

# PSA/Secretary Orientation Handbook for Onboarding Employees

*The MWACOP has developed a PSA/Secretary Orientation Handbook for onboarding employees in your unit. This is just a guideline for you to develop your own forms, checklist, etc., as needed according to the policies/procedures in your unit. We have provided links to the various subject areas, suggestions and links to official and/or sample forms.*

## Facility Tour

- Tour (adjust per unit protocols/procedures)
  - Building access is determined by the Research Leader
  - Keys are issued
  - Security codes for the farm building are established
  - Clothing for the lab and laundry rules are established
  - Purchasing lab supplies
    - Who to ask
    - What is allowed
  - Walk through of lab facilities then familiarization with lab equipment

## Hospitality

- Parking Facilities – work within unit protocols for parking

## Electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF)

- The Official Personnel Folder (Standard Form 66) is a file containing records for an individual's federal employment career. Employees with OPFs are those in the Executive Branch service, as listed in Title V of the United States Code and some federal employees not under Title V service. The long-term records in the file are included to protect the legal and financial rights of the government and the employee. The OPF is part of the government-wide system of records, OPM/GOVT-1.
- The eOPF is an electronic version of the paper OPF and a system for accessing the electronic folder online. The eOPF system combines document management with workflow capabilities. The eOPF allows each employee to have an electronic personnel folder instead of a paper folder.
  - [eOPF Information & Resources](#)
  - [eOPF website](#)

## Employee Personal Page (EPP)

- Web-based application that provides employees self-service access to their personal information. EPP provides you with the ability to view and make changes to your Direct Deposit, Financial Allotments; Federal Tax (W-4), Health Savings Account, Residence Address, State Tax, Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). You can view your Leave Calculator, Benefits Statement, Earnings & Leave Statements (E&L), Health Insurance, Life Insurance, Leave Summary, Residence Address, W-2, 1095-C Employer Provided Health Insurance and other personal information. EPP also provides you with helpful links to

valuable information sites regarding BENEFEDS (Government benefits), TSP Home and OWCP Claimant Query System.

- [EPP brochure](#)
- [EPP website](#)

## **Human Resources (HR)**

- [Human Resources Division on Axon](#)
- Info on this page:
  - HRD Resources on AXON
    - Classification
    - Employee & Leadership Development
    - HRD Notifications (aka Greenies)
    - HR Information System Applications
    - Onboarding
    - OWCP
    - Pay & Leave
    - Performance Management Program
    - Research Position Evaluation System (RPES)
    - Retirement & Benefits
    - Staffing/Recruitment
    - Work/Life Program
  - Business Service Center HR Contacts

## **Information Technology (IT)**

- [AgLearn](#)
  - The Agriculture Learning (AgLearn) system is USDA's department-wide system for managing training records and activity at USDA. AgLearn is one of the USDA eGovernment strategic initiatives and directly supports the Presidential eGovernment initiative for e-Training. USDA employees and USDA partners will use AgLearn to search, access, enroll in, and record all training opportunities through the web, any time, any place. Training opportunities on AgLearn will include both online courses as well as instructor-led training. USDA employees will have a record of their training on AgLearn and also can plan their future career development in the system. By using AgLearn, USDA employees will have access 24x7, anytime, and anyplace. There are courses which you will be required to take. To use AgLearn and other programs, you need to complete the eAuthentication Process.
  - Check AgLearn on a regular basis, as items may be added to your learning plan.
- [Axon](#)
  - Axon, the ARS Intranet site, is a central place where ARS employees can find, access, and share information and resources needed to perform their jobs more effectively. Many of the tools and features in Axon are designed to help improve and increase employee communication, collaboration, and knowledge sharing across ARS. Access to Axon is restricted to REE employees. For employees' convenience, many features and links are in multiple places. Some links in Axon

allow employees to access information outside of the site, and those items are denoted with an asterisk (\*).

- Use your email password to login to Axon.
- **What is an axon?**
  - An axon (from Greek, axis), also known as a nerve fiber, is a long, slender projection of a nerve cell, or neuron, that typically conducts electrical impulses away from the neuron's cell body. The function of the axon is to transmit information to different neurons, muscles, and glands. In this way, our Intranet site's main function is to transmit information throughout our Agency.
- [eAuthentication \(eAuth\)](#)
  - An eAuthentication account is a way for you to interact with USDA websites online. It gives you the ability to identify yourself to the USDA via your User ID and password. It permits you to access a wide range of USDA applications across the many USDA agencies and their services. You gain the convenience of transacting business with USDA online at any time and from any computer, with internet access, that is convenient to you. Use eAuth to login to [AFM Portal](#), [AgLearn](#), [ARIS \(CATS/ARMPS/SOD/HRD\)](#), [Concur](#), [My EPP](#) and [WebTA](#).
  - To obtain eAuthentication wait for 2 pay periods to pass then email [ARSeAuth@ARS.USDA.GOV](mailto:ARSeAuth@ARS.USDA.GOV) give them the person's name, EOD, and email address
- [Digital Signature How To](#)
  - This document is intended to provide instructions on how to insert a digital signature into a PDF document using your LincPass card. The Financial Operations Services Team (FOST) Electronic Signature Directive requires digital signatures based on public-key infrastructure (PKI) which guarantees signer authenticity, data integrity and non-repudiation of signed documents. A PKI digital signature is created using a LincPass card.
- [Email](#)
  - Your "ars.usda.gov" email account is your official email and should be used exclusively for all your work-related email.
    - Outlook
      - ♦ [Password Reset](#)
    - Outlook Web App
      - ♦ [Through ARS Network](#) (AXON – located in the purple area to the right)
      - ♦ [For University sites- VPN](#)
- [Java](#)
  - Java will need to be installed to run ARIS and/or CATS. Java will only interact/function with Internet Explorer. Firefox and Chrome browsers block its use. Do not update when new versions are available, only do so when instructed by location/unit IT personnel. Newer versions can be unusable.
- [LincPass](#) (information on Axon)
  - All employees and contractors working for USDA must be issued a Personal Identity Verification (PIV) card, known as LincPass. This website is your resource

for details on USDA's LincPass. This effort is part of the entire Federal Government's move toward compliance with the President's Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12 (the Common Identification Standard for Federal Employees and Contractors), commonly known as [HSPD-12](#).

- [Social Media Use and Communication](#)
  - This document describes Agricultural Research Service (ARS) policies and procedures for using and communicating via social media (new media) and social networking tools. These policies and procedures are established to ensure proper use, conduct, and information dissemination using social media tools and platforms in accordance with Agency, Departmental, and Federal guidelines and regulations. Transmitted information (including employee dialogues—one to one and one to many) and employee conduct using social media and social networking tools should reflect the highest quality standards in communicating messages and information to the public, and should adhere to Departmental and Federal regulations.

### **Lab Safety**

- Safety Training/AgLearn/University
  - [AgLearn](#)
  - USDA Information Security Awareness Training
  - Radiological Environment Management (University)
    - Annual inspections done by the Universities
    - Contact your environmental management department, if located at a University for more training opportunities

### **Performance Plans**

- The following appointment types require performance plans:
  - Permanent Full Time (PFT)
  - Temporary Full Time (TFT)
    - Term Employees
    - Pathways
- If performance plans are required for a new employee; all documents must be complete with all signatures within 15 days of coming onboard.
- [Performance Management Resources & Performance Plans templates \(AD-435E & AD-435S\)](#)

### **Purchase Card**

- Get to know your purchasing agent
- To locate the Midwest Area Agency Program Coordinator go to [AXON-Purchase Cards](#) page and scroll to the Contact List for REE Cardholders at the bottom of the page.
  - Some locations have a purchase card coordinator as a resource
- Go to [Axon - Acquisition and Property Division - Purchase Card](#)
- Complete the [USDA Request for Purchase Card Form](#)
- Complete the required training

## **Student and Outreach Database (SOD) (for new SYs)**

- The Student and Outreach Database is a database that captures student and outreach data in one central location. Data collected from SOD will serve all data reporting requirements, eliminating the multiple data calls and hours of extra work.
- Categories in which to collect data:
  - Students
    - ARS Students Working in ARS Facilities
    - Non ARS Students Working in ARS Facilities
    - Non ARS Students/Postdocs Working in other Facilities
  - ARS or Non ARS Postdocs Working in ARS Facilities
  - SYs serving as Advisors
  - Adjunct or Other Professor Appointments
  - Mentorship
  - Student Tours/Student Visits to ARS Locations
  - Presentations to Schools
  - Science Fair Participation
  - Facilities and Equipment
  - Other Outreach Activities
- [SOD Manual](#)
- [SOD Database in ARIS](#)

## **Telework**

- [REE Telework Program](#) (link takes you to Axon)
  - Info on this page:
    - USDA Telework Policy
    - USDA Telework FAQ's
    - Telework Agreement Form (AD-3018 USDA Telework Agreement)
    - USDA Telework Training
    - Eligibility/Policy/Documents, Forms & Resources/Program Contacts

## **Travel**

- [Use and Management of the Travel Charge Card](#)
  - To acquire a travel card the following forms need to be completed:
    - [USDA Travel Card Application](#)
    - [Travel Card IBA Acknowledge Agreement](#) (link to the form is located under Travel Forms and Documents)
  - Complete for new Government Employees
    - [Concur Govt Traveler Profile](#)

## **WebTA**

- [WebTA 4.2 on Axon](#)
  - Info on this page:
    - Email address or phone number for obtaining eAuth internal ID's for new employees
    - What to do to reset eAuth password
    - Webcast Training PowerPoint

- Commonly Used Transaction
- Employee Guidance
- Timekeeper Guidance
- Supervisor Guidance

## WEX/Vehicle

- [Issuing New/Terminating WEX Driver PINs and Required Training](#)
  - Administrative Officers (AO) and Program Officials are responsible for completing the Driver PIN Worksheet to request WEX Driver PINs for new employees/authorized cooperators and to terminate existing PINs for departing employees. Program and Support Services Brand (PSSB) will forward the new Driver PIN to the employee, including information to complete the required USDA Training within 30-days (see [APD Alert 2016-P2, USDA Driver-Fleet Card Training](#)). Drivers are responsible for following the guidance in the Alert to complete the training and register/certify their assigned PIN within 30 days.
- [Driver PIN Request Worksheet](#)
  - Generally completed by PSA and sent to AO for submission.
- [Roadside Assistance](#)
  - The WEX Fleet credit card offers roadside assistance through the National Auto Club (NAC). The service is available 24 hours per day. NAC will bill the WEX Fleet Card. There are no out-of-pocket expenses for the driver. This service is optional. Offices may use other mechanisms to obtain roadside assistance.
- [Authorized Use of the Fleet Card](#)
  - Policy requires offices to enter all WEX card transaction that exceeds the micro-purchase level in IAS for processing and approval by a warranted contracting officer. The micro purchase levels are \$2,500 for services (labor), \$3,000 threshold for supplies (fuel and parts), and over \$3,000 for a combination of services/supplies.
  - USDA authorizes the WEX fleet card for refueling, maintaining, and purchasing parts for reportable motor vehicles (reported in the FAST system) and non-FAST equipment when accountable/sensitive.
  - USDA permits the Purchase Card as an alternative payment method only when the WEX and WEX Pay (out of network payment) process is not available from a nearby WEX accepting merchant or merchant that will process a WEX Pay transaction. Purchase Cardholders must document the need to use the purchase card for reportable vehicles.
- [AXON – Personal-Property](#)
  - Includes but not limited to:
    - Tort Claims Administration
    - Motor vehicle management
    - USDA Driver and Fleet Card Training
    - Allowing Non-Federal Employees to Operate a Government Vehicle
- [Sample Onboarding Checklist - AD-3020](#)