



PAYROLL OFFICE LETTER

U. S. Office of Personnel Management

Number: P-97-4

Date: March 7, 1997

Subject: MARCH 1997 HEADCOUNT

This letter is the call for your March 1997 semiannual Headcount Report. The Headcount Report is reported semiannually (in March and September) by all payroll offices that withhold monies from salaries for participants in the Civil Service Retirement System, Federal Employees Retirement System, Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, and/or the Federal Employees Group Life Insurance Programs. The Headcount Report is a "snapshot" of enrollment in these programs as of these two points in time. The information you report to us plays a pivotal role in our system of internal accounting control, the negotiation of Health and Life Insurance premium rates, and in the determination of the employer contributions for Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) employees.

The Headcount is submitted on the OPM Form 1523 (Supplemental Semiannual Headcount Report); reporting of enrollment by individual health benefits plan is accomplished via the SF 2812-A. This reporting will be for the **LAST** payroll period **PAID DURING THE FIRST 15 DAYS** of March 1997. If you pay payroll twice during the first 15 days of March, the Headcount will be for the second payroll period paid in that period. For monthly payroll cycles, the reporting period will be for February 1, 1997 through February 28, 1997.

In the interest of time, we ask that you **FAX** your Forms 1523 and 2812-A to us. If you still report via the hard copy SF 2812, please fax your SF 2812 in addition to the OPM Form 1523 with your SF 2812A. In the past, we have often received faxed Headcount information that was very difficult to read -- please ensure the copy being faxed will provide clear and legible output on our end.

Our FAX numbers are:

☎ 202-606-0701
☎ 202-606-0195

We would like to receive your reporting on the applicable payroll paid date. If this cannot be accomplished, we must ask that we receive it no later than **April 1, 1997**. Please, under no circumstances, delay submitting your normal RITS or hard-copy SF 2812 because your Headcount Report is not ready to be submitted.

It is very important, for the reasons cited above, that the information you report on your Headcount is **ACCURATE** and **TIMELY**. For the September 1996 Headcount, over 40% of all reports were either late or contained errors that delayed processing. For your information, we have attached a list of the errors we encountered in that Headcount. We would refer you to Payroll Office Letter 95-4, which contains detailed Headcount reporting requirements. It is available electronically through OPM "Mainstreet" or a copy can be obtained by calling the contact provided in the last paragraph of this letter.

The instructions for your March 1997 report are virtually the same as for prior reports, except for the following:

The SF2812-A with your Headcount should contain totals for the dollars and enrollees reported on it. The total dollars and enrollments on the SF2812-A must agree with the dollar and enrollment totals reported on line B3 of your OPM Form 1523; and the total dollars must agree with the total dollars reported on RITS (or the hard copy SF 2812).

We also wish to remind you that of the following changes initiated for the September 1996 reporting:

The name of the preparer, in addition to the signature of the authorized official, is required.

In the Retirement section, the amounts reported on Line C3 (Total Retirement) in the "Deductions Made" and "No Deductions Made" columns should not include the number of enrollees for Salary Offset, Military Deposits, and for Civilian Service Credit reported on lines C1i, C1j, C1k, C2i and C2k.

We would also like you to place emphasis on your reporting of **AGGREGATE BASE SALARY** (ABS) data. We require ABS for each CSRS and FERS category included on your OPM Form 1523. The ABS is the total gross salary, subject to retirement withholding, for the reported pay period, for each category of CSRS and FERS retirement. For example, on Line C.2.a, the amount reported will be the total salary (subject to retirement withholding) paid this pay period to individuals with CPDF retirement code K. Your ABS reporting provides us with an important accounting control over RITS/hard-copy SF 2812 reporting. We compute withholdings and

contributions amounts for each Retirement category on your OPM Form 1523 based on the ABS, and compare that to the corresponding amounts you reported to us via RITS or on your hard-copy SF 2812. We will contact you for an explanation, if this analysis reveals a significant variance.

If you have any questions concerning the preparation of your Headcount report, please call Dick Osberg at (202) 606-4709.

/s/

Robert A. Yuran, Chief
Financial Management Division
Retirement and Insurance Service

Attachments (3)

Note - Attachment 2 (OPM Form 1523 - Revised 9/96) and Attachment 3 (SF 2812-A) are not available on OPM Mainstreet. You may call for copies.