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Comptroller General
of the United States

Accessible Version

May 16, 2023

The Honorable Kiran A. Ahuja
Director
Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20415-1000

Priority Open Recommendations: Office of Personnel Management

Dear Ms. Ahuja:

The purpose of this letter is to provide an update on the overall status of the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) implementation of GAO's recommendations and to call your continued personal attention to areas where open recommendations should be given high priority.¹ In November 2022, we reported that, on a government-wide basis, 77 percent of our recommendations made 4 years ago were implemented.² OPM's recommendation implementation rate was about 46 percent. As of April 2023, OPM had 64 open recommendations. Fully implementing these open recommendations could significantly improve both OPM's operations and its efforts to assist federal agencies in addressing various human capital management issues.

Since our June 2022 letter, OPM has implemented two of our 15 open priority recommendations.

- OPM provides and tracks specialized training for all individuals, including contractors, who have significant security responsibilities, as we recommended in our May 2016 report.³ This will help ensure that individuals with significant security responsibilities carry out their job in a manner that protects the systems they work with.

¹Priority open recommendations are those that GAO believes warrant priority attention from heads of key departments or agencies. They are highlighted because, upon implementation, they may significantly improve government operations, for example, by realizing large dollar savings; eliminating mismanagement, fraud, and abuse; or making progress toward addressing a high-risk or fragmentation, overlap, or duplication issue.

²GAO, *Performance and Accountability Report: Fiscal Year 2022*, [GAO-23-900398](#) (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 15, 2022).

³GAO, *Information Security: Agencies Need to Improve Controls over Selected High-Impact Systems*, [GAO-16-501](#) (Washington, D.C.: May 18, 2016).

- It is now standard process to reach out to payroll data providers in cases of missing, flagged or rejected data, and that such efforts typically result in submission or resubmission of data, as we recommended in October 2016.⁴

We ask your continued attention to the remaining priority recommendations. We are also adding two new priority recommendations. One is related to fully defining the role of the agency official for privacy and another is related to addressing skills gaps. This brings the total number of priority recommendations to 15. (See enclosure for the list of recommendations and actions needed to implement them.)

The 15 priority recommendations fall into the following six areas

Improving the federal classification system.

Questions have been raised about the General Schedule's (GS) ability to keep pace with the evolving nature of government work. Implementing one priority recommendation that OPM examine ways to make the GS system's design and implementation more consistent with the attributes of a modern, effective classification system could help OPM ensure that the federal classification system is keeping pace with the government's evolving requirements.

Making hiring authorities more effective.

To ensure agencies have the talent they need to meet their missions, federal agencies must have a hiring process that is applicant-friendly and flexible while also meeting policy requirements, including hiring on the basis of merit. By implementing one priority recommendation to refine, consolidate, eliminate, or expand hiring authorities, OPM could improve the federal hiring process and strengthen the government's ability to compete in the labor market for top talent.

Improving payroll data.

OPM is responsible for supporting federal agencies' human capital management activities, which includes ensuring that agencies have the data needed to make staffing and resource decisions to support their missions. The Enterprise Human Resource Integration (EHRI) system is OPM's primary data warehouse to support these efforts. We have three priority recommendations in this area, including (1) increasing the availability of payroll data for analysis, (2) creating a schedule for executing data integration plans, and (3) developing or improving internal control activities to ensure the quality and security of EHRI data. Doing so will help support OPM's strategic and open data goals, which include making this data available to the community currently served by their FedScope data website.

Addressing employee misconduct and improving performance management.

OPM has a role in ensuring that agencies have the tools and guidance needed to effectively address misconduct and maximize the productivity of their workforces. Implementing one priority recommendation, which calls for OPM to provide guidance on agency training for

⁴ GAO, *Federal Human Resources Data: OPM Should Improve the Availability and Reliability of Payroll Data to Support Accountability and Workforce Analytics*. [GAO-17-127](#) (Washington, D.C.: October 7, 2016).

managers and supervisors, would help agencies more effectively address employee misconduct and maximize the productivity of the workforce.

Additionally, managing employee performance has been a long-standing government-wide issue, and without effective performance management, agencies also risk losing the skills of top talent. OPM could help inform agencies' decision making related to performance management by implementing two performance management-related priority recommendations to develop and implement a mechanism for agencies to share information, and to develop a strategic approach for identifying and sharing emerging research and innovations.

Strengthening IT security and management.

OPM collects and maintains personal information on millions of individuals. Protecting this sensitive information is imperative. We have six priority recommendations in this area, such as establishing (1) a process for conducting an organization-wide cybersecurity risk assessment, (2) a timeline to develop a plan to manage permanent electronic records, and (3) a time frame for fully defining the role of the senior agency official for privacy. Implementing these recommendations is critical for ensuring that OPM can effectively protect and manage sensitive information that it collects as the chief human resources agency and personnel policy manager for the federal government.

Addressing mission critical skills gaps.

Mission-critical skills gaps specific to federal agencies and across the federal workforce pose a high risk to the nation. They impede the government from cost effectively serving the public and achieving desired results. This area was added to the High-Risk List in 2001. In our latest high-risk update, mission critical skills gaps are a factor in 22 of 36 high-risk areas.⁵

OPM plays a critical leadership role in addressing this issue and implementing the one priority recommendation in this area, which is to establish an action plan to address skills gaps identified in OPM's workforce assessment. Doing so will help OPM improve its capacity to provide human capital services and guidance to agencies.

In April 2023, we issued our biennial update to our [High-Risk List](#), which identifies government operations with vulnerabilities to fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement or the need for transformation to address economy, efficiency, or effectiveness challenges.⁶ OPM has oversight responsibility for one of our high-risk areas, [strategic human capital management](#). In our April 2023 update, we reported that OPM's leadership commitment increased since our 2021 report. This increase was partly due to OPM filling, and the Senate confirming, new agency leadership for the first time since 2018, which provides the high-level attention needed to help address skills gaps. Additionally, OPM is leading multiple efforts to address skills gaps across the federal government and has resumed stewardship of the Chief Human Capital Officers Council to help connect OPM's government-wide policy efforts with agencies' human capital leaders. However,

⁵GAO, *High-Risk Series: Efforts Made to Achieve Progress Need to be Maintained and Expanded to Fully Address All Areas*, [GAO-23-106203](#) (Washington, D.C.: Apr, 20, 2023).

⁶[GAO-23-106203](#).

a recent assessment of OPM's own workforce found skills gaps in areas such as project management, organizational performance, leadership development, and data analysis. In February 2023, we recommended that OPM establish an action plan to address these skills gaps, which, if unaddressed, may limit OPM's ability to successfully meet mission requirements and help other agencies close their skills gaps.⁷

Several other government-wide high-risk areas also have direct implications for OPM and its operations. These include (1) the [government-wide personnel security clearance process](#), (2) [ensuring the cybersecurity of the nation](#),⁸ (3) [improving the management of IT acquisitions and operations](#), and (4) [managing federal real property](#). We urge your attention to the OPM and other government-wide high-risk issues as they relate to OPM. Progress on high-risk issues has been possible through the concerted actions and efforts of Congress, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and the leadership and staff in agencies, including within OPM. In March 2022, we issued a report on key practices to successfully address high-risk areas, which can be a helpful resource as your agency continues to make progress to address high-risk issues.⁹

In addition to your continued attention on these issues, Congress plays a key role in providing oversight and maintaining focus on our recommendations to ensure they are implemented and produce their desired results. Legislation enacted in December 2022 includes a provision for GAO to identify any additional congressional oversight actions that can help agencies implement priority recommendations and address any underlying issues relating to such implementation.¹⁰

There are various strategies Congress can use in addressing our recommendations, such as incorporating them into legislation. Congress can also use its budget, appropriations, and oversight processes to incentivize executive branch agencies to act on our recommendations and monitor their progress. For example, Congress can hold hearings focused on OPM's progress in implementing GAO's priority recommendations, withhold funds when appropriate, or take other actions to provide incentives for agencies to act. Moreover, Congress could follow up during the appropriations process and request periodic updates. Congress also plays a key role in addressing any underlying issues related to the implementation of these recommendations. For example, Congress could pass legislation providing an agency explicit authority to implement a recommendation or requiring an agency to take certain actions to implement a recommendation.

⁷GAO, *Federal Workforce: OPM Advances Efforts to Close Government-wide Skills Gaps but Needs a Plan to Improve Its Own Capacity*, [GAO-23-105528](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 27, 2023).

⁸With regard to cybersecurity, we also urge you to use foundational information and communications technology supply chain risk management practices set forth in our December 2020 report: GAO, *Information Technology: Federal Agencies Need to Take Urgent Action to Manage Supply Chain Risks*, [GAO-21-171](#) (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 15, 2020).

⁹GAO, *High-Risk Series: Key Practices to Successfully Address High-Risk Areas and Remove Them from the List*, [GAO-22-105184](#) (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 3, 2022).

¹⁰James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023, Pub. L. No. 117-263, § 7211(a)(2), 136 Stat. 2395, 3668 (2022); H.R. Rep. No. 117-389 (2022) (accompanying Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, H.R. 8237, 117th Cong. (2022)).

Copies of this letter are being sent to the Director of OMB and to the appropriate congressional committees. In addition, the report will be available on the GAO website at <http://www.gao.gov>.

I appreciate OPM's continued commitment to these important issues. If you have any questions or would like to discuss any of the issues outlined in this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me or Michelle Sager, Managing Director, Strategic Issues, at 202-512-6806 or SagerM@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this letter. Our teams will continue to coordinate with your staff on all of the 64 open recommendations, as well as those additional recommendations in the high-risk areas for which OPM has a leading role. Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gene L. Dodaro". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "D".

Gene L. Dodaro

Comptroller General
of the United States

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable Shalanda Young, Director, Office of Management and Budget
The Honorable Margaret Pearson, Associate Director, Retirement Services, OPM

Enclosure -- Priority Open Recommendations to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM)

Improving the Federal Classification System

Human Capital: OPM Needs to Improve the Design, Management, and Oversight of the Federal Classification System. GAO-14-677. Washington, D.C.: July 31, 2014.

Year Recommendation Made: 2014

Recommendation: To improve the classification system and to strengthen OPM's management and oversight, the Director of OPM, working through the Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) Council, and in conjunction with key stakeholders such as the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), unions, and others, should use prior studies and lessons learned from demonstration projects and alternative systems to examine ways to make the General Schedule (GS) system's design and implementation more consistent with the attributes of a modern, effective classification system. To the extent warranted, develop a legislative proposal for congressional consideration.

Action needed: Although OPM originally partially agreed with this recommendation, it later reported that it concurred with the recommendation. In February 2023, OPM reported that it continues to provide federal agencies with technical assistance on classification, as well as updating and establishing classification policy. Additionally, OPM reported on the development of a new classification policy for artificial intelligence work. To fully implement the recommendation, OPM still needs to work through the CHCO Council and in conjunction with key stakeholders, such as OMB and unions, to complete its review of studies and lessons learned; and, if warranted, develop a legislative proposal to make the GS system's design and implementation more consistent with the attributes of a modern, effective classification system. Doing so could help OPM better position itself to help ensure that the federal classification system is keeping pace with the government's evolving requirements.

High-risk area: [Strategic Human Capital Management](#)

Director: Dawn G. Locke, Strategic Issues

Contact information: LockeD@gao.gov, (202) 512-6806

Making Hiring Authorities More Effective

Federal Hiring: OPM Needs to Improve Management and Oversight of Hiring Authorities. GAO-16-521. Washington, D.C.: August 2, 2016.

Year Recommendation Made: 2016

Recommendation: To help strengthen the government's ability to compete in the labor market for top talent, and to improve the federal hiring process, the Director of OPM, in conjunction with the CHCO Council, should determine whether opportunities exist to refine, consolidate, eliminate, or expand agency-specific authorities to other agencies and implement changes where OPM is authorized, including seeking presidential authorization (as necessary) in order to do so. In making these determinations, OPM should use the information from its assessment of agencies' use of certain hiring authorities to gain further insight into why agencies relied on

hiring authorities that OPM oversees, the relationship between agencies' choices and the agency mission and broader public goals, consistent with merit systems principles, and insight agencies may have regarding their authorities or processes. In cases where legislation would be necessary to implement changes, OPM should work with the CHCO Council to develop legislative proposals.

Action needed: OPM agreed with this recommendation. In February 2023, OPM reported that, since 2021, it has been working to identify opportunities to consolidate and streamline federal hiring regulations. Additionally, OPM reported that it has authorized a variety of hiring flexibilities to assist agencies to address hiring surges resulting from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the American Rescue Plan Act, the Inflation Reduction Act, and the Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors (CHIPS) and Science Act, among others. To fully implement this recommendation, OPM needs to prioritize and follow through on its planned actions to streamline hiring authorities and, as appropriate, develop legislative proposals in consultation with the CHCO Council. By doing so, OPM could improve the federal hiring process and strengthen the government's ability to compete in the labor market for top talent.

High-risk area: [Strategic Human Capital Management](#)

Director: Dawn G. Locke, Strategic Issues

Contact information: LockeD@gao.gov, (202) 512-6806

Improving Payroll Data

Federal Human Resources Data: OPM Should Improve the Availability and Reliability of Payroll Data to Support Accountability and Workforce Analytics. GAO-17-127
Washington, D.C.: October 7, 2016.

Year Recommendation Made: 2017

Recommendations: The Director of OPM should take the following three actions:

- Improve the availability of the Enterprise Human Resource Integration (EHRI) payroll data--for example, by preparing the data for analytics, making them available through online tools such as FedScope, and including them among the EHRI data sources on the OPM website and Data.gov.
- Develop a schedule for executing plans to integrate payroll data into the larger suite of EHRI databases.¹¹
- Evaluate existing internal control activities and develop new control activities for EHRI payroll data, such as implementing transactional edit checks that leverage the information in the other EHRI datasets.

Action needed: OPM agreed with these recommendations. For the first recommendation, OPM told us in February 2023 that an improvement plan would be developed by the end of the third

¹¹This recommendation refers to OPM officials' original statement that they would develop plans to address the shortcomings raised in our recommendations in [GAO-17-127](#).

quarter of fiscal year 2023. Officials said that this plan will help improve the quality of the data with a goal of making it available to the community currently served by their FedScope data website. To fully address this recommendation, OPM needs to develop and implement this plan and improve the availability of EHRI data.

For the second recommendation, which we elevated to priority status in fiscal year 2022, OPM has not functionally integrated payroll with other EHRI databases and has not developed a schedule for implementing plans to do so. The integration of EHRI databases relates to more than just where the data are warehoused – it requires implementation of processes described in the three other EHRI recommendations. Further, a schedule for execution of those processes is critical for ensuring implementation of our recommended data reliability and availability efforts. In February 2023, OPM officials told us that efforts to fully integrate EHRI would be incorporated into the improvement plan described in the first recommendation. To fully implement this recommendation, OPM needs to complete the recommended plans and develop a schedule for executing these plans.

For the third recommendation, which we elevated to priority status in fiscal year 2022, OPM officials provided documentation of about 250 validation edits for EHRI payroll data—and stated that they intend to evaluate relational edits as part of developing their improvement plan. However, we continue to believe that OPM may be missing opportunities to leverage other EHRI data for edit controls, as OPM officials have agreed to in prior years. This includes but is not limited to fields in the EHRI Human Resources Data feed, such as 1) full time and part time status, 2) time in service, and 3) Telework eligibility. These fields could be assessed as potential relational checks for elements of the payroll data, including the 1) total hours an employee charges in a pay period and use of compensatory time or overtime, 2) accrual of annual and sick leave; and 3) use of situational and routine telework. OPM has also not finalized its overall approach to updating controls. To fully implement this recommendation, OPM needs to finish updating control activities, including evaluating opportunities to leverage other EHRI datasets to improve integration and data quality. Fully implementing the remaining three recommendations would help OPM support its strategic and open data goals.

Director: Rebecca Shea, Forensic Audits and Investigative Service

Contact information: SheaR@gao.gov, (202) 512-6722

Addressing Employee Misconduct and Improving Performance Management

Federal Employee Misconduct: Actions Needed to Ensure Agencies Have Tools to Effectively Address Misconduct. GAO-18-48. Washington, D.C.: July 16, 2018.

Year Recommendation Made: 2018

Recommendation: The Director of OPM, after consultation with the CHCO Council, should provide guidance to agencies to enhance the training received by managers/supervisors and human capital staff to ensure that they have the guidance and technical assistance they need to effectively address misconduct and maximize the productivity of their workforces.

Action needed: OPM partially agreed with this recommendation. In March 2022, OPM stated it had obtained funding to update related training courses, which would include guidance on addressing employee misconduct. OPM reported that it is reviewing and updating existing

training materials, and is in the process of testing one course and determining how to deliver the training to federal agencies. OPM stated that the first training will be made available to agencies in late 2022, at the earliest. In February 2023, OPM reported that progress on this recommendation was delayed because of vacancies in the responsible program office, funding for the other courses, and a focus on other government-wide priorities. To fully implement this recommendation, OPM needs to complete its update of guidance on training supervisors and human capital staff on addressing federal employee misconduct and make this information available to agencies. Implementing this recommendation would enhance the guidance and technical assistance needed to effectively address misconduct and maximize the productivity of the workforce.

High-risk area: [Strategic Human Capital Management](#)

Director: Dawn G. Locke, Strategic Issues

Contact information: LockeD@gao.gov, (202) 512-6806

Federal Workforce: Opportunities Exist for OPM to Further Innovation in Performance Management. GAO-19-35. Washington, D.C.: November 20, 2018.

Year Recommendation Made: 2019

Recommendations: The Director of OPM, in consultation with the CHCO Council, should take the following two actions:

- Develop and implement a mechanism for agencies to routinely and independently share promising practices and lessons learned, such as through allowing agencies to post such information on OPM's Performance Management portal.
- Develop a strategic approach for identifying and sharing emerging research and innovations in performance management.

Action needed: OPM agreed with these recommendations. In March 2022, OPM reported that its Senior Executive Services and Performance Management team included a new quarterly survey in their Executive Resources forums requesting agencies to share any promising practices and lessons learned. However, OPM told us that the response rate to the quarterly survey was low and did not provide any results. In addition, OPM stated that it has also requested agencies to share promising practices and lessons learned during its annual Performance Management forum but did not receive comments in response. OPM said that it is trying to determine whether it can use an available tool to share successful work practices.

In February 2023, OPM also confirmed that due to agency vacancies and a focus on other priorities, it has not made substantive progress on establishing a strategic partnership to produce emerging research and innovations in performance management. However, OPM stated that its hiring plans will allow the agency to apply resources to finalizing its strategy, once implemented. To fully implement these recommendations, OPM needs to develop and implement a mechanism that encourages agency stakeholders to share promising practices and lessons learned, and develop a strategic approach for identifying and sharing emerging research and innovations in performance management. Doing so would help inform agencies' decision making related to performance management.

High-risk area: [Strategic Human Capital Management](#)

Director: Dawn G. Locke, Strategic Issues

Contact information: LockeD@gao.gov, (202) 512-6806

Strengthening IT Security and Management

Privacy: Dedicated Leadership Can Improve Programs and Address Challenges.
GAO-22-105065. Washington, D.C.: September 22, 2022.

Year Recommendation Made: 2022

Recommendation: The Director of OPM should establish a time frame for fully defining the role of the senior agency official for privacy or other designated privacy official in reviewing and approving system categorizations, overseeing privacy control assessments, and reviewing authorization packages, and document these roles.

Action needed: OPM stated that it partially concurred with this recommendation. OPM officials told us that their privacy team is involved in various activities related to this process. In addition, they said their privacy and security teams are currently examining roles and responsibilities for the selection and evaluation of the controls. As of February 2023, OPM stated that the agency planned to look for opportunities to more fully document the role of the senior agency official for privacy in these activities during fiscal years 2023 and 2024. To fully implement this recommendation, OPM needs to ensure that policies and processes for involving the senior agency official for privacy or other designated privacy officials in these steps are fully defined and documented. Doing so will help OPM ensure that privacy protections are adequately incorporated into systems that contain personally identifiable information.

High Risk Area: [Ensuring the Cybersecurity of the Nation](#)

Director: Jennifer R. Franks, Information Technology and Cybersecurity

Contact information: FranksJ@gao.gov, (404) 679-1831

Information Security: OPM Has Improved Controls, but Further Efforts Are Needed.
GAO-17-614. Washington, D.C.: August 3, 2017.

Year Recommendation Made: 2017

Recommendation: To further improve security over personnel and other sensitive information at the agency, the Director of OPM should improve the timeliness of validating evidence associated with actions taken to address the U.S. Computer Emergency Readiness Team (US-CERT) recommendations.¹²

Action needed: OPM partially agreed with this recommendation. In February 2023, OPM stated that it is using an action plan to track the progress of this recommendation. The agency plans to document configuration management implementation procedures and guidelines to address the

¹²GAO-17-614 directed this recommendation to the Acting Director of OPM because there was no confirmed Director for the agency at the time of issuance.

remaining US-CERT recommendation. According to the agency, as it expands its asset inventory program, it will be in a better position to progressively remediate the US-CERT's recommendation. To fully implement this recommendation, OPM needs to validate the effectiveness of the actions taken to implement the remaining US-CERT recommendation. Implementing our recommendation will help OPM ensure that the actions taken have effectively mitigated vulnerabilities that can expose its systems to cybersecurity incidents.

High-risk area: [Ensuring the Cybersecurity of the Nation](#)

Director: Jennifer R. Franks, Information Technology and Cybersecurity

Contact information: FranksJ@gao.gov, (404) 679-1831

Cybersecurity: Agencies Need to Fully Establish Risk Management Programs and Address Challenges. GAO-19-384. Washington, D.C.: July 25, 2019.

Year Recommendation Made: 2019

Recommendation: The Director of OPM should establish a process for conducting an organization-wide cybersecurity risk assessment.

Action needed: OPM agreed with this recommendation. As of February 2023, OPM stated that it is finalizing its Organizational Risk Assessment Plan to outline the agency's approach to planning and conducting an organization-wide cyber risk assessment. To fully implement this recommendation, OPM needs to resume its project and ensure that the process it implements aggregates information from across the agency to help consider the totality of risk derived from the operation and use of its information systems. Doing so could help OPM identify trends or prioritize investments in cybersecurity risk mitigation activities to target widespread or systemic risks to its systems and organization.

High-risk area: [Ensuring the Cybersecurity of the Nation](#)

Director: Marisol Cruz Cain, Information Technology and Cybersecurity

Contact information: CruzCainM@gao.gov, (202) 512-5017

Federal Retirement: OPM Actions Needed to Improve Application Processing Times. GAO-19-217. Washington, D.C.: May 15, 2019.

Year Recommendation Made: 2019

Recommendation: The Associate Director of OPM's Retirement Services, working in coordination with the Chief Information Officer, should develop, document, and implement a Retirement Services IT modernization plan for initial project phases that is consistent with key aspects of IT project management, such as determining objectives, costs, and time frames for each initial phase.

Action needed: OPM partially agreed with this recommendation. In March 2022, OPM stated that it was developing a Retirement Services IT modernization plan, which it planned to finalize in June 2022. As of February 2023, OPM has not provided documentation of its IT modernization plan. OPM stated that it is working on Retirement Services IT modernization

initiatives and seeking funding to modernize IT infrastructure. However, OPM did not provide any supporting documentation or further explain these efforts. To implement this recommendation, OPM needs to develop, document, and implement a Retirement Services IT modernization plan that is consistent with key aspects of IT project management, such as determining objectives, costs, and time frames. Having such a plan is especially important since OPM anticipates that implementing the plan will be an iterative, multiyear effort.

Director: Yvonne Jones, Strategic Issues

Contact information: JonesY@gao.gov, (202) 512-6806

Information Technology: Agencies Need to Fully Implement Key Workforce Planning Activities. GAO-20-129. Washington, D.C.: October 30, 2019.

Year Recommendation Made: 2020

Recommendation: The Director of OPM should ensure that the agency fully implements each of the eight key IT workforce planning activities it did not fully implement.

Action needed: OPM agreed with this recommendation. As of February 2023, OPM has implemented five of the eight recommended IT workforce planning activities—developing competency and staffing requirements, assessing gaps in competencies and staffing, developing strategies and plans to address gaps in competencies and staffing; monitoring reporting on progress in addressing gaps; and reporting to agency leadership on progress in addressing gaps. However, in February 2023, OPM stated that it does not have a workforce plan. In addition, while OPM provided position descriptions for certain IT workforce roles, it had not provided documentation of its competency requirements. To fully implement this recommendation, OPM needs to develop a workforce planning process that addresses each of the eight key IT workforce planning activities, identify competency requirements, and assess competency needs regularly. Doing so would provide OPM greater assurance that it has the IT staff with the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to support its mission and goals.

Director: Dave Hinchman, Information Technology and Cybersecurity

Contact information: HinchmanD@gao.gov, (214) 777-5719

Information Management: Selected Agencies Need to Fully Address Federal Electronic Recordkeeping Requirements. GAO-20-59. Washington, D.C.: February 27, 2020.

Year Recommendation Made: 2020

Recommendation: The Director of OPM should establish a time frame to develop a plan to manage permanent electronic records.

Action needed: OPM agreed with this recommendation, which we have elevated to priority status in 2022 to emphasize the importance of ensuring that agencies move from paper-based management to electronic management of records. In February 2023, OPM stated that it is in the process of procuring a contract to meet OMB's electronic recordkeeping requirements. Specifically, a request for information has been submitted and the contract is intended to cover storage and/or digitization of hard copy records. To fully implement this recommendation, OPM

will need to finalize a contract that describes how it will maintain permanent electronic records. Doing so should help better position OPM to manage its permanent electronic records.

Director: Marisol Cruz Cain, Information Technology and Cybersecurity

Contact information: CruzCainM@gao.gov, (202) 512-5017

Addressing mission critical skills gaps

Federal Workforce: OPM Advances Efforts to Close Government-wide Skills Gaps but Needs a Plan to Improve Its Own Capacity. GAO-23-105528. Washington, D.C.: February 27, 2023.

Year Recommendation Made: 2023

Recommendation: The Director of OPM should establish an action plan to address OPM's skills gaps identified in the workforce assessment, either as an update to its Human Capital Operating Plan or a separate effort.

Action Needed: OPM agreed with the recommendation. In February 2023, OPM reported plans to conduct a Human Capital Review and stated that the review's results would assist in developing an action plan to address their agency-specific skills and competency gaps. To fully implement this recommendation, OPM needs to show how they will take action on previously identified skills gaps. Implementing the one priority recommendation in this area will help OPM improve its capacity to provide human capital services and guidance to agencies.

High Risk Area: [Strategic Human Capital Management](#)

Director: Dawn G. Locke, Strategic Issues

Contact information: LockeD@gao.gov, (202) 512-6806