

USAWC employees learn about NSPS results

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Jan. 9, 2009 – After a year of tracking accomplishments, writing and re-writing objectives and assessments, it was finally time to find out the results of the 2008 National Security Personnel System at the Army War College.

More than 60 employees who gathered for a town hall meeting on Jan. 8 in Bliss Hall to learn about the results of the pay pool across the college and what their payouts were calculated. Col. Bobby Towery, USAWC chief of staff, reviewed the results and answered a few dozen questions.

Many questions were about how this pay increase compared to the one they would have received under the previous General Schedule system. Several people later indicated that they still had questions about how their personal salary has changed and why.

The NSPS payout consists of:

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

Under the previous General Schedule system, employees would have received a 2.9 percent salary increase and the percent local market supplement increase. Under NSPS, employees will receive 1.74 percent of the salary increase, and the 1 percent local market supplement. The remaining 1.16 percent of the salary increase was distributed to the NSPS pay pool for bonuses and salary increases.

Towery also explained that the NSPS process was one he felt was equitable and fair and was designed to make sure there were checks and balances to make sure employees were treated fairly.

"Each of the assessments was looked at multiple times at multiple levels," he said. "Every evaluation was also looked at during the final pay pool, regardless of the rating.

"I personally looked at every evaluation," he said.

Under NSPS, employees receive a final rating of 1-5, with 5 being the highest. The ratings were determined by looking at both the employee and rater assessment.

Each share was worth 2.009 percent of an employees' salary. For the USAWC, the final rating count was a follows:

- Five employees received a rating of 2
- 164 employees received a rating of 3
- 52 employees received a rating of 4
- Two employees received a rating of 5

The ratings will determine the number of shares an employee received as part of the pay pool. The shares could either be distributed to an employee as a salary increase or bonus. For one share, the payout was comprised of a 52.5 percent salary increase and a 47.5 bonus. For two shares, it was an 87.5 salary increase and a 12.5 percent bonus. For three to five shares, it was a 100 percent salary increase.

Rating Level	If Average Rating is:	Then Number of shares is:
5	4.76-5.00	6 shares
5	4.51-4.75	5 shares
4	4.00-4.50	4 shares
4	3.51-3.99	3 shares
3	3.00-3.50	2 shares
3	2.51-2.99	1 share
2	2.00-2.50	0 shares

The pay pool also shared some lessons learned for the employees to use in preparing for the next pay pool.

For objectives:

- Ensure objectives are clear and measurable with qualitative and quantifiable expectations based on industry standard, historical data or regulatory guidance.
- Identify and eliminate redundancies in objectives; consider combining similar objectives.
- Consider carefully the number of objectives. General rule of thumb is two to three. More than three often meant splitting an objective into two objectives that were not really supportable as two distinct objectives.
- Make sure the objectives encompass all of the employee's duties.
- Carefully consider the weighting of each objective.
- Consider the number of contributing factors. Again, less is better, choose one or two.
- Required job skills should not be contributing factors.
- Write objectives so a third party (pay pool panel) can understand.

For employee self-assessments:

- Employee should 'sell' him / herself - Write for the pay pool panel as well as the rater.
- Explain what was accomplished, how well it was accomplished, and the impact it had for the mission or organization during the rating period only.
- Spell-check and proof what you write - eliminate unnecessary verbiage, typos and poor grammar.

After all was said and done, Towery said he felt the process was a success.

"It was a long but good process. I think it was fair for everyone."