



April 5, 2024

The Honorable Kiran Arjandas Ahuja
Director
U.S. Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20415

Dear Director Ahuja,

The Federal-Postal Coalition, representing over thirty organizations comprising more than five million active and retired federal and postal employees, urgently implores you to exercise existing statutory authority, enabling the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to raise the maximum annual uniform allowance provided to federal employees mandated to wear agency-directed uniforms.

Presently, the Coalition finds the current maximum annual allowance of \$800 insufficient to cover the costs of uniforms required for the performance of official civil servant duties. Under 5 U.S.C. 5902, OPM possesses the authority to adjust the maximum annual uniform allowance for federal employees. However, the maximum allowance has remained stagnant at \$800 for nearly eighteen years, despite a significant decrease in its purchasing power over the years.

According to Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data, the purchasing power of the current \$800 allowance has diminished by more than 50% since OPM's last proposed increase in 2006. BLS Consumer Price Index data indicates that an annual allowance of \$1,232.05 is necessary to restore the purchasing power of the current \$800 allowance.

Moreover, while agencies can provide newly hired federal civil servants with an initial maximum uniform allowance greater than the government-wide annual maximum, this OPM-set amount has not been adjusted in almost eighteen years. Increasing the initial maximum uniform allowance to \$2,464.13, as per Consumer Price Index data, is imperative to restore its purchasing power.

The Coalition strongly advocates for the establishment of a new section to 5 CFR 591, mandating agencies to biennially review their maximum annual uniform allowance. These adjustments should, at a minimum, align with the changes to the annual Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners.

The decades-long stagnation in uniform allowance increases negatively impacts civil service, by placing significant financial burdens on civil servants while further contributing to poor employee morale and exacerbating retention issues. We urge OPM to address this matter promptly.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. The Federal-Postal Coalition eagerly anticipates collaborating with OPM to resolve this significant civil service concern.

Sincerely,

American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE)
American Foreign Service Association (AFSA)

American Postal Workers Union (APWU)
Federal Managers Association (FMA)
International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF)
International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE)
Laborers International Union of North America (LiUNA)
National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE)
National Association of Agriculture Employees (NAAE)
National Association of Assistant United States Attorneys (NAAUSA)
National Association of Government Employees (NAGE)
National Association of Postal Supervisors (NAPS)
National Council of Social Security Management Associations (NCSSMA)
National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE)
National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU)
National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU)
Patent Office Professional Association (POPA)
Professional Aviation Safety Specialists (PASS)
Professional Managers Association (PMA)
Senior Executives Association (SEA)