



The Four Winds

National Weather Service Employees Organization

NOAA Records Show NWS is Misrepresenting the Vacancy Rate

(March 7, 2017) On February 28, NWSEO received a response to a Freedom of Information Request which reveals there are several hundred more vacant funded positions in the National Weather Services than the NWS claims. This FOIA response confirms NWSEO's long standing claim that there are over 600 vacancies within the NWS.

Last year, the *NWS Insider* dismissed the union's calculations and claimed that that only 394 funded positions vacant:

“Why is the number of vacancies stated by headquarters (394) different than the number stated by NWSEO (667)? That is a difference of more than 200 positions.

- The vacancy number is different because NWS management must use the Congressionally authorized level of 4,638 FTE (Full Time Equivalent) contained in our FY 2016 appropriation, whereas NWSEO is likely referring to the NWS post-modernization staffing model levels, circa 2000. However, NWS management is not privy to NWSEO's calculations.
- NWS management must also account separately for positions funded by other federal agencies, e.g. FAA.
- The Congressionally authorized FTE level of 4,638 represents the staffing level we are authorized to fill each fiscal year.”

These same numbers have been cited by NWS leadership repeatedly last year in various briefings.

In response to NWSEO's FOIA request for:

- the total number of vacancies,
- total number of employees on board, and
- total number of authorized and appropriated positions,

NOAA provided the following chart which demonstrates that NWS leadership has been misrepresenting both the number of appropriated positions and the number of vacancies.

According to data provided by NOAA, **as of November 1, 2016, there were 643 vacant funded positions in the NWS.** According to this document, **there were a total of 4,874 appropriated positions in the NWS in FY 16, not 4,638 as claimed by the NWS.** NOAA also reports that there are 174 additional positions that are either reimbursable by other agencies or fee-funded (such as the CWSU meteorologists):

Vacancy Report - As of 1 November 2016

Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D	Column E	Column F	Column G	Column H
LO/SO	Vacant Positions Available (D - C)	Onboard Positions* (As of 10/23/16)	FY16 Authorized Positions (PB Enacted) (E + F)	FY16 Appropriated Positions (Enacted)**	FY16 Reimbursable & Fee-Funded Positions (Enacted)**	Hiring Actions In Process (As of 10/30/16)	Current Staffing Level Percentage (C / D)
NWS	643	4405	5048	4874	174	277	87%
NMFS	476	2928	3404	3093	311	257	86%
NOS	279	1085	1364	1279	85	72	80%
NESDIS	175	759	934	889	45	58	81%
OAR	139	689	828	775	53	30	83%
OMAO***	40	642	682	681	1	14	94%
SO/USEC	-5	977	972	935	37	97	101%
Grand Total	1747	11485	13232	12526	706	805	87%

* Data Source: As of 23Oct16 - NFC pulled 2Nov16

** Data Source: NOAA FY16 Budget (Enacted)

*** Note: 321 Commission Corps positions not included

Vacancies are current and do not include estimate future attrition

The higher number of appropriated positions reported by NOAA is consistent with Exhibit 10-6 of the Budget Justification submitted to Congress by NOAA in support of the agency’s FY 17 appropriations request. This document states that there are 4,874 positions for which the NWS had budget authority in the enacted FY 16 appropriations.

-NWSEO-

No one cares more for National Weather Service employees than National Weather Service employees.

**No one works harder for National Weather Service employees than National Weather Service employees.
We are NWSEO.**