



American Federation of Government Employees AFGE Local 3607 (AFL-CIO)

PARS FACT SHEET 3

What can you do to get a better PARS plan?

As a result of the changes made to the Performance Appraisal and Recognition System (PARS) in 2008, it is more important than ever that you participate in the collaborative process that is supposed to occur when your PARS plan is being developed. To begin you can focus on the following key areas:

Make sure your supervisor does not merely copy your last PARS plan and turn it into your new plan. The 2009 performance period was only 8 or 9 months.

Make sure you propose assumptions for your PARS plan. Some managers resist employee efforts to include assumptions in their PARS plan. However, because of the new benchmark standards, it is more important than ever that you request assumptions be included in your plan. A separate fact sheet on assumptions is available from the Union.

Make sure your PARS plan takes into account your leave plans. If you are expecting you will be out on extended sick leave or leave without pay (LWOP) you also could face a problem if your PARS plan fails to account for your planned absence. Make sure your PARS plan does not penalize you for taking approved leave. Ask that deadlines and work quantity requirements be adjusted to reflect your anticipated use of leave.

The benchmark standards include standards that are vague and subjective such as creativity, high quality work products, promoting teamwork, etc. Your supervisor may be unable to tell you what those standards mean or how you will be evaluated. That leaves you vulnerable. If you are unclear as to how your supervisor is going to evaluate your performance under such vague standards, the PARS agreement between EPA and AFGE gives you the right to add written comments for consideration and final determination by a second level supervisor.

Don't accept verbal promises from your supervisor that nothing is really changing and you have nothing to worry about. The Agency has issued benchmark standards that make every employee vulnerable. Your supervisor could be forced to put you on a Performance Assistance Plan (PAP) by upper management or your supervisor could be gone tomorrow. A new supervisor might take full advantage of the vague standards that are in your PARS plan. Request changes in your proposed PARS plan so that you do not end up on a PAP or Performance Improvement Plan (PIP).