

AFGE PARS FACT SHEET 2

What you can you do to get a better 2008 PARS plan?

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The PARS program for 2008 will be somewhat different from the PARS program in 2007. Not only is the PARS schedule compressed into less than nine full months, but the Agency has substantially tightened the benchmark standards it is applying to employees. It is more important than ever that you participate in the collaborative process that is supposed to occur when your PARS plan is being developed. You may be able to minimize the potential damage of the 2008 PARS plan, and improve your 2008 plan, if you focus on the following key areas:

- Make sure your supervisor does not merely copy your 2007 PARS plan and turn it into your 2008 plan. The 2008 performance period is only 8 or 9 months. Make sure that in 2008 you are not being required to complete a years worth of work in 8 or 9 months!
- Make sure you propose assumptions for your PARS plan. Some managers resist employee efforts to include assumptions in their PARS plan. However, because of the new benchmark standards, it is more important than ever you request that assumptions be included in your plan. See AFGE PARS FACT SHEET #3.
- Make sure your PARS plan takes into account your leave plans. If you normally use most of your leave during the first 8 or 9 months of the year, you could lose more than a month of working time out of the 8 or 9 month PARS rating period in 2008! If you are expecting you will be out on extended sick leave or LWOP you also could face a problem if your PARS plan fails to account for your planned absence. Make sure your 2008 PARS plan does not penalize you for taking approved leave. Ask that deadlines and work quantity requirements be adjusted to reflect your anticipated use of leave.
- The benchmark standards include standards that are vague and subjective such as creativity, high quality work products, promoting teamwork, etc. Your supervisor may be unable to tell you what those standards mean or how you will be evaluated. That leaves you very vulnerable. If you are unclear as to how your supervisor is going to evaluate your performance under such vague standards, the PARS agreement between EPA and AFGE gives you the right to add written comments for consideration and final determination by a second level supervisor.

- Don't accept verbal promises from your supervisor that nothing is really changing and you have nothing to worry about. The Agency has issued benchmark standards that make every employee vulnerable. Your supervisor could be forced to put you on a PAP by upper management or your supervisor could be gone tomorrow. A new supervisor might take full advantage of the vague standards that are in your PARS plan. Request changes in your proposed 2008 PARS plan so that you do not end up on a PAP or PIP.