

What Are Federal Employee Pay Raises vs. Retiree COLAs?

March 23, 2017

Federal retirement expert, Chris Kowalik, shares important details on the differences between federal employee pay raises and federal retiree cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) to pensions.

What you will learn:

- 3 ways a federal employee's pay can increase
- When employee pay raises occur -- plus how they are calculated and applied
- Why annual employee pay raises are not set in stone based on certain economic conditions
- The formula determining the annual retiree COLA
- How and why COLA amounts are different for CSRS and FERS retirees
- Why federal employee pay raises and retiree COLAs don't often coincide with one another in a given year
- When a federal employee's locality pay can permanently affect their retirement pension

Year	Employee Pay Raises	Year	CSRS Retiree COLAs	FERS Retiree COLAs
2008	2.5	2008	2.3	2.0
2009	2.9	2009	5.8	4.8
2010	1.5	2010	0.0	0.0
2011	0.0	2011	0.0	0.0
2012	0.0	2012	3.6	2.6
2013	0.0	2013	1.7	1.7
2014	1.0	2014	1.5	1.5
2015	1.0	2015	1.7	1.7
2016	1.0	2016	0.0	0.0
2017	1.5	2017	0.3	0.3
10-Year Average	1.04%	10-Year Average	1.69%	1.46%

[History of Federal Employee Pay Raises and Federal Retiree COLAs](#)

About Chris Kowalik

[Chris Kowalik](#) is a federal retirement expert and frequent speaker to federal employee groups nationwide. In her highly-acclaimed [Federal Retirement Impact Workshops](#), she empowers federal employees to make confident decisions as they plan for the days when they no longer have to work. Chris' candid and straightforward nature allows employees to get the answers they need, and to understand the impact these decisions have on their retirement.