



# CPAC Newsletter

November 2003

## Inside this issue:

Army Civilian Human Resources Agency Activated 1

Vacancy Announcement Board 2

Thrift Savings Plan Open Season 3

Federal Employees Health Benefits Open Season 3

MyPay 4

Off Duty Employment 4

Retirement: Main Types and Eligibility Conditions 5

Benefits for Those Affected by Reduction in Force 7

Non-Appropriated Fund Vacancies 9

## Army Civilian Human Resources Agency Activated

Lt. Gen. John Le Moyne, the U.S. Army Deputy Chief of Staff G-1, formally inaugurated the Army Civilian Human Resources Agency October 5.

The new agency is a result of the integration of the Civilian Training, Education and Development System, Civilian Personnel Field Activity, Civilian Personnel Advisory Centers, overseas Civilian Personnel Operations Management Agency. CHRA is part of the Army leadership's vision to streamline headquarters, create more agile and responsive staffs, reduce layers of review and approval, focus on

mission, and transform the Army. The establishment of the CHRA will enable the Army to enhance quality of service provided to its civilian employees and support the Army's vision for Transformation.

David Snyder, G-1, Civilian Personnel Policy Director, said, "This change is another step in the evolution of our program that will allow us to better reach our goal of providing consistent quality and timely support to all customers."

As an agency under the G-1, CHRA is part of the Army's initiative to mold personnel functions into

a corporate structure, enabling equitable, efficient and effective management of civilians worldwide. The agency will manage all aspects of the human resources life-cycle for civilians from recruiting to retirement. CHRA will serve appropriated fund, non-appropriated fund and local national civilian employees.

The Army Civilian Human Resources Agency is planned to become part of the Army Human Resources Command by 2008.

The CHRA is headquartered at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland.



# Vacancy Announcement Board

“Access the  
Vacancy  
Announcement  
Board Website  
via [www.cpol.  
army.mil](http://www.cpol.army.mil).”

The Civilian Personnel On Line (CPOL) Position Vacancy Website has recently been renovated. The result is a newly updated, more-streamlined Vacancy Announcement Board. Upon accessing the new Vacancy Announcement Board, users are able to search for position vacancies within the U.S. by state, or outside the U.S. by country. Users may search for position vacancies by Special Program categories (such as Student Hire, Summer Employment, Medical Cell, and Army Career Program); General Occupational Groups (such as Finance and Accounting, or Arts and Recreation); Specific Occupational Numeric Series; and by grade level.

The following provides step-by step procedures for accessing the new Vacancy Announcement Board, and for navigating through this new site to locate position vacancies that are serviced by the Fort Detrick Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC).

Access the Vacancy Announcement Board Website via: <http://cpol.army.mil>

Select: Employment

Select: Army's Vacancy

Announcements

Scroll down to States and Select MARYLAND (Maryland is simply an example, a the Ft Detrick CPAC also services USAMRMC activities located in other states as well, to include Texas, California, Utah, Pennsylvania, Alabama, Virginia, and Massachusetts).

Hit Get Results.

There will be about 200 vacant positions that will be listed for Maryland.

Those Vacancy Announcements that begin with the letters "BBU" or "NEBB" are positions that the Fort Detrick CPAC services.

Not all of the "BBU" or "NEBB" positions are located at Fort Detrick in Frederick, MD. Be sure to look at the Place of Work location on the Vacancy Announcement to determine where the position vacancy is located.

Some Vacancy Announcements that begin with "MD" are also serviced by the Fort Detrick CPAC. You will need to check the Place of Work location on these "MD" Vacancy announcements to determine where the

position is located.

Double Click on the Vacancy Announcement Number to view the entire vacancy announcement. Some position vacancies are announced both Internally (NEBB), and Externally (BBU) or MEDCELL (MD), so you may see two vacancy announcements for the SAME position.

Check the Who May Apply area on the Vacancy Announcement in order to determine for which announcement you should apply.

When applicants apply to NEBB Announcements, they need to follow the instructions in the How to Apply area, and they need to submit a resume through the Army Resume Builder and Self Nominate. Be sure to read the Other Requirements area to be sure your application is complete.

When applicants apply to BBU Announcements, they need to follow the instructions in the How to Apply area, and they need to submit their resume and address the Knowledge, Skills, & Abilities listed in the Vacancy Announcement. Be sure to read the Other Requirements area to be sure your application is

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complete.

When applicants apply to MD Vacancy announcements, they

need to follow the instructions in How to Apply area, and they need to submit their resume to the address noted in the vacancy announcement.

Be sure to read the Other Requirements area to be sure your application is complete.

## Thrift Savings Plan Open Season

TSP Open Season started 15 October and ends 31 December 2003.

During this open season, participants covered by FERS may elect to contribute up to 14% of the basic pay they earn each pay period. Participants covered by CSRS may elect to contribute up to 9% of the basic pay they earn each pay period.

In addition participants who are age 50 or older may elect to contribute up to \$3,000 in 2004.

Visit <https://www.abc.army.mil> or [www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov) for more information.

During open season you are permitted to process only one change to your TSP election. If you have

created a transaction and you wish to change it you must cancel it before it processes and create a new transaction. If you transaction has processed, you are not permitted to cancel it and create a new transaction. TSP contributions can be terminated at any time if you feel the need to stop contributing.



## Federal Employees Health Benefits Open Season

During this open season, you may change or cancel your FEHB coverage. The effective date for new elections will be 11 January 2004.

Before changing or making an election, please take the time to verify the cost and coverage of the plan

you are interested in. All of the health care providers have increased their premiums and changed coverage. Make certain you check your current coverage to see if it is still the best for you and your family. If you plan to cancel your coverage make certain you have

new coverage before the cancellation is effective.

Visit <https://www.abc.army.mil> for information, to make or cancel elections.

Visit [www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov) for more information, costs, plan brochures.



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## MyPay



In a news release, from the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS), the two million military and civilian users of MyPay are being cautioned to use only the official MyPay site (<https://mypay.dfas.mil>) when seeking to access pay account information. In a statement from Claudia L. Bogard, director of Corporate

Communications for DFAS, "Personal information is valuable and should be safeguarded. Don't provide your personal information to any Web site unless you know it can be trusted." Look-alike sites have recently frustrated MyPay customers who have been confused by accidentally finding their way to a

commercial site that is in NO WAY affiliated with DFAS or the Department of Defense. DFAS' myPay is a secure, DFAS-operated Web site that lets active duty, National Guard and Reserve military members, civilian employees, military retirees and civilian annuitants take charge of their pay accounts on-line.

## Off Duty Employment

Army personnel must not engage in outside employment that:

- Interferes with their ability to perform their government duties
- Appears to create conflicts of interest involving the Army or the United States Government
- May reasonably be expected to bring discredit or criticism

against the employee or the Army

This restriction further disallows canvassing, soliciting and peddling of goods and products (AVON, school candy, etc.) by employees during working hours.

Civilian employees must normally obtain official permission before engaging in off-duty

employment if the prospective employer transacts or is proposing to transact business with the Department of Defense or its Departments. Employee or supervisor inquiries regarding the appropriateness of off-duty employment should be directed to the Judge Advocate's Office.



## Retirement: Main Types and Eligibility Conditions

Employees who meet the general eligibility criteria may qualify for several different types of retirement benefits. Generally, the availability of any of these alternative forms of retirement

depends on a variety of factors. For the majority of employees, the most significant criteria involve a worker's attainment of certain minimum age and length of service requirements. However,

the availability of some other types of retirement may depend on factors like an individual's health or physical ability to work (e.g., a disability retirement) or a worker's employment situation (e.

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g., a discontinued service retirement during a reduction-in-force).

The types of retirement generally available to federal employees include:

### **Voluntary Retirement**

When federal employees meet the age and service requirements for a voluntary retirement, they may retire at any time with an immediate full annuity. (This kind of voluntary retirement also is known as a “non-disability” or “standard” retirement.)

For CSRS-covered employees who meet the general eligibility requirements (see above), voluntary retirement is an option once the following minimum age and creditable service requirements are satisfied: age 62, five years service; age 60, 20 years service; and age 55, 30 years service.

FERS-covered employees who meet the general minimum requirement (i.e., five years creditable service) are eligible for a standard or voluntary retirement once they meet certain minimum age and service requirements. The minimum retirement ages for unreduced FERS benefits are: age 62 with five years’ service, age 60 with 20 years’ service, and age 55 (for individuals born before 1948) with 30

years’ service. FERS-covered employees born in or after 1948 also may qualify for unreduced benefits if they have at least 30 years’ service and meet the special Minimum Retirement Age (MRA) requirements established for unreduced annuities. These MRA standards generally establish the earliest age at which employees may qualify for unreduced annuities (with 30 years’ service) or reduced annuities if they have between ten and 29 years of creditable service.

Under FERS, a worker may separate after completing ten years of service and reaching the minimum retirement age, and delay application for benefits in order to diminish applicable reductions for attaining benefits before age 62.

### **Deferred Retirement**

This is another form of retirement that normally is taken on an optional basis. Under CSRS, former employees who leave their money in the retirement fund are eligible for an annuity that starts at age 62 if they have completed at least five years of creditable civilian service and were covered by CSRS for at least one year within the two-year period immediately before separating.

Under FERS, workers are eligible for deferred

benefits if they leave service after having completed five years of service covered by retirement deductions. Deferred benefits are payable at age 62, or at the minimum retirement age with at least ten years of service. Separated workers electing the deferred benefit at the MRA with at least ten years of service will have a computation as if they were retiring at that point, including the applicable reductions of five percent for each year of age under age 62.

Deferred annuitants under CSRS and FERS are not eligible to participate in the FEHB program or to acquire FEGLI coverage. However, once their annuity begins, they will get annual cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs). In addition, they will be eligible to provide a survivor annuity for their spouses.

### **Disability Retirement**

Federal and postal workers covered by CSRS or FERS who become unable to continue in their federal or postal positions because of the onset of a disabling condition generally are eligible for a disability retirement. Under CSRS and FERS, federal and postal employees no longer able to perform in their positions (or other vacant

(Continued on page 6)

*“The types of retirement generally available to federal employees include Voluntary and Deferred Retirement.”*

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positions at the same grade or pay level) are assumed to be disabled for federal or postal service, even though they might be able to hold some other job. This “occupational” definition of disability is different than that used by Social Security.

Employees generally must meet all of the following conditions to be eligible for disability retirement.

- If CSRS-covered, they must have completed at least five years of civilian service to be eligible for disability benefits (the comparable figure for FERS-covered employees is 18 months).
- They must, while employed subject to either retirement system, have become totally disabled for useful and efficient service in the position occupied or any other vacant position of the same grade or pay level for which they otherwise are qualified.
- Their application for disability retirement must be filed with the Office of Personnel Management in accordance with specified time limits.

### Early Retirement

Generally, there are two kinds of early retirement

under which federal employees may be able to leave their jobs with an immediate (but possible reduced) annuity, even though they have not met the normal age and service requirements. Both CSRS and FERS contained special provisions that allow employees who do not meet the normal age and service requirements to retire early. The basic purpose of these early retirement options or procedures is to assist an agency in carrying out a personnel reduction or downsizing operation with minimal workforce disruptions. These early retirement options typically are extended to employees who are facing an involuntary separation, transfer to another commuting area, or an immediate reduction in their rate of basic pay. By allowing employees who meet certain criteria to retire early, an agency can create vacancies that, in turn, can be filled by employees who would otherwise be separated or downgraded.

The two basic kinds of early retirement that may be made available to certain employees are:

- **Early Voluntary retirement**—An agency may make this type of “early out” option available during a downsizing

operation, such as a reduction-in-force or reorganization, to employees who meet certain minimal age and service requirements; i.e., employees must be at least age 50 with 20 (or more) years of creditable service or they can qualify at any age if they have at least 25 years of creditable service. Generally CSRS retirees who are under age 55 will have their annuities reduced by one-sixth of one percent for each full month they are under age 55 (i.e., two percent per year). Once they reach age 55, such retirees will not have their annuities increased to compensate for the reduction.

- **Discontinued service retirement (DSR)**—A “discontinued service retirement” is an involuntary retirement that provides an immediate annuity to employees who are separated (i.e., retired) against their will. Just as with an early voluntary retirement, employees are not eligible for a discontinued service annuity if they are separated for cause on charges of misconduct or delinquency. The final

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responsibility for determining whether a separation is in fact involuntary for purposes of receiving a discontinued service annuity rests with OPM. Other than their involuntary nature, DSRs are similar in

many respects to an early voluntary retirement. They have the same minimal age and service requirements (i.e., age 50 with 20 years, any age with 25 years), but are subject to several additional requirements or

procedures.

While both types of early retirement are often triggered by the same personnel pressures (RIF, reorganization, transfer of function, etc.), they differ in several important respects.

## Benefits for Those Affected by Reduction in Force

### Downgrading or Separation Benefits

There are a variety of potential benefits available to employees facing downgrading or separation because of Reduction in Force (RIF). This is an overview of how RIF affects various benefits and entitlements of a Federal employee. This information is general and cannot possibly cover every circumstance and it is not necessarily applicable to every Federal employee. If you need specific information or more details, please contact your servicing personnel office.

### Benefits for Downgraded Employees

An employee who is placed in a lower-graded position in his or her agency through reduction in force (RIF) procedures is normally entitled to retain the same grade for two years. An employee who is downgraded after

receiving a specific RIF notice and taking a lower-graded position offered at management's initiative is eligible for grade retention on the same basis as an employee who is actually downgraded by a RIF action.

Grade and pay retention does not apply to employees holding temporary or term appointments at the time of the RIF. Also, an employee who is downgraded during a RIF is eligible for grade retention only after first completing at least 52 consecutive weeks at a higher grade than the position into which he or she is placed.

### Benefits for Separated Employees

**Severance Pay**  
Severance pay is available to an involuntarily separated employee provided that the employee did not refuse

an offer of a position that is:

- in the same commuting area,
- in the same agency, and
- no more than two grades lower than the employee's current grade level.

In addition, the employee must have been employed for at least 12 continuous months, and cannot be eligible for an immediate annuity as a Federal employee or as a retired member of the armed forces. The employee also cannot be receiving workers' compensation benefits for wage loss due to an on-the-job injury. Unemployment Compensation  
The unemployment insurance program for Federal employees is administered by the Department of Labor through State

(Continued on page 8)

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governments. States, including the District of Columbia, determine the eligibility for benefits and the amount to be paid. The program provides a weekly income for a limited period of time. Separated employees should file a claim for benefits at his or her State Employment Service Office or Unemployment Office. The employee must take his or her social security card, official notice of separation or non-pay status (Standard Form 50), specific RIF notice letter, and notice about unemployment insurance (Standard Form 8).

#### **Unused Annual Leave**

All civilian employees covered by annual leave laws are entitled to receive a lump sum payment for accrued annual leave when separated from the Federal Government.

#### **Unused Sick Leave**

There is no payment for unused sick leave. However, an employee who is separated from Federal service is entitled to have his or her sick leave restored to his/her sick leave account if the individual is reemployed in the Federal Government. All unused sick leave is added to the total service of an employee who is eligible for an annuity under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS). Regular FERS

employees cannot apply unused sick leave to total service for retirement.

#### **Health Benefits**

**Separated Employees Only:**  
Department of Defense employees who are separated may continue enrollment for 18 months following separation. During this time the agency continues to pay its share and any additional administrative cost. Employees continue to pay their share.

After separation, an employee not eligible for an immediate annuity can continue health insurance free for 31 days. The employee may elect to continue receiving, however this request for continued coverage is not automatic. It must be requested in writing within 60 days of separation (or within 60 days of receiving a notice from the agency that FEHB coverage is terminating) and the employee must pay their own share, the government's cost, and an additional 2% administrative fee. This temporary extension of coverage can only last for 18 months. Dependents of employees may carry this coverage for up to 36 months. An employee may also convert to a private plan.

#### **Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FGLI)**

**Separated Employees Only:**  
Separated employees are covered free by FEGLI for 31 days. An employee who is separated and not eligible for an immediate annuity may convert all or part of the life insurance to an individual policy without having to take a medical examination.

#### **Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)**

**Withdrawing Money:**  
When an employee separates from Federal service for more than 31 days, the employee can choose to either leave their money in their TSP account or to withdraw the vested TSP account balance. There are several options for withdrawal:

1. If the account balance is under a certain amount (currently \$3500 or less), the TSP Service Office will notify the employee and the employee's account balance will be paid to the employee automatically in a single payment, unless the employee requests that it be retained or selects another withdrawal option.

2. After separation from Federal service, the employee may:

- Leave it in the TSP.
- Transfer it entirely to an Individual Retirement Account

(Continued on page 9)

*"After separation, an employee not eligible for an immediate annuity can continue health insurance free for 31 days."*

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(IRA) or other eligible retirement plan.

- Purchase a life annuity immediately or at a later date if the account balance is at least \$3,500.
- Receive a single payment immediately or at a later date.
- Receive a single payment and ask the TSP to transfer a portion of it to an IRA or other retirement plan.
- Receive a series of equal monthly payments beginning immediately or at a later date.
- Receive a series of equal monthly payment and ask the TSP to transfer each payment (or a portion of it) to an IRA or other eligible retirement plan if the series of payments is expected to last less than 10 years and is not based on the employee's life expectancy.

Any funds paid directly to the employee from TSP are taxable; a 10 percent

penalty may be charged for early withdrawal if the employee separates before the year they attain age 55. Employees will receive all appropriate forms to exercise their withdrawal options from TSP.

All options are outlined and explained on the TSP website [www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov) or by calling the Thrift Line at (504)255-8777.

### Retirement Benefits Refunds

An employee who separates from Federal employment before completing a minimum of 5 years of creditable civilian service are not eligible to receive optional or deferred annuity benefits under CSRS or FERS. An employee who receives a refund of retirement deductions under CSRS may, after reemployment with the federal Government, repay the amount refunded plus interest so that the period of service covered by the refund may be included in the computation of annuity benefits. However, while

an employees covered by FERS may also receive a refund of his or her retirement contributions, a FERS employee will not be eligible to receive annuity benefits based on the period of service covered by the refund if the employee is reemployed in the Federal Government. There is no provision in law which permits the repayment of FERS contributions that have been refunded. A separated employee does not have to take a refund. Interest has been paid on all funds in a FERS account, while CSRS employees receive no interest for accounts more than 5 years old. Taxes have already been paid on the deductions themselves. Payment of taxes is required only on the interest earned on money in the retirement account.

The following websites have additional information on your retirement options: [www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov) and [www.abc.army.mil](http://www.abc.army.mil).

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## Use or Lose Annual Leave for Civilian Employees

*“Employees will earn leave for each full pay period they are employed in the leave year.”*

Each civilian employee has the personal responsibility to ensure they schedule their annual leave so not to lose any of it at the end of the current leave year. This year, the last leave period for civilians begins 28 December 2003 and ends 10 January 2004. Any employee with more than 240 hours of annual leave on 11 January 2004 (minus those few exceptions that have special approval to carry over more than 240 hours of annual leave) will lose the excess annual leave. The supervisor maintains the responsibility to ensure that the employee has scheduled the annual leave so as not to lose it.

Employees will earn leave for each full pay period they are employed in the leave year. The 30-day maximum (240 hours) carryover of annual leave remains in effect. Employees must schedule any “lose or use” annual leave before 30 November 2003.

Because the terrorist threat continues, the national emergency, with respect to certain terrorist attacks, has been continued for an additional year, beyond 14 September 2003. The “National Emergency by Reason of Certain Terrorist Attacks”

constitutes an exigency of the public business under 5 U.S.C. 6304(d)(1)(b).

If an employee has scheduled approved annual leave, there are potential for restoration of that leave to the employee in excess of the 240 hours restriction if:

- The employee’s supervisor must cancel that annual leave due to “an exigency of the public business.” “An exigency of the public business” is something so important that the only way to accomplish it is to cancel the employee’s already scheduled and approved leave. The work situation requires immediate action.
- It is lost due to sickness of the employee.

In order to consider restoration of the employee’s leave, use of annual leave must have been scheduled in writing before the start of the third biweekly pay period (30 November 2003) to the end of the leave year, and the determination that an “exigency” is of major importance and that annual leave may not be used, must be made by the head of an activity.

Specifics for processing requesting for restoration

of forfeited leave due to exigency of service include:

- a. Determination made by the immediate supervisor that an exigency is of major importance and that an employee may not use scheduled and approved leave.
- b. Employee is notified in writing that scheduled leave will be cancelled.
- c. The supervisor initiates a letter to the organization commander explaining the exigency and requesting approval to cancel scheduled leave.
- d. Promptly after the leave year ends the employee submits a request, through the supervisor, to the CPAC requesting restoration of forfeited annual leave. This request must include the Commander’s approval of the exigency. The request will be approved by the CPAC and returned to the organization. The Command will forward the approved request with all supporting documents to the Customer Service Representative for input of restoration of

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annual leave into DCPS.

Documentation Requirements (minimum):

- a. Beginning and ending dates of exigency period.
- b. Dates and number of hours scheduled which must be

cancelled.

- c. When leave was scheduled and approved.
- d. Description of the exigency that shows it is such importance that the employee cannot be excused from duty.
- e. Statement as to why there is no alternative to

cancellation of leave.

- f. Statement as to why leave cannot be rescheduled during the remainder of the year.

REF: 5 CFR Ch 630; Title 5 USC Ch 63

## Non-Appropriated Fund Vacancies

Child & Youth Program  
Assistant - \$9.24/ hour flex  
positions at the Child  
Development Center



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