

USDA Labor Management Forum

April 24, 2013 Minutes

Draft

I. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

The USDA Labor-Management Forum Meeting was called to order at 1:05 p.m.

Member Roll Call:

Labor and Designated Alternates:	Management and Designated Alternates:
Steve Hollis, AFGE	Dan Kline, DM-OHRM, Management Co-Chair
Chris Berry, NFFE	Dr. Gregory Parham, ASA
Eve Epstein, NTEU	Robin Heard, ASA
Joey Gonzalez, NFFE	William P. Milton, Jr., DM
Jim Triebwasser, NAAE	Bryan Knowles, DM
Rachel Nelson, AFSA	Steve Placek, NAD
Clay Combes, AFGE	Marilyn Holland, APHIS
Marcus Washington, AFSCME	Edna Primrose, RD
Cynthia C. Ross, NAPPQOSE	Gayle Barry-Norman, NRCS
Christopher Ketner, AFSCME	Neha, Hewitt, OGC
Stephanie Droke, NAPPQOSE	Robin Bailey, FNCS
	Jacqueline Myers, FSIS

Other Attendees: Oscar Gonzalez-OSEC, Curt Wiley-ASA, Chris Nelson-OSEC, Cheryl Cook, Todd Batta-OSEC, Jamie Wadzink-OSEC, Lisa Wilusz-OBPA, Carlissia Graham-OSEC, Sue Bussells-OCIO, Mika Cross-OHRM, Pat Farmer,-FSA, Frank McDonough-FNS, Shelli Moore-NRCS, Dianna Parker-NFC, Jody Holstrom-FSIS, Jocelyn Somers-AFGE, Candy Thompson-FSA, Trina Liddell-AFSCME, Shantelle Gordon-AFSCME, Melissa Baumann-NFFE, Laverne Walker-AFSCME, Kellie Upshaw-FSIS,

Note Taker(s): Francesca Yabraian/Myron Greenhow

II. DISCUSSION

Introduction: The **USDA CHCO William P. (Billy) Milton, Jr.**, called the quarterly meeting to order and introduced the Assistant Secretary for Administration Dr. Gregory Parham, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration Curt Wiley, among others, before turning the meeting over to the co-chairs' **Dan Kline and Steve Hollis**. **Dan** requested a motion to accept the minutes if there were no objections to them. **Billy** made a motion to accept the minutes and requested a second. **Edna Primrose** seconded the motion. The minutes were accepted.

Update on the Blueprint for Stronger Service: **Chris Nelson** opened with talking about the greater role DAMs will play in moving the ASP forward. He emphasized the need for support from the labor organizations to become more involved; "we want to make sure we partner with

them,” shared **Chris**. Chris informed the Forum that today it would be briefed on four initiatives being undertaken:

- 1) Space Management
- 2) Worker Compensation
- 3) Strategic Sourcing
- 4) Marketing Place

Presentations were made by **Robin Bailey, Jacqueline Myers, Lisa Wilusz, and Todd Batta**.

Robin briefed the Forum on the Department’s efforts to develop cost savings in the utilization of space management. He noted that USDA spends over 500 million annually in space cost. A recent GSA study revealed that only 40% of available space is being utilized. The goal is making USDA an employer of choice. USDA would like to maximize telework. The IPT that is being stood up to work on this initiative will determine how effective we are in space utilization. To date, the Department has identified savings of \$5 million dollars a year in savings on space within the Forest Service alone.

One idea **Robin** offered is finding a way to dissolve the Central Rent Account. **Steve Hollis** noted the continued resistance maintained by some agencies local management toward granting increased telework; he asked what the Department will do to educate management of this concern. **Steve** further asked if the Department intends to appropriate more computers. **Eve Epstein** asked about the space studies timeline. **Robin** noted that the Office of Operations is presently conducting studies and it is hoped the results will be available the middle of May. **Trina Liddell** asked if the results would be shared with Labor. **Robin** indicated affirmatively that it would.

Jackie Myers gave the next presentation on Workers Compensation. She expressed the need for increased safety and health on the job. She emphasized that Workers Compensation is being viewed with the mindset of case assessment, return to work and the OWCP e-system. She indicated that USDA spent \$70 million in 2012. **Jackie** believes that a 12 – 15% savings can be realized in overall cost. She indicated that there are presently 17 ways being employed in USDA for addressing return to work. The goal is one system throughout USDA; OWCP-E System makes the process more efficient and effective. Currently RD, FS and APHIS will implementing within their agency and transitioned by Aug 2017.

The goal is developing one central manner of dealing with this for USDA. She acknowledged there is presently no system in place for capturing safety and health issues within USDA. Regarding Health and Safety, **Steve** wanted to know if the initial concern will be prevention. Jackie acknowledged Steve’s idea was a good one, but beyond the present scope of the IPT addressing workers compensation. **Melissa Baumann** indicated that labor is interested in knowing if a shift in focus occurs and if there is a present labor representative assigned to the IPT. **Steve** reiterated the same concern. **Steve** pointed out that **Melvin Hawkins** had been assigned to represent Labor in the ABIC, but had not received updates noting recent meetings

or accomplishments due to other matters. **Chris** acknowledged **Melvin's** participation. **Steve** asked if there were ABIC meeting minutes.

Lisa Wilusz provided the Forum a briefing on Strategic Sourcing. Lisa emphasized the need for strategic sourced contracts throughout USDA. She noted a savings of \$1.5 million dollars achieved in the efforts to strategic source the NFC mail services. Further, with USDA's switch to UPS, the Department realizes a savings of \$3.2 million a year. Lisa made an example of Adobe Licensing that could be eliminated where there is no need for the software licensing.

Lisa maintains that the Department intends to take a holistic approach to sourcing. She expressed her interest in obtaining Labor's participation in the IPT. She noted that the Department has established a thermometer with a goal of \$250 million a year in savings attained through strategic sourcing.

Chris again extended an opportunity to the labor representatives to participate in upcoming and ongoing initiatives to improve and streamline services through the **Blueprint**.

Robin interjected the next meeting time for the space management IPT would be Tuesday at 3 p.m. for those that may be interested in knowing.

Todd Batta gave the fourth briefing. **Todd** briefed the Forum of the Department's ongoing efforts to avoid Furloughs. He share that this began with the Sequester's implementation on March 1st. He noted that impacts differ agency to agency. The Continuing Resolution was signed on March 26, 2013 which noted a bill for five departments, Agriculture was one of them. Furloughs were anticipated for FSA, RD and FSIS. FSIS received additional funding thanks to reallocation of funding approval by Congress. Another request was presented to the Congress recently; we think it will receive a positive outcome. **Todd** shared that he realizes this is frustrating, but is quite confident the outcome will be positive. **Steve** questioned that Sequestration is supposed to be across the board, so why does it seem to be only FSA. Todd responded that FSIS did receive additional funding and RD was scaled back 18%. **Steve** asked what about everyone else? Todd shared that every agency was subjected to 5.1% reduction; what we did not originally anticipate was the need to absorb and additional 2.7%.

Steve passes out copies of the AFGE's Paper by Law Professor Charles Tiefer, entitled, "Reducing Spending on Service Contracts in Order to Comply with Sequestration;" he wants to make sure everyone present gets a copy of the paper.

Chris Berry shared his concerns that information was not being shared to address furloughs in a timely fashion. **Oscar Gonzalez** stated that Secretary Vilsack is doing everything he can to work with labor and management in disseminating timely information. If there has been any disconnects we apologize for it. We ask for your continued patience; as **Todd** has indicated we expect a positive outcome. **Chris** replied that he hears two messages, "we want to share, but we can't until we hear from the White House." **Oscar** offered that if there are any specific instances that **Chris** can share that he would like to know about them.

Melissa noted that what she's hearing is there is nothing to share; but management is communicating information to USDA. **Dr. Parham** expressed his appreciation to **Melissa** noting it is an important point. He noted that we are not the only Department in the federal government being effected. However, we are sharing as much information as we can as often as we can.

Pre-decisional Involvement of HSPD-12 Implementation: **Cheryl Cook** gave the Forum a briefing based on the provided HSPD-12 handout. **Cheryl** shared that there are three standing requirements for the use of the PIV card and that USDA has named its version of the PIV card, Lincpass. Cheryl noted some of the benefits of using the Lincpass include, ease of use; reduced Helpdesk Support; increased security; and the ability to digitally sign email and documents.

- In **2008**: USDA issued Departmental Regulation DR3170-001, which requires all newly purchased desktops and laptops to be equipped with a FIPS 201 compliant PIV card reader. Additionally appendix B section 23.0 states ***"All employees and contractors who have been provisioned with a LincPass must use it to access USDA networks."***
- **2009**: USDA issued Departmental Regulation DR4620-002, which established the general requirements for a common Federal identification system.
- **2011**: USDA issued Departmental Regulation DR3640 – 001, also requires USDA internal users to use the PIV for logical computer access.

Cheryl noted the initiative is multidisciplinary, requiring cooperation and collaboration between many functional areas, including IT, HR, Physical Security, Finance, Procurement and Senior USDA Leadership and will require a phased approach. To ensure the success of this cross-functional effort, USDA will name a senior project manager to lead it. **Curt Wiley**, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration, has been named Executive Sponsor for this effort.

A mechanism to track and report actual PIV usage for network access is being implemented and a PIV usage baseline is being established. **USDA's goal is 50% by the end of FY13.** As part of phase one, employees will be instructed to use their PIV cards for logical access but will not be technically prevented from alternate password access to prevent significant interruptions in continuity of operations.

Due to the distributed nature of workstation support in USDA, the second phase—technical enforcement of PIV card usage—will require a planning team comprised of representatives from USDA agencies, line offices, security, and other functional areas to ensure all known technical and human resource issues are mitigated and a cohesive enterprise solution is developed. USDA will establish a tiger team to develop a detailed technical implementation plan for PIV enforcement that adheres to the OMB mandate. The team will also address alternate two-factor mechanisms to deal with cases where employees do not have access to a working PIV card or card reader for various reasons.

Melissa indicated that the IPT working the HSPD-12 initiatives have included three representatives from Labor **Randy Meyer-NFFE**, **Mike DePiro-NTEU**, and herself. This IPT was stood up in 2011 and have addressed a number of HSPD-12 initiatives on both the logical and physical access side.

Chris Berry indicated that the Forest Service has small buildings all over the country. **Cheryl** noted, “so, do I have a different expectation for two employees versus everyone else, perhaps; but one expectation for all.” We have indicated to OMB that we would have 50% by the end of the year. **Chris** asked about the cost of full implementation. **Melissa** indicated that full enrollment has been a problem in Forest Service. **Cheryl** shared that light activation stations which are mobile serve this purpose for field employees. **Steve** indicated that leaving his PIV card in the laptop has been his problem; “have you come up with an alarm for those that do?”

Cheryl noted the two pending initiatives that will soon be taken up in the Department, the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) and the..... **Billy** noted to the Forum that **Cheryl** has a meeting with the LR staff tomorrow; can we ensure the information gets out to the unions tomorrow? **Dan** indicated this is his intention.

(The Forum took a break for approximately 15 minutes; the meeting resumed at 2:50 p.m.)

USDA Wellness Program: **Billy** introduced **Mika Cross**; **Mika** gave a briefing on the Wellness Program in USDA. She pointed out that the Wellness Program would be drafting a Comprehensive “Health and Wellness Departmental Regulation; developing a robust Wellness Campaign for 2013-2014 and establishing nationwide Wellness Ambassadors. Its goal will be to promote work place health and wellness; provide policy and resource information; and identify grass root employees to assist in promotion. **Mika** noted that some states have already begun adopting some form of Wellness Program. Below is an example, but not all inclusive, of observances the Department will highlight in 2013:

- April – Stress Awareness Month
- May – Employee Health & Fitness Month
- June – National Employee Wellness Month
- July – Injury Prevention & Safety Month
- August – National Immunization Awareness Month
- September – National Cholesterol Education Month
- October – National Work & Family Month
- November – American Diabetes Month
- December – Safe Toys & Gifts Month

Mika closed letting the Forum know they can remain informed by going to the USDA Connect website for the latest information on the Wellness Program. **Billy** thanked **Mika** for her presentation and moved the meeting on to the PDI Workshop.

Pre-decisional Involvement Workshop: **Dan Kline** informed the Forum of a pending new requirement to report PDI on a quarterly basis under the newly established PDI metric. He pointed out in previous meetings there was an effort to establish two workgroups in support of this initiative, one to determine what the measure will be and the other to determine the benefits of measuring PDI. Notably, **Dan** pointed out the efforts to revise the Forums' Charter resulted in no modifications by reason of a lack of response. When an offer to participate went out for volunteers, three responded or were identified. They were **Jacqueline Myers, Terrence Johns** and **Steve Hollis**. **Dan** noted that the team wanted to ensure management understood that PDI is available for all topics. The parties can agree when something is off the table. The revised document (provided to Forum electronically) communicates expectations. The document has yet to be finalized. The acceptance of PDI accomplishments from LROs will no longer be accepted; the accomplishments must be acknowledged by the unions. **Steve Hollis** wanted to know if this would take the place of the PDI Guidance developed in 2010. **Billy** informed the Forum that the Secretary's ultimate goal is 100%, but 90% is believed attainable for the present year. **Dan** emphasized this expectation is for all forums within USDA.

Steve wanted to know what percentage of 7106 (a) initiatives management engaged in PDI for the year. **Dan** noted the challenge under Executive Order 13522 assumes the parties have a charter and guidance document for PDI. The parties have a clear understanding for engagement in PDI and what topics are can and will not be subject to PDI. **Steve** agreed that it's important to have an understanding at all levels of what PDI is and is not. **Dan** agreed; this is always what we have maintained. He acknowledges that everything is potentially subject to PDI; but he notes there is no present enforcement mechanism. **Billy** reaffirmed that any new initiatives must be offered as PDI to Labor. **Steve** emphasized that no office can anticipate all initiatives that may occur during the year. **Billy** agreed with **Steve**. **Dan** likewise agreed, but offered that at least the parties are engaged in PDI and the identification of those opportunities to PDI.

Chris Berry wanted to know if only things that are driven by the Forum are eligible for PDI. **Billy** shared that it could come from anywhere. We're not trying to limit PDI. **Steve** wanted to know what others thought about negotiating PDI through their local forum. **Dan** proffered that PDI is not negotiations; nor does it take the place of negotiations.

Billy wanted to know what the workgroup saw as a timeframe for finalizing the PDI draft requirement documents. **Dan** suggested two weeks from today in time for the next Forum quarterly meeting. **Steve** agreed. At this point, **Robin Bailey** asked **Billy** if this was going to be forced on agencies despite whether the parties agree they are doing enough for PDI. **Billy** said, "no." **Dan** clarified that it does require a joint submission and all forums will be required to submit. LROs were submitting documentation unilaterally; the results of these submissions were disputed by the effected labor organizations. **Robin** followed up with wanting to know who is acting as the arbiter over any disagreements. **Billy** responded, "OHRM." **Steve** chimed, "... or this Forum." **Billy** reiterated, "OHRM."

Confirmation of Meeting Dates: The Forum confirmed the next quarterly meeting for July 25, 2013. There was also agreement to hold an ad hoc teleconference call on June 12, 2013 to address revisions to the developed PDI reporting draft.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

DRAFT