

**Hearing on the Future of Federal Service
Statement for the Record
National Academy of Public Administration**

As Federal agencies explore strategies to help build the next generation of public servants, it is clear that it will be critical to attract and retain employees using flexibility and benefits that will appeal to younger workers. The 2021 National Academy of Public Administration (the Academy) [Elevating Human Capital: Reframing the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's Leadership Imperative](#) report included recommendations directing OPM to work with agency stakeholders to review federal human capital regulations and guidance to identify needed changes, with attention to streamlining the human capital management process. This includes developing a more unified approach that places greater focus on commonalities across agencies and occupations while enabling appropriate flexibilities. It highlights the need for a proactive, systematic, and inclusive approach to developing government-wide human capital policies that effectively address current and emerging workforce issues and reflect the needs of evolving and diverse stakeholder groups. Additionally, the 2018 Academy report [No Time To Wait 2: Building a Public Service for the 21st Century](#) stressed the need for building flexibility into the pursuit of mission. Because agencies know best what they need to do their jobs, they need to have the flexibility for devising the human capital systems to accomplish their missions. Pilot projects to test new flexibilities should be part of how every agency does business, and OPM should have a key role in encouraging these pilots and for gathering information about how well they work, relying on evidence-based human capital management as the foundation for the entire system.

Attracting and hiring more diverse candidates requires additional tools and flexibilities, but it also reflects a culture shift that needs to happen throughout the organization and cannot be a compliance exercise if it is to be effective. As agencies look to support and advance the Biden Administration priority of Equity, it will be important to address the compelling case for increasing cultural competency. Current Academy research has identified several observations. Agencies need to address active and passive resistance to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives; the pursuit of diversity is in fact critical to accomplishing the mission; and agencies ultimately need to address principles of change management to support paradigm shifts required to address DEI effectively.

These flexibilities and paradigm shifts will enable and support new work agreements that allow for more virtual and remote working arrangements. These arrangements can be key drivers to attract and retain a broader set of candidates and build the next generation of public service. As agencies address these new work environments, they should consider applying [Agile government principles](#). This requires building on the software development process tenets that focus on creating products quickly with a high degree of customer acceptance and satisfaction. Included in these key principles are utilizing evidence-based metrics for success, customer-driven behavior; and continuous experimentation, evaluation, and improvement to learn from both success and failure.

With so few federal civilian employees under the age of 30, and so many eligible for retirement from the federal government, it is imperative that agencies continue to explore new approaches to human capital management in order to conduct the meaningful work that provides critical services to the American public.