



NATIONAL ACADEMY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION®

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National Academy of Public Administration Issues Report on Human Capital For the U.S. Office of Personnel Management *Report Outlines 23 Recommendations to Strengthen and Modernize OPM*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – An expert panel of the National Academy of Public Administration today issued its final report, “[Elevating Human Capital: Reframing the U.S. Office of Personnel Management’s Leadership Imperative](#)” following an independent assessment of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) as requested by Congress.

“As our government works to address the increasingly complex and interconnected ‘Grand Challenges,’ facing the nation, the urgent need for leaders, managers, technical experts and front-line workers in the right jobs, with the right skills, has never been greater,” said **Terry Gerton, President and CEO of the Academy**. “Our independent panel report provides an opportunity for a fresh look at changes OPM can make to become the government-wide leader it was always meant to be. The Panel’s recommendations provide a roadmap for this important transformation of OPM and federal human capital management – and in turn, affords a path for building the workforce of the 21st century.”

Following a proposal by the Trump Administration to move OPM’s policy functions to the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and to merge the remaining functions with the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), the *FY 2020 National Defense Authorization Act* directed the OPM Director to contract with the Academy to conduct an independent study that would include assessing OPM’s statutory and non-statutory functions, identifying associated challenges, and recommending a course of action to address the challenges including any statutory or regulatory changes needed to implement the recommendations.

An Academy study team directed and overseen by a panel of five Academy Fellows – with extensive expertise and experience in the areas of federal human capital systems, labor management relations, technology modernization, organizational analysis and transformation, change management, stakeholder engagement, and customer experience – did not find that the problems or challenges identified in the Trump Administration proposal would be resolved by transferring OPM functions to OMB and GSA.

However, the Academy panel identified a number of cross-cutting challenges affecting OPM's ability to effectively deliver on its mission to lead federal human capital management. It concluded that meeting the needs of a 21st century workforce will require a reinvigorated focus on strategic human capital management and performance. The panel offered [23 recommendations](#) designed to achieve the following objectives and outcomes:

- Human capital is recognized and supported as a strategic priority across government by the Administration, the Congress and federal agencies.
- OPM's role is reaffirmed and strengthened as the leader for strategic, governmentwide human capital management.
- OPM's approach to human capital management evolves from predominantly compliance-oriented to customer-focused, value-added, data-driven and forward-looking, encouraging innovation and sharing of best practices.
- OPM's technology platforms are modernized, affording secure and efficient access to human capital data and systems supporting government-wide human capital management.

The Academy, an independent, non-profit, and non-partisan organization chartered by Congress more than 50 years ago, has a long history of providing government leaders with insights and expertise from more than 900 Academy Fellows on a range of issues. For example, the Academy launched the [Grand Challenges in Public Administration](#) initiative in 2019 to focus on the future of governance. Human capital management, a key foundational element for effective governance, is among the 12 Grand Challenges identified: [Modernize and Reinvigorate the Public Service](#) sets the stage for addressing the full suite of human capital challenges. In addition, recent white papers by Academy panels, [No Time to Wait, Building a Public Service for the 21st Century, Parts 1 and 2](#), offered strategies and steps to reform the federal government's human capital system and processes and strengthen agencies' ability to attract, recruit, retain, motivate, pay, and hold accountable a high-performing workforce to meet those challenges.

To learn more about the Academy panel's key findings and recommendations for OPM, read the report [here](#).

About the National Academy of Public Administration

Chartered by Congress to provide non-partisan expert advice, the Academy is an independent, non-profit, and non-partisan organization established in 1967 to assist government leaders in building more effective, efficient, accountable, and transparent organizations. Learn more at www.napawash.org

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