
ARC Monthly Bulletin – November 2011

Valuable information for ARC's customers

Article headlines appear below. Scroll down for full stories.

HEADLINES

Franchise Services

1. Award Winning Budget Formulation and Execution Manager (BFEM) Joins ARC's Service Line
2. Oracle Release 12 (R12) Project Update

Financial Management

3. Reducing Improper Payments
4. Accounts Payable Help Desk

Human Resources Services

5. HR Efficiency Review Initiative Update
6. Leave Year Ending Date Could Have Significant Impact for Retirements
7. TSP Increases Contribution Limits for Tax Year 2012
8. Federal Benefits Open Season Info Available on Facebook and Twitter

Information Technology Services

9. PKI Hardware Refresh

FULL STORIES

1. Award Winning Budget Formulation and Execution Manager (BFEM) Joins ARC's Service Line

The BFEM application is now available. The BFEM program is comprised of two main components; the BFEM system and the Project Management Office (PMO). The program offers assistance producing annual budget requests. Our staff works with customers to ensure efficient operation and successful development. We are pleased to have added the BFEM program as one of our offerings.

For additional information, contact Christopher Friedline at 202-504-3707 or christopher.friedline@bpd.treas.gov.

2. Oracle Release 12 (R12) Project Update

Customers are reminded to evaluate non-ARC systems (e.g., time and attendance, revenue/billing, etc.) that your agency administers or uses to determine what changes can or should be made to those systems to accommodate the new Accounting Flexfield (AFF) structure. As part of the R12 project we will make necessary changes to systems to accommodate the new AFF structure. Details on the new AFF structure can be found on the R12 website, https://arc.publicdebt.treas.gov/fs/oracler12/fsoracle_r12.htm.

If you have any questions on the Oracle R12 Project, contact us at R12communication@bpd.treas.gov.

3. Reducing Improper Payments

GOVerify is a new program within Public Debt that is focused on reducing improper payments in the Government. Our financial management staff is working with the GOVerify team to test the Oracle vendor data and incorporate the use of GOVerify services into our payment processes to improve our internal controls over disbursements. GOVerify is a new program within Public Debt that is focused on reducing improper payments in the Government. An information sharing session on improper payments was held with our grant-making customers on October 6, 2010.

If you have any additional questions about GOVerify, contact Debra Carder at 304-480-7002 or debra.carder@bpd.treas.gov.

4. Accounts Payable Help Desk

As more Federal agencies serviced by our financial management business line are transitioned to FMS's Internet Payment Platform (IPP) for accounts payable processing, the number of vendors impacted has increased significantly. As a result, an Accounts Payable Help Desk was established on September 26 to support agency IPP invoice approver questions and vendors questions related to IPP invoicing.

The Accounts Payable Help Desk can be reached at 304-480-8000, option 7. The Help Desk is available Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm.

If you have any additional questions regarding Accounts Payable or IPP, contact us at AccountsPayable@bpd.treas.gov.

5. HR Efficiency Review Initiative Update

Human Resources Operations Division continues its efficiency initiative. To see how they are progressing check out the updates below:

In employment services branches, we have adjusted the size of teams to correspond with the work load. Forms and tools have been developed to standardize the hiring process and other processes. Delegated examining unit reporting has been automated. Customer identified issues have been tracked and various improvements implemented. Additional improvements are still under consideration. As a result of our newly established call center we were able to handle the recent USAJobs outage more efficiently then past outages. Our participation in the pilot initiative is scheduled to end January 18; we will continue to consider adjustments as well as make improvements based on what we have learned during the pilot.

Employee benefits branch has started a preliminary analysis for an efficiency review. Beginning November 7, customers calling 304-480-8275 for benefits information during open season will receive assistance from the new service center. We have a group of trained staff prepared to handle the increased call volume during open season.

The pilot in the personnel processing branches has officially ended. While a great deal of work remains to refine processes and increase the use of automated tools within the branches, the new structure and processes that have been adopted to date meet our objectives of reducing workload variability among staff, increasing standardization, improving employee efficiency, and improving employee work-life balance. Additional benefits, such as the partial implementation of automated call logs that can be shared with customers for analysis have been a positive result.

Pay and Leave Branch's pilot has been implemented. Pay and Leave assistants have been broken into three function-oriented teams: processing, reporting, and a call center. While adjustments have been on-going since implementation, the pilot seems to be generating overall efficiency gains. Our employee proficiency is improving due to specialization, and customer requirements are being met.

Division-wide, the process improvement team is in the early steps of initiating a project to map all processes. Process mapping will be invaluable in identifying best practices and streamlining activities both within and across functions.

As HR Services makes changes and moves forward, we strive to inform you every step of the way. We understand that the changes made affect you. Please keep in mind the goal of the initiative is to achieve operational excellence by providing you the best service.

For additional information, contact Mike Cundiff at 304-480-7130 or mike.cundiff@bpd.treas.gov.

6. Leave Year Ending Date Could Have Significant Impact for Retirements

The 2011 leave year and calendar year both end on December 31. An employee must have scheduled "use or lose" annual leave by November 19 and then taken the leave by the end of the leave year to avoid forfeiture.

Any unused “use or lose” leave will be forfeited December 31, 2011. Employees who are retiring on January 1, 2012, or after will forfeit any leave balance over their 2011 personal leave ceiling; those forfeited hours will not be included in the employee’s lump-sum payment of annual leave.

Since the leave year ends in December instead of January, it is especially important that Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and CSRS Offset covered employees planning to retire on January 1, 2, or 3, of 2012, pay special attention to their "use or lose" annual leave balance.

For additional information about the rules for "use or lose" annual leave, contact the Pay and Leave Services Branch at 304-480-8400 or payroll@bpd.treas.gov. For assistance choosing the best date to retire, contact the Employee Benefits Branch at 304-480-8275 or benefits@bpd.treas.gov.

7. TSP Increases Contribution Limits for Tax Year 2012

The regular Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) contribution limit for tax year 2012 is $17,000. For Federal agencies paid through the National Finance Center, including all of ARC’s HR customers, the 2012 tax year spans from December 18, 2011, through December 15, 2012. To distribute $17,000 over the entire tax year, employees should elect to contribute $654 per pay period to the TSP. This election should be made according to agency procedure between December 4, 2011, and December 17, 2011.

Employees who will be age 50 or older during 2012 may also contribute up to an additional $5,500 tax-deferred “catch-up” contributions, only if regular contributions for the tax year will total $17,000. To distribute $5,500 over the entire tax year, employees should elect to contribute $212 per pay period to the TSP. This election should also be made between December 4, 2011, and December 17, 2011. Please note that a new "catch-up" election must be made each tax year.

For additional information, contact the Employee Benefits Branch at 304-480-8275 or benefits@bpd.treas.gov.

8. Federal Benefits Open Season Information is Available on Facebook and Twitter

Get the latest information on the Federal Benefits Open Season by “Liking” our Facebook page.

We'll post reminders, breaking information, and items of interest about the health, dental, vision, and flexible spending accounts during the Open Season on both Facebook and Twitter.

To view the Open Season Facebook page, go to www.facebook.com/fedbenefits.

We encourage you to become a fan by clicking on the “Like” link once you are on the Federal Benefits Open Season Facebook page. To become a fan, you must have a Facebook account. If you don’t have an account, you can sign up by clicking the Sign Up graphic on OPM’s Federal Benefits Open Season Facebook page.

Get the latest information from OPM on Federal benefits including Open Season by following the new Federal Benefits’ Twitter Feed.

After Open Season, we’ll still be around providing information on the benefit programs throughout the year.

To view our Twitter feed, go to http://twitter.com/insurefeds.

We encourage you to follow our Twitter feed. To follow, you must have a Twitter account. If you don’t have an account, you can sign up by filling out the information (i.e., name, email, and password) and clicking “Sign up” from our twitter page or from http://twitter.com/.

9. PKI Hardware Refresh

On October 16, 2011 Public Debt completed a refresh of the hardware supporting our Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) Shared Service Provider Program. This process helps insure the continued performance and availability of systems supporting HSPD-12 programs for Treasury, the Department of Homeland Security, Social Security Administration, and NASA.

For additional information, contact Orlando Yaconis at 304-480-6205, or Orlando.Yaconis@bpd.treas.gov.

ARC Websites: Homepage I Customer Access Pages I Bulletin Archives

----

Administration: Subscribe I Unsubscribe I Bulletin Feedback
