

National Finance Center's Customer Board Meeting

Wednesday, April 8, 2020

9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. eastern standard time (EST)

Roll Call

NFC Participants

Calvin Turner, NFC
Anita Adkins, NFC
Anthony Priola, NFC
Trudy Sandefer, NFC
Dawn Hughes-Morris, NFC
Sharon Cannon, NFC
Renee Pellissier, NFC
Debby Tatum, NFC
Wardell Jones, NFC
Adrienne Fourcade, NFC
Chris Cutitto, NFC
Tracey Hoolahan, NFC
Jim Morrissey, NFC
Sandie Mikell, NFC
Anh Lewellen, NFC
Emily Sandefer, NFC
Tiffany Ward, NFC
Griselda Taylor, NFC
Lisette Lopez, NFC
Tangie White, NFC
Anh Lewellen, NFC
Gene Bogart, NFC
Shelda Melancon, NFC
Marquette DeFillo, OCFO-USDA
Marsha Baker, OCFO-USDA

Agency Participants

LaRell Faulkner, DOL
Stephanie Forster, TR
Sheonna Gibson, TR
Renee Caputo, GAO
Raven Andrews, USAID
Manoj Pillai, USAID
Eunice Meade, GAO
Kathy McDuffie, OSC
Stephanie Harris, Peace Corps
Paige Jones, Smithsonian
Curtis Lutz, Smithsonian
Theresa Thompson, TR
Chakravarthy Susarla, TR
Delores Edwards, CNCS
John McPhaul, AOC
Allison Thiriez, ARC
Bob Short, CTFC
Michelle Emmons, CNS
Veronica McCray, DNFSB
Tajuana Dill, FCC
Ed Chmielowski, FDIC
Tracey Stackhouse, LOC
Timothy Gulley, MedPAC
Anthony Mitchell, NEH
Derika Ferdinand Walker, NEH

NFC Participants

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Agency Participants

Marlo Blue, NEH
Terry Cook, DOJ
Tanya Bennett, SBA
Takisha Bowens, AOC
Traci DiMartini, Peace Corps
Mahasti Pourdastan, DHS
Maria Wennersten, Smithsonian
Natalie Tyce, FDIC

Opening Comments**National Finance Center (NFC) Response to COVID-19 (Coronavirus)—Calvin Turner**

We have a high number of cases in Louisiana, mainly from the large gatherings during Mardi Gras, so right now New Orleans is being hit extremely hard. There is a lot of lock-down measures the city is taking to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Out of an abundance of caution, most of NFC operations have shifted to telework. As we move to telework, our goal is to not let any of our normal business operations suffer. So far NFC has been able to do that. A minimal number of staff must go into the building at any point in time. NFC was in the position to ease in to telework after the tornado that struck our building in 2017. We had been looking at how to modify processes, so that if we had to go to 100% telework, we could respond quickly. We can deliver all our services to our customers with a maximum number of 22 employees on site at a time.

OCFO/NFC Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)—Sharon Cannon

All of NFC operations are being sustained through maximized telework. Considering what is occurring in New Orleans, NFC is pleased to report that generally our employees are healthy and available to serve; and our systems and applications are available to our customers.

NFC has been able to improve our business processing, many of which are shifting to digital distribution and accessibility. NFC continues to maintain our continuity of operations facility in Bossier City, LA; however, it is not in use currently because we are maximizing telework. NFC is preparing for Hurricane Season which starts in June. We are evaluating our continuity plan to ensure, should the pandemic continue through that time, we are prepared to respond to a hurricane unfolding. NFC remains confident that we can sustain our operations under a wide variety of circumstances and is available to support you as needed.

Improved Customer Experience

Customer Engagement Experience 2020—Dawn Hughes- Morris

The 2020 Customer Engagement Experience (CEE) scheduled for June is being rescheduled. NFC is looking at scheduling the meeting in the October/November timeframe. Client Management Representatives will be in contact to do a pulse check to see which of these months' work best for all. The theme for the 2020 CEE is 'Charting the Course,' with the location in Downtown New Orleans, LA. Two representatives from each Agency will be invited to attend the CEE. If an Agency requires more representatives, they may make that request to NFC. We will again to have vendors participate.

The learning tracks this year will be comprised of mini concurrent sessions, which will allow you to customize your learning track. The course will be designed for executives, senior level professionals, and advanced front-line federal business professionals. Several sessions created to fit all your needs, with each offering geared towards learning and collaboration at specific levels of experience and knowledge.

Live demonstrations will be a part of the CEE, both NFC developed and NFC hosted systems such as BSM (ServiceNow), Time and Attendance (T&A) reporting solutions including Insight, CULP reports, and Reporting Center, as well as EmpowHR and EPIC demonstrations. This year NFC has also added a session called "Did You Know" to allow customers to maximize the resources available to learn NFC systems every day.

NFC subject matter experts will share their knowledge and expertise to introduce customers to resources accessible from NFC.

Communication Improvements—Dawn Hughes-Morris

NFC has been looking to transform and streamline our business processes workflows. We have created a digital communication strategy plan, designed to outline all the communication vehicles NFC has in place. The document will outline how NFC communicates with our customers, and how they can communicate with us. The document will also provide descriptions of resources and suggested target audiences for each communication type. More information on the digital strategy plan is forthcoming.

ServiceNow—Renee Pellissier

NFC continues our investment in transforming and streamlining our Customer Service offerings. Service Now© (SN) is the opportunity to improve lines of business workflow and customer experience. It delivers a simple and configurable platform using automated procedures built around helping organizations improve their workforce in a more automated, efficient, and holistic fashion.

Recently Accomplished:

On December 7, 2019, NFC upgraded SN to the Madrid version and delivered a more digitized customer service portal which provides a more elegant external facing user interface (UI).

NFC also introduced the ability to submit manual payments via the SN portal. This has recently gone into effect, and customers are beginning to use this service. Table Management requests can also go in through this service. If anyone needs more information on this, a customer notification was released regarding the manual payment process.

Current Work Stream:

NFC is currently developing a new Customer Service Management (CSM) module to provide a customer-centric platform target for 3rd Quarter FY-20, which includes:

- Executive Dashboards for External Departments and Agencies at the appropriate level. This solution will provide a view of the many services offerings provided by NFC.
- New dashboards for Servicing Personnel Officers and/or Benefits Processing Officers at the appropriate Personnel Office Level.
- New automated end-to-end Training Request functionality to request NFC training.

What's Next?

Demand Management will provide the ability to submit System Change Requests (SCRs) electronically without the need to send a document to an email, targeted for end of FY-20. With that you will be able to track in SN and have a transparent view of where the SCR is in the internal NFC process as well as progress made.

Considering the current situation with the pandemic and our telework status, NFC is looking to transition other manual processes into SN. NFC is going through the logistics of those transitions now. Notices will come out to customers prior to any transition.

Paige Jones, Smithsonian: Executive Dashboards being rolled out in the 3rd Quarter- what would be on those Executive Dashboards?

Michael Campbell, NFC: The Executive Dashboard will make available, to Agencies at their level, whether Executive or Department, everything in that department. The Agency/Department will be able to see everything under its span of control and down to another level to their span of control and another level to the HR POC span of control. In the beginning, it will include tickets that have generated with service request incidents or request for access and anything that comes across our service catalog. All of that will be able to be seen in that customer service management model at the beginning. The plans are in the future to add more functionality to that. Training will be included as well.

Regulatory/OPM Initiatives—Cherie Landry

Project 42599, Updates to Paid Sick Leave Legislation – The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFRCA) became effective on April 1, 2020 and expires December 31, 2020. The related guidance has been issued from the Department of Labor and this guidance defines new leave entitlements.

We are required to implement the provisions of the Act expediently. As such, we have outlined a strategy to allow employees to be paid in accordance with the leave that is now made available.

The Act provides for, under Division C:

Scenario 1 – Emergency Family and Medical Leave under the Emergency Family Medical Leave Expansion Act (EFMLEA). This provision provides for expanded family and medical leave to covered employees to be granted up to 10 weeks of paid leave at the 2/3 rate of pay. Employees invoke this leave under title I of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) (Reason 5 – Employee is unable to work or telework due to a need for leave to care for the employee’s child (under 18 years of age) as a result of the child’s school or place of care has been closed, or the child care provider of the child is unavailable, when related to a public health emergency connected to COVID-19.)

Eligibility: For an employee to be eligible for coverage under the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Act, the employee must be employed for at least 30 calendar days prior to the leave request and covered under title I of the FMLA (chapter 28 of title 29, United States Code). Coverage under title I of FMLA applies to civilian Federal employees:

- with an intermittent work schedule (i.e., non-appropriated fund flexible employees on an intermittent work schedule);
- under a temporary appointment (i.e., an appointment with a time limitation of 1 year or less); or,
- covered under unique statutory authorities that apply provisions of title I.

The Act provides for, under Division E:

Scenario 2 – Emergency Paid Sick Leave Paid under the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act (EPSLA). This provision provides for paid leave at the Full Rate of Pay for up to 10 days/80 hours for Federal employees.

Reason – 1) Employee is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;

Reason – 2) Employee has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine related to COVID-19; or

Reason – 3) Employee is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and is seeking a medical diagnosis.

AND

Scenario 3 – Emergency Paid Sick Leave Paid at 2/3 Rate of Pay for up to 10 days/80 hours.

Reason – 4) Employee is caring for an individual subject to an order described in Reason 1 or self-quarantined as described in (2);

Reason – 5) Employee is caring for a child whose school or place of care is closed (or childcare provider is unavailable) for reasons related to COVID-19; or

Reason – 6) Employee is experiencing any other substantially similar condition specified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with Secretaries of Labor and Treasury. (These conditions are to be determined as the DOL issues implementing guidance.)

Therefore, as of PP07, 2020, the week of 04/12/20, we will implement changes as applicable for the T&A input (WebTA and Paycheck 8) to ensure the appropriate corresponding rate of pay aligns with the leave used.

The time and attendance input will include using a designated transaction descriptor assigned to transaction code 66 (Admin Leave) to identify the leave request based on one of the six reasons I previously shared with you. We are using TC 66 because it allows for the multiple rates of pay that are incorporated in the calculations, eliminates

the need for system modifications related to edits for other sick leave balances/accruals and the TC 66 is applicable to intermittent/seasonal employees who do not earn sick leave.

This is an extremely aggressive timeline and initial system modifications will be limited to those that we can test and implement successfully while meeting the basic general need. Additional guidance related to the specific transaction code descriptors will be released this week. We appreciate your questions, patience and support as this continues to evolve and new guidance is being released daily. Our commitment is to work with you and address your questions and provide you with the facts and next steps to be taken.

Question: Annual and aggregate pay caps?

Answer: NFC will provide information on Thursday April 9, 2020, regarding how to manage and track/report on the respective pay caps involved with the new paid leave entitlements.

ITSD Updates

Cyber Security - Terrance Goodman

NFC provided updates on Cyber Security.

USDA Data Center Migration - Tony Priola

NFC appreciates everyone's efforts to date in getting the new data center tested while also working out issues with their own alternative work locations as we address the pandemic.

The data center cutover is scheduled for April 25th. NFC conducted its first customer test at the end of March. On March 28th we tested customer connectivity and access to the Customer User Acceptance environment. That test went very well, and we learned a lot as we gear up for future phases and the eventual cutover.

Phase 3 – Production Environment Testing (4/11/2020 9:00 a.m.–4/12/2020 3:00 p.m. CDT)

During the maintenance weekend prior to the scheduled migration, production systems at the Denver facility will be shut down and the Domain Name System (DNS) entries will be changed to point to the Kansas City data center. Customers will be able to access the applications as if they were production. Please note that work processed and/or files sent will not be maintained from testing.

<https://www.nfc.usda.gov/dcmigration/> Here you will find answers to some Frequently Asked Questions, and a link to all the Customer Notifications that have been sent out regarding the data center migration. The site has been updated with the new dates and additional information.

Special Note: In order to ensure the most recent copy of data is available at the new location some NFC applications may require an extended outage prior to the 25th. NFC is actively working to minimize the service impact to our customers and a client notification will be sent out once the needed down time is finalized.

GESD Technical Services

T&A Solutions - Renee Pellissier

webTA 3.8

Kronos and Immix advised NFC that end of life for webTA 3.8 would be March 2021 and would like all Agencies migrated to their core version of webTA 5.0. NFC is currently testing this product and assessing the security requirements and will be providing feedback to Kronos. The webTA 5.0 core version does not include any Agency-specific requirements. For these Agencies with unique requirements, Kronos would have to code these requirements separately and deliver them in subsequent Service Packs. The Service Packs would be parented to the core version. Additional Operations and Maintenance costs would apply to the customer feature Service Packs. The efforts to migrate webTA 5.0 will also require funding.

NFC is aware that the webTA 3.8 published end of life date is inadequate time to allow NFC and serviced Agencies to prepare for budgetary impacts and change management

activities associated with an upgrade. Additionally, NFC does not feel that Kronos can support the required work effort to transition all the impacted Agencies by the March 2021 end of life date and is working with the contracting officer regarding legal and financial impacts. NFC is scheduled to meet with Kronos to discuss their plans on how they will support the customer migrations and unique features and how Kronos will continue supporting webTA 3.8 through the life cycle until all customers are migrated to the new version. NFC will be requesting specific costing information relative to migrations and to the customer unique feature extensions. While NFC is discussing the impacts of migrating to webTA 5.0 with the contracting office and Kronos, they will be reaching out to all of NFC hosted Customers and share information and to discuss a path forward.

Curtis Lutz, Smithsonian: Smithsonian are hosted by Kronos and are currently utilizing webTA 3.8. SI funded the upgrade to webTA 4.2; worked over a year towards the migration; however, there were too many issues and Kronos abandoned this implementation and began focusing on webTA version 5. Did NFC have any customer that have experienced the same thing?

Renee Pellissier, NFC: Yes, and NFC is working with the Contracting Officer.

Calvin Turner, NFC: NFC has been having discussions with Kronos regarding these actions because we knew this would be a concern for our customers—your concerns have been voiced to Kronos.

Curtis Lutz, Smithsonian: Thank you.

Traci DiMartini, Peace Corps: Will NFC be making more information available regarding Paycheck8?

Renee Pellissier, NFC: Yes, just reached out to NFC and we will provide a cost estimate and a demo of the product. The same applies to all our Customers interested in Paycheck8 or any other product, submit a Software Change Request (SCR) and NFC will accommodate you.

Curtis Lutz, Smithsonian: Please let us know how your discussions and negotiations go with Kronos.

Renee Pellissier, NFC: NFC would like to do some comparisons to see if our Kronos hosted Customers are receiving the same service and consideration as our hosted customers regarding monies already paid so we can see how that scenario plays out. NFC spent about a year trying to migrate to webTA. NFC has been implemented for 4 years and still have open tickets.

Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) was Kronos' final webTA 3.8 migration.

webTA 4.2

NFC is currently working with USDA on webTA 4.2, Service Pack (SP) 10, currently in CUAT. These changes are scheduled to be migrated to production in May providing the testing passes the QA and CUAT processes. This SP should resolve some of the production issues that are experienced during our T&A processing week.

webTA 5.0

NFC will continue testing and accessing the product regarding the security requirements and will provide feedback to Kronos. There are some customers that have requested to implement into the 5.0 version. More information to come regarding end of life for 3.8 and testing regarding 5.0.

DHS – Would like to talk offline with NFC.

NFC will be discussing the end of life cycle with Kronos and how they will support all of the Agencies in migrating them to 5.2 during this short timeframe. Kronos will not be able to handle all the customers unique features and the migrations that need to occur – this will take at least 3 years. Kronos' support and cooperation will be required to complete these migrations. NFC is working with the Contracting Officer and will meet with Kronos again to discuss and will reach out to DHS after this next meeting so there's more information to share with them.

EmpowHR 9.2 Project - Renee Pellissier

The 9.2 Project is an upgrade and a redesign for the current 9.0 customers. It will allow for Fluid Technology, and will provide device mobility, improved search capability, guided navigation, and be able to personalize some navigation paths as well. In addition, Oracle has implemented their continuous delivery, so that instead of one huge release every 4 or 5 years, we get releases quarterly. EmpowHR 9.2 will also allow the option of selective adoption. NFC plans to select the relevant functions to adopt, by developing a strategy and a governance for assessing those delivered features with customers through Working Groups. NFC will present which functions and features are available and ask for feedback from the collective group.

GESD Operational Services

Retirement Processing Initiative - Dawn Hughes-Morris

NFC is pleased to share that we have maximized telework in the retirement and military deposit processing sections, while continuing efforts to submit retirement related packages to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) on a timely basis.

Please know that for the past few weeks we have been working diligently with OPM to determine if they can receive retirement application packages digitally as well as accept an electronic signature of the annuitants during this unprecedented event. In addition, we are exploring new ways for Customers to send retirement packages to NFC that would reduce or eliminate the need for hard copy mail.

The Office of Personnel Management is considering our request, and should this be approved and a new process adopted, it may only be temporary under the current COVID-19 event. NFC is optimistic and still working through the details of the discussions with OPM. Therefore, we ask that Agencies continue to mail NFC the retirement packages to NFC. We have made good progress in our discussions and will continue to update you as we make progress in this area. More to come as we make improvements in this area.

Mahasti Pourdastan, DHS: would like to get clarification, until NFC receives guidance from OPM, the benefits and retirement group will continue to use the same process.

Dawn Hughes-Morris, NFC: Correct, no changes at all.

Paige Jones, Smithsonian: Do you have an idea when OPM might decide?

Dawn Hughes-Morris, NFC: They should be very close; NFC has been meeting with OPM for the last three weeks. The hardest part is requiring a signature on the retirement package. OPM needs to clear a few things on their policy side. Whatever they do will be temporary, specific because of the pandemic.

New Pay - Marsha Baker

New Pay has had to become more flexible with the changes occurring day to day/ month to month. There has been a lot of change since the last Customer Board update. No Agency received money in their FY20 budget, including GSA, and in the FY21 budget, no Agency received money to move to New Pay. The President's budget included 20 million for GSA to determine which Agencies could migrate to New Pay, and to build the interfaces to get New Pay up and running.

Members of NFC and USDA-OCFO attended vendor demonstrations in January and February with other shared service payroll providers. We quickly determined that even though we all process payroll, we do it slightly differently. Inconsistencies included decimal point placement.

New Pay has taken a step back since there are limited resources, to focus on each employee getting paid. We are now focusing on the payroll policies we should have across the government. We are working with the other payroll providers, including Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS), who handle civilian military. Meetings are held every two weeks to discuss trends and policies we have. The intent of these meetings is to come up with a recommendation, so that we can still achieve the President's agenda. Recommendations from these meetings will be released in the following weeks.

As we move into FY21 we will look to see if we receive money, we will work with shared service providers to see if there are any policies that can be implemented in the legacy system. Revised approach to how New Pay will work.

Mahasti Pourdastan, DHS: One of the vendors is Kronos, for some of the Agencies thinking about leaving Kronos, in that environment, how that would look. Do the Agencies have an option to choose someone outside of Kronos? Or are we obligated to stay with them?

Marsha Baker, OCFO: At this point the only vendors who have been selected is for the payroll calculation processing. There has been no selection of the time keeping system, nor when that selection will be made. At this point FY20-21 we are only looking at the payroll processing side. There are only two vendors identified for this piece.

Question & Answer Session- Anita Adkins

Terry Cook, DOJ: CARES act, there is another provision that comes out regarding the way premium pay limitations and aggregate pay limitations. Has NFC had a chance to review the language that OPM is putting out, and its impact on the system?

Cherie Landry, NFC: Yes, we have. In respects to normal annual and aggregate pay caps, NFC tracks them, we do not cut anyone back. If they are lifting those caps, NFC may have to make some adjustments, but still will not cut anyone back. We will have additional information on the Thursday April 9, 2020, call as well.

Mahasti Pourdastan, DHS: addressed how DOJ is going to report the paid sick leave with NFC staff, trying to make it as flexible as possible. If an Agency decides to use that process, is NFC open to that?

Anita Adkins, NFC: One challenge with the approach from DOJ, is they created new transaction codes. NFC is trying to avoid numerous system changes and modifications. They also mentioned that their approach would result in possible debt to the employees

after this is resolved due to overpayments. NFC is trying to minimize any adverse impact on the workforce. We would like to get the rate and limit right the first time.

Paige Jones, Smithsonian: are you referring to division C or division E in regard to the Aggregate pay cap?

Anita Adkins, NFC: we are discussing the pay caps on the 2/3rds rate being paid under the Emergency Paid Leave. If you have specific questions you can reach out to us individually.

Kathy McDuffy, OSC: We utilize Paycheck8, and OPM is also authorized to use evacuation leave, with Transaction Descriptions (TD) be created in Paychek8 to cover that evacuation pay?

Anita Adkins, NFC: we are working very closely with GDCl to include TD for leave, as well as doing our own research on the evacuation leave, since we have received several questions on that. We will have updates in the April 9th meeting.

Closing Comments – Calvin Turner

We asked Customer Board attendees to provide feedback and topics of information they would like discussed at future Customer Board meetings. NFC would like to keep the meetings crisp and efficient. Any questions should be sent to your CMB Representative.

Adjourn

Future Customer Board Meeting:

Lincoln Conference Room, USDA South Building, Washington DC

July 8, 2020, 9:00 a.m.–11:00 a.m. (EST)

October 7, 2020, 9:00 a.m.–11:00 a.m. (EST)