



Agency Priority Goal Action Plan

Improve the Hiring Process

Goal Leader:

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Overview

Goal Statement

- Strengthen the capabilities of Federal HR professionals by relaunching a delegated examining (DE) certification program that creates a level standard for all HR delegated examiners. By September 30, 2019, at least 43 percent of delegated examiners will complete the updated certification program.

Challenge

- The Human Resources Specialist (0201) occupation was identified as a Government-wide mission critical occupation (MCO) in 2011 and re-validated in 2015 as one of six high-risk MCOs. Although various strategies have been implemented to address skills gaps for Federal HR specialists, the gaps continue to exist. (<https://www.gao.gov/assets/670/668202.pdf>)
- The identified root causes leading to HR's designation as a High Risk include:
 1. Training/Development: HR Specialists (GS-11 to GS-14) have inconsistent access to the appropriate training/education they need to meet customer expectations and drive customer satisfaction.
 2. Grade Structure: Opportunity for accelerated promotion/career progression leads to high transfer rates and journey specialists with limited technical depth.
 3. Workload: Demanding workload and ineffective customer relationships and expectations leads to dissatisfaction and higher transfer rates.
 4. Engagement: HR specialists transfer to other agencies or retire from Federal service at a higher rate when they do not feel valued in their current work environment.
- An effective hiring process must be supported by expert Human Resources (HR) professionals who are knowledgeable about all aspects of talent acquisition, from recruiting, to job posting, to developing effective assessment tools, and use of special hiring and compensation flexibilities.

Overview

Opportunity

- The Human Resources (HR) Capabilities Program will cultivate continuous development of Federal HR professionals to acquire expertise and collaborate with managers and employees to recruit and retain individuals with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to achieve Federal agency missions.
 1. As OPM pursues improvements and modernization of the hiring process, the agency's policy, service delivery, and oversight functions will coordinate efforts to strengthen the knowledge and consultative ability of agency HR professionals to ensure they are skilled and equipped to support an efficient and effective hiring process.
 2. The HR Fellows Policy Rotation Program enables HR Professionals to develop highly needed policy skills, broaden organizational experience, and build Government-wide networks to improve participants' abilities to assume Human Capital leadership roles.

Goal Structure & Strategies

Federal HR Capabilities Program:

OPM will employ a holistic approach to build HR professionals' core knowledge and capability for each HR technical area Government-wide, while addressing the priority root causes identified by the Federal Action Skills Team (FAST) team in October 2016.

OPM will pursue the following strategies for each HR technical area*:

- Develop curriculum
 1. Develop and validate technical competency models.
 2. Develop, implement, and maintain a HR “core” curriculum.
 3. Develop certification programs, as applicable (starting with DE certification).
- Develop and implement the OPM HR Policy Fellows Program.

**HR technical areas: Staffing, Classification, Employee Relations, Labor Relations, Performance Management, Benefits, Compensation, HR Development, and HR Systems*

Summary of Progress – FY19 Q4

In FY 2018-2019, OPM strengthened the capabilities of Federal HR professionals by redesigning the delegated examining (DE) training and certification program that creates a level standard for HR delegated examiners. However, OPM made the mandatory training component and on-the-job training elements of the program voluntary and by September 30, 2019, OPM did not achieve its goal of having at least 43 percent of delegated examiners complete the updated certification program. The newly developed assessment test remains mandatory for certification and has been implemented.

OPM, with the assistance of the Chief Human Capital Officers Council, continues to implement strategies to close the skills gaps of Federal HR specialists. Together, OPM and Federal agencies have a vested interest in training employees who can perform examining functions well and in a manner that is defensible. To do that, they must be fully knowledgeable about competitive examining procedures and requirements.

OPM will continue to manage and track the progress of the DE certification program and the HR Policy Center of Excellence. The DE certification program is key to equipping all Federal HR practitioners with the knowledge and understanding of the process to fill competitive civil service jobs. The HR Policy Center of Excellence is in process of selecting a new group of participants who are expected to start in Q2 FY 20. Both of these programs are designed to build capability amongst Federal HR professionals. OPM will continue to monitor the progress of these programs as part of the initiative to build capability and close skill gaps for HR professionals.

Strategies	Progress (FY 19, Q4)
<p>1) Curriculum Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certification, as applicable (starting with Delegated Examining (DE) Certification) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed changes to the enrollee registration and training tracking system required by OPM, Office of the Director. Published CHCO Memo and the DE Certification Program Guide outlining new DE certification requirements, costs, and registration information. Launched DE Certification Assessment. All components of new DE Certification Program are active. Research underway to determine feasibility of establishing DE certification as a condition of employment.
<p>2) OPM HR Policy Center of Excellence</p>	<p>Completed the evaluation of the pilot:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants submitted reflection papers capturing the overall experiences and desired objectives of the program. Host supervisors completed surveys to determine program success by July 31, 2019. Home supervisor completed interviews offering feedback and observation of the participants knowledge and skilled transferred into the agency by August 30, 2019.

Key Milestones

Strategy: Develop curriculum.

- Develop and validate technical competency models
- Develop, implement, and maintain a HR “core” curriculum
- Develop certification programs, as applicable (starting with DE certification)

Milestone Summary

Key Milestone	Milestone Due Date	Milestone Status	Change	Owner	Comments
Develop assessment for new DE certification program.	Q3 FY 18	Complete		Human Resources Solutions	
Develop tracking system for new DE certification program.	Q4 FY 18	Complete	Q3 FY 19	Human Resources Solutions	
Deploy communications strategy (to include CHCO Memorandum and Program Administration Guide)	Q3 FY 18	Complete	Q3 FY 19	Employee Services, Human Resources Solutions, and Merit Systems Accountability & Compliance	
Write guidance on how to use DE certification as a condition of employment.	Q1 FY 19	Not Met	Q2 FY 20	Employee Services, Human Resources Solutions, and Merit Systems Accountability & Compliance	
Launch new DE certification program.	Q4 FY 18	Complete	Q4 FY 19	Employee Services, Human Resources Solutions and Merit Systems Accountability & Compliance	

Key Milestones

Strategy: Develop and implement the OPM HR Policy Center of Excellence.

Milestone Summary					
Key Milestone	Milestone Due Date	Milestone Status	Change	Owner	Comments
Add annual knowledge checks for any new regulations and legislation that pertains to the work of Federal HR specialists.	Q4 FY 19	Not Met	Q2 FY 20	Employee Services, Human Resources Solutions, and Merit Systems Accountability & Compliance	
Evaluate the DE certification program to determine if legislation should exist to mandate certification for all Federal HR professionals, within all HR technical areas would be appropriate.	Q3 FY 19	Not Met	Q1 FY 20	Employee Services, Human Resources Solutions, and Merit Systems Accountability & Compliance	
Decide which program format to pilot.	Q2 FY 18	Complete		Employee Services	
Develop pilot implementation plan (for example, select pilot agencies and participants, and develop capstone exercise and manager assessment).	Q4 FY 18	Complete		Employee Services	
Pilot HR Policy Center of Excellence.	Q1 FY 19	Complete		Employee Services	
Monitor and evaluate pilot program.	Q4 FY 19	Complete		Employee Services	

Ongoing Risks and Challenges

Resources (Human/Financial)

- For curriculum development and utilization:
 1. Identifying and/or hiring instructional system designers
 2. Identifying resources as subject matter experts for HR curriculum development review
 3. Identifying and recruiting knowledgeable instructors/trainers
 4. Agencies ability to pay for new curriculum, as a result of workforce reshaping and budget constraints
- Funding for hiring assessment tool
- Efficacy of the OPM HR Policy Center of Excellence

Key Indicators

	Q1 FY 19	Q2 FY 19	Q3 FY 19	Q4 FY 19	FY 19 Year- End Result	FY 19 Year- End Target
Percent of Federal HR professionals who perform delegated examining (DE) work completing DE certification	-*	-*	-*	0% [†]	0% [†]	43%
Percent of staffing specialist course participants who demonstrate knowledge improvement	87.5%	100%	99%	93%	93%	90%
Percent of managers of participants in the HR Policy Center of Excellence who report an increase in the participants' knowledge/expertise	-*	-*	-*	100%	100%	85%
Number of participants in the HR Policy Center of Excellence (cumulative)	5	5	5	2	5 [‡]	18

* Historical data for these measures is unavailable.

† OPM launched the DE certification program in Q4 FY 2019. OPM intended both the training and assessment components of the program to be required for certification. However, with the launch of the program in Q4, OPM issued guidance stating that the training components of the program would be voluntary and that passing the assessment would be the only requirement for certification.

‡ The total number of participants in Cohort 1 is 5. Three (3) participated for 6 months (November 2018 to May 2019) and two (2) participated for 12 months (November 2018 to November 2019).

Data Accuracy and Reliability

Percent of Federal HR professionals who perform delegated examining (DE) work completing DE certification

Definition of Measure The number of Federal HR professionals who perform DE work that completed the new DE certification requirement divided by the number of HR professionals who perform DE work.
Data Source Federal HR Institute (FHRI) database information exported to a spreadsheet for verification and validation. Note: Data for FY18 and FY19, Q1 and Q2 is from the USALearning Portal, which is automatically updated once an employees has successfully completed the training. Data for FY 19 Q3 and beyond will come from a new tracking system.
Data Verification and Validation FHRI program lead and DE program manager will validate and review DE data for accuracy.
Data Limitations The data will be limited to the HR professionals who are enrolled in the DE certification program. There can be inconsistencies in the number of HR professionals who conduct DE work due to attrition and agency consolidations of DE Units (which could change the number of operating DEUs).

Percent of staffing specialist course participants who demonstrate knowledge improvement

Definition of Measure The number of staffing specialist course participants who demonstrate knowledge improvement by the number of staffing specialist enrolled in the courses.
Data Source FHRI LMS database. FHRI will use scored pre and post course knowledge checks.
Data Verification and Validation FHRI program lead will validate and verify the accuracy of the staffing specialists students who demonstrate knowledge improvement.
Data Limitations The data will be limited to enrollments in the FHRI Staffing Specialist curriculum. FHRI sets target grades for each course, but does not limit participation to this target group, and higher or lower graded employees may enroll.

Data Accuracy and Reliability

Percent of managers of HR Fellow participants in the OPM HR Policy Center of Excellence who report an increase in their fellows' knowledge/expertise

Definition of Measure The number of managers of HR Fellows who report an increase in their knowledge/expertise divided by the overall number of managers of HR Fellow participants.
Data Source Survey to managers of HR Policy Fellows. Data will be compiled using a spreadsheet for verification and validation.
Data Verification and Validation The project manager for the OPM HR Policy Center of Excellence will review survey data for accuracy and completeness, and validate any survey data collected and utilized.
Data Limitations There are no significant data limitations.

Number of HR Fellow participants in the OPM HR Policy Center of Excellence

Definition of Measure The number of HR Fellow participants in the OPM HR Policy Center of Excellence
Data Source Registration data source for the OPM HR Policy Center of Excellence.
Data Verification and Validation The project manager for the OPM HR Policy Center of Excellence will review data for accuracy and completeness, and validate any data collected and utilized.
Data Limitations There are no significant data limitations.

Additional Information

Contributing Programs

Organizations:

- DE Certification Program: OPM Employee Services (Policy); OPM Merit Systems Accountability & Compliance (Program Management); OPM Human Resources Solutions (Training and Delivery)
- OPM HR Policy Center of Excellence: OPM Employee Services
- Federal HR Institute's Staffing Specialist Curriculum: HRS Center for Leadership Development

Policies:

- OPM Employee Services and OPM Merit Systems Accountability and Compliance

Other Federal Activities:

- Federal HR Professionals to participate in the DE Certification Program and the OPM HR Policy Center of Excellence

Stakeholder / Congressional Consultations

OPM engaged its internal and external stakeholders in the development of its 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, to which this APG is aligned. The agency interviewed more than 50 external stakeholders, which included customers of OPM, Federal agencies, executive councils, advisory groups, affinity groups, and consultants, and solicited their feedback on the prior strategic plan as well as OPM's strengths and challenges. The agency also conducted 16 interviews with executives within OPM.