

FACT SHEET

Within-grade Increases.

Refer to the collective bargaining agreement with AFGE Local 2755 for additional provisions pertaining to bargaining unit employees.

To be honest, many Federal employees paid under the General Schedule (GS) system, regardless of supervisor status, probably take that periodic step increase for granted. Depending upon their step within the grade, many expect to see a difference in their pay at fairly clear and consistent intervals. Supervisors often do not think about step increases and the statement such increases make about an employee's work as well as the supervisor's assessment of the employee's performance. That is, until the supervisor is faced with taking a performance-based action.

This Fact Sheet covers basic information about what a within grade increase (WIGI) is, who is eligible, reasons why they may be delayed or denied, and what supervisors must do if faced with denying or delaying a WIGI.

1. General information. A WIGI is an increase in an employee's rate of basic pay which advances from one step of his/her grade to the next once the employee meets the requirements for length of service and satisfactory performance. Personnel actions effecting WIGIs are generated automatically. The NSSC will process these system generated actions unless the supervisor has identified a performance problem with the employee and requests postponement or withholding of the WIGI.

The following are the waiting periods and the affects of non-pay status on waiting periods for General Schedule employees.

Waiting period for General Schedule (GS) (full-time) with a prearranged regularly scheduled tour of duty:

- For advancement to steps 2,3, and 4 – 52 calendar weeks
- For advancement to steps 5,6, and 7 – 104 calendar weeks
- For advancement to steps 8,9, and 10 – 156 calendar weeks

Non-pay status may impact a waiting period. GS employees with a prearranged regularly scheduled tour of duty are allowed up to the following amounts of non-pay duty time such as leave without pay (LWOP) before the waiting period for a WIGI is extended:

- For advancement to step 2, 3 and 4 – up to 2 workweeks or 80 hours
- For advancement to step 5,6 and 7 – up to 4 workweeks or 160 hours
- For advancement to steps 8, 9 and 10 – up to 6 work weeks or 240 hours

Time in excess of the above will extend the waiting period by the excess amount. GS employees without a prearranged regularly scheduled tour of duty (Intermittent) will have their waiting period extended by the excess amount.

2. How do you know when your employee is scheduled for the next WIGI? Supervisors are responsible for knowing when employees are scheduled for a WIGI. Likewise, they are responsible for knowing the most recent rating of record for their employees. Reports are available in both Datamart and NOPS. Both will provide information on who is due a WIGI in the next twelve month period. Screen shots of the NOPS report appear below. Since all supervisors have access to NOPS, it is relatively simple to pull a report on one's employees. It is highly recommended that each supervisor do so for planning purposes since there is no advance notification given by NSSC or OHCM.

Screen Cap of NOPS Org Roster

Promotions [\(Click here for help.\)](#)

This section is for Permanent Full time, Part time, Term, and FCIP employees only.

- 1 Conversion to Senior Executive Service [\(View Names\)](#)
- 6 GS 15 [\(View Names\)](#)
- 6 GS 14 [\(View Names\)](#)
- 3 GS 13 [\(View Names\)](#)
- 3 GS 12 [\(View Names\)](#)
- 0 GS 11 [\(View Names\)](#)
- 0 GS 10 [\(View Names\)](#)
- 1 GS 9 [\(View Names\)](#)
- 0 GS 8 [\(View Names\)](#)
- 0 GS 7 [\(View Names\)](#)
- 0 GS 6 [\(View Names\)](#)
- 0 GS 5 [\(View Names\)](#)
- 0 GS 4 and Below [\(View Names\)](#)
- 20 Promotions Summary [\(View Names\)](#)
- 756 Within Grade Increase Due Next 12 Months [\(View Names\)](#)

Screen Cap of NOPS WIGI Report Headings

NOPS Organization Profile System(NOPS) - Windows Internet Explorer

https://nops.nasa.gov/system/NOPS_Listview.cfm?list_code=INCR_DUE

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help Links FPPS Datamart HCIE Portal PDM

NASA National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NASA Organizational Profile System (NOPS)
 Human Capital Information Environment (HCIE)

+ XLS + PDF + SWF

Within Grade Increase Due

Org	Employee Name	Grade	Step	Action Date
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Internet 100%

If you decide an employee's current performance on one or more performance objectives is below fully successful (e.g. needs improvement or fails) and the employee's scheduled WIGI is due, and you believe you need to postpone or withhold an employee's WIGI due to poor performance, insufficient time to assess performance or any of the reasons outlined in this fact sheet, please contact one of the following for assistance:

Kate Spruill at 41808 – Org Codes A, A1, A2, A5, B1, B2, B3, B4, C1, D1, D2, D5, E4, E6, H1.

Nicole Smith at 48783 – Org Codes B6, B7, C2, C4, D3, D4, E1, E3, E5.

3. Earning a Within-Grade Increase. An employee who has not attained step 10 of the grade of his or her position may earn advancement in pay to the next higher step of the grade upon meeting the following three requirements established by law.

- The employee's performance must be at an acceptable level of competence (ALOC). To be determined at an ALOC, the employee's most recent rating of record must be at least "Fully Successful". This also presumes that the employee's performance continues at the Fully Successful level or higher.
 - When a WIGI decision is not consistent with the employee's most recent rating of record a more current rating of record must be prepared.
 - The rating of record used as the basis for an ALOC determination for a WIGI must have been assigned no earlier than the most recently completed appraisal period.
- The employee must have completed the required waiting period for advancement to the next higher step of the grade of his or her position.
- The employee must not have received an equivalent increase during the waiting period (e.g., QSI or promotion).

A supervisor may waive the ALOC determination if the employee did not have the opportunity to perform under the standards for a minimum of 90 days because they have not served in any position for at least 90 days during the final 52 calendar weeks of the waiting period. Examples of reasons why this may have occurred include absence due to long-term training, detail to another agency or employer for which no rating has been prepared, or prolonged absence while on paid leave.

4. Postponing a WIGI. As indicated above, a WIGI is not an entitlement; rather it is something which must be earned. There are two situations where a supervisor must postpone a WIGI.

- When the employee's work is less than satisfactory and s/he has been placed on a performance plan or otherwise told of the specific performance expectations at least 30 calendar days before the WIGI due date. In this situation, the supervisor must immediately contact OHCM for guidance.
- When the employee has been reassigned or demoted because of unacceptable performance and is or will be eligible for a WIGI within the next 60 days.

If either of these conditions exists, the supervisor, with the assistance of OHCM, must provide the employee with written notice that the WIGI will be postponed, the reasons therefore, and that s/he has no more than 90 calendar days to demonstrate fully successful performance. The employee must be given either a new or revised performance plan that outlines specific performance objectives that must be met during the 90 day period. The supervisor must notify the NSSC of the approval via email to nssc-contactcenter@nasa.gov.

If the employee's performance remains unacceptable, then action must be taken to withhold the WIGI, otherwise, the WIGI may now be granted.

5. Withholding (Denying) a WIGI. The withholding or denial of a WIGI is tied to the need for supervisors to make an ALOC determination discussed in paragraph 3 above. A WIGI will be denied if the employee's current performance is unacceptable with respect to any major job duty or performance objective, or if the employee's performance is at the minimum level required for retention in the position but below the "Fully Successful" level of competence. More specifically, a within-grade increase is withheld:

- When the rating of record is "Fully Successful" and performance has deteriorated to less than "Fully Successful". An off-cycle appraisal prepared for within-grade increase purposes to either withhold or deny is considered a rating of record.
- When the rating of record is less than "Fully Successful"
- When the employee failed to demonstrate fully successful performance during the period a decision has been postponed on an employee's eligibility for a WIGI.

When a supervisor determines an employee's performance is not at an acceptable level of competence and this may lead to a denial of the WIGI, the employee will be provided the following in writing, normally 30 calendar days before eligibility for the increase:

- An explanation of each aspect of performance which falls below the acceptable level.
- A description of acceptable level of performance on each aspect.
- Advice as to what must be done to bring performance up to an acceptable level.
- A statement that the employee has a period of 30 calendar days in which to bring performance up to an acceptable level and still receive his/her WIGI at the completion of the current rating period.
- A statement that the employee may request reconsideration within 15 calendar days of being notified of the negative ALOC determination.

6. Reconsideration of a negative ALOC. When a supervisor makes a negative ALOC determination and withholds a WIGI, the following procedures must be followed:

- An employee may request reconsideration of a negative determination by submitting a written response to the supervisor explaining why the negative determination should be reconsidered. The request for reconsideration must be initiated within 15 calendar days after receiving the notice of determination.

- The employee shall be provided with a prompt written final decision.

If the reconsideration is favorable, the employee's WIGI will be approved with an effective date retroactive for the original due date. The supervisor must notify the NSSC of the approval via email to nssc-contactcenter@nasa.gov .

If the decision is to sustain the negative determination, the employee must be informed in writing of the reasons for the decision, and his/her appeal or grievance rights as appropriate. **Refer to the collective bargaining agreement with AFIGE Local 2755 for additional provisions pertaining to bargaining unit employees.**

A new determination will be made at any time the employee's performance reaches an acceptable level of competence, but in no event later than 52 weeks from the end of the waiting period of the original due date for the WIGI. In this case, the WIGI will be made effective the beginning of the next pay period which begins after the favorable decision. The supervisor must notify the NSSC of the approval via email to nssc-contactcenter@nasa.gov .

References:

- a. Title 5, U.S. Code, Section 5335
- b. Title 5 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 531
- c. NPR 3430.1C