

Directive 345.1
1/24/90

CIVIL SERVICE AND FEDERAL EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEMS

- I. PURPOSE This Directive states the policy and provides information on the retirement systems for all Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) employees subject to pension plan deductions. The retirement systems are complex and multifaceted. This Directive defines who is covered and the resources available for further information.
- II. REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS This Directive replaces AMS Instruction 345-1, Rev. 2, Retirement, dated 7-9-84.
- III. POLICY It is AMS policy to provide retirement counseling to employees and assistance to claimants, including survivors of deceased employees.
- IV. COVERAGE This Directive applies to all AMS employees who are in career, career-conditional, excepted career, excepted conditional, term, temporary appointment pending establishment of register (TAPER), or excepted indefinite appointments.
- V. DEFINITIONS
- A. Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) employees are persons who are automatically covered by CSRS (generally, anyone hired in the Federal Government in a permanent position prior to January 1, 1984).
- B. Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS) employees are persons who are covered by FERS (generally, anyone hired in the Federal Government in a permanent position since January 1, 1984, or elected to transfer from CSRS to FERS).
- C. CSRS Offset employees are persons who are covered by CSRS and Social Security (generally, anyone hired in a covered position after January 1, 1984, had at least 5 years of civilian service in a previous appointment, was covered by CSRS at the time of separation, and had a break in service of at least 1 year).
- D. The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) is a retirement savings and investment plan for Federal employees.
- VI. BENEFITS
- A. Benefits will vary according to the retirement plan coverage and elections made at the time of retirement.

These benefits are explained in the following brochures available from the appropriate Servicing Personnel Office (SPO):

1. General information for CSRS and Offset employees on the retirement system, military service credit, deposits and redeposits, disability retirement, survivor benefits, early retirement, computing benefits, credit for unused sick leave, refunds, and voluntary contributions may be found in the CSRS "Retirement Facts" pamphlets, numbers 1 through 10 (RI 83-1 through RI 83-10).

2. Information about FERS is explained in FERS (RI 90-1) and FERS Transfer Handbook, A Guide to Making Your Decision (RI 90-3).

3. A Thrift Savings Plan Open Season Update brochure is provided to FERS, CSRS, and Offset employees at each open season (twice a year) and gives brief up-to-date information on the plan. New employees will receive the Summary of the Thrift Savings Plan For Federal Employees booklet with more detailed information.

B. Details on how to apply for benefits and processing of forms may be obtained from the appropriate SPO.

VII.
COUNSELING
SERVICES

A. The SPO's which provide retirement counseling for AMS employees are:

1. AMS, Personnel Division, Employee Relations Branch, Washington, DC, for SES or Schedule C appointments;

2. APHIS, Customer Support Services, Hyattsville, Maryland, for all other AMS headquarters' employees; and

3. APHIS, Field Servicing Office, Field Personnel Services, Minneapolis, Minnesota, for AMS field employees.

B. Employees planning to retire should contact their SPO for counseling and guidance at least 90 days prior to their proposed retirement date.

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