



## ***Benefits Administration Letter***

Number: 04-104

Date: October 27, 2004

### **Subject: OPM Released the Automated Coverage Determination Tool!**

On September 30<sup>th</sup>, OPM deployed the Coverage Determination Application, or "CDA". The CDA provides human resource (HR) specialists and benefits counselors with an easy-to-access, online tool that efficiently and accurately determines retirement coverage for the two major retirement systems -- Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS).

#### **Why use the CDA?**

The CDA was developed to accurately determine the correct retirement coverage for Federal employees when they first enter into duty, transfer agencies, convert from one type of appointment to another, or re-enter federal employment after a period of separation. Staff responsible for these activities are the primary CDA users.

There are several benefits of using the CDA, including convenient online access, faster determinations, and increased accuracy. For those new to determining coverage, the CDA can help identify coverage discrepancies, and for those who have been doing coverage determinations manually for years, the CDA can help verify previously performed coverage determination and ensure accuracy.

#### **Benefits Officers' Role**

Benefits Officers work with both the HR specialist and benefits counselors within their respective agencies and with OPM's Retirement Systems Modernization Group (RSMG). As the subject matter experts for Federal government benefits programs, Benefits Officers may field questions from HR staff who want to know more about using the CDA. The RSMG can also provide additional information and instruction to support Benefits Officers who are advising users on the tool.

Similarly, RSMG will rely on Benefits Officers to assist with the security administration of users at their agencies. RSMG will rely on Benefits Officers if there is a question or concern about a potential user from their agency or if there is a question or concern about continued access for a user from their agency.

## Access and Training for the CDA

OPM has made it easy for all users to experience the CDA - online training is offered on how to operate the tool. The Web-based training module for the CDA walks you through a series of steps and exercises designed to familiarize you with the features and layout of the CDA. Since the training is accessed through the CDA Website, you will need a user ID and password to access both the CDA and the Web-based training. Go to [www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov), “HR Tools & Resources” to apply for your user ID and password!

## Additional Information

Because of the important role with both Agency staff and RSMG, Benefits Officers are encouraged to become familiar with the CDA. RSMG will provide an overview of the CDA at the next Benefits Officers Network meeting scheduled for November 1, 2004.

Learn more about the CDA by visiting the “HR Tools and Resources” section of the OPM Website at [www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov). Questions and requests for information may be directed to Patrice Jordan at (202) 606-0607 or email at [AskRSM/CDA@opm.gov](mailto:AskRSM/CDA@opm.gov).

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