For premium payment years beginning in:	The assumed interest rate is:
June 1998	5.04
July 1998	4.85
August 1998	4.83
September 1998	4.71
October 1998	4.42
November 1998	4.26

Multiemployer Plan Valuations Following Mass Withdrawal

The PBGC's regulation on Duties of Plan Sponsor Following Mass Withdrawal (29 CFR part 4281) prescribes the use of interest assumptions under the PBGC's regulation on Allocation of Assets in Single-employer Plans (29 CFR part 4044). The interest assumptions applicable to valuation dates in December 1998 under part 4044 are contained in an amendment to part 4044 published elsewhere in today's **Federal Register**. Tables showing the assumptions applicable to prior periods are codified in appendix B to 29 CFR part 4044.

Issued in Washington, DC, on this 6th day of November 1998.

John Seal,

Acting Executive Director, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

[FR Doc. 98–30447 Filed 11–12–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7708–01–P

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

New Application Procedures for Federal Jobs (Automated Resume Processing)

AGENCY: Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

ACTION: Notice with request for written comments.

SUMMARY: This notice announces approval for Federal agencies to restrict application format for employment consideration to the resume when applications will be processed using automation.

Beginning on November 13, 1998, agencies may continue to accept the *Optional Application for Federal Employment* (OF–612), resumes, or other written formats when considering applicants for Federal employment; or agencies may choose to restrict application format to the resume when applications will be processed using automation.

The OPM pamphlet, *Applying for a Federal Job* (OF–510), which describes what applicants should include in resumes or applications submitted for consideration for Federal jobs, will be updated to include a sample resume document and to explain new agency application processing options. Applicants can get copies of the updated pamphlet beginning in December 1998 from the USAJOBS Governmentwide Automated Employment Information System.

OPM has implemented an online resume builder on the USAJOBS web site at www.usajobs.opm.gov. The online resume builder allows applicants to prepare a resume that they can print for personal use; save and/or edit on the web site for future use; and electronically submit for agency-specified job opportunities in the Federal Jobs Database. The online resume builder contains all of the data elements outlined in the *Applying for a Federal Job* pamphlet as required for resumes submitted for Federal employment. The resume builder produces a resume suitable for both manual and electronic processing.

This action is being taken to continue and expand employment application options for both Federal agencies and job applicants.

The Office of Personnel Management and other Federal agencies rate applicants for Federal jobs under the authority of 5 U.S.C. 1104, 1302, 3301, 3304, 3320, 3361, 3393, and 3394.

DATES: Written comments will be considered if received on or before December 14, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Send or deliver written comments to Mary Lou Lindholm, Associate Director for Employment, U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 1900 E Street NW., Washington, DC 20415.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Richard Whitford at 202–606–1031 (rawhitfo@opm.gov) or Claire Gibbons at 202–606–1221 (cxgibbon@opm.gov).

U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

Janice R. Lachance,

Director.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In a December 16, 1994, **Federal Register** notice (59 FR 65086) OPM announced a new application process that became effective on January 1, 1995. Under the new procedures, agencies filling positions in the competitive service, the excepted service and the Senior Executive Service could no longer require the SF–171, *Application for Federal Employment*, as the only acceptable application form for employment, but also had to inform applicants for most jobs that they could apply with a resume, the *Optional* *Application for Federal Employment* (OF–612), or any other written format of their choice, including the SF–171. Authorization of the SF–171 as an official form expired on December 31, 1994. Exceptions for the creation of special forms for unique jobs or jobs filled through automation were allowed. The new procedures were established to implement a National Performance Review (NPR) recommendation to OPM to eliminate standard forms because the length and complexity discouraged applicants from seeking Federal employment. An interagency task force of 16 Federal agencies recommended the new application procedures that let applicants choose the format of their application. The new procedures were reviewed and accepted by the National Partnership Council, the Interagency Advisory Group, unions, and organizations representing major constituency groups. As the proliferation of Government forms would be counter to the NPR objective to simplify the application process, agencies were advised that they could seek OMB approval for agency-specific forms only for unique jobs with highly specialized requirements or for special forms needed for a computer-assisted application system.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approved the new application process for a period of three years which ended on December 31, 1997. However, due to requests received by the Federal staffing community, authorization for the *Optional Application for Federal Employment*, OF–612, was extended for a period of three years through December 31, 2000.

At the time the Notice was issued, the use of electronic application processing systems was not widespread in Federal agencies. Now more than three years later, the staffing environment has changed. Given full delegation of examining authority and continued downsizing, agencies are looking for new ways to perform staffing work more efficiently and cost effectively. Today's automated technology allows agencies to accept employment applications via fax, email and the world wide web. Applications can be processed by automated systems that are capable of applying sophisticated search routines to evaluate the competencies, qualifications and skills that match the knowledge, skills and abilities of jobs being filled. To effectively use much of this technology, the application format must be limited to the resume.

The use of the resume is not burdensome for job applicants. The resume is the standard for applying for employment in most segments of the

American job market. The resume allows job seekers to apply for most positions without having to seek out special forms and can be easily prepared using a typewriter or personal computer. The resume is compatible with new innovative ways for job seekers to quickly and easily apply for Federal jobs.

The following Questions and Answers give more information on the new application procedures:

(1) Why did OPM develop the new procedures?

OPM developed the new procedures to provide agencies with an additional option for application receipt to take advantage of current technology. The use of automated systems for the development, movement and processing of resumes is becoming standard within the human resources field. Rather than requiring agencies to make individual requests to OMB for the approval of a resume approach for Federal employment application, OPM determined it made more sense to move the initiative ahead on a Governmentwide basis.

(2) Must agencies adopt the resume approach for Federal employment application?

No. Agencies may continue to use the application procedures established in January 1995, i.e., agencies may accept resumes, the *Optional Application for Federal Employment* (OF-612), or any other written format of the applicant's choice. The new procedures simply allow agencies choosing to use automated systems for the receipt or processing of applications to restrict applications to the resume format. Agencies may make the choice on an agency-wide basis, for individual departments or bureaus, or on an announcement-by-announcement basis.

(3) Do the new procedures change existing policy on the content requirements of resumes submitted for Federal employment consideration?

No. The data elements identified in the pamphlet, *Applying for a Federal Job*, describe the required content of a resume or application filed for Federal employment. Agencies may, at their discretion, choose to define fewer data elements as acceptable in an application. Agencies may not add additional elements except as related to the job being filled (i.e., competencies, knowledges, skills and abilities; date of birth for law enforcement positions where age is a factor, etc.).

(4) May agencies require use of the USAJOBS resume builder; an agency specific online resume builder; or other automated application filing method?

No. Agencies must accept resumes created from any source; e.g., online resume builder; resume preparation software; word processing software; or typewriter, as long as the resume meets the specific agency parameters for format, content and length. Agencies accepting applications in other formats must be sure that the automated methods for applying are available and accessible to job seekers.

(5) May agencies specify the format or layout of resumes submitted for automated processing?

Yes. Agencies using automated systems may establish basic format and length guidelines for optimal resume processing. The guidelines may include requirements for the order in which the resume elements are presented; font size; resume length; and restrictions on the use of graphics, such as boxes and lines. The purpose of allowing agencies to establish format and length guidelines is to provide maximum integration of resumes with electronic application receipt and processing systems. For example, many automated application scanning systems deliver the best character recognition when standard font sizes, such as 12 point or 10 characters per inch (cpi), are used; other systems limit the size of the computer files that may be accepted into the system or passed to other systems. When resumes are not formatted to basic guidelines, manual processing must be applied which reduces the efficiencies gained by automation and delays the process of filling jobs. While agency guidelines for resumes will be permitted to accommodate the technology being employed, agency guidelines cannot be so specific as to establish only ''one'' acceptable resume document. Agencies are warned against establishing requirements that would result in the arbitrary rejection of resumes from employment consideration for failure to follow instructions, i.e., name must be centered and entered on line 2.25, or only resumes prepared in Times Roman 12 pt. font will be considered.

Agencies opting to require resumes for automated processing must take steps to guarantee access to the application process for all job seekers. Agencies are responsible for establishing procedures to assist job applicants who do not possess the keyboard skills required to prepare a resume or who do not have access to a typewriter, word processor, or on-line resume developer. Vacancy announcements must contain a contact point; i.e., name and telephone number, that job seekers may call if they are unable to submit a resume and need assistance applying.

The online resume builder on the USAJOBS web site meets all of the basic requirements for resume preparation for electronic processing. Resumes created on the USAJOBS resume builder are automatically formatted at the time of transmission to meet agency specified requirements. This meets agency needs without burdening job seekers.

(6) What provisions have been made for applicants with disabilities?

The resume builder on the USAJOBS web site will be made available in text format for use with text readers by the visually impaired.

The revised pamphlet, *Applying for a Federal Job*, will be available in braille, large print and on audio tape and computer disk. The pamphlet tells applicants what to include in their resumes or applications for Federal jobs. Furthermore, information on the Federal application process is available in text format for use with text readers by the visually impaired on the USAJOBS web site and computer bulletin board.

(7) How will OPM publicize the new application process?

OPM's Employment Information Office regularly distributes new releases and mailings to Federal offices, State Employment Service offices, State Vocational Rehabilitation Services offices, colleges and universities, and other major constituency groups. This year's mailings will include updated information on the application process.

(8) How will applicants find out about the new procedures?

Updated information on the application process will be distributed through the USAJOBS Governmentwide automated employment information system. Applicants may connect to the system (1) on the world wide web at http://www.usajobs.opm.gov; (2) by telephone at 912–757–3100 (TDD 912–744–2299) or at their local OPM Service Center (see blue pages listings in local phone directories); (3) by computer bulletin board at 912–757–3100 or telnet fjob.opm.gov; or (4) through touch screen kiosks located in more than 200 OPM offices, Federal buildings, and college campuses nationwide.

(9) May applicants use commercial software to prepare their resume, the *Optional Application for Federal Employment*, or application in another format?

Yes. Applicants may use commercial software to prepare their resume, *Optional Application for Federal Employment*, or other application format. At all times, however, applicants are responsible for making sure that their application contains the

information requested in the pamphlet, *Applying for a Federal Job*, and adheres to the requirements specified in the vacancy announcement.

(10) Can an agency design its own form and seek OMB approval for its use?

Yes. OMB will continue to consider requests for agency-specific forms for unique jobs with highly specialized requirements or special forms needed for a computer-assisted application system. However, the necessity for these requests should be reduced with the blanket approval for the use of resumes only for automated application processing.

(11) Can a Federal agency require its own employees to file for vacancies using a particular form?

Yes, but only when recruiting from its own employees. For example, an agency may require a particular form, such as the *Optional Application for Federal Employment*, for internal merit promotion actions. OMB approval is required for any specific form that seeks job-related information from non-agency employees. Non-agency employees include former employees with reinstatement eligibility, transfer eligibles from other agencies, and nonstatus applicants. For this purpose an agency is an ''executive agency'' as defined in 5 U.S.C. 105, for example, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of the Navy, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

(12) How may agencies handle incomplete applications, i.e., applications that do not contain all the information requested in the vacancy announcement?

Each agency should establish policy on how to handle incomplete applications. Agencies may:

—Not consider incomplete applications;
—Ask applicants for the missing information; or
—Rate incomplete applications as submitted.

All applicants for a particular vacancy must be treated the same way. Agency vacancy announcements should state the policy on incomplete applications.

(13) Should applicants continue to submit proof of 5 or 10 point veterans' preference or proof of Agency/ Interagency Career Transition Assistance Program eligibility with their applications?

Yes. Applicants should be advised, when allowed by the application method, to submit proof with their applications if they are claiming 5 or 10 point veteran's preference or eligibility for priority consideration under the Agency or Interagency Career Transition Assistance Program. When the

application method, such as an email transmission of resumes, does not support the attachment of special forms or documents to the application, applicants should be advised of how and by when they should submit their claim, i.e., mail and/or fax, postmarked by, etc.

(14) Why do many automated application processing systems require that the application format be limited to the resume?

Many automated application processing systems rely on optical character recognition for translating data on a printed document into a computer file that can be searched for data elements, such as name and address; skills; work experience; and education. In order to reliably capture the data from the document it must be clear and easy to read. Since hand written documents and information typed into confined boxes on forms are often difficult to read, the optical character recognition systems cannot reliably capture data presented in this manner.

Other automated systems rely on the electronic movement of application information from one automated system to another. Specifically formatted application forms may not be able to be properly translated from a sending automated system to a receiving system. The generic text contained in the resume can be converted to a format that is universally acceptable from one automated system to another.

(15) How will agencies certify that the information contained in applications is correct and that applicants meet suitability requirements for Federal employment?

Agencies will continue to determine suitability and obtain certification of application information from the *Declaration for Federal Employment* (OF 306). Agencies should continue to obtain the *Declaration for Federal Employment* before individuals are appointed. Agencies should not routinely ask applicants to submit the *Declaration* along with their resumes or applications. A major reason for creating the *Declaration* was to separate qualifications information from suitability information so that agencies could better protect the privacy of individuals by restricting access to more sensitive background data. Given the privacy concerns and the intent to reduce the burden on applicants, OPM continues to strongly encourage agencies to require the *Declaration* only from job finalists except where to do so would have a significantly adverse impact on the hiring process.

(16) May agencies permit the use of official time and Government resources

to develop and submit electronic applications for job vacancies?

Agencies may establish their own policy on the use of official time and resources for the preparation and submission of electronic applications for job vacancies. The guiding principle in determining whether or not Federal employees should be allowed to use Government time and resources in pursuit of alternative employment is whether such use is in the best interest of the agency and, therefore, the Federal Government.

(17) How is resume data collected on the USAJOBS resume builder secured?

The resume data collected on the USAJOBS resume builder falls under the Privacy Act. A Privacy Act notice is available on the system to users. OPM uses secure transactions to encrypt resume data when it is moved to and from the USAJOBS web site to create and edit resumes. Resume access on the USAJOBS web site is secured by password, name and Social Security Number. Job seekers uncomfortable with submitting resumes over the Internet continue to have the option to submit resumes using traditional application methods selected by agencies such as hand-delivery, mail or fax.

[FR Doc. 98–30327 Filed 11–12–98; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 6325–01–P

RAILROAD RETIREMENT BOARD

Sunshine Act Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the Railroad Retirement Board will hold a meeting on November 18, 1998, 9:00 a.m., at the Board's meeting room on the 8th floor of its headquarters building, 844 North Rush Street, Chicago, Illinois, 60611. The agenda for this meeting follows:

(1) Request for Reconsideration of Blanket Deputation for Office of Inspector General Special Agents.

(2) Year 2000 Issues.

The entire meeting will be open to the public. The person to contact for more information is Beatrice Ezerski, Secretary to the board, Phone No. 312–751–4920.

Dated: November 26, 1998.

Beatrice Ezerski,
Secretary to the Board.
[FR Doc. 98–30535 Filed 11–10–98; 10:45 am]
BILLING CODE 7905–01–M