



U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20416

March 7, 2014

The Honorable Tom A. Coburn, M.D.
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senator Coburn:

Acting Administrator Markowitz has asked me to respond to your recent letter requesting information on the US Small Business Administration (SBA) employees and hours of Absence Without Leave (AWOL).

The following SBA workforce data and narratives are responsive to your request for Agency employee AWOL information.

1. The agency's definition of AWOL, including any changes made to the policy during the specified years.

SBA's Response:

AWOL is not explicitly defined in the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). However, AWOL is mentioned in 5 CFR 630.1208. Therefore, the SBA defers to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) definition of AWOL. OPM's Resources Manual – Employee Relations section defines AWOL as an “absence [from duty] without prior [management or supervisory] approval, and therefore without pay, that may be a basis for disciplinary action.”

The SBA has not changed any policies mentioning or discussing AWOL from 2008 to the present.

2. An explanation of how AWOL is recorded by the agency, including whether AWOL hours are recorded distinctly from LWOP or other personnel statuses in payroll records.

SBA's Response:

AWOL hours are recorded in the SBA's Time and Attendance System (T&A) of record using a unique transaction code. The AWOL transaction code is distinct from Leave Without Pay (LWOP) and other personnel records transaction codes.

3. Any penalties for employees who are AWOL without agency approval, and a description of who determines such penalties at the agency.

SBA's Response:

AWOL is considered misconduct. The SBA follows the processes mandated throughout the Federal government to protect employees' due process rights. If a suspension or higher penalty is warranted, an employee is given notice of any allegations, and an opportunity to respond, before a higher level supervisor or other Agency official makes a decision on the penalty to impose. When considering corrective actions, the immediate supervisor must refer to the SBA's administrative directives. The applicable directive, Standard Operating Procedure 37 52 2, Discipline and Adverse Actions, recommends progressive corrective actions for AWOL misconduct ranging from a letter of reprimand to removal.

4. The number of employees currently AWOL at your agency.

SBA's Response:

The SBA has one employee listed as AWOL in the Agency's Payroll System as of January 11, 2014, the most recent date AWOL data is available.

5. The annual number of total reported AWOL hours for all agency employees.

SBA Response:

Leave Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Annual AWOL Hours Reported	1,656.50	2,542.00	5,553.00	2,838.25	1,009.50	3,533.75

6. The annual number of employees who have been deemed AWOL during the specified years.

SBA's Response:

Leave Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total Employees Reported as AWOL	10	4	12	8	8	20

7. The total number of employees at the agency in each year for which information is requested.

SBA's Response:

Leave Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
+Total SBA Employees	2,931	3,146	3,166	3,012	3,322	3,160

+ Excludes SBA's Office of Disaster Assistance temporary employees who are mobilized only during national disasters.

8. The total number of hours worked by all employees at the agency.

SBA's Response:

The data requested is not within the Agency's system of record, Time and Attendance System (T&A). For the years 2008-2012, the transactional data is not maintained within the SBA's T&A system. However, the Agency's payroll services provider, the National Finance Center (NFC), does maintain the prior years' data requested. The SBA submitted a functional requirements document (statement of needs) to NFC and requested a price quote. NFC estimates, depending on the complexity and competing agency priorities, the data and price quote will take approximately two to four weeks to generate.

We appreciate your support of SBA and small businesses. If you have additional questions, please contact Nicholas Coutsos, Assistant Administrator for Congressional and Legislative Affairs (202) 205-6700.

Sincerely,

Bridget E. Bean
Deputy Chief Operating Officer/Chief Human Capital Officer