

SPECIAL FURLOUGH EDITION - Civilian Personnel Bulletin – October 2013

The articles below provide information and resources that may be useful to civilian employees who are affected by the current shutdown furlough situation:

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Message from LTC Bostick

“These furloughs are in no way a reflection of the importance of your work or the hard heroic effort you put forth every day. This has been a trying period for our USACE teammates across the globe. I want to thank all of you – military, civilian and contractors – for your patience and your professionalism, as well as your continued service to the Corps and the Nation. Stay strong through these challenging times.”

Thomas P. Bostick, Lieutenant General, US Army, Commander, USACE

Employee Assistance Program and USACE Chaplain Resources Information

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

The EAP is a confidential counseling and referral service that can help you and your family successfully deal with life's challenges. EAP services are available to you at no cost, through Stuecker and Associates. You can call 24 hours a day, seven days a week for confidential help with work, family, personal matters, legal, or financial issues. Use of EAP will not jeopardize or have a negative impact on your job security and/or opportunities for promotion. Information about EAP services is available on their website at <http://stueckerandassoc.com/usace-glord/#/> or by phone at 502-452-9227 or 1-800-799-9EAP (9327).

USACE Chaplain's Office

The Chaplain's office can provide counseling and assistance. Please contact a member of the Chaplain's staff at 202-761-5305.

Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE)

While on furlough, Federal employees may become eligible for unemployment benefits under the Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) program. UCFE is paid by the states under the same terms and conditions as regular state unemployment compensation (UC). You will need to contact the state of your last duty station to file an UCFE claim. To qualify for benefits, you must have earned sufficient wages during the prior 12–18 months, as determined under the state UC law. The state will advise you of

whether or not you are eligible for benefits. A map of the state unemployment insurance web sites may be found at <http://www.servicelocator.org/OWSLinks.asp>.

In many states, employees may file for unemployment benefits electronically. Please check your state's unemployment insurance web site for additional details.

When filing for benefits, please have the SF-8 you were provided with your furlough letter, along with a copy of your last LES or SF-50.

We recently learned unemployment offices are asking furloughed employees for leave and earning statements back to April 2012 or W-2. Furloughed employees should tell unemployment offices to fax wage and earnings requests to the Army Benefits Center - Civilian and the ABC-C staff will complete the required wage information. ABC-C Unemployment Branch contact information is as follows:

Army Benefits Center - Civilian
301 Marshall Avenue (ATTN: Unemployment Branch)
Ft Riley, KS 66442

Fax number (785) 240-3643
Phone number (785) 239-8661

Federal Employee Education & Assistance Fund (FEEA)

The Federal Employee Education & Assistance Fund (FEEA) is the only non-profit organization devoted solely to helping civilian federal and postal employees. In response to the furlough situation now affecting nearly one million civilian federal employees, FEEA will make available no-interest loans of up to \$1,000 through the Emergency Assistance Program. Employees who experience a reduced or missing paycheck may apply on or after the date of their first reduced paycheck. Please note: Contractors are not eligible for FEEA assistance. Employees in need should:

- Download and complete the Emergency Assistance Application
- Provide a copy of your pay stub showing furlough day(s) and reduced compensation
- Follow the instructions for providing a copy of the bill(s) you need help paying
- Be sure to follow the instructions for clearly describing your hardship situation -- you must provide complete information about the particular hardship being made worse by loss of pay due to furlough
- Fax all required materials to FEEA at 1-303-933-7587 or scan all required materials and email to rmartillaro@feea.org

FEEA will process applications as they are received, but the high volume of requests means it may take a week or more to process requests. Per the FEEA website, "Funding is very limited and FEEA has had to significantly curtail available loans. We are helping those who are in the worst situations AND have extenuating financial circumstances beyond being furloughed. We, unfortunately, have to turn away some applicants who would previously have qualified for assistance due to lack of funds. Again, please be patient and know FEEA's mission is to help as many federal employees as possible."

USAA Bank

USAA is prepared to offer the payroll advance loan to affected military members with existing direct deposit at USAA Bank if a government shutdown interrupts military pay. Likewise, members who have existing direct deposit arrangements at USAA Bank for their Federal checks may also be eligible for the loan if their payments were interrupted due to a debt ceiling impasse. Members should check with USAA on any options available.

Helpful Links

Army Civilian Personnel Online (for latest Army shutdown information) - <http://cpol.army.mil/library/general/2013sequestration/FY14Lapse.html>

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) - <http://stueckerandassoc.com/usace-glord/#/>

Federal Employee Education and Assistance Fund (FEEA) - <http://www.feea.org/programs/emergency-assistance/furlough-aid-information>

Office of Personnel Management (OPM) (for latest status on Federal operational status) - <http://www.opm.gov>

Military One Source - <http://www.militaryonesource.mil/>

DOD/DCPAS Shutdown Furlough - <http://www.cpms.osd.mil/Subpage/FurloughGuidance>