



National Federation of Federal Employees
Forest Service Council
International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers



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Wildland Firefighter Pay Update

20 March 2025

On March 15, 2025, the President signed the **Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025** (H.R. 1968) funding the Federal Government through September 30, 2025. The CR includes a permanent pay increase for wildland firefighters, based on language from the Wildland Firefighter Paycheck Protection Act (WFPPA). The WFPPA was crafted by representatives from the **National Federation of Federal Employees** (NFFE) and **Grassroots Wildland Firefighters**.

The pay increase includes a special hourly base rate for wildland firefighters, with a higher proportional increase for lower GS levels. GS-5s will receive a 30 percent increase in their base pay rate, while GS-9s will receive an 18 percent increase in base pay. This pay increase will apply to anyone previously eligible for the wildland firefighter pay supplement that has been in effect since 2021, and includes both primary and secondary fire positions.

In addition to the special pay scale, employees will receive wildland fire incident response premium pay while assigned to wildfires, in the form of a daily bonus calculated at 450 percent of one hour's base pay. (For example, at the new hourly rate of \$21.46/hour, a GS-5 would earn an additional \$96.57 per day while assigned to an incident.) The premium pay for incident response will be available to all employees assigned to wildfire incidents, even if they are not primary fire employees.

You can view the new base pay tables and **[read the full text of the WFPPA](#)**.

The new pay increase permanently replaces the temporary pay supplement granted to wildland firefighters through the **2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act** (IIJA). The original IIJA pay supplement was funded for only two years, leaving wildland firefighters to face a pay cliff at the end of each fiscal

year or expiration of a CR. Due to intense lobbying efforts by NFFE and Grassroots Wildland Firefighters, the IJJA pay supplement has been included in subsequent CRs and we have so far avoided a pay cliff. Because the new WFPPA language is written into the CR as a permanent pay increase, we will no longer have to worry about a pay cliff at the end of each fiscal year.

The temporary IJJA pay supplement represented a 50 percent increase in firefighter base pay, so the new permanent pay scale will result in slightly lower base pay for firefighters than they received under the supplement. However, the IJJA supplement did not include premium pay for time assigned to incidents, and the pay increase from the supplement was not creditable towards retirement. The new permanent pay increase, on the other hand, is now included as retirement-creditable basic pay and will count towards firefighters' high-3 average salary used to compute lifetime retirement annuities.

The Union continues to obtain clarification on the timing and status of the new pay scale implementation. There remains some concern that firefighters may face a temporary decrease in pay while OPM works to implement the new pay system. We expect the implementation of the new pay scale to be similar to the 2021 implementation of the IJJA firefighter pay supplement, with a delay in implementation followed by a lump sum payment of the back pay each employee is entitled to by law.

Employees will be entitled to the new pay adjustment at the same time as they stop receiving the old IJJA supplement, but they may not immediately see the new pay adjustment reflected in their paychecks. If this is the case, employees will be entitled to a lump sum payment once OPM has fully implemented the new pay system.

We will continue to keep you updated with further developments.

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