed information on pertinent aspects of the DoD Priority Placement Programs.

1. How Will DoD Assist You In Finding Another DoD Job?

The Priority Placement Programs provide the primary method by which employees will be afforded maximum opportunity for placement assistance in other DoD positions and locations. The PPP has been called the most effective outplacement program in the Federal service. It is an extremely effective placement assistance system established and maintained to minimize the adverse effects on employees due to such actions as drawdowns, base closures, consolidations, contracting out and classification decisions. Since its inception in 1965, this highly acclaimed placement system has received the personal support and sanction of every Secretary of Defense.

2. How Effective Is the DoD PPP In Placing RIF-Affected Employees?

To date more than 150,000 employees have been placed through the PPP. More placements could have been made. However, for personal reasons, and despite the fact that employee relocation expenses are paid in accordance with the Joint Travel Regulations, some employees are not willing to relocate to other DoD facilities where vacancies exist. Employees who are willing to relocate can greatly enhance their placement opportunities.

3. How Does the DoD PPP Work?

Employees affected by RIF, and those who decline to accompany their function, either by transfer or management reassignment to another commuting area, are registered in a computerized system that is operated in Dayton, Ohio, by the Priority Placement Support Branch. As vacancies occur, supporting civilian personnel office use a computer system to tell the Center in Dayton to immediately refer the resumes of employees who match the title, series, and grade of their vacant position and who have indicated availability for placement at their DoD location. This referral and matching process can take as little as 24 hours from the time an employee is registered in the PPP.

4. How are Employees Referred for Placement Under the PPP?

Employees are referred using a numeric priority (1 through 3). The priority assigned is based on the severity of the employee's proposed personnel action. For example, an employee facing RIF-separation with no offer of continued employment is assigned a Priority 1, while an employee with a RIF offer of a change to lower grade one grade below their current grade held, is assigned Priority 3. Priority 1 employees must be considered for placement before priority 2 and 3 employees. Additionally, the priority assigned determines which recruitment actions are "stopped" when a match occurs.

5. What Happens When Resumes Are Received at a DoD Civilian Personnel Office?

When the resumes reflect priorities 1 or 2, all recruiting action STOPS and the job is offered to the highest priority registrant determined to be well qualified. Priority 3 resumes permit the selection of a current employee of the Component, e.g., Army, Navy or Air Force, but STOPS new appointments, including reinstatement, and transfers from outside the Component.

6. Is the Offer Mandatory or Does the Manager Have a Choice?

Any offer made in accordance with PPP procedures is mandatory, and this mandate is rigidly enforced. Again, the registrant must be well qualified for the job including meeting any reasonable, special qualifications.

7. How Do Managers Feel About the Mandatory Placement of Registrants in Their Vacant Positions?

We have outstanding support from commanding officers and managers since they understand the reason for PPP placements. Additionally, they know that they are getting a well-qualified employee. Many civilian managers have been placed through the DoD PPP, and they owe the continuity of their careers to this program. Obviously, they are strong supporters.

8. Do You Have any Statistics on the Success of These Mandatory Placements?

In the past few years, we have conducted five follow-up surveys on a fairly extensive basis. Managers have indicated that more than 90 percent of all PPP placements resulted in their receiving an employee that was equal to or better than candidates selected through the merit promotion process.

9. With That Type Success, the Registration Requirements Must be Rigid. Are They?

In order to be registered, the employee must be "sufficiently well qualified", that is, be able to satisfactorily perform the duties of the position with orientation only, and the registrant's performance and conduct must not be in question. The "sufficiently well qualified" determination is initially made by the registering personnel office and confirmed between the registering and gaining activities before offers are confirmed.

10. How Many Offers Does the Registrant Have from Which to Choose?

One. The employee is told at the time of registration that only one valid offer is authorized, so they are careful to register for locations and skills that are acceptable. They are allowed up to four days to accept or decline an offer.

11. Can the Employee Select Any DoD Installation in the World for Registration Purposes?

No. The employee's supporting civilian personnel office determines the appropriate geographic area necessary to afford a reasonable opportunity for placement. The employee may then designate activities in that area that are acceptable. The geographic areas for which registration is made are determined on such criteria as the skill(s) for which the employee is "sufficiently well qualified" and how well represented those skills are in that geographic area. For

example, skills that are common at many DoD locations could dictate a more narrow referral area than unusual skills that are not widely represented within the DoD.

12. With So Many Installations in Tight Budgetary Situations and/or Having to Reduce the Civilian Workforce. Is it Realistic for an Employee at Base to be Closed to Expect a Job Offer Through the DoD PPP?

DoD has taken measures to lessen the impact of DoD downsizing on employees who are either losing their job or being displaced. Some of the measures include offering retirement and resignation incentives to create vacancies, offering outplacement subsidies to non-DoD agencies to hire surplus DoD employees, and increasing the minimum RIF notice period, thus giving employees more time to be placed prior to separation.

Again, employees need to be flexible in their decisions when registering in the Priority Placement Programs and carefully consider their options to increase their placement opportunities. The supporting civilian personnel office will provide trained counselors to assist in this effort.

13. Is the DoD PPP Cost Effective?

The General Accounting Office has reviewed the effectiveness of the DoD PPP and reported that millions of dollars are saved each year in severance pay and unemployment compensation avoidance. Additionally, there is a substantial savings in retaining skilled people within DoD.

14. How Do You Get This Information About Placement Assistance to the Employees at The Bases Scheduled to be Closed?

The local supporting civilian personnel office is responsible for briefing employees and assisting in their registration in the DoD PPP. In addition, you will be provided information that will explain available assistance. DoD CARE Office representatives may also conduct on-site PPP workforce briefings.

15. Realistically, What Percentage of These Adversely Affected Employees Do You Think Will Receive Offers of Other Jobs?

If an employee is willing to relocate, chances for continued employment are greatly increased. Our ability to achieve this goal is boosted significantly by lengthy advanced notice periods and closures that are spread over several years. The more time we have to find you another job; the greater the chances of finding you another job.

16. How Can I Register In the DoD PPP?

Contact your supporting civilian personnel office for an appointment.

Think about your skills. You may register for up to five types of jobs for which you are “sufficiently well qualified”. This means you would be able to begin performing the duties of typical positions with orientation only.

Think seriously about where you might be willing to relocate outside the commuting area. Your supporting civilian personnel office will establish geographic parameters within which you are eligible to register, based on availability of jobs for your skills. This is very important because the area must be broad enough to reasonably provide an offer, yet you must be very sure that you will accept a job at that location if offered. One declination of a valid job offer removes you from the PPP.

Consider whether you would be available for lower grades knowing that your pay will likely be protected.

Be sure to stay in touch with your supporting civilian personnel office. Your personnel office must be able to contact you promptly when an offer is forthcoming or when an expansion or revision of your registration is advisable.

Veteran's Recruitment Appointment (Formerly Veterans' Readjustment Appointment)

On November 7, 2002, Congress passed the Jobs for Veterans Act (Public Law 107-288). The act makes significant changes to the Veterans Readjustment Act, to include changing the title of the Act to "Veterans' Recruitment Appointment" (VRA). **The changes were effective immediately upon enactment of the law.**

PLEASE NOTE: The public law changes the VRA provisions found in 38 USC 4214. Although there has as yet been no change to 5 CFR Part 307, Veterans' Readjustment Appointments, the CFR language stems directly from 38 USC 4214. Therefore, any change to title 38 immediately affects the CFR provisions. Until 5 CFR is updated, you should use 38 USC 4214 as the governing reference for VRA.

Under the new law, the following veterans are eligible for a non-competitive VRA appointment:

- Disabled veterans;
- Veterans who served on active duty in the Armed Forces during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized;
- Veterans who, while serving on active duty in the Armed Forces, participated in a United States military operation for which an Armed Forces Service Medal (AFSM) was awarded; and
- Recently separated veterans. Recently separated veterans are defined as those who have separated from active service within the last three years.

These provisions are a substantial change from the previous language.

- They provide additional flexibility by eliminating all time restrictions on appointments for veterans in the first three categories, i.e., disabled veterans and those with a campaign badge or AFSM. This means that individuals in the first three categories may be appointed or converted to a VRA appointment without regard to any time limit.
- Length of service requirements have been eliminated for all categories of veterans.

- On the other hand, veterans who are not disabled and who do not have a campaign badge or AFSM may only be appointed within the first three years after their most recent separation. This provision not only affects individuals to whom you wish to make an initial appointment, but also affects current VRA appointees whom you may wish to convert to a new appointment. For example- you appoint someone who is eligible only as a “recently separated veteran” 2 ½ years after separation. This individual may not be converted to a new VRA appointment once an additional six months have passed. Because of this, many individuals currently on the roles under VRA appointments may well not be eligible under the new criteria. Such individuals **are**, however, continued in their current VRA appointments and are converted to career/career-conditional appointment at the appropriate time.

Unlike the previous VRA provisions, the new language does not specifically include the provision that the veteran must have been “released from active duty under conditions other than dishonorable.” Based on the most recent guidance we have received, this should NOT be interpreted to mean that dishonorably discharged veterans are eligible for VRA appointments. Under title 38, the basic definition of a veteran is someone who has “other than a dishonorable discharge.” Therefore, the reasonable conclusion is that the removal of the discharge language from the VRA provisions is an effort to remove what amounts to a redundancy, rather than a change in requirements.

Other aspects of the VRA remain unchanged. As in the past, the following provisions apply.

- The maximum grade level at which appointments may be made is GS-11;
- Veterans must be “qualified,” i.e., able to perform the essential functions of the position with or without reasonable accommodation for a disability;
- Veterans with less than 15 years of education must still receive training or education; and
- After two years of successful employment, appointments must be converted to career conditional.

The “VRA Frequently Asked Questions” information previously under the Staffing Advisory Section on the CPMS website has been deleted for revision, and will re-appear when all appropriate changes have been made.

Changes to FASCLASS Accounts

Due to DA’s implementation of FASCLASS Version 2.0, there are several new features for managers/AO’s:

1. When PD’s are created, additional selections are now available under the “Select a User Role” feature. The creator must make a selection from 2 separate menus. First the creator makes a selection from the “Select a User Role” which contains 3 choices (Next Reviewing Source, CPAC Personnelist, or Servicing CPOC Classifier). Next the creator must make a selection from the “Select a User” which contains names based on the first selection made. For example, if the creator wants to forward the PD to the CPAC generalist, he/she selects CPAC generalist from the Select a User menu.

Similarly, if the creator wants to send the PD to the CPOC, he/she selects Servicing CPOC Classifier in the menu and then the name of the CPOC classifier from the second menu.

Those that are familiar with FASCLASS know that we normally choose the CPOC Classifier user. You may continue to select the CPOC Classifier.

2. The search capability now includes the Advanced Search features that were previously only available to CPOC and CPAC employees. This means managers can search on the same items as the CPOC. In addition, there are new ways to search by organization from a drop down menu (view all organizations, view organizations with PD's, view organizations with no PD's) and you can search by employee name (only within the NE region).

3. Another new feature is called Track PD, which allows managers, personnelists, and classifiers to determine where the PD is in the process (e.g., under review by the classifier, etc.).

DA is continuing to work on enhancements to FASCLASS, so if you have any suggestions for improvement, please pass them on to us and we'll forward them on for you. If you have any additional questions about Version 2.0, contact your servicing specialist for assistance.

Transformation of Army's Civilian HR Databases - MODERN

Army is transforming from civilian Human Resource (MODERN) databases at each Civilian Personnel Operations Center (CPOC) to a consolidated database at one central site. The transition period will begin COB on 6 Jun 2003 and last at least until COB 23 JUN 03.

During the transition period, the Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS--MODERN) will not be available, so personnel actions will not be able to be initiated or processed. Please refer to the chart below in order to make timely submissions of Requests for Personnel actions prior to the transition period (system downtime).

The ART screen is expected to be available during the transition period, but the information will be refreshed only as of 6 JUN 03. Other HR Applications will continue to be available through the transition periods. These include Business Objects, FASCLASS, Emergency Contact, SF50 History, Resume Builder, Vacancy Announcement / Vacancy Announcement Builder, Resumix, ANSWER, and Web-Based Referral.

CPOCs will continue to announce vacancies, issue referrals, work on classification actions, and perform other work during the transition period. CPOCs intend to process all personnel actions that are effective during the pay periods affected by the transition periods to minimize impact on employees.

Emergency actions occurring during the transition periods, will be processed manually as expeditiously as possible and will be input to DCPDS once it is available. Emergency actions are those that would result in an employee not getting paid at all, or being overpaid (including deaths, removals, suspensions, critical accessions, and return to duty actions).

Impact on the Army Benefits Center-Civilian (ABC-C): During the transition period, ABC-C transactions can still be made but will be held in pending status until DCPDS is operational. Customers and counselors can view their actions in the projected areas of the Interactive Voice Response System / Employee Benefit Information System (IVRS / EBIS). Processing of retirement packages will continue during the transition periods. Retirement RPAs that are to be effective the end of JUN or the beginning of JUL will need to be entered into MODERN NLT 6 JUN in order to be flowed to the ABC-Center prior to the MODERN downtime.

Actions effective 1-6 Jun	In CPOC by	Processed NLT
Actions that may affect pay (accessions, promotion (temporary and permanent), change to lower grade, and position actions such as position review that may result in a pay change).	COB 16 May 2003	6 Jun 2003
Routine actions (awards, non-pay actions, extensions of temporary actions).	COB 23 May 2003	6 Jun 2003.
Paperwork and documentation associated with in-processing new hires and CAOs effective 1 and 2 Jun 2003. CPACs need to forward inprocessing documents to the CPOC promptly for 2 Jun EODs, and coordinate closely with the CPOC for EODs on 3-6 Jun.	COB 2 Jun 2003	6 Jun

Actions effective 7-28 Jun	In CPOC by	Processed NLT
Actions that may affect pay (accessions, promotion (temporary and permanent), change to lower grade, and position actions such as position review that may result in a pay change), and extensions of time-limited appointments expiring during the transition.	COB 23 May 2003	30 Jun 2003

Routine actions (awards, non-pay actions, extensions of temporary actions).	COB 30 May 2003	1 Jul 2003
In-processing paperwork and documentation associated with new hires and CAOs.	COB Jun 19 2003	30 Jun 2003

If you have questions, please contact your servicing CPAC specialist.

Non-Appropriated Funding Vacancies

Child & Youth Program Assistant – Child Development Center – Flex position - \$9.24/hour

Administrative Assistant – Youth Services – Full Time - \$8.50 - \$12.00/hour

Food Service Worker – Community Activities Center/NCI Café – Flex position - \$8.65/hour