USDA

White Paper
U. S Department of Agriculture
Electronic Official Personnel Folder (e-OPF)

Introduction – The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is implementing several systems across Government that's intended to improve the management of human capital. One of these systems is the e-OPF. The e-OPF replaces the current paper based folder with an electronic folder containing each employee's personnel records.   Information on e-OPF can be found on the OPM web site, http://www.opm.gov/egov/ehri_overview.asp .

This concept of operations paper is intended to outline the basic concepts of the e-OPF and its components.

Benefits – e-OPF improves the ability of the Government to provide personnel services in many ways including:

> **Access –** Employees who are not co-located with the personnel office that maintains their paper based OPF have little or no access to the documents in their folder. In many cases an employee never reviews the content of his or her folder until retirement.   If errors have occurred and critical documents have not been properly filed early in a person's career, they are much more difficult to correct 10, 20 or 30 years after the fact. e-OPF provides employee access any time and any place via a secure internet site.

> **Security/Continuity of Operations –** The current paper based folder is a "single point of failure." A folder can be lost. A fire or natural disaster can destroy hundreds or thousands of folders. There is no back up. As an electronic database, e-OPF allows every employee's documentation to be backed up and securely stored at a remote site. The employment record for each employee can be restored if a disaster occurs.

> **Efficiency of Operations –** The current system requires documents such as a "Notification of Personnel Action" to be printed. One copy gets filed and one copy gets mailed to the employee. For example, the annual pay adjustment for agency "X" in January produces approximately 14,000 documents that must be individually filed. Obviously this process requires significant resources and as a manual process there are many opportunities for mistakes.   When e-OPF is implemented, the National Finance Center (NFC) will transmit the data, which will be automatically filed in each employee's electronic folder. Rather than get a copy of the document in the mail, the employee will get an email notification that a document has been added to their folder. The employee can then go online to review the document and, if desired, print a copy.

Responsiveness – In many instances providing services or answers is dependent upon having access to an employee's OPF. Delays occur when a paper based folder has to be retrieved. Information in e-OPF will be available at any time to authorized servicing personnel specialists. Investigators doing background checks can be given short-term access to an employee's electronic folder. This will allow background checks and security clearances to be done much more quickly.

Implementation Plans -
The USDA has targeted July 2006 for completion of Fast Track Implementation and is funding the initiative. Implementation will begin as an "Electronic Day Forward" start. This means that an e-OPF will be established for each employee and new documents will be electronically received from NFC and will be electronically filed. Employees will be notified how to access the system using a phased approach.

It is still unclear as to the funding source for annual hosting, maintenance and back-file conversion; however, the Office of Human Capital Management (OHCM) is researching funding options. As funds become available, existing paper folders will be reviewed; documents that are no longer supposed to be in the folders will be removed; and the folders will be sent to an OPM approved contractor who will scan and index the documents in the folders. Once scanned, the folders will be returned to a National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) warehouse for storage. OPM is expected to issue guidance on how long the folders should be retained.

Shortly after the documents are scanned the images will be loaded into the employee's e-OPF. The employee will then be able to review the scanned documents and can assist with the overall quality control of the process by reporting any problems not previously detected.

Training –
Use of the system by employees is not complicated. Training materials will be distributed to help employee's get started. There will be help desk support provided by NFC.

Data Security –
The e-OPF will be operated by the National Business Center in Denver CO, part of the Department of Interior. This operation has a certified and accredited security plan. Access to an employee's records will be limited to the employee and designated personnel in the employee's servicing personnel office. Access is controlled by userid and password. The userid is assigned by the system and should be kept private. Passwords will initially be emailed or hard copy mailed to the employee. The password can then be changed. Employees will not be able to enter or change information in the e-OPF. Additionally, the e-OPF application will automatically keep a record of all instances where an employee's folder is accessed. This auto-auditor not only keeps a record of the user's identity but also date stamps when the user accessed the employee's personnel folder. (Note: Forest Service employee's will have access to their e-OPF's through the Forest Service's Self Service Dashboard.)