



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

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Memorandum For Chief Human Capital Officers

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Subject: **Modernization and Consolidation of Occupational Series**

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is modernizing Federal position classification and job grading standards to ensure the classification system remains current, consistent, and responsive to evolving mission needs. Under 5 U.S.C. chapter 51 and implementing regulations at 5 CFR part 511, OPM establishes and maintains these standards and oversees their appropriate application across the Federal Government.

This modernization of General Schedule (GS) and Wage Grade (WG) occupational structures supports Executive Order 13932¹, Executive Order 14170², the Merit Hiring Plan³, and the Chance to Compete Act (2024)⁴. It strengthens the talent pipeline, removes outdated structures, and positions agencies to more effectively recruit and retain the skills required for today's workforce.

Modernization Strategy

OPM is implementing four mutually reinforcing objectives that modernize and streamline the classification system while supporting workforce agility:

1. **Streamline occupational series.** Consolidate series with low employment, obsolete duties, or redundancy to simplify classification, support employee mobility, and reduce administrative burden.
2. **Redesign the classification framework.** Update and align GS and WG series with modern work, emerging technologies, and national frameworks, including the

¹ Exec. Order No. 13932, Modernizing and Reforming the Assessment and Hiring of Federal Job Candidates, 85 Fed. Reg. 39457 (June 26, 2020).

² Exec. Order No. 14170, Reforming the Federal Hiring Process and Restoring Merit to Government Service, 90 Fed. Reg. 8621 (Jan. 20, 2025).

³ Office of Personnel Management and Domestic Policy Council, *Merit Hiring Plan* (2025), available at <https://www.opm.gov/chcoc/latest-memos/merit-hiring-plan.pdf>.

⁴ Chance to Compete Act of 2024, Pub. L. No. 118-188, 138 Stat. 2644 (2024)

Department of Labor’s Standard Occupational Classification system, and external labor market data.

3. **Promote transparency and merit principles.** Ensure qualification standards reinforce competitive access and uphold statutory merit-system requirements.
4. **Advance skills-based hiring.** Expand competency-based assessments and reduce unnecessary reliance on educational credentials to strengthen merit-based hiring and widen access to qualified talent.

Together, these efforts advance a modern, merit-based, and mission-aligned Federal workforce structure.

Scope of This Memorandum: Phase One

This memorandum initiates Phase One of a multi-phase effort. Phase One focuses on consolidating low-utilization and obsolete occupational series, the first objective above. Future phases will address broader structural redesign aligned to skills-based workforce frameworks.

This phased approach ensures agencies move through change in an orderly, manageable sequence while OPM advances a comprehensive modernization strategy.

Consolidation Criteria and Decision Standards

OPM applied consistent, data-driven criteria to determine series recommended for consolidation:

Criterion	Description	Rationale
1. Low Federal Employment (100 or fewer FTEs)	Series has 100 or fewer employees governmentwide.	Indicates limited usage and potential for consolidation with broader series.
2. Obsolete or Non-Transferable Skills	Series includes outdated functions or lacks alignment with modern occupational taxonomies (e.g., not mapped to DOL’s Standard Occupational Classification [SOC] system).	Suggests the work is no longer relevant or has evolved into other roles.

Criterion	Description	Rationale
3. Declining Hiring Trends	Series shows minimal or no hiring activity over the past 3–5 years.	Reflects reduced demand and limited future workforce planning value.
4. No Forecasted Workforce Demand	No projected growth or replacement need based on workforce planning data.	Indicates the series is not mission-critical or sustainable.
5. Redundancy with Other Series	Duties and competencies are fully covered by another existing or updated series.	Supports consolidation and reduces classification complexity.
6. Lack of Agency Sponsorship	Limited or no agency identification of the series as a priority for retention or update recorded.	Suggests low strategic value across government.

Consolidation may include realigning positions to an existing broader series, canceling obsolete series, or merging specialty coverage under updated classification standards. These standards ensure consolidation decisions support mission needs, reflect modern work, and maintain clarity and consistency across the Federal Government.

Employee Impact and Transition

Consolidation of occupational series will not automatically change an employee's grade, pay, tenure, or career ladder placement. When reclassification is required, agencies must apply all applicable requirements governing classification determinations, grade retention, pay retention, and career progression and follow their internal merit promotion plans to implement the updated classification standards.

Agencies must also fully comply with all collective bargaining obligations, including notice and negotiation requirements where applicable. OPM will provide comprehensive implementation guidance to ensure consistency across agencies, protect employee rights, and minimize disruption throughout the transition.

Addressing Employee and Stakeholder Concerns

The evolution of work across government, including new technologies, scientific advances, and shifting mission demands, has led many series to become low-use, outdated, or

overlapping. As OPM modernizes occupational series, we recognize that employees and stakeholders may have questions about what these changes mean. OPM is committed to ensuring a smooth, predictable transition for employees and agencies. The following addresses anticipated questions from key stakeholder groups.

- **Specialized professional and technical communities (e.g., wildlife biology, geospatial analysis, laboratory science):** Consolidation does not diminish the recognition of specialized work. These functions will remain fully reflected in position descriptions, qualifications, competencies, and career paths, even when grouped within broader series.
- **Occupations with statutory distinctions:** Consolidation does not change statutory requirements or the core professional identity of a field. Legal support work, such as claims examination or legal research, remains separate from positions requiring attorney authorities or licensure.
- **Employees in skilled trades:** Work such as HVAC repair, heavy equipment operation, and carpentry require extensive hands-on expertise. Consolidation updates structure for clarity and consistency, but does not change trade skill requirements, certifications, or performance expectations.
- **Agencies with highly specialized missions:** OPM will support mission visibility through specialty titles and clear position description guidance to ensure unique mission work is accurately communicated to applicants.
- **Labor organizations:** Agencies must continue to follow all notice and negotiation requirements. OPM will provide materials to support consistent and timely engagement.

Throughout the process, OPM will continue working closely with agencies to address mission-specific needs, ensure smooth transitions, and consider retention requests supported by operational evidence.

Agency Review and Next Steps

OPM will:

- Issue the proposed consolidation list (Appendix A)
- Review agency feedback and retention requests
- Issue updated classification and qualification standards
- Provide FAQs, tools, templates, and implementation guidance

Agencies must:

- Conduct a headquarters-level review of affected series
- Identify mission-critical positions and impacts
- Submit requests to retain series when warranted by operational or statutory requirements with supporting documentation per the instructions in Appendix B
- Provide classification, workforce planning, and recruiting insights
- Meet all collective bargaining obligations

Conclusion

These actions position the Federal classification system to meet current and emerging mission needs while strengthening merit, transparency, and workforce agility. For additional information and support, agency headquarters-level human resources offices may contact Classification and Assessment Policy at fedclass@opm.gov.

cc: Deputy CHCOs, Human Resources Directors

Appendix A – Full List of Occupational Series for Consolidation

This appendix identifies the **115 occupational series** recommended for consolidation, affecting approximately **4,926 Federal employees** governmentwide. Each series was identified based on one or more of the following criteria: low employment, obsolete skills, declining demand, redundancy, or lack of agency sponsorship. For instructions on submitting retention requests or agency feedback, see Appendix B.

Series Code	Series Name	Number of Employees	Proposed Realignment	Criteria Met
0011	Bond Sales Promotion Series	0	0001	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
0021	Community Planning Technician	21	0303	1, 3, 6
0023	Outdoor Recreation Planning	368	0186	3, 6
0029	Environmental Protection Assistant	87	0303	1, 3, 6
0090	Guide	647	1001	3, 6
0095	Foreign Law Specialist	1	0901	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
0134	Intelligence Aid and Clerk	5	0303	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
0136	International Cooperation	8	0131	1, 3, 6
0140	Workforce Research and Analysis	48	0101	1, 3, 6
0184	Sociology	17	0101	1, 3, 6
0190	General Anthropology	126	0101	3, 6
0302	Messenger	5	0303	1, 2, 3, 6
0309	Correspondence Clerk	14	0303	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
0313	Work Unit Supervising	58	0303	1, 3, 6
0319	Closed Microphone Reporter	44	0303	1, 3, 4, 5, 6

Series Code	Series Name	Number of Employees	Proposed Realignment	Criteria Met
0322	Clerk-Typist	6	0303	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
0326	Office Automation Clerical and Assistance	862	0303	2,3,5
0350	Equipment Operator	112	0303	2, 3, 5
0356	Data Transcriber	24	0303	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
0390	Telecommunications Processing	56	0303	1, 3, 6
0392	General Communicating	219	0303	2,3,5
0394	Communications Clerical	6	0303	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
0410	Zoology	33	0401	1, 3, 6
0437	Horticulture	101	0401	3, 6
0455	Range Technician	147	0404	3, 6
0459	Irrigation System Operation	56	4701	1, 3, 6
0480	Fish and Wildlife Administration	315	0401	3, 6
0487	Animal Science	54	0401	1, 3, 6
0642	Nuclear Medicine Technician	63	0640	1, 3, 6
0688	Sanitarian	57	0601	1, 2, 3, 6
0698	Environmental Health Technician	91	0640	1, 2, 3, 6
0880	Mining Engineering	51	0801	1, 3, 6
0881	Petroleum Engineering	287	0801	3, 6
0958	Employee Benefits Law	56	0901	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
0965	Land Law Examining	180	0901	3, 4, 5, 6
1020	Illustrating	74	1001	1, 3, 6
1046	Language Clerical	2	1001	1, 3, 4, 5, 6

Series Code	Series Name	Number of Employees	Proposed Realignment	Criteria Met
1051	Music Specialist	11	1001	1, 2, 3, 6
1054	Theater Specialist	9	1001	1, 2, 3, 6
1056	Art Specialist	3	1001	1, 2, 3, 6
1087	Editorial Assistance	39	1001	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
1107	Property Disposal Clerical and Technician	39	1001	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
1163	Insurance Examining	35	1101	1, 3, 6
1321	Metallurgy	15	1301	1, 3, 6
1372	Geodesy	52	1301	1, 3, 6
1374	Geodetic Technician	19	1311	1, 3, 6
1380	Forest Products Technology	13	1301	1, 3, 6
1384	Textile Technology	42	1301	1, 3, 6
1658	Laundry Operations Services	32	1601	1, 3, 6
1725	Public Health Educator	22	1701	1, 3, 6
1730	Education Research	57	1701	1, 3, 6
1815	Air Safety Investigating	30	1801	1, 2, 3, 6
1850	Agricultural Warehouse Inspection	34	1801	1, 3, 6
2144	Cargo Scheduling	31	2102	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
2161	Marine Cargo	55	2101	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
2183	Air Navigation	69	2101	1, 2, 3, 6
2608	Electronic Digital Computer Mechanic	32	2601	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
3106	Upholstering	10	3101	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
3511	Laboratory Working	17	3501	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
3513	Coin/Currency Checking	1	3501	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Series Code	Series Name	Number of Employees	Proposed Realignment	Criteria Met
3515	Laboratory Support Working	0	3501	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
3604	Tile Setting	37	3601	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
3605	Plastering	8	3601	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
3606	Roofing	40	3601	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
3707	Metalizing	72	3701	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
3712	Heat Treating	45	3701	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
3725	Battery Repairing	14	3701	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
3727	Buffing and Polishing	7	3701	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
3769	Shot Peening Machine Operating	56	3701	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
3802	Metal Forging	25	3801	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
3808	Boilermaking	88	3801	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
3940	Broadcasting Equipment Operating	19	3901	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
4104	Sign Painting	75	4101	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
4361	Rubber Equipment Repairing	20	4301	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
4373	Molding	51	4301	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
4416	Offset Platemaking	15	4401	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
4417	Offset Press Operating	61	4401	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
4441	Bookbinding	40	4401	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
4449	Electrolytic Intaglio Platemaking	15	4401	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
4604	Wood Working	392	4601	3, 4, 5, 6
4616	Patternmaking	29	4601	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
4715	Exhibits Making/Modeling	18	4701	1, 3, 4, 5, 6

Series Code	Series Name	Number of Employees	Proposed Realignment	Criteria Met
4717	Boat Building and Repairing	35	4701	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
4737	General Equipment Mechanic	154	4701	3, 4, 5, 6
4745	Research Laboratory Mechanic	9	4701	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
4816	Protective & Safe Equipment Fabricating & Repair	25	4801	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
4819	Bowling Equipment Repairing	2	4801	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
4850	Bearing Reconditioning	28	4801	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
4855	Domestic Appliance Repairing	1	4801	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
5031	Insects Production Working	85	5001	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
5042	Tree Trimming and Removing	52	5001	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
5205	Gas and Radiation Detecting	48	5201	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
5221	Lofting	63	5201	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
5313	Elevator Mechanic	6	5301	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
5317	Laundry & Dry Cleaning Equipment Repairing	22	5301	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
5323	Oiling and Greasing	21	5301	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
5419	Stationary-Engine Operating	25	5401	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
5438	Elevator Operating	0	5401	1, 3, 4, 5, 6

Series Code	Series Name	Number of Employees	Proposed Realignment	Criteria Met
5440	Packaging Machine Operating	27	5401	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
5729	Drill Rig Operating	74	5701	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
5736	Braking-Switching and Conducting	47	5701	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
5737	Locomotive Engineering	60	5701	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
5738	Railroad Maintenance Vehicle Operating	31	5701	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
5767	Airfield Clearing Equipment Operating	164	5701	3, 4, 5, 6
5876	Electromotive Equipment Mechanic	44	5801	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
6505	Munitions Destroying	26	6501	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
6656	Special Weapons Systems Mechanic	30	6601	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
7006	Preservation Servicing	82	7001	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
7402	Baking	17	7401	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
7405	Bartending	0	7401	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
7407	Meatcutting	1,107	7401	3, 4, 5, 6
7420	Waiter	10	7401	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
8610	Small Engine Mechanic	33	8601	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
8810	Aircraft Propeller Mechanic	69	8801	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
9003	Film Assembling and Repairing	0	9001	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

(Total: 115 series impacting ~4,926 employee records.)

Appendix B - Agency Instructions for Review and Response

Headquarters-Level Review Requirements

Agencies must conduct a comprehensive, agency-wide review at the headquarters level to ensure operational needs are addressed and submit a consolidated agency response for any occupational series they seek to retain. This review must include the following:

- **Assess Organizational Impact:** Identify all positions within the proposed consolidated series and determine which roles are mission-critical or involve specialized function that would not be adequately captured under a broader series.
- **Evaluate Workforce Planning Needs:** Consider future hiring trends, skill requirements, and alignment with skills-based hiring initiatives. Agencies should document how retention of a series supports long-term workforce strategy.
- **Document Classification Challenges:** For each series recommended for retention, provide examples of difficulties applying current standards, including any agency studies, surveys, or position review findings that support the case for retention, employment data (number of positions, pay plan, and grade), and a clear explanation of how the work supports the agency's mission.

Timeline for Agency Responses

- **Friday, April 24, 2026:** OPM issues proposed consolidation guidance.
- **Monday, May 11, 2026:** Deadline for agency feedback and retention request with supporting documentation.
- **May 2026:** OPM reviews agency input and finalizes consolidation decisions.
- **April 2026 – September 2027:** Ongoing publication of updated classification and qualifications standards and implementation guidance for GS and WG occupational series.

Submission Instructions

All agency responses and supporting documentation must be submitted through the OPM secure portal by the deadline above:

Secure Portal: <https://surveys.opm.gov/se/5B5534D4645F8295>

Agencies with questions about the submission process or review requirements should contact Classification and Assessment Policy at fedclass@opm.gov.

Appendix C – Survey for Occupational Series Consolidation and Realignment Feedback

Purpose:

This survey seeks your agency's input on the proposed modernization and consolidation of occupational series by OPM. Please provide detailed responses to help inform decisions using the required link.

Section 1: Agreement and Rationale

1. Does your agency agree with the occupational series OPM identified for consolidation?

Yes

No

If no, please explain your reason(s) for not supporting the consolidation of specific occupational series:

2. Does your agency agree with the realignment of specific occupational series for coverage?

Yes

No

If no, please provide your recommendations for occupational series realignment:

Section 2: Retention and Justification

3. Is your agency requesting to retain occupational series?

Yes

No

Identify the series and provide your justification for retaining the series:

Section 3: Impact and Workforce Considerations

4. Are any positions mission-critical and/or require unique competencies not covered by broader series?

Yes

No

If yes, please describe:

5. How will consolidation affect workforce planning and skills-based hiring initiatives at your agency? Please describe.

Section 4: Challenges and Issues

6. What recruitment or retention challenges exist for these occupational series? Please describe.

7. What classification and/or qualifications difficulties have you encountered with these series? Please describe.

Section 5: Additional Input

8. Are there any additional comments your agency would like to share?

Appendix D: Answers to Frequently Asked Modernization and Consolidation of Occupational Series Questions

1. What is the purpose of OPM's modernization and consolidation effort?

OPM's modernization initiative updates the Federal classification and job grading system to keep pace with the changing nature of work. This effort supports broader government reform mandates found in Executive Orders, the Merit Hiring Plan, and the Chance to Compete Act. OPM's goal is a more agile, mission-ready workforce, supported by modernized structures for hiring, employee mobility, and career development.

2. Will consolidation of occupational series change employee pay, grade, or tenure?

No. Consolidation does not automatically change an employee's grade, pay, or tenure. Agencies must continue applying all statutory and regulatory requirements related to classification, pay retention, reduction-in-force procedures, and collective bargaining obligations. Where positions are realigned into a consolidated occupational series, agencies will implement those changes in accordance with law and OPM guidance to minimize disruption.

3. Why is modernization necessary for the Federal classification system?

Over time, many occupational series have become outdated, redundant, or minimally used. Modernization reduces administrative burden, increases consistency, and helps agencies classify work in ways that reflect current missions, technology, and labor markets.

4. What are the primary objectives of the modernization strategy?

OPM's modernization strategy pursues four objectives: streamlining occupational series; redesigning the classification framework to align with modern work and national labor market data; streamlining occupational series; reinforcing merit systems principles; and advancing skills-based hiring.

5. What does "skills-based hiring" mean within this modernization effort?

Skills-based hiring means assessing applicants based on demonstrated competencies, what they can actually do, rather than relying solely on educational credentials or degree requirements. This approach broadens access to Federal careers, strengthens merit-based selection, and helps agencies hire candidates who are genuinely ready to perform the work from day one.

6. Why is OPM consolidating occupational series, and how many are affected?

OPM identified 115 occupational series, affecting approximately 4,926 employees, for consolidation based on low employment, obsolete skills, declining demand, redundancy, or lack of agency sponsorship.

7. What criteria did OPM use to determine which series should be consolidated?

OPM evaluated usage levels, redundancy, alignment with modern work, and agency feedback.

8. What are agencies expected to do during the consolidation review process?

Agencies must conduct a headquarters-level review of all affected positions, document mission-critical impacts and classification challenges, and submit a consolidated response, including retention requests with supporting documentation, by the deadline specified in Appendix B.

9. What must agencies submit if they wish to retain a series proposed for consolidation?

See Appendix B. Agencies must provide workforce data, organizational charts, position descriptions, competency requirements, and mission justification.

10. What are the deadlines and required steps for submitting feedback?

Agencies must submit feedback, including any retention requests and supporting documentation, by **Monday, May 11, 2026**. Submissions must be provided through the secure portal at: <https://surveys.opm.gov/se/5B5534D4645F8295>. OPM will review agency input in **May 2026** and continue issuing updated classification and qualification standards from **April 2026 through September 2027**.

11. How will encumbered positions be transitioned into consolidated series?

OPM will issue implementation guidance outlining how agencies should convert encumbered positions into consolidated series. In most cases, this will involve reviewing position descriptions to confirm proper alignment with the broader series and updating titles and occupational codes as needed. Conversion does not automatically require changes to duties or grade levels; instead, it simply ensures positions are accurately classified within the modernized structure.

12. How will OPM ensure mission-critical or highly specialized work remains appropriately classified?

OPM will evaluate agency requests to retain series supported by data and mission justification. Consolidation does not prevent agencies from identifying specialized work through titling practices, qualification requirements, and position descriptions. Broader series frameworks retain the flexibility to distinguish specialized duties where the mission requires it.

13. Is this consolidation a key phase of a broader classification modernization effort?

Yes. This consolidation is Phase One of a multi-phase effort to modernize the Federal classification system. This phase targets low-utilization, obsolete, and redundant occupational series. Subsequent phases will update classification and qualification standards more broadly, advancing skills-based workforce models and ensuring the system keeps pace with evolving mission needs.

14. What tools, resources, or support will OPM provide to agencies?

OPM will issue updated classification and qualification standards, reclassification timelines, implementation guidance, position description templates, and competency models.

Agencies with complex or mission-specific implementation needs may also request direct engagement with OPM.

15. What is the overall impact of the modernization effort on the Federal workforce?

This initiative builds a more transparent, flexible, and skills-aligned classification system, one that reflects how work is actually performed today. By modernizing and streamlining outdated structures and reducing administrative burden, OPM is positioning agencies to hire and retain the talent their missions require and to better serve the American public for years to come.