Vol. 1, Issue 2

May 3, 2004

CHRO Newsletter

Civilian Human Resources Office

"KOINOBORI"
Boys' Day is just around the corner (May 5th)

Don't miss it!!

- Training Announcements

See the back page

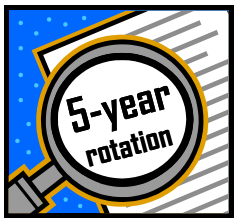
INSIDE

Overseas Tour Rotation Policy	1-2
NSPS	2
US Leave (LWOP, Maternity)	3
Dress and Appearance	3-4
Labor Relations	4
Foreign Allowance	
JN Employment Opportunities	5
JN Classification Process	
MLC/IHA Child Care Leave	
Who authorizes MLC Travel	
ADR	6-7

MCBJ Overseas Tour Rotation Policy

Story by US Employment/ Classification Section

The Department of Defense (DoD) 5-year rotation policy for GS-7 and above appropriated fund civilian positions has been in effect since 1966. It was instituted by DoD in response to Commanders' concerns that the knowledge of civilians overseas was becoming dated,



while civilians in CONUS who would benefit from overseas rotation were not getting the opportunity to serve overseas. In 1988 the policy was modified to include lower grade levels as well. The rotation of lower graded non-family member employees opened up more employment opportunities for family members. Adding the lower graded positions was part of a broader package that expanded family member employment opportunities and included congressional action mandating preference for military spouses.

The limitation on foreign service normally applies to all competitive service positions in all DoD components in the overseas area. Overseas Limited (OSL) appointments are covered by the DoD policy, as are employees on temporary or term appointments. All periods of appropriated fund employment not interrupted by one year's residence in CONUS will be used to compute the 5-year limit. Employees exempt from the policy include employees who are family members and accompanied military or civilian DoD employees to the foreign area; employees who were employed in the foreign area on or before April 1, 1966; and employees employed on or before Aug 1988 in GS-6 or below or in non-supervisory wage grade positions as long as the employee remains continuously employed at those levels.

The intent of the rotation policy is to ensure a continuous rotation of employees between CONUS and OCONUS. Tour extension decisions must be based on resource and mission requirements, and be in the best interest of the command. The employee must have an acceptable annual performance rating, possess current knowledge, skills and abilities required in his/her current job, and have successfully adapted to the overseas work and cultural environment. MCBJ also recognizes the uniqueness of the mission and the subsequent need for managers to have the flexibility to manage their workforce. Therefore, the following local policy has been established:

Local Policy

Employees completing an **initial overseas tour** (24 months in Okinawa) may have their tour extended up to 24 months. Division Heads may approve these tour extensions.

Approval authority for overseas **extensions beyond 5 years** has been delegated to the MCBJ Chief of Staff. The Chief of Staff is the authority who may grant approval at the request of the supervisor and the employee and endorsement of the Division Head. All requests must include a written justification from the Division Head, and the employee must meet all requirements as stated above.

Short-term extensions of 6 months or less may be granted by the Division Head for com-

(Continued on the page 2)

MCBJ Overseas Tour Rotation Policy

(Continued from page 1)

passionate or personal reasons on an individual basis. Some examples of when a short-term extension may be appropriate include allowing children to complete the school year; allowing the employee or an employee's family member to continue short-term medical treatment; or other reasons deemed appropriate by the Division head.

When an overseas extension request is disapproved, employees on career or career-conditional appointments will either exercise their return rights to CONUS, or return through the DoD Priority Placement Program (PPP). Employees on OSL appointments will be terminated. OSL employees are not eligible to register in PPP.

How does the PPP work?

The PPP is an automated, worldwide referral program used throughout DoD. It provides placement opportunities to eligible non-displaced overseas employees in vacant positions at DoD activities in the United States, and provides placement opportunities for employees adversely affected by reduction-in-force worldwide. The selection of employees is based on their numeric priority (1 through 3). The basis of the numeric priority is the severity of the employee's proposed personnel action. Priority 1 registrants must be considered for placement before priority 2 and 3 registrants. Non-displaced employees subject to rotation, serving on permanent career or career-conditional appointments, remain in PPP until placed or until declining a valid offer. Declination of a valid PPP offer without exercising return rights may result in termination from Federal service.

Tour curtailments

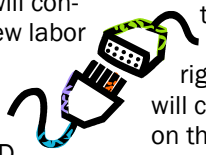
Tour curtailments must be requested through command channels. The first step should be to set up a meeting with the supervisor and possibly Division Head to discuss the reason(s) the employee does not wish to complete the tour, and to determine if there are any possible alternatives to returning to CONUS. If after this meeting the employee wishes to formalize the request for curtailment, the request must be submitted in writing through command channels. If the employee has been at this duty station less than 1 year, a release from transportation expenditures incurred by the government on the employee's behalf for the move here must also be requested in writing, and submitted through command channels to the MCBJ Chief of Staff. Keep in mind that curtailment of an overseas assignment can be an extremely costly endeavor. Employees are not entitled to travel and transportation allowances for their return trip unless the appropriate official approves their request for tour curtailment, and the MCBJ Chief of Staff approves their release from transportation agreement.

Implementation of New Personnel System Delayed

Story by US Employment/ Classification Section

Rather than switching to the National Security Personnel System (NSPS) as early as October 2004 as previously advertised, the Navy now acknowledges that the Defense Department will spend several years shifting employees to its new personnel system. Some Defense employees will change to a six-month pilot personnel system in July 2005. After the pilot test is completed, DoD will evaluate it and make changes before launching a 12-month pilot, which also will be followed by an evaluation. A third group will be phased in starting in late 2006, bringing the total of DoD employees under the new system to 300,000. At that point, the DoD must seek approval from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to expand the system to the remaining 400,000 of its civilian workforce.

Currently there are no details about what the new system will look like. DoD plans to consult widely with employee groups and OPM, and will post its changes in the Federal Register. The first proposal -- for a new labor relations system -- will go out in November, followed by a proposed rule for a new human resources system in January 2005. Six teams of employees from DoD, OPM and the Office of Management and Budget will consider options for new labor relations, pay-for-performance, and disciplinary appeals systems. DoD has already begun to consult with the General Accounting Office, and will hold town meetings with employees and meetings with union officials. This process would follow the lead of the Homeland Security Department in consulting broadly with employees before moving forward.



DoD believes NSPS is the right system at the right time. It is now taking time to ensure NSPS is implemented in the right way. Information will continue to be posted on the Department of Navy web site at www.donhr.navy.mil.

How Does Leave Without Pay Affect You?

Story by U.S. Employee & Labor Relations/Benefits Section

LEAVE: While in a nonpay status, you will not accumulate any annual or sick leave.

FEHB: Federal Employees Health Benefits – CHRO will provide you a written notice of your options to continue or terminate your FEHB coverage as soon as possible after they become aware that you are in a nonpay status. You must indicate on the notice your option to either continue enrollment or to terminate your enrollment. If you do not return your notice within 31 days (45 days for employees living overseas), your enrollment will automatically terminate. If you choose to continue your FEHB, your coverage may continue up to one year while on LWOP. However, you will be responsible for your portion of the FEHB premium.

NOTE: *You may pay your premium directly to your servicing payroll office while in a LWOP status or incur a debt and repay the premiums once you return to a pay and duty status. If you elect to incur a debt, the repayment of the debt is deducted from your pay. If you terminate your enrollment while you are in leave without pay status, you may reenroll within 60 days of returning to pay status in a position in which you are eligible for FEHB coverage.*

FEGLI - Federal Employees Group Life Insurance is continued without cost to you for up to one year while in a nonpay status. After one year of LWOP, your life insurance will be terminated.

SCD – Service Computation Date: All LWOP in excess of 180 days in a calendar year will affect your retirement and leave service computation dates.

WGI – Within Grade Increase Adjustments: Excess LWOP will affect your WGI waiting period. The following chart describes how much LWOP you can take before your WGI waiting period will be extended:

STEP IN GRADE	MAXIMUM NUMBER OF HOURS LWOP
1—4	80 hours
5—7	160 hours
8—10	240 hours

LWOP FOR RELOCATION: If you are accompanying a military or DoD sponsor, contact CHRO for further guidance.

NOTE: *You must keep your supervisor, organization and/or human resources office informed of your status while on LWOP. Contact your supervisor if you want an extension of your LWOP. You organization must submit a SF-52 to CHRO for any extension. If you accept another Federal position, contat CHRO immediately to prevent erroneously processing your resignation.*

Maternity Leave

Story by U.S. Employee & Labor Relations/Benefits Section

Absence related to pregnancy is charged to sick leave or annual leave, depending on the availability of each type of leave, or leave without pay (LWOP). Requests for sick leave for maternity reasons are treated the same as any certified temporary medical disability. Under the Family Friendly Leave Act, sick leave is appropriate if the employee is incapacitated for the performance of duties due to pregnancy or childbirth, or to provide care for a family member as a result of pregnancy or childbirth.

Sick leave is not authorized for absence due solely to the employee's responsibility for infant care. Workload permitting, the supervisor may approve additional annual leave or LWOP for this purpose. Employee may be eligible for other childbirth or infant care leave under the Family and Medical Leave act of 1993 (FMLA).

If you are unsure about leave and absences, call the U.S. Employee & Labor Relations/ Benefits Section, CHRO at 645-7548.

Dress and Appearance

Story by U.S. Employee & Labor Relations/Benefits Section

Employees are expected to comply with reasonable dress and grooming standards based on comfort, productivity, safety, health and type of position occupied. When clothing such as coats and ties create discomfort during hot weather and in places where cooling is minimized to conserve energy, the requirements should be modified or eliminated.

Any management requirement for specific dress and appearance must be based on a

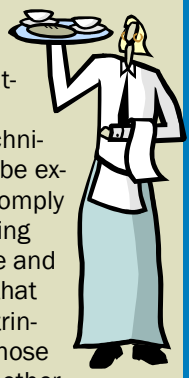
Continued on the following page

Dress and Appearance

(Continued from page 3)

clear showing that the prohibited dress contributes to an unsafe, unhealthy, non-productive, or disruptive work environment.
(examples: spiked high-heel shoes, mini-skirts, sheer blouses, midriffs, strapless dresses, cut-off jeans, sleeveless T-shirts, shirts with vulgar writing)

Employees who wear standard uniforms (guards, firefighters, mess attendants, medical technicians) may be expected to comply with grooming appearance and standards that are more stringent than those required of other employees. These standards are in line with job requirements and with like standards for employees in similar occupations.



To establish or make modifications to the official dress code, coordinate thru CHRO, U.S. Employee & Labor Relations/ Benefits Section for guidance.

Labor Relations

Story by U.S. Employee & Labor Relations/Benefits Section

Marine Corps Base Camp Smedley D. Butler Bargaining Unit Status employees are covered by the Master Labor Agreement (MLA) of December 2002. AFGE Local 240 represents Bargaining Unit Status (BUS) employees covered by the MLA.

To download the MLA go to ***https://lnweb1.manpower.usmc.mil/manpower/mi/mra_ofct.nsf/m&ra+home***

The bargaining unit is a group of employees with common interests who are represented by a labor union in their dealings with agency management. Bargaining unit status (that is, whether the position is in or out of the unit) pertains solely to the employee's position in the agency—it does not take into consideration whether the employee is a dues paying union member. As such these are two distinct groups. Bargaining unit members are employees whose positions are included in the defined bargaining unit while union members are employees that pay dues to the labor organization. (Automatic payroll deduction of dues is commonly referred to as dues withholding). Only employees within the bargaining unit can have automatic dues withholding.

The Federal Service Labor Management Relations Statute specifically excludes certain positions from bargaining unit coverage. Individuals employed as supervisors, management officials, employees engaged in personnel work in other than a purely clerical capacity, employees engaged in intelligence, counterintelligence, investigative or security work which directly affects national security, and employees primarily engaged in investigation or audit functions relating to the work of individuals employed by the agency whose duties directly affect the internal security of the agency cannot be included in a Federal sector bargaining unit.

Questions concerning AFGE Local 240, the MLA, or which employees can be included or excluded from the bargaining unit at MCB Butler should contact the CHRO Employee & Labor Relations/Benefits Section at 645-7548.

Foreign Allowances

Story by Information Systems Specialist

Everyone entitled to and drawing foreign allowances (***Post Allowance and Living Quarters Allowance***) is required to notify the CHRO when a change in the number of dependents (increase or decrease) occurs, as it can affect the amount of money paid for the allowances. For example, if you have a dependent child depart for college, the number of dependents must be decreased by one while the child is in the United States attending school. The number can be increased by one while the child is visiting during summer break and decreased again once the child departs. When the family travels on Renewal Agreement Travel (RAT) orders, entitlement to Post Allowance is suspended on the day of departure from Okinawa and restarted on the day of return. Therefore, **it is very important to notify the CHRO** in a timely manner of your departure and return dates for RAT. Failure to do so may result in indebtedness to the US Government.

Questions/concerns can be directed to the U.S. Employee & Labor Relations/Benefits Section at 645-2784

Civilian
- TSP Features
- Forms & Publications
- Info for Agency Reps

THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN

TSP Open Season has begun!

Read the local OKI-NEWS for details or log onto http://www.tsp.gov

IAA *(The Incorporated Administrative Agency)*
LMO *(Labor Management Organization)*
GOJ *(Government of Japan)*
MLC *(Master Labor Contract)*
IHA *(Indirect Hire Agreement)*

Registration for

IAA LMO

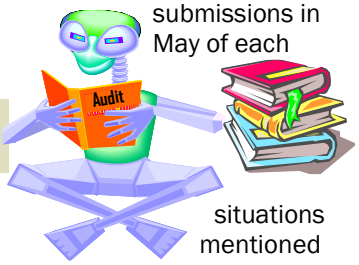
Employment Opportunities

Story by JN Employment Unit

The Incorporated Administrative Agency (IAA), Labor Management Organization (LMO) for USFJ Employees is an independent agency appointed by the Government of Japan (GOJ). The IAA/LMO provides personnel administrative services to Master Labor Contract (MLC) and Indirect Hire Agreement (IHA) employees. Another important role the IAA/LMO plays is to provide applicants to hire as new MLC and IHA employees.

There are two IAA/LMO offices in Okinawa. The Koza Branch manages the employees working for the Air Force and Army activities, and the Naha Branch manages the employees working for the Navy and Marine Corps activities.

Twice each year, the IAA/LMO offices accept applications from individuals interested in applying for MLC/IHA positions on base. They keep the applications in a register and applications are renewed with new submissions in May of each year. Approximately 15,000 to 20,000 applications are currently registered. However, there has been a change in the registration date this year. The IAA/LMO will be accepting applications from the period of 20 April to 21 May 2004, which is about ten days earlier than in previous years.



JN Classification Process II

Story by JN Classification Unit

In this issue we would like to answer the second most common question we receive: **when do we conduct desk audits?** We will conduct desk audits in three different situations: **1)** for official classification actions; **2)** for sample audits; and **3)** for research requested by USFJ.

When we receive an official classification request for an encumbered position from an activity, we will conduct a desk audits with the incumbent. When the position is vacant, we will contact the supervisor to get information about the position – no desk audit is conducted in such case(s). We periodically conduct sample audits by randomly selecting positions. We may conduct audits for research purposes when USFJ and GOJ are establishing new Job Definitions for the MLC and/or the IHA.

In any of these three situations mentioned above, we will inform the supervisor of the purpose of the audit and schedule dates for the desk audits. The audits are normally conducted with each employee and classifier at the employee's work location. Classifiers may contact the supervisors when additional information is required before or after the audits. In the next issue, we will explain the sample audits procedure and purpose.

Who authorizes MLC travel claims?

Story by JN Employee/Labor Relations Unit

We are updating signature cards for the Issuing Officers (IO) to review and authorize MLC travel claims. Upon request from activities, the MLC Contracting Officer's Representative will designate the IO as an official approving authority for MLC travel authorization. The signature cards will officially be filed with the CHRO, the IAA/LMO, and the GOJ for their records. The IO (or the COR) is the only authorized person who will endorse all travel related documents for MLC travel authorization. Thus, the IO (or the COR) needs to certify the correctness of the MLC travel claims within the assigned activities. We will be contacting all activities soon to seek cooperation with this process. Further explanation of this process will be made when we visit or call for assistance. In this event, we would appreciate if you can provide utmost cooperation and support with this process.

CCL for MLC/IHA

Story by JN Employee/Labor Relations Unit

MLC/IHA employees who are planning to take Child Care Leave (CCL) must submit necessary documents to their supervisors **one month before the effective date**. The documents to be submitted are: **1**) proof of birth (a copy of the first page of *boshitecho*), **2**) resident registration (*jyuminhyotohon*), and **3**) leave slips. If an MLC/IHA employee fails to submit the documents on time, the pension insurance and health insurance may be charged to the employee for the month. The documents are usually prepared and submitted during the postnatal period of (pregnancy) leave. Reduced Work Hours (RWH) request follows the same procedure as CCL.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

Story by Workforce Development & Diversity Section

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) is a concept that offers various methods to resolve issues and settle complaints. ADR offers parties an opportunity for early and informal resolution of disputes in a manner satisfactory to all. It costs less and uses fewer resources than administrative and adjudicative processes. ADR is used to help define and clarify issues, start a dialog between the parties and keep them talking, help clarify the choices and devise reasonable alternatives, and facilitate cooperation between employees and management.

The ADR method used by MCBJ Butler EEO Office is Mediation.

Mediation Process

While conflict is a normal part of our daily lives, it can often be an uncomfortable experience, especially when it involves the workplace. When you find yourself in a dispute with a fellow employee, manager, or other colleague, mediation can help you resolve issues in a private, confidential and timely manner. The mediation process is an informal one that uses a neutral third party known as a mediator to facilitate resolution of the dispute. The mediator has no power to make a decision or force one on any party; instead, the mediator works with all parties to reach a voluntary agreement of their own making.

The process usually begins with a joint session. During the first meeting, the mediator will explain the process and how it works, and will answer any questions the parties may have. After each party has had a chance to tell his or her side of the story, the mediator may ask questions to clarify or elaborate on a particular topic. After the first joint session, the mediator may meet with each party separately (caucus) to discuss the issues in greater detail and to gain a better sense of how the parties would like the issue resolved.

The mediation process may then continue with a series of separate meetings, or the mediator may decide to continue meeting with the parties jointly. During these joint and private meetings, the mediator will explore with the parties various options for resolving the dispute. The mediator can act in any number of roles, i.e., communicator, translator, agent of reality, etc. The ***goal*** of mediation is to reach a mutually agreeable resolution.

Mediation is ***confidential***. The mediator will keep all information confidential. The mediator will not willingly be a witness in a court of law or an administrative process. No written record will be made of the mediation process.

Secondly, mediation is ***quick***. A mediation settlement takes much less time to achieve than the more timely (and costly) process of litigation.

Finally, you do not give up any of your rights to pursue the matter formally. While mediation is designed to be an informal settlement process, it is entirely ***voluntary***. The parties or the mediator can end the mediation any time.

To assist in choosing whether or not mediation is an appropriate ADR process for your dispute, you should consider the following:

a. The case involves continuing relationships.

b. The parties want it settled confidentially and informally.

c. The parties indicate they would like to have a say in shaping an agreement.

Remember, the mediation process is completely voluntary. Any party can end the proceedings any time, and the disputant or complainant may continue to pursue the appropriate EEO or administrative process.

Parties should represent themselves and can be accompanied by their representative.

For information on ADR contact USMC Camp S.D. Butler, Workforce Development & Diversity / EEO Office (ADR program manager) at 645-7689.

Know the Basis of Discrimination

Equal Pay Act (EPA) of 1963: The EPA protects women and men who perform substantially equal work in the same working environment from sex based wage discrimination.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964: Title VII prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) of 1967: The ADEA prohibits employment discrimination of individuals who are 40 years of age or older.

Rehabilitation Act of 1973: The Rehabilitation Act prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities working in the federal government.

Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act: The ADA prohibits employment discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities in the private sector, state government, or local government.

Civil Rights Act (CRA) of 1991: The CRA of 1991 provides that a complaining party may recover compensatory damages in case of intentional employment discrimination.

ADR Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q1: What is Mediation?

Mediation is a voluntary and confidential process where a neutral third party (mediator) helps employees come together to talk and decide how to end disputes. The mediators do not take sides or make decisions for the parties. The mediators enable and empower the parties to reach an agreement that will work for them.

Q2: How does the mediation program work?

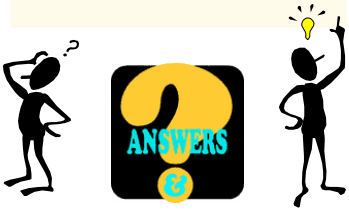
Before the mediation starts, the mediator will review the terms of your signed Agreement to mediate. By signing the Agreement, both parties agree the mediation is confidential, in good faith, and you agree to comply with the rules governing the session. At the mediation, both parties are given an opportunity to express their points of view in a comfortable environment. In most cases, the parties and the mediators will be in the same room, at least for some of the time.

Q3: What if I don't want to settle in mediation?

That is your choice. The mediator(s) will not tell you what to do. If you and the other party are unable to reach a mutual agreement during mediation, you may pursue your dispute in other available forums, keeping in mind the statutory timeframes for pursuing EEO complaints and grievances.

Q4: What if the other party doesn't want to mediate?

We will explain the advantages of mediation to the other party. We will do our best to encourage (but not force) the other party to agree to participate. However, it is a voluntary process and we cannot require a person to mediate.



Q5: What are the advantages of mediation?

Mediation gives you and the other party the chance to resolve the dispute yourselves. Most people are satisfied with resolutions they develop themselves rather than with something that is decided for them. You can also resolve your concerns in mediation in much less time than it would take to pursue a complaint or grievance using the regular statutory processes.

Q6: Should I bring an attorney?

Usually, only the disputing parties and the mediator(s) are present at the mediation session. If you would like your attorney or representative to attend, this is something that must be discussed and worked out prior to the mediation.

Q7: May I bring a friend or a family member?

Again, usually only disputants and the mediator(s) attend the session. If you would like a friend or family member to attend, this must also be worked out before the mediation.

Q8: Where/when will the mediation occur and how long is the session?

The ADR manager or mediator will contact you to schedule a time and location for the mediation. Sessions may take from three to six hours. Additional sessions may be scheduled if you are unable to resolve the dispute in one session and are making progress toward an agreement. Depending on the time of the session, we encourage parties to have a healthy breakfast or lunch. Mediations are normally held outside the activity where the parties are employed.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

Q9: What happens if we do not reach a mutually acceptable agreement?

You may pursue your dispute through other forums. You will not be penalized for participating in mediation or for failing to reach an agreement. You must remember, however, that mediation does not waive the statutory timeframes for filing a discrimination complaint or grievance.

Q10: What happens if we reach an agreement?

A settlement agreement is prepared, signed and executed by both parties, who may also enforce the agreement. The agreement is forwarded to the ADR Program Manager and to the forum from which the dispute arose (i.e., EEO, ER). Each party also retains a copy of the agreement.

CHRO

Civilian Human Resources Office

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WE'RE ON THE WEB!
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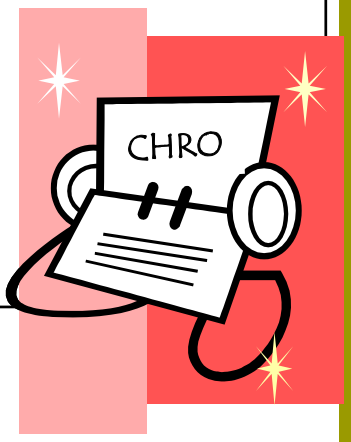
U.S. Employee & Labor Relations Section: **645-7548**

Workforce Development & Diversity Section:

Training: **645-7689**
EEO: **645-5422**

JN Labor Section:

JN Employment: **645-3370**
JN Classification: **645-3370**
JN Employee/Labor Relations: **645-3364/3921**



ICE Interactive Customer Evaluation

We value your comments!

Please fill in our comment card:
http://ice.disa.mil/index.cfm?

TRAINING COURSES COMING UP

MAY:

- Management Analysis: Planning—24-28 May

JUNE:

- Civilian Personnel Management for Supervisors– 14-16 June
- Mid Level Supervision– 17-18 June

JULY:

- Correcting Employee Conduct and Performance— 13-15 July
- Federal Budgeting for Non-Budgeting Personnel— (Date to be determined)

Call 645-7689 or e-mail chrotraining2@mcbbutler.usmc.mil (MCBBUTLER CHRO Training on Global Address List) for questions.

CLICK HERE Training announcements on the Web:
https://ww1.mcbbutler.usmc.mil/chro/chrodata/training.asp

WD&D WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND DIVERSITY