

# HR Welcome Guide

As a new employee, understanding your job status and benefits can be confusing and overwhelming. To assist you, the U.S. Army Audit Agency (USAAA) Human Resources Office has provided the below summary of your employment, pay, work schedules, time and leave, benefits, and employee relations and services. You may want to refer to this information throughout your career with the Agency; however, since personnel policies, rules, regulations, and laws change rapidly, this document should only be used as an initial reference. For up-to-date, detailed information or clarification of items contained in this document, you should consult your servicing Human Resources Specialist.

## **EMPLOYMENT**

### **Human Resources Servicing**

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The USAAA Human Resources Office provides personnel servicing to all Agency employees in conjunction with an Army Civilian Personnel Operations Center (CPOC). The Agency's internal Human Resources staff, located at the Ft. Belvoir and Ft. Meade Field Offices, provides day-to-day personnel advisory services to employees, while the CPOC is responsible for the processing of personnel actions. The Agency's Human Resources staff answers employee inquiries and communicates directly with the appropriate servicing CPOC to ensure employees' personnel actions are accurate and processed in a timely manner. You should direct your questions on all personnel matters to your servicing Human Resources Specialist or Assistant. Human Resources servicing is dependent on the audit directorate to which you are assigned. You can get a list of Human Resources points of contact for each directorate on the intranet human resources pages under HR POCs.

### **Official Personnel Files**

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The Northeast CPOC located in Aberdeen, Maryland is the custodian of official personnel files (OPF) for all Agency employees, with the exception of those personnel assigned to the Korea and Hawaii Field Offices. The Korea CPOC located in Taegu maintains OPFs for personnel assigned to Korea. The Pacific CPOC located in Ft. Richardson, Alaska maintains OPFs for personnel assigned to Hawaii.

Access to information contained in these files is restricted to the individual employee and to certain others who have an official business need. If you wish to review your official personnel file, you may request to do so via an email to your Human Resources Specialist. The Human Resources Specialist or Assistant will follow-up with the appropriate CPOC to obtain and arrange for your review of the OPF.

Within the Agency, the USAAA Human Resources Office maintains unofficial personnel files for all Agency employees. These files contain information related to your employment with the Agency, such as SF50s, performance appraisals, awards, etc. You have access to your unofficial file and should review it periodically. Supervisors have limited access to employees' files.

## **My Biz**

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My Biz is a web-based Self-Service HR module that grants access to your official personnel data. It allows you to view your personal information 24/7 from your workstation; updated specific fields of personal information; and provide input on performance plans and accomplishments for performance appraisals.

## **Notification of Personnel Actions (Standard Form 50)**

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One of the first official documents that you will have access to once you begin employment with the Agency is a Notification of Personnel Action, SF-50. This document will tell you the type of appointment you have, retirement coverage, health insurance, life insurance, whether you are in a probationary/trial period, etc. Knowing this information will help you better understand your entitlements and benefits. For your own record, you should establish a personal file to keep all of your important papers. An OPF will be established and maintained. It contains a history of your employment and will follow you throughout your entire Federal career. However, it is important that you maintain your own file.

## **Appointment**

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Your appointment to a position in the Agency may be one of several kinds. The type of appointment affects your status and length of your job. Most initial appointments to the Agency are excepted appointments under the Federal Career Intern Program (FCIP). Other types of appointments include career or temporary. Appointments are made subject to investigation of your qualifications, character, and security background.

Any questions concerning your appointment should be directed to your servicing Human Resources Specialist.

**Excepted** appointment means the appointment is not under competitive merit system requirements—that is it does not require open competitive examination to the general public, numerical ranking, rule of three, and other federal hiring rules & restrictions. These appointments allow the Agency to be flexible in their hiring and bring employees on board faster. They include a variety of student employment programs that provide job opportunities to students in good standing with their academic institutions. The Federal Career Intern Program (FCIP), Student Career Employment Program (SCEP),

and Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) are the primary student programs the Agency uses.

FCIP and SCEP employees are eligible for health and life insurance if their appointments are expected to last at least 1 year and they are in a work status at least 1/3 of their total time in the program. They may also be noncompetitively converted to career-conditional or career appointments upon completion of program requirements.

STEP employees are generally ineligible for benefits and their employment ends once their appointment expires or once they are no longer a student. In order to become a permanent federal employee, they must compete for and be selected for a permanent position.

**Career** appointments are permanent appointments given when selections are made from a list (OPM or DEU) of persons who have passed either a written examination or meet eligibility based on education and experience.

Career appointments confer permanent status. As a career appointee, you have the greatest possible job protection. You also have permanent reinstatement eligibility, which means that, should you leave the Federal service, you may be considered for reemployment no matter how much time has elapsed.

**Temporary** appointments are usually made when there are short-term projects that require additional employees for one year or less, but may be extended for up to one year. Temporary appointments expire automatically unless terminated sooner or converted to a new appointment.

A temporary appointment does not confer eligibility to be promoted, reassigned, transferred, or converted noncompetitively to a career appointment. If your appointment is for less than one year, you are ineligible for health and life insurance. Also, if your appointment is for less than 90 days, you are ineligible to earn annual leave (vacation).

## **Trial/Probationary Periods**

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A trial or probationary period is the final step in the employment examining process and allows management an on-the-job opportunity to determine the employee's fitness for permanent Federal Government service.

During this time, the supervisor will closely observe the employee's conduct, general character traits, and performance. The supervisor will be required to document their decision to retain or separate each employee prior to expiration of the trial or probationary period. If a decision is made to separate an employee, they will be notified in writing of the reason and the effective date of the termination. Although the employee does not have a right to reply to this letter, the notice will include any applicable limited appeal rights. Employees on excepted appointment who are terminated during their trial period generally have no appeal rights.

Employees on excepted appointments are required to serve a 1-2 year trial period, regardless of whether they already completed probation in another Federal position in the competitive service. FCIP employees serve a two-year trial period; SCEP employees a 1-year trial period. Similarly, employees on competitive career-conditional appointments are subject to a 1-year probationary period.

If you are subject to a trial or probationary period, you should use this opportunity to demonstrate your total fitness and suitability for Federal employment. Put forward a solid work effort, ask questions, seek feedback on the quality of your work, and improve the quality of your contribution with each assignment. If this is your first Federal job or a new line of work for you, remember that this is a time for you to experience the work first hand and assess your degree of satisfaction with this situation. If you find that the work is not what they expected or may not be what they prefer, you should talk to your supervisor. You may be able to gain valuable insight based on a supervisor's experience.

## **Position Descriptions**

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All Agency jobs have an official written description of the duties, responsibilities, and supervisory relationships required by management in the respective position. This written description is called a position description (PD). The process of preparing a PD begins with the supervisor deciding what work needs to be done and how the work will be organized.

Once the PD is written, the duties and factor descriptions are compared with classification standards issued by DOD. The result of this analysis determines the title, occupational series, pay schedule and pay band of the position.

Within the first few days of employment, your supervisor should provide you with a copy of your PD and explain what your job involves. If you do not receive a copy, ask your supervisor for one.

It is not necessary for a PD to set forth every duty you may be expected to perform. Supervisors have full authority to assign duties to employees as they see fit within the scope of their operations. Assignments should, however, be reasonably related to the employee's position and pay. Should you refuse to perform a reasonable task properly assigned by your supervisor, it may be considered insubordination and could result in disciplinary action.

Position descriptions are also used as tools to assist in developing performance objectives and reviewing your performance. The purpose of this practice is to assure that employees and their supervisor have a clear understanding of what they are required to do; that the major duties of their position are recorded and properly evaluated; and that they are properly paid for the work they do. If you feel that the work you are doing is not properly described, or that the title, series, or grade of their position

is improper, you should discuss this matter with your immediate or next higher supervisor, or your servicing Human Resources Specialist. Employees are entitled to initiate a complaint or appeal in these matters at any time.

## **Merit Promotion and Placement Program**

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The purpose of the Merit Promotion and Placement Program is to ensure that well-qualified individuals are referred and selected for positions, and to provide equity in placement opportunities for all qualified candidates. Both auditor and non-auditor positions may be filled by a variety of means with Federal Government candidates or candidates from outside the Government. Vacant positions to be filled under competitive or promotion procedures require use of mandatory career referral procedures (RESUMIX) specified by the Department of the Army. For details, refer to your servicing Human Resources Specialist. The Human Resources Office posts Agency vacancies filled via agency-wide emails.

## **Performance Appraisals and Counseling**

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Performance appraisal is the process of reviewing and evaluating the employee's achievements against documented objectives/expectations. The Agency has developed standardized performance objectives for auditors at all levels. The primary purpose of appraisals and counseling is to assess strengths and weaknesses, provide guidance on desired improvements, and assist in employee career development. Unobstructed communication and effective interaction between the supervisor and the employee are essential and continuous.

Here are two types of appraisals that you may receive:

- **Annual Appraisals:** Annual appraisals normally cover an employee's performance for one year, but must cover at least 90 days. All Agency employees are covered under the National Security Personnel System (NSPS) and have an annual rating period of 1 October through 30 September. Each employee is assigned a rater and a higher level reviewer, responsible for proposing performance ratings at the end of the cycle.
- **Job Appraisals:** Because auditors may have multiple assignments outside their official rating chain within their rating period, the Agency has devised an individual job appraisal form (USAAA Form 440) to capture their accomplishments and improvements needed on specific jobs. For probationary employees, job appraisals every 90 days until for the first year if their probation/trial period. After probation, job appraisals are only required for employees who are not working for directly for their annual raters and their audit assignment lasts for 30-days or more.

You can obtain more details on performance appraisals and ratings by contacting your rater or higher level reviewer or servicing Human Resources Specialist.

## **Service Computation Date**

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A service computation date (SCD) is a date, either actual or constructed, used to determine benefits that are based on how long you have been in the Federal Service. Your SCD is established considering all creditable Federal employment (including civilian and military service) to determine your leave accrual rate and tenure for reduction-in-force purposes. It is computed by subtracting the total of all previous creditable civilian and military service from the date of entrance on duty, resulting in a constructed service computation that represents all creditable Government service. For retired military employees, only certain portions of wartime service are creditable for inclusion in the computation. Your SCD will be reflected on your Notification of Personnel Action (SF-50). Contact your servicing Human Resources Specialist for additional information.

## **PAY**

### **Paydays and Pay Checks**

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All Agency employees are paid on a biweekly basis through the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) and are required to participate in the direct deposit of their pay to a financial institution. DFAS will mail a leave and earnings statement (LES) to you each time you are paid, showing your total earnings, deductions, and leave accumulations. You are responsible for reviewing your LES on a regular basis and bringing any errors in your pay or deductions to the attention of your servicing Human Resources Specialist or Assistant.

### **Payroll Deductions**

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Some deductions from pay are required by law, and other deductions are made upon an individual request. Typical deductions are as follows:

**Required:** Federal Income Tax; State Income Tax; City Tax (if applicable); Medicare Contributions; Civil Service (CSRS) or Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) deductions, or Social Security. \*

\*Either CSRS or FERS Retirement deductions are made for permanent employees; and only Social Security (FICA) deductions are made for temporary employees.

**Optional:** Health Benefits (FEHB); Group Life Insurance (FGLI); U.S. Savings Bonds; Allotments to a Credit Union or other Savings Institution; Thrift Savings Plan; Charitable Deductions

## **MyPay System**

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MyPay is an automated pay service provided by your servicing payroll office, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS). The service puts you in control of your pay account, provides you immediate access to your personal information, and allows you to change your pay preferences online. With MyPay, you can:

- View, Print and Save Leave and Earnings Statements (LES)
- View and Print tax statements (W2s)
- Change federal and state tax withholdings
- Update bank account and electronic funds transfer information
- Manage allotments
- Make address changes
- Purchase US Savings Bonds

MyPay can be accessed at <http://www.mypay.gov/>. Directions on gaining initial access to the system and obtaining a PIN can be found on the website. While use of the MyPay system is not mandatory, we highly encourage it since it offers faster, enhanced services, security, accessibility, and reliability. If you are unable to make necessary changes using MyPay, you may contact the agency's Customer Service Representative (CSR).

## **Annual Pay Increases**

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Employees with overall performance ratings of Level 3- Valued Performer, Level 4- Exceeds Expectations or Level 5- Role Model are eligible to receive rate range adjustments, local market supplement increases and performance-based pay increases. Employees with overall ratings of Level 2-Fair are only eligible for rate range adjustments and local market supplement increases. Employees with overall ratings of Level 1- Unsuccessful receive no pay increases. Annual payouts occur the first pay period in January.

## **WORK SCHEDULES, TIME AND LEAVE ADMINISTRATION**

**U.S. Army Audit Agency Regulation 690-1** prescribes U.S. Army guidance and procedures for work schedules, overtime, compensatory time, reporting time and attendance, administering leave, and dismissing personnel under emergency conditions. The procedures outlined in this regulation include internal controls that Agency personnel must follow. Please read this regulation carefully to ensure you are familiar with your entitlements to various types of leave as well as the proper procedures for establishing work schedules and requesting leave

## Holidays

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The following days are legal holidays for Federal Government employees:

New Year's Day	1 January
Martin Luther King's Birthday	3rd Monday in January
President's Day	3rd Monday in February
Memorial Day	Last Monday in May
Independence Day	4 July
Labor Day	1st Monday in September
Columbus Day	2nd Monday in October
Veteran's Day	11 November
Thanksgiving Day	4th Thursday in November
Christmas Day	25 December

Holidays that fall on a Saturday will be observed on the preceding Friday, and those that fall on a Sunday will be observed on the following Monday. Required work on an observed holiday entitles an employee to premium pay or compensatory leave, as appropriate. When a holiday falls on a day that an employee is regularly scheduled to work under either a compressed or flexible work schedule, the scheduled workday is the employee's holiday.

## **EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

The Army Benefits Center-Civilian (ABC-C) located in Ft. Riley Kansas provides benefits processing and counseling services to Army civilians. They can assist you in obtaining up-to-date information using state-of-the-art technology in the following program areas:

- Retirement (Civil Service Retirement System and Federal Employees' Retirement System)
- Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)
- Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB)
- Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI)
- Survivor Benefits (Death and Dismemberment)

You can find out about your basic employee benefits, how and when to sign up for coverage, and keep up-to-date on legislative issues simply by using by using the web address of <https://www.abc.army.mil/> or a touch-tone telephone to contact the Army Benefits Center-Civilian (ABC-C) at 1-877-276-9287. Access to the system requires you to enter your social security number (SSN) followed by a Personal Identification Number (PIN). Initially, your PIN will be your four-digit date of birth (mmyy). For

security purposes, you should immediately access the system and change your PIN to any six-digit number you choose. Do not share your PIN number. Army developed this system to provide quality customer service, and in addition, empower employees to have more control of their benefits and entitlements. USAAA Human Resources staff are not authorized to make benefits elections on your behalf through the ABC automated system.

## **EMPLOYEE RELATIONS AND SERVICES**

### **Incentive Awards**

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The aim of the Army Incentive Awards Program is to foster mission accomplishment by recognizing employee excellence and motivating them to high levels of performance and service. Types of awards available are: Special Act or Service Awards, On-the-Spot Awards, Time-Off Awards. Within the Agency, special performance awards (Auditor General Awards) are given each year to employees who have made significant contributions toward Agency mission accomplishment. Supervisors make recommendations based on an employee's high quality performance for these awards. Honorary awards are also available. They include length-of-service recognition, consisting of a certificate and emblem for each five years of service (beginning with 10 years); letters of appreciation and commendation; Certificates of Appreciation; Certificates of Commendation; Certificates of Achievement; and other awards granted by higher headquarters, or non-Federal agencies or the President.

### **Disciplinary Action**

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Disciplinary action is an important tool designed to help managers and supervisors maintain an orderly and productive work environment. Properly used, the disciplinary action process will assist employees in correcting unacceptable behavior that may ultimately threaten their job. If such actions are required, possible penalties include oral reprimand or warning, written reprimand, suspension, reduction in grade, or removal. Employees have the right to reply to any disciplinary action taken and they will be advised of the reply procedure. Based on any reply received, a final decision will be rendered. If an employee is dissatisfied with the decision given, they have formal grievance or appeal rights based on the type of action, and these will be detailed for them in the decision process. Discipline will be used to correct unacceptable conduct or behavior, not to punish employees. Generally, managers do not take disciplinary action on trial or probationary employees. First offense misconduct is grounds for removal for these employees.

## **Grievances and Appeals**

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A **grievance** is an expression of dissatisfaction an employee may have with any aspect of working conditions, relationships, or employment status within the control of the Department of the Army. If at any time you believe they have been treated unfairly, you have a right to present their grievance or appeal to Agency management officials. In accordance with Department of Army administrative grievance procedures, any grievance should be filed within 15 calendar days after you become aware of the circumstance(s) that prompted the grievance. Grievance procedures may be accessed on the Agency's intranet at Human Resources/Guidance/DA Policy Memo on Employee Administrative Grievance System.

**Appeals** are requests by employees for reconsideration of adverse actions or decisions against them, such as suspension, change to lower grade, or removal. The Agency's Management Employee Relations Specialist is available to provide advice and information on grievances and appeals.

## **Equal Employment Opportunity**

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The Federal Government guarantees equal employment opportunity to all persons on the basis of merit, and without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, politics, or marital status. Department of the Army regulations require that this policy be adhered to, in letter and in spirit, and that all personnel receive full and impartial consideration for initial employment, possess equal standing and security as Army employees, receive equal training to develop skills, and enjoy equal opportunity to advance to the best of their abilities. The application of this policy is an integral part of personnel policy and practice in the employment, development, advancement, and treatment of all Federal employees. If employees believe that they have been subjected to discrimination based on any of the above conditions, they have the right to use, without fear of coercion or reprisal, the formal procedures established to consider complaints of discrimination. Employees may discuss the complaint with an Equal Employment Opportunity Counselor available at the Headquarters, Department of the Army, EEO Office, at (703) 604-2838 who may assign the complaint to a local counselor. If a counselor is unable to resolve the complaint informally, employees may file a formal complaint and the employee will be advised of the procedure.

## **Worker's Compensation**

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The Worker's Compensation Law provides compensation benefits to civilian employees of the United States for disability from personal injury sustained while in the performance of duty, or from employment-related disease. Injuries incurred while on official business during local travel, temporary duty travel, or at a temporary duty station are generally covered. Injuries during weekend trips away from a temporary duty station for personal reasons (e.g., voluntary return home trips), or during normal commuting to and from work are not covered. The law also provides for the payment of

benefits to dependents, if the injury or disease causes an employee's death. You may be granted up to 45 days continuation of regular pay for an injury sustained on the job. You are responsible for reporting any injury to your supervisor as soon as possible, and for completing the forms required to document the injury or disease to receive benefits. You may obtain forms and further information from your supervisor, or the Human Resources office.

## **Employee Assistance Program**

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We all have problems from time to time that may appear to be more than we can handle. When you are experiencing problems that “won’t go away,” whether the issue is drug or alcohol abuse, marital problems, emotional difficulties, or financial problems, talking it out can often give you the direction you need for solving the problem. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a program designed to assist you in the identification and resolution of problems that may be causing difficulties on the job.

If you or a family member are experiencing a personal problem and you believe that it has progressed to the point where job performance has been or soon will be affected by it, you should contact your local EAP office. Your supervisor or Management Employee Relations Specialist will be able to provide you with the contact number and location of an EAP office near you.

The initial EAP counseling session is provided to you at no cost. If you need additional assistance beyond this initial appointment, the counselor will work with you to secure the most cost-effective help available. The service is strictly confidential. Your supervisor will not be given any information unless you sign a release.