



**Increase your Federal benefits strategic resources by coming to the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) 2012 Fall Festival of Training**

Retirement Services, Benefits Officers Training and Development (BOTD) announce their 2012 Fall Festival of Training. We will be conducting an array of 27 workshops on November 27 – 29, 2012 at the Sheraton Station Square Hotel in Pittsburgh, PA. These workshops consist of full and ½ day workshops.

During the Benefits Training, BOTD is offering these workshops to help you increase your knowledge of the Federal benefits programs and to improve your counseling skills. These workshops will be led by OPM experts and will offer an intensive, high-energy learning experience on selected topics. If you are responsible for administering benefits in your agency or providing counseling to employees about their benefits, you don't want to miss out on these informative workshops.

**Attendance at the Benefits Training meets the requirement in 5 U.S.C 8350(3) that "once each year, each retirement counselor of an agency shall successfully complete a training session conducted under the [U.S. Office of Personnel Management] training program."**

Be sure to register for the workshops early since they fill quickly.

We will not have a Customer Service Center available at this event.

Attached to this announcement is Registration information, Workshop Descriptions, General Information about the event and answers to some frequently asked questions.

For those registering using a training form or purchase order you may register now. For those registering using a credit card you may not do so until, Monday, October 1, 2012. The registration deadline for this event is Friday, October 26, 2012.

## 2012 Fall Festival Training Information

**Location** All workshops will be at the Sheraton Station Square Hotel located at 300 W Station Square Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15219.

A block of rooms is reserved for attendees at the Hotel at the contracted government rate of \$119 per night, plus tax. To claim tax exemption, you must provide the Hotel with your Federal ID or travel order to qualify along with the Pennsylvania Exemption Certificate (attached). You must bring this form with you and present it at check in. The Hotel does not provide this form. Otherwise under GSA's rules, you may file with your agency for reimbursement of these taxes under "Miscellaneous Expenses" without going through the "actual expenses" claim process.

If you are staying overnight, you must make reservations directly with the Hotel and indicate that you are attending OPM training. This will insure that you receive the proper rate.

Note: **You must show a government ID at check in.** The Sheraton Station Square will accept reservations until October 30, 2012, at the contracted rate or up until block of rooms is full, if sooner. After that date the government rate will apply only if space is available.

A dedicated booking website has been created for you to make, modify or cancel your reservation. This is the Hotel's preferred way that you book your reservation. The web address is:

<https://www.starwoodmeeting.com/Book/opm12>

If you must make a reservation via the telephone, the toll free number is 1-800-325-3535. Mention you are registering for the OPM Fall Festival of Training.

The Hotel is serviced by the Pittsburgh International Airport. The airport is 18 miles from the hotel. Airport shuttle & taxi service to and from the airport is available. The cost approximately for the shuttle is \$18 each way and for a taxi is \$40 each way.

**Dates** November 27 - 29, 2012

**Workshop Times** Registration will take place within your scheduled workshop at 8:00 AM unless otherwise specified. The workshops will begin promptly at 8:30 AM and end at 4:00 PM (unless taking a ½ day workshop). The workshops are scheduled to run for the full day and all attendees are expected to be there for the full day. Plan your travel

schedule to allow you to remain until the scheduled end of the workshop.

Registration for the ½ day workshops will take place within your scheduled workshop at 8:00 AM and 12:15 PM. The morning ½ day workshop will begin promptly at 8:30AM and end at 11:45 AM. The afternoon ½ day workshop will begin promptly at 12:45 PM and end at 4:00 PM. These workshops are also scheduled to run for their full time and all attendees are expected to be there for the full time. Plan your travel schedule to allow you to remain until the scheduled end of the workshop

Registration for the Retirement Operations Center tour will begin at 7:15 AM in the hotel lobby. The bus will depart promptly at 8:00 AM and is scheduled to return at 5:00 PM.

### **Tuition**

1-Day workshop -- \$345

Retirement Operations Center Tour - \$345

½ -Day workshops -- \$245

Tuition is per workshop. There is no discount for taking multiple workshops. Tuition includes the welcome reception, continental breakfast, breaks, lunch for those going on the ROC tour and dessert on Wednesday evening for the General Session. Lunch (except for the day you take the ROC tour) and dinner are on your own. In addition each workshop participant receives:

*Workshop Handbook* -- Filled with extra space for your notes, this handy reference guide will prove to be an indispensable resource back at the office. Keep it close at hand for future reference.

*Certificate of Completion* -- Upon **conclusion** of the workshop you'll receive a certificate.

### **How to Register**

Workshop registration information is available at <https://registration.golearnportal.org>..

**If you are paying tuition cost using a training form or purchase order you may register now.**

**If you are paying tuition cost using a credit card you will not be able to register until Monday, October 1, 2012.**

Registration deadline is October 26, 2012.

If you are paying by credit card, all we need is the credit card

information requested on the workshop registration form.

Please note: **If the credit card holder is not the workshop participant, provide an email address for the cardholder so an invoice can be sent.**

**Registration Form** **If you are paying tuition cost using a training form or purchase order** you must submit a separate paper workshop registration form and training form or purchase order for each individual. (Photocopies of the conference registration form are acceptable.) Training forms/purchase orders must contain an authorizing signature. Please print or type in your name on the workshop registration form as you want it to appear on your certificate.

If you are using a paper workshop registration form, fax the registration form to: 202-606-4327

We send confirmation notices after we receive registration forms. If you do not receive a confirmation 2 weeks after submission please contact us at (202) 606-4900 or at [benefits@opm.gov](mailto:benefits@opm.gov).

**Fall Festival Vendor Information:** If paying tuition costs via Training Forms or Purchase Orders you may need the following additional information to facilitate setting up vendor information in your agency's financial system:

**Vendor Name:** U.S. Office of Personnel Management  
**Address:** 1900 E Street, N.W., Room 4351, Washington DC 20415  
Attn: Fall Festival  
**Phone #** 202-606-0788  
**EIN/Tax ID #** 919999515  
**DUNS #** 790907112  
**Contact #** 202-606-2529 (Clyde Bronson)

**Cancellation Policy** You may cancel registrations up to or close of business eastern standard time on Thursday, **November 8, 2012**, to receive a refund. The request must be submitted in writing to us by close of business on November 8. **A \$100 administrative fee will be assessed to your refund for any cancellations.** Agencies will be billed the entire amount for spaces they have reserved if a cancellation is received **after** November 8.

If you are unable to attend, your agency can send a substitute. Substitution information must be in writing, and a separate registration form must be completed. If no substitution is sent, the workshop material will be sent to the attendee that cancelled and no refund will be made.

In the event that special circumstances such as serious illness, accident or death of a close family member arise and the circumstance can't be reported until after November 8, documentation to support the special circumstance (e.g. physician's statement, copy of death certificate, etc) will be required in order to process a refund (less the \$100 administrative fee); however, no refund will be considered after **November 16, 2012**.

**Payment  
with 2012  
funds**

You may pay for the Fall Festival training using FY 2012 funds. In 70 Compo Gen. 296 (1991), the Comptroller General ruled training that began in the next fiscal year is chargeable to prior fiscal year appropriations where the training had been identified as a need in the prior year.

**For More  
Information**

Check out the Frequently Asked Questions. If your question isn't there, you can fax us at (202) 606-4327, email us at [benefits@opm.gov](mailto:benefits@opm.gov), or call us at (202) 606-4900.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **What is the cost of the classes?**

1-Day workshop -- \$345

Retirement Operations Center tour - \$345

½-Day Workshop--\$245

### **Is there a discount for taking more than one workshop?**

There is no discount for taking multiple workshops. Tuition is per workshop

### **What is the attire?**

Attire during the Fall Festival of Training is business casual.

### **What is the address of the hotel?**

The Sheraton Station Square is located at 300 W Station Square Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15219.

### **Do I need to make my own hotel reservations?**

Yes, you must make your own hotel reservations. A block of rooms at the contracted rate of \$119, plus tax, has been reserved. Make your reservations directly with the Sheraton Station Square at: <https://www.starwoodmeeting.com/Book/opm12>. This is the preferred way. If you must make a reservation via telephone, the Telephone number is 800-325-3535.

### **How far is the airport from the hotel?**

The Hotel is located approximately 18 miles from The Pittsburgh International Airport. Airport shuttle & taxi service is available. The cost is approximately \$18 each way for shuttle service and \$40 for taxi service.

### **Is parking available? If so, what is the cost?**

Yes. Additional information on available parking will be provided as we get closer to the date of the event.

### **Will any meals be provided?**

Tuition includes the welcome reception, continental breakfast, breaks, lunch for those going on the ROC tour. Lunch (for all others) and dinner are on your own. There will be a General Session scheduled for Wednesday evening and desserts will be served.

### **Are childcare services provided?**

No, childcare will not be provided. Due to the intensive nature of the workshops, it is not appropriate to bring children to the workshops. Only the Federal employees registered for the workshop may attend. If you have family with you, please ensure that you make adequate childcare arrangements so you are free to focus on the workshops.

**What time are all day classes?**

Registration will begin each day at 8:00 AM in your scheduled workshop. The workshops will begin promptly at 8:30 AM and end at 4:00 PM unless otherwise noted. The workshops are scheduled to run for the entire day and all attendees are expected to be there for the **entire** workshop. You should plan your travel schedule to allow you to remain until the scheduled end of the workshop.

**What time are ½ day classes?**

Registration will begin each day in the scheduled workshop at 8:00 AM for the morning classes and 12:15 PM for the afternoon classes. The workshop will begin promptly at 8:30 AM and will end at 11:45 AM for the morning class and will begin promptly at 12:45 PM and end at 4:00 PM for the afternoon class.

**What time does the bus depart for the ROC tour and when will we return to the hotel?** Registration will begin each morning at 7:15 AM in the hotel lobby and the bus will depart promptly at 8:00 AM. The bus is scheduled to return to the Hotel each evening at 5:00 PM.

**Can I register onsite?**

No. The Benefits Training workshops fill quickly. You should register on line at <https://registration.golearnportal.org/> or submit your registration form to us as soon as possible.

If you are paying tuition cost using a training form or purchase order you may register now.

If you are paying tuition cost using a credit card you will not be able to register until Monday, October 1, 2012.

**The registration deadline is October 26, 2012.**

**Can I purchase a workshop handbook without attending the class?**

The workshop handbooks are designed to be an integral part of the training. They are not designed to be stand-alone documents. Therefore, it isn't possible to make them available to people who do not attend the workshop.

**Do I need to submit an SF 182 (or equivalent) form?**

If you are paying by a government issued credit card, you do not need to submit an SF 182 (or equivalent). Just complete the credit card payment information on the registration form.

**Can I send the registration form and send the payment information later?**

Your Benefits Training registration form is **not** complete until we receive both the registration form and complete payment information.

**Can I enroll in more than one workshop on the same day?**

Workshops are scheduled to run from 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM. You can only take one workshop on each day unless you are taking a ½ day workshop.

**Can I indicate a second choice workshop in case my first choice is filled?**

Yes, if you want to indicate a first and second choice for a workshop, clearly indicate it with a 1 and 2. Do not put check marks by more than one workshop per day.

**When will I receive a confirmation on my registration?**

Online registration confirmations are emailed once your payment has been processed.

We email confirmation of your faxed registration to you within one week of our receipt of your completed registration. If you do not receive confirmation within 2 weeks of registering, please email us at [benefits@opm.gov](mailto:benefits@opm.gov) or call (202) 606-4900.

**When will my credit card be charged?**

Generally the credit card will be charged after we receive your completed registration. There may be some exceptions.

**What do I need to provide the hotel so they won't charge tax?**

To claim tax exemption, you must provide the Sheraton with the Pennsylvania Exemption Certificate. For your convenience, the tax exempt form is included with this announcement. You must bring this form with you **along with your Government ID** and present it at check in. The Hotel does not provide this form. Otherwise under GSA's rules, you may file with your agency for reimbursement of these taxes under "Miscellaneous Expenses" without going through "actual expenses" claim process.

**Will there be a Customer Service Center (CSC) available to check on the status of a case that I am working on?**

No – we will not have a CSC at this event.

**Who can I contact for further information?**

For more information about the Benefits Training you can fax us at (202) 606-4327, email us at [benefits@opm.gov](mailto:benefits@opm.gov), or call us at (202) 606-4900.