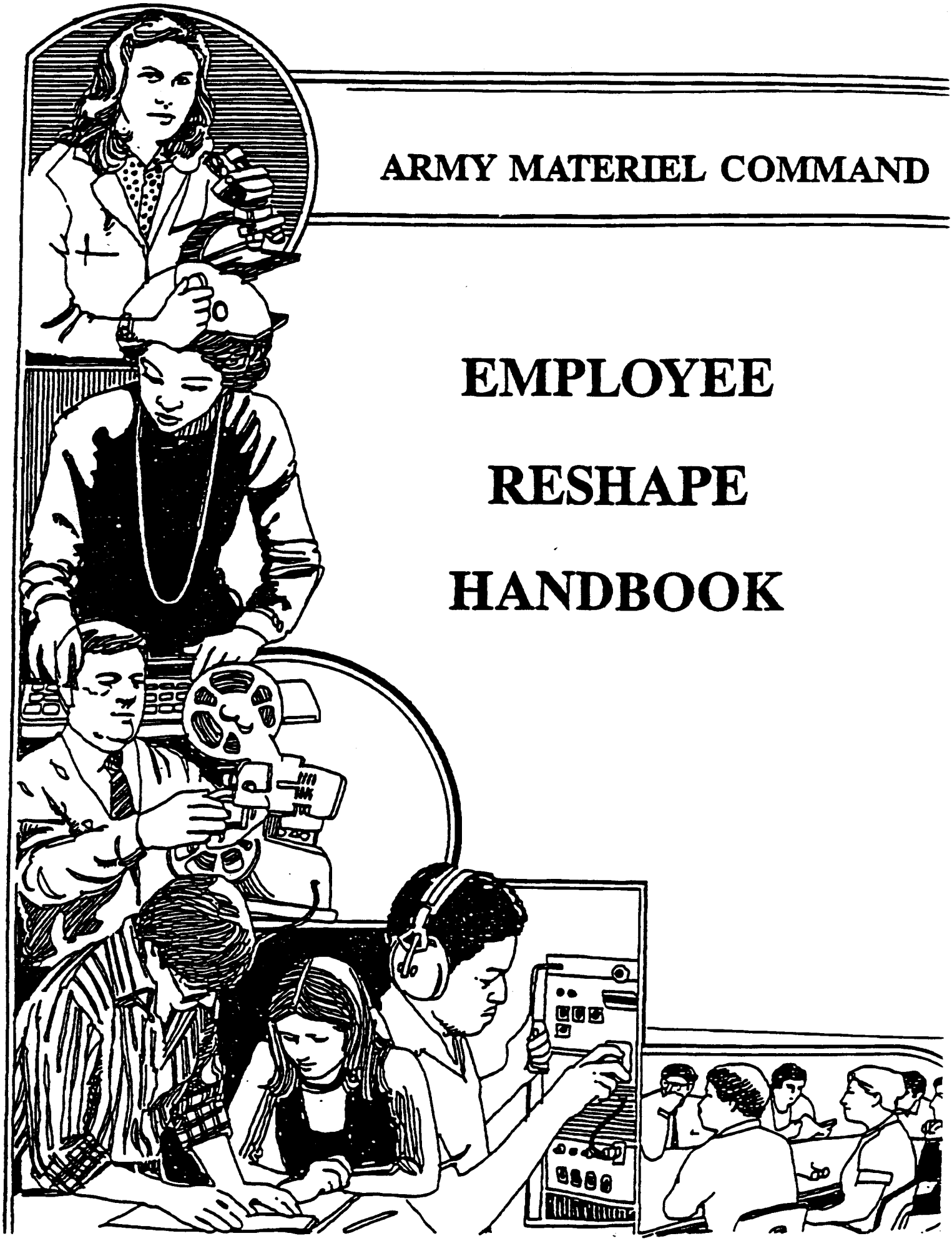

ARMY MATERIEL COMMAND

EMPLOYEE RESHAPE HANDBOOK

AMCPE-ROC

FOREWORD
THE U.S. ARMY MATERIEL COMMAND

This Handbook has been prepared to help you understand your employment options and entitlements if your job is affected by the Army Materiel Command reshape efforts.

This Handbook explains various outplacement programs, reimbursement of moving expenses, in addition to programs to keep you employed, if continued employment is not possible with AMC. Additionally, this handbook contains information about other personnel programs and benefits such as grade retention, early retirement and continued benefits.

Much of what you will want to know will depend on your individual circumstances. For specific information contact your civilian personnel office.

I hope this publication will serve as a useful tool to assist you in asking the right questions to make the right decisions regarding your future employment.

JOHNNIE E. WILSON
Major General, USA
Chief of Staff

CONTENTS

TITLE	PAGE
BENEFITS	I
DISCONTINUED SERVICE RETIREMENT	I-1
SEVERANCE PAY	I-2
VOLUNTARY SEPARATION INCENTIVE PAY	I-6
HEALTH BENEFITS	I-10
LIFE INSURANCE	I-11
UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION	I-12
GRADE AND PAY RETENTION	I-13
LEAVE AND RETIREMENT REFUNDS	I-15
REAL ESTATE/MOVING EXPENSES	I-16
OUTPLACEMENT ASSISTANCE	II
PRIORITY PLACEMENT PROGRAM	II-1
REEMPLOYMENT PRIORITY LIST	II-3
INTERAGENCY PLACEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM	II-4
DISPLACED EMPLOYEE PROGRAM	II-4
DEFENSE OUTPLACEMENT REFERRAL SYSTEM	II-5
ARMY CAREER AND ALUMNI PROGRAM	II-6
FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES, CAREER AND ULTIMATE SUCCESS	II-7
RESHAPE INITIATIVES	II-9

BENEFITS

DISCONTINUED SERVICE RETIREMENT

Eligibility.

Early retirement for employees who are involuntarily separated from the service on or after October 1, 1992, will be permitted only when the following conditions are met:

(1) Employee, if otherwise eligible, must not have declined a reasonable offer of a position in his/her agency for which he/she is qualified. The offered position must be in the employee's same commuting area (unless the employee is under a mobility agreement), at the same tenure and work schedule, and may not be lower than two grades below the employee's current position.

(2) He/she has been employed under the retirement system for at least one year of the last two years immediately preceding the separation on which the annuity is based, and

(3) He/she meets either the following minimum requirements:

(a) Attainment of age 50 and completion of 20 years of creditable service, including five years of civilian service, or

(b) Regardless of age, has completed 25 years of creditable service, including five years of civilian service.

Annuity payments begin immediately after you retire.

Employees may choose a lump-sum payment of retirement deductions in addition to annuity payments.

Reduction of Early Retirement. If the retiring employee is under age 55, the basic life annuity rate is reduced by 2 percent a year for each year payment begins prior to age 55. The reduction remains in effect during the entire period the annuity is paid.

SEVERANCE PAY

Eligibility.

An employee usually is entitled to severance pay if he/she meets all the following requirements:

- Employee's separation is involuntary and not for reasons of misconduct, delinquency, and inefficiency.

- Employee is not entitled to an immediate annuity. In other words, the employee must not currently be receiving Federal civilian or military retirement pay or be eligible to receive such pay within 31 days. (Disability payments from the Veterans Administration are <u>not</u> considered retirement pay.)

- Employee was on part-time or full-time work schedule with a regular scheduled tour of duty.

- Employee has not declined an offer of an equivalent position in the same commuting area.

- An employee who resigns before being involuntarily separated may also be entitled to severance pay in certain situations.

- Severance pay is not a lump-sum payment. It is paid at the same intervals as when the employee was employed, i.e., bi-weekly.

An employee's severance pay fund consists of two parts:

1. <u>Basic Severance Allowance</u>

1 week's basic pay for each year of civilian service up to and including 10 years

and

2 weeks' basic pay for each year of civilian service beyond 10 years

(25 percent of year is given for each 3 months that civilian service is more than 1 full year)

PLUS +

2. Age Adjustment Allowance

10 percent of the total basic severance allowance for each year over 40 years of age at the time of separation (25 percent of a year is given for each 3 months the employee's age exceeds age 40)

EQUALS =

3. Severance Pay Fund

The basic severance allowance added to the age adjustment allowance makes up the employee's total severance pay fund

Example: Elmer, age 45 years and 2 months, is involuntarily separated after 15 years and 3 months of civilian service. His basic pay was $350 a week (18,200 a year) prior to his separation. He meets all of the requirements for severance pay. His entitlement is:

Basic Severance Allowance

10 weeks' basic pay for the first 10 years of civilian service (1 week X 10 years = 10 weeks; 10 weeks X $350 = 10 weeks;	= $3,500
and	
10.5 weeks' basic pay for 5.25 years of civilian service beyond 10 years (2 weeks X 5.25 years = 10.5 weeks; 10.5 weeks X 350 = $43,675)	= $3,675
	$7,175

PLUS +

Age Adjustment Allowance

$7,175	Basic severance allowance
X 10	percent
$ 718	
X 5	years beyond age 40 (2 months are dropped)
$3,590	

EQUALS =

Severance Pay Fund

Basic Severance Allowance	$7,175
plus	+
Age Adjustment Allowance	3,590
Total Severance Pay Fund	$10,765

Elmer would receive a total of $10,765, paid at the same pay intervals as when he was employed (such as once a month or every 2 weeks).

There is a limit on the amount of severance pay an employee can receive. This limit is 52 weeks' (one year's) pay. The limitation is in effect for the employee's lifetime.

Example: Margaret earns $350 a week ($18,200 a year) and is age 48 with 20 years of civilian service. The 52 weeks' pay limitation applies to her as follows:

Basic Severance Allowance .

10 weeks' basic pay for first 10 years of civilian service (1 week X 10 years = 10 weeks; 10 weeks X $350 = $3,500)	= $3,500
and	
20 weeks' basic pay for 10 years of civilian service beyond 10 years (2 weeks X 10 years = 20 weeks; 20 weeks X 350 = $7,000)	= $7,000
	$10,500

PLUS +

SEVERANCE PAY

Age Adjustment Allowance

$10,500	Basic Severance Allowance
X 10	percent
$ 1,050	
X 8	years beyond age 40

EQUALS =

Severance Pay Fund

Basic Severance Allowance	$10,500
plus	+
Age Adjustment Allowance	8,400
	$18,900
Margaret's annual pay before separation	$18,200

The maximum severance pay Margaret could receive is 52 weeks' pay ($18,200).

VOLUNTARY SEPARATION INCENTIVE PAY

Eligibility.

To be eligible for a separation incentive, an individual must be a U.S. citizen Direct Hire civilian employee who is eligible for either early retirement, immediate (optional) retirement, or resignation, who is:

(1) Serving in an appointment without time limitation;

(2) Continuously employed by Department of Defense (DOD) for at least 12 months;

(3) Not reemployed annuitant;

(4) Not in the final reduction-in-force at a closing activity;

(5) Not disabled so that he/she would be eligible for disability retirement

Employees who accept voluntary separation pay are not eligible for the following:

(1) DOD permanent or temporary employment for one year from the date of voluntary separation;

(2) Registration in the DOD Priority Placement Program;

(3) Eighteen-month post-separation group health insurance (subsidized by the government and normally offered to individuals who are involuntarily separated); and

(4) Any other offers of separation pay.

The separation incentives:

(1) Must be paid in a lump sum at the time of separation.

(2) Must be the lesser of the amount of severance pay to which an employee would be entitled or $25,000.

(3) Shall not be a basis for payment for (or be counted in the computation of) any other type of Government benefits (e.g., a computation for severance pay).

(4) Are not available for any separations occurring after 30 September 1997.

VOLUNTARY SEPARATION INCENTIVE PAY (VSIP)

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. Q: Can employees who elect to retire under Discontinued Service Retirement (DSR) provisions receive both the alternate form of annuity ("lump sum annuity") and VSIP?

A: No. DSRs are essentially **involuntary** separations in lieu of reduction in force (RIF). VSIP applies only to **voluntary** separations (early retirement, optional retirement, or resignation).

2. Q: Are employees who have received RIF notices eligible for VSIP?

A: Under normal circumstances VSIP generally will be available only prior to the issue date of RIF notices. However, in the current RIF situation where timely action is urgent, VSIP may be offered during the RIF notice period. In this case, employees who receive RIF notices will be eligible for VSIP. Employees who elect VSIP will be required to sign statements confirming the **voluntary** nature of the action and affirming their understanding of the rights and benefits they will be relinquishing which would otherwise apply if their separation were to remain an **involuntary** action.

3. Q: Are SES employees eligible for VSIP?

A: No. However, some circumstances might justify offering VSIP to an SES member. Any plan which includes an SES member must be worked in advance with the MACOM and HQDA.

4. Q: How is the amount of an employee's VSIP determined?

A: The amount of incentive pay is calculated based on the formula for severance pay as set forth in 5 USC 5595(c); however, the maximum is $25,000. Thus, if an employee's severance pay would ordinarily be $30,000, the amount for VSIP purposes would be $25,000.

5. Q: Is separation pay taxable?

A: Yes. It is subject to Federal tax and any applicable State and local taxes.

6. Q: Who is eligible for VSIP?

A: To be eligible, an individual must be a U.S. Direct Hire civilian employee who is eligible for either early retirement, immediate (optional) retirement, or resignation, who is:

- Serving in an appointment without time limitation;

- Continuously employed by DoD for at least 12 months;

- Not a reemployed annuitant under subchapter III of chapter 83 or 84, 5 USC;

- Not in the final RIF at a closing activity;

- Not disabled so that he/she would be eligible for disability retirement.

7. Q: Are there any conditions under which an employee who meets the criteria in 6 above would not be eligible for VSIP?

A: Yes. Normally, employees in the following categories are not eligible for VSIP:

- Employees receiving special salary rates of pay, including retention allowances based on recruitment/retention difficulties (excluding FEPCA locality pay);

- Employees who have received advanced in-hire rates based on superior qualifications within the last 5 years;

- Employees in positions defined as "hard to fill";

- Members of the Senior Executive Service.

8. Q: Can an employee who is voluntarily separated for VSIP return to work at his or her former installation?

A: Employees who accept VSIP are not eligible for permanent or temporary employment in DoD for one year from the date of their separation. This does not preclude them from seeking immediate employment in a non-DoD agency, should they desire to do so.

9. Q: Can an employee who is eligible for voluntary early retirement or discontinued service retirement, and is also subject to position abolishment or RIF, resign in lieu of retiring and receive VSIP?

A: Yes. However, they will be relinquishing the rights and benefits that ordinarily would apply if their separation were to remain "involuntary."

10. Q: Will activities be limited to the number of incentives, by category (i.e., resignations, early retirements, regular retirements) that are approved?

A: No. Activities will be limited to the total number of incentives (not by category) requested in their plans, and by the amount of funds available to pay the incentives.

11. Q: Is it expected that VSIP will be offered only during the open period for VERA?

A: Incentives for employees who want to exercise early retirement will be limited to the VERA open period. The open period for VSIP for regular retirements and for resignations will depend on the date approved by HQDA.

12. Q: Will only employees in series/grades matching the series/grades of employees targeted for involuntary separations be eligible to participate?

A: No, VSIP is authorized if another employee can be saved from being involuntarily separated. This will not always equate to the same series and grade of the person scheduled to be involuntarily separated. For example, a GS-201-13's position is being abolished, and through the sequence of RIF displacements through bumping and retreating, the person who is left without any RIF assignment rights (and therefore is subject to involuntary separation) happens to be a GS-212-07. If the GS-201-13 elects to voluntarily separate for VSIP, the GS-212-07 would be saved from RIF.

13. Q: Can an employee who has been identified for involuntary separation and is eligible for discontinued service retirement elect to retire under the voluntary early retirement authority (VERA), and be eligible for VSIP, after he or she has already received a specific notice of proposed involuntary separation?

A: Yes. (The answer to question 9 is applicable.)

CONTINUED HEALTH AND LIFE INSURANCE

HEALTH INSURANCE

Employees currently enrolled under the Federal Employees Health Benefits program who are involuntarily separated by reduction-in-force may elect to continue their coverage for 18 months following separation, with Department of Defense (DOD) continuing to pay the employer's portion of the cost. The separated employee must pay the employee portion, with DOD paying the employer cost, plus the administrative fee. Employees must complete SF 2809, Health Benefits Registration Form, and submit it to their civilian personnel office.

A retiring employee may elect to continue health benefits coverage as an annuitant with no change in benefits and Government contributions. The cost may be deducted from the annuity payments. To continue health benefits coverage, the employee must meet all of the following requirements:

a. Has at least 5 years of creditable service;

b. Retired on an immediate annuity (an annuity which begins to accrue no later than 1 month after the date of final separation);

c. Has been enrolled (or covered as a family member) in a plan under the Health Benefits Program during;

(1) The 5 years of service immediately preceding retirement; or

(2) All service since first opportunity to enroll; or

(3) All service on or before 31 December 1964.

d. The annuity is sufficient to cover the withholding required as the employee's share of the cost of enrollment.

LIFE INSURANCE

Separated employees who have basic Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) coverage will receive a SF 2819, Notice of Conversion Privilege, or SF 2821, Agency Certification of Insurance Status. These forms explain the right to convert to an individual policy. If an employee wishes to convert, the SF 2821 must be sent to the Office of Federal Employees Group Life Insurance within 31 days after the insurance stops, or within 15 days after notification of the conversion privilege (whichever allows the most time).

Retiring employees will be eligible to continue basic life insurance (not accidental death or dismemberment) if all of the following conditions are met:

a. The employee retires on an immediate annuity (one which begins to accrue no later than 1 month after the date of final separation);

b. There is no conversion to an individual policy when the basic life insurance as an employee would otherwise cease;

c. The employee had been insured under the FEGLI Program for the 5 years of service immediately preceding retirement, or the full periods of service during which the basic life insurance was available, if less than 5 years.

The cost of post-retirement coverage depends upon the level of protection the employee wants to retain after reaching age 65. At the time of retirement the employee will receive a SF 2818, Election of Post-Retirement Basic Life Insurance Coverage, which provides a choice of three levels of coverage. If the employee elects to retain 25 percent of the basic insurance amount after reaching age 65, there is no cost. If he/she elects either 50 percent or 100 percent of the basic insurance amount, the full cost of the additional protection will be deducted from the employee's annuity. The withholdings begin at retirement and continue for life or until the election is canceled.

d. Retiring employees may also obtain optional insurance (not accidental death or dismemberment) if they are eligible to continue basic life insurance. In addition, the optional insurance must have been in force for not less than 5 years preceding retirement; or the full periods of service during which the optional life insurance was available, if less than 5 years. The cost of optional insurance will be deducted from the annuity payment.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

Unemployment compensation for federal employees is provided to federal employees in the same amount, on the same terms, and subject to the same conditions as the compensation which would be payable to him/her under the unemployment compensation law of the state. The states also process claims and determine eligibility. Federal agencies are required to provide state agencies with wage and separation information for these claims.

Purpose of the program is to provide a weekly income for a limited period of time to unemployed federal civilian employees, who qualify, to help them meet basic needs while searching for employment.

Benefits are paid by the states from funds provided by the federal government. No payroll deductions are made for unemployment insurance protection.

To file a claim, employees must go to the nearest state employment service office or unemployment insurance claims office and register for work. Take with you your Standard Form 8, Standard Form 50, and Social Security card.

All state laws require that an employee must have qualifying earnings during a past period specified by law; register for work, file a claim, and report regularly as directed; and are able to work and available for work.

GRADE AND PAY RETENTION

Grade retention lets you keep your current grade for two years after you accept another position at a lower grade because of a reduction in force.

Pay retention, often called "saved pay," lets you keep your current rate of basic pay if you accept a lower paying position because of management actions not due to an official reduction in force. It is effective until your new pay catches up.

Eligibility Requirements:

Grade retention is used if you are on a permanent appointment and have served for at least 52 consecutive weeks at a grade higher than the new position. Grade retention ends after:

- The two-year period is completed;

- You are placed at the same or higher grade level than the previous grade; or

- You are placed at a lower grade for cause or at your request.

Pay retention is used if you do not meet the 52-week condition for grade retention or if you decline to transfer with your position. Its primary use is for situations not associated with reductions in force or reorganizations. You are also eligible for pay retention when grade retention expires. Pay retention ends when the rate of pay of the new position is equal to or greater than the pay of your previous position.

Grade retention will be used to determine your pay and calculate retirement, life insurance, promotion, and training benefits.

- You will receive within-grade increases, cost-of-living increases, special rate pay, overtime, and performance awards based on the retained grade.

- After the two-year period, your pay will be recomputed according to pay retention rules.

GRADE AND PAY RETENTION

Pay retention applies when your current rate of pay exceeds the highest amount for the top step of the new grade. If your current rate of pay does not exceed the top step of the new grade, your pay will be set at the step in the new grade that equals or exceeds your current rate of pay.

- If your current rate of pay exceeds the highest rate of pay for the new grade, you will retain your current salary as long as it is less than 150 percent of your new grade.

- You will then receive 50 percent of any future general pay increases until your pay equals the 10th step of the grade.

LEAVE AND RETIREMENT REFUNDS

All employees are entitled to refunds of their contributions.

- If you are separated, you will receive a lump sum payment for your unused annual leave.

- You will not receive compensation for any sick leave. If you are reemployed within the federal government within three years, your sick leave will be recredited.

- You have the option of withdrawing your retirement fund contributions or leaving them in the system for future use.

Eligibility is determined by the status of each individuals account.

REAL ESTATE/MOVING EXPENSES

The Homeowners Assistance Program (HAP) is a Department of the Army Program that provides some monetary relief to eligible homeowners who face a financial loss when they sell their homes in an area where real estate values have declined because of a Base Closure or Realignment. There are three benefits offered under the HAP: (1) partial compensation for sale-by-owner losses, (2) purchase of your home by the government, or (3) payment of the costs of a foreclosure, under certain circumstances. The Corps of Engineers administers the program and will analyze the community, make market surveys and make a recommendation to Department of the Army for final determination as to whether HAP will be offered at your location.

Department of the Army Relocations Services (DARSE). The DARSE contract provides several services to a relocating civilian employees affected by management directed actions over which they have no control (such as reduction-in-force, base closure, transfer of function, etc.).

The DARSE program offers the following srrvices:

- pre-transfer counseling
- residential sales assistance
- destination services
  - -- home finding for renters and buyers
  - -- mortgage counseling.

The principal service offered is the residential sales assistance. Under the residential sales assistance provisions, PHH Homequity, the DARSE contractor, purchases the employee's home at the appraised fair market value. This immediate sale enables the employee to receive an offer for his home based on two appraisals. If the offer is accepted, the employee will receive the equity in the home and will sign the home over to the contractor company. The house becomes the property of the company and the company receives payment from the Army for its services.

When the employee receives written notification of any of the above, management directed actions, he/she becomes eligible for the normal Permanent Change of Station (PCS) entitlements which all relocating employees receive, provided a physical move is required. Affected employees are entitled to use the DARSE contract in order to expedite their move. It is important to remember that the relocation services expenses are substituted for the normal home sale reimbursements under PCS entitlements.

Department of the Army Relocation Services (DARSE) (cont'd)

Relocation Services are not started automatically. It is up to the employee to request DARSE assistance and participate actively in the program.

Employees should contact their civilian personnel office for assistance.

Permanent Change of Station (PCS). To become eligible for PCS benefits employees must sign an agreement to remain in the government service for 12 months.

Employees will be reimbursed for moving expenses, if asked to take a job which requires a relocation.

- One round trip for house hunting. Maximum of 10 calendar days. Days used will be deducted from the allowable for temporary quarters.

- Travel costs (to include airfare or mileage and per diem for lodging and meals) for employee and dependents

- Temporary quarters allowance at the new location (up to 60 days with provisions for extension of 60 days). For temporary quarters located in CONUS, the maximum per diem is the standard CONUIS rate of $66.00. For OCONUS, the maximum rate is that prescribed for that locality.

- Shipment of household goods (not to exceed 18,000 pounds)

- Temporary storage of household goods (not to exceed 90 days, with a provision for an extension of 90 days).

- Certain expenses associated with selling and buying a residence or termination of a lease. The government pays customary expenses not to exceed 10% for sale of a residence at the old duty station, and 5% in connection with the purchase of a residence at the new duty station.

- Miscellaneous expenses. The maximum amount authorized for miscellaneous expenses will not exceed the employees basic salary for 1 week for employees without dependents or 2 weeks' basic salary for employees with dependents.

OUTPLACEMENT ASSISTANCE

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
PRIORITY PLACEMENT PROGRAM

The Priority Placement Program (PPP) provides the primary method of registration and referral of DOD personnel for placement consideration at DOD activities within the United States and Puerto Rico who are: scheduled for involuntary separation by reduction-in-force (RIF); and scheduled for separation due to declination of transfer of function (TOF) outside the commuting area of whose positions have been relocated outside the commuting area, but within the competitive area, and who are not on a mobility agreement.

Eligibility Requirements:

Among the employees eligible for PPP registration are displaced employees with career/career-conditional status, whose job performance and conduct are satisfactory, and meet one of the following criteria:

- Identified to be adversely affected by RIF or functional transfer;

- Full time employees who decline a part-time position offered under RIF procedures or TOF provisions;

- Employees in a retained grade status who are impacted by subsequent RIF action (separation or further reduction in grade/pay);

- Employees who are eligible for and take Discontinued Service Retirement as a result of RIF or declination of TOF and desire to continue working; and

- Otherwise eligible registrant who resigns but desires continued employment.

Excepted service employees with personal career/career conditional status are also eligible for registration. Employees occupying excepted service positions who do not have personal competitive status may be registered in PPP for excepted service positions.

Registration:

Registration for PPP is mandatory during the RIF notice period and for one year from separation for employees who have entitlement to severance pay. Registration can take place prior to receipt of a specific advance notice, at the discretion of the activity head or designee, when such action is consistent with mission requirements. Registration will be for the full range of skills for which the employee is qualified (up to five), and will normally include the current skill. Registration must be down to and including two grade or pay levels below the current grade or level. Involuntary registrants will be deleted from PPP twelve (12) months following separation from activity rolls or when the registrant declines a valid job offer.

REEMPLOYMENT PRIORITY LIST

The Reemployment Priority List (RPL) affords priority consideration for career and career-conditional employees separated from competitive service. It is maintained by the agency for each commuting area in which the agency separated employees. It restricts most hiring from outside the agency. The RPL eligible can be given consideration ahead of internal candidates as well. Career/career conditional employees separated by RIF are eligible for RPL consideration, if they have not declined a RIF offer for a permanent competitive service position with a rate no lower than that of the position from which separated. Employee who resign or retire before the RIF date are not eligible for RPL registration. Eligible registrants are placed on the RPL the day after receipt of the notice of separation due to RIF. The period of eligibility is two (2) years for tenure group I (career) and one (1) year for tenure group II (career conditional) employees. Eligibility begins on the date of separation.

Consideration is afforded for permanent and temporary positions if the registrants are qualified and available. Employees may be removed from the RPL upon declination of a position at the same grade, or with a representative rate at least as high as that of the position from which separated; acceptance of permanent reemployment in the same or different agency; failure to reply to an inquiry concerning a specific permanent position; or at their own request.

INTERAGENCY PLACEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Interagency Placement Assistance Program is a pre-RIF placement program administered by the Office of Personnel Management to give priority referral for positions in other agencies to surplus employees facing separation by RIF. Registration in the program is optional. The area of registration is nationwide; employees may be registered from receipt of the general notice of RIF until the separation date.

Eligibility Requirements:

Employees eligible to register in this program must be

- Career or career-conditional, or
- Excepted service with or without competitive service, or
- Serving an appointment not limited to one year or less, and
- Identified as a potential loss under one of the following conditions:

  -- Position is scheduled to be abolished.

  -- Activity is undergoing an efficiency (contracting out) study.

  -- May be separated in a RIF because a higher standing employee whose job was abolished can bump or retreat into your position.

DISPLACED EMPLOYEE PROGRAM

The Displaced Employee Program (DEP) The Displaced Employee Program is a post-RIF program administered by the Office of Personnel Management to give separated employees priority referral for positions in other Federal agencies.

Registrants must have competitive status; career employees have registration eligibility for two years, career-conditional employees, for one year.

DEFENSE OUTPLACEMENT REFERRAL SYSTEM

The Defense Outplacement Referral System is a voluntary program managed by the Department of Defense and the Office of Personnel Management.

The automated referral system matches both military and civilian employees and their spouses with vacancies in federal agencies, state and local governments, and the private sector.

Eligibility Requirements:

You are eligible to register in the program if:

- You may be adversely affected by base closure, realignment, or RIF).

- You are seeking employment elsewhere, even if you are not being affected by downsizing.

- You are the spouse of someone adversely affected by downsizing.

- Your spouse has registered for placement outside your geographic area.

Although registration is not required, it recommended that you participate in this program. If you register, you should be ready to consider seriously any offers made to you through the program.

You may register for positions at your current grade level but no more than three grades below.

You may register for up to five skills.

You and your spouse may register simultaneously for the same geographic area.

Your local civilian personnel office will counsel you and your spouse on available options and will help you register.

ARMY CAREER AND ALUMNI PROGRAM

The Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP) is a Commander's program targeted to serve all personnel who are leaving the Army - soldiers, civilians and family members. It is made up of a Transition Assistance Office (TAO) and a Contracted Job Assistance Center (JAC).

TAO provides total quality management to the transition process to assure transitioning personnel are aware of services available. TAO personnel evaluate clients' needs and prepare individual transition plans.

JAC provides individual assistance/counseling, workshops and seminars to develop skills needed to find alternative employment. Computers are available for SF-171, resume writing and to use a nationwide job search system. A library of reference material is available on employment and career opportunities.

AMC has 10 ACAP sites, additional ACAP sites are located throughout CONUS and OCONUS.

Five AMC sites have both TAO and JAC services - Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD, Redstone Arsenal, AL, Rock Island, IL, St. Louis, MO, and Fort Monmouth, NJ.

Five sites have TAO offices with some expanded local services that include computers, reference library, etc., Red River, TX, Tooele, UT, Picatinny, NJ, Letterkenny, PA, and Warren, MI.

A mobile JAC unit and personnel are available from a regional site when an installation does not have an ACAP office or JAC.

Personnel may be granted up to 40 hours excused absence to attend training classes or use ACAP services. Services are available to personnel in the following priority order.

Priority 1: Military and civilian servicemembers, and their family members, projected to separate within 90 days or less;

Priority 2: Military and civilian servicemembers, and their family members, projected to separate within 91 - 120 days;

Priority 3: Military and civilian servicemembers, and their family members, projected to separate within 121 - 180 days;

Priority 4: All others on a space available basis including but not limited to, military and civilian servicemembers and their family members transitioning voluntarily and/or more than 180 days out and non-Army Department of Defense personnel serviced by Army installations or activities.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES, CAREERS AND ULTIMATE SUCCESS

Future Opportunities, Careers and Ultimate Success (FOCUS) is a job search assistance program that was developed and implemented as a focal point for employees and active duty military seeking transition assistance as a result of the eventual closure of the Sacramento Army Depot.

The program was developed for use at Sacramento Army Depot to ensure transition services were available to personnel.

Based on the decision to Congress to close the Sacramento Army Depot, the Depot management decided to set up a job search assistance center to serve employees. The initial effort started with a task force that began the basic groundwork by developing a survey to assess employees' needs, visiting pertinent agencies, attending workshops and meetings, and gathering miscellaneous literature. The FOCUS team determined the resource material most useful for the center in meeting the needs of Depot employees. the FOCUS team envisioned the primary functions of the center as providing employees an environment which promoted morale, as well as giving them a facility to obtain job source information and training.

After the initial task force recommendations, the Depot Commander authorized the establishment of the FOCUS Management Committee to govern the implementation and operation of the FOCUS Center. The committee was comprised of all the key personnel (Directors or Deputy Directors) of the organizations on the Depot.

A budget of $185,000 was approved by the Depot Commander to support the establishment of the FOCUS facility to include the refurbishment of an existing facility. Procurement actions for office furniture, computer software, service contracts and unique organizational requirements were expedited through the Directorate of Contracting. Since all the computer hardware was donated by various directorates, no costs were incurred. Two laser printers were provided by the Commander's Office for the use of the FOCUS Center. With full support of the FOCUS Management Committee in expediting the facility's requirements, construction and acquisition of all resources was completed in less than 90 days. The FOCUS program became official when the FOCUS Charter was approved and signed by management and union officials.

The FOCUS Center serves as the depot liaison for community, State, Federal and Army programs assisting personnel with their job search and career planning.

Some of the services offered at the FOCUS Center include Career Guidance, Resume Writing, Transition Counseling, Community Education and Job Search.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES, CAREERS AND ULTIMATE SUCCESS

Overall, the FOCUS program has been a success for individuals, the installation and the local community. As of September 30, 1992, a total of 42 employees have found new employment through services offered by the FOCUS Center. The Sacramento Army Depot realized a cost avoidance of $22,128.00 (severance and unemployment payments) per placement, which totals a cost savings of $924, 000.00.

Implementing instructions are available at HQAMC for developing local programs.

RESHAPE INITIATIVES

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1993 contains several significant provisions for lessening the impact of base closures and downsizing at the Department of Defense (DOD). Several of these provisions apply governmentwide. The following provisions are effective 23 October 1992. Implementing instructions are forthcoming from the Office of Personnel Management.

GOVERNMENTWIDE INITIATIVES

Governmentwide List of Vacant Positions. A new provision, 5 U.S.C. 3329, requires OPM to list agency vacancies announced under the merit promotion program for which applications will be accepted from outside the agency. Required information includes the job title, its tenure, location, and pay rate, and application procedures.

Agency Consideration of Department of Defense (DOD) Displaced Employees. Non-Defense agencies are required to give full consideration to the application of qualified displaced DOD employees before selecting any other candidate from outside the agency for a vacant position. The only vacancies excluded are those excepted from the competitive service because of their confidential, policy-determining, policy-making or policy-advocating character. Eligible displaced employees are DOD employees who either received a specific reduction in force (RIF) separation notice or were separated by RIF during the year prior to enactment of the Act up through September 30, 1997. Eligibility lasts for 24 months after separation.

Military Service Credit for Civilian Retirement Systems. The Act repeals a provision in Title 10 that prohibited credit under any retirement system for Federal civilian employees for military service that was the basis for a Voluntary Separation Incentive (VSI). The prohibition was included in the VSI program as established by the Defense authorization act for fiscal years 1992 and 1993.

Thirft Savings Plan (TSB) Benefits. Federal employees involuntarily separated due to a RIF can elect to withdraw their TSP accounts in lump-sum payments, to elect to receive an immediate TSP annuity, or to leave their money in the plan. This applies to RIF separations after December 31, 1993, or any earlier date chosen by the Executive Director of the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board. The Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board is responsible for administration of TSP benefits.

Separation Incentives. The Secretary of Defense has authority to offer separation pay to regular and early retirees and employees who resign, provided they have been continuously employed for at least 12 months. Reemployed annuitants and employees eligible for disability retirement would not be eligible. The purpose of separation pay is to encourage eligible DOD employees to leave voluntarily in order to reduce the number of involuntary separations required during base closures and other similar staff reductions. The Secretary will designate the occupations, locations, etc., where the incentives will be offered. The amount of separation pay is the amount an employee would receive if eligible under the severance pay law or $25,000, whichever is less. This program applies only to separations on or before September 30, 1997.

Job Training Partnership Act Assistance. DOD employees will be eligible for training, adjustment assistance, and employment services through the Department of Labor's Training Partnership Act programs.

Employees at installations listed in the base closure and realignment acts will be eligible for assistance, as determined by the Secretary of Defense, up to 24 months before closure or realignment is completed. Other employees with a termination notice will be eligible 180 days before scheduled termination.

Unlimited Annual Leave Carryover. DOD employees at installations scheduled for closure during the period October 1, 1992, through December 31, 1997, can accumulate annual leave without restriction. Employees will be credited with the unused leave and permitted to use it or is provided lump sum payment upon separation. Normally, an employee may carry more than 240 hours into a new leave year only when an exigency of the public business or sickness occurred after the employee's annual leave was scheduled.

Continued Health Benefits. Eligible DOD employees separated by RIF may continue their health benefits coverage at the rates paid by current Federal employees. DOD will pay the Government share and the 2% administrative charge. Ordinarily, employees who continue coverage after separation must pay the employee and agency shares of the premium plus a surcharge. This provision applies to separations on or after the date of enactment of the Act through September 30, 1997, or through January 31, 1998, if specific RIF separation notice was given by September 30, 1997.