



# Fort Eustis

## Civilian Personnel Advisory Center Bulletin

[www.eustis.army.mil/cpac](http://www.eustis.army.mil/cpac)

July 2006

670 Lee Blvd, Fort Eustis, VA 23604-5096



### NSPS Town Hall Meetings-Rescheduled

The last NSPS Town Hall for all employees interested in hearing more about NSPS will be held on 1 Aug 2006 from 0930-1100:

Where: Jacob's Theater

Bldg. 647

Located at the corner of Monroe and Jackson Avenues

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### Obtaining Civilian Personnel Documents

While employed as a Federal employee, your servicing personnel office maintains your official personnel file and you may request to review the file by contacting your CPAC Specialist. If you require copies of your personnel records after separating (i.e., resignation or retirement) from Federal service, the Privacy Act of 1974 and the Office of Personnel Management directives require a written request, signed and dated, to access information from civilian personnel records. Written authorization of the person of record, or proof of that person's death, is also needed. Your civilian personnel records are normally transferred to the National Personnel Records Center, Civilian Personnel Records within 120 days after separation from Federal employment. If less than 120 days have elapsed since separation, write to the last employing office or servicing personnel office. Thereafter, send your request to the office indicated below. Include in your letter the following information pertaining to the record sought.

Full name used during Federal employment

Social Security Number

Date of Birth

Name(s) of Federal employing agency(s)

Approximate dates of Federal employment, especially separation

State in your letter the information you are seeking and **BE SURE YOUR REQUEST CONTAINS THE INDIVIDUAL'S OR AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE'S SIGNATURE.**

#### Mail request to:

National Personnel Records Center

Civilian Personnel Records

111 Winnebago Street

St. Louis, MO 63118

### Name Changes

Expecting a change in your name due to marriage, divorce or some other event? If so, notify your supervisor after the name change occurs to update your personnel records. When you notify your supervisor, you will need to provide documentation (i.e., a receipt from the Social Security Administration) indicating that the SSA is aware of the name change. Afterwards, your personnel record will be updated to reflect the change.

## Abuse of Government Assets



Did you know that inappropriate access to the internet through a government computer could end your Federal career? Using electronic mail, visiting websites or downloading material from the internet during duty time for non-official use, and sending electronic mail for unauthorized purposes are examples that could result in your removal as a government employee. With today's technological capabilities, everything you do on a government computer down to the keystrokes can be captured, recorded and used as evidence against you if you violate the rules for use. Please review your organization's policy on computer use and use of government equipment and property to avoid any violation. Your career is not worth jeopardizing, please follow the rules.

## Political Activity in the Federal Workplace

The Hatch Act prohibits federal employees from engaging in partisan political activity while either on duty or in a federal building. They may not, for instance, wear partisan political buttons or display campaign related material at work. Federal managers, in particular, should be careful about political activity, for their federal career could be ruined by even a single infraction of the government's restrictions on political activity.

The Hatch Act bars some off-duty political activities outside the federal workplace, as well. For example, sending an e-mail through your agency's e-mail system could be a Hatch Act violation, if the content of an e-mail message is political in nature. Such a violation may be found even if you sent the e-mail from home after remotely accessing your federal e-mail account. Similarly, federal employees may not engage in partisan political activities when wearing uniforms or riding in government vehicles. Moreover, federal employees may not run for political office in a partisan election. Some, but not all, federal employees are also banned from participating in political campaigns, even when they are off-duty and not on federal agency penalty premises.



The penalty for a Hatch Act violation is automatic termination for a single offense, no matter how inconsequential a particular violation may seem. The only exception is when the three-member panel of the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) unanimously rules to allow a federal agency to suspend, rather than remove, an employee. Therefore, you should treat prohibited forms of political activity in connection with your federal position as the proverbial "hot potato."

When in doubt, seek guidance from the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) or simply steer clear of activities that could be deemed questionable. As reported above, one Navy employee recently found out the hard way that the OSC, which prosecutes Hatch Act violations before the MSPB, takes a hard line on what is prohibited political activity. In that case, the employee, who was a union official, sent an e-mail through his agency's e-mail system, in which he invited his union members to a "Halloween party" for a political candidate. Following a hearing, an MSPB Administrative Law Judge recommended a 60-day suspension for the employee. The employee is at the mercy of the three members of the MSPB's full Board, who will order an employee's termination unless they unanimously grant an exception to the automatic penalty and adopt the 60-day suspension recommended by the Administrative Law Judge instead.

More detailed information about the Hatch Act, including potential criminal sanctions for certain types of activities, is available on OSC's website at [www.osc.gov](http://www.osc.gov).

## Training Opportunity: Personnel Management for Executives

The Army Management Staff College offers its final two Personnel Management for Executives courses as it prepares for the upcoming Army Civilian Education System.

**PME I 07-1 (23 Oct – 2 Nov), Application Deadline: 8 Sep.** Department of Army civilians, grades GS-13 and 14, or the equivalent, and military officers, majors and above, are eligible to apply for the program. GS-12 and GS-15 personnel will be considered by exception. Preference is given to individuals who supervise or direct the work of other employees. The program concentrates on leadership competencies, workplace issues, networking, relevancy, opportunity, and real-time results. As a military or civilian federal executive, this program is a forum designed to improve your leadership skills, expand your perspectives, and teach you to generate effective ideas. Throughout the program, you will focus on the “people issues” within your organization. PME I is an exciting developmental experience that explores leadership concepts and their practical application through challenging curriculum and networking opportunities. You will study major subject areas including adaptive change, the role of the leader, ethical decision-making, communication, stress and wellness, personal leadership styles, and diversity. PME I is not a technical personnel course. Daily presentations by subject matter experts, along with interactive exercises and simulations, active learning peer groups, and relevant reading material characterize the experience.

**PME II 07-1 (3 Dec – 8 Dec), Application Deadline: 20 Oct.** PME II focuses on empowerment, change, advanced leadership competencies, and transformational leadership. It is a challenging, five-day program where you will interact with guest speakers, be part of active learning peer groups, and perform individual and group activities to meet the challenges of today’s uncertainty, change, and opportunity.

Students must have attended PME I no less than 24 months prior to the start of PME II and meet all other eligibility criteria as specified for PME I. PME II captures the essence of the PME I experience and carries it forward to PME II to demonstrate continuity in a summary look at leadership best business practices; addresses the complexities of leadership with emphasis on accountability, responsibility, and forward-thinking. PME II focuses on complex workplace real-time events and forms the foundation from which participants will develop a strategic leadership action plan. For additional information and to apply online, visit the AMSC website at <http://amsportal.belvoir.army.mil>.

## Army Congressional Fellowship Program (ACFP)

Nominations are now being accepted for the upcoming Army Congressional Fellowship Program (ACFP). This program is designed to provide congressional training to Army officers and civilians. The 15-month program, which starts in August 2007 and ends in December of 2008, is done in two phases. The first phase consist of an orientation, 40-hour force integration course and six to eight one-day seminars. Each fellow is then assigned to serve the second phase on a full-time assignment on the staff of a member of congress, congressional committee or support agency of congress.

The ACFP is open to DA civilian employees at the GS12 through 15 grade levels who have career status and are serving in permanent competitive positions. Interested applicants should access the FY 2006 ACTEDS Training Catalog on the Civilian Personnel on-line webpage at <http://cpol.army.mil/library/train/catalog/acfp.html> for a description of the program, eligibility requirements, and application forms. It is crucial that nominees prepare their nomination package carefully and use only the forms available on the website. Contact your training coordinator for additional information and deadlines for submitting a nomination.




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## Benefits-Thrift Savings Plan

If you are planning to leave Federal service, you have some options to consider regarding your Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). As a separated participant, you can choose one or more TSP withdrawal options. You may request a one-time partial withdrawal of at least \$1,000 or more from your account, and leave the remaining balance in the TSP until a later date. When you are ready to withdraw your entire balance, you may receive a single payment, a series of monthly payments, a TSP annuity, or you may combine one or more of these options. If you elect a partial withdrawal, single payment or short-term monthly payments based on a dollar amount, you may transfer all or part of your payment(s) into an Individual Retirement Arrangement (IRA) or other eligible retirement plan. You may also leave your balance in the TSP and make a withdrawal decision later. The TSP does not require you to begin a full withdrawal of your account until after you have separated and have attained age 70½.



If you choose to leave your balance in the TSP, it will continue to accrue earnings based on the funds your balance is invested in. You may continue to make inter-fund transfers to move the balance around among the funds. This may be completed on the TSP Web site under the “Account Access” section or you may contact the TSP Service Office to make your request. Until you request a withdrawal with Form TSP-70, you may transfer in money from other eligible retirement plans or traditional IRAs with Form TSP-60, Request for a Transfer into the TSP.

All of the TSP forms and publications mentioned below are available on the TSP web site under “Forms and Publications” (*be sure to obtain the forms for civilians*). You may print the withdrawal forms, complete and mail them to the TSP (*address is provided on each form*) for processing and payment. However, if you use your TSP PIN, the “Account Access” section of the TSP web site allows you to fill out your withdrawal form, print it, and in some instances, submit it online for processing and payment. If you need a TSP PIN, you may request one from the “Account Access” section of the TSP web site or by contacting the TSP Service Office. Your new PIN will be mailed to your address of record within 10 business days. The TSP Service Office is your contact regarding your TSP account *after* you leave Federal Service:

<p><b>Thrift Savings Plan</b></p> <p><b>TSP Web Site:</b> <a href="http://www.tsp.gov">http://www.tsp.gov</a></p>	<p><b>1-TSP-YOU-FRST</b> <b>(1-877-968-3778)</b> <b>(toll-free)</b></p> <p><b>TDD: 1-TSP-THRIFT-5</b> <b>(1-877-847-4385)</b> <small>(limited availability outside of the U.S.)</small></p>	<p><b>Outside of the United States and Canada:</b></p> <p><b>(404) 233-4000</b></p>
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***The following forms and booklets are available to withdraw your account, or obtain information about taxes and TSP annuities:***

- TSPBK02, Withdrawing Your TSP Account After Leaving Federal Service
- TSP-536, Important Tax Information About Payments From Your TSP Account
- Form TSP-77, Partial Withdrawal Request
- Form TSP-70, Full Withdrawal Request
- Form TSP-16, Exception to Spousal Requirements (if applicable)
- TSPBK05, TSP Annuities

***To keep your account information up to date:***

- TSP-3, Designation of Beneficiary
- TSP-9, Change of Address for Separated Participants (*You may also contact the TSP to update your address*)

## It's As Easy as ABC-C!!!

The Department of the Army has announced that local Civilian Personnel Advisory Centers (CPACs) will return the "personal" element to certain benefit processes for Army civilian employees. While the Army Benefits Center-Civilian (ABC-C) remains the provider of benefits counseling and processing services, the personal assistance of your CPAC may help you feel more comfortable in managing your benefits. The CPAC will continue to publicize benefits information and help you become familiar with the ABC-C's *Employee Benefits Information System* (EBIS) and all it has to offer.

Visit or call your Fort Eustis CPAC for assistance with navigating through the EBIS and all the services offered through the ABC-C web- and phone-based systems. With ABC-C you control your benefits elections and changes and a counselor is only a phone call away to assist.



Using either the web- or phone-based systems you can apply for retirement, initiate Post-56 military deposits or civilian deposits/redeposits and update beneficiary designation forms. If you request, the CPAC can provide you with these forms. The CPAC will also help you to obtain retirement estimates from the EBIS system and will review your completed retirement application and other forms before they are sent to the ABC-C. (Note: *It is important that your retirement package is submitted to the ABC-C within 90-120 days of your intended retirement date.*)

If you experience a major life-changing event, **the CPAC is here for you**. Contact us immediately for confidential personal assistance in determining the potential impact of a major life changing event such as:

Event	Potential Impact
Death of an employee	Beneficiary/survivor benefits or lump sum retirement benefits; unpaid compensation; death claims for FEGLI, TSP
Death of an Immediate Family Member	Benefits under FEGLI Option C - Family; change of FEGLI Options; FEHB coverage; beneficiary designations
Employee who appears to have a disabling condition expected to last one year in duration that has rendered the employee unable to remain in a productive capacity.	Eligibility for disability or discontinued service retirement
An accidental dismemberment	FEGLI benefits
Diagnosed as terminally ill with a life expectancy of nine months or less	FEGLI Living Benefits; beneficiary designations; disability retirement
Marriage, divorce, child turns age 22, employee in LWOP status	Permissible benefit changes, beneficiary changes, etc.

Because we care, the CPAC and the counselors at ABC-C are ready to serve you with your benefits needs. The Fort Eustis CPAC is located in building 670 and open 0800-1600 Monday through Friday. The ABC-C can be reached at the following phone/websites: <https://www.abc.army.mil> or 1-877-276-ARMY-CTR/(1-877-276-9287); TDD: 1-877-276-9833

## Federal Government Survey

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is conducting the 2006 Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) across the Federal Government. Employees were randomly chosen; however, all DOD Comptroller employees were asked to participate in the survey. The notifications were sent via email. Responses are voluntary and confidential.

The FHCS is a tool that measures Federal employees' perceptions of whether, and to what extent, conditions characterizing successful organizations are present in the Department of Defense and other Federal agencies. The survey:

- ✓ Provides general indicators of how well the Department and other Federal agencies are running it's human resources management systems.
- ✓ Serves as a tool for the Department of Defense and other Federal agencies to assess their progress toward meeting the goals of the President's Management Agenda.
- ✓ Gives senior managers critical information to answer the question: What can I do to make my organization work better?

Information from the FHCS will help the department target improvements, extend best practices, and remain a competitive, "employer of choice" in the market place.

## Veteran's Preference Change-Update

In May, we told you about a change in the definition of veteran's preference and how the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) altered the definition of "veterans' preference" to align agency regulations with federal law. In the June edition of the Federal Register, OPM published an interim rule that extended veterans' preference to "include individuals who served on active duty for more than 180 days, other than for training, any part of which occurred" between Sept. 11, 2001, and "the date prescribed by Presidential proclamation or by law as the last day of Operation Iraqi Freedom."

Veterans' preference would also be extended to include those who served on active duty between Aug. 2, 1990, and Jan. 2, 1992.

The interim rule also no longer requires veterans to be honorably discharged to be veterans' preference eligible.

The interim regulations can be found at <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20061800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2006/E6-8962.htm>.

## Wanted!!

Your local servicing CPAC is available and prepared to address any general or specific questions or problems you may have related to your pay, leave, performance ratings, awards, where to locate specific regulations and various other general human resources information. They have quick access to your records and will be able to provide a speedy resolution to your inquiries.

## Feedback

This bulletin is designed to inform employees and supervisors of new civilian human resources issues and refresh their knowledge of existing polices 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.



### 2006 Federal Human Capital Survey



### Veteran's Preference Change

