

Modernizing and Reinvigorating the Public Workforce: An Agenda for 2021

Academy Election 2020 Project

Working Group: Modernize and Reinvigorate the Public Workforce

Background

At the time when the government needs fresh ideas, it struggles to hire young people. With twice as many employees over 60 years old as under 30, the federal government will face future workforce issues. The civil-service system itself is also antiquated with a pay setting mechanism that was developed in 1949 and a Merit System that values compliance with rules more than merit. The route to reform needs to be based on three steps: mission first, principles always, and accountability for both.

The Challenge: Modernize and Reinvigorate the Public Workforce

As governments are increasingly called upon to address complex and interconnected “wicked problems,” their need for leaders, managers, technical experts, and front-line workers in the right jobs with the right skills at the right time has never been greater.

Recommendations for 2021

- 1. Build interest in public service and government as a career** through a funded campaign initiated by the White House and managed by OPM.
- 2. Develop a modern system of flexible pay and job classification** beginning with an EO that maximizes use of administrative flexibilities to streamline processes.
- 3. Initiate hiring reform that significantly expands the use of streamlined hiring authorities, uses modern assessment processes to identify high-quality candidates, and reduces the number of security clearance requirements.**
- 4. Improve the quality of managers and supervisors in government.**
- 5. Identify talent management in government as a presidential priority.**
- 6. Refocus OPM** with an emphasis on responsiveness and flexibility in Talent Management.
- 7. Identify and implement modern assessment processes**, with a goal of eliminating applicant self-assessment questionnaires within one year.

Additional Resources

These resources provide additional information and recommendations in the line with the Election 2020 paper, *Modernizing and Reinvigorating the Public Workforce: An Agenda for 2021*.

[The Academy: Election 2020: Modernize and Reinvigorate the Public Workforce](#)

[The Academy: Roundtable on Modernizing and Reinvigorating the Public Service](#)

[The Academy: Why Public Service Matters: Now and Always](#)

[GAO Report: Federal Workforce: Key Talent Management Strategies for Agencies to Better Meet their Missions](#)

[GAO Report: Human Capital: Improving Federal Recruiting and Hiring Efforts](#)





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