



Fort Eustis CPAC Civilian Personnel Advisory Center Bulletin

670 Lee Boulevard
Fort Eustis, VA 23604

www.eustis.army.mil/cpac
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GETTING REFERRED FOR A FEDERAL JOB

Would you like to increase your chances of getting referred for a Federal job!? "How?"



It is interesting how many people do not get referred for consideration because of the little things that are incomplete on their resume. What little things? For instance, the "To" and "From" dates for the periods of experience. These dates help the human resources (HR) representative determine if the applicant has the experience as required by the position and/or if they meet the time-in-grade requirement for the grade level. Completing the correct month and year for a position (i.e., Jan 2009 – Mar 2010), helps to increase the chances of being referred. Normally positions require one year of specialized experience and one year time in grade at the next lower level of the position being filled. (These requirements can both be met by one period of experience in the General Schedule.)

Also, you can increase your chances of getting referred for consideration by updating your information and history on your Federal job resume. Ensure your experience is described in terms that can be understood by the HR representative and prospective employer and the use of acronyms are limited.

What about the personal contact information in the supplemental data sheet? Is your information up to date? The HR representative uses the best option(s) available to contact a selectee, whether it is via work/duty/personal email addresses or work/duty/home/cell telephone numbers. The HR representative is only able to contact the selectee from the information that is provided on the resume and/or in the supplemental data.

As a minimum, applicants should update their information and/or post a new resume every eight (8) to twelve (12) months. An incomplete application with insufficient information may result in an applicant not being considered for a vacancy.

Take time to tweak your information and content such as: New technology, Employment dates, College completion dates, Training dates, and/or Contact information.

NOTE: According to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), applications for the Federal workforce must be complete. Submitting a complete application package is very important as decisions regarding whether your application will be considered further are determined entirely upon the information you initially submit. Eligibility and qualification determinations cannot be made when requested information is missing. Incomplete applications will not be given further consideration for employment.

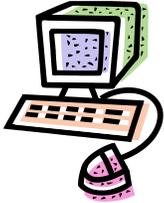
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USA STAFFING - TIPS FOR APPLICANTS

Fort Eustis CPAC will begin using USA Staffing to fill vacant positions at this installation no later than 31 March 2012. Army vacancy announcements will continue to be posted on both www.armycivilianservice.com and www.usajobs.gov. Jobs announced under USA Staffing will require some new application procedures and documents which will be described in the individual vacancy announcement.



There are steps that you as an employee or potential applicant can take now to simplify and expedite the process of applying for specific jobs under USA Staffing.

1. Create accounts under both USAJOBS and Application Manager. A USAJOBS account is needed to apply for all Army positions. You may already have a USAJOBS account. If not, go to www.usajobs.gov and click on "First Time Visitors" and then "Create an Account". An Application Manager account will be required when you apply for jobs under USA Staffing. Go to www.applicationmanager.gov and click on "Create an Account", then follow the directions.

2. Pre-position your resume. You may create and store up to five versions of your resume in your USAJOBS account. This allows you to tailor your resume content if you have significantly different types of experience/skills and apply for jobs in different occupational areas. Be sure that your resume clearly describes the duties you have performed and the level of your experience. Include the beginning and ending dates for each job and the hours worked if less than full time. If you include volunteer experience, be sure to include the amount of time spent and describe the work you did.

3. Upload supporting documents. Some documents are required to verify your eligibility for employment, veteran's preference, education and/or credentials. You can scan these documents, save them on your computer, and then upload them to your USAJOBS account by following the instructions under the "Upload a New Document" section. Once you correctly upload a document, it is available for use in all future applications.

4. Make sure your account always has your current contact information, especially your email address. Review and update your resume periodically so it is ready to use when you find a vacancy in which you are interested.

By pre-positioning your resume and supporting documents in your USAJOBS account, you will be ready to quickly respond when you see a vacancy that interests you. If your resume and supporting documents are loaded in your account, the only requirement to finalize your application package will be completion of the assessment questionnaire for the specific job you are applying for.

If you have questions, contact the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center at (757) 878-2125.



THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN (TSP) CONTRIBUTION LIMITS FOR 2012

Elective Deferral Limit

The elective deferral limit for TSP contributions for 2012 is \$17,000 (which is an increase from \$16,500 that existed in 2011). This means that eligible employees can contribute as much as \$17,000 for the 2012 calendar year – and all of it will be tax-deferred. The TSP web site has complete information on contribution limits <https://www.tsp.gov/planparticipation/eligibility/contributionLimits.shtml>.

You can designate your biweekly contribution amount to any dollar or percentage amount, but payroll deductions will stop when you reach \$17,000 during the calendar year 2012.

TSP Catch-up

If you are at least age 50 (or will become age 50 during the calendar year) and if you are making the maximum contribution into the TSP during the calendar year (e.g., \$17,000 for 2012) you can make catch-up contributions (supplemental tax-deferred contributions) to your TSP account (as much as \$5,500 per year).

So, in order to be eligible to make catch-up contributions, you must be:

- Age 50 or older anytime during the calendar year in which the catch-up contributions are being made (even if you become age 50 on December 31 of this year);
- Currently employed and in Pay Status;



- Making regular contributions to a civilian or uniformed services TSP account (or both), and/or an equivalent employer plan (such as 401(k), 403(b), or 408 plan), that will equal the maximum allowed by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). See <http://www.tsp.gov/> for the current year's limit.

You are not eligible to make catch-up contributions (or regular contributions) within 6 months of making a financial hardship withdrawal from the TSP, nor while in a "non-pay" status.

Remember, Catch-up contributions must be elected each year. Please visit the TSP website <http://www.tsp.gov> for additional information regarding catch-up contributions or call the TSP Office at 1-877-968-3778 or TDD at 1-877-847-4385 (for hearing-impaired participants).



ROTH VS. TRADITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The TSP will introduce a feature later this year that will allow all active Federal employees and members of the uniformed services to make Roth contributions to their TSP accounts. This new feature will allow you to contribute some or all of your contributions to the Roth TSP. With Roth contributions, you pay taxes now. However, when you withdraw these contributions and their earnings, you will not have to pay taxes on them as long as you are 59½ or older and you have had Roth contributions for five years or more when you receive your distribution.

As we get closer to the date when you can start making Roth contributions, you'll learn more about this new feature on the TSP website (<https://www.tsp.gov>). In the meantime, you may want to start thinking about whether Roth contributions could be to your advantage. Additional information can be found in the January/February 2012 issue of the *Thrift Savings Plan HIGHLIGHTS* at <https://www.tsp.gov/PDF/formspubs/high12a.pdf>.

CPAC ICARE PROGRAM

The December 2011 CPAC Bulletin included an article on CPAC's new customer service program called ICARE (Integrity, Compassion, Advocacy, Resourcefulness and Excellence) which was implemented in January 2012. The ICARE program includes five standards of excellence: 1) **Integrity**, 2) **Compassion**, 3) **Advocacy**, 4) **Resourcefulness**, and 5) **Excellence**. It has been set up as a one-year themed approach with twelve supporting behaviors: **Attitude** (January), **Professionalism** (February), **Commitment** (March), **Courtesy** (April), **Respect** (May), **Communication** (June), **Safety** (July), **Privacy** (August), **Stewardship** (September), **Creativity** (October), **Quality** (November), and **Ownership** (December). Each month, the CPAC will communicate and demonstrate the monthly theme for that particular month. Even though there is a specific theme for each month, the Ft. Eustis CPAC is committed to communicating and demonstrating the five standards of excellence and their supporting behaviors all year long. We understand that these behaviors are what our management officials, employees and external customers expect from us on a daily basis.

As indicated above, the supporting behavior for the month of March is "Commitment". The CPAC staff is committed to learn, do and live the standards of Customer Excellence every day; is committed to the health and well being of themselves, their team members and their community; and is committed to being a representative of the Civilian Human Resources Agency (CHRA) South Central Region (SCR) wherever they are.

The CPAC staff remains committed to providing excellent customer service. We encourage our customers to take the time to provide us with their comments and suggestions by accessing the Ft. Eustis CPAC Interactive Customer Evaluation (ICE) site at http://ice.disa.mil/index.cfm?fa=card&service_provider_id=93747&site_id=439&service_category_id=33. We look forward to serving YOU in 2012!





NEW ABC-C FEATURE – REQUEST A RETIREMENT ESTIMATE ELECTRONICALLY

The Army Benefit Center-Civilian (ABC-C) now offers the ability for current Army-serviced employees who are eligible for a voluntary/optional retirement within the next five years to request a retirement estimate electronically through the Employee Benefits Information System (EBIS).

Employees may access EBIS through the ABC-C web site at <https://www.abc.army.mil>. Once in their account, employees may select the new "HR LINKS" button on the top of the screen. Eligible employees who click on the "Request an estimate...." button will be asked a series of questions pertaining to their retirement estimate request. Once submitted, ABC-C will receive the request electronically and it will enter a queue to be worked.

The completed estimate will be electronically returned to the employee's EBIS account and, similar to the system utilized by Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) for receipt of leave and earnings statements, an email notification will be sent to the employee that the estimate is available in EBIS. The employee can then log into EBIS, click on the "HR LINKS" button and then select the "View estimates..." button. Estimates will be in a PDF file format and employees may print the estimates from this screen or save the PDF file for future reference.

Employees who are NOT within five years of voluntary retirement and click on the "HR LINKS" button will receive a notice that they are ineligible to request an electronic estimate. Employees who are NOT within five years of voluntary retirement eligibility but who wish to receive an estimate (Minimum Retirement Age (MRA) +10, Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA), disability and deferred retirement) will not be able to use the electronic option at this time. These employees will need to request their estimate by using the ABC-C automated phone line at 877-276-9287 and speaking with a retirement counselor.



TAX WITHHOLDING INFORMATION

Now is a good time to review your tax withholding information. Please verify that your deductions are being withheld for the correct State and Locality. Correct information is your responsibility and changes can be made via MyPay (<https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx>) or your Customer Service Representative (CSR).





ANNUAL WEINGARTEN NOTICE (REPRESENTATION RIGHTS)

Under Title 5, United States Code, section 7114(a)(2)(B), an employee being examined in an investigation (an investigatory examination or interview) is entitled to union representation if the examination is conducted by a representative of the agency, the employee reasonably believes that the examination may result in disciplinary action, and the employee asks for representation.

Specifically, Section 7114(a) of Title 5, United States Code states:

“(2) An exclusive representative of an appropriate unit in an agency shall be given the opportunity to be represented at---

(B) any examination of an employee in the unit by a representative of the agency in connection with an investigation if---

(i) the employee reasonably believes that the examination may result in disciplinary action against the employee; **and**

(ii) the employee requests representation.”



This right is commonly referred to as the “Weingarten” right, based on the U.S. Supreme Court’s private sector labor decision in *NLRB v. J. Weingarten, Inc.*, 420 U.S. 251 (1975). Briefly, this statutory right provides that when an agency representative (to include your IG, your guard/police force or even a representative from DoD) questions a bargaining unit employee, and the employee reasonably believes the questioning may result in disciplinary action against that employee and the employee requests union representation, the employee is generally entitled to representation if the investigation continues.

Upon a valid request for union representation from a bargaining unit employee, management has three options:

- 1) Grant the request and notify the union that a meeting to examine a bargaining unit employee is going to take place and that the employee has requested union representation;
- 2) Stop questioning the employee and continue the investigation without interviewing that employee; or
- 3) Offer the employee a clear choice to either continue the interview without representation, or to have no interview.

Additional information regarding “Weingarten” rights can be obtained in PERMISS at <http://cpol.army.mil/library/permis/4122.html>. Remember, this “Weingarten” right applies to bargaining unit employees.



WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU RETIRE

Traditionally, December 31st is one of the most popular dates for federal workers to retire. This past year it was even more popular because December 31st was the end of the pay period, leave year and month. Additionally, with government-wide budget cuts, some agencies were offering early retirement opportunities to their employees with a December 31 effective date. Due to these combined circumstances, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is experiencing a significant, and perhaps unprecedented, rise in retirement claims, adding to their already overwhelming retirement workload.



As cited in many news articles and federal employee trade publications, OPM is experiencing a backlog in processing federal retirement claims. In July 2011, OPM announced they were averaging 18 weeks (4 months) to fully process a retirement claim. While OPM has not recently announced any increase in claim processing time, given the above factors it is reasonable to anticipate that processing time will increase to possibly 6 to 12 months to fully adjudicate a retirement.

With the delay in providing retirees their full annuity payments, OPM has made remarkable improvements by providing retirees interim pay (typically about 60-80 percent of expected full annuity). It now takes OPM only 7-10 days from when it receives a retirement package (usually 4-6 weeks after the retirement date) to provide an annuitant interim pay. With OPM's current backlog and the expected significant rise in retirement processing workload, the time frame for OPM to place an annuitant in interim pay may increase to 6-8 weeks after their retirement date.

Because of these anticipated delays, federal employees retiring in the first quarter of the 2012 calendar year, are encouraged to carefully evaluate their financial status to ensure they have sufficient financial resources and are prepared for a 6-8 week period before receiving interim (estimated) payment and as much as a 6-12 month delay in receiving their final, approved annuity.

Sources of income beyond retirement annuities include, but are not limited or applicable to everyone: Thrift Saving Plan (TSP) funds, Social Security benefits, Annual Leave Lump Sum payout, VSIP payout, Individual Retirement Accounts (IRA) and other personal savings accounts.

Employees with questions on their individual retirement application packages are encouraged to contact the Army Benefits Center – Civilian (ABC-C) at their toll free number 1-877-276-9287 (counselors are available from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm CT, Monday through Friday) OR TDD (Telecommunication Device for the Deaf) at 1-877-276-9833.





CPAC HAILS and FAREWELLS!



Ms. Yolonda Parrott, Human Resources Specialist (Employee Benefits), joined us from the Civilian Human Resources Agency (CHRA), Corps of Engineers CPAC, U.S. Army Engineer District Norfolk, VA.



Ms. Michelle Faisca, Human Resources Specialist (Compensation)

Ms. Sylvia Freeland, Human Resources Officer (CPAC Director)

ARMY BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION RUN/WALK



On 14 June 2012 at 0630 hours, Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG) soldiers and civilians will come together at Fanshaw Field for an installation run to celebrate the Army's 237th birthday. The run is 3.2 miles and for those civilians who love to walk, there is a 2 mile walking option instead. Ms. Barbara P. Panther, CHRA Director, has issued a "Get Fit Challenge" for every CHRA employee. She is forming a HQ's team to run as a group at APG. The Director further challenges everyone out there to form their own "Get Fit Challenge" groups in support of the Army's Birthday Celebration Run. The Fort Eustis Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC) will be organizing a 2 mile walk for their employees in June 2012. Please consider organizing a run/walk for your organization!



FEEDBACK



This bulletin is designed to inform employees and supervisors of new civilian human resources issues and refresh their knowledge of existing policies and procedures. We welcome your feedback; contact your servicing Human Resources Specialist. The bulletin is available on our web page, <http://www.eustis.army.mil/cpac> Request you print and post on Bulletin Boards throughout your organization for those employees who do not have access to our web page. The CPAC uses the Interactive Customer Evaluation (ICE) and we would appreciate you taking the time to rate us and provide feedback on the service you receive from our office. Just click on the following website: http://ice.disa.mil/index.cfm?fa=site&site_id=439