

**DoDEA
Human Resources
Regional Service Center**

January 2009 NSPS Pay Adjustments

The NSPS January pay changes consist of:

1. Performance-based payouts in the form of base salary increases, bonuses, or a combination of both
2. An NSPS general salary increase of 1.74%, which is equal to 60% of the General Schedule increase
3. An increase to local market supplements (LMS) equal to the increases to General Schedule locality pay rates.

Payouts are effective on January 4, 2009, and will be included in the paycheck received on January 23. Employees who receive a final rating of record of “3” or higher are eligible for performance-based payouts.

General Salary Increase

The NSPS general salary increase is an across-the-board salary adjustment for NSPS employees who are rated “2” or higher under the NSPS performance management system. The amount of this increase is 60% of the government-wide General Schedule pay increase for Federal employees. For 2009, the General Schedule increase is set at 2.9 percent (not including increases to locality rates). Of this percentage:

- 60 percent—or 1.74 percent—is designated for increases to base salaries and paid to NSPS employees who receive a rating of record of 2 or higher.
- 40 percent—or 1.16 percent—is allocated to performance pay pool funds and distributed through the pay pool panel process as performance-based salary increases.

Local Market Supplements

NSPS employees receive local market supplements based on the General Schedule locality pay rates. The increases to these local market supplements will mirror the General Schedule locality increases and be paid to employees with a performance rating of 2 or higher. For 2009, the overall average increase to General Schedule locality rates is 1 percent, but an employee’s actual increase depends on his/her duty location. In the Washington D.C. area the LMS for 2009 is 23.10%.

For more information on compensation, performance management and other NSPS subjects, please visit the DoDEA NSPS web page at <http://www.dodea.edu/nsps/index.cfm> or the DoD NSPS web page at <http://www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps>.

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Welcome to 2009!

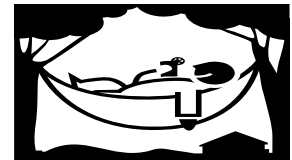
The Human Resources Service Center would like to thank you for all your hard work, commitment, and devotion to DoDEA over this past year. There have been many changes and many challenges, and 2009 should be a year of many new challenges and opportunities to excel. We are proud to serve the employees and managers of the world’s greatest school system.

FERS Annuity Supplement

The FERS Annuity Supplement is a monthly annuity benefit paid until age 62 to certain FERS employees. The benefit is paid by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and is in addition to the regular monthly FERS benefit.

To be eligible for the FERS Annuity Supplement employees:

1. Must be under age 62 and retire on a non-disability, immediate annuity (not a Deferred Retirement).
2. Must be eligible for one of the following types of retirement:
 - Voluntary Retirement without any reduction for age (i.e., Minimum Retirement Age (MRA) with 30yrs of service, age 60 with 20yrs of service)
 - Involuntary or “Early-Out” Retirement (upon attaining the MRA). Employees retiring early or involuntary who have not reached their MRA will not be eligible to begin receiving the FERS Annuity Supplement until they reach their MRA.
4. The service credited under the FERS component must include at least one full calendar year (beginning January 1 and ending December 31).of civilian service.
5. If you transfer to FERS from CSRS, you must have at least one full calendar year of FERS covered service to qualify for the supplement.
6. If your earnings from wages or self-employment exceed the Social Security annual exempt amount, your FERS Annuity Supplement will be reduced or stopped. This means that if you retire under FERS before age 62 and work after retirement, you may lose part or all of the FERS Annuity Supplement depending on the amount of your earnings after retirement.



TRAINING TIDBITS

Cancellation of Training Event

The SF-182 has been submitted, you are registered and have received your Career Development Notification Memorandum; your event has been confirmed. Then something happens and you are unable to attend. What should you do?

If for any reason you cannot participate in a confirmed training event, immediately notify the Human Resources Development (HRD) Section and your supervisor. HRD can help you reschedule, arrange to send a substitute, or cancel your registration. By notifying HRD, we can ensure that your training funds are not lost and you do not incur unnecessary costs to the government and/or to you.

A friendly reminder, the money you save on an event is funds that can be used later by you or by a fellow employee.

If you have any questions on cancelling, rescheduling or sending a substitute to a confirmed training event, contact your Human Resource Development Specialists at 703-588-3801.

2009 TSP and TSP Catch-Up Contributions

For 2009, the annual maximum contribution to a regular TSP account is \$16,500 (a \$1,000 increase from 2008). FERS employees should use caution in determining the amount you will contribute each pay period. If your contribution reaches the \$16,500 maximum before the end of the year, both your contributions and agency matching contributions will be suspended for the remainder of the year.

The first pay date for 2009 TSP contributions will occur on January 9, 2009. If your 2009 TSP election was not effective on December 21, 2008, and you want to maximize your contributions based on the IRS Annual Deferral Limit you will need to adjust your contribution amount based on the remaining number of paychecks you expect to receive in 2009.

To determine the maximum amount you should contribute each pay period, you can use the online calculator available on the TSP website <http://www.tsp.gov/calc/contributions/index.html>

You may access EBIS at <https://hq-w3.dodea.edu/>. Elections are made through EBIS and transmitted electronically to payroll alleviating the need for you to complete an election form.

For additional information on the Thrift Savings Plan visit the TSP website at www.tsp.gov.

2009 TSP Catch-Up Contributions

To be eligible to make catch-up contributions, you must be able to certify that you will make (or have made) the maximum regular employee contributions of \$16,500 by the end of 2009. Both CSRS and FERS employees must contribute the full \$16,500.

Catch-up contributions are additional tax-deferred contributions. They are not the same as regular TSP contributions. They are in addition to regular contributions. Catch-up contributions have their own annual limit separate from the IRS elective deferral limit for regular TSP contributions. For 2009, the TSP Catch-Up elective deferral limit is \$5,500.

Although, the last date an election can be accepted for 2009 was December 5, 2009. You can start, change, or stop your catch-up contributions for 2009 at any time.

If you need further assistance with making your election through EBIS, please contact your local Human Resources Representative, email the DoDEA HQ Benefits Unit at Benefits@hq.dodea.edu or call the Benefits Unit directly at 703-588-3981, Commercial or DSN 425-3981.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Chances are you've heard about the Federal Occupational Health (FOH) Employee Assistance Program – known as "EAP." But, have you really "heard" about EAP and how it can help you?

In the past, the term "EAP" has been associated with substance abuse counseling. Today, the program offers advice and assistance to help employees cope with a variety of situations.

EAP services include free, voluntary, short-term counseling and referral for various issues such as mental and emotional well-being, alcohol and other substance abuse, stress, grief, family problems, and psychological disorders. EAP counselors work in a consultative role to help address employee and organizational challenges and needs. EAP also assists organizations in preventing and coping with workplace violence, trauma, and other emergency response situations.

"The EAP Program goes well beyond substance abuse counseling," said Kimber Polley, Human Resources Specialist for DoDEA. "Most of us are unaware of all of the services that are available to us," she added. Polley knows first-hand how EAP can help beyond the traditional substance abuse programs it's most known for. Polley's father passed away

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) - continued

in December, 2006. EAP referred her to a legal professional to assist with estate issues. The law office subsequently assisted with some of the administrative paperwork that accompanies the death of a loved one for a reduced price.

In addition, employees can be referred for other legal services such as a healthcare power of attorney, living wills, family law, car accidents, identity theft, small claims court issues, and traffic violations. Financial service referrals include car buying, debt elimination, family budgeting, savings and investment strategies, home buying, college planning, and retirement.

On January 22, DoDEA will have an onsite counselor at 4040 N. Fairfax, 1st Floor Conference Room from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm. Please call the EAP at 1-800-222-0364 to schedule an appointment for that day.

In an attempt to expand EAP awareness in DoDEA, Polley is also planning a series of events for 2009 for DoDEA Headquarters employees. In December, she coordinated a brown bag lunch on Managing Holiday Stress, which gave employees a preview of future seminars. The next brown bag lunch seminar will be in February and is titled "Balancing Work and Family."

With all that EAP has to offer, it's easy to see that it's not the "same old EAP" anymore! Please dial 1-800-222-0364 or log onto www.FOH4you.com for more information.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What information should I have available when I call the EAP?

It helps to have your home and work addresses, telephone numbers, and zip codes available when you call. Be specific regarding the Federal agency name and division for which you work. This information is used to locate a counselor convenient to you. In addition you will be asked for a contact number to verify appointments, your date of birth, and pay grade level. The information provided helps us to differentiate you from another employee who might have the same name.

2. Is the information I provide protected?

Yes. All of this data is protected and is only shared with those who will be providing services to you. If for some reason you are uncomfortable providing this information, we will assist you to the best of our ability without the information

3. How will I be connected to an EAP Counselor?

If you decide to see a counselor, the Customer Service Associate (CSA) will personally connect you with an EAP counselor's office so that you can schedule an appointment.

4. Where are the EAP Counselors' offices located?

Many government buildings have FOH EAP counselors on site. Services are confidential and the EAP is independent from the agency. In addition to the on site counselors, there is a wide network of EAP counselors across the country that provides services in private offices. The CSA will work with you to locate a counselor that is convenient for you.

5. After my initial call, will I receive a follow-up call?

Yes. As a courtesy to our employees, FOH will place a follow-up call a few days after the initial request for services to see if there were any difficulties scheduling an appointment. If you were unable to successfully schedule an appointment, a Follow-Up Specialist from FOH will assist you in getting an appointment. You do not need to wait for a follow-up call if you are experiencing any difficulties. At any time do not hesitate to call 1-800-222-0364 for immediate assistance.