



CPMS EXPRESS

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Proper Use of Voluntary Separation Incentive Pay (VSIP) Part I: Downsizing VSIP

Voluntary Separation Incentive Pay (VSIP), commonly referred to as a "buyout," is authorized within the Department of Defense (DoD) for reducing involuntary separations during downsizing, and for restructuring the workforce to meet mission objectives. When buyouts are offered in either scenario, commanders, managers, and human resources officers must ensure that all transactions are consistent with the intended purpose of VSIP and compliant with DoDI 1400.25-V1702, "Voluntary Separation Programs." This article, which focuses on downsizing VSIP, is the first of three articles

on the proper use of buyouts.

Downsizing buyouts may be offered whenever acceptance of an incentive saves a civilian employee from involuntary separation by reduction in force (RIF). If an incentive payment does not avert a RIF separation, it cannot be legally justified under the downsizing VSIP authority. Even though this requirement is straight-forward and unequivocal, on-site evaluations by the Civilian Assistance and Re-Employment (CARE) Division indicate that some downsizing buyouts cannot be validated because the supporting human

resources offices did not maintain complete audit trails.

Proper documentation should include enough information to show that the buyout saved an employee from RIF separation. A redacted audit trail for two downsizing buyouts paid to Army employees at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal is available for review at www.cpms.osd.mil/care/care_bestpractices.aspx. It is a good example of an intelligible audit trail that would enable any knowledgeable third party to reconstruct the transaction from start to finish.

New Address for Conversion Requests

On October 8th, 2009, The Office of Personnel Management distributed Benefits Administration Letter (BAL) 09-205, Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) Program: New Address for Conversion Requests. The BAL provides updates to information contained in BAL 09-204, dated May 5, 2009. Specifically, the new BAL provides an updated address for information and requests regarding the conversion of FEGLI coverage.

FEGLI enrollees can request conversion information when their FEGLI coverage terminates for any reason, other than voluntary cancellation. Employees are instructed to use the new address when requesting information from the Office of Federal

Employees' Group Life Insurance (OFEGLI) to convert their FEGLI coverage to a private policy. The new address is effective immediately and should only be used for conversion requests. The address on the SF 2819 (Notice of Conversion Privilege) is no longer current. Please provide employees with the following addresses:

New OFEGLI address for conversion requests ONLY:

OFEGLI
P.O. BOX 1866
LONG ISLAND CITY, NY
11101-9885

New OFEGLI address for conversion requests using overnight delivery ONLY (such as express mail):

OFEGLI
FEGLI CONVERSION TEAM
5TH FLOOR 27-01
Queens Plaza North, QUEENS,
NY 11101

OFEGLI has arranged to ensure that any conversion requests sent to Jersey City by mistake will automatically be forwarded to their Long Island City, NY (Queens) office.

BAL 09-205 has been posted on



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Job Announcements



[Administrative Support Assistant \(OA\)](#)

YB-0303-02/02 Closes 1/5/10

[Human Resource Specialist \(Performance Management\)](#)

YA-201-03/03 Closes 1/5/10

[Supervisory Human Resource Specialist \(Compensation\)](#)

YA-201-03/03 Closes 01/14/10



CPMS Welcomes 4 New STAR Program Participants

Employment of Veterans in the Federal Government

Civilian Personnel Management Service (CPMS), Recruitment Assistance Division (RAD) welcomes four new Student Training and Academic Recruitment (STAR) students to a one week orientation which was held on July 27-31, 2009 in Rosslyn, Virginia. The four (4) new STAR students are:

Ms. Bridget Anderson, is a senior at Morgan State University, majoring in Social Work. Bridget was a summer intern at the Command Sustainment and Revitalization, Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC), Strategic Analysis and Military Personnel (MPD) division. Bridget has been certified in National Security Personnel System (NSPS), Army Records Information Management System (ARIMS) and Headquarters Department of the Army (HQDA) Tracking System.

Mr. Kyle Edenzon earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Biotechnology Studies with honors in May 2009. He is currently enrolled in a Master of Science Program, in Chemistry and Environmental Health and Safety Management at Rochester Insti-

tute of Technology (RIT). Kyle has spent the last two summers interning for the Department of the Navy at the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock Division and Tufts University's Polymer Chemistry Department.

Mr. Lawrence Mark is a non-traditional student at Michigan Technological University majoring in Business Administration. Mark is currently the President of the Entrepreneurs Club of Michigan Tech and has started two different companies. Prior to attending Michigan Tech, Lawrence spent 12 years in the public safety field.

Ms. Mariangela Monsalve is a senior at the University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez majoring in Marketing and Human Resources. Mariangela has been a member of the Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM) since 2008.

The STAR program is one of the newest student employment and recruiting programs developed by CPMS. The program is an innovative approach to marketing and promoting DoD as an

employer of choice through student peer-to-peer interaction on college and university campuses, while addressing DoD recruitment needs. Students are hired to assist DoD with its entry level recruitment needs throughout the school year. Students are hired through the Student Educational Employment Program to serve as DoD on-campus "Ambassadors". CPMS launched the STAR program in October 2006.

STAR students work part-time for DoD and develop customized marketing and recruiting plans for their respective college or university. They conduct peer to peer recruiting and provide DoD with a continuous on-campus presence. The STAR students conduct group presentations and coordinate on-campus visits by DoD recruiters and Senior Executives.

During the orientation week, the students met with several senior leaders and received a DoD overview. They attended the July meeting of the DoD Recruitment Consortium, where members gave briefings on organizations' mission, types of vacancies, and future hiring goals.

The orientation helped new STAR students understand the variety of DoD mission critical occupations for which they will be marketing and recruiting.

STAR students also participated in DoD tours and briefings at the Pentagon.

The STAR students are excited about the STAR program. They are highly motivated to share information about the DoD career opportunities at their respective campuses.

On November 9, 2009, President Obama signed the *Employment of Veterans in the Federal Government* Executive Order, making hiring Veterans a top priority.

The Order comes as the number of military members re-entering civilian life is ballooning. "This initiative is about more than repaying our debt for their courageous service and selfless sacrifice," Obama said. "It's also about continuing to fill the ranks of federal employees with men and women who possess the skills, dedication and sense of duty that Americans deserve from their public servants. And few embody those qualities like our nation's Veterans."

The purpose of the Executive Order is to increase the number of Veterans in the federal workforce. The Order outlines key initiative requirements and directs all agencies to aggressively enhance recruitment strategies and promote employment opportunities through a robust Veterans' Employment Initiative.

The Executive Order creates an interagency Council on Veterans Employment which will advise the President and the Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) on the Veterans' Employment Initiative. Established within the Council is a Steering Committee with responsibility for providing leadership, accountability, and strategic direction to the Council. Acting Director for CPMS, Ms. Sharon Stewart, has been assigned as the DoD representative on the Steering Committee. She will be working closely with the representatives from Veterans Affairs, Department of Labor and OPM.



From left to right Lawrence Mark , Bridget Anderson, Rhonda Diaz, Mariangela Monsalve and Kyle Edenzon.

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Benefits and Citizenship

Over the past couple of months, the Benefits and Entitlements Branch received several inquiries regarding conveyance of benefits for positions held by non U.S. citizens. Typically, a person is appointed in the competitive service only if he or she is a citizen or owes permanent allegiance to the United States. Executive Order 11935, issued on September 2, 1976, restricts the employment of non-citizens into competitive service positions covered by title 5 of the U.S. Code. This ordinance applies worldwide to all agencies with competitive service positions. Upon request, OPM can authorize an appointment of aliens to positions in the competitive service to promote the efficiency of the service in specific cases or for temporary appointments. There are instances where a non-citizen may be given an appointment under section 316.601. The Immigration Reform Act holds employers responsible for ensuring that individuals hired are eligible to work in the U.S.

After ensuring the proper hiring procedures are followed, conveyance of benefits is dependent upon the type of federal appoint-

ment. If an employee is serving on an appointment limited to one year or less, they are ineligible to enroll unless their appointment is extended or converted beyond one year. In these cases, the employee becomes eligible to enroll under 5 U.S.C. 8906(a) when one year of continuous employment is completed, excluding any break in service of 5 days or less.

The one-year requirement may be met at the end of a one-year appointment in a single agency or it may be based on a series of shorter appointments served in one or more agencies, as long as the individual has not had a break in service of more than 5 days. The employee pays both the employee and Government shares of the FEHB premium.

Intermittent employees are not eligible for coverage if their appointments are seasonal or occasional employment and equate to less than 6 months of work within one calendar year that amount to less than 6 months of work. An exception to this provision is when an employee transfers to an uncovered appointment, after a break in service of no more than 3 days,

from any position which conveyed eligibility for benefits coverage.

Certain scientists, physicians, and professionals from other countries are employed by Federal agencies under J-1 visas. J-1 visas are authorized for non-immigrant aliens i.e., exchange visitors. Employees with J-1 visas are specifically excluded by law from Social Security coverage. If these individuals were employed prior to January 1, 1987, they are not excluded from CSRS coverage. Appointments between January 1, 1984, and December 31, 1986, were under the Federal Employees' Retirement Contribution Temporary Adjustment Act of 1983 (enacted November 29, 1983); the CSRS contribution rate for Federal employees who were covered by Social Security was adjusted to 1.3 percent of pay. However, since this legislation affected the amount of the employee's CSRS contribution, but not the CSRS coverage rules themselves, it had no effect on J-1 visa holders. They continued under CSRS-only coverage and paid 7 percent deductions. Since J-1 visa holders are excluded from Social Security, they are

ineligible for FERS coverage. If the visa status of a J-1 visa holder changes (for example, to an immigrant visa) and the employee becomes covered by Social Security as a result, the employee is then converted to either CSRS Offset or FERS coverage under regular coverage rules if he or she has an appointment that conveys retirement coverage. If the employee becomes covered by CSRS Offset, he or she has a 6-month opportunity to join FERS.

If you would like more information on benefits and citizenships, please email us at benefits@cpms.osd.mil. Research this or any United States Code at The Library of Congress website, <http://thomas.loc.gov/>.

Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Engages in Social Networking

OPM is now on Facebook and Twitter. Federal employees will be able to sign up and link into Federal benefits electronically. Due to security restrictions, you will not be able to access the links from your government computer, but you may access them from your home computer or cell phone.

To view OPM's **Facebook** page, go to www.facebook.com/fedbenefits. OPM encourages you to become a fan by clicking on the "Become a fan" link once you are on the Federal Benefits Open Season Facebook page. To become a fan, you must have a Facebook account. If you don't have an account, you can sign up by clicking the Sign Up graphic

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Employment of Veterans in the Federal Government

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The Veteran Employment Initiative has several key requirements:

- a) Establishment of a Veteran Employment Program Office
- b) Development of an agency-specific Operational Plan
- c) Mandatory annual training on Veterans' Preference and special hiring authorities for human resources

- personnel and hiring managers; and
- d) Annual reporting requirements.

The veterans Employment Program offices within each agency will match veterans with job openings and assist them with navigating the application process. The DoD's Veterans Employment Program Office has been established within CPMS. The development of the Operational Plan is

currently in progress.

As the largest federal employer of veterans, the Department of Defense is excited about this new initiative and plans to continue its commitment to providing employment opportunities to the men and women who have served honorably on behalf of our great nation. DoD currently has more than 342,000 Veterans serving in civilian positions.



HUMAN RESOURCE PROFESSIONAL CAREER FRAMEWORK WEBINAR SERIES TO CONTINUE IN 2010!

Throughout August, September, and October, Field Advisory Services conducted a series of live Webinars on the HR Professional Career Framework (HRPCF) that included a complete demo of the web site. The Webinars were a huge success. Thank you to all who participated.

If you're not familiar with the HRPCF, the HRPCF is a tool and guide that will help HR professionals drive their own career development. The HRPCF supports more empowered and focused careers and opportunities for HR professionals.

CPMS developed the HRPCF to support the changing tactical and strategic roles of the civilian HR business advisor serving in a rapidly changing and challenging strategic environment. It offers a vision of the emerging roles and competencies required to deliver quality HR support and advice today and into the future.

For those of you who would like to participate in a Webinar and learn more about the HRPCF, we've decided to continue with the Webinar series at the start of the New Year. The schedule is below. Please click on the registration link below or visit

<http://www.cpms.osd.mil/fas/hrpcf/> and click on Hot Topics to register for a session.

If the dates and times below don't work for you, or if you are interested in scheduling a private session for your office, please contact Johnny McLean for arrangements at: Johnny.McLean@cpms.osd.mil.

To learn more about the HRPCF visit the web site at: <http://www.cpms.osd.mil/fas/hrpcf/>.



REDUCING THE DANGERS OF TEXT MESSAGING WHILE DRIVING

On October 1, 2009, President Obama signed an [Executive Order 13513](#) that issued a Federal Government-wide prohibition on the use of text messaging while driving on official business or while using Government-supplied equipment.

The Federal Government should demonstrate leadership in reducing the dangers of text messaging while driving, which causes drivers to take their eyes off the road and at least one hand off the steering wheel, endangering both themselves and others.

Date	Time (eastern daylight time)	Registration Link (select just one session)
Tuesday, January 12 th	9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.	Session 1 registration
Wednesday, January 27 th	3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.	Session 2 registration
Thursday, February 11 th	8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.	Session 3 registration
Tuesday, February 23 rd	1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.	Session 4 registration
Wednesday, March 10 th	11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.	Session 5 registration
Thursday, March 25 th	2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.	Session 6 registration

ACCESS YOUR THRIFT SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

The account access section of the TSP Web site allows you to access your account balance and request certain transactions. The following options are available:

- view your TSP account balance
- view most recent transactions
- get your participant statements
- allocate your contributions in the various TSP Funds
- make withdrawals
- make interfund transfers
- update your contact information
- apply for TSP loans

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT (OPM) ENGAGES IN SOCIAL NETWORKING

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on OPM's Federal Benefits Open Season Facebook page. You can also follow OPM on their new **Twitter** account, FedEmployeeBen (<http://twitter.com/FedEmployeeBen>). OPM will tweet important information about Open Season, financial education tips, and reminders of actions to take to get the most from your benefits.

THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN BENEFICIARY ACCOUNTS

The Thrift Saving Plan (TSP) has implemented interim procedures for spouse beneficiary accounts. The transition will not be fully complete until 2010.

Several options are available for beneficiaries of TSP accounts. Once a TSP Form -17 Information Relating to Deceased Participant is completed, signed and processed, TSP will send an interim notice informing the beneficiary that may request to leave their inherited funds in TSP. The funds will remain in the G fund

until an account under the spouse's name can be established. Rather than a 60 day pay out, spouses have the option of requesting immediate payment provided the required forms are completed and notarized. Payments can also be transferred to a spouses TSP account, IRA's or other eligible plans with form TSP-13-S-D. Visit the TSP Web site for more detailed information regarding transfer options and taxation rules about TSP Death Benefit Payments.

Happy New Year

