



SOUTHWESTERN DIVISION CIVILIAN PERSONNEL ADVISORY CENTER

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To reach the SWD CPAC: <http://www.swf.usace.army.mil/swd-cpac> (TOLL FREE) 800-453-8907
819 Taylor St., Rm 2A14, Fort Worth, TX 76102-0300

[Steven G. Crawford, Director, Southwestern Division Civilian Personnel Advisory Center](#)

Hiring for Stimulus Work: The New American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

The Office of Personnel Management has authorized the use of excepted-service appointments using Schedule A hiring authority for managers who have requirements to fill additional staff as a result of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).

We may fill positions funded by ARRA projects on a temporary basis for up to one year with extensions in increments up to one year. No appointments using this authority may extend beyond 30 September 2012. All appointments are limited to individuals who will be directly working with ARRA efforts.

Workforce planning is the critical first step to identifying the kinds of jobs and talent that you are seeking when recruiting for positions filled under this authority. Managers should contact their servicing staffing specialist to determine an appropriate recruitment strategy that can be used to fill these kinds of positions. Name requests can be honored in cases where the prospective employee is qualified for the position to be filled and management has a desire to place them into the position. Public announcements are not required when filling excepted service positions.

However, in cases where management does not have any particular applicant in mind, the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center can work with you to develop an announcement that will target certain skill sets or talent. In cases where competitive announcements occur, veterans' preference rules will apply. Our hiring strategies can include outreach to our veterans, through the use of programs such as the Veterans' Recruitment Appointment, the Veterans Employment Opportunity Act (VEOA) and 30 Percent or More Disabled Veterans authority.

This is a new authority that can be used immediately in cases that support ARRA. Please work with your servicing staffing specialist to determine the recruitment strategy and identify cases where this authority might be worthwhile to pursue. POC - Jeff Hair, 817-886-1187

Understanding the Proper use of Your Government Credit Card

Do you use a government travel card? This article provides some critical information to help ensure you are using the card properly and to obtain the money you are due.

By now, most employees know that the government travel card is only to be used for official business travel, and charges to the card should be in connection with travel expenses. But, do you also know that you are required to file your travel voucher within five business days after completing your official travel? Moreover, you are required to do split disbursement. Now, some of you may be saying... "Sure, I already do that." But recently, we have discovered that many employees execute the split disbursement but do not allocate enough money to account for all of their outstanding charges against their government credit card. Many employees just allocate enough money to cover their hotel, taxes, rental car, and gas. They do not allocate enough money to cover all of their ATM withdrawals, fees, food, and incidentals charged against the card. As a result, they end up with outstanding balances, and often end up being late paying their credit card.

Payment for all undisputed charges must be made **in full** by the statement billing due date, which is 25 to 30 days after the closing date on the billing statement of account. The due date is printed on the bill. This does not mean that you have 25 to 30 days to make your payment after completing your voucher, having it approved, and receiving payment. It means you typically have about 30 days to pay your undisputed charges in full, depending upon the statement closing date. This is why it is imperative that you expeditiously complete your travel voucher and appropriately allocate outstanding charges to the card via split disbursement. You can also allocate all disbursement to be paid to the credit card, and receive a credit or refund from Citibank for any overpayment made. One important thing to note is that some employees do not claim all of the expenses they are entitled to receive as reimbursements. The list below covers some expenses that you can appropriately claim on your travel voucher if authorized on your orders.

- Personal automobile (POV) miles to/from an airport

- POV miles to and from a TDY location, when authorized to travel by POV
- In and about miles while at a TDY location, when approved in advanced
- Shuttles, taxis, and transportation tips
- Air port parking and other parking fees, such as hotel or TDY location parking
- Toll road fees
- ATM fees
- Excess baggage or any type of baggage fee, when approved on the orders
- Laundry and dry cleaning at the TDY location only when the TDY continues for 4 or more consecutive nights lodging on official travel
- Personal calls (limited to \$2.00 a day and \$10.00 a week)
- Work related telephone calls and faxes
- Maximum lodging amount allowed for the per diem locality, excluding lodging tax.
- Actual lodging cost over the maximum per diem, if authorized on your orders
- Dual lodging, if authorized on your orders
- Lodging/Hotel taxes
- Rental car charges for the size of car approved on your orders
- Rental car gas
- Meals – actual meal expenses above the per diem rate, if authorized on your orders, and receipts are provided
- Air fare (Government contract airline City Pair air fares)
- Travel agency fees

You are required to submit receipts for your hotel and any expense over \$75.00. However, it is a good habit to maintain all of your receipts so you can appropriately apply the correct amount to split disbursement. If you discover that you have failed to claim expenses that are reimbursable, you can submit a supplement to the travel voucher.

Regardless of whether you have received your reimbursement or not, you are obligated to pay your undisputed government credit card charges by the statement due date. If you encounter problems, you should notify your supervisor and the Agency Program Coordinator (APC) for your district. Employees who misuse their government credit card by making personal charges or ATM withdrawals that are unrelated to an official TDY, are subject to disciplinary action up to an including removal. Employees who misuse their government credit card by failing to pay their undisputed government credit card charges by the due date may also be subject to disciplinary action ranging from a letter of reprimand to a suspension; with more stringent action

possible, if warranted or for continued misuse. POC – Christine Watkins, 817-886-1156.

The ANSWER to Your Application Questions

“Why didn’t I get referred for the job?” “What did I do wrong?” Everyone has asked themselves these questions at least once and felt the frustration of missing out on that job they really wanted. Here is the process to receive feedback on applications through the Department of Army’s automated **ANSWER** system.

The first step is getting your resume created in the Department of Army’s RESUMIX system located on CPOL.army.mil. Once you have completed that mission, you can now access the ANSWER database. While in the RESUMIX database you will see the automated link to ANSWER. You can view your resume on file, track the progress of jobs for which you have applied, and find out if you were referred or not referred positions you have applied for. If you feel you should have been referred for a vacancy and were not, you can also submit an inquiry. Simply click on the “Go to Answer” button, go to the last tab on the bottom right labeled “Send Mail” and voice your concern about the particular job in question.

When you create an inquiry make sure you give the following necessary information: Name, e-mail address, and the announcement number for the vacancy you are inquiring about and a brief description of why you think you should have been referred. Please create separate inquires for each different announcement you have questions on.

When you submit an inquiry through ANSWER it flows through a Central RESUMIX Helpdesk and is assigned a tracking number. These inquires are then flowed directly to the personnel office/Specialist handling the recruitment action. You should receive a response to your inquiry within 3 days of the CPAC receiving it. The response will be sent directly to the e-mail address you provided.

Please remember that although the RESUMIX system currently being used to work recruitments is an automated, process, the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center does its best to conduct a thorough examination process of all resumes to ensure appropriate consideration is given. POC - Christina Graham 817-886-1204.

NSPS Pay Setting: An Art and a Science

Pay setting under NSPS is a more complicated process than under the General Schedule. Managers are more

involved and have more flexibility in setting pay for employees. Issues that managers need to keep in mind when setting pay include budget implications and financial responsibility, local market salaries for jobs, internal pay equity and the applicant's level of skill and experience.

The purpose of this article is to provide information on pay setting flexibilities, limitations and issues for management to consider in the pay setting process when filling positions. This document does not include compensation for performance based pay actions or adverse actions.

NSPS pay bands cover a wide salary range, with minimum and maximum rates set based on national labor market factors and conditions. When advertising for vacant positions, management can use the complete salary range of the pay band or use a narrower pay range. In determining the pay range to use for advertising the vacancy, the manager should consider whether the position is difficult to fill, the salaries of current employees doing similar work, and what is reasonable to pay for the position.

Common errors include setting a pay range that is higher than management will realistically pay for the position or setting the range too low and eliminating desired candidates. For example, an employee must receive a minimum of a 6% pay increase to be promoted into a higher pay band. If management advertises a Pay Band 3 position with a limited pay range, some applicants that are being compensated at the high end of Pay Band 2 will be eliminated for consideration. Alternately, if management advertises the full range of a Pay Band 2, but only wants to compensate the selected candidate in a pay range equivalent to the GS-12 level, management will receive applicants receiving higher compensation who will expect a salary offer at the higher end of the pay band.

When developing a compensation strategy, the advertised pay range is certainly an important factor. Other considerations need to include whether PCS will be offered and whether recruitment incentives will be used.

Once a candidate is selected for the position, then the selected individual's status will determine how they can be compensated.

A. Selection of an external candidate. If the selectee is new to the government, the minimum pay offer is the bottom of the pay band. The maximum pay offer is Step 1 of the former GS grade plus an additional 30%. In positions that are difficult to fill, maximum pay offers may need to be supplemented with recruitment incentives.

B. Selection of an internal candidate. If an internal candidate is selected, then a decision must be made as to whether the action is a reassignment or a promotion. For a reassignment, the maximum pay increase is 5%. An employee is limited to one 5% pay increase via voluntary reassignment, or multiple reassignments with a cumulative

value of 5%, in a 12 month time span.

A promotion under NSPS is movement to a higher pay band or to a higher level of work (e.g., a pay band 1 employee moving to a supervisory position or movement from a Technician/Support band to a Professional/Analytical band). For a promotion, the minimum pay increase is 6% and typically the increase is from 6% to 12%. District Commanders can approve pay increases on promotion over 12% up to 20%. The SWD Commanding General can approve promotion increases greater than 20%.

C. Management directed reassignments. Positions may be filled non-competitively through a management directed reassignment. Management may increase the employee's salary up to 5% for each occurrence.

D. Voluntary Reduction in Band. When an employee voluntarily moves to a lower pay band, the authorized management official may decrease or increase the employee's salary, but must set the employee's salary within the assigned pay band. An increase in salary may be executed up to five percent of the employee's current salary (not to exceed the maximum of the rate range).

As managers work through the pay setting process, it is important to coordinate closely with your servicing human resources office representative to fully understand the flexibilities and limitations that apply to specific cases. Proactively working together can increase our chances of filling our jobs with good candidates and ensuring that all parties understand the components of an individual's compensation package. POC – Steve Crawford, 817-886-1173

Military Leave for Reservists

Each 1 October, military reservists are given 15 days of military leave (hours type 'LM') to use during the fiscal year while they are on reserve duty. This leave accrual is shown on the employee's Leave and Earnings Statement (LES), along with other types of leave accruals. Occasionally we receive inquiries concerning how a reservist gets credit for their military leave hours. A Reserve Status Form must be completed by the reservists and submitted to their servicing CPAC Staffing Specialist. The CPAC will ensure the data is coordinated between the Human Resources database and the Defense Civilian Pay System. Military reservists can find the form at: <http://www.swf.usace.army.mil/swd-cpac/Forms/In%20Processing/RESERVE%20STATUS%20Form.doc>

POC – Pam Tynes, 817-886-1193