

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE NEWS RELEASE
(SEPT. 26, 2008)

DoD Finalizes NSPS Regulations

The Department of Defense and the Office of Personnel Management jointly issued the final enabling regulations for the National Security Personnel System, one of DoD's human resources management systems. NSPS was originally authorized by the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004 and amended by the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008.

The proposed regulations were initially published in the Federal Register on May 22, 2008, for a 30-day public comment period. The department and OPM received 526 public comments. Nine of the 10 unions having national consultation rights with the department also provided comments. DoD and OPM carefully considered all comments and suggestions. The final regulations incorporate some of the changes and recommendations received and reflect the department's commitment to ensuring fairness and transparency in the performance management system, a key concern of commenters. A comprehensive overview of the comments and the department's response is included in the supplementary information published with the final regulations.

While the final regulations incorporate significant changes, the core features of the personnel system remain intact. The final regulations govern how classification, compensation, and performance management flexibilities will be accomplished. NSPS retains the existing values of the civil service, including merit system principles and veterans' preference, and allows employees to be paid and rewarded based on performance, contributions to mission accomplishment, and market considerations.

The NSPS regulations have undergone significant change since they were first introduced. Most of these changes were motivated by one of three factors: changes mandated in law, changes derived from lessons learned and best practices, and changes driven by public and union comments.

Changes brought about by National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008:

- NSPS will follow existing government-wide rules for:
 - Labor-management relations
 - Disciplinary and adverse actions and employee appeals of adverse actions
 - Staffing and employment
 - Workforce shaping (reduction in force, furlough, and transfer of function).
- Excludes Federal Wage System (blue collar) employees from coverage under NSPS.

- Mandates that all employees with a performance rating above "unacceptable" (rating of 1 on a scale of 1-5)) or who do not have a current performance rating receive no less than 60 percent of the annual government-wide General Schedule pay increase. In accordance with the statute, the balance will be allocated to pay pools for the purpose of increasing rates of pay based on performance at the valued performer (rating of 3) and higher levels.
- Requires that all NSPS employees with a performance rating above "unacceptable" or who do not have a current performance rating receive locality pay in the same manner and extent as General Schedule employees.

Adjustments and clarifications made to lend consistency based on lessons learned and best practices:

- Allow for NSPS coverage of employees appointed for less than 90 days.
- Provides a conversion/movement out process for employees moving to GS positions, to ensure consistent pay setting practices for NSPS employees.
- Allows employees to request reconsideration of an individual job objective rating, in addition to the ability to request reconsideration of the overall final rating of record.
- Grandfathers GS pay retention timeframes for employees covered by GS grade or pay retention rules at the time of their conversion to NSPS.

Additional substantive changes made following publication of the proposed rules in the Federal Register:

- Revises definition of "rate of pay" to ensure consistency and conformity regarding pay issues.
- Requires organizations to share aggregate pay pool results.
- Extends accelerated compensation for developmental positions to positions assigned to the Student Career Experience Program in the student pay schedule.
- Extends within-grade increase "buy-in" provision to Federal Wage System employees who move into NSPS.

DoD will continue to use NSPS flexibilities to build and sustain a high-performing workforce. There are currently approximately 183,000 DoD employees under NSPS. The next DoD organizations will convert into NSPS in the late 2008, early 2009 timeframe, bringing the total number of employees under the system to approximately 200,000.

The final regulations can be found at: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2008/pdf/E8-22483.pdf>.

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (OCT. 1, 2008)

DoD Officials Move Toward Civilian Expeditionary Capability

Jim Garamone

WASHINGTON—Defense Department officials are moving forward with setting up a global expeditionary force for civilian employees, a senior Pentagon personnel official said Sept. 30.

Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy Patricia Bradshaw said operations in Iraq and Afghanistan pointed to the roles DoD civilians can play.

“In the past, there were many situations and job opportunities that we have just routinely relied on the military to do, or we have turned to a contractor,” she said.

But DoD civilian employees have played crucial roles in operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“At the end of the day, when you look at the duties that need to be performed in theater, and particularly as the [security] situation becomes more permissive, it provides opportunities for DoD civilians to serve,” she said.

More than 16,000 DoD civilians have served in U.S. Central Command’s area of operations since 2001, officials said. They have served as engineers, logistics specialists, weapons inspectors, administrative specialists, and on provincial reconstruction teams.

“They have demonstrated the value civilians can give to theaters like Iraq and Afghanistan,” Bradshaw said.

Even more opportunities exist now for civilians to serve. As the coalition works to help the Iraqi and Afghan governments to develop their defense ministries, more civilians are needed to serve as advisors to their counterparts, she said.

DoD civilians have a desire to serve, Bradshaw noted. State Department officials asked for help in filling slots in provincial reconstruction teams in Iraq. The solicitation for the 100 slots went throughout DoD, and more than 1,500 civilian employees sent in resumes. This demonstrated many DoD civilians would rise to the occasion to serve if they could, Bradshaw said.

“We filled those jobs, and we saw the increased demand for DoD civilians, yet we did not have an infrastructure to support that,” she said.

To rectify that, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness David S.C. Chu issued a memorandum Feb. 12 titled, “Building Increased Civilian Deployment Capacity.” That memorandum laid the groundwork for the expeditionary civilian workforce and put rules in place.

“The first is, if we advertised a position and a civilian volunteered, then that DoD civilian should be released to serve,” Bradshaw said.

This will be tested as individual augmentee positions, normally filled by servicemembers in Iraq and Afghanistan, begin to be filled by civilians. A total of 157 positions are open.

“Our goal is to get DoD civilians to volunteer for these opportunities,” she said. “At the end of the day, it’s not only good for accomplishing the mission, but [also] for building an individual’s portfolio for the future, [when] this kind of experience will become ever more important.”

The idea is to have a cadre of civilians who can respond to long-term opportunities and to crises such as hurricanes, tsunamis, earthquakes, and so on, she explained.

“We’re creating an infrastructure that can respond to needs around the globe, and that includes civilian capability,” Bradshaw said.

The jobs are temporary assignments with most for a year, but some for six months. Civilians deploying to the region will receive not only cultural and language training, but also force protection training, and must meet medical requirements, she said. When the assignment is over, local installations must ensure civilian employees return to the jobs they left or similar ones.

“One of the objectives when we set up our expeditionary workforce is we need to have a ready, cleared, and trained workforce that can respond on a dime like our military does,” she said.

Garamone writes for American Forces Press Service.

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (OCT. 2, 2008)

Presidential Fellows Program Develops Future DoD Leaders

Gerry J. Gilmore

WASHINGTON—Motivated individuals who want a fast track to executive careers within the Defense Department or at other federal agencies might investigate the Presidential Management Fellows Program.

Career Development

The program's purpose "is to attract to the federal service outstanding men and women from a variety of academic disciplines and career paths who have a clear interest in, and commitment to, excellence in the leadership and management of public policies and programs," President Bush said in a statement on the Office of Personnel Management's Web site explaining the program.

The program was created by Executive Order in 1977, when it was known as the Presidential Management Internship program. The program's name was changed a few years ago.

The Defense Department is among several federal agencies that participate in the PMF program, said Washington Headquarters Services Manager Ken Rauch, PMF coordinator. Successful applicants, he said, serve on paid, two-year assignments.

WHS received 148 applicants for the seven fellowship positions that were available this year, Rauch said. WHS maintains 14 total positions as part of the program. The fellows receive training and other administrative program support.

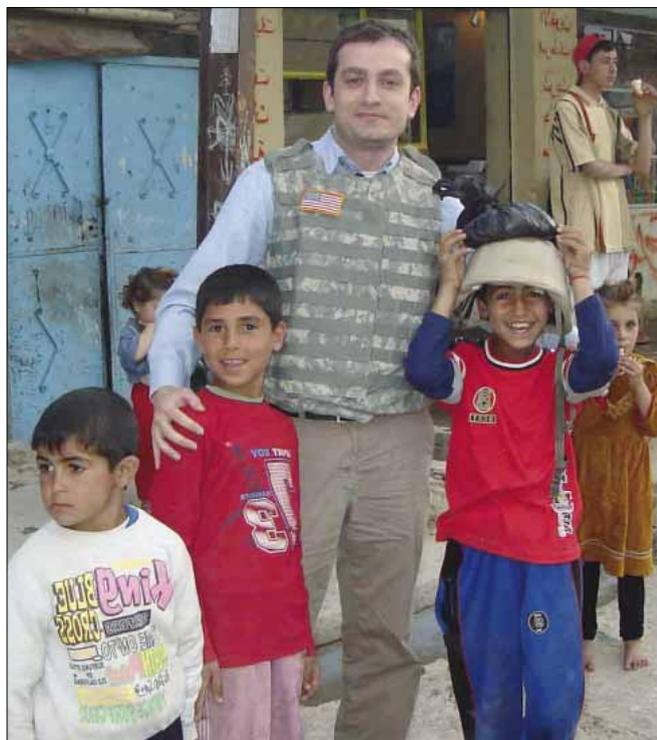
After completing the program, most participants join the federal civil service in functional areas that reflect their expertise, Rauch said, and most stay in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. "The fellowship journeys here at OSD are simply extraordinary, to include direct support to the global war on terrorism," he said.

Some DoD participants, like Ylber Bajraktari and Natalie Howley, volunteer for overseas duty in Iraq or Afghanistan as part of their two years of service.

Bajraktari, 30, obtained his graduate degree at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. A member of the PMF program's class of 2006, he served in Baghdad from February 2007 to February 2008 on the staff of then-Multinational Force Iraq commander Army Gen. David H. Petraeus.

"I cannot say enough good things about the program," said the Kosovo-born Bajraktari, who became a U.S. citizen in 2004. The program, he said, offers challenging assignments, as well as plentiful training opportunities.

Bajraktari was a member of a 20-person joint strategic assessment team during his duty tour in Baghdad. The team, he said, studied how military, economic, political, and diplomatic assets could be best employed to effect stability in and around Baghdad during the surge.



Ylber Bajraktari visits Iraqi children in the city of Tal Afar in northern Iraq. Bajraktari, a participant in the Presidential Management Fellows Program, served a year with Army Gen. David H. Petraeus' staff in Baghdad. Courtesy photo

Surge-fortified U.S. and Iraqi security operations helped to reduce insurgent-committed violence in Baghdad and were a key component that contributed to the surge's success, Bajraktari said. Iraq today "is in a better place" than it was prior to the surge, Bajraktari said. However, he added, the situation in Iraq is still fragile.

Bajraktari earned the Defense Superior Civilian Service Award for his service in Iraq. He plans to join the Middle East section of the Office of the Secretary of Defense's policy shop to put his training and experience to good use.

"I wanted to do public service, and I wanted to work for the government," Bajraktari said in explaining why he applied for the PMF program. And international affairs "never gets boring," he said.

Howley, 27, began the Pentagon's PMF program a year after Bajraktari. Like Bajraktari, she also obtained her graduate degree at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. Now about halfway through the program,

Howley said she's still deciding where she'd like to work in the Defense Department.

Howley also performed overseas service, having served with the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan, from February to May of this year. She received the Global War on Terrorism Medal for her service there. While in Kabul, she worked with Afghan federal officials on Afghan local governance, elections and other issues.

"You do try to connect with the people and make their lives better," Howley, a Frankfort, Ky., native, said of her tour in Afghanistan. Her work in Kabul, she said, was conducted in a balanced way, with the view that Afghanistan is a sovereign nation with its own policies and priorities. "I really enjoyed it, and would go back," Howley said of her assignment in Afghanistan.

Although nominations for the 2009 PMF are now closed, those interested in applying for future PMF assignments can find registration information at <https://www.pmf.opm.gov/howtoapply.aspx>.

Gilmore writes for American Forces Press Service.

AMC Fellows Program

The Army Materiel Command is accepting applications for the AMC Fellows Program, Fellows Class 10, which begins in July 2009. The first set of interviews will occur in January or February 2009. Once participants have completed their graduate degree, they begin a series of rotational, on-the-job training assignments over the next 47 months. In the five-year training period, fellows can expect to advance from GS-7 to GS-13. Further details about the AMC Fellows Program are available in the *Fellows Brochure* at www.amc.army.mil/pa/fellowsbrochure.pdf.

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (OCT. 7, 2008)

AbilityOne Program Provides Jobs for Disabled Veterans

Gerry J. Gilmore

WASHINGTON—The Defense Department is a strong supporter of the federally managed AbilityOne program, which works with private and public groups to provide goods and services to the government and jobs for the blind and other people who have severe disabilities, including wounded veterans.

"As the largest customer of this program, the Department of Defense has a responsibility and a tremendous opportunity to increase support by procuring more goods and services provided by the AbilityOne program," John J. Young Jr.,

under secretary of defense for acquisition, technology and logistics, stated in a March 24 memorandum.

AbilityOne, formerly known as the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act, or JWOD, is administered by the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled—an independent federal agency. More than 1,300 wounded military veterans are part of the program's 43,000-strong workforce, according to a DoD news release. The Defense Department is the program's largest customer, the release said, as it purchases more than \$1.3 billion in goods and services each year, including laundry services, uniforms, office supplies, and grounds maintenance.

Work contracts arranged through the AbilityOne program provide most of the chemical-protection coats and pants used by U.S. servicemembers. Skilcraft-brand office supplies found across the federal government also are part of the AbilityOne program.

President Bush, in a White House document dated Feb. 11, stated that the AbilityOne program "has taken steps to embrace successful business practices, including e-commerce and performance-based contracting." The program, he said, provides work for tens of thousands of disabled Americans employed at more than 600 community-based nonprofit organizations.

The AbilityOne program can trace its roots to the passage of the Wagner-O'Day Act of 1938, sponsored by Sen. Robert F. Wagner and U.S. Rep. Caroline O'Day. This legislation mandated that the federal government purchase brooms, mops, and other items provided by nonprofit agencies employing people who are blind. The Wagner-O'Day Act was expanded in 1971 through the efforts of Sen. Jacob Javits. The resultant legislation, known as the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act, permits nonprofit agencies serving people with other severe disabilities in addition to blindness to participate in the JWOD program and authorized nonprofit agencies to provide not only supplies, but also services to the federal government.

The executive-branch Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, the National Industries for the Blind, and NISH, formerly known as National Industries for the Severely Handicapped, form a triad of support for JWOD, whose name was changed to AbilityOne by the U.S. Congress in 2006.

Gilmore writes for American Forces Press Service.

AIR FORCE MATERIEL COMMAND NEWS RELEASE
(OCT. 28, 2008)

Air Force Materiel Command's Top Civilian Outlines Goals

John Scaggs

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio—After one month on the job, Air Force Materiel Command's top civilian is working with the Pentagon and other agencies on establishing a clear civilian development model.

It is one of several priorities for Dr. Steve Butler, a member of the Senior Executive Service and the executive director for AFMC, which is headquartered at Wright-Patterson AFB. Creating the model is tied to the makeup of AFMC. Civilians comprise more than 70 percent of the command's work force of 77,000—the highest percentage among all Air Force major commands—and AFMC employs 40 percent of the total number of Air Force civilians.

Consequently, Butler said that AFMC will lead the way in establishing civilian leadership roles and developing its people.

"Much of this will occur within the next year," Butler said. "I hope to create a command-wide process to encourage and enhance opportunities for civilians to gain broader experience at their home centers and make it easier for civilians to move to other geographic locations. We will continue to aggressively push for additional acquisition resources and training for our people."

As the civilian deputy to Gen. Bruce Carlson, AFMC commander, Butler occupies a position equivalent to a lieutenant general. His role involves providing counsel on a variety of topics and dealing with union issues.

"For example, I advise General Carlson on acquisition issues relating to our mission to buy major weapon systems like the F-22 for the Air Force," Butler explained. "As an engineer, I advise him on science and engineering issues, to include how to recruit new scientists and engineers so the Air Force stays on the technical leading edge."

"Additionally, I lead the development of our civilian workforce and partner with the unions that represent our workers," he said. "I plan to meet with union leaders and continue the great work by my predecessor to value the contributions of our unions and to partner with them for success."

Butler said that AFMC's leaders recognize the demands on civilian leadership and the need for more deliberate development of the civilian workforce.

Scaggs writes for Air Force Materiel Command Public Affairs.

OSD RELEASES SYSTEMS ENGINEERING GUIDE FOR SYSTEMS OF SYSTEMS (SEPTEMBER 2008)

The *Systems Engineering Guide for Systems of Systems*, published by the offices of the director, systems and software engineering, the deputy under secretary of defense for acquisition and technology, and the under secretary of defense for acquisition, technology and logistics, addresses SE considerations to meet capability needs through integrating independently useful systems into a larger system that delivers unique capabilities—a system of systems—within the Department of Defense.

Drawing from the lessons of current SoS SE practitioners, the guide is intended to provide a resource for systems engineers who are supporting SoS work, particularly as part of an SE team for an SoS.

Following development of the initial draft in 2006, a pilot phase was conducted to solicit input from practitioners across DoD on the approaches employed by their teams to conduct SE in their SoS environments. Data from these reviews, along with information from case studies conducted as part of the initial draft of the guide, provide the basis for this document.

In addition, research teams active in areas related to SoS SE provided input to this version of the guide. These teams provided feedback on the draft guide and input based on the results of their research as it applies to the guide's contents.

Finally, several panels were held with the International Council on Systems Engineering, and a workshop was held with industry representatives under the auspices of the National Defense Industrial Association SE Division. Other industry representatives, including Aerospace Industries Association, participated in the guide review process.

The results and experiences of SE practitioners were emphasized in this version of the guide since they most closely represent the perspective, circumstances, and concerns of the guide's primary target audience. The views of the research community and industry have been critically important in understanding the limits of this version with respect to the broader areas of SoS SE and in assessing the alignment of views between SoS SE practitioners and researchers.

Download the guide at www.acq.osd.mil/sse/docs/se-guide-for-sos.pdf.