



FEW

WORKING FOR THE ADVANCEMENT
OF WOMEN IN THE GOVERNMENT

NEWS & VIEWS

JULY/AUGUST 2021

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2021 LEADERSHIP SUMMIT II
August 9 - 13, 2021



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Virtual LEADERSHIP SUMMIT II

Our Sponsors:



By: FEW National President Karen M. Rainey

President's Message

As National President, I cordially invite everyone to attend and not miss this phenomenal opportunity for interactive career enhancement training online at the Virtual Leadership Summit II (VLS II), August 9–13, 2021. This year's theme for FEW's National Training Event is "Soaring to New Heights." Your potential is endless and start here at this training program. The theme is based on making the most of your life by working toward climbing so that you can reap the benefits of your fullest potential.

This will be an event of extraordinary training, networking, keynote speakers and meetings. It's an exciting time for you to grow as we teach you to soar to the next level in your career and meet the challenges of your personal goals. You can expect training at the VLS II to be the most comprehensive caliber training; not only for FEW members, but to all those wanting to soar to greater success.

With the help of our generous sponsors and exhibitors like Blue Cross Blue Shield, Long Term

Care Partners, GEHA and many more, FEW will help you soar at this virtual training through each program during the week. Our theme for the Compliance Program is "Soaring to New Heights: Lift as you climb" and the focus of our Annual Health and Wellness Fair initiative is: navy representing colon/colorectal cancer, yellow representing suicide prevention, lavender representing cancer awareness

You don't want to miss the many opportunities offered at the VLS II designed just for you and your advantage. Remember to visit the Exhibit Hall and talk to the agencies and other exhibitors on hand, attend our regional meeting of people from your local area and celebrate with other FEW members at the Membership Meeting and Awards and Scholarship Program. It is important that you stay engaged, keep proactive and help us help you begin "Soaring to New Heights."

Register here.

What is Juneteenth?

By: Gail E Carmack, FEW Diversity Chair, Philadelphia Chapter



President Abraham Lincoln issued the “Emancipation Proclamation” on Sept. 22, 1862. It became effective on Jan. 1, 1863, and states: “All persons held as slaves within any state...in rebellion against the U.S. shall be then, thenceforward and forever free.” However, it was not until after the Confederacy surrendered on April 9, 1865, that news about the proclamation reached Texas. **Two and a half years after the proclamation**, in Galveston, Texas, on June 19, 1865, Major General Gordon Granger, District of Texas Commanding Officer, read General Order Number 3.

“The people of Texas are informed that in accordance with a Proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired laborer.”

The celebrations that followed became known as Juneteenth, the oldest nationally celebrated

commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States. The name “Juneteenth” is an amalgamation of the words “June” and “nineteenth.” In 1980, Juneteenth became a Texas state holiday and celebrated in 48 states. Certain foods became popular and subsequently synonymous with Juneteenth celebrations, such as strawberry soda-pop. More information about Juneteenth is at JUNETEENTH.com.

The peaceful protests arising out of the police killings of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd in 2020 brought renewed attention to Juneteenth and spearheaded national holiday discussions. On Tuesday, June 15, 2021, the U.S. Senate unanimously voted to make “Juneteenth” a federal holiday. On Wednesday, June 16, 2021, the House of Representatives voted 415-14 to establish “Juneteenth National Independence Day,” a federal holiday commemorating the end of slavery. The first federal holiday created since Martin Luther King Jr. Day in 1983.



2021 Advance Child Tax Credit Payments

Payments start July 15

Filed already?

You don't need to take any action now if you've filed a 2020 tax return.

Haven't filed yet?

File your tax return as soon as possible. For people not required to file a tax return and who didn't file in 2019 or 2020, quickly register using the IRS **Non-filer Sign-up Tool**. You may qualify for the Child Tax Credit and Economic Impact Payments.

- Eligible families can receive advance payments of **up to \$300 per month** for each child under age 6 and **up to \$250 per month** for each child age 6 and above.
- Payments begin July 15 and will be sent monthly through December 15 without any further action required.
- You can benefit from the credit even if you don't have earned income or don't owe any income taxes.
- The tax credit includes advance payments for 2021 only.

The American Rescue Plan Act Advance Child Tax Credit provisions include:

- The maximum Child Tax Credit increased to \$3,600 for children under the age of 6 and to \$3,000 per child for children between ages 6 and 17.
- The credit includes children who turn age 17 in 2021.
- Taxpayers may receive part of their credit in 2021 before filing their 2021 tax return.

Eligible taxpayers who don't want to receive advance payment of the 2021 Child Tax Credit will have the opportunity to unenroll from receiving the payments.

[IRS.gov/childtaxcredit2021](https://www.irs.gov/childtaxcredit2021)





What it Means to Lead: A FEW Important Factors from our National Past Presidents

By: Connie Coleman-Lacadie, VP for Policy & Planning

Leadership has many definitions. One that stands out is “**the ability to inspire a team to achieve a certain goal.**” FEW’s National President Rainey and Past Presidents embody that definition. Take heed of their wisdom shared as you reflect upon your leadership:

- **Leadership is not about an individual.** It is about the mission and vision, helping others, providing credible information, and reacting appropriately.
- **Be humble.** Accept what you do not know and seek answers.
- **Be supportive.** Encourage membership and participation at all levels of FEW.
- **Be dependable.** Do the job you were elected and accepted to do!
- **Be bold.** Take risks, be brave, and take action. FEW still has work to do; the generations of women to come are relying on us to improve their future.
- **Listen to everyone.** Ensure all voices are heard.
- **Lift others up.** Value the leaders who came before, encourage those you work with, and support those you pass the leadership baton to tomorrow.
- **Learn to embrace change because it is inevitable.** Adaptability will keep leaders relevant, attracting new sponsors, partners, and members. With flexible leaders open to adopting innovative methods, FEW and its mission will continue to grow.
- **Steward the organization’s future.** Appreciate and utilize membership talent. This will lead to new membership, additional expertise, varying perspectives, and new technology solutions.
- **Enjoy the experience.** Being a leader is hard work. However, understanding your mission and knowing your goal is the beginning of an incredible journey.

Soaring to New Heights 2021



Virtual
LEADERSHIP SUMMIT II
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Highlighted Training Courses

- 1106 – All About Federally Employed Women
- 1206 – My Diversity Manager (MDM)
- 2109 – Introduction to Project Management Basics
- 2205 – The Written Word: Mastering Effective Business Writing
- 2207 – Effective Public Speaking: Even If Your Knees Are Knocking!
- 3210 – Introduction to Lean Six Sigma – Process Improvement/Lean6
- 3211 – Senior Executive Service (SES) Development – GS 13+
- 4201 – Federal Resumes
- 4209 – Thrift Savings Plan for Early to Mid-Career Employees
- 5106- Leadership and Management Skills – Boosting Morale in a Virtual Workplace
- 5110- Intro to Grant Writing
- 9901 – Special Emphasis Program Manager (SEPM) Training



FEW Training and Mentoring Programs Are Linked

By: Kaya Lewis-Baltimore, Vice President for Training

Training and mentoring are not the same! The major difference is relationships and the outcomes. Training is an event that may last for hours or several days with limited interaction after the training. Mentoring materializes a relationship that has a duration of months to years and provides a highly personalized experience. FEW recognizes the importance of both so, FEW's Training and Mentoring Programs have linked up! Join us in our very own course "ALL About FEW" and learn more about our new Mentoring Program.

As a reminder, our **2021 Virtual Leadership Summit II** is coming up on August 9-13.

Please make sure to register and gain access to the incredible training opportunities like the "ALL about FEW" course. FEW's national training program always provides fantastic training and generates incredible networking experiences that can develop into mentoring relationships.

Click here to register!

If you have additional questions or would like to make a suggestion about training or mentoring opportunities, please email trainingvp@few.org or mentoring@few.org.

Advancing Racial Equity

By: Patrice Dogbatse, National VP for Diversity



January 2021 saw the Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government executive order signed. Seven months later, FEW continues to celebrate diversity, equity, and inclusion. FEW continues to promote understanding our differences and encouraging conversations that highlight our commonalities. FEW's inclusion goals are centered on creating environments where any individual or group feels welcome, respected, and valued to participate fully. One of our most valuable benefits is training.

- Does your chapter or region have practices and programs that are equitable and inclusive of historically marginalized communities (communities of color, limited English proficiency, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+, etc.)?

- Are you creating an engaging and welcoming organization for the next generation and embracing their contributions?
- In which ways can your chapter or region be more inclusive?

I encourage you to do a self-evaluation and have tough conversations. Who is benefitting from your programs? Who is involved in the decision-making? Are they the usual participants? Are you welcoming new perspectives and ideas? If it is always the same people, you need to provide content that attracts diverse audiences. How? Simply, ask your members what they would like to see or what they need.



Fossil Fuel Investments May Erode the Value of the Thrift Savings Plan

By: Nicole Cantello

On May 20, 2021, President Joe Biden signed an Executive Order on Climate-Related Financial Risk to address climate change's threat to U.S. financial stability. The Executive Order calls on the Department of Labor to review fossil fuel investments and climate change financial risks in the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). The TSP currently has investments in fossil fuel companies in its various funds. The most prominent federal employees' union, AFGE, said it supports this review. Democrats in the House and Senate recently introduced legislation calling for a similar review. TSP Go Fossil Free, a group of federal employees, is also concerned about the effect of fossil fuel holdings on the TSP returns.

As the economy is shifting to clean energy sources, many other retirement funds have sold coal, oil and gas investments due to low financial returns. For example, the New York State pension determined that fossil fuel divestment would be in the financial interest of retirees. It's widely understood in financial markets that fossil fuel stocks have been in long-term decline and have underperformed in the market for almost a

decade. Coal, oil and gas companies are poor investments and present financial risk to TSP members' earnings.

While many pension funds have been divesting from fossil fuels to protect the pension investments, the agency that administers the TSP, the Federal Thrift Retirement Board, has resisted calls for the TSP to study divestment from fossil fuels. This Executive Order will require the study of the financial risks posed by fossil fuel holdings.

The United States is now back in the Paris agreement, which will impact administrative decisions like ending fossil fuel subsidies and developing climate finance plans. Many companies and local jurisdictions are committing to reducing their fossil fuel consumption to reduce their carbon footprint. As the current administration, businesses, states and cities accelerate the transition to a low-carbon economy; the TSP should shift investments to avoid the potential high risk and low returns of fossil fuels. TSP beneficiaries, including federally employed women, would see the returns on their TSP accounts rise..

Compliance Matters...

By: Keisha D. Spruill, National Compliance Team



The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed multiple layers of concern for the federal workforce. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) provides guidance and resources to help employees and employers understand their rights and responsibilities at work during the pandemic.

According to the EEOC website, recently updated and expanded technical assistance related to the COVID-19 pandemic addresses questions related to federal equal employment opportunity (EEO) laws. The EEOC also posted a new resource for job applicants and employees, explaining how federal employment discrimination laws protect workers during the pandemic. These publications help employees and employers understand their

rights and responsibilities at work during the pandemic.

The new information covers how the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) apply when an employer offers incentives for employees to provide documentation or other confirmation of vaccination when an employee gets a vaccine in the community or from the employer or its agent. The technical assistance only answers COVID-19 questions as they pertain to EEO laws. Other federal, state and local COVID-19 pandemic laws are still applicable for employers and employees. For more information, [click here](#).



The 19th Amendment Centennial – We’ve Come a Long Way...

By: Kimberly Smith, Editor, News & Views

Despite the pandemic, last year was an incredible year for women’s history. August 2020 saw centennial celebrations for the 19th Amendment, which guaranteed women’s voting rights. Many of our country’s leaders made pledges and commitments to prioritize women’s issues, and since then, we’ve seen some progress and a lot of national attention on women’s rights. But how much progress has genuinely been made? Below are some milestone moments since last year:

- **October 2020:** The historical policy, allowing all federal workers to receive 12 weeks of paid parental leave for a new child, went into effect.
- **January 2021:** The inauguration of the first female elected official into the executive branch took place.
- **May 2021:** Supreme Court agrees to hear Mississippi abortion case. Texas governor signs Senate Bill 8, aka Texas Heartbeat Bill, that criminalizes abortion after a heartbeat.
- **June 2021:** Supreme Court upholds its longstanding deference to Congress on national defense and military affairs when presented a case to end

gender-based registration under the Military Selective Service Act.

Presently, there are more than 30 pieces of legislation addressing women’s rights and recognitions. They range from supporting and expanding civic engagement and political leadership of adolescent girls around the world (H.R. 1661: Girls LEAD Act); to providing equitable pay to the members of the United States Women’s National Team (H.R. 1644: GOALS Act); to charging the Secretary of the Treasury to mint commemorative coins in recognition of the Bicentennial of Harriet Tubman’s birth (H.R.1842 – Harriet Tubman Bicentennial Commemorative Coin Act).

FEW and organizations like it, who advocate and champion the advancement of women, have grown through the years. Their voices and union have built today’s platform for discussions and progress around women’s rights, equality and recognition. Their work is bridging the gender disparities gap. Join their efforts on this cause, research the current legislation, call your representatives and use your civic rights to be a voice for the next generation of women.



Employee Thrift Advisory Council Board

By: Georgia Thomas

Having a seat at the table usually provides the attendee both knowledge and influence to conversational outcomes and governance. For FEW, that table is the Employee Thrift Advisory Council (ETAC) Board. Fourteen organizations, including FEW, make up the ETAC and are exclusively invited to interact with the Federal Retirement Investment Board (FRTIB). The FRTIB's mission is to administer the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) solely in the interest of participants and beneficiaries. So, by extension FEW's participation on the ETAC is in the interest of FEW participants and FEW beneficiaries.

For almost 30 years, the benefit to FEW members has been in information exchange and policy-making communication among federal employees, military members and the Board. As an example, before the Oct. 1, 2020, enactment of increasing the automatic enrollment percentage from 3 percent to 5 percent of basic pay for all automatically enrolled participants in the TSP. For Blended Retirement Service (BRS) participants, a discussion was held with the ETAC about its impact on our members. On other occasions, the ETAC has sent letters to Congress and individual legislators to jointly voice support or objection to pending or proposed legislation.

Many of the issues addressed during and outside of ETAC/FRTIB meetings are complex. FRTIB provides Q&A sessions, demonstrations and training to help the ETAC make wiser decisions. FEW takes advantage of FRTIB training including it at the National Training Program (NTP) or Leadership Summit.

FRTIB meeting minutes are made public and contribute to better insight on issues for ETAC further discussions. Click here to review those minutes.

Thank you for the privilege to act as your ETAC Board FEW representative. As pertinent information arises, you will find it shared through FEW's website and periodically through social media and e-blasts. Please don't hesitate if you have a TSP-specific issue(s) you want to address or a suggestion you would like to elevate to the ETAC. Please contact me at etac@few.org.

Update your Thrift Savings Plan Mailing Address and Contact Information!

Keeping your address up to date with the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) is essential. How you update your mailing address depends on whether or not you still work for the federal government.

- **If you're currently a federal employee**, report your correct address to your agency. TSP can't accept address changes directly from you.
- **If you're an active or a Ready Reserve member of the Air Force, Army, Navy, or Marine Corps**, you can update your address through the myPay website. Just make sure that you log in and go to the TSP section to change your TSP address. Changing it in the "Correspondence Address" section of myPay will not change your TSP address.
- Members of the Coast Guard and NOAA Corps can use Direct Access. Select "Home and Mailing Address" under Tasks, then choose "TSP" from the drop-down menu next to "Address Type."
- **If you're no longer a federal employee or uniformed service member or have a beneficiary participant account**, visit **My Account: Profile Settings** on tsp.gov to change your address.

UHC Federal Programs Virtual Wellness Series



UnitedHealthcare (UHC) continues to offer a variety of virtual wellness resources to support you and your health this year. Keep an eye out for future invitations as UHC is committed to offering a variety of complimentary, engaging and informational wellness sessions. Please let them know what you would like to see and how they can support you.

Third quarter wellness sessions are in the months of **July, August** and **September**—so we encourage you to join! Register below to join a session now and learn from experts.

Click below for session registration.

[REGISTER >>](#)

Second quarter Wellness Sessions are on demand—**just click here.**

Cathy Harris Nominated to MSPB Chair in Hopes of Reducing Board's 3,000 Case Backlog



By Tully Rinckey PLLC

As the current administration passes its first few months in office, federal employees wonder if and how this administration will turn around the Merit System Protections Board (MSPB)'s record-setting four-year stagnation. The MSPB hears agency action appeals, including those previously heard by the Civil Service Commission and new causes of action appeals arising from the Civil Service Reform Act (CSRA). MSPB has three board member positions, two of which are needed to achieve a quorum. Not only has the Board lacked a quorum since January 2017, but it has also lacked active members since March 2019. This void has left many federal employees without an equitable way to appeal cases and are stripped of protections against agency management abuse. The backlog of cases alone has surpassed 3,000.

During the previous administration, board nominations never made it past the Senate. However, President Biden has recently nominated Cathy Harris—a member of the Metropolitan Washington Employment Lawyers Association (MWELA)—to Chair the MSPB. While the nomination is not yet Senate confirmed, it is the first step

in the right direction by the Biden Administration to establish a well-needed quorum to end this backlog and restore the federal employee appellate process. [Click here to read more about the MSPB status.](#) [Click here to learn more about the president's nominations.](#)

Tully Rinckey PLLC is one of the nation's largest federal sector labor and employment, security clearance, and military law firms, serving clients across the U.S. FEW and Tully Rinckey have a Memo of Understanding, and with this agreement, FEW members are entitled to one free half-hour telephone consultation each year with one of Tully Rinckey's experienced attorneys concerning federal employment, military and security clearance matters including discrimination claims, adverse action appeals, and veterans' benefits, to name a few. In addition to the attorney consultations, members who pursue their legal claims with Tully Rinckey will be entitled to a 10 percent discount in legal fees. For more information or to schedule a consultation with a Tully Rinckey attorney, please call 888-529-4543 or visit www.tullylegal.com.