

ARMED FORCES RETIREMENT HOME PLAN TO IMPLEMENT EO 13522

Introduction. The Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH) is an independent Federal agency providing state of the art continuing care communities for certain former enlisted personnel and warrant officers of the Armed Forces of the United States. By statute, the AFRH has a direct human-care mission at two facilities: AFRH-Washington, and AFRH-Gulfport.

Currently, only one facility is operational: the Gulfport, Mississippi facility was rendered inoperable by Hurricane Katrina (August 28, 2005). The Gulfport facility is in the process of being completely rebuilt, and is slated to open in Fall, 2010. At the same time, the AFRH-Washington campus is undergoing major renovations.

The AFRH currently has 268 employees. The plan is to stabilize at 305 employees sometime after the opening of Gulfport.

1. Describe how the agency will conduct a baseline assessment of the current state of labor relations within the agency.

The AFRH has conducted a preliminary assessment as follows.

The AFRH has two bargaining units:

a. Local 3090, American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO. This Local represents all General Schedule employees under the Nursing Division of the Armed Forces Retirement Home - Washington except for supervisory, professional, and clerical personnel.

The most recent negotiated agreement with this Local was signed May 23, 2005. The agreement was valid for 3 years, with subsequent three year automatic roll over periods.

There were no appointed representatives for this Local from July 31, 2009 until February 23, 2010 when an acting President was appointed by the National level. The Local is in the process of recruiting, organizing, and training. The AFRH has facilitated Local 3090's effort to revitalize itself by providing meeting rooms and publicity avenues.

b. Laborers' International Union of North American, Federal, Public Service & Plaster Trades Employees Local Union 572, AFL-CIO. This local also represents employees at the Armed Forces Retirement Home - Washington. The bargaining unit includes all non-professional employees who are not represented by Local 3090 and are eligible to be in the bargaining unit under the Labor Relations statute.

The most recent negotiated agreement was finalized on June 4, 1999--and has rolled over automatically annually every since.

Except for one brief period, this local has not had any AFRH employee representatives for some years, and is primarily run out of a business office now located in Fairfax, Virginia.

(All Gulfport positions were eliminated approximately four years ago in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, and thus there are no bargaining unit employees in Gulfport.)

The agency has had amicable relations with both unions, resolving issues informally to the mutual satisfaction without 3rd party litigation. Future meetings with the two unions will determine if any further base line assessment would advance the purposes of the Executive Order.

2. Report the extent to which the agency has established labor-management forums, or may participate in the pilot projects (described in section 4 of the order).

Regarding Local 3090, the negotiated agreement provides a general framework for addressing the matters envisioned by the Executive Order in Article 1, Section 3. More specifically, Article 7 ("Home-Union Cooperation") states:

The Parties recognize that many areas of mutual interest and concern are outside the scope of the collective bargaining relationship. The Parties also recognize that it is in the best interests of both Parties to meet and discuss such issues outside to collective bargaining context. Either party wishing to meet with the others shall contact the other party and arrange to meet at a mutually agreeable time and location.

Local 572 has a similar provision in Article 9, Section 1, of the negotiated agreement: either party having the ability to call a meeting.

Small organizations are typically more informal regarding cooperation and communication, and that has been the case here. Cooperation has indeed occurred, but without the formal meetings and minutes found in larger organizations.

As to the pilot projects discussed in section 4 of the Executive Order, the AFRH does not anticipate participation at this time: our major energies are focused on opening the rebuilt facility at Gulfport at this time (in addition to major changes in the Washington campus--which include rebuilding the most used building on the campus). For a small agency, it is not feasible to add a new project with formal measures and efforts (on top of formal Government-wide Human Capital requirements).

3. Address how the agency will work with the exclusive representatives or its employees through its labor-management forums to develop agency-or bargaining unit-specific metrics to monitor improvements in areas such as labor-management satisfaction, productivity gains, cost savings, and other areas as identified by the relevant labor-management forum's participants.

The AFRH will share with labor relations forum members the data that the agency currently routinely collects to measure agency effectiveness and compliance. The forum will determine what additional metrics, if any, need to be established in order measure labor-management satisfaction, productivity gains, cost savings, and other relevant areas.

4. Explain the agency's plan for devoting sufficient resources to implementation of the plan.

As a small agency, with unions at the same geographical location as headquarters, we do not expect funding to require any special budgeting efforts.