

NATIONAL COUNCIL PRE-DECISIONAL INVOLVEMENT (PDI) TALKING POINTS

Introduction: National Council on Federal Labor-Management Relations

- National Council established by Executive Order (EO) 13522, *Creating Labor-Management Forums to Improve Delivery of Government Services*. Pre-decisional involvement, or PDI, is a key component of the EO. The EO envisions employees and their union representatives as stakeholders whose viewpoints and input should be obtained in a collaborative labor-management engagement process before agency leaders make decisions. The EO contemplates that management and unions will take a proactive approach to discuss workplace challenges and work collaboratively to develop solutions jointly on the front end of the decision-making process. This can result in better decisions and save valuable time and resources that might otherwise be spent on formal notices, positional bargaining, and adversarial impasse procedures.
- Co-Chaired by Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Director and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Deputy Director for Management. Our membership includes:
 - The Chair of the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA);
 - Deputy Secretaries of certain Cabinet level agencies, including Agriculture, Defense, Homeland Security, Labor, and Veterans Affairs;
 - National Presidents of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE), National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU), International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), and leaders from other unions representing federal employees, specifically the Federal Education Association (FEA), International Brotherhood of Teamsters, (IBT), and National Association of Government Employees (NAGE); and
 - The President of the Senior Executives Association (SEA) and the President of the Federal Managers Association (FMA).
- The Council supports the creation of labor-management forums throughout the government and the strengthening of current labor and management partnerships through the following activities, among others:
 - Collecting and disseminating information about improving labor-management relations throughout the federal government;
 - Providing guidance on improving labor-management relations and sharing success stories;
 - Labor and management representatives collaboratively developing and promoting training, guidance, and other tools to promote the success of labor management forums and partnerships; and
 - Developing metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of the Council and labor-management forums.

A. The positive effects and benefits of PDI

1. Mission Performance

- Within the federal workforce, both management and labor seek to serve the public and accomplish the government’s mission in an effective and efficient manner. PDI offers an opportunity for the meaningful exchange of ideas and best practices to assist labor and management with achieving this goal.
- We have heard many labor-management success stories, which demonstrate that offering a venue such as PDI to engage employees through their union representatives leverages their invaluable knowledge and experience. These examples have shown how PDI improved work processes, saved money, and enhanced employees’ engagement throughout the government.
 - USDA-RD Colorado and AFGE Local 3499 worked collaboratively to centralize the Single Family Housing Direct program in Colorado and increase staff training sessions. As a result, total customer complaints decreased, positive customer feedback increased, and loan processing increased 20%
 - USDA-FSA and AFSCME Local 3354 worked collaboratively to increase the percentage of loans made to Socially Disadvantaged Applicants to 14.2% (goal was 11%)
 - GSA’s LMR Council (NFFE and AFGE) worked to expand telework practices which enabled GSA to lead the way for all of the Federal government in respect to efficient use of office space. The lease consolidation in Washington, DC, alone is projected to save \$28M annually
- Early engagement of the parties reduces the amount of time spent on resolving internal conflict and formal labor-management procedures. It also increases the amount of time focused on the mission. By discussing goals, workflows, and options upfront, implementation time is reduced, and the implementation process is improved.

2. Labor Management Relationships

- PDI, effectively and reliably practiced, fosters an environment of trust and leads to a more mature and stable labor-management relationship.
- PDI, with its emphasis on “problem solving” and communication, strengthens bonds of trust that may lead to an expanded scope of engagement in work processes and mission outcomes.
- PDI promotes an opportunity for better communication between labor and management at all levels to identify interests and needs with respect to the issues that they attempt to resolve. It also allows both sides the opportunity to disagree without being disagreeable to each other.

- PDI increases the likelihood that issues will be handled proactively instead of reactively at the lowest possible levels, enhancing the opportunity for outcomes/solutions to result from creative collaboration.
- PDI complements the existing labor-management partnerships, contracts, and forums, and is versatile enough to be a stand-alone process or molded to fit the participants' needs and current relationships. PDI may be used to promote the development of new labor-management relationships.
- PDI is a tool not reserved solely for labor-management forums that exist under the E.O. but can be effectively employed at all levels of recognition and labor-management engagement.

3. Employee Engagement & Satisfaction

- Employees, through their unions, are afforded a non-threatening forum to provide management and the public with the full knowledge, skill, and commitment that unions and employees can bring to ensure that government functions in a cost effective manner.
- Employees involved in decision making feel a sense of ownership and empowerment, and that they are valued by management. This may lead to their feeling a greater sense of team, increasing their level of commitment and performance to the success of the mission.
- Employees engaged in decision making understand the vision and direction of management and the mission; they are better able to provide feedback on actual work processes and capabilities as well as offer operational suggestions to improve work processes.
- Employees who are involved in, and part of, the decision making process gain a sense of ownership over the decision. This stands in contrast to employees who are left out of the decision-making process and who may be less likely to fully support decisions or work-process changes.
- We have heard specific examples of improved engagement and satisfaction achieved through the efforts of labor management partnerships:
 - Treasury-TTB and NTEU saw an 8% jump (69% from 61%) in their FEVS positive response rate to a question about communication after establishing regular meetings between management and employees to update the workforce about pending changes
 - SEC and NTEU Chapter 293 negotiated a student loan repayment program which has lowered separation rates for employees under a student loan service agreement (In 2015, 0.48% separation rate for employees under a student loan

service agreement compared to 5.5% separation rate for employees not under an agreement)

- NLRB and NLRBPA improved employee satisfaction with the telework program, as measured by the FEVS, from 29.8% in 2011 to 80% in 2015

B. Resources Available

- **National Council on Federal Labor Management Relations website, lmrcouncil.gov**
 - Offers tips, advice, and real world examples from actual labor-management representatives who have developed, engaged, and practiced diverse types of PDI engagements as stand-alone process or incorporated into an established labor-management process the parties have developed. For example:
 - [Pre-decisional Involvement Frequently Asked Questions](#)
 - [Pre-decisional Involvement Guidance from the Council](#)
- **Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) and Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) at websites, www.fmcs.gov and www.flra.gov, respectively.**
 - Both offer descriptions of web-based and classroom training to labor-management organizations to assist groups in getting started with creating a labor-management forum, engaging in PDI, or fine tuning existing PDI processes. Those interested can find information about requesting this training through each website.
 - FLRA, FMCS, and the General Services Administration (GSA) have jointly created a two-day training on how PDI can be used to lessen the impact of office space moves on the employees and the work environment. The step-by-step process demonstrates creative problem solving that provides a model to use or to build upon.
- **OPM's Report on Labor-Management Relations in the Executive Branch**
 - This report provides an in-depth view of the relationship between collaborative labor-management relationships and employee engagement. It also includes highlights of labor-management success stories and the National Council's work. It is available on the OPM website: www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/labor-management-relations/reports/.
- **The National Council's Email Address**
 - Forums seeking assistance may contact the national Council via its email address; LMRCouncil@opm.gov. Requests for assistance are referred to the Council's Problem Resolution Subcommittee for follow-up by representatives of management, labor, and neutral agencies.

C. PDI First-Hand Testament

- PDI Success Stories found on the National Council website provide first-hand accounts from representatives of both labor and management, to answer a series of questions about their use of PDI, their labor-management relationships, and the advice that they would offer to other labor-management groups, www.lmrcouncil.gov/PDI/Success-Stories.pdf.
- It may be helpful for Council members to share personal PDI experiences highlighting the lessons learned and how his or her labor-management partners have built on the engagement; encourage audience members to do the same by emailing the National Council at LMRCouncil@opm.gov.