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IRS Proposal Threatens NPAA Awards for Thousands of Employees

The IRS is holding firm to its proposal made at a mid-term bargaining table to restructure the NPAA program in a way that would eliminate awards for thousands of employees who previously received them, even if they maintain their current performance ratings.

At that table, the IRS proposed national-level pools for each division broken down only by the major occupational series in the divisions. This would force the employees in each series to compete with each other nationwide. For example, Customer Service Representatives in W&I would be forced to compete with all other CSRs in W&I to be in the top 55 percent and qualify for a performance award.

Thousands of employees in certain chapters, occupational series and geographic areas who have received awards under the current pool structure and whose performance ratings do not change would no longer receive performance awards. Those awards would instead be shifted to areas of the country where ratings are higher.

NTEU strongly opposes the IRS changes to the pool structure and countered with a reasonable approach that addressed the agency's concerns. NTEU proposed streamlining the awards pool process without causing currently eligible employees to lose out on awards. Last summer, the bargaining dispute went before a neutral factfinder who reviewed both parties' proposals and found that NTEU's proposal to streamline the award pools was more reasonable; and he recommended that the IRS adopt it.

The IRS, however, decided to ignore the factfinder's recommendation and moved the bargaining dispute to the Federal Service Impasses Panel (FSIP). NTEU and the IRS have each made written submissions to the FSIP in support of their respective proposals. If the FSIP adopts the IRS' proposal, employees could see the impact in their fiscal 2020 awards.

The IRS is well aware of the harm its proposal will inflict on employees, but is prioritizing minor costs and inconveniences over the economic welfare of its workforce. The IRS is also aware that the FSIP is currently stacked with presidential appointees who have mostly sided with management in their decisions.

NTEU will continue to keep you updated on this important fight.
