



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

**STATEMENT OF
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before the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON REGULATORY AFFAIRS AND FEDERAL MANAGEMENT

UNITED STATES SENATE

on

“IMPROVING THE USAJOBS WEBSITE”

April 12, 2016

Chairman Lankford, Ranking Member Heitkamp, members of the Subcommittee, my name is Mark Reinhold, and I am the Associate Director of Employee Services at the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM). I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you at today’s roundtable about how OPM is working to modernize the Federal hiring process, so that it can best serve both hiring agencies and individuals who are interested in Federal employment.

Federal hiring modernization is a vast, complicated topic that must be addressed through multiple and distinct approaches. As discussed below, this includes customer-driven changes to USAJOBS. But, first, some general information about OPM’s efforts would help put this discussion in the proper context. At OPM, we are working every day to craft human resource management policies that are grounded in data and that plan for and develop a Federal workforce for today and for the future. These efforts include the work OPM is doing to support the President’s Management Agenda’s (PMA) goal to recruit, hire, and retain a world-class workforce. The Federal government must be competitive as an employer, and, with this responsibility in mind, OPM must ensure agencies have the tools and resources needed to recruit talent to fulfill their missions in ways that are responsive to the needs of the American public we all serve.

As part of the PMA, OPM is currently leading efforts to identify issues or challenges in Federal employment and help agencies confront difficulties in hiring. OPM has dual responsibilities as both a customer service organization and an oversight agency. Ensuring that Federal agencies understand the existing authorities and tools at their disposal to successfully recruit, develop, and

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retain the best personnel is core to both elements of our mission. OPM recognizes the importance of partnership between human resources teams and hiring managers across Federal agencies to support successful recruiting and hiring outcomes. The human resources team is a crucial partner and advisor for assisting with the technical aspects of hiring and helping make sure the process moves along smoothly and in accordance with statutory and other legal requirements. Hiring managers are best equipped to know the distinctive skills and talents they need on their teams. Hiring managers must be empowered with knowledge and tools to fully engage in the hiring process, at the appropriate points in the process, and human resources staff must be supported through training and education about the hiring authorities and techniques available to address hiring needs. In connection with our Hiring Excellence Campaign, OPM is reaching out to human resources staff and hiring managers in Federal agencies across the country to strengthen these collaborative relationships, help them identify skills gaps, and find and recruit the best professionals to fill positions. OPM has also launched a Hiring Toolkit for managers and human resources staff on HR University, which includes comprehensive guidance on the fundamentals of Federal hiring, available pay and compensation flexibilities to support recruiting and retention efforts, how to use data to inform workforce planning and recruiting strategy, and a hiring decision tool that guides the user through a set of questions to generate recommendations on hiring and pay flexibilities that are available to help meet the user's needs.

OPM has been working and will continue to work with agencies to support them in crafting clear, concise, and targeted job opportunity announcements that will help them attract the right talent. OPM is continuously working with our stakeholders to identify occupations that are experiencing hiring challenges – particularly in the areas of information technology management and cybersecurity – and to support agencies in effective applicant assessments to find and hire the best talent. OPM recognizes it is a frustration for applicants when they do not receive up-to-date feedback from hiring agencies, and to address this, we are working to help agencies streamline processes and cut down on the time it takes to fill Federal positions.

OPM has increased our outreach and strengthened our available tools and guidance to Federal agencies to help support their human capital needs. OPM is also working with key partners, including the Chief Human Capital Officers Council and other key stakeholders to inform future strategies and action plans. OPM is paying careful attention to government-wide mission critical skills gaps, current hiring volumes, manager satisfaction, and applicant feedback. OPM recognizes that job seekers and talent pools are communicating in new ways, which is why, as part of its overall recruitment efforts, OPM is leveraging technology and social media to engage and interact with communities around specific mission areas and talent needs.

OPM holds as centrally important to our mission the need to identify and address any barriers to diversity and inclusion in a high-performing workforce that may exist. OPM collects and reviews demographic data, after the selection process has occurred, as part of our analyses to determine whether there are challenges in employing a Federal workforce that draws from all segments of society, and, if so, how we might address these challenges. We are also providing training to agencies, managers, supervisors, and employees to foster diversity and sustain or create a more inclusive workplace. OPM works closely with Federal agencies and employees, including

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Federal employee resource and affinity groups to enlist their support in achieving common agency-wide goals and objectives in this critically important area. All of these activities are in addition to our daily oversight responsibilities to ensure Federal government agency human resources programs are effective, follow merit system principles, and meet related civil service requirements.

Equally important is the experience applicants have when they are seeking employment in the Federal government. USAJOBS provides a portal through which the Federal government can communicate opportunities to job seekers. At its core, USAJOBS is the mechanism through which OPM enables Federal agencies to meet their statutory requirement to provide notice about available job opportunities being filled through the competitive examining process, and through which OPM meets its statutory requirement to publish those positions for public view. USAJOBS provides applicants a one-stop shop to search for jobs in agencies across the Federal government and serves as a central transfer point to connect the job seeker to the agency filling the job. Many agencies also use USAJOBS to provide notice of other positions for which the public notice requirement does not apply. In 2015, job seekers completed more than 1 billion job searches using USAJOBS. USAJOBS also served as the gateway through which more than 11 million account holders were connected with agencies' job application systems where they filed more than 22 million applications for agency job openings.

OPM is continually working to improve the job seeker and applicant experience on USAJOBS, while also improving our services for agency users. OPM has made improvements to USAJOBS' information gathering mechanisms so that USAJOBS operates smarter and more uniquely tailored to the user. Incorporating the results of user research into our USAJOBS enhancements allows future iterations of USAJOBS to respond to customer needs. In the past year, OPM has engaged hundreds of stakeholders across the country to gather input and feedback to help shape enhancements. This effort has informed the development of new features and functionality, including a Map Search Feature to provide job seekers with a global view of where jobs are located and a mobile-friendly, responsive design website. Further, in February, OPM released a new and improved application process that guides applicants through a simple process to create and edit their application package. OPM has also made changes to the USAJOBS design system web design standards across the entire website, in order to enhance the job seeker's ability to find information. Further improvements to the website incorporating user feedback will continue to be implemented consistently with best industry practices. Along with OPM's other systems, I understand that USAJOBS has benefited from the recent deployment of security tools and other security enhancements. OPM will continue to work with agencies to help ensure their automated hiring software and systems support a seamless and smooth hand-off from USAJOBS when an applicant applies for a job and is transferred to the agency's system to complete the agency's application process.

OPM is excited about the developments we have led and participated in as an agency, and I look forward to a great discussion with all of you today. Thank you, and I welcome your questions.