

I have been hearing hints of concern regarding the PM 2783 KPT Pilot Program resembling a portion of the FSA Tomorrow plan. I was relatively new during FSA-T, and really don't remember the details of that plan, but apparently there was a portion of that plan that called for some sort of district wide PT that would work in multiple offices doing filing and other menial tasks that would free up staff so numbers could be reduced.

Right now it seems that we have pressure on us from all sides about pay freezes, accusations of not being good stewards with tax dollars, we get more days off with leave and holidays than the private sector, etc. Although we need to be vigilant and defend what we do, we must meet these obstacles with facts, not with emotion and opinion. What I am saying is we can't dodge everything that is coming at us or we will miss the hidden opportunity that is mixed in with the stones that are being thrown at us.

The KPT Pilot program came about as the result of NASCOE working to get the National Office to recognize that our PT's do a lot more technical work than they used to, and that the National Office should take a look at their job classification to see if there was merit in offering grade 8's to more accurately define the role most if not all PT's take on in our offices.

This effort has been in the works for a little over two years now. At the National Convention in Hot Springs AR this past August, and the MASCOE Convention in Branson in September, Myron Stroup noted that there was a draft notice nearly a year ago (August 2009) regarding the reclassification of PT's floating around in the National Office. Myron stated that he had been told multiple times that it was getting ready to be released.

Notices, before they can be released, have to pass across the desk of several FSA officials. If one person makes a change, then the process has to start all over. And the PM 2783 notice is the result of lots of differing ideas, changes, trimming and personnel changes at the national level. If you will remember, we got a new Deputy Administrator of Field Operations this past August, and I am sure that had an effect on the content of the final notice as well.

Although the KPT Pilot Program is not exactly what NASCOE had anticipated, it is an opportunity for upward mobility of highly engaged staff that we did not have before. The position is not going into other counties and doing actual work, but rather is a resource for a district, or multiple districts even the state to use in the field for training, assisting with routine problems, getting a PT level perspective on issues that should be resolved, even attending and passing along "train the trainer" instruction from the national level.

The person selected would still be responsible for their regular duties in their home county, but would also be recognized for things they are probably already doing. In every part of the state, there are PT's that are in some way shape or form doing this. For example, during the SURE signup, Barton County PT Angie Morgan came to my office to provide initial training on the SURE Workbook. She may have received an award, but this kind of effort is ongoing and should be recognized on that same ongoing basis. I am positive that Angie has provide assistance to other counties beyond that initial training, but was probably recognized only once for her efforts.

In summary, the PM 2783 notice was not very detailed and left lots of room for our beaten up egos and imaginations to interact and run wild; but we should be used to that because every program we administer has rules that are open for interpretation. This fact could be a good thing as we utilize COC's

in a way that gives flexibility to shape farm programs to the needs of their county, why shouldn't we have the luxury of shaping our personnel resources as our needs justify as well.

It is important to remember that this is a one year pilot program, and that as with anything we have some things to figure out. If we can make this program successful, there is the potential that it could be offered up on a much wider basis. This program could not only prove to provide a reward for high achievers, but also an incentive for others to become high achievers.

One last thought, it is very important to remember that this is a Pilot program and there are issues to overcome, but please sort this off from the personal attacks on federal employees and look at it from a standpoint of its potential. Let's not pass up on opportunity because we are scared, and let's not throw the baby out with the bathwater.

Jackson  
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