

§ 591.240

COLA, or post differential under title 5, United States Code.

(c) Payment of a COLA or post differential is not an equivalent increase in pay within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. 5335.

§ 591.240 How are agency and employee representatives involved in the administration of the COLA and post differential programs?

(a) OPM may establish a COLA Advisory Committee in each COLA survey area. The committees are composed of agency and employee representatives from the COLA survey area and one or more representatives from OPM.

(b) To the extent practical, the COLA Advisory Committees coordinate and work with the Survey Implementation Committee established pursuant to *Caraballo, et al. v. United States*, No. 1997-0027 (D.V.I).

§ 591.241 What are the key activities of the COLA Advisory Committees?

(a) The COLA Advisory Committees may—

(1) Advise and assist OPM in planning living-cost surveys;

(2) Provide or arrange for observers for data collection during living-cost surveys;

(3) Advise and assist OPM in the review of survey data;

(4) Advise OPM on its administration of the COLA program, including survey methodology; and

(5) Assist OPM in disseminating information to affected employees about the living-cost surveys and the COLA program.

(b) The committees also may advise OPM on special situations or conditions, such as hurricanes and earthquakes, as they relate to OPM's authority under § 591.223(b) to conduct interim surveys or implement some other change in response to conditions caused by a natural disaster or similar emergency.

§ 591.242 What is the tenure of a COLA Advisory Committee?

OPM may establish a COLA Advisory Committee in each area prior to each living-cost survey conducted in that area. OPM will appoint committee members for 3-year renewable terms. To the extent practical, the committee

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will continue to exist between surveys, but OPM may periodically review with the committee whether there is a continuing need for the committee.

§ 591.243 How many members are on each COLA Advisory Committee?

A COLA Advisory Committee has up to 12 members composed of OPM representatives and other agency and employee representatives, unless OPM determines that the committee should be larger. In determining the number of committee members, OPM considers the amount of work the committee is likely to be requested to do (based on the size and complexity of the local living-cost survey) and the availability of employee and agency representatives to participate as committee members.

§ 591.244 How does OPM select COLA Advisory Committee members?

(a) In establishing a COLA Advisory Committee, OPM invites local agencies and employee organizations to nominate committee members. OPM also invites COLA Defense Corporations and the local Federal Executive Board or Federal Executive Association each to nominate committee members. Subject to § 591.243, OPM selects committee members from these nominations in a manner designed to achieve a balanced representation that is reflective of agencies and employee organizations in the area. In consultation with the committee, OPM may select additional nominees to serve as alternates to the primary committee members. OPM designates not more than two OPM representatives to serve on each committee.

(b) Each Executive agency, as defined in 5 U.S.C. 105, must cooperate and release appointed employees for committee proceedings and activities unless the agency can demonstrate that exceptional circumstances directly related to accomplishing the mission of the employee's work unit require his or her presence on the job. Executive agency employees serving as committee members are considered to be on official assignment to an inter-agency function, rather than on leave, and are eligible to receive reimbursement for authorized travel expenses from their respective agencies.