



A Governmentwide Framework For Federal Personnel Reform

A Proposal

November 2004



National Commission
on the Public Service
Implementation Initiative

ADDRESSING PERSONNEL REFORM ON A GOVERNMENTWIDE BASIS

The National Academy of Public Administration and the National Commission on the Public Service Implementation Initiative assembled a group of individuals to followup on a forum chaired by Comptroller General David M. Walker and National Commission on the Public Service Chairman Paul A. Volcker at the Government Accountability Office on April 14, 2004. As David Walker and Paul Volcker concluded:

[T]here was widespread recognition among the forum participants that a "one size fits all" approach to human capital management is not appropriate given the range of the challenges and demands government faces. However, there was equally broad agreement that there should be a governmentwide framework to guide human capital reform built on a set of "beliefs and boundaries." (see GAO report GAO-05-69SP)

All the participants in this followup effort believe that it is important to articulate and adopt a governmentwide framework to underlie the new personnel systems being adopted in the individual agencies of the federal government. As witnessed by the framework proposed herein, there was considerable agreement on what its elements should include.

In addition to the framework set out here, several of the participants advocated updating the Merit System Principles (Sec. 2301, Title 5, USC). While supporting the principles embodied in the existing Merit Principles, they believe that they should also embody the modern day view of federal employees and employment, such as valuing and enabling employees and striving for excellence in performance and results.

The members of the group participated in their individual capacities. The organizations with which they are associated have neither reviewed nor endorsed this proposed framework.

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A GOVERNMENTWIDE FRAMEWORK FOR FEDERAL PERSONNEL SYSTEMS

Core Values to Underlie the Federal Public Service

- Is dedicated and accountable to the collective public interest.
- Is driven by achievement of mission.
- Values the people who work for it.
- Is grounded in merit principles.

Principles to Support Government's Core Values

Government operations are *accessible and transparent* to the public.

There is ongoing *communication and involvement* among employees at all levels.

The entire *workforce shares responsibility* for upholding core values and accomplishing mission.

Diversity in the workforce is fostered and appreciated.

Employers have responsibility for assuring the *resources* and providing the *training* necessary to meet mission expectations. Employers and employees have shared responsibility for enabling employees to achieve organization mission and objectives.

Advancement and rewards are based on *skills and performance*.

Employees have the *right to organize* and bargain collectively, with appropriate exceptions in sensitive areas.

Inherently governmental work is performed by federal employees.

Processes and Criteria for the Implementation of Flexible Personnel Authorities

Agencies will have:

1. *an integrated strategic and human capital plan* that identifies how the new systems will achieve the agency goals identified
2. a plan for assessing and developing needed *leadership capacity*
3. a plan for *financing* the successful implementation of the new systems
4. a plan for *evaluating and reporting* on the development and implementation of new systems
5. a modern, effective and credible *performance management system*

In developing and implementing new personnel systems, agencies will *consult on an ongoing basis with employees and their representatives*, striving wherever possible to reach consensus in the decision making process. Agencies will also develop plans to consult with other affected parties.

Agencies will develop and implement new systems in *consultation with OPM* and implementing regulations will be issued jointly with OPM. Appeals processes will be developed in *consultation with MSPB and OPM*.

Agencies will develop and implement *risk management capacity* and other strategies to promote the necessary *adaptability* to meet existing and future challenges.

Governmentwide compliance with these values, principles and processes should be assured through a regular process of oversight. Several proposals that have been raised to accomplish this include:

- Approval by OPM for agencies to adopt new human resource flexibilities, based on agency submission of a valid business case for adoption of the new systems.
- Scheduled periodic audits by OPM to assess agency implementation of new flexibilities and their compliance with the governmentwide framework.
- Regular oversight by the appropriate Congressional committees of implementation and compliance at specific agencies and on a governmentwide basis.



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