

Army Moves Forward with Civilian Reductions

ARMY NEWS SERVICE (DEC. 8, 2011)

Department of Army announced today it is moving forward with plans to reduce the size of its civilian employee workforce.

In July, the Army announced a planned reduction of approximately 8,700 positions by Sept. 30, 2012. These cuts are based on Department of Defense resource decisions as reflected in the fiscal 2012 President's Budget and require a reduction of Army civilian employees to comply with decreased funding levels.

The Army has identified 70 different locations affected by these reductions across eight commands and agencies with nearly 90 percent of the cuts taking place within Installation Management Command, Army Materiel Command, and Training and Doctrine Command.

Thirty seven states will be affected by these reductions with the majority of personnel cuts occurring in those states with the largest military and Army civilian populations.

"Army commands and agencies are continuing to take necessary actions to reduce their civilian on-board strength to meet funded targets established by the secretary of defense and reflected in the President's Budget," said Thomas R. Lamont, assistant secretary of the Army for manpower and reserve affairs. "To the maximum extent possible, the Army will rely on voluntary departures to achieve these manpower reductions."

Commanders are responsible for shaping their workforce within their allocated budget and may use all available options to achieve reduction objectives while mitigating adverse impact on the workforce. Voluntary Early Retirement Authority and Voluntary Separation Incentive Payment may be used to reduce the number of personnel to meet mission objectives.

Air Force Expands FY12 Officer Voluntary Force Management Measures

AIR FORCE PERSONNEL, SERVICES AND MANPOWER PUBLIC AFFAIRS (DEC. 9, 2011)

Eric M. Grill

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas—Air Force leaders announced Dec. 6 the expansion of voluntary officer separation measures for fiscal 2012 as part of the Service's ongoing force management initiatives.

The leaders implemented a tailored, multi-year program in 2010 to reduce the personnel numbers to meet the Service's

authorized end-strength level of 332,800 active-duty airmen by Sept. 30, 2012.

In September, the Air Force announced the FY12 Officer 10-8 Commission Waiver Program allowing eligible officers in the line of Air Force, Line of the Air Force-Judge Advocate General, Chaplain, Biomedical Service Corps, and Medical Service Corps competitive categories, unless specifically excluded, to retire with reduced active commissioned service. Based on Air Force needs, eligible officers may request to retire with at least 20 years total active federal military service and a minimum of eight years total active federal commissioned service as of the approved retirement date.

Also announced in September was the FY12 Officer Limited Active Duty Service Commitment Program, which allows officers otherwise eligible for the 10-8 Commission Waiver Program to help facilitate their retirement no later than Sept. 1, 2012, officials said. The expansion to the voluntary FY12 Force Management Program now includes the FY12 Limited Active Duty Service Commitment Waiver Program being offered to lieutenant colonels and below as well as the addition of the FY12 Time-in-Grade Waiver Program and the FY12 PALACE CHASE Program.

The Time-in-Grade Waiver Program is offered to lieutenant colonels in certain competitive categories or Air Force specialties and allows them to request retirement in their current grade if they have two years time in grade and 20 years total active federal military service as of the requested retirement date.

The Limited Active Duty Service Commitment Waiver Program is now open to officers in selected Air Force specialties to request retirement or separation prior to completing specified active duty service commitments or service obligations. Officers approved for a waiver must retire no later than Sept. 1, 2012, or separate no later than Sept. 29, 2012.

The FY12 PALACE CHASE program provides additional active duty service commitment waiver authority for lieutenant colonels and below in select Air Force specialties to facilitate transfer from active duty service to an Air Reserve Component. Transfer to an Air Reserve Component results in a one-to-one (not less than one year or greater than six years') commitment.

Air Force officials regularly review the Service's manpower and personnel capabilities to ensure they align with current, emerging, and future Air Force missions. Airmen transitioning from active duty service as a result of force management

are eligible to continue serving in the Air Force Reserve or Air National Guard.

Additionally, airmen and family readiness centers around the world host the Department of Labor Transition Assistance Program, offering airmen information about the GI Bill and vital resources for a successful transition from the Air Force.

For more information on force management programs, visit the Air Force Personnel Services website at <https://gum-crm.csd.disa.mil>.

Priority Placement Program Serves Employee, DoD Needs

AIR FORCE PERSONNEL, SERVICES AND MANPOWER PUBLIC AFFAIRS (DEC. 12, 2011)

Debbie Gildea

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas—Civilian employees adversely affected by actions such as transfer of function or base realignment and closure may be eligible for assistance through the Department of Defense Priority Placement Program.

“The priority placement program sometimes conjures concern when mentioned, but it is one of the most positive programs available and benefits employees, the Air Force, and the Department of Defense,” said Ray Gonzales, the Air Force Personnel Center workforce transition branch chief.

Depending on the situation, the program provides mandatory placement, matching eligible well-qualified employees to vacant positions throughout the DoD.

“That helps us maintain a relatively stable workforce and enables us to meet force management objectives as well,” Gonzales said.

Defense Department officials are working to bring civilian employment levels back to fiscal 2010 levels, which involves eliminating some positions and restructuring others, Gonzales said, adding that priority placement enables leaders to restructure while taking advantage of an existing skilled, motivated workforce.

But PPP is not just for use during government-initiated actions, Gonzales said. It is also a useful tool for unexpected situations.

“The program helped us place employees and family members displaced by natural disasters, like Hurricanes Andrew, Katrina, and Rita,” Gonzales said.

The intent of the program—during any displacement event—is to place qualified registrants in order to maintain a stable, trained, experienced workforce, Gonzales said. For a PPP placement to occur, the registrant matched against a job vacancy must be well qualified for the position and certified by the current supervisor, he added.

“PPP doesn’t just benefit employees,” Gonzales said. “It’s a smart tool that will enable leaders to continue to accomplish their mission following displacement events, and it’s a money-saving tool allowing leaders to take advantage of available, educated, trained, and skilled employees.”

For more information about the priority placement program and other personnel issues, visit the Air Force Personnel Services website or the Office of Personnel Management website at www.opm.gov.

Air Force Offering Second Round of VERA/VSIP

AIR FORCE NEWS SERVICE (JAN. 4, 2012)

WASHINGTON—The Air Force is offering a second round of voluntary early retirement authority and voluntary separation incentive pay beginning Jan. 9, 2012.

The move is part of the Air Force’s continuing effort to meet the Department of Defense requirement to maintain civilian funding at fiscal 2010 levels

“The Air Force recognizes the invaluable contributions of our civilian workforce, but also recognizes the fiscal constraints under which the Department of Defense and the government as a whole are operating,” said Maj. Gen. Sharon Dunbar, the director of force management policy. “We are working to balance mission needs while taking care to minimize the effect on our current permanent civilian workforce and their families.”

The first round of VERA/VSIP was used as a voluntary means to reduce civilian workforce levels, enabling strategic rebalancing efforts. As the Air Force continues its fiscal 2012 civilian workforce restructure, round two of VERA/VSIP will be used to further realign and rebalance the civilian force.

Civilian employees will receive VERA/VSIP eligibility surveys from their personnel managers in January, and applications are due Feb. 3 or an earlier date established by local authorities. Applicants approved for this round of VERA/VSIP will need to separate on or before April 30.

“We are pursuing all available force management measures, to include civilian hiring controls, where required, with the

goal of avoiding involuntary measures for our current permanent workforce,” Dunbar said.

In August, the Air Force instituted a 90-day hiring freeze that was lifted as an Air Force-wide control Dec. 16, 2011. Hiring controls remain in effect in some areas and vary by major command, depending on current MAJCOM strength relative to approved funding levels. Of the positions already identified for elimination, many were vacant, and the freeze created additional vacancies. By lifting the Air Force-wide freeze, MAJCOM managers and hiring officials will be able to hire personnel into vacant positions that remain to support the future Air Force mission.

For any information about civilian employment, voluntary separation programs, and other personnel issues, visit the secure Air Force Personnel Services website at <https://gum-crm.csd.disa.mil>.

Air Force Completes FY12 Civilian Workforce Restructure

SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS (JAN. 11, 2012)

Ann Stefanek

WASHINGTON—Air Force officials announced 4,500 additional positions for elimination as a continuation of its FY12 Civilian Workforce Restructure Jan. 11, 2012.

This reduction builds on the realignments announced in November, including the elimination of 9,000 positions and the addition of 5,900 positions against the Air Force’s top priorities. In addition, these reductions respond to the Secretary of Defense’s direction to target civilian funding at fiscal year 2010 levels.

“We value our talented and experienced workforce and are trying to do everything possible to manage these reductions with as little impact to our people as possible,” said Michael B. Donley, Secretary of the Air Force.

In an effort to encourage voluntary separations and retirements, the Air Force is currently offering its second round of voluntary separation incentive pay and voluntary early retirement authority programs. Civilian employees received VERA/VSIP eligibility surveys from their personnel managers earlier this month and the applications are due no later than Feb. 3. Approved applications will result in separations or retirements that take effect by April 30.

Air Force officials are still evaluating the need for a Reduction in Force.

“At this time, we are surveying the workforce for a second round of VERA/VSIP and are in the midst of management reassignments resulting from the first round of the restructure,” said Brig. Gen. Gina Grosso, director of manpower, organization, and resources. “Once we exhaust all voluntary force management measures, a determination will be made whether or not a RIF [Reduction in Force] is necessary. We hope to have more information in the spring.”

This announcement marks the end of civilian reductions associated with the Air Force’s FY12 civilian workforce restructure.

Civilian Developmental Education Applications Due Beginning in March

AIR FORCE PERSONNEL, SERVICES AND MANPOWER PUBLIC AFFAIRS (JAN. 30, 2012)

Debbie Gildea

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas—Air Force civilians interested in developmental education should work on their nomination packages now, Air Force Personnel Center officials advised.

The official call for nominations will be in March, but some people may need more time to gather information and coordinate their package, said Joan Gudinas, AFPC civilian developmental education program manager.

“Waiting until the last minute to prepare your package may result in preventable errors,” said Gudinas. “Developmental teams and CDE board members noted last year that there were spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors that could have been avoided. There are frequently other errors too—like using the wrong forms and format—that can be avoided if you start now and contact us when you have questions.”

A variety of CDE programs are available for civilians at every level, including Civilian Acculturation and Leadership Training, Defense Civilian Emerging Leader Program, Squadron Officer School, Education with Industry, and intermediate and senior developmental education, Gudinas said.

Options vary by grade, she explained, so AFPC has scheduled several March webcasts that will focus on opportunities available to civilians in each grade. Webcasts will be held at 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. central standard time March 1 for GS 14 and 15; March 8 for GS 12 and 13; and March 15, 21, and 29 for GS-7 through 11. Developmental education experts will provide a presentation during each webcast, followed by question-and-answer periods.

A big change this year, Gudinas said, is that applicants are no longer required to have 12 months in their current position to be able to apply.

"In the past some civilian employees who were ready for developmental opportunities were unable to pursue them because of the 12-month requirement," she said. "That not only affected their ability to pursue personal goals, but also delayed their ability to gain knowledge from CDE experiences to help improve the Air Force. That didn't make sense, so the requirement has been eliminated."

Another change benefits senior civilians. This year, GS-14 and GS-15 civilians will be able to apply for the Defense Senior Leader Development Program for academic years 2013 and 2014.

"This year, we are advertising both academic years to align the Air Force selection process with the tight DoD timeline," said Gudinas. "The nomination sheet from the DoD application is the only portion required initially when applying for DSLDP. Once employees have been vectored by their developmental teams, we will contact them to have them complete their DoD application."

The nomination process starts with the employee, Gudinas said. The first step is for an interested employee to complete the AF IMT (form) 4059, and submit it to their supervisor for coordination and approval through the chain of command.

"The coordination process could take time, so that's another reason to start preparing the package now," Gudinas said. "The first general officer, Senior Executive Service member, or installation or wing commander in your chain of command must endorse the nomination. We recommend that you provide your leadership with ample time to review and sign off on your package."

In addition, Gudinas explained, the submission process this year will require that employees submit their own application packages to AFPC via the Air Force Personnel Services website after the packages have been coordinated through the chain of command. Instructions for submission will be included in the March call for applications, she said.

When completing the application form, Gudinas reminds applicants that they can identify up to three programs.

"Don't limit yourself to one program—take advantage of all the opportunities you can," she said.

Packages will be due May 1, with developmental team boards slated to meet during the summer to rank and vector the packages. The CDE board will convene in the early fall, and final approval of primary and alternate candidates will be released around October.

"CDE is part of the civilian continuum of learning that ensures the right combination of education, training, and experience is available to help all airmen develop as Air Force leaders," said Gudinas. "Opportunities are out there, but airmen must put the time and effort into the process and apply for the opportunity to compete."

For more information about civilian developmental education opportunities and other personnel issues, visit the Air Force Personnel Services website at <https://gum-crm.csd.disa.mil>.