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: November 10, 2026

Subject: Final Regulations on Personnel Management in Agencies and Strategic Human Capital Management

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The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) announces the issuance of its final regulations on Personnel Management in Agencies, which are effective on November 30, 2026, and are accessible on the Federal Register website. The Federal workforce plays a vital role in executing the important missions of Federal agencies in service to the American people. Accordingly, the strategic human capital management processes used to cultivate and manage the workforce must be integrated into agency planning and management processes, remain current with research and best practices, allow for proactive responses to anticipated environmental changes, and seek to continuously maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of HR service delivery.

These regulations amend part 250 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, to replace Human Capital Operating Plans (HCOPs) with Annual Staffing Plans (ASPs), Human Capital Reviews (HCRs) with Annual Staffing Reviews (ASRs), and the HRStat quarterly review process with Quarterly Staffing Plan Performance Reviews; reduce the number of required annual employee survey questions; and strengthen the role of the Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) by requiring that the CHCO have appropriate visibility, control, and oversight of human capital functions within the agency. OPM has also prepared the attached frequently asked questions (FAQs) to help agencies implement these requirements.

Summary of Key Regulatory Changes

The rule consolidates three overlapping planning and review products into one fiscal-year cycle aligned with the staffing cycle required by Executive Order 14356, Ensuring Continued Accountability in Federal Hiring:

- **ASPs** replace HCOPs and serve as the agency's operational workforce plan, aligned with the agency strategic plan, the annual performance plan, the

budget, the President's Management Agenda, and the Human Capital Framework.

- **ASRs** replace HCRs. OPM and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) jointly evaluate ASP implementation and progress toward workforce goals.
- **Quarterly Staffing Plan Performance Reviews** replace HRStat. The CHCO coordinates each review with the Performance Improvement Officer and the Strategic Hiring Committee (SHC). Agencies may fold them into existing GPRA Modernization Act quarterly reviews where practicable.

The rule also does the following:

- **Strategic Hiring Committees.** Consistent with Executive Order 14356 and related guidance, each agency must maintain an SHC. The rule codifies this requirement in regulation and specifies that the committee must include, at a minimum, the Deputy Secretary (or equivalent), the agency chief of staff, and the CHCO. The committee oversees agency hiring to ensure it is consistent with the agency's mission needs and its ASP and has governance authority only; it has no examining, rating, or certification authority.
- **CHCO visibility, oversight, and control.** Agencies must structure delegations, organizations, policies, and technology so the CHCO can carry out statutory duties. At each ASR, the agency head must certify in writing that the CHCO has this access and authority and must document any gap with a remediation timeline.
- **Annual employee survey.** OPM no longer administers the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). Each agency administers its own Annual Employee Survey (AES) using 10 prescribed questions, submits results to OPM and OMB within 90 days of completing administration, and posts results publicly. Additional questions should be discussed with the agency's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs desk officer.

Applicability and Timing

The SHC, ASP, ASR, and Quarterly Staffing Plan Performance Review requirements apply to all agencies except the Central Intelligence Agency, the Government Accountability Office, the United States Postal Service, and the Postal Regulatory Commission. Annual employee survey requirements apply to all executive agencies.

The rule was published in the Federal Register on October 29, 2026, at 91 FR 68013 and takes effect on November 30, 2026. ASP obligations for the FY 2027 cycle are already in

effect under Executive Order 14356 and the Guidance on Annual Staffing Plans (July 30, 2026).

Actions Requested

- Continue preparing and implementing FY 2027 ASPs under the Guidance on Annual Staffing Plans and continue to institutionalize and strengthen the role of the SHC.
- Train staff and hiring managers on their roles in the new cycle.
- Prepare for the agency-head certification. At each ASR, the agency head must certify in writing that the CHCO has the required visibility, oversight, and control of human capital functions, and must document any gaps with a remediation timeline.

Although the rule is not effective until November 30, 2026, OPM strongly encourages agencies to use the 10 prescribed questions in any survey fielded before that date. Surveys fielded on or after that date must use the 10 prescribed questions. Align the agency's survey instrument accordingly and plan the field period with your Statistical Official. OPM will provide separate guidance to agencies on the survey and reporting requirements.

Additional Resources

Please refer to the attached FAQs, which address the new requirements and questions agencies have raised about related OPM guidance: Guidance on Annual Staffing Plans (July 30, 2026) and Annual Employee Survey Administration Requirements (July 9, 2026).

Contacts

Please direct questions to the Office of Workforce Policy and Innovation. For questions on workforce planning and the staffing framework, email workforce@opm.gov. For questions on survey operations, email evs@opm.gov.

Attachment: Frequently Asked Questions

cc: CHCOs, Deputy CHCOs, Human Resources Directors, and Chiefs of Staff

U.S. Office of Personnel Management

Personnel Management in Agencies – Strategic Human Capital Management: Frequently Asked Questions

Supplemental guidance on the final amendments to 5 CFR part 250

This document addresses questions raised by agencies regarding OPM's amendments to 5 CFR part 250. The responses are based on the final regulatory text and two implementation guidance documents: Guidance on Annual Staffing Plans and Annual Employee Survey Administration Requirements (July 9, 2026). Where a response reflects guidance rather than a regulatory requirement, that distinction is expressly noted.

Audience	Agency human resources officials; and performance and budget officials
Purpose	Explain OPM's final amendments to 5 CFR part 250 and help agencies implement the new Annual Staffing Plan, staffing review, Strategic Hiring Committee, CHCO certification, and employee survey requirements.
Primary citations	5 CFR part 250

Terms used in this document

Term	Meaning
ASP	Annual Staffing Plan: the agency's fiscal-year operational workforce plan.
ASR	Annual Staffing Review: OPM and OMB's joint annual evaluation of ASP implementation.
CHCO	Chief Human Capital Officer.
HCOP / HCR / HRStat	Human Capital Operating Plan, Human Capital Review, and HRStat: the prior planning and review processes the rule replaces.
PIO	Performance Improvement Officer.
Statistical Official	The agency official the survey team works with on sample design, field period, and coding.
PRA	Paperwork Reduction Act.
A-11	OMB Circular A-11, Part 6, which sets the budget and performance calendar.

A. Overview

1. What is the final rule, and what does it change?

The rule amends 5 CFR part 250 and replaces three overlapping planning and review processes with one integrated fiscal-year cycle:

- ASPs replace Human Capital Operating Plans. The ASP is the agency's operational workforce plan for the fiscal year. It turns mission and budget decisions into funded positions, skills, hiring, and succession actions. Each plan aligns with the agency strategic plan, the budget, the President's Management Agenda, and the Human Capital Framework.
- ASRs replace Human Capital Reviews. OPM and OMB jointly evaluate ASP implementation and progress toward workforce goals.
- Quarterly Staffing Plan Performance Reviews replace HRStat. Each review assesses how the agency is carrying out its ASP, including hiring activity, vacancies, significant variances, and progress toward workforce goals. The CHCO leads each review with the Performance Improvement Officer and the Strategic Hiring Committee. Findings feed the quarterly ASP update.

The rule also:

- Requires the agency head to certify in writing at each ASR that the CHCO has the required visibility, oversight, and control. Any gap is documented with a remediation timeline.
- Codifies Strategic Hiring Committees, which provide senior leadership direct oversight of hiring and ensure hiring aligns with mission needs and the approved ASP. At a minimum, the Deputy Secretary, or equivalent, the chief of staff to the agency head, and the CHCO each serve on the committee.
- Updates the prescribed survey questions and sets administration and reporting parameters so each agency can administer its own annual employee survey. Beginning with the 2026 cycle, agencies use 10 prescribed questions, down from 16. Agencies submit results to OPM and OMB within 90 days of completing administration and post results publicly.
- Replaces references to the Federal Workforce Priorities Report with the President's Management Agenda.

2. Why did OPM make these changes?

The prior framework required separate planning and review processes that overlapped the staffing cycle already required by Executive Order 14356, Ensuring Continued Accountability in Federal Hiring. OPM consolidated them into one fiscal-year cycle, so workforce planning, budget formulation, and hiring execution use the same document. Because the E.O. directed agencies that were not previously subject to subpart B to engage in these planning processes,

the rule extends part 250's planning requirements to those agencies so that the regulation matches the E.O. The E.O. also requires each agency to establish a Strategic Hiring Committee. The rule incorporates that requirement so that hiring decisions stay tied to mission needs and the approved ASP. CHCOs have often lacked the visibility and control the CHCO Act already assigns them, so OPM now holds agency heads accountable in writing for correcting that. The annual employee survey is shorter and agency-administered so agencies and OPM can use the results in workforce planning while they are current.

3. When does the rule take effect?

The rule takes effect on November 30, 2026. Some obligations apply sooner. See Question 36 for ASP requirements already in effect and Question 37 for transition.

B. Annual Staffing Plans

4. What is an Annual Staffing Plan?

The ASP replaces the agency's Human Capital Operating Plan. The ASP is the agency's operational workforce plan for the fiscal year. It converts mission and budget decisions into funded positions, skills, hiring, succession, and workforce actions. It implements the agency's broader strategic human capital strategy but does not replace it, and it is not an HR-only document.

5. Does the ASP cover the entire agency workforce?

The ASP covers the staffing requirements and priorities within the scope set by the rule, E.O. 14356, and applicable governmentwide requirements. The Executive Order does not apply to positions related to national security, immigration enforcement, or public safety. For visibility and planning, agencies should still account for those positions, and for non-career positions, in the ASP and quarterly updates to the greatest extent practicable.

6. What must an ASP include?

The plan must include metrics and criteria for current and future workforce and staffing needs. It must target hiring to the highest-need areas, skill-gap closure, service-delivery improvements, and succession planning. It must also set measurable goals tied to the four Human Capital Framework systems: Strategic Planning and Alignment, Talent Management, Performance Culture, and Evaluation. The CHCO prepares the plan and coordinates with the CFO, the COO, and senior leadership on the budget formulation cycle in OMB Circular A-11, Part 6.

7. How should agencies address efficiency in the ASP?

The ASP should explain how the agency will meet its staffing needs efficiently. Agencies should consider:

- Restructuring the organization and eliminating unnecessary layers and duplicative functions.
- Consolidating administrative functions.

- Reducing low-value contractor positions when employees can do the work better.
- Reassigning staff and redistributing workloads internally.
- Strengthening performance management, improving processes, and adopting new technology.

8. What does the hiring forecast require?

The July 30, 2026, guidance requires a detailed hiring forecast by quarter and by mission area or component. It must show total projected hires, external hires versus internal placements, and mission-occupation, technology, and early-career hires, with billets and budget reserved.

For FY 2027, OPM's Guidance on Annual Staffing Plans (July 30, 2026) sets these governmentwide targets, consistent with the Merit Hiring Plan:

- At least 60 percent of new external competitive selections from shared certificates.
- At least 33 percent early-career hires among new external hires.
- 100 percent of external hires assessed with a validated technical assessment or an OPM-approved alternative.

9. When must agencies submit or update the ASP?

At the start of the fiscal year, in coordination with OPM and OMB, following the A-11 Part 6 calendar. Agencies may update the plan during the year based on enacted appropriations or authorizing legislation, or otherwise in coordination with OPM and OMB. Agencies submit progress updates to OPM and OMB at the start of each quarter and explain significant variances.

10. Who should be involved in developing the ASP?

The CHCO prepares the ASP and the hiring forecast. Planning starts at the component, bureau, and program level, where managers identify the positions, skills, and staffing levels needed to execute the mission. The Strategic Hiring Committee reviews and approves the submission. Budget officials, the CFO, the performance office, and mission leadership take part.

11. Must the ASP use workforce data?

Yes. The plan is built on workforce data, not narrative alone. Agencies should be able to produce authorized positions, onboard strength, vacancies, hiring actions, time-to-hire, occupational and mission-critical needs, attrition, retirement eligibility, recruitment difficulties, hiring outcomes, and progress against staffing priorities. Demographics may be used where legally appropriate. The rule does not require a particular HR system, but existing systems must be able to produce this information.

C. Aligning the ASP with Budget, Strategy, and Performance

12. How does the ASP fit with the Agency Strategic Plan, the Agency Performance Plan, and the President's Management Agenda?

The President's Management Agenda sets governmentwide management priorities. The Agency Strategic Plan turns those priorities and the agency's statutory mission into multi-year goals. The Agency Performance Plan converts the strategic plan into performance goals, indicators, and targets. The budget resources program activities. The ASP converts those decisions into funded positions, skills, hiring, succession, and workforce actions. Because budget cycles overlap, agencies begin the next planning cycle before the current one ends. Preparation for the next fiscal year's ASP begins no later than the fourth quarter of the preceding fiscal year. Starting early aligns the plan with the next budget cycle and ensures plans are reviewed and ready for execution by the start of the fiscal year.

13. What does the fiscal year timeline look like?

The ASP runs October through September, tied to OMB Circular A-11, Part 6.

Timing	ASP activity
October	Execution begins. Funded hiring, skills, and workforce actions align to available resources.
October–November	Workforce gaps and FTE needs feed the next budget cycle during OMB's fall review.
Late November–December	Assumptions are revised as funding levels and hiring ceilings become clearer, alongside pass-back and appeals.
January	The refresh connects funded positions to budget justifications. The refresh should be reflected in the Q1 submission.
First Monday in February	The plan should be updated to reflect the submitted budget posture, concurrent with the President's Budget.
February–April	Quarterly updates capture hiring execution and risk during congressional review.
Spring–summer	Quarterly updates inform restructuring and skill gaps for the next submission. ASP data feeds the June budget build. A mid-July review captures execution against revised assumptions, timed to the July Mid-Session Review.
September	A year-end update closes out execution and sets the next fiscal year's baseline.

14. What is the recommended quarterly review cadence, and who participates?

This cadence (guidance) satisfies the requirement of at least four Quarterly Staffing Plan Performance Reviews each fiscal year.

Qtr	Focus	Participants
Q1 (Dec.)	Validate the funded staffing baseline, early hiring execution, component variances, and governance issues.	Headquarters CHCO, component CHCOs or HR leads, CFO, performance office
Q2 (Mar.)	Reconcile workforce execution against budget defense and congressional developments.	Headquarters CHCO, CFO, budget office, strategic or performance office
Q3 (June)	Update skills and hiring assumptions for the A-11 cycle.	Headquarters CHCO, CFO, hiring leads, component HR leaders
Q4 (Sept.)	Close out annual execution, document variances, and set the next year's baseline.	Headquarters CHCO, component CHCOs, CFO, performance office, agency leadership

D. Annual Staffing Reviews and Quarterly Reviews

15. What is an Annual Staffing Review, and how does it differ from the Human Capital Review?

The ASR is the annual evaluation of the agency's implementation of the ASP. OPM and OMB conduct it jointly; OPM alone conducted the Human Capital Review. The ASR is integrated with the staffing plan and the staffing-performance framework, and senior agency officials and mission leadership participate. It is not a renamed HCR and not an HR-only exercise. OPM and OMB oversight continues across the staffing-plan, quarterly-update, ASR, and survey framework; it is consolidated, not eliminated.

16. What is a Quarterly Staffing Plan Performance Review, and how does it differ from HRStat?

The CHCO coordinates the review with the Performance Improvement Officer and the Strategic Hiring Committee. It evaluates ASP implementation and progress toward workforce goals, and findings feed the quarterly update to OPM and OMB. HRStat involved only the CHCO and the PIO; the Strategic Hiring Committee is now a required participant. Reviews cover staffing-plan implementation and workforce outcomes, not only hiring counts.

17. How often must quarterly reviews occur, and can they be combined with existing reviews?

At least four times per fiscal year. Agencies may fold these reviews into existing quarterly performance reviews under the GPRA Modernization Act, 31 U.S.C. 1121(c), where practicable.

The intent is to reorient the quarterly review agencies already hold, not to add a meeting. Use the same CHCO and PIO participants and the cadence in Question 14.

18. What information should HR have ready for quarterly reviews?

Staffing progress against the plan, hiring activity, workforce requirements, vacancies, priorities, significant variances, and any other measure OPM or the agency has identified. If the data cannot be produced quarterly, resolve the system or definition problem before the first review rather than waiting for the ASR to surface the gap.

E. Strategic Hiring Committees

19. What is a Strategic Hiring Committee?

A committee each covered agency must establish to oversee hiring and ensure it aligns with mission needs and the ASP. The rule codifies a requirement first set by Executive Order 14356. The Committee reviews and approves the ASP, then ensures hiring actions are consistent with the approved plan.

20. Who must serve, and is there a size limit?

At a minimum, the Deputy Secretary (or equivalent), the chief of staff to the agency head, and the CHCO. Beyond those three members, agencies have discretion over the Committee's size and composition. OPM and OMB guidance recommend broader membership.

21. What authority does the Committee have?

The Committee provides senior-level governance of agency hiring. It reviews and approves the ASP, aligns hiring actions with mission needs and the approved plan, and oversees implementation in accordance with the merit system principles and prohibited personnel practices in 5 U.S.C. 2301 and 2302.

F. Chief Human Capital Officer Role and Certification

22. How does the rule change the CHCO's role?

Agencies must structure delegations, organizations, policies, and technology so the CHCO has sufficient visibility, oversight, and control to carry out the duties in 5 U.S.C. 1401 and 1402(a) and to access the information described in 1402(b).

- **Visibility:** access to the information needed to oversee human capital functions and staffing.
- **Control:** an appropriate level of authority and oversight. It does not make the CHCO the approving official for every personnel action.

The rule addresses strategic human capital oversight, not the transfer of every staffing decision.

23. What is the agency-head certification?

At each ASR, the agency head certifies in writing to OPM that the CHCO has the required visibility, oversight, and control. Any gap is documented with a remediation timeline. The certification makes agency leadership accountable in writing for CHCO access and authority, alongside the Deputy Secretary's and the agency head's chief of staff's seats on the Strategic Hiring Committee. It is an internal agency management function.

24. When is the first certification due, and what if there is a gap?

The agency head certifies at each ASR, starting with the first ASR after the rule takes effect. If the CHCO does not yet have the required visibility, oversight, or control, the agency head still certifies but identifies each gap and a timeline for closing it. OPM will provide the date of the first ASR after publication.

25. Does the rule dictate internal CHCO structure?

No. Agencies keep discretion over internal structure, and component HR operations are allowed, provided the CHCO retains the required visibility, oversight, and control. OPM guidance recommends that component CHCOs report directly to the headquarters CHCO, or have a clearly enforceable oversight line, so workforce data, controls, and decisions integrate across components. That reporting line is guidance. The certification is the requirement.

26. What are the requirements for an agency covered by 5 CFR part 250, subpart B, that does not have a statutory Chief Human Capital Officer?

The senior official responsible for human capital management, as designated by the agency head, serves on the Strategic Hiring Committee in the Chief Human Capital Officer's place. The annual certification requirement in § 250.206(b) does not apply to these agencies.

27. How should headquarters and component CHCOs divide the work?

The headquarters CHCO owns enterprise ASP policy, quarterly review standards, workforce data definitions, and cross-component escalation. Components supply mission-specific demand signals, hiring plans, and execution updates on a recurring cadence. The headquarters CHCO, component CHCOs, the CFO, strategic planning and performance staff, and leadership review forums all take part.

28. Should agencies review current delegations?

Yes. Review organizational delegations, reporting relationships, information access, and governance against the certification standard. CHCOs have often been excluded from strategic planning in large, decentralized agencies, and the certification is how the agency head confirms that has been addressed.

G. Annual Employee Survey

29. Does OPM still administer the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS), and how does the new survey differ?

No. FEVS is discontinued. Starting with the 2026 cycle, each agency administers its own annual employee survey using the 10 prescribed questions. See OPM's Annual Employee Survey Administration Requirements memorandum.

Ownership and focus both change:

- Agencies control timing, platform, and methodology.
- The required set drops from 16 questions to 10, selected for management use: goal clarity, accountability, feedback, performance differentiation, employee empowerment, career development, and handling of poor performance. Four items are unchanged, one is reworded, and five are new.
- Agencies submit results to OPM and OMB within 90 days of completion so the data can inform workforce planning while it is current.

30. When must agencies administer the survey, and how long must it be open?

Agencies are expected to complete the survey by the end of each calendar year. The December 31 data-collection deadline is unchanged. The rule sets no administration window within the year and no minimum or maximum field period. Set the field period with the agency's Statistical Official and relevant internal stakeholders, taking account of agency size and workforce distribution.

31. Must agencies survey every employee, and is there a required response rate?

No. Agencies may survey all employees or a statistically representative sample, based on size and resources. There is no minimum response rate, but agencies are expected to assess and address potential bias when response rates are low or uneven across units. Develop any sample design with the Statistical Official and document the sampling frame, stratification variables, target sample size, and selection method.

32. Can agencies add their own questions or run pulse surveys, and is an OMB control number needed?

The Annual Employee Survey (AES) consists of 10 prescribed questions covered by OPM's common form Information Collection Request (ICR), approved under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) with OMB Control No. 3206-0284. Each agency must apply for Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) approval to use the common form via ROCIS.gov. Each survey must display this control number on surveys when administering the prescribed questions. Agencies should discuss any additional questions with their OIRA desk officer.

33. Who submits results to OPM and what happens to them?

- **Level of submission.** Submit results to OPM and OMB through the data collection mechanism OPM will provide, at the overall agency level. A department submits

combined data for all components; subcomponents do not submit separately. An agency may administer centrally, delegate to components, or use a hybrid, provided the required workforce is represented and results are consolidated. If administration is delegated, agree on a consistent coding scheme with the Statistical Official.

- **Timing and posting.** Results go to OPM and OMB within 90 days of completing administration, using the data collection mechanism OPM will provide. Agencies post results publicly and set the disclosure content.
- **Benchmarks.** OPM will inform agencies when cross-agency benchmarks are available.
- **Use of results.** No separate action-plan submission or organizational-health report is required. Survey findings are an input to the ASP, quarterly reviews, and ASR.
- **Records.** The agency that administers the survey holds the data. Direct records requests and questions about an agency's administration to that agency, not OPM.

34. Which agencies must submit, and what happens if an agency does not?

All executive branch agencies submit survey data to OPM on the schedule and in the format OPM establishes. OPM will follow up with any agency that does not submit.

H. Applicability, Effective Date, and Transition

35. Which agencies are covered?

The Strategic Hiring Committee, ASP, ASR, and Quarterly Staffing Plan Performance Review requirements in subpart B of 5 CFR part 250 apply to agencies covered by 5 U.S.C. 306(f): any Executive agency as defined in 5 U.S.C. 105, except the Central Intelligence Agency, the Government Accountability Office, the United States Postal Service, and the Postal Regulatory Commission. Survey requirements apply to all executive branch agencies as defined by 5 U.S.C. 105.

36. Are ASP obligations already in effect, separate from this rule?

Yes. Executive Order 14356 and OPM's Guidance on Annual Staffing Plans (July 30, 2026) for the FY 2027 cycle, are already in effect.

37. What should agencies do now?

- Review delegations, organizational structures, and HR information systems to identify gaps in CHCO visibility. Prepare the agency head's initial certification and establish a timeline for addressing any identified gaps.
- Establish a direct reporting line, or a clearly enforceable oversight line, between component CHCOs and the headquarters CHCO.
- Fold quarterly staffing reviews into existing 31 U.S.C. 1121(c) reviews where practicable, using the cadence in Question 14.

- Work with the agency Statistical Official to field the annual employee survey instrument with the 10 survey items no later than December 31. Submit results to OPM and OMB within 90 days and post results publicly, unless posting would jeopardize or negatively impact national security.
- Review workforce planning policies and processes and align them with the new requirements, including any that still describe HCOPs, HCRs, HRStat, or central FEVS administration. This covers workforce planning, staffing governance, reporting, reviews, delegations, and the survey.
- Train staff and hiring managers in workforce planning, staffing, analytics, HR reporting, CHCO operations, and the survey. Selecting officials and program managers should understand their role in the plan and quarterly reviews.

Contacts

Please direct questions to the Office of Workforce Policy and Innovation. For questions on workforce planning and the staffing framework, email workforce@opm.gov. For questions on survey operations, email evs@opm.gov.