October 3, 2008

SUBJECT: FY 2009 SF-52 Case Numbers and Submission Procedures

TO: MWA Administrative Officers

THROUGH: Diane M. Strub /s/
Deputy Area Director

FROM: Deborah K. Agee /s/
Area Human Resources Assistant

The following is the synopsis of the Midwest Area's Fiscal Year 2009 SF-52 submission procedures. **There are some changes** from last year. **Because of the current budget environment, all permanent and temporary positions, with the exception of STEP and LA positions, must come through the Area Office for Area Director's review and approval**. **You may continue to manage the STEP/LA positions at the local level although we want to look at SCEPS at this level also. Additionally, you will be held to your Position Staffing Plan (PSP) for the entire fiscal year. Any requests for personnel actions not aligned with the PSP, other than STEP/LA positions, must have a justification attached explaining the request to deviate from the PSP. The justification should include a budget impact with a three year budget analysis.**

Please continue to follow the non-citizen procedures. Please remember that to hire a non-citizen as a Federal employee requires a positive name trace be completed first. The Midwest Area Web Page at www.mwa.ars.usda.gov has a link through the Program Admin Support Task Group (PASTG) to the MWA Non-U.S. Citizen Chart which gives detailed procedures to bring a non-citizen into your location facility. If you have any non-citizen questions, please feel free to contact me by e-mail at Deb.Agee@ars.usda.gov or Marie at Marie.Bishop@ars.usda.gov

You may start using "09" as the first two digits of your SF-52 Request Numbers and begin with "0100" as the last four digits of your SF-52 Request Numbers. As a reminder:

Positions 1 and 2: Fiscal Year = 09
Positions 3, 4, 5 and 6 = Fourth level of Mode Code (i.e. Wooster is 3607)
Position 7 = Zero (0)
Positions 8, 9 and 10 = Three-digit sequential numbers beginning with "100"

1. **All Category 1 and 4 SY positions on the PSP** - The original SF-52 and AD-332 Position Description Coversheet must be sent through me for Area Director (AD) approval (copies not needed). E-mail the Position Description to my attention as a Word document so I may electronically request Office of National Programs (ONP) approval to recruit.

2. **<u>Category 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, (0 SCEP) Personnel Actions on the PSP</u> –**
   a. **For permanent, temporary and term positions, the original SF-52, AD-332 and Position Description (PD needed only if for a recruit or redescription) must be sent through me for the AD approval and signature (copies not needed). All Administrative Support Staff positions will be first reviewed by the Deputy Area Director (DAD) and discussed with the AD.**

3. **<u>All Personnel Actions not on the PSP</u> - If the requested action is not listed on the FY09 PSP, the original SF-52 must be sent through me for AD approval and <u>must</u> include a justification and budget analysis.**

4. **<u>Category 0, 7 Student Temporary Employment Program Employees (STEP) and LA Appointments; Recruits/Appointments/Extensions/Conversions to higher grade</u> -**

   All STEP and LA actions may be handled at the Location level, the SF-52 sent directly to Human Resources Division (HRD), Western Services Branch (WSB) with a copy to me.

5. **<u>Changes in Work Schedules/Tours of Duty</u>** -
   a. For student appointments and other temporary positions, send the SF-52 directly to WSB with a copy to me.

   b. For permanent positions, send the SF-52 directly to WSB with a copy to me. **However, if the action is converting a part time to full time, the SF-52 must come to me for AD approval.**

6. **<u>Separations</u>** –

   a. For all separations: Retirement, Termination, Expiration of Appointment, Resignation, **except** when AD signature is required (i.e. removals - or as immediate supervisor) send the SF-52 directly to WSB with a copy of the SF-52 to my attention.

   b. All separation SF-52s must state either "Retain Position" or "Abolish Position." **Note: Area Director's approval is required for abolishing all permanent positions.**

   c. You may retain position numbers as retaining the number does not mean the position has to be refilled identically. Recruiting at or establishing a higher full performance grade level (FPL) of vice positions requires AD approval.

   d. If it is known that the employee will not work the complete final pay period before separating, annotate in Part D on reverse of the separation SF-52, "Separating employee did not complete tour of duty final pay period and will not accrue leave."

   e. On <u>Retirement SF-52s</u>, in Part D, state if the retiree's Retirement Certificate and Retirement Letter are needed for presentation at the retiree's party/dinner and the date of the event. Retirement applications and other necessary retirement paperwork should be sent to Retirement & Benefit Staff in advance of the effective date of the retirement to avoid a delay of the retirement annuity.

f. All separation SF-52s must be faxed or e-mailed to The TALX Corporation with the completed TALX Employee Separation form. Contact me if you need the forms and contact numbers.

g. Follow the Leave Policy & Procedures 402.6, dated September 29, 1997 (amended 12/8/97 and 6/22/07), Appendix A on Lump Sum Procedures. If there are leave errors in the NFC Database, please send the AD-581 with audit and copy of final T&A to my attention for updates (TINQ) to the database. **Reminder: Audits must be signed by supervisor of employee.**

OVERALL INFORMATION AND REMINDERS

- WSB normally needs a minimum of one full pay period before a requested effective date to process an action. The Area Office needs on the average 3-5 days to process actions, therefore, include this time frame in your calculations when initiating your SF-52's. A longer processing time should be expected for SY and Research Associate positions due to more detailed classification process requirements. WSB will rarely back-date actions, therefore, your paperwork must be submitted in a timely manner to avoid delays in processing and effective dates.

- A copy of all SF-52's for STEP and LA positions sent direct to WSB must be sent to me at the same time as the original to WSB.

- When you need new PFT position numbers not identified on the FY09 PSP, after receiving AD approval for the position, contact your assigned servicing HR Specialist in WSB for a new number.

- When you need new STEP or LA positions not identified on the FY '09 PSP, contact your assigned HR Specialist in WSB for a new number (AD approval not required).

- Please e-mail your HR Specialist in WSB as soon as you become aware of the date you are bringing on board a STEP or LA especially those with a short processing time before enter on duty effective date.

- Diane Strub and I have LA/STEP delegation for all of the Midwest Area and can help when you are in travel status, on vacation, etc.

- Please follow the above procedures to avoid delay in processing at the Area and Headquarters levels. If you have any questions concerning these procedures, don't hesitate to e-mail me at Deb.Agee@ars.usda.gov or call me at (309) 681-6633.

Position Category Codes

An ARS system of administrative designations for groups of positions having generally similar characteristics, primarily for personnel and budgetary tracking purposes. Category has no legal or administrative significance outside of ARS. Some positions may perform duties from more than one category. ARS categories established for all positions are as follows:

- **Category 1 (Research Scientist).** Permanent positions in which the highest level of work, for a major portion of time, involves personal conduct or conduct and leadership of theoretical and experimental investigations primarily of a basic or applied nature such as: determining the nature, magnitude, and interrelationships of physical, biological, and psychological phenomena and processes; creating or developing principles, criteria, methods, and a body of knowledge generally applicable for use by others. Such positions meet all or most of the criteria enumerated in the RGEG. Category 1 positions are SY positions.

- **Category 2 (Nonpermanent Research/Service Scientist).** Professional scientific positions which are established on a nonpermanent basis, are filled through temporary or term appointments, and entail research and/or service science work. Examples are Research Associate, Research Affiliate, Visiting Scientist, and individuals reemployed in ARS after having retired from Category 1 or Category 4 positions.

- **Category 3 (Support Scientist).** Professional scientist positions which function to provide direct support or service to one or more Category 1 or 4 positions. The work of such positions is characterized by responsible involvement in one or more, but not all, phases of research (particularly not the problem selection and definition phases); responsible participation in analysis and preliminary interpretation of data (but not including responsibility for final interpretation and conclusion which relate the results to the field of research involved). Examples include but are not limited to: (1) conducting literature searches; (2) selecting procedures and conducting experiments; (3) collecting and analyzing data or specimens; or (4) preparing technical reports.

- **Category 4 (Service Scientist).** Permanent positions whose incumbents either primarily or exclusively serve as project or program leaders over or personally perform, work assigned to ARS involving professional scientific services to the public or to other governmental agencies, such as: identification of animals, plants, or insects; diagnosis of diseases; mass production of plants, animals, or insects; collection, introduction, and maintenance of germplasm or specimens; vaccine production; education, extension, or technology transfer activities; or nutrient data and food intake surveys. Category 4 positions are SY positions.

- **Category 6 (Specialist).** "Specialist" positions which perform scientific program management, administration and/or analytical duties and therefore require professional education and training. Examples are: Area Director, Center Director, Agricultural Administrator, and National Research Program Leader

Position Category Codes Continued

- **Category 7 (Technician/Aid/Assistant positions (Engineering and Scientific Support).** Identify technician, aid, and assistant positions in one-grade interval series within the GS-400, 600, 700, 800, 1300, and/or 1500 groups. Examples include: Biological Science Technician/ Aid, Electronics Technician, Hydrologic Technician, Statistical Assistant/Clerk, Physical Science Technician/Aid.

- **Category 8 (Trade and Craft Occupations.** Positions having trade or craft knowledge as the paramount qualifications requirement. Examples: Boiler Plant Operator Foreman, Animal Caretaker Leader, Laborer, Farmer, Tractor Operator.

- **Category 9 (Administrative Support Occupations (Clerical/Secretarial/Other).** General occupations involved in structured work in support of office operations within one-grade interval series in the GS-300 occupational group. Examples: Secretary, Office Automation Clerk/Assistant, Computer Operator, Administrative Technician/Clerk, Management Assistant/ Clerk.

- **Category 0 (Zero).** Includes all positions that do not fit any of the above codes, including all positions incumbered by students. Examples: Student Trainees (STEP, SCEP); Expert and Consultant positions; Collaborators; and Volunteers.

- **Category G (Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA).** Employees serving a temporary assignment between ARS and States, local governments, institutions of higher education, Indian Tribal governments, or other organizations under Title IV of the Intergovernmental Personnel Act of 1970 (PL 91-648), as amended by the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 (PL 95-454).