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**STATEMENT**  
**OF**  
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**BEFORE THE**  
**COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**

**UNITED STATES SENATE**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Chairman Voinovich, and distinguished Members of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, my name is Michael Vajda. I am the Director of the Department of the Army Civilian Human Resources Agency, Army's sole Spiral 1.1 transitioning organization. I appreciate the opportunity to share with you today the strategy being used by the Department of Army to transition to the National Security Personnel System (NSPS) to include specific details pertaining to the training of our Spiral 1.1 civilian employees located here at Ft Shafter.

## **ARMY'S APPROACH TO NSPS**

The center piece of the Army is soldiers and the civilian employees who support them. Our primary mission, to prosecute the Global War on Terrorism, illustrates the need for the agility and flexibility that NSPS offers to better support our warfighters in a very dynamic environment. Army civilians are engaged whether it is our safety specialists who are embedded in our combat brigades, the scientists who are looking for better ways to equip and protect our force, the logisticians who assure that they are properly provisioned, or the transporters who help get them to the fight. To date, approximately 2,000 Army civilians have been deployed forward to support our troops, while many others are in and out of the theater of operations on temporary duty assignments. The civilian force is repairing and modifying equipment and protective gear, maintaining our installations and power projection platforms, and assuring that our soldiers and their families are properly cared for. Acquiring and sustaining a capable and focused workforce in these times requires a human resources system that is as contemporary as the challenges we face.

Army has approximately 260,000 civilian employees geographically dispersed throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia. DOD will incrementally convert employees into NSPS in groups, commonly referred to as spirals. The first group is Spiral 1.1 with an Army population of approximately 2400 employees, including 20 employees here in Hawaii. Spiral 1.1 will be transitioned to NSPS on 30 April 2006 and will provide valuable lessons learned for future spirals. We deliberately chose the operating Civilian Human Resources (CHR) community to serve as our Spiral 1.1 participants. Our primary rationale was that this would better equip the CHR community to assist Commanders, managers and employees who would transition in later spirals.

The Department of Army realized early on that the transition to NSPS represented a multi-faceted, cultural challenge. The shift from a seniority driven system to a performance based system is dramatic. While the current Department of the Army performance management system is based on measurable objectives, the annual evaluation does not drive pay as envisioned under NSPS. As is true across the entire General Schedule system, Army employees currently realize increases in pay based on their length of service and satisfactory performance. Under NSPS, pay will be based primarily on performance results.

Although NSPS will represent a dramatic change across a very large and diverse workforce, our implementation and training plans are in place and being executed.

#### **Partnership with the NSPS Program Executive Office (PEO)**

Army is an active partner with the NSPS PEO and other components. We have led or served on all working and focus groups in an effort to support the deployment of NSPS across the Department of Defense (DoD). In no area, however, has this partnership been

more apparent than in the area of training development and execution. The NSPS Training Working Group has demonstrated component cooperation and collaboration. We have been active participants in the development of training materials, pilot courses and Train-the-Trainer courses. This cross component partnership provides a baseline of consistent messages and significantly reduces the duplication of effort that would have resulted from individual component efforts. Using the jointly developed training materials as a base, each component develops delivery strategies to support unique mission requirements.

### **ARMY'S NSPS TRAINING STRATEGY**

Army is using a cascading approach to NSPS training. Managers and HR Specialists are being trained as trainers in PEO sponsored classes. These trainers will, in turn, deliver NSPS training to managers, supervisors and employees at Army installations and activities. The Army NSPS Training Plan details how training will be accomplished within the Department of the Army down to the installation level.

### **Developing Trainers**

The first step toward assuring timely training of the Army workforce was the development of a cadre of Army trainers. We centrally funded and hosted instructional methods courses (i.e., how to train) throughout the United States and Europe. Over 400 Army trainers have attended PEO sponsored Train the Trainer training. We have trainers located at each Spiral 1.1 installation or activity. This approach ensures that our employees can be trained with a minimum of disruption and travel. As needed, Army will continue to develop NSPS instructors throughout the deployment cycle.

## **Delivery**

Training is currently underway for Army Spiral 1.1 activities. CHR professionals are being trained in their responsibilities for execution of the many HR processes which will change under NSPS and for providing advisory services to managers and supervisors about NSPS provisions. Our managers and supervisors are being trained in their NSPS responsibilities with an emphasis on performance management. Employees are receiving training which provides an overview of both the HR elements and performance management features of NSPS.

Of the 2348 employees in Spiral 1.1, 60% have been trained. Within the Fort Shafter Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC), six members of the staff have attended multiple train the trainer courses, the supervisors have completed the supervisory training courses, and the rest of the staff is scheduled to receive NSPS training by mid-April.

## **Change Management**

The experiences from DOD and Army Demonstration Projects identified cultural changes as the most difficult to make. New core competencies, like change management, interpersonal communications, coaching and counseling, and performance management, are critical to success and the basis for NSPS cultural transformation. We identified on-line and classroom courses designed to develop and reinforce the needed NSPS core competencies. Employees and supervisors may complete web-based courses at their own pace from any location. Each of the Army's Regional Human Resources Offices also offers a full complement of classroom courses to further develop the core competencies. This training has been heavily marketed, and Army has experienced very high levels of course completions. Thus far, over 5700 employees have completed a web-based

training course; of those, 1588 were completed by Spiral 1.1 employees. Over 5000 Army employees have attended classroom delivered core competency training; 695 of those courses were completed by Spiral 1.1 employees. This training will facilitate the cultural transition to an NSPS environment.

### **NSPS Communication Strategy**

Educating the workforce on NSPS stretches far beyond classroom training. It begins well in advance of an organization's spiral transition and continues long after. Army developed a comprehensive approach to introduce the workforce to the regulatory and design provisions of NSPS before their activities actually transition to the new system. One of our best practices in the communication strategy is the use of chain teaching. Using this method, the senior leader of an organization presents the key NSPS message to subordinate leaders and staff. In turn, those leaders relay the message to their subordinates, and so on until the message reaches every individual in the chain of command. This requires leaders to fully comprehend the message and assures small group discussions and question and answers between each level of supervision and the subordinate staff. These small group discussions will answer questions like: What Pay Pool Am I In, How Will the Pay Pool Work, When Will I know My Performance Rating? Army developed two distinct applications for our chain teaching, a Senior Leader Forum for top leadership and an NSPS Overview for the entire workforce. For employees transitioning under Spiral 1.1, the chain teaching is 100% complete. The DOD and Army NSPS websites are critical tools in the communication strategy. These sites contain NSPS information, policies and hands-on training tools such as the PEO developed on-line courses entitled Fundamentals of NSPS and NSPS 101. The

Fundamentals of NSPS explains the NSPS provisions of the Federal Register and NSPS 101 covers the basic features of the HR system. These web-based courses are very user friendly and contain embedded learning checks which provide immediate feedback on the comprehension of material.

The NSPS message is continuously reinforced through Town Hall Meetings at major installations, briefings for special groups, and distribution of NSPS brochures, publications, and training bulletins.

### **Summary**

NSPS offers the Department of Defense the unique opportunity to revitalize its civilian workforce through implementation of a performance-focused human resources management system. This represents the biggest change in federal human resources management since adoption of the Pendleton Act in 1883. Preparing the workforce for this major cultural change is a huge challenge. Training plays a critical role in the successful implementation of NSPS, and we have a comprehensive plan for NSPS training delivery and implementation. The Army is ready to transition Spiral 1.1 on April 30, 2006, and will incorporate lessons learned for future spirals. We look forward to the benefits the NSPS flexibilities will provide the mission and our employees.