



Building Rural America
National Association of Credit Specialists
of the
USDA – Farm Service Agency
Management/Personnel Committee

THE MANAGEMENT/PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MET AT THE DETROIT MARRIOTT AT THE RENAISSANCE CENTER HOTEL IN DETROIT, MICHIGAN ON JUNE 18, 2012 TO REVIEW RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED BY THE MEMBERSHIP.

THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTIONS ARE RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION:

Resolution 1

CONCERN: Empower is designed to be a full service site for employees and supervisors to access information on their positions and the on those that they supervise. Employees who log into Empower are unable to see position descriptions. Page 1 is completed with required information. Item 25 Description of Major Duties and Responsibilities is blank. The Position Description is not included.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: Accurate Position Descriptions for all employees should be included on Empower.

Resolution 2

CONCERN: 5PM Par 22 C Identifying Performance Elements states that when identifying performance elements, the elements should be reflected in the employee's official position description and encompass the position's major duties and responsibilities. As an FLM, my performance element on supervision includes standards on hiring that are required by the department. My position description contains nothing about hiring responsibilities and with the state being considered over staffed it does not appear that hiring will be done during the rating period. Regulations tell us and we are trained that the performance plan should match the position yet the department does not act accordingly.

PROPOSED SOLUTION:

1. The position description should be updated to accurately reflect what the employee does.
2. The Performance Plan and Position Description should match.
3. The performance plan should not include activities that the employee does not participate in.
(how do you achieve something you do not do)

Resolution 3

CONCERN: For 6 months my FLO spent more than 50% of his time detailed to another office. ARS has no provisions to capture detailed work so the work done during details results in inaccurate information

recorded for the employee's home duty station.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: ARS provide a category for work done during details or other work done in your home office that is assigned from another office. We request a notice/clarification on how to properly allocate work hours to the proper office.

Resolution 4

CONCERN: There are times when telework could be allowed as FLP work is not always face to face. RD allows the loan approval offices to be approved for core telework schedules. FLP approval offices have similar customer facing duties.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: Allow FLP field employees to qualify for core telework if approved by their supervisor and review official.

Resolution 5

CONCERN: Currently, we are required to use USA Jobs for filling vacancies (i.e. hiring FLOTs). Managers get stacks of applications to wade through that have neither production agriculture experience nor any formal training in an agriculture field. The present screening questionnaire gives a higher value to someone with work experience, any work experience, over a person with an agriculture degree. For example, a person working in a nursing home or a welfare office will make a register and displace an individual with a 4 year degree in Agriculture Economics.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: The evaluation system/questionnaires should be changed so that persons with education, training and/or experience in agriculture make the list of referred candidates for consideration.

Resolution 6

CONCERN: We routinely receive mail from the St. Louis Finance Office which has been mailed in a large white envelope at the cost of \$1.00 or more. The contents will be only a regular white envelope with 1 or 2 documents in it which could have been mailed for \$0.45.

PROPOSED SOLUTION:

1. Scan and email document to county office
2. Do not use the large envelope.

Resolution 7

CONCERN: 1-EQ indicates that the Environmental Coordinator will certify that FLOT's have completed Environmental Training; however there is no Environmental module. We realize that there are differences between the states regarding environmental requirements however; the core material is universal. It is essential that FLOTs have a good grounding of agency environmental requirements as they begin their career.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: Add training module to address core environmental requirements to the training program.

THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTIONS ARE RECOMMENDED FOR NON ADOPTION:

Resolution 8

CONCERN: CEDs automatically change all single deceased borrower addresses to the FP County Office Address. This Practice is done supposedly to prevent COC Election Ballots from being sent to deceased persons. Unfortunately if this person happens to be a FLP borrower, the Executor/Administrator is left in the dark about payments due and year end statements and the failure to keep payments current on the FLP loans makes any eligible relative not able to pursue the transfer and assumption process on remaining FSA debt and assets securing same.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: CEDs be required to find out who the Executor/Administrator of all single deceased farmers and change the SCIMS address to that person. FP regulations and software be amended to allow CEDs to exclude ineligible farm operations/operators from receiving COC Election Ballots by some other means than just having all of the deceased's USDA mail sent to the FP COF by a SCIMS address change.

REASON FOR NOT ADOPT: This appears to be a local issue and not a national issue. There are guides on how to handle these situations.

Resolution 9

CONCERN: Persons on Maxi-Flex are allowed to come in early and work credit hours so they can build up annual leave by the end of the year. They use the credit hours instead of annual leave then get the SED to approve carry over annual leave. I know this because it just happened in my office. The CED gets the COC to sign a blanket authorization to accrue credit hours anytime the CED deems necessary. There is almost nothing going on program wise in this office that can possibly justify this abuse of leave. When this concern is mentioned the answer is well, that is a supervisory issue. Since this has been going on for years, one could assume by now that this is a nationwide issue and is costing some money, especially when this person retires and gets paid for his annual leave.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: Establish better controls on earning credit hours.

REASON FOR NOT ADOPT: There are controls in procedures in place to address approval and use of credit hours. We support the use of credit hours as an effective tool to compensate employees for work completed. This appears to be an issue best addressed by the supervisor or state administrative staff.

Respectfully submitted by the 2011/2012 Management Committee

Clif Rasmussen, UT, Zone A

Jason McMillin, TX, Zone B

Greg Koerner, Chairman, OH, Zone C

Jamelda Futon, MS, Zone D