"2022" Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Annual Pay Raise

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Agency POCs

Q: Why wouldn't NFC accept a requirements form from me?

A: Your name was not listed on the Agency Contacts List.

Q: How can I receive Pay Raise information?

A: You must be identified on the Agency Contacts List, which was mailed to current POCs with the Annual Pay Raise Kickoff Package. If you need to be added to the list, your contact information must be submitted by another authorized POC using the Agency Contact Information Form, in accordance with Agency Contact Information section in the Customer Procedures.

Q: Can my agency have more than two POCs?

A: Yes, a currently authorized POC can specify an additional POC by adding the name and contact information on the Agency Contact Information Form.

Q: What am I expected to do as my agency's approved POC?

A: As an Agency approved POC, you are expected to submit requirements and table updates to the Annual Pay Raise Mailbox (Annual.PayRaise@usda.gov), attend Pay Raise meetings, and receive and share pay raise information with your Agency.

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Forms

Q: How do I submit forms/requirements for Agency-specific TMGT table updates?

A: See the instructions below:

- For requirements that include **Agency-specific** TMGT table updates that should be processed manually for Tables 16, 29, 52, and 98, Agencies are required to submit

updates to the TMGT Team via the ServiceNow procedures for TMGT updates through Agency-authorized personnel only.

- o ServiceNow Request Tickets must be submitted as a Request, and not an Incident, to the PaPB/QCS group for processing, and screen prints are required with each update to ensure accuracy.
- o Agency Requirements/TMGT Tables Forms relating to those manual TMGT table updates MUST be submitted to the Annual Pay Raise Mailbox, Annual.PayRaise@usda.gov, with the ServiceNow ticket number entered on the form for tracking purposes.

- For TMGT table updates that should be processed via batch load, Agencies will be required to submit their Agency Requirements/TMGT Tables Forms to the Annual Pay Raise Mailbox, Annual.PayRaise@usda.gov, along with the associated table update requests.

Q: Why isn't the Pay Table Form available?

A: The table information previously provided on the Pay Table Form can now be entered on the Agency Requirements/TMGT Tables Form, which can be found on the Pay Raise web page.

Q: What kinds of actions will cause my requirements form to be rejected?

A: Your form will be rejected for one or more of the following reasons:
1. it contains more than one Pay Plan
2. it contains an invalid Pay Plan
3. it contains a Pay Plan that will be automatically processed
4. a revised form did not contain the original control number supplied by NFC
5. it was submitted by an authorized user, as indicated by the Agency Contact List
6. table files submitted were incorrectly formatted
7. more than 50 table entries were included on the form, instead of in a .CSV file
8. fifty (50) or more table entries were provided in a format other than in a .CSV file
9. incomplete Remark Code information was provided, e.g., literal was not provided
10. other required information was not provided

Q: Why can't I submit more than one Pay Plan per requirements form?

A: Requirements can vary by Pay Plan, so to ensure that no errors are made, a separate form should be used for each Pay Plan.

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Q: What kinds of requirements should go in Section G, Special Requirements, on the Agency Requirements/TMGT Tables Form?

A: The types of requirements that can go in Section G include customized remarks codes.

Q: Which Pay Plans do not require a requirements form to be completed?

A: Pay Plans listed in the Annual Pay Raise Bulletin and the Customer Procedures do <u>not</u> have to be submitted on requirements forms. These Pay Plans will either not be processed, or they will be processed automatically.

Q: Can I use the Agency Requirements/TMGT Tables Form to submit pay increase requests for wage grade employees under the Federal Wage System?

A: Yes, you may use the Agency Requirements/TMGT Tables Form to submit pay increase requests for wage grade employees under the Federal Wage System. For more information, refer to the Customer Procedures.

Q: How do I inform NFC that my Agency approves its requested changes?

A: Agency approval must be submitted on the Agency Status Report after production data is verified. This form should also be used to provide feedback and comments to NFC throughout the Annual Pay Raise process. See the Customer Procedures for more information.

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Processing

New! Q: What is NFC's new Software Scheduled Release cycle for 2023?

A: <u>NFC's Software Scheduled Release cycle for 2023 is Pay Periods 06, 13, and 19.</u> However, there will also be a Pay Period 01 release, which will include the Annual Pay Raise project, as well as the Union Dues Rate Update project.

New! Q: How should Agencies submit TMGT updates with less than 50 entries?

A: Agency-specific updates that should be processed "manually" must be submitted via ServiceNow according to the instructions in the Customer Procedures.

New! Q: How should Agencies submit TMGT updates with 50 or more entries?

A: Agency-specific updates that should be processed via batch load must be submitted using one of the (3) TMGT file layouts provided by NFC. See the instructions in the Customer Procedures.

Q: What is required to process a rollback?

A: When NFC processes a manual rollback in EPIC, other actions processed for that pay period will be rolled back also on the PPS side (e.g., FlexFund). Criteria used for a rollback include department/agency, NOA code, Effective date of action and pay plan.

"2022" Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Annual Pay Raise

Q: What is the order of processing actions for an employee who receives the annual pay raise and a WGI, both effective in January? Last year, we found that the pay raise was calculated first, then the WGI, but the WGI was based on the prior-year pay tables. This required HCUP processing for every individual in our agency with a WGI effective the first pay period of the year since the salary for the WGI was then incorrect.

A: Last year's furlough and retroactive pay raise processing caused some unique situations that will not exist for PP 01. The salary rates will be in effect for all personnel actions effective in January. If an employee receives a NOA 894 (PAY ADJ) and NOA 893 (WGI), both effective PP 01 (in January), the NOA 894 will sequence before the NOA 893, but both will have the correct salary rates.

Q: What is the maximum number of entries that can be submitted for manual processing via screen prints?

A: You can submit up to 49 entries with screen prints. If you have 50 or more entries, they may be entered into a spreadsheet for batch loading.

Q: Is it okay to process brand new hires (future ready status), employees new to the federal government? It seems it should be okay as they will not receive a pay adjustment and will be hired at the CURRENT YEAR's rate.

A: This is fine. When we process the pay adjustments we select only employees who are active as of the end of PP26. New hires would not be in that population. It is correct that their accession will process using the correct new CURRENT YEAR amount.

Q: How can I find out why my pay adjustment was not processed?

A: Messages specific to the issues that need to be resolved, regarding someone not getting a pay adjustment, can be seen in EPIC as doc type 999. Not all of these are pay raise related, but those that are, specify the pay raise could not be generated and should be processed manually.

Q: Where do I send information related to Annual Pay Raise?

A: All information related to Annual Pay Raise should be sent to the Pay Raise mailbox (Annual.PayRaise@usda.gov), not to your Client Management representative.

Q: Where can I obtain the locality rate name? Do we create one?

A: The locality rate name can be found on Table 016, Geographical Location Codes with Names.

Q: What Nature of Action Codes and Legal Authority Codes will be used for the Annual Pay Raise Process?

A: Refer to the section title Nature of Action Codes and Legal Authority Codes on Pay Raise Agency Requirements/TMGT Tables Forms in the Customer Procedures.

"2022" Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Annual Pay Raise

Q: What if my agency requires a remark code other than the standard remark codes to be used?

A: Customized remark codes must be provided in Section G, Special Requirements on the Agency Requirements/TMGT Tables Form.

Q: Where should I send updates for Table 030, Payroll Constants and Table 055, Minimum and Maximum Salaries?

A: Updates for Tables 030 and 055 should be emailed to the mailbox specified in the instructions for submitting these table updates.

Q: When will SF 50s associated with Annual Pay Raise be available for viewing?

A: SF 50, Notification of Personnel Action, will be available for viewing after completion of Pay Period 01.

Q: Can I submit Union Dues changes on Annual Pay Raise Agency Requirements/TMGT Tables Forms?

A: No, Union Dues changes may not be submitted on the Agency Requirements/TMGT Tables Form. You should follow your normal process for Union Dues.

Q: What happens if I submit my requirements after the deadline?

A: Your request may be processed retroactively in a later pay period as a separate project requiring an interagency agreement.

Q: My agency's pay bands do not have any steps, just a bottom of range and a top of range number. In completing Table 098 for the bands, do I just put in the low and high numbers of the range? If so, does the Low go in Low Step1 and the High in Step10 – leaving all other steps untouched?

A: For Table 98, you enter the minimum amounts in the LOW columns for the appropriate step, and maximum amounts in the HIGH columns for the appropriate steps. Some Table 98 entries have one step, others have multiple steps. The spreadsheet is set up to handle all pay plans. If your table entry only has Step 01, you only need to enter an amount in the Step 01 columns. The rest can remain as is with zeroes.

Each unique pay area, pay plan, grade, and beginning effective date (if applicable) will require a separate line entry.

For example, a Pay Plan with 5 grades, each with step 01, would require entries listed on five lines for each grade with the minimum salary amount in the Low Step 01 and the maximum salary amount in the High Step 01.

If a pay plan in Table 98 has multiple steps, then the salary amounts would be entered into the spreadsheet in the columns labeled with those steps for each applicable grade.

"2022" Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Annual Pay Raise

The agency can always send their salary amounts in on the Agency Requirement/TMGT Tables Forms as done in the past, and the processing team will ensure that the appropriate updates are completed for the CURRENT YEAR.

Q: My agency does not have steps in our pay system; instead our pay plan has pay bands. Do you want us to send you screen prints of what we need for each pay grade or do you want us to use the excel spreadsheet and just leave out all the steps (with zeros) and add in the minimum and maximum rates for each grade?

A: You would not use the spreadsheet because TMGT will not use the spreadsheet for manual updates (less than 50 entries).

Q: If NFC is automatically processing pay adjustments for individuals on pay retention (specifically codes J, K) will the system automatically generate an error for those whose salary now falls on a pay table?

Example Scenario:

John Doe is on pay retention (2017 RUS table) as a 12 step 00, $95,299

The 2018 adjustment is processed and his salary now falls between the 12 step 9 and 12 step 10 on the 2018 RUS table.

Does the system generate an error such as, "Invalid entry" or "Mismatch" since the salary is on a valid table and the pay rate determinate identifies them as being on pay retention?

If the system doesn't automatically identify the error, are we as an Agency supposed to review all individuals on pay retention to determine who will remain and those who will come off when the adjustment is processed?

A: After the action attempts to run in PINE pass 01, your agency will get the error and will be responsible for working the error. Then your agency will have to re-process the action by removing the PRD code and determining exactly which step to apply. The program does as much as it can, but the step decision needs to be worked by the agency. These errors will show up in EPIC/EmpowHR, where the action can be modified and released back through for processing in PINE.

Q: Why isn't my table data updated in the TEST environment (IDMS61 DICT02)?

A: If your tables were processed by Payroll Operations, they are updated in the PRODUCTION environment. If the changes were batch loaded, but are not in the production environment, you should send an email to Annual.PayRaise@usda.gov.

"2022" Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Annual Pay Raise

Q: On the SSN lists we submitted, we included two WG employees. We expect them to receive retroactive pay adjustments processed in pay period 1. Should we see them in TEST PINE for this annual pay adjustment project? Or, was information about WG not added to this test environment?

A: No, wage grade testing is not included as part of the Annual Pay Raise effort. Wage grades are processed in conjunction with BEAR in production at the start of pay period 01 and the actions will apply in the production environment, but it is not a part of the pay raise testing in the test environment.

Q: Why can't I see test Personnel actions on IRIS 125 or test salaries on IRIS 101 for the pay plans KB, KI, KM, KO, KP, KY or KX?

A: "K" pay plans are bypassed by BEAR60 due to "wage grade" so the information will not be made available until the production *BEAR90* program runs. Wage grade increases are not included with the BEAR60 pay raise test actions.

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Access

Q: How do I get access to test pay raise changes?

A: Complete form AD 3100-P and submit it via ServiceNow in accordance with Security Access Requests section in the Customer Procedures.

Q: After submitting access request forms for the Pay Raise testing, some IDs came back with a suffix of "A" (e.g., xxyyyA) while some came back with a suffix of "U" (e.g., xxyyyU). Which is correct, and will either one work to get to the test area for Pay Raise?

A: Both the "A" suffix and the "U" suffix accounts will work.

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Contacting NFC

Q: How can I contact the NFC Annual Pay Raise team?

A: Contact the NFC Annual Pay Raise team by emailing Annual.PayRaise@usda.gov.

Q: How should I submit special pay raise requests prior to the President signing the Executive Order to authorize a pay increase?

A: You should submit special pay raise requests prior to the President signing the Executive Order to authorize a pay increase by emailing the request to NFC.GESDRequest@usda.gov. Please note that early or late requests (outside of the standard pay raise processing cycle) may require an Interagency Agreement.

"2022" Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Annual Pay Raise

Q: Why can't I open documents and files on the Pay Raise web page?

A: If you are using Microsoft Edge or Google Chrome as your browser, your default option when clicking on a file will be the SAVE AS option when on that page; but if you use Internet Explorer, you will get the OPEN option.

Q: Since I'm having trouble opening files on the website, can I send information in another format?

A: No, you must use the format supplied on the NFC website to provide information for processing.

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Testing

Q: Will the Customer User Acceptance Testing (CUAT) environment be used for pay raise testing?

A: No, pay raise testing is never conducted in the CUAT environment. See the pay raise testing instructions in the Customer Procedures. Agency Security Officers will need to submit access requests via ServiceNow by the mid-December deadline.

Q: Are FESI transactions loaded for pay raise testing?

A: No, FESI transactions are not loaded for pay raise testing.

Q: Can I submit more than 50 SSNs for testing?

A: No, NFC will not process more than 50 SSNs for testing.

Q: Can I submit test SSNs in a Microsoft Word document?

A: No, test SSNs must be submitted in a Microsoft Excel document.

Q: What happens if my test SSN file is submitted without being password protected?

A: If you submit your test SSN file without being password protected, your request will not be processed, and your submission will be reported as a security incident to the Agriculture Security Operations Center (ASOC). This may affect your future ability to submit PII data.

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