

**Chapter Officers**

**Mike Mellish**, President & Newsletter Editor | **Norris Alderson**, Vice President | **Betty Waters**, Secretary  
**Eric Kareh**, Treasurer & Webmaster | Chapter Website: <https://www.narfe.org/chapter0227>

*NARFE's mission has remained the same since 1921, to protect and improve the benefits of federal retirees, employees and their families.*

**CHAPTER MEETINGS**

Thanks to all who attended our Holiday Luncheon at Amerigo on December 10. We had 16 attendees, consisting of thirteen chapter members and three guests. The primary order of business was good food and camaraderie. A shout-out to our luncheon group for their generous contributions of \$210 for the NARFE Alzheimer's Research Fund! Our donation was mailed to Daniel Koob, TN Federation Alzheimer's Chair, on December 12.

**Next Chapter Meeting**

Wednesday, March 18, 2026 at 10:30 a.m.  
(Online Zoom Session)

**Please note that this meeting is scheduled for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday in March.**

Our next chapter meeting, will be held via Zoom on Wednesday, March 18. Likely topics for our first quarterly meeting of 2026 will be: 1) a review and discussion of the latest news regarding the Administration's ongoing efforts to reduce and reshape the federal workforce; 2) possible threats to our federal benefits (we weathered some close calls in 2025); 3) review of the chapter meeting schedule for 2026; and 4) the TN Federation's Annual Meeting in mid-April. As usual, we will open the floor to any other topics members may wish to discuss.

**Online meeting participation via computer:**

Below is the unique link for our March meeting. Depending on how you sign in, you may be asked to enter the unique meeting ID and passcode.

**Zoom Meeting Link:**

XXXXXXXXXX

Meeting ID: xxx xxxx xxxx

Passcode: xxxxxx

**Call-in meeting participation via conventional phone call:**

- 1) Dial the following phone number: 312-626-6799
- 2) Enter the unique meeting ID for our meeting followed by a hashtag: xxx xxxx xxxx#
- 3) When asked for Participant ID simply type in a hashtag: #
- 4) Enter the unique password for today's meeting: xxxxxx

While in a Zoom meeting, enter \*6 on your phone's keypad to mute or unmute your conversation.

**OFFICER REPORTS & OTHER NEWS**

Eric Kareh, Treasurer, reports that as of February 16 we had \$2,807.43 in our Truist checking account. During the months of December-February, the chapter received \$177.76 in dues rebates from NARFE HQ.

**NARFE Chapter 227 Holiday Luncheon at Amerigo, Brentwood, TN, December 10, 2025**



Provided below is a tentative meeting schedule for the year ahead. Please note that this schedule is available at our Chapter 227 website and will be updated as the year progresses. In addition to possible changes in the schedule and/or meeting locations, we anticipate the addition of one or more special one-topic meetings. For updates be sure to visit the meetings section of our website:

<https://www.narfe.org/chapter0227/meetings-events/meetings/>.

**Tentative Newsletter/Meeting Schedule for 2026**

Newsletter	Meeting Date	Meeting Type	Time
February	March 18	Zoom	10:30 a.m.
May	June 10	Lunch	11:00 a.m.
August	September 9	Zoom	10:30 a.m.
November	December 9	Holiday Luncheon	11:00 a.m.

On January 12, Linda Heaton, TN Federation President, met with members of Chapter 227 online via Zoom to conduct this year’s installation of officers ceremony. Much appreciation to Betty Waters and Eric Kareh for graciously agreeing to stay on and serve for another year in their capacities as Secretary and Webmaster, respectively. Eric, who was chapter Vice President in 2025, agreed to switch positions and serve as our Treasurer this year. Last but not least, we welcome Norris Alderson back to the chapter board as our newly installed Vice President. Norris previously was President of Chapter 227 from 2013-2019, and Vice President from 2011-2012. In addition to his work for the chapter, Norris has served as TN Federation Treasurer from 2015 to present.

On January 23, this year’s audit committee (Bill and Joyce Hayes) conducted a review of the chapter’s financial records covering the period from January 16, 2025 through January 15, 2026. The committee found that bank statements were balanced monthly; the annual Form 990-N e-Postcard for Tax-Exempt Organizations was filed on time and accepted; and all checks written were documented, backed up by receipts, and represented appropriate expenditures. The committee also completed NARFE Form F-131, “Chapter Audit Checklist,” and a copy was sent to Cindy Reneé Blythe, NARFE’s National Secretary/Treasurer, for her review and signature. The 70th Annual Tennessee Federation Meeting, which we encourage all members to attend, is set for April 14-15. This two-day event has a registra-

tion fee of \$15 and will be held at the Holiday Inn Franklin-Cool Springs located at 1738 Carothers Parkway, Brentwood, TN. **As this is literally in our own backyard, we truly do encourage everyone to fill out a registration form and get it, along with a check for \$15, in the mail to TN Federation Secretary, Karen Kopp-Voshel today.** To be eligible to win the early bird drawing prize of \$100, Karen needs to receive your registration form no later than March 13. Additional information and materials, including a copy of the registration form for this year’s meeting, is provided in the February 2026 issue of [the Federation newsletter](#) and at the “[Meetings](#)” page at the Federation website. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to any of us on the Chapter 227 board.

We are happy to share that Chapter 227 reached the ripe old age of 73 on February 1! Amazing to think that some of us are nearly as old as the chapter! Perhaps some of us might even be a smidgen older? The chapter extends a warm welcome to Samantha McIsaac who came onboard as a new member of Chapter 227 in December.

**CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

Over the past year, Chapter 227 lost 10 members and gained 11 resulting in a net increase of 1. Yay!! As of January 8, 2026, the chapter had 90 members. Losses were attributable to a combination of non-renewal of memberships (7) and, sadly, deaths (3). Additions consisted of new members (6); membership reinstatements (4); and transfers of members to the chapter (1). While our net gain in chapter membership in 2025 was only 1, it is the first such gain our chapter has experienced in quite some time. For comparison, chapter membership fell by 7 in 2024, 6 in 2023, and 7 in 2022. Do any of our long-time members know when we last saw a year-over-year gain in membership?

We do very much appreciate and thank our many members who have maintained their Chapter 227 memberships for so many years, renewing for periods of one-, two-, or three-years, or, alternatively, participating in `NARFE’s dues withholding program. According to the Member Activity Report (the M-112), 38 members renewed their memberships during 2025. An additional 23 members participate through dues withholding, enjoying a 12.5% discount on their national dues and never having to worry about the need to renew.

**FEDERAL WORKFORCE UPDATE**

It has definitely been tough to pin down an accurate accounting of the current Administration’s cuts to federal employment during its first year. As noted in a [report published by the Brookings Institution this past November](#), the author notes frustration indicating that it may be several years before “an accurate count of the Trump administration’s downsizing efforts” are known. As discussed in the November issue of our newsletter, it was difficult to reconcile the expected elimination of 300,000 federal jobs by year end as noted by OPM Director Scott Kupor last August. As of mid-November, available information indicated a cumulative net decrease of approximately 185,000 federal workers thru September 30. This number was based on available workforce data published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) that showed a net decrease of 85,000 workers thru mid-September, combined with the expected loss of 100,000 workers who had chosen to resign under the Deferred Resignation Program (DRP) and agreed to an end date of September 30.

**Cumulative Changes in the Federal Workforce\***

Workforce Statistic	1/20/2025 thru 11/30/25	1/20/2025 thru 12/31/25	Difference
Total Separations	322,049	352,285	30,236
DRP Separations	NA	123,801	--
Other Separations	NA	228,484	--
Accessions (aka Hires)	102,127	110,025	7,898
Net Change in Workforce	-219,922	-242,260	22,338

**Source:** U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Federal Workforce Data, website: <https://data.opm.gov/>.

\*Data excludes Postal workers and military personnel.  
NA: Not available.

With the release of additional [information](#) by Director Kupor in late November, combined with the introduction of a new Federal Workforce Data portal by OPM on January 8 (see table above), it now seems clearer that the year-end cuts to federal jobs referred to by OPM earlier in 2025 reflected separations alone, and did not take into account the impact of newly hired (and perhaps re-hired?) workers. This seems like an odd metric, as there is considerable turnover in the federal workforce, with

a little over 200,000 separations typically occurring in a normal year. Data from the new Workforce portal, shows that there was a net decrease of 242,260 federal workers between January 20 and December 31, 2025. OPM also reports that 127,204 employees retired during this same time period representing 39% of the 352,285 total separations reported for 2025. A little puzzling is the 123,801 DRP separations recorded as of December 31, 2025 (see table), as this number is approximately 30,000 below the 154,000 voluntary DRP resignations initially [reported by OPM in August 2025](#) and reiterated in a [news release](#) at the OPM website on December 31. Perhaps these remaining DRP resignations have yet to be processed?

While OPM’s Federal Workforce portal provides access to a ton of detailed information, with employment breakouts provided by Department, Agency, and even Sub-Agency, one disappointing aspect is that the site provides a single snapshot for most data, with updated monthly numbers replacing data for the previous month. Hopefully OPM will address this apparent shortcoming at some point in the future? For now, the monthly employment data provided by the BLS in their series “[All Employees, Federal, Except U.S. Postal Service](#)” is perhaps the best bet when it comes to acquiring data on monthly changes in federal employment. This series provides monthly data for January 1939 to present. In addition to downsizing, other harmful actions affecting federal workers are the Administration’s ongoing campaign to eliminate collective bargaining rights, and the recent finalization of a rule that will effectively eliminate merit-based civil protections for tens of thousands of employees. Despite ongoing legal challenges from unions, the Administration is stepping up its pressure on Agencies identified in Executive Orders [14251](#) and [14343](#) and is moving forward with canceling Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) that are still in place. In a [memorandum dated February 12](#), OPM Director Scott Kupor issued guidance to agencies on how to proceed, and is requiring that they file monthly status updates on CBAs until such time that all are fully eliminated. OPM [data](#) indicate that the percent of federal employees covered by CBAs has dropped from 56% in January 2025 to 38% at the end of 2025. Executive Order 14251 directed a majority of agencies to cancel their union contracts, [citing “national security” concerns](#) based

on a rarely used portion of the 1978 Civil Service Reform Act.

Despite years of opposition from NARFE, federal unions, and other organizations, the Administration issued a final rule creating a new excepted service schedule, Schedule Policy/Career (formerly Schedule F). According to [a statement](#) from NARFE National President Bill Shackelford, this new rule will allow for the reclassification of 50,000 or more federal positions into this new excepted service category, leaving them without protections against politically motivated terminations. President Shackelford added that “not only do we believe this is a disastrous policy for our nation, but we also believe it is contrary to the Civil Service Reform Act and illegal” and NARFE’s “attorneys will continue to make that case in court.” The [new rule](#) was published in the Federal Register on February 6, and will take effect on March 9.

### **NARFE-PAC REPORT**

In the latest NARFE-PAC newsletter, dated January 22, 2026, NARFE staff reports that through the fourth quarter of the 2025-2026 election cycle, 14,824 NARFE members contributed \$1,032,810 to NARFE-PAC. The average contribution was \$69.14. Compared to the fourth quarter of the 2023-2024 cycle, total contributions were up \$327,207 (from \$759,282), and the average contribution increased by \$13.19 (from \$55.95). The total

number of contributors increased by 1,253 (from 13,571).

For the Tennessee Federation, 133 National-Only members contributed \$7,507 for an average of \$56.44, while 58 Chapter members from across the State contributed \$5,109 for an average of \$88.09. Data for Chapter 227 show that 13 members contributed \$840, representing an average contribution of \$64.62. The latest [NARFE-PAC contribution report](#) uses data from January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025.

### **MARCH IS NARFE-PAC MONTH**

We encourage everyone to check out RJ Thacker’s article “The Federal Workforce is at a Crossroads in 2026” featured in the March 2026 issue of *NARFE Magazine* (pp. 22-28). As RJ points out, NARFE-PAC provides the resources needed to support candidates who will stand up for an impartial civil service and will work diligently to protect our hard-earned benefits. In addition, each contribution helps provide NARFE with the resources needed to challenge and hopefully halt or reverse the advancement of harmful actions and proposals such as the reclassification of employees to the Schedule P/C excepted service category and the stripping away of collective bargaining rights. **Please consider making a contribution to NARFE-PAC during the month of March.**