

ARS □ CSREES □ ERS □ NASS

Policies and Procedures

Title: Employee Exit Clearance Procedures

Number: 426.1

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Originating Office: Human Resources Division, REE Policy Branch, AFM/ARS

This Replaces:

Distribution: All REE Employees

This P&P establishes procedures for all employees, both permanent and temporary, who transfer to another agency, resign, retire, or otherwise separate from an REE agency.

***As of 10/05/2004, the Attachment 4, USDA Form AD-1126, Exit Interview Questionnaire, has been abolished by the Department. REE also will no longer use the questionnaire. Thus, Attachment 4 (AD-1126) to Directive 426-1 is no longer valid for use and is removed from the directive. This directive will be updated at a later date.**

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1. Policy

When an employee separates from ARS, CSREES, ERS, or NASS, the respective agency must ensure that the employee either returns or accounts for any outstanding financial liabilities and/or accountable items for which the employee is responsible. Each agency, in coordination with Administrative and Financial Management's (AFM), Human Resources Division (HRD), must follow a coordinated set of actions to complete check-out procedures before the employee leaves the agency. These requirements may be supplemented, but not replaced.

2. Liabilities

A *financial liability* is an employee debt that includes monies owed for travel expenses and advances, advanced leave, service or training agreements, etc. An *accountable items liability* includes any Government-owned items for which an employee is responsible; i.e., official records, charge cards, passports, ID cards, laptop computers, home use equipment, or other assigned personnel property, electronic access cards, etc. Prior to separation, each employee is responsible for returning accountable items and monies owed.

If the employee cannot account for all items or if the employee owes money to the Government, the employee must arrange for settlement of these items. If a settlement arrangement is not agreed upon, Agency Administrators may request that HRD initiate collection action against the employee for an outstanding debt or loss of property.

3. The Separation Process

Any employee planning to leave the agency should notify his or her supervisor as soon as possible, preferably 2 weeks in advance of the separation date. By giving an advance notice, post-employment matters can be resolved quickly and efficiently. Upon notification, administrative representatives (i.e., supervisors, HRD representatives, location administrative officers, administrative officers, Area personnel office staff, Area personnel assistants, or others who may have administrative responsibility), must contact the employee personally to conduct the exit process. (If practical, discussions should be in person; however, neither past nor present supervisors are permitted to discuss or collect information for the completion of the AD-1126, USDA Exit Interview Questionnaire (Attachment 4), with the employee. The administrative representative must also complete and/or provide the employee with the following documents:

- **SF-52, Request for Personnel Action.** Administrative representatives must forward the SF-52 to the appropriate HRD operations branch as soon as possible following the separation date (either on the employee's last day or the first workday following the separation date). Timely processing of the separation action permits timely transfer of

employee benefits and receipt of lump sum payments. All SF-52's for involuntary separations (removals/terminations) must be prepared by the HRD Employee Relations Branch.

- **REE-9, Separation Forms Checklist (Attachment 1).** This form must be completed by HRD operations staff for use in tracking the status of actions as they are processed through the system and sent to the employee. Administrative representatives who initiate any of the processes identified on the form are encouraged to complete relevant sections and send the annotated REE-9 along with other materials that are submitted to HRD.
- **REE -10, Employee Exit Checklist (Attachment 2).** Administrative representatives must explain the clearance process to each separating employee and must provide guidance relative to the employee's responsibilities. The employee must then obtain appropriate signatures on REE-10 following the directions shown on the form. Individuals receiving returned items or clearing the employee will check the appropriate block (either "Yes" or "N/A"), sign, and date the form showing that any indebtedness to the Government is cleared.

If the division/office responsible for collection of the property and/or funds checks "No" (indicating that an indebtedness remains), that office must also: (1) determine whether or not collection action is appropriate; and, (2) prepare a recommendation to the Agency Administrator to either waive the liability or pursue collection. The dated signature of the Agency Administrator on the REE-10 is evidence of the final action to be taken. If collection action is recommended, the responsible office must provide HRD with specific information needed to begin the collection process.

- **Issues to Discuss With Employees Who Are Either Separating from Federal Service or Who Are Transferring to Another USDA Agency (Attachments 3a and 3b).** Administrative representatives should contact each exiting employee to ensure that the employee receives information relative to the critical areas listed in these attachments prior to their departure. Each employee is encouraged to refer to the applicable attachment and to ask questions about any area that is unclear.
 - ▶ For separations from the Federal Government, refer to Attachment 3a.
 - ▶ For transfers from ARS, ERS, CSREES, or NASS to another USDA agency, refer to Attachment 3b.
 - ▶ For movement from a temporary position to a permanent position, from a permanent position to a temporary position, or acceptance of a position overseas or in another Federal agency, issues on both Attachment 3a and 3b may apply.

- **AD-1126, USDA Exit Interview Questionnaire¹ (Attachment 4).** This questionnaire implements the Civil Rights Action Team’s recommendation to establish a process to develop trend analysis and evaluation on overall retention issues. The administrative representative must provide each separating, **permanent** employee with a copy of this questionnaire. The employee must complete and return the AD-1126 to the administrative representative (or mail it back in a preaddressed, postage-paid return envelope). As an option, the AD-1126 may be completed during a personal interview with the employee. *Please note that current or past supervisors are prohibited from conducting this interview or collecting this data.* Completed forms must be submitted to the REE Policy Branch, HRD. The REE Policy Branch will compile responses, share summary data with appropriate agency and civil rights officials, and coordinate the required annual report to the Department.

4. Summary of Responsibilities

Administrators

- Ensure that all separating employees use the same check-out procedures.
- Develop internal clearance procedures according to the agency’s administrative structure and provide HRD with all necessary forms and clearances to process separations and/or to collect outstanding debts.
- Determine if collection action is appropriate for any outstanding debt or loss of property, or waive employee responsibility.

Director, Human Resources Division (HRD)

- Develops internal procedures for collection of employee indebtedness via the National Finance Center (NFC) system.
- Develops instructional materials and conducts training for administrative representatives involved in the exit process.
- Initiates the process with NFC to collect for employee indebtedness relating to outstanding leave balances or other financial liabilities.
- Initiates the process with NFC to collect for employee indebtedness relating to accountable property.

¹ OHRM Personnel Bulletin No. 250-4, dated September 4, 1997, subject: Agency/Department Exit Interview Guidelines

- Collects and reports exit interview information required by the Civil Rights Action Team to the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM), USDA, as requested.

Director, Procurement and Property Division (PPD)

- Develops clearance procedures for the return of accountable items.
- Provides appropriate information to HRD to initiate collection of monies owed relative to accountable property.
- Provides advice to Agency Administrators about waiver authority.

Director, Financial Management Division (FMD)

- Develops clearance procedures for the clearance of financial liabilities.
- Provides appropriate information to HRD to initiate collection of monies owed relative to financial liability.
- Provides advice to Agency Administrators about waiver authority.

Director, Information Technology Division (ITD)

- Develops internal clearance procedures for the return of accountable property.
- Develops internal procedures for termination of ID's, passwords, etc., for NFC as well as other ADP access.
- Develops internal procedures for changing safe and door combinations.

REE Safety Officers, ARS Area Administrative Officers, and Location Administrative Officers

- Develop local clearance procedures to ensure compliance with safety regulations and to clear personal protection equipment.

Administrative Representatives

- Ensure that each separating employee has properly completed all appropriate forms and that all employee questions have been answered.
- Refer appropriate questions to HRD.

- Notify HRD of outstanding service agreements.
- Notify PPD and FMD of any unreturned Government property or financial liabilities.
- Conduct appropriate leave audits and notify HRD of outstanding leave prior to payment of final T&As.
- Submit required documents to HRD as indicated on forms REE-9 and REE-10 (Attachments 1 and 2, respectively).

Employees

- Notify supervisors of planned separation date as soon as known.
- Return any Government-owned accountable items prior to separation.
- Arrange for repayment of any outstanding debts.
- Clear all items on form REE-10 (Attachment 2) through designated officials.
- Review “Issues to Discuss With Employees Who Are Separating from Federal Service” (Attachment 3a) and/or “Issues to Discuss With Employees Who Are Transferring to Another USDA Agency” (Attachment 3b) and refer questions to the administrative representative.
- Complete form AD-1126, “USDA Exit Interview Questionnaire” (Attachment 4) and return it to REE Policy Branch, HRD.

/s/

W. G. HORNER
Deputy Administrator
Administrative and Financial Management

REE-9 (10/99)

SEPARATION FORMS CHECKLIST

Employee Name _____ Type of Action _____ Effective Date _____

INSTRUCTIONS: The HRD staff is responsible for completing and filing this form. Administrative representatives who initiate any of these processes are encouraged to complete relevant sections and include with other materials submitted to HRD for processing.

TYPE OF DOCUMENT	DATE COMPLETED	DATE SENT TO HRD	DATE SENT TO EMPLOYEE
• GENERAL FORMS			
REE-10 Employee Exit Checklist			
AD-1126 USDA Exit Interview Questionnaire			
SF-50-B Notification of Personnel Action			
SF-293 Notice to Separated Employee . . . Disposition of OPF			
AD-349/1024 Employee (Change of) Address			
AD-435 Performance Appraisals			
SF-312 Classified Information Nondisclosure Agreement			
AD-581 Lump Sum Leave or Compensatory Time Payments			
AD-717 Audit for Leave Year(s) _____			
AD-815 Post Employment Restriction Notice			
• RETIREMENT FORMS			
SF-2802 Application for Refund of Retirement Deductions CSRS			
SF-2808 Designation of Beneficiary CSRS			
SF-3102 Designation of Beneficiary FERS			
SF-3106 Application for Refund of Retirement Deductions FERS			
TSP-BK01 TSP Withdrawal Information (Employee Package)			
• LIFE INSURANCE FORMS			
SF-2825 Portability Notice			
• HEALTH INSURANCE FORMS			
FEHB TCC Letter			
SF-2809-A FEHB, Federal Employees Health Benefits Program			
RI79-27 Temporary Continuation of Coverage (TCC) under FEHB			
SF-2810 Notice of Change in Health Benefits Enrollment			
• UNEMPLOYMENT FORMS			
SF-8 Notice to Federal Employee About Unemployment Insurance			
FRICK-U88Z UCFE Frick Company Employee Separation Form			

Signature _____ Date _____

NOTE: File Completed Sheets Only -- OPF (Left Side)

REE-10 (10/99)

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Research, Education, and Economics Agencies

Employee Exit Checklist

1. EMPLOYEE	2. ORGANIZATIONAL UNIT	3. SEPARATION DATE
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INSTRUCTIONS: The administrative representative is responsible for ensuring that all items in Parts I - VI are checked. Any items marked as "no" under cleared should be identified in Part VII. The administrative representative must obtain authorization and signatures for all items listed in Part VII. Once the status of all items has been resolved, the administrative representative completes Part VIII and forwards this form to AFM, Human Resources Division.

ITEM	ACTION	CLEARED			CLEARED THRU (Name/Office)	SIGNATURE	DATE
		YES	NO	N/A			

PART I - ADMINISTRATIVE

1. Leave Audit (AD-717)	Complete and forward to HRD.						
2. Lump-sum Payments (AD-581)	Complete and forward to HRD.						
3. Official Listings (phones & assorted directories)	Complete AD-349 and/or AD-1024.						
4. Last T&A	Timekeeper must mark the last T&A as final.						
5. Retirement Forms (ARS field only)	Mailed SF-2802, SF-2808, SF-3106, SF-3201, TSP-BK01.						
6. Life Insurance Forms (ARS field only)	Mailed SF-2825/Portability Notice.						
7. Health Insurance Forms (ARS field only)	Mailed/delivered TCC Letter, RI 79-27, SF-2810.						
8. Unemployment Form (ARS field only)	Mailed/delivered SF-8.						
9. Performance Plan (NASS only)	Forward NASS PRP Form 435B to HRD.						
10. AD-1126, Exit Questionnaire	Collect and forward to HRD.						

PART II - IDENTIFICATION/PROPERTY

1. USDA Photo ID Card	Collect and submit to AO/LAO or HRD in HQ.						
2. Lock-up Pass	Collect and destroy (ERS return to COS).						
3. Official Government Passport and/or Visa	Return to the originating office.						
4. Accountable Property (Computers, Cell phones, home use equipment, etc.)	All property has been returned. Contract warrants have been terminated. Passwords/IDs have been terminated.						
5. Other Accountable Items (keys, manuals, etc.) Transit Subsidy - ERS Only	All accountable items have been returned.						
6. Reference Materials (Smart Ctr., Library, etc.)	All reference materials have been returned.						
7. Personal Protection and Safety and Health (ARS only)	See AO/LAO/Safety Ofcr for OHMP testing, to ensure compliance, and clear equipment.						

ITEM	ACTION	CLEARED			CLEARED THRU (Name/Office)	SIGNATURE	DATE
		YES	NO	N/A			
8. Electronic Access Card(s) (Building, Elevator, Parking, etc.)	Collect and return to AFM/FD or AO/LAO for field offices.						
Part III - FINANCIAL							
1. Travel Advance	Check with designated preparer of travel advances (via NFC Travel) or with Imprest Fund						
PART IV - SERVICE AGREEMENTS							
1. First Duty Station/ Relocation Bonus	Verify that agreement has been fulfilled.						
2. Transfers/Relocations/ Bonus	Verify that agreement has been fulfilled.						
3. Long-Term Training (1890, Math Stat, etc.)	Verify that agreement has been fulfilled.						
PART V - CHARGE CARDS							
1. Travel Charge Card	Return to the employee's supervisor/administrative representative.						
2. PCMS Purchase Card	ARS & CSREES - return to AFM/FMD. NASS & ERS - return to agency budget office. ITD - Cancel Password and IDs						
3. Supply Cards (Central Supply Store - HQ)	Return to AFM/FD.						
4. FTS 2000/ International Calling Card	Return to AFM/ITD.						
PART VI - SECURITY							
1. Debriefing	Complete SF-312; contact USDA Sec Ofcr for "SCI" Debriefing						
2. ADP access	ARS - Contact ACS/DCS or ITD help desk. CSREES, ERS, NASS - Contact LAN/e-mail administrator.						
3. NFC access	ARS/ ACS and CSREES - call ITD help desk; ERS - ADP Sec Ofcr; NASS - Agency Sec Ofcr.						
4. Classified Materials	Arrange with ITD to change safe and door combinations.						
5. Official Records	Supervisor must make sure records have not been removed.						
6. Office Doors, Files, Desk keys	Arrange with AFM/FD (AO/LAO for ARS field) to change locks, return keys, etc.						
7. Official Authorizations	Rescind employee's authorization to act for the agency (e.g. property passes, Imprest Fund, open travel authorizations, etc.)						
PART VII - ITEMS NOT CLEARED (LIST SPECIFIC STATUS AND ACTION(S) TO BE TAKEN)							
ITEM	STATUS	ACTION			SIGNATURE OF AGENCY HEAD (OR DESIGNEE)		

ITEM	ACTION	CLEARED			CLEARED THRU (Name/Office)	SIGNATURE	DATE
		YES	NO	N/A			
1.		<input type="checkbox"/> Waive	<input type="checkbox"/> Collect				
2.		<input type="checkbox"/> Waive	<input type="checkbox"/> Collect				

PART VIII - TO BE COMPLETED BY THE RESPONSIBLE ADMINISTRATIVE REPRESENTATIVE ONCE ALL ITEMS HAVE BEEN CHECKED.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Typed Name and Title:

**ISSUES TO DISCUSS WITH EMPLOYEES WHO ARE
SEPARATING FROM FEDERAL SERVICE**

1. HEALTH BENEFITS COVERAGE

- Is employee covered?
- Is employee carrying FEHB into retirement?
- Was 31-day extension of coverage explained?
- Was temporary continuation of coverage (TCC) explained? Was TCC letter issued?
- Was conversion privilege explained?
- Was SF-2810 (or the equivalent) given to employee?

2. LIFE INSURANCE

- Is employee covered?
- Is employee carrying FEGLI into retirement?
- Was 31-day coverage explained?
- Was conversion privilege explained?
- Was SF-2819 given to employee?
- Was SF-2821 completed?

3. THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN

- Was employee participating in TSP?
- Were options discussed?
- Was withdrawal packet given to employee? Interfund transfer?
- Was TCC website provided?

4. SICK LEAVE

- Did employee have sick leave? Advanced sick leave?
- If employee is resigning, was employee informed that sick leave will always be recreditable should employee return to Federal service.

5. ANNUAL LEAVE/COMP LEAVE/CREDIT LEAVE

- Did employee have annual leave or advanced annual leave? Comp leave? Credit leave?
- Was lump sum payment for leave explained?
- If leaving in the middle of a pay period:
 - ▶ For Full time -- no leave will be accrued
 - ▶ For Part time -- leave is prorated for number of hours worked

6. REFUND OF RETIREMENT

- Was the employee given information on refund of retirement? Was the process explained?
- Was SF-2802 or RI 83-13 (CSRS) given to employee (upon request)?
- Was SF-3106 or RI 90-11 (FERS) given to employee (upon request)?
- Was CSRS/FERS refunded service explained?

7. PAYROLL CHANGE

- Was leave and earnings statement explained? (Where to look for changes made to benefits, etc.)
- Was last paycheck discussed? (Expected date of receipt, estimated amount, unapplied allotments, etc.)
- Do we have correct mailing addresses for last paycheck, W-2s, documents, etc.
- Will bank account remain open for final paycheck and lump sum payment of annual leave? If EFT utilized, will bank account remain open for final check from current agency and lump sum payment of leave?
- Has employee provided changes of address?

8. MISCELLANEOUS ISSUES: The following issues should be explained if they apply to the separating employee:

- OWCP
- Unemployment Compensation (SF-8)
- Social Security/Medicare Benefits
- Reinstatement Eligibility
- Reemployment Rights
- Post-Employment Restrictions
- Time-Off Award (If you leave Federal Government or move to another agency outside of USDA, any time not used is forfeited.)
- Was collection process for indebtedness explained?

- Does the employee have a contact name and phone number?

**ISSUES TO DISCUSS WITH EMPLOYEES WHO ARE
MOVING TO ANOTHER USDA AGENCY**

1. HEALTH BENEFITS COVERAGE

- Is employee covered?
- Was automatic transfer of coverage to new agency explained?
- If during open season timeframe and a change has been requested, was employee informed that the new election has been forwarded to the new agency and that the employee should verify that the change occurs in PP-01.

2. LIFE INSURANCE

- Is employee covered?
- Was automatic transfer of coverage to new agency explained?
- If during open season timeframe and a change has been requested, was employee informed that the new election has been forwarded to the new agency and that the employee should verify that the change occurs on time.

3. THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN

- Was employee participating in TSP?
- Was automatic transfer of election(s) to new agency explained?
- If during open season timeframe and a change has been requested, was employee informed that the new election has been forwarded to the new agency and that the employee should verify that the change occurs on time.

4. ANNUAL & SICK LEAVE

- Was employee eligible to earn annual and/or sick leave? If so, explain that balance(s) transfer(s) to the new agency and when.
- Was employee advanced annual and/or sick leave?

5. COMP LEAVE & CREDIT LEAVE

- Did employee have comp leave? credit leave?
- Was lump sum payment for credit and comp leave explained?

6. PAYROLL CHANGE

- Was leave and earnings statement explained? (Where to look for changes made to benefits, etc.)
- Was last paycheck discussed? (Expected date of receipt, estimated amount, unapplied allotments, etc.)
- Were W-2s explained?
- Mailing address change for last paycheck from current agency and any other correspondence that may be necessary?
 - ▶ If EFT utilized, will bank account remain open for final check from current agency and lump sum payment of any credit/comp leave?
 - ▶ If applicable, was transfer of CFC and/or savings bonds to the new agency explained?

7. MISCELLANEOUS ISSUES: The following issues should be explained if they apply to the separating employee:

- Reinstatement Eligibility
- Reemployment Rights
- Post-Employment Restrictions
- Time-off Award (Unused hours may be transferred *if* the new supervisor agrees to accept the balance. If not, the balance is forfeited.)
- Was the collection process for indebtedness explained?
- Does the employee have a contact name and phone number?

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AD-1126, USDA EXIT INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions: We ask each employee who leaves the agency to provide feedback about his or her employment. This information will enable us to identify where improvements should be made in various agency programs and/or work practices. Your participation is voluntary.

All responses are kept confidential.

Part I - Reasons for Leaving: **ARS** **CSREES** **ERS** **NASS** *(Please check one.)*

Indicate which best describes how important each of the following reasons was in your decision to leave the organization. Please circle ONE response for each.

1 - Important
2 - Neither Important nor Unimportant
3 - Unimportant

(REASONS FOR LEAVING)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| 1. Desire to pursue non-work interests | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 2. Desire change to different type work | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 3. Desire to earn more money | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4. Desire to continue formal education | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 5. Desire a move to different location | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 6. Desire to work close to home | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 7. Desire to advance career | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 8. Desire more meaningful work | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 9. Retirement benefits | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 10. Health benefits | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 11. Leave benefits | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 12. Changes to retirement | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 13. Reorganization | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 14. Inconsistent policies | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 15. Management/employee cooperation | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 16. Organization becoming too political | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 17. Working conditions/safety | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 18. Working hours/shifts | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 19. Opportunity to participate in decisions | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 20. Red tape | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 21. Job stress | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 22. Personal health problems | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 23. Difficulties in getting adequate day care | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 24. Training | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 25. Opportunities for advancement | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 26. Promotional practices | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 27. My job was moved geographically | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 28. Management wanted to fire or demote me | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 29. Support, e.g., equipment, etc. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 30. Recognition | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 31. Morale of work group | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 32. Relationship with supervisor | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 33. Discrimination based on sex, race, age, etc. | 1 | 2 | 3 |

34. Other: _____ 1 2 3
35. Of the reasons listed above, what was your number one (1) reason for leaving?___ (Give the number)

