



FLRA NEWS

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FLRA ISSUES REVISED ARBITRATION REGULATIONS TO IMPROVE AND EXPEDITE THE REVIEW OF ARBITRATION AWARDS

The Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) announced today final revisions to its regulations concerning the review of arbitration awards. *See 75 Fed. Reg. 42283*. This is a significant step in the FLRA's arbitration initiative, which includes updating the FLRA's arbitration regulations and creating an arbitration education program -- including training sessions and tools -- to make arbitration case processing more effective and efficient. FLRA Chairman Carol Waller Pope expressed appreciation for the wide participation by agency and union practitioners and arbitrators, stating that "the many comments received helped the FLRA finalize revisions that clarify and enhance the Federal sector arbitration review process. Close to twenty-five years of experience under the rules originally adopted for the review of arbitration awards created the foundation for building new rules that will enable more expedited and responsive resolution of disputes involving arbitration awards." The issuance of the final regulations is yet another step in the FLRA's efforts to better serve its customers and provide meaningful and clear guidance for the processing of cases before the Authority.

The final regulations were developed after extensive study and evaluation of the policies and procedures involving the review of arbitration awards. As part of that process, the FLRA solicited input of arbitrators and practitioners by conducting nationwide focus groups, distributing surveys to parties to recent FLRA decisions, and inviting members of the Federal labor-management community to provide ideas and views on the grievance arbitration process by sending email to the FLRA's engagetheflra@flra.gov address.

Under the revised process for the review of arbitration awards, excepting parties may now request an expedited, abbreviated decision, and may receive assistance from the FLRA to collaboratively resolve their arbitration disputes. Where resolution requires a decision by the Authority, the revised regulations specifically incorporate the grounds upon which an arbitration award may be found deficient. The revised regulations also clarify and incorporate certain procedural requirements -- such as changing the Authority's existing practice for calculating the date for filing timely exceptions, so that the thirty-day period begins on the day after, not the day of, service of the arbitration award -- which are aimed at limiting the number of procedural filing errors and improving the quality of the records on which decisions are based. The new process also allows parties to use forms provided by the Authority to assist them in the preparation and submission of their arbitration-related filings. As set forth in the [Federal Register notice](#), the effective date for the new rules is October 1, 2010, which assures sufficient time for training and other activities so that parties will understand the new procedures before they go into effect.

The FLRA administers the labor-management relations program for 1.6 million non-Postal Federal employees worldwide, approximately 1.1 million of whom are represented in 2,200 bargaining units. It is charged with providing leadership in establishing policies and guidance related to Federal sector labor-management relations and with resolving disputes under, and ensuring compliance with, the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute.

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