



Air Force District of Washington Civilian Personnel Newsletter



SPOTLIGHT: AFDW TRAINING COURSES

Is workforce development training courses worth your time and effort? Absolutely! Your contributions keep this great Air Force strong! Checkout the courses being offered below with your needs in mind! These courses are packaged to respect your time and help to jumpstart your self-development. Training will be held at the Jones Building, Andrews AFB, Conference Room 2510. *You may register with Ms. Stephanie McCoy, AFDW/A1KE, 240-612-6585.

COURSE TITLE	DATE/TIME	AUDIENCE
Hierarchy/Position Review Training POC: Rose Yestramski, AFDW/A1C, 240-612-6602	21 Jan, 0900-1100 27 Jan, 1300-1500 28 Jan, 0900-1100 29 Jan, 1300-1500	Liaisons
*Self Service Applications (MyBiz/MyWorkplace & Awards)	22 Jan, 1000-1100	Employees
*Annual Performance Rating of Record	19 Mar, 1000-1100	Supervisors
*How to Manage Employee Conduct & Appeals	24 Apr, 1000-1100	Supervisors
*Reasonable Accommodations	21 May, 1000-1100	Employees & Supervisors
*Medical Documentation	19 Nov, 1000-1100	Supervisors

NEW ROUND OF VERA AND VSIP

As the Air Force continues to restructure the workforce, Round II of VERA and VSIP will be used to further realign and rebalance the civilian force. The two programs work together to provide employees the opportunity to leave federal service, through regular retirement, early retirement or resignation, with a separation incentive payment of up to \$25,000. Civilian employees will receive VERA and VSIP eligibility surveys from 23 Mar – 3 Apr 2015. Applicants approved for this round of VERA and VSIP will retire or separate no later than 31 May 2015.

REMINDERS



2015 TSP LIMITS

The Internal Revenue Code places limits on the dollar amount of contributions you can make to TSP. The Internal Revenue Service calculates the dollar amount every year and the limitations may change annually. The limits are available on the TSP website and the ThriftLine.

<https://www.tsp.gov/planparticipation/eligibility/contributionLimits.shtml>

27 Paydays in 2015

Periodically, the pay year will be comprised of 27 paydays instead of the more common 26 paydays. This occurs in pay year 2015. As a result, some deductions and withholdings may be affected. If there are questions regarding this information, contact Benefits and Entitlements Service Team (BEST) at 1-800-525-0102.



Ask The CPO

The AFDW Civilian Personnel Officer (CPO), Ms. Dominique Jeter, and the Civilian Personnel staff are committed to providing you with excellent customer service. We are available to answer questions you may have on a variety of civilian personnel issues. If you have a question for the CPO, please send an email to usaf.jbanafw.afdw-staff.mbx.afdw-ask-the-cpo@mail.mil.

Q: Is there a moratorium on issuing adverse actions during the holiday season?

A: Our local policy concerning disciplinary/adverse actions during the period 15 Dec through 3 Jan is as follows:

- All notices of proposed action may be issued during this period
- All decisions may be issued, except suspensions and removals
- Suspensions and removals will be effective prior to 15 Dec or after 3 Jan
- Exceptions to the above may be made on a case-by-case basis

This policy supports one of the AF core values of placing people first by showing compassion for the workforce during the stressful holiday period (from a financial and mental health standpoint), while still allowing for exceptions on a case-by-case basis to avoid any adverse impact to the mission.

Please send any questions you may have to usaf.jbanafw.afdw-staff.mbx.afdw-ask-the-cpo@mail.mil.

Process Change for Supervisor/Lead Position

AFPC/DPI has discontinued their internal policy to "cursory review" all supervisory/lead positions for recruit/fill on an annual or bi-annual basis. This internal process change was an effort to optimize their resources to ensure they were meeting the needs of the Air Force mission, while simultaneously reducing non-regulatory/non-mandated steps in their process.

If a position requires a review due to change in organizational structure or in the duties of the position, the AFDW Civilian Personnel Section (CPS) will submit a ticket via myPers as a recruit/fill for re-classification/position review. If there are no changes to the position description and the position description is still accurate (the organizational structure is still exactly the same as when the PD was originally developed) and there are no changes needed to the position build, the RPA may be sent directly to AFPC Staffing with the appropriate local coordination from the CPS and Manpower Office.

2015 PAY RAISE

Federal employees under the General Schedule will receive a 1 percent pay increase in 2015. Employees on pay retention are entitled to 50 percent of the increase in the maximum step of the grade for the position held at the time of the increase.



Example: Employee's retained rate is \$38,107. The rate for GS-9, step 10 = \$ 36,123 before a general increase of 4.2 percent is applied. The rate for GS-9, step 10, after the increase is \$37,640 (\$36,123 x 1.042). Applying a 50 percent increase, pay is set as follows: \$37,640 minus 36,123 = \$1517 amount of increase
 $\$1517 \times \frac{1}{2} = \758.50 (round up for anything over 50 cents)
 $\$38,107 + 758 = \$38,865$ employee's new retained rate.

Since the employee receives only half the general increase while all the rates in the grade are increased by 100 percent of the general increase, eventually the top step of the grade "catches up" or exceeds the rate the employee is retaining. This usually takes about three general pay increases. When "catch up" occurs, i.e., when an employee's retained rate equals or is less than the maximum rate for the grade of the position held, pay retention terminates and the employee is placed in the top step of the grade.

EMPLOYEE MANAGEMENT RELATIONS CORNER

PROHIBITED PERSONNEL PRACTICES (PPP)

1. Don't **DISCRIMINATE** on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicapping condition, marital status, or political affiliation.
2. Don't **SOLICIT** or **CONSIDER** any personnel recommendation or statement not based on personal knowledge or records of performance, ability, aptitude, general qualifications, character, loyalty, or suitability.
3. Don't **COERCE** an employee's political activity.
4. Don't **DECEIVE** or **OBSTRUCT** any person with respect to such person's right to compete for employment.
5. Don't **INFLUENCE** a person to withdraw from competition for the purpose of improving or injuring the prospects of another person for employment.
6. Don't **GRANT** any preference or advantage not authorized by law, regulation, or rule to any [employee or applicant for the purpose of improving or injuring the prospects of another person for employment].
7. Don't **EMPLOY** or **ADVOCATE** a relative.
8. Don't **RETALIATE** against a Whistleblower, whether an employee or an applicant.
9. Don't **RETALIATE** against employees or applicants who exercise their appeal rights, testify, or cooperate with an Inspector General or the Special Counsel, or refuse to break the law.
10. Don't **DISCRIMINATE** based on actions not adversely affecting performance.
11. Don't **VIOLATE** any law, rule, or regulation implementing or directly concerning the merit principles.
12. Don't **VIOLATE** Veteran's Preference by taking or failure to take a personnel action (National Defense Authorization Act for FY97).
13. Don't **ENFORCE** a nondisclosure policy, form or agreement that does not contain the proper statement.

Please visit the <http://www.mspb.gov/ppp/ppp.htm> website to obtain additional information regarding PPP.

OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE

The time is now. If an employee's performance on any job critical element is unacceptable, the supervisor must inform the employee of the elements, job objectives and/or responsibilities in which performance is unacceptable, in what way it is unacceptable, and exactly what is required to improve the performance to an acceptable level. The employee must be provided a reasonable opportunity period to demonstrate acceptable performance. That opportunity process, for employees who are not in a probationary or trial period, takes the form of a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). The PIP is a formal document and plan that will be developed by supervisor with the guidance of your servicing Employee Management Relations (EMR) Specialist. The time needed to demonstrate acceptable performance is a judgment made by the supervisor based on such considerations as:

- ◆ The employee's position,
- ◆ The extent of the performance problem, and
- ◆ The nature of the problem

Normally the performance improvement period is a timeframe within 60-90 days. Please do not wait until the end of the appraisal cycle to address performance concerns, work with your EMR Specialist as soon as possible.

PROBATIONARY PERIOD

The probationary period or trial period is the initial period of employment. During this period the supervisor carefully considers whether the employee is able to meet the standards and expectations of the job and if the employee should be retained by the Air Force as a “regular” employee. An employee is also required to serve a probationary period upon initial appointment to a supervisory or managerial position. During this time, the supervisor appraises the employee’s:

- Ability to learn and perform job duties
- Quality of work
- Productivity
- Work habits
- Cooperation
- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Other standards and expectations specific to the employee’s work situation



If the employee is clearly not meeting the requirements of the job, the employee may be released at anytime during the probationary period. As a result of not meeting the expectations the supervisor must take action early and consult with their servicing Employee Management Relations Specialist on available options such as:

- Reassignment
- Change to Lower Grade
- Termination

The supervisor should not wait until the end of the probationary period to initiate action. When initiating action, the supervisor should consult with their servicing Employee Management Relations Specialist early in the process. Probationary employees who are subject to administrative action have very limited appeal rights to have the action reviewed by outside third parties such as an Arbitrator or the Merit Systems Protection Board. The probationary period is intended to be used to determine whether the right employee has been hired for the job. Once the probationary period ends, the process for releasing an employee generally requires further documentation.

REPORTING A CIVILIAN DEATH

The following should be accomplished in reporting a civilian death:

- Notify AFDW/A1CE to report civilian death and request the death report worksheet
- Death must be reported to AFPC BEST at 1-800-540-4047 once civilian death worksheet has been completed
- Separation (death) RPA must be submitted to 9LDPCWE-BPR inbox to include a copy of the civilian death worksheet
- A copy of the civilian death worksheet must be sent to the 11 FSS Casualty Office (Attn: Mr. Joseph Sites)

What is an Individual Development Plan?

- A formal document that specifies an individual's development goals and how they are to be accomplished (including resources, time, importance)
- A negotiated plan designed to meet an organization's overall mission goals and objectives and close competency gaps in a structured way
- A "living document" subject to change as work schedules, goals, and even budgets shift
- A "non-binding" agreement between supervisor and employee, used solely to help them agree on training plans over a specific period of time (normally one year)
- Mutual goals established between the supervisor and employee

When do we use IDPs?

- To identify and assess future developmental needs or competency areas
- To provide structured learning experiences linked to an organization's goals and objectives
- To establish agreed-upon developmental activities for the employee's career development
- To promote formal career development
- To structure a means by which to fill employee organizational competency gaps

How do we use IDPs?

- First, assess the individual's current skills and strengths
- Compare the assessment with individual's abilities and current competencies required
- Identify developmental opportunities
- Draft a proposed plan
- Employee and supervisor meet informally to discuss modifications

Employee and supervisor jointly reviews and finalizes the document. Note: Regular update sessions are recommended to evaluate progress. Normally, employee and supervisor reconvene after a period of one year (or less), unless a major change to the document is required. An IDP is a living document that changes based on upcoming needs. Both employee and supervisor rely on the IDP as a roadmap to success. At the end of the performance year, or at another agreed-upon time, both the supervisor and employee meet to review the IDP to determine successes and areas for improvement. These adjustments are then incorporated into the next (new) IDP for the coming year.

How to use an IDP to achieve success!

- Managers who promote IDPs are advising their employees that each person's development is an organizational priority
- Supervisors should allow employees to attend their planned training to further leverage talent and capabilities
- Supervisors can use IDPs as motivators, to focus the approach to training and development rather than a random, *ad-hoc* approach
- Enable a structured approach to training
- Help the organization to focus on training goals
- Leverage talent and enhances the workforce

FROM THE DESK OF THE Labor Relations Officer RIGHTS TO REPRESENTATION- "WEINGARTEN RIGHTS"

Title VII of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 and Public Law 95-454, provides that a bargaining unit employee, upon request, has the right to union representation during an investigation conducted by management, where the employee being questioned reasonably believes that the investigation may result in discipline. This right is commonly referred to as an employee's "Weingarten Rights" after a 1975 U.S. Supreme Court decision involving a company of that name which granted this same right to workers in private industry. The provisions of the Civil Service Reform Act granting Federal employees similar rights are based upon this decision; hence, the nickname, "Weingarten Rights." In determining when Weingarten Rights apply, the following question and answer guidance is provided:



Q: How are an employee's Weingarten Rights triggered? How will I know if I'm involved in a potential Weingarten situation?

A: The right arises in situations when management is investigating actions of the employee (asking the employee questions) and the employee reasonably believes discipline may result from the questioning. In order to invoke Weingarten Rights, the employee must then request union representation.

Q: When an employee is called in for questioning in a Weingarten-type situation, does the interviewer have to inform that employee of these rights before questioning begins?

A: No. The law provides that each agency (in our case, the Air Force) shall annually inform employees of their rights. This is the only

notification required.

Q: Does an employee's request for representation in a Weingarten situation have to be in writing?

A: No. A simple oral request will suffice.

Q: How will management know if an employee "reasonably believes" that discipline may result from questioning?

A: Consider whether answers to the questions could cause discipline or a recommendation for discipline. Is the intent of the questions to obtain information concerning an incident so discipline may be taken? Could the employee's specific answers result in discipline based upon the information the employee discloses? If the answer is "yes to either question, then a Weingarten situation probably exists and the employee is entitled to union representation.

Q: Can an employee be represented by a family lawyer or other personal representative of their own choosing in a Weingarten situation?

A: No. The right to be represented under the law only applies to a union representative (steward, officer, business agent, etc.) being present as a representative in a Weingarten situation.

Q: Management wants to question an employee about suspected misconduct and the employee requests a union representative be present. What are the options?

A: The management interviewer can decide not to question the employee at all and cancel the interview; or management may adjourn the interview until a union representative is present.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT GENERAL SCHEDULE & FEDERAL WAGE SYSTEM

The current appraisal cycle for the legacy system (GS/FWS) employees began 1 Apr 14 and ends 31 Mar 15. The rating system is acceptable or unacceptable. Supervisors must render an overall rating of “R” for Acceptable or “N” for unacceptable. **NOTE: Contact your servicing EMR Specialist regarding any performance concerns.**

LOGIC TABLE - ACTIONS FOR EARLY ANNUAL RATING OF RECORD

IF	AND	Action Required by: DEPARTING SUPERVISOR	Action Required by: New Rating Official
Rating Official departs during the period of 1 Jan - 31 Mar	Employee remains in the same position and meets minimum criteria for annual rating of record	The GS/FWS departing supervisor must complete annual rating of record for their employee. Complete AF Form 860A. The form is available at http://www.e-publishing.af.mil/	Communicate final rating of record to employee. Establish rating criteria for next rating cycle
Employee is promoted, reassigned, detailed or changed to lower grade during the period of 1 Jan - 31 Mar	Employee remains within Air Force and is working in another Organization and meets minimum criteria for annual rating of record	The GS/FWS losing supervisor must complete annual rating of record for their employee. Complete AF Form 860A. The form is available at http://www.e-publishing.af.mil/ NOTE: Losing organization will pay for monetary performance award from their bogey.	Gaining supervisor will communicate final rating of record to employee along with any performance award associated with rating. Establish rating criteria for next rating cycle
Employee is promoted, reassigned, detailed or changed to lower grade during the period of 1 Jan - 31 Mar	Departs Air Force and meets minimum criteria for annual rating of record	The GS/FWS losing supervisor must complete annual rating of record for their employee complete AF Form 860A. The form is available at http://www.e-publishing.af.mil/ NOTE: Employees who depart Air Force prior to the effective date of the performance award (1 Jun) are not entitled to a performance award.	Forward rating of record to Civilian Personnel Office as part of the Employee Performance Folder
Employee retires, separates, resigns 1 Jan - 31 Mar	Meets minimum criteria for annual rating of record	The GS/FWS losing supervisor must complete annual rating of record for their employee complete AF Form 860A. The form is available at http://www.e-publishing.af.mil/ NOTE: Employees who depart Air Force prior to the effective date of the performance award (1 Jun) are not entitled to a performance award.	Forward rating of record to Civilian Personnel Office as part of the Employee Performance Folder