

United States Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Plan for Implementation of Labor-Management Forums

Introduction

The labor and management associates at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) have recognized that effective labor-management relationships are essential to achieving the strategic goals identified in OPM's Strategic Plan, *A New Day for Federal Service*. Our four goals are to Hire the Best, Respect the Workforce, Expect the Best, and Honor Service. A collaborative relationship between union and management serves the best interests of the Agency, our employees, and our customers. We are committed to building a genuine collaboration that focuses on achieving the mission of this Agency and improving the quality of work life for OPM employees.

We see our labor-management culture as one characterized by mutual respect and trust, joint problem-solving, and a willingness to share information and confront problems openly and honestly. Within our labor-management forum framework, we will work together to develop better and more effective ways to meet the goals of this agency and to seek solutions to workplace issues. This will lead to fewer employee complaints of any nature and more focus on serving our customers.

Current Agency Labor-Management Collaborations

OPM is already working in genuine collaboration forums starting with the recent negotiations on our comprehensive Agency reorganization. The negotiations were conducted in an interest based environment – to include interest based bargaining training for all participants - and resulted in an agreeable and swift implementation. A unique outcome of the reorganization discussions is a feature in the implementation plan that provides for ongoing conversations; as such, the dialog on post-reorganization implementation issues does not end with the completion of negotiations.

The collaboration between the Retirement Operation Center's management team and the American Federation of Government Employees Local 2450 in Boyers, PA, can be attributed to the trust, honesty, and open communication that exist between these two groups. We use the process of Alternative Dispute Resolution to work through issues at the lowest level. Over the years ADR has proven to be more effective than the negotiated grievance process. We also believe we share the concept of working as a team for the good of the agency, our customers and employees. Although we work as a team, both parties believe personal accountability at all levels is the true mechanism for a successful partnership and a successful retirement operation.

We also convened a "Partnership Group" that involves representatives from AFGE locals 32 and 2450, Office of the Director, and Agency management officials to develop our

Labor-Management framework and to discuss emerging issues needing attention during the transition to our formalized Agency Labor-Management Framework.

Implement Agency Labor-Management Forums

The Labor-Management Framework includes three tiers which will be guided by the top tier - OPM’s Labor-Management Transformation Forum (LMTF).

OPM’s Labor Management Framework		
	Forum	Responsibilities
Tier One	OPM’s Labor-Management Transformation Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency mission linked goal execution • Topics referred for the Labor-Management Transformation Forum’s involvement (including Local 2450 invoking participation or soliciting Forum involvement) • Development and on going analysis of Labor-Management success metrics
Tier Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor Management Committee (Local 32) • Ongoing LR Communications Forum (Local 2450) 	Pre-decisional discussions, Impact and Implementation negotiation obligations
Tier Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grievance Procedure • Arbitration Settlement Discussions/Hearings • Unfair Labor Practice Charges • Clarification of Unit • FMCS • MSPB 	Traditional LR

OPM’s Labor-Management Transformation Forum

In order for OPM’s Labor-Management Transformation Forum to succeed and guide the rest of the Labor-Management Framework, it must have the visible commitment, endorsement, and involvement of leaders in the Agency and Union who have decision making authority. All participants must be committed to implementing Forums that will yield tangible benefits. The Forum must also develop and monitor metrics to ensure initial and sustained success. Our Forum structure addresses these principles as follows:

- Membership: Forum membership will consist of three Co-Chairs. The Co-Chairs are the Director of OPM and the Presidents of American Federation of Government Employee, Local 32 and Local 2450. The Director shall appoint no fewer than five and no more than 10 Forum Members. The President of AFGE, Local 32 and the President of AFGE, Local 2450 will share 10 member slots and will work together to determine the number of members within the 10 slots who will come from each Local.

- Charter: OPM’s Labor-Management Transformation Forum will facilitate effective Agency operations by assisting in the accomplishment of Agency high priority goals, improving working conditions, increasing morale, and improving customer service. Each member is committed to the goals and process of the Forum. Members will be open-minded, demonstrate appropriate interpersonal skills and behavior, be positive and enthusiastic about the opportunity to be involved in the forum and meeting the Agency’s goals, and exhibit trust and faith in other members. The Forum will establish time frames to implement goals, resolve issues, and evaluate outcomes and established metrics. The members will be knowledgeable about the issues before the Forum, seek input from co-workers, communicate to co-workers that the Forum is doing serious work and convey that work in a positive, constructive manner.

- Preliminary High Priority Goals Identified
 - Career Ladder/Bridge positions (e.g., develop policies/procedures to ensure career ladders and bridge positions are considered when organizations are being made or changed.)
 - Work Life Initiatives (e.g., expansion of telework, ROWE, Wellness, etc.)
 - Diversity and Inclusion (e.g., increasing throughout the Agency)
 - Space (e.g., organizational co-location of employees with like work, virtual workplace)
 - Career Development/Employee Development/Upward Mobility (e.g., developing competitive employees)
 - Training (e.g., continual learning, certifications, etc.)
 - Work Assignments (accurate position descriptions and accurate performance standards are aligned to office goals)
 - Awards (e.g., monetary, non-monetary, etc.)
 - MEO/Contracts (e.g., “insourcing”)
 - Explore opportunities for permissive bargaining and how to evaluate success
 - Hiring Reform (e.g., vacancy announcement process)
 - Employee Benefits
 - Open Government (e.g., transparency and collaboration between constituents)

The Co-Chairs will identify a Forum Member to champion each goal selected for execution. Champions will establish a small committee (e.g., 2/3 union reps, 2

employees, 2 subject matter experts [from ES, OPM HR or even another agency]). The Champion will assist the committee in setting up action plans, supporting tasks, and milestones toward accomplishing the goal. The Champion will report goal accomplishment status as appropriate at monthly meetings.

- **Structure:** The Forum will meet at least monthly. Regular Agenda items are:
 - Forum Goals (identification of new Goals as dictated by Agency mission, or Forum metric and trend observations, and/or updates of previously identified Goals)
 - Labor-Management Topics (topics generated from Tier 2 or Tier 3 activity. (Local 2450 can use this agenda item to invoke their participation in the Forum (regular or temporary) or to solicit Forum involvement in an issue.

Forum members will receive training on successful labor-management principles such as team building, consensus building, cooperative problem solving, and alternative dispute resolution. A Labor-Management Transformation Forum Newsletter or other similar marketing tool will be used to disseminate successes and outcomes to the workforce. The Forum will identify a method for annual or bi-annual membership changes and also develop a process to quickly fill unexpected vacancies.

Labor-Management Metrics

The “Partnership Group” has identified three preliminary categories of metrics for collection and evaluation that are in alignment with the metrics suggested by the National Council on Federal Labor-Management Relations:

- Mission accomplishment metrics (e.g., goal accomplishment outcomes)
- Quality of work life metrics (e.g., Employee Viewpoint Survey data. On-the-spot satisfaction survey data addressing specific labor-management activities, goal implementation, topics bargained, etc.)
- Labor-management relations metrics (e.g., LR climate survey for union and management representatives and grievance, arbitration, ULP information)

The Labor-Management Transformation Forum will develop and finalize metrics in accordance with the action plan outlined below and as Goals are identified and addressed.

Implementation Action Plan

<u>Planned Activity</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>
Designate Labor-Management Transformation Forum members	3/31/2010
Labor-Management Forum Success Training (group dynamics, consensus building, cooperative problem solving, and alternative dispute resolution)	2-day training on 4/6/2010 & 4/8/2010
First Meeting of the Labor-Management Transformation Forum	4/30/2010
Agree upon initial high priority goals	6/30/2010
Develop metrics	6/30/2010
Administer baseline survey on labor-management relations climate	7/30/2010
Train the Trainer modules developed to cascade labor-management training (consensus building, cooperative problem solving, and alternative dispute resolution) to front line union representatives and supervisors and managers	8/31/2010
Roll out union rep/supervisor Training	9/30/2010