<div align="center">

Questions for Mr. Jason S. Miller
Deputy Director, Office of Management and
Budget

**Questions from Chairman Gerald E.
Connolly**
Subcommittee on Government Operations

July 21, 2022, Hearing: "The Future of
Federal Work II"

</div>

---

1. **What has the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) learned about how private-sector businesses utilized telework flexibilities during the coronavirus pandemic, and how could these practices be adopted to improve federal government use of telework?**

Government-wide guidance provided by OMB, OPM, and GSA in OMB Memorandum M-21-25, "*Integrating Planning for A Safe Increased Return of Federal Employees and Contractors to Physical Workplaces with Post-Reentry Personnel Policies and Work Environment*" (M-21-25), demonstrates the Administration's commitment to principles-based decision-making and the use of evidence and data as agencies develop and implement their post-reentry work environments and plans for the future of work for their workforce and workplaces.

This guidance encourages agencies to evaluate and assess the effects of personnel policies on achievement of agency mission and employee performance informed both by lessons learned from the pandemic, as well as private-sector practices, including national, regional, and local workforce trends.

Agencies' ability to transition to expanded telework, like many private-sector businesses, enabled agencies to protect the health and safety of the workforce and the communities that agencies serve, while continuing to operate and deliver effectively for the public. It is important to note, however, that around half of the Federal workforce was not eligible to telework during fiscal year 2020, including due to the nature of their work, as highlighted in OPM's most recent annual report on telework to Congress. Additionally, early in the COVID-19 pandemic, some agencies experienced challenges with the initial transition to maximum telework due to the state of Federal information technology (IT) systems, related business processes, and tools for online collaboration. Meaningful improvements have since been made in those areas and, in some cases, the improvements have resulted in improved service delivery and customer experience.

Taking into consideration how "private-sector businesses utilized telework flexibilities during the coronavirus pandemic", as noted in this question—as well as how Federal agencies used those flexibilities—is an ongoing effort through the President's Management Agenda (PMA) to, "reimagine and build a roadmap to the future of Federal work informed by lessons from the pandemic and nationwide workforce and workplace trends."

The Administration also views efforts by agencies to explore data, information, and evidence from the public and private sectors regarding the use of telework and remote work flexibilities, and regarding the

related use of online collaboration tools and digital service delivery approaches, as essential to the Administration's ongoing efforts to deliver excellent, equitable, and secure Federal services and customer experience through the PMA.

I would note, informed by engagement with various senior executives across the private sector, that this is an area that many organizations across the country are continuing to evaluate and assess—from the most effective balance between in-person, hybrid, and remote work for organizational health, to the impact on the use of office space and on local communities and businesses, to the potential benefits for recruitment, inclusion, accessibility, and employee engagement—all in the context of a changing labor market. Looking at the private sector also shows the potential for a move to increased telework and remote work to be a factor that can support organizational resilience, efficient mission delivery, and improved customer experience.

2. **How does OMB evaluate the effectiveness and benefits of federal telework policies across government?**

As we work alongside each other again in our workplaces, we are building on the innovations and technology that we put to work during the COVID-19 pandemic to make the Federal Government even more efficient, resilient, and effective. It is imperative that we use this opportunity to both bring evidence, including lessons learned during the pandemic, to bear, and continue to build evidence on our emerging strategies.

As I noted during the hearing, the "north star" for assessing the effectiveness and benefits of Federal telework policies is high-performance mission delivery for agencies. OMB memorandum M-21-25 notes that "agencies' decisions must be guided by how they can most effectively achieve their respective missions." Consistent with OMB and Safer Federal Workforce Task Force guidance, agency parameters for who works in person and when and how to have workers come into the office, work in the field, or work from home or from alternate remote locations, are necessarily driven by mission, operational, and taxpayer considerations, as well as a commitment to the wellbeing and engagement of the Federal workforce and to the Federal Government's ability to continue to compete in the national talent marketplace and foster inclusive and accessible workplaces.

As to specific steps the Administration is taking to build and use evidence as it relates to post-reentry work environments, in October 2021, OMB, in partnership with GSA, launched the first-ever Government-wide Pulse Survey of Federal staff. The findings from these touchpoints have also provided valuable information about employee engagement and the increased return to the office. The results are available online in a user-friendly dashboard.

In addition, OMB is poised to launch the Government-wide President's Management Agenda Learning Agenda, which will include learning questions related to the future of work and understanding how different work environments affect agency delivery on mission and service delivery. This first PMA Learning Agenda will encourage collaboration and research to close evidence gaps within, beyond, and in partnership with the Federal Government. We shared the PMA Learning Agenda for public comment in draft form earlier this year. The PMA Learning Agenda, once released in final form, has the potential to help Federal agencies and external researchers collectively answer critical questions related to the future of Federal work, and also the PMA more broadly.

Finally, the President's FY 2023 Budget included a proposal and funding for OPM, in coordination with GSA and other agencies, to lead a series of pilot tests focused on the return to Federal facilities, including testing various work environments.

3. **What does a robust federal telework regime mean for the future of federal office space?**

While many Federal employees will continue to serve the American people by working every day or most days at an agency workplace—just as they did prior to the pandemic—others are doing so with updated hybrid work arrangements. Agencies are strategically using telework, remote work, and other appropriate hybrid work arrangements to better advance their missions, enhance recruitment opportunities, and improve employee satisfaction, engagement, and retention. The impact of post-reentry personnel policies, often referred to as the future of work, will be agency-specific.

Once mission, customer, and employee needs are accounted for and the input of stakeholders is incorporated, we expect that some agencies will determine that, with greater use of telework and remote work, they can reduce their office space footprint. For those agencies that can reduce their office space, they will need to make the necessary investments to dispose of that space, modernize existing space, invest in information technology tools that support hybrid collaboration, and perhaps arrange for new space to meet newly established post-reentry requirements.

Changes to agencies' office space portfolios will occur in step with ongoing changes to application of Federal personnel policies, over the next several fiscal years, provided that the necessary resources are available to change the configuration of the existing portfolio through disposal, consolidation, and modernization. These planning and implementation efforts will be guided by OMB guidance, including M-22-14, "FY 2024 Agency-wide Capital Planning to Support the Future of Work," issued in July 2022, which provided direction to agencies regarding real property assessments based on changes in the workplace. Changing the configuration of existing portfolio includes both an upfront cost and an outyear cost-avoidance opportunity.

4. **Is the federal government experimenting with hoteling and other innovative uses of office space? And, if so, have these experiments been successful?**

Agencies are experimenting with a variety of workspace arrangements to innovate how the Federal workforce accomplishes its work. OMB issued M-22-14, "FY 2024 Agency-wide Capital Planning to Support the Future of Work" in July 2022 to begin defining real property needs in the future-of-work context. The memorandum instructs agencies to submit their capital plans to the Federal Real Property Council by December 16, 2022, after considering mission requirements and customer needs, the size of the current and future workforce, and the technologies and physical space the workforce will need. It also instructs agencies to consider lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic and nationwide workforce and workplace trends to inform formulation of their capital plans.

5. **What steps is OMB taking to ensure that agencies are preparing for future public health crises?**

OMB developed the 2023 President's Budget, which makes transformative investments in pandemic preparedness and biodefense across public health agencies within the Department of Health and Human

Services—$81.7 billion would be available over five years—to enable an agile, coordinated, and comprehensive public health response to future threats, and to protect American lives and the economy. In addition, the Budget also includes overtime, danger, and premium pay authorities for Federal employees for services related to preparation, prevention, and response to public health emergencies.

OMB is also supporting Federal agencies through the President's Management Council and the interagency executive management councils in building on lessons learned and practices that were effective during the COVID-19 pandemic—including across Federal operations, the Federal acquisition system, support for the health, safety, and wellbeing of the Federal workforce, and agency stewardship of response, recovery, and relief funding—to enhance agency resilience and mission delivery.

6. **How will you ensure that federal employees are clearly informed of public health policies and their rights during future emergencies?**

The approaches used during the Administration's response to the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that Federal employees, Federal employee unions, and Federal contractors have access to information about agency workplace safety plans, requirements, policies, and procedures—supported by collaboration among OMB, OPM, GSA, and other relevant Federal agencies such as CDC—taken together are a model to which the Federal Government can turn in future emergencies.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, agencies were instructed through Executive Order (EO) 13991, on *Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing*, to put in place COVID-19 workplace safeguards relying on the best available data and science-based public health measures, including guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the EO directed prompt consultation by agencies with Federal employees, Federal employee unions, Federal contractors, and other interested stakeholders.

Pursuant to the EO, OMB issued guidance to agencies on implementing such safeguards through OMB Memorandum M-21-15, *COVID-19 Safe Federal Workplace: Agency Model Safety Principles*. This guidance directed agencies to form COVID-19 Coordination Teams to develop and, as needed, update tailored agency workplace safety plans. The guidance also directed agencies, on an ongoing basis, to continue to ensure that all employees, onsite contractor employees, and visitors to Federal workplaces are made aware of the agency's implementation of CDC guidance and recommendations through plans, requirements, policies, and procedures related to workplace safety. This includes posting workplace safety plans on publicly available agency websites.

OMB, in partnership with OPM, consistently seeks, through its guidance, to ensure that agencies provide appropriate workplace communication and engagement with Federal employee representatives, as called for by EO 14003, *Protecting the Federal Workforce*, issued on January 22, 2021. In addition, OMB and OPM engage directly with national Federal employee unions, and with senior agency leadership and officials, on a regular basis to exchange information related to workplace safety.

7. **What lessons do you think we have learned from the U.S. Digital Service in terms of finding and recruiting technology talent to federal government?**

Increasing the number of technologists serving within Federal agencies is critical to expanding the Federal Government's capacity to deliver, manage, and oversee modern digital products and services. What U.S. Digital Service (USDS) has learned—through USDS' own experience, as well as its partnerships with agencies—is that best practices for recruiting and hiring can be tailored and expanded for use across the Federal Government, using existing authorities available to agencies.

USDS uses a "tour of duty" model, and hires staff under Schedule A(r), which authorizes term appointments of 2 years, renewable once, not to exceed 4 years. This approach is designed to attract tech experts in private sector who are interested in public service, but who may not be ready to commit to a career in Government. USDS recruitment practices include leveraging modern talent sourcing tools, social media engagement, and speaking at tech sector events. These recruiting practices and selection of events reflect private-tech sector practices, but also, because USDS is a public agency, go further to intentionally align to the *diversity of the public we serve*. Having a robust talent team allows USDS to focus on candidate experience, taking time to develop relationships and open communication throughout the process, to keep their attention. Also, participation of USDS' own staff as subject matter experts in evaluating the qualifications of candidates enables USDS to move through the candidate selection process more quickly, thoroughly, and effectively. These practices build momentum and maintain USDS' access to the talent pool of candidates who have a strong interest in public service, but who may also have multiple competing offers from private sector companies.

In addition to its own practices, USDS also helps agencies hire tech talent. USDS' funding source, the Information Technology Oversight and Reform appropriation, allows USDS the flexibility to assign USDS experts to other agencies to help them to build their capacity, and assist with position descriptions, recruiting, and interviews.

Over the past 2 years, USDS has expanded its impact to improve hiring of needed talent across the interagency in partnership with OMB and OPM. This includes work with agencies to shorten the time to hire, increase the number of hires, and leverage promising and effective practices, such as incorporating competency-based hiring. Since 2019, agencies have increased their hiring of tech experts, in partnership with OMB and OPM, after adopting practices that introduce subject-matter experts earlier in the hiring process and use hiring actions to make multiple selections whenever possible. Making a certificate available for months to multiple hiring managers allows them to quickly make selections to fill positions that open after a certificate is issued—dramatically reducing-to hire for those selections

8. **What are you doing to ensure that the current cyber workforce has the skills needed today and into the future to address current and emerging threats?**

Federal agencies face a critical shortage of cybersecurity and IT talent, and it is imperative that the Federal Government addresses this problem to meet agency mission needs, increase the safety and security of public services, and adequately prepare for cybersecurity challenges ahead.

The President's Management Agenda (PMA) lays out the steps this Administration will take to strengthen the overall Federal workforce by attracting a qualified and diverse set of employees, strengthening employee engagement, reimagining the roadmap for the future of Federal work, and building a personnel system to support the broad range of agency missions.

In order to effectively incorporate advanced and improved cyber strategies, agencies must be able to retain a skilled Federal and contracted cyber workforce. Currently, agencies are able to use current designated cyber and IT streamlined hiring authorities, developed and proven reskilling programs in areas such as cybersecurity and data science, and special pay incentives and rates to help retain the already skilled workforce currently onboard.

OMB is working with additional Federal partners, to include OPM, the Office of the National Cyber Director (ONCD), and the Chief Information Officer (CIO) and Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) Councils, to ensure that the Federal Government can better compete for, and develop, cyber talent in a tight national labor market, with a strategic focus on helping agencies be able to bring on and keep new talent, rather than simply having agencies recruit workers away from other agencies.

9. **How can we promote innovation and experimentation in federal human resources and hiring while ensuring we maintain merit system principles and a civil service based on expertise and acumen?**

Human resources (HR) and hiring are governed by a strong set of laws, rules, and regulations, but there is still room for innovation. Improving hiring is absolutely critical—it is one of the key success measures for the President's Management Agenda.

One such area where OMB and OPM have continued to work with agencies is on using subject matter Experts (SMEs) in partnership with human resources to determine the skills and competencies needed for a position, identify the assessment strategy to use, and participate in the candidate assessment process. The rigorous process—the Subject Matter Expert Qualification Assessment (SME-QA) process typically yields a certificate of eligible candidates that is very well suited to the position.

Several agencies are also exploring using the authority to share certificates with other agencies under the amendments to Title 5 of the U.S. Code made by the Competitive Service Act of 2015.

An interagency Talent Team community of practice is serving as a helpful forum for agencies to share lessons, identify areas of new or different processes, and pilot these methods) and is allowing greater space and energy around new and promising practices in the hiring process—including greater use of SMEs, skills-based assessments, and recruiting for multiple positions with a single announcement (i.e., "pooled hiring").

However, HR offices across the Federal Government continue to lack capacity to meet current hiring needs, let alone find time and resources to experiment and innovate. Ensuring that agencies can fully resource and support their HR offices would accelerate the progress agencies are making in hiring and increase their capacity to engage in strategic, innovative hiring.

Through the Budget, the Administration supports building additional capacity and capability for agencies—including their HR capabilities. This includes Talent Teams designed to complement existing HR shops—with a focus on strategic workforce management and agency hiring processes. The Budget also supports agency efforts to expand and enhance recruitment and hiring of top talent, and to improve hiring outcomes through the use of more effective candidate assessments.

10. **As you noted in your testimony, consistent with Executive Order 14035 on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce, "[o]ver the course of FY 2022, Federal agencies have built DEIA strategic plans and action plans to operationalize best practices around diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in FY 2023 and beyond. Agencies are now working to implement those plans." Related to these goals, what specific barriers have kept agencies from ensuring that their facilities are fully accessible to employees with disabilities?**

On June 25, 2021, the President signed Executive Order 14035, "Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce," followed by a "Government-wide Strategic Plan to Advance Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce," issued on November 23, 2021. In response to this Executive Order, agencies have established dedicated diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) teams and conducted self-assessments of their agency DEIA practices and programs, HR processes, and workforce composition. Over the course of FY 2022, Federal agencies have built DEIA strategic plans and action plans to operationalize best practices around diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in FY 2023 and beyond. Agencies are now working to implement those plans.

The Federal Government must consistently design, construct, develop, and maintain facilities, technology, programs, and services so that all people, including people with disabilities, can fully and independently use them. The Federal Government's commitment to accessibility should include proactive engagement with users and efforts to modernize infrastructures to support the rapid adoption of technological innovations. Examples of efforts agencies are undertaking include:
- Enhancing or working to enhance the use of technology that is 508 compliant, which enables access to key information for those with disabilities;
- Revising reasonable accommodation policies and procedures and providing ways to track timeliness of responses and processes to provide those accommodations; and
- Reviewing potential physical facilities and equipment improvements to reduce physical barriers and help those with disabilities accomplish their work.

11. **The Partnership for Public Service recently released its "Best Places to Work in the Federal Government Rankings." One of the insights emerging in that analysis is that federal employees aged 30-39 expressed the lowest engagement rates across all of government. Why do you think mid-career employees are among the least engaged federal employees and what steps can we take to address their concerns?**

As I noted in the hearing, employee engagement in the Federal Government on average is below that of the private sector. This is a threat to the health of Federal agencies going forward. Agencies need to take steps to improve engagement, including those employees earlier in their careers or those employees who have recently joined the agency. The Federal Government must be a competitive employer to continue to serve the public effectively.

The Partnership for Public Service's "Best Places to Work in the Federal Government Rankings" are based on a subset of OPM's Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). OPM is engaged in more in-depth analysis of agency FEVs data, alongside of information gained from "Employee Pulse Surveys" issued by OMB three times throughout the pandemic. OMB, OPM, and agencies are determining how to best use this employee engagement data as together Federal agencies develop action planning under the President's Management Agenda's first priority of "Strengthening and Empowering the Federal Workforce." This Priority includes a specific strategy—a Cross-Agency Priority Goal—to "Make every Federal job a good job, where all employees are engaged, supported, heard, and empowered […]", with actions aimed at improving Employee Engagement Index (EEI) scores, by narrowing agency-identified gaps in EEI by employee groups or organizational units. Agency workforce strategies must be built on actual evidence-based human capital data, which both the cited FEVS and recent Government-wide Pulse Surveys are providing to agencies, allowing them to determine specific employee engagement and workplace investments priorities and changes.

12. **Has the Biden Administration set their Cross-Agency Priority (CAP) goals?**

Yes, the President's Management Agenda (PMA) has designated Cross-Agency Priority (CAP) Goals for a number of the PMA strategies that involve multiple agencies to coordinate to achieve the outcomes. The designation of CAP goals can be found on Performance.gov, which is being updated quarterly with progress (see https://www.performance.gov/pma/).

    i.   **What data will agencies and OMB use to assess the Administration's CAP goal progress?**

The PMA, including CAP goals, will be assessed using a variety of measures and data. A number of "success metrics" have been posted on Performance.gov that describe what success looks like and how performance will be measured for PMA priorities and strategies. As the work through the PMA progresses and new data becomes available, the Performance.gov platform will be updated to communicate progress.

    ii.   **Are the CAP goals public? Why or why not?**

Yes, CAP goals have been made public on Performance.gov as part of the President's Management Agenda. Public sharing of progress toward these goals is vital to promoting both external and internal accountability.

    iii. **Can the public track achievement of CAP goals? Why or why not?**

Yes, updates to the PMA, including the metrics and milestones associated with CAP goal achievement, will be released to the public on a quarterly basis.

        a) **If not, what is the Administration's timeline for creating a portal for the public to identify and track progress toward CAP goal achievement?**

The Administration will post progress on its PMA including CAP goals on www.performance.gov.