

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
FEDERAL VETERINARIANS



The Newsletter

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100+ YEARS OF SERVICE TO FEDERAL VETERINARIANS

Be sure to check out our recent updates from the AVMA Convention Meeting 2026. Stay informed about the latest industry trends, innovations, and important announcements from this year's event.

NAFV public practice networking event was like a well-crafted financial plan—full of smart connections, bright ideas, and a lot of potential for future growth. Who knew networking could be this fun?



Catch the recent updates from your NAFV Board of Directors, message from our Executive Vice-President and check out the upcoming webinars for free!



www.nafv.org

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Any veterinarian employed full-time by the
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monthly), or by federal payroll deductions
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NAFV newsletter by email.

The National Association of Federal
Veterinarians is a non-profit corporation and
the purposes for which it is formed are to
promote the veterinary profession, to improve
the professional efficiency and material
interests of the members, to acquaint the
public with the activities of veterinarians in the
federal service, and to cooperate with the
American Veterinary Medical Association, the
United States Animal Health Association and
other similar groups with common interests.

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The Role of the National Association of Federal Veterinarians

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) measures employee engagement and satisfaction with their workplaces, or in other words morale. The FEVS serves as a tool for employees to share their perceptions in many critical areas including their work experiences, their agency, and their leadership. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) and its Office of Employee Experience (OEX) use the results of FEVS to inform efforts and the initiatives currently underway with the "Best Places to Work in the Federal Government" ranking according to the Partnership for Public Service on employee satisfaction, engagement, and morale—all of which support and inform USDA's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan and the Secretary and Deputy Secretary's FY2022 priority to "Make USDA a Best Place to Work."

And this is where an association such as the National Association of Federal Veterinarians (NAFV) can come in. Today's veterinarians are the only doctors educated to protect the health of both animals and people. These dedicated professionals apply their medical skills not in "private practice" but in "public practice" in the service of every American through the many programs administered by the federal government. Though federal veterinarians touch the lives of every American every day, many feel under-compensated, underappreciated, and overworked. These feelings can contribute to high employee turnover rates, which impact overall morale of the team, the health and wellness of Americans, and the agency's bottom line. Many times, there are significant gaps between the perceptions of an agency's executive leadership and the realities of mid-level management. This can be even worse when including agencies rank and file grassroots employees.

The majority of NAFV members (and most of the veterinarians employed by the federal government) work for the USDA. The results of FEVS indicated that morale is USDA is low, ranked 16 of 17 large federal agencies, only slightly better than the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). When you look at the sub-agency rankings our major membership comes from the Food Safety and Inspection Service (ranked 298 out of 411) and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (ranked 294 out of 411). For those working there, this may not come as a surprise. But, how can these agencies benefit from working with NAFV, as an association of managers and supervisors? There are finer points of job satisfaction that the FEVS cannot measure. The impact of mandatory deployments on people's job satisfaction, for example. When that deployment is seen as furthering the mission of the agency, it can be a positive motivating factor; however, if that mandatory deployment is seen as making up for an agency's failure to fill critical vacancies, it has just the opposite effect on morale.

When deployments are viewed as unequal because certain individuals seem to be exempt from deployment, then it can negatively impact moral and the sense of accomplishment. This level of detail can't be reached by the FEVS, but through consultations with our members and executive leadership, these insights can be addressed. In many cases, just hearing a third party explain the situation can make all the difference in how the issue is perceived. In service of these public servants, the NAFV strives to serve both veterinarians and the agencies they work for by facilitating communication, making suggestions for improvements, and working collaboratively to address issues of concern. This advocacy includes emphasizing professionalism and expertise in federal service but also promoting continuing education, teamwork and morale, and a standard of excellence. NAFV can work with you to improve it and your professional working environment.

NAFV can approach agency senior leadership with your concerns and possible solutions, not as a union but as an organization that represents you as medical/scientific professionals. Our goal is to enhance your work-life balance, productivity, impact to instill a positive sense of accomplishment. Lifting veterinarians positively impacts their teams and, in-turn, agencies. Boosted morale translates into productivity gains and pride in a job well done, making all the difference in our personal and professional lives.

WHY JOIN NAFV

National Association of Federal Veterinarians



*Uniting federal veterinarians to
advance animal health, public health,
and the vital services we provide
for our nation.*



STRONG COMMUNITY

Connect with federal veterinarians across agencies who share your commitment to animal and public health.



ADVOCACY & VOICE

NAFV represents your interests before Congress, OPM, and other federal partners.



PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Access continuing education, leadership opportunities, and resources to advance your career.



COLLABORATION

Work together on national initiatives that protect animals, people, and our food supply.



MAKING AN IMPACT

Your work matters. Together, we strengthen the federal veterinary mission.



**TOGETHER, WE ARE STRONGER.
TOGETHER, WE SERVE.**



2026 AVMA CONVENTION MEETING



Longtime wildlife veterinarian Dr. Mark Penning delivered the AVMA Keynote, "Hugged By a Mountain Gorilla: Embracing the Need to Protect Animals and Their Habitats," sponsored by AVMA Insurance Services and Hill's Pet Nutrition, on July 11. Dr. Penning, director of the North Carolina Zoo who was the vice president of animals, science, and environment at Disney Experiences for 14 years, talked about the magical kingdom's efforts in animal welfare, wildlife conservation, and environmental stewardship, and how veterinary professionals are well equipped with many transferable skills.

After the talk, Dr. Janae Tatum said the hourlong keynote "stirred something" in her husband, Dr. Evan Abernethy, who has always wanted to go into wildlife and exotics but went into general practice. Dr. Erin Hamlin, with Thrive Pet Healthcare in Rochester, New York.

Exhibitor booths showcased the latest technology and cutting-edge solutions in veterinary medicine. Three awards were handed out to the best exhibit hall booths.

When not in the exhibit hall or CE sessions, attendees and guests had ample opportunities to enjoy the Southern California weather at special events such as AVMA in the Park: A Twilight Experience at Disneyland, and Live Life, Love All: A Family Affair at Splitsville Luxury Lanes in Downtown Disney, hosted by CareCredit, Hill's Pet Nutrition, and AVMA Insurance Services. The event on July 11 featured 20 luxury bowling lanes, live music, a silent disco, and special meet-up spots for both young professionals and veterinary technicians.

For the early birds, there was the Scrubs & Sneakers Fun Run, a 3.1-mile route around the Anaheim Convention Center (ACC) campus.



The five-day convention, which took place July 10-14 in Anaheim, California, drew more than 7,000 attendees, including 2,726 veterinarians, 265 exhibitors, and over 1,100 guests, with a mix of first timers and regulars who have turned it into a time to reunite with friends. The annual meeting offered more than 700 continuing education (CE) sessions totaling about 780 CE hours.

Like every year, the programming offered a diverse selection, from off-site excursions about bees and butterflies to workshops on veterinary entrepreneurship and communication, as well as a daylong symposium on reducing barriers to care and the annual Global Health Summit.

Our organization, NAFV was represented by our Association's President, Dr. Leah Trapp together with our NAFV President- Elect, Dr. Neil Vezeau and Executive Vice- President, Dr. Joseph Anelli in the AVMA 2026 House of Delegates meeting. Our resolution, to declare November 3, as One Health Day in each of the 50 States passed unanimously.

We are committed to staying engaged with the latest industry developments.

NAFV AT THE 2026 AVMA CONVENTION MEETING



"Veterinarians: Guardians of Food and Health"

Dr. Joseph Anelli
NAFV Executive Vice- President

Dr. Leah Trapp
NAFV President



We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to our colleagues, fellow veterinarians, attendees, and friends for their presence and participation in our NAFV annual public practice Networking Event held last July 11th at the AVMA Convention.

Your attendance and active engagement contributed significantly to the success of this event. It was inspiring to see so many dedicated professionals coming together to share insights, forge new connections, and advance our collective goals. The support as members and sponsors is vital to the growth and development of our community, and we are truly grateful for your commitment. We look forward to continuing this momentum and fostering stronger collaborations in the future.

Thank you once again for your valuable time, support, and dedication in the Veterinary and public practice fields.

NAFV 2026 PUBLIC PRACTICE NETWORKING EVENT



THE GRASS ISN'T ALWAYS GREENER—A PERSPECTIVE ON FEDERAL VETERINARY CAREERS

By: Dr. Joseph Anelli

NAFV CONTINUES TO ADVOCATE AGGRESSIVELY FOR:

- A Special Salary Rate for federal veterinarians.
- Full implementation of the USDA Rural Veterinary Action Plan.
- Reversing inappropriate reclassification of Veterinary Medical Officer positions.
- Recruiting and retaining the next generation of the public practice veterinarians.

THE INTANGIBLE REWARD

Perhaps the biggest difference isn't compensation. Private practitioners improve the lives of individual animals every day. Federal veterinarians protect entire populations. One career saves a patient. The other may prevent an epidemic. Both are indispensable.

NAFV'S COMMITMENT

- Competitive salaries
- Special Salary Rates
- Better recruitment
- Better retention
- Rural Veterinary Action Plan
- Recognition of veterinarians as essential national security professionals
- Preservation of the Veterinary Medical Officer career series

Our goal is not simply to preserve federal veterinary medicine—but to make it a career that attracts the brightest graduates while retaining the experienced professionals already serving. The past year has reminded us that federal service is changing. Yet it has also reinforced something equally important: the work federal veterinarians do has never been more critical. Whether protecting our borders from New World screwworm, responding to highly pathogenic avian influenza, ensuring the safety of our food supply, or preparing for the next emerging disease, federal veterinarians remain on the front lines of America's animal, public, and national health security.

As we continue advocating for improvements, it's worth taking a moment to recognize that public practice remains one of the most meaningful—and ultimately rewarding—careers our profession has to offer. Suggested companion reading: The recent FedSmith article, "The Grass Isn't Always Greener But Is Federal Salary Really That Bad?", provides a useful reminder that total compensation—including retirement and benefits—often tells a different story than salary alone.



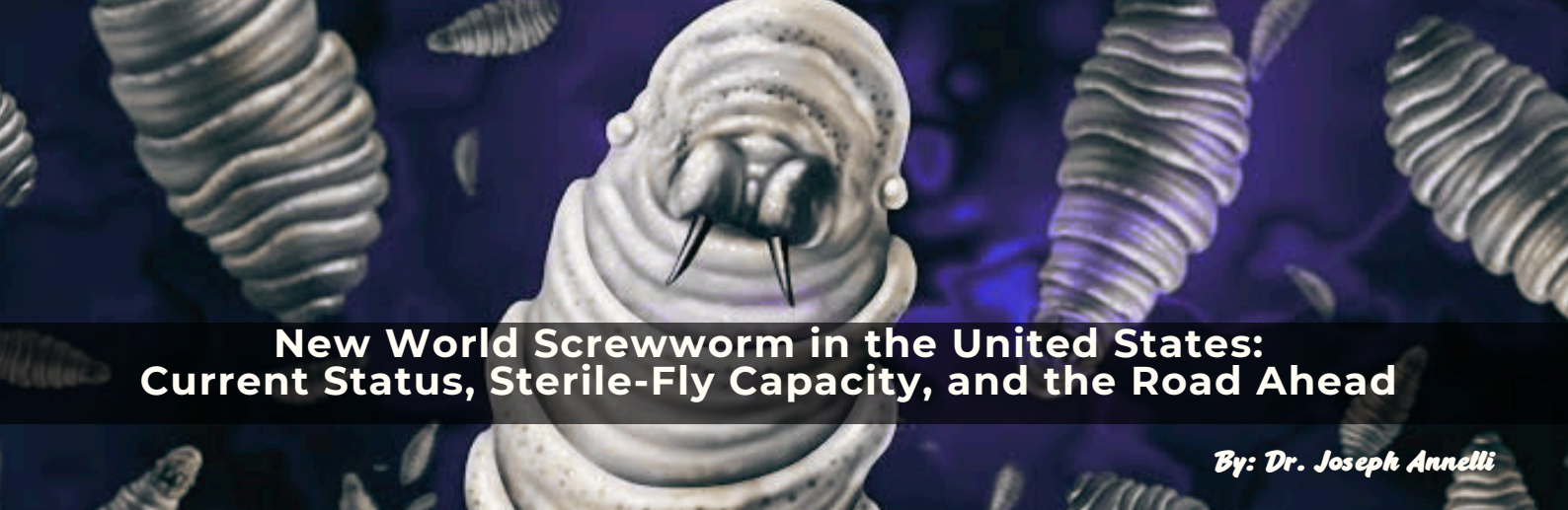
This has been one of the most challenging years many of us have experienced in federal service.

We've seen reductions in force, early retirements, organizational restructuring, reclassification of some veterinary positions, and uncertainty surrounding the future of the federal workforce. For many members, the traditional perception that federal employment automatically meant lifetime stability has understandably been shaken.

At the same time, many of our colleagues in private practice continue to struggle with a different set of challenges—educational debt, long hours, emergency call, staffing shortages, business pressures, burnout, and increasing client expectations.

A recent FedSmith article reminds us that salary alone rarely tells the whole story. Total compensation—including retirement, health insurance, paid leave, and other benefits—often narrows or even eliminates what appears to be a large private-sector salary advantage.





New World Screwworm in the United States: Current Status, Sterile-Fly Capacity, and the Road Ahead

By: Dr. Joseph Annelli

New World screwworm (NWS) has returned to the continental United States after decades of successful exclusion. The detection does not yet mean that the parasite is broadly established across the country, but it represents a serious animal-health emergency requiring sustained federal, state, tribal, industry, veterinary, wildlife, and public-health coordination. The immediate challenge is to determine how widely NWS may already be distributed while producing and releasing enough sterile flies to suppress reproduction faster than the wild population can expand.

What Has Been Confirmed

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service confirmed the first U.S. animal case associated with the current outbreak on June 3, 2026, in a calf in Zavala County, Texas. Additional detections followed, requiring epidemiologic investigations, quarantine zones, animal movement controls, intensified surveillance, and sterile-fly releases.

As of July 17, the Texas Animal Health Commission reported cases in 13 Texas counties involving 29 premises. Because counts and case classifications are changing as investigations proceed, USDA's online confirmed-detections dashboard and the applicable State Animal Health Official websites should be treated as the authoritative sources for current case and zone information. USDA distinguishes an active animal case from an inactive animal case. An animal may recover and no longer require treatment while the surrounding geographic infested zone remains active. Consequently, a declining number of active animals does not by itself mean that the area has been cleared of NWS.

Confirmed Cases Are Only the Visible Portion of the Outbreak

NWS larvae develop in wounds or natural body openings of living, warm-blooded animals. A single infested animal may be detected and treated, but the adult female fly that deposited the eggs may already have mated and may have laid additional egg masses on other animals. This creates an important distinction among the number of confirmed infested animals, the area in which reproducing flies may be present, and the larger surveillance area in which additional infestations or wild flies could still be found. The confirmed case count therefore represents the minimum known burden, not necessarily the full biological footprint. The true extent of the outbreak will depend heavily on whether NWS has entered free-ranging animal populations. White-tailed deer, feral swine, coyotes, exotic ungulates, and other wildlife can sustain transmission without being readily observed. USDA has reported examination of more than 1,600 wild animals in high-risk Texas counties without evidence of NWS. That is encouraging, but it does not exclude localized, low-density, or newly emerging wildlife transmission.

The Federal and State Response

USDA, the Texas Animal Health Commission, New Mexico authorities, and other partners are conducting epidemiologic investigations, animal tracing, trapping, treatment, wildlife surveillance, public outreach, and sterile-fly releases. Response actions around confirmed detections have included 20-kilometer infested zones, quarantines, movement controls, heightened surveillance, additional trapping, wildlife management measures, and targeted outreach to veterinarians and animal owners. USDA has also activated the Moore Air Base dispersal facility in Edinburg, Texas so sterile-fly operations

can be redirected rapidly to Texas and even in northern Mexico. These measures are appropriate, but their effectiveness depends on rapid reporting. Veterinarians and animal owners should immediately investigate wounds that are enlarging, draining, malodorous, unusually painful, or visibly infested with eggs or larvae. Lesions around the nose, ears, eyes, genitalia, umbilicus, and other body openings deserve particular attention. The U.S. food supply remains safe. NWS is a parasite of living tissue and is not a foodborne infestation. CDC reports that no locally acquired human infestations have been identified in the United States during the current outbreak. Human infestation remains possible, however, particularly when a person has an open wound and is exposed where wild NWS flies are circulating.

Sterile Insect Technique Remains the Principal Eradication Tool

The sterile insect technique was central to the original eradication of NWS from the United States. Large numbers of laboratory-reared flies are sterilized and released over affected areas. Female NWS flies generally mate only once. When a wild female mates with a sterile male, her eggs do not hatch, progressively reducing the reproductive capacity of the wild population. This method is proven, but it is not instantaneous. Success requires repeated releases at sufficient density across the entire area where wild flies are reproducing. If the release zone is too small, if production is inadequate, or if untreated infestations continue producing wild flies outside the release area, suppression will take longer and geographic spread may continue.

Published Capacity and Analytical Production Projection

If all planned production facilities reach their published targets, the combined theoretical capacity would approach the scale used during the historic North American eradication campaign. The following ranges are planning estimates rather than official USDA production forecasts.

Period or facility stage	Plausible weekly production	Basis
Current operational baseline	Approximately 100 million	Pacora facility currently operational
After initial Metapa production	Approximately 160–200 million	Pacora plus published Metapa target
During staged Texas production	Approximately 250–400 million	Analytical ramp assumption as Texas capacity comes online
Full planned capacity	Approximately 460–500 million	Pacora + Metapa + Moore Air Base published maximum capacities

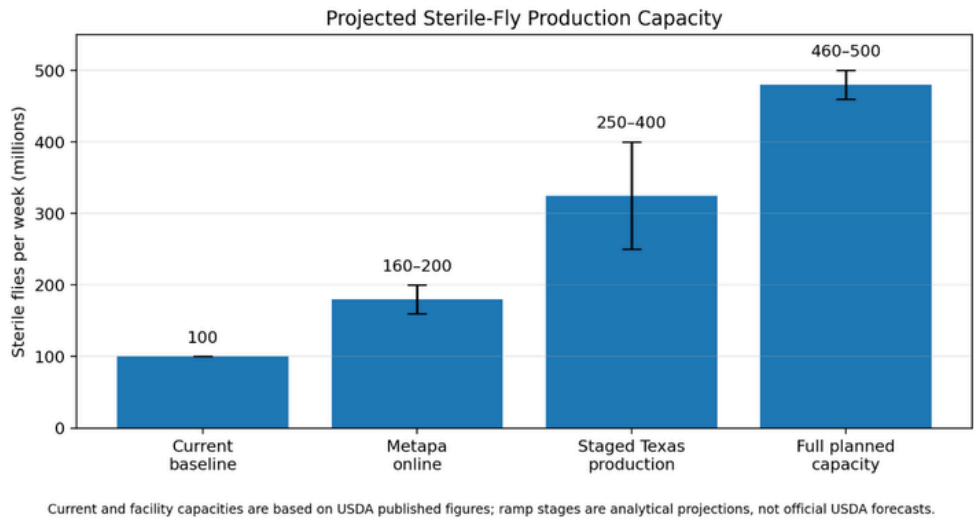


Figure 1. Published capacity targets and analytical ramp-up ranges for sterile NWS fly production. The timing and intermediate stages are author projections; the facility's maximums are based on USDA published figures.

Current Sterile-Fly Production and Dispersal

The COPEG facility in Pacora, Panama, remains the only fully operational NWS production facility in North America. It produces and disperses approximately 100 million sterile flies per week. Those flies must support operations extending from Central America and Mexico to the U.S. border and now into affected portions of the United States. USDA is investing \$21 million to renovate and convert an existing fruit-fly facility in Metapa, Mexico. Once complete, the facility is expected to add approximately 60 million to 100 million sterile NWS flies per week. USDA states that Mexico expects production to begin as early as summer 2026.

Published Capacity and Analytical Production Projection

If all planned production facilities reach their published targets, the combined theoretical capacity would approach the scale used during the historic North American eradication campaign. The following ranges are planning estimates rather than official USDA production forecasts.

What Determines How Quickly Production Can Expand

A facility may be structurally complete before it can sustain full biological production. The speed of the ramp-up will depend on construction and equipment installation, colony development, strain performance, irradiation capacity, quality control, staffing, transportation, aircraft availability, and the ability of sterile males to remain competitive after handling and release. For that reason, expansion should be viewed as a production ramp rather than a single activation date. Even after additional capacity becomes available, allocation decisions will remain difficult because sterile flies are needed simultaneously to suppress populations in Central America and Mexico, reinforce the border, and respond to U.S. detections.

How Far Might the Outbreak Extend?

The known detections demonstrate that NWS has reached multiple Texas counties. They do not yet demonstrate continuous, self-sustaining transmission across Texas or neighboring states. At the same time, scattered confirmed cases can represent a larger area of low-density fly circulation than animal case maps initially reveal.

Author's Assessment

The United States is still within a meaningful containment window, but that window cannot be assumed to remain open. The current case map almost certainly understates the area in which surveillance must operate. Whether the outbreak remains a regional emergency or becomes a prolonged national eradication campaign will be determined by the speed of detection, the degree of wildlife involvement, the maintenance of movement controls, and the rate at which sterile-fly production can be increased.

The expected combined production capacity of roughly 460 million to 500 million sterile flies per week is encouraging. Nevertheless, the decisive metric is not theoretical capacity; it is the sustained number of high-quality sterile males delivered at the correct density over every active breeding area. Biology—not construction announcements—will determine when the program has regained the advantage.

This article was prepared with editorial assistance from OpenAI's ChatGPT to improve organization, readability, and drafting efficiency. All factual information and cited data were reviewed against official sources by the author. The interpretations, professional opinions, assumptions, projections, and conclusions are those of the author and were independently evaluated and approved before publication. The author accepts full responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and content of the article. ChatGPT is not listed as an author and did not exercise independent scientific or editorial judgment.

The projections in this article are informed professional assessments based on information available as of July 17, 2026, and on published USDA facility plans. They illustrate potential operational scenarios and should not be interpreted as official forecasts, policy statements, or commitments of USDA, NAFV, or any other governmental agency. Case counts, zone boundaries, facility schedules, production output, and release operations may change rapidly. Readers should consult USDA APHIS and the relevant State Animal Health Official for current requirements and official situation data.



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Shared
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One Mission:
Veterinary
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2



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4



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online.



5



WELCOME TO NAFV!

Our team will review
your application and
be in touch.



Professional Liability Insurance: Federal Employees

Many federal employees don't fully understand their professional liability exposure — until they are suddenly facing a disciplinary proceeding, an adverse administrative action, or even a civil lawsuit. Even if allegations are ultimately dismissed, the cost of mounting a legal defense can be financially overwhelming.

Professional Liability Insurance (PLI) from FEDS Protection is designed to help protect federal employees when the unexpected happens.

Allegations can quickly trigger agency investigations or legal action. In these situations, having experienced and dedicated legal counsel is not a luxury — it is a necessity. It is important to understand that an agency attorney represents the agency, not you. Their role is to protect the agency's interests, which may not align with your own.

A FEDS Protection (PLI) policy can help safeguard your career by ensuring you have legal representation focused on your defense. Coverage may apply to civil lawsuits, administrative actions, and criminal investigations arising from acts, errors, or omissions performed while rendering your federal employment duties.

There is no open enrollment period to wait for — but coverage must be in place before any incident or allegation occurs. Don't wait until it's too late.

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- Affordable:** Peace of mind for as little as \$290* a year. That's less than the typical cost for one hour with an employment attorney. Federal managers and law enforcement officers may qualify for agency reimbursement of up to half the premium.

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This seminar will cover important topics like these:

- Understanding cash flow
- Estate planning
- Investing and protecting your assets
- And more

[Option 1] Wednesday, September 23 | 3:00 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. ET

[Option 2] Wednesday, September 23 | 6:30 p.m. – 7:15 p.m. ET

Virtual – Zoom

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