



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Heads and Acting Heads of Departments and Agencies

FROM: Scott Kupor, Director, U.S. Office of Personnel Management

DATE: July 24, 2026

RE: Issuance of Regulations on Performance Appraisal for General Schedule, Prevailing Rate, and Certain Other Employees

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) announces the issuance of its final regulations on Performance Appraisal for General Schedule, Prevailing Rate, and Certain Other Employees, which are effective on August 6, 2026, and are accessible on the Federal Register website. These regulations amend subpart B of part 430 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, by removing the prohibition on a forced distribution of performance rating levels and authorizing OPM to require and enforce a standardized distribution of performance rating levels across agencies. Changes to subpart B also include: reducing the number of summary level patterns, eliminating a Level 2 rating of record, eliminating the mandatory review of a Level 1 rating of record, adding a mandatory supervisory critical element, and prohibiting challenging a rating of record through grievance procedures. Another significant addition to subpart B is the requirement for OPM to evaluate and certify the operation and application of an agency's performance appraisal system on a biennial basis.

These changes represent a landmark update to Federal performance management and mark a major step forward in strengthening accountability, improving performance differentiation, and advancing a results-driven culture across the Federal workforce. Federal employees play a critical role in delivering results that advance agency missions and support national priorities. Performance management must be clear, credible, and focused on outcomes. The updated regulations establish a stronger framework for evaluating performance, improving consistency, increasing transparency, and ensuring that performance ratings more accurately reflect demonstrated contributions to mission success.

These reforms reaffirm that individual performance remains the foundation of Federal performance management. Employees will continue to be evaluated based on established performance expectations, critical elements, and documented accomplishments. Supervisors remain responsible for assessing performance, providing feedback, documenting results, and making evidence-based performance determinations. The revised framework strengthens these responsibilities while promoting greater consistency and accountability across agencies.

To support agencies in this effort, OPM has developed a comprehensive suite of implementation resources, including guidance materials, reference tools, training aids, and communication products. These resources are designed to assist agency leaders, human resources

professionals, performance management officials, supervisors, and employees in understanding and implementing the new requirements. OPM will continue to release additional guidance and support materials as agencies prepare for and implement these requirements. OPM will also publish guidance on the Fiscal Year 2026 performance appraisal cycle close-out under separate cover.

These reforms are intended to strengthen confidence in Federal performance management, improve accountability, support mission execution, and reinforce a culture of excellence throughout the civil service. By ensuring that performance distinctions are meaningful, evidence-based, and aligned with organizational outcomes, these reforms will help build a stronger Federal workforce that better serves the American people.

Agency headquarters-level human resources offices may contact OPM at performance-management@opm.gov. Component-level human resources offices must contact their agency headquarters for assistance. Employees must contact their agency human resources office for assistance.

cc: Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCOs), Deputy CHCOs, Human Resources Directors, and Chiefs of Staff

New Performance Management guidance documents:

[FAQs on 5 CFR part 430, subpart B Final Regulations](#)

[Template: Agency Policy on Performance Management](#)

Briefing Decks for [Employees](#), [Human Resources Professionals](#), [Supervisors](#), and [Leaders](#)

Quick Reference Guides on [Self Assessments](#), [Rating Employees](#), [Federal Performance Management Changes](#), [Role of Organizational Performance](#), and [Standardized Distribution](#)