

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM — ALERT #1

SSA will soon implement its new performance appraisal plan, the *Performance Assessment and Communications System* (PACS--see Article 21 of the contract). The new appraisal system includes:

- new performance standards
- statements of the agency's values, goals, and objectives
- the use of numerics in appraising employees
- meetings to communicate performance expectations

This is the first in a series of flyers AFGE Council 220 has prepared for your information.

Changes under PACS:

- **Critical elements** are generic for all SSA jobs. Under the old appraisal system, they were derived from your position description.
- **Performance ratings** of Pass/Fail have been replaced by a three-level assessment range: Not Successful, Successful and Outstanding. Management has indicated it expects the vast majority of employees will fall into the Successful category.
- **The alignment statement** is used to communicate the agency's mission, values, goals and objectives. SSA says this will **not** be used to rate employees. Even if local, area or regional managers add performance goals to the alignment statement, they are not to be used for ratings' purposes.
- **Expectation discussions** will be held around the time management issues the generic standards to explain how employees can achieve a *Successful* level of performance. Be alert to management's use of numerics. Ask what happens if these numbers are not met as well as what level of performance is needed to achieve *Outstanding*. Beware of unrealistic goals that are designed to encourage statistical manipulation and unhealthy competition at the risk of good service to the public. Inform your AFGE union representative.

Warning:

- 1) Do not commit yourself verbally or in writing to meet numeric expectations. If you fail to meet such a commitment, management could initiate disciplinary action against you. If management requires you to sign a contract to achieve numeric results, consult with your union representative first.
- 2) Do not cut corners to try to achieve numeric results. Employees can be disciplined for improper adjudication techniques, POMS violations, and statistical manipulation.