



July 31, 2013

Update on IRS Awards

Here is the latest information about NTEU's ongoing fight to see that earned performance awards are paid.

Last week, NTEU and the IRS spent a full day meeting with an arbitrator on this issue, during which the union argued these points:

- The NTEU awards program is legally required under the contract;
- The IRS must bargain over any changes to it;
- Employees have earned these awards through their hard work; and
- Through petitions delivered to management, tens of thousands of IRS employees have made their voices heard on the importance of paying these awards.

The IRS, on the other hand, argued simply that not paying the awards is justified by the existence of what it called "unprecedented times." These are unprecedented times. Employees have had to deal with furloughs, pay freezes and constant attacks on their benefits. That makes it all the more important that the IRS pay the awards employees have earned.

It continues to be vitally important for IRS employees to communicate directly to their frontline managers the unfairness of failing to pay earned performance awards, emphasizing the detrimental impact on morale and productivity that such a decision is causing in workplaces.

At day's end, the IRS pressed for an immediate decision, but the arbitrator said he wanted time to consider the matter.

In that event, or in the case of an adverse decision, NTEU is fully prepared to take the matter to the Federal Service Impasses Panel (FSIP) for a final and binding decision. But that is not our only step. NTEU is preparing to file a national grievance charging the IRS with bad faith bargaining over this issue—specifically, that the agency denied NTEU information necessary to pursue the matter effectively, and other allegations. That grievance will contain a demand for retroactive payment of awards, if they have not been paid as scheduled in late September.

NTEU has a team of experienced chapter presidents and national staff, led by National Executive Vice President Frank Ferris and including NTEU Negotiator Ken Moffett, hard at work addressing this issue on behalf of employees. The chapter presidents are Doreen Greenwald, Chapter 1 (Wisconsin); David Carrone, Chapter 6 (Louisiana); John Kelshaw, Chapter 60 (New Jersey); and Cheryl Brewer, Chapter 71 (Philadelphia Campus).

NTEU's commitment to ensuring employees receive the awards they have earned by their work on behalf of the American people continues to be strong.

I will keep you updated as developments occur.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Colleen M. Kelley".

Colleen M. Kelley
National President