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Effective government requires effective management. For too long, our federal government's operational challenges have received insufficient attention, with serious consequences for the nation. The transition from one presidential administration to the next offers an important opportunity to tackle this problem.

To help shape the next president's management framework, a number of leading government reform experts forged a consensus about critical federal workforce management issues and actions our next president should take to improve government operations. We believe good government starts with good people, and these proposals concentrate on improving the federal government by focusing on its greatest asset – its people.

We are proud to present this report and look forward to working with the next administration to enhance the performance of our federal government.

Sincerely,

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ROADMAP *to* REFORM

A Management Framework for the Next Administration



PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE



The Partnership for Public Service is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that works to revitalize the federal government by inspiring a new generation to serve and by transforming the way government works.

INTRODUCTION

Nothing drives government reform like a crisis. After federal officials failed to connect the dots pre-9/11, Congress created the Department of Homeland Security. In the wake of the botched response to Hurricane Katrina, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was reorganized — again. When 30 million toxic toys had to be recalled, the Consumer Product Safety Commission got a makeover and a budget increase. In isolation, these responses may make sense and seem sufficient. But here's the catch: they are not isolated from one another — and, as a result, they are not sufficient. They are symptoms of a larger problem: the eroding organizational health of our federal government. Unless our next president moves past piecemeal reforms and executes an effective strategy to improve operations across government, he will likely fall short of achieving his goals — and may even find himself dealing with his own avoidable crisis.

Most of government's management challenges have developed over decades, and they stem from a tendency of our federal leaders to emphasize policy at the expense of operational issues. The focus on policy is understandable. It is also a recipe for failure, as evidenced by the aforementioned incidents, which were largely operational breakdowns.

There are two primary reasons why operational issues are often overlooked: Our government is run by short-term political leadership that often has little incentive to focus on long-term issues, and our government operates in an environment without any real-time metrics for performance or organizational health. The transition from one presidential administration to the next offers an important opportunity to change this paradigm and push to improve government operations.

The key to improving our federal government's operational health is a robust management framework — a roadmap to reform — that tackles challenges from federal budgeting to the use of technology to deliver services. The centerpiece of the president's government reform plan needs to be a strategy to restore prestige to — and increase the capacity of — our federal workforce. Every single policy of the next administration will be influenced by the people charged with executing it. Simply put, good government starts with good people.

History tells us that getting the “people piece” right won't be easy — or glamorous. Going back several decades, every president has rolled out his own government reform plan. Despite these repeated efforts, government's management challenges persist. While it's good that each administration offers its own reforms, it's also part of the problem. Operational issues can't be resolved in four- or eight-year blocks. Yet, when a new occupant comes into the White House, we hit reset. There's no continuity of effort, which is a major reason these reforms have limited impact. Making matters worse, this never-ending parade of reform plans

has caused “change fatigue” to set in across government. Any new effort to fix government may be met with skepticism by veterans of previous reforms.

Our next president should resist the temptation to wipe the reform slate clean. Before launching his government reform effort, the president and his team should review the management policies and accomplishments of previous administrations, assess the results of their reforms to see what has worked and what hasn’t, and then try to understand why. When the president does launch his management framework, he should make it a high-profile initiative that is viewed by all federal leaders and the general public as integral to the realization of the president’s goals — not just a box to check. An investment in management issues is an investment in achieving the president’s ultimate goals.

The federal government is the nation’s largest employer, and its workforce is incredibly complex with many unique challenges. More than 80 percent of the 1.9 million career civil servants work outside of the Washington, D.C. area. This workforce is graying, and a third of these workers are expected to leave government in the next five years, the majority through retirement. Interspersed among these civil servants are roughly 4,000 presidential appointees who hold key leadership and management positions.

By some estimates, there are also more than 7 million federal contractors, who increasingly carry out the work of our federal government. In this multi-sector workforce, federal employees are often complemented by contractors to help accomplish agency missions. As a result, federal strategic human capital planning involves this broad talent pool, and agency leaders must determine the appropriate staffing for each situation.

Each aspect of the “people piece” of government deserves more attention, but the new president’s management framework should focus on the talented, but underutilized, civilian workforce. The goal should be clear: to improve organizational performance. Core components of an effective workforce, which foster high performance, include:

- *The Right Talent* — Government has the right people, from top to bottom, with the right skills to work on behalf of the American people.
- *An Engaged Workforce* — Government employees are motivated, empowered and performing to the best of their capabilities.
- *Strong Leadership* — Managers are able to inspire and make meaningful and credible distinctions among employees in terms of performance.
- *Public Support* — Americans value and support federal public service and understand the importance of having good people in the federal government.

Public support for a vital civil service drives policymaker support for a vital civil service. If lawmakers know support for a first-rate civilian workforce is comparable to the backing that exists for our military services, they will spend more time promoting constructive solutions. Attitudes toward federal employment are also a key part of the federal recruiting climate. When federal service becomes more appealing, it's reasonable to expect that large numbers of qualified applicants will apply for hard-to-fill positions.

The other three elements of an effective workforce — the right talent, an engaged workforce, and strong leadership — serve as the organizing framework for a human capital management plan. This document outlines the most pressing people management challenges our government faces and suggests solutions for each, gathered from a variety of perspectives and supported by the good government community. It also offers specific ideas for how to use metrics and leverage the presidential transition to enhance future reform efforts. These pieces are interconnected and interrelated, both to one another and to the goal of high performance. The new president will need a comprehensive agenda that addresses all of them. Effective government requires effective management.

WHAT TO DO — A FRAMEWORK FOR REFORM

1

THE RIGHT TALENT

If good government starts with good people, an effective workforce management plan logically starts with strategies to attract and retain top talent. Both logic and math dictate the need for increased attention to federal recruiting. Our federal government expects to lose approximately 530,000 employees in the next five years, as the retirement of baby boomers depletes our government of many expert and experienced workers.

Our federal government needs to view the way it recruits, hires and retains talent from the applicant's perspective to ensure job candidates are treated fairly, openly and promptly. Another consideration is that not all of today's job seekers want their next job to be a career — some want it to be a career-builder. Government needs to recognize these attitudes and re-imagine itself as a place that can draw talent for both short and long periods of time, at all experience levels.

CHALLENGES

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT FEDERAL OPPORTUNITIES

There's a widespread perception that most Americans are not interested in government jobs. That's not exactly right. When given a set of choices, most people are roughly as interested in federal jobs as private-sector alternatives. The problem for federal recruiters is a lack of public knowledge about federal job opportunities. Government service is simply off the radar of most job seekers.

Government has specific recruiting challenges among mid-career and older workers. Often, government brings in talent at the entry level, but agencies need to take a closer look at bringing on external talent in mid-level and senior positions, where talent needs will be particularly acute due to the retirement of baby boomers. Like their younger counterparts, experienced workers know very little about federal opportunities, but they also hold more negative views toward government, requiring a recruiting pitch aimed at their specific concerns.

STUDENT LOAN DEBT

Even when individuals are knowledgeable about and interested in federal jobs, other barriers remain. Among younger people, a growing number find themselves priced out of public service by increases in the average student debt burden.

CONFUSING AND CLOSED HIRING PRACTICES

Many applicants find themselves shut off from interesting opportunities, in large measure because of our government's practice of opening only half of all jobs to external candidates. As a whole, current recruitment and hiring regulations, policies and practices are inadequate. In too many cases, the process takes too long, is too complicated, lacks transparency and fails to produce the right talent for the job.

ANTIQUATED COMPENSATION SYSTEM

Our government's nearly 60-year-old compensation system is inflexible, antiquated and lacks market sensitivity. The General Schedule (GS) system is widely criticized for providing too little latitude to recruit top talent and reward exceptional workers, while also making it too hard to discipline poor performers. Longevity is the primary determinant of a worker's pay increases, denying federal managers a potentially valuable tool for attracting new workers and motivating existing ones.

LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY

When it comes to federal recruiting and retention policies, a lack of accountability for the right outcomes perpetuates the status quo.

INCREASING USE OF PRIVATE CONTRACTORS

We increasingly rely on external contractors to do government work, but we often don't know a lot about who they are and how to best manage them. The use of contractors also raises questions about what functions are inherently governmental, the true size of government and the right combination of skills needed to deliver services to the American people.

RECOMMENDATIONS

ENGAGE IN MORE AGGRESSIVE, STRATEGIC RECRUITING

- The federal government needs to develop improved pipelines of talent by fostering relationships with college campuses, better utilizing internship programs, leveraging technology, and recruiting aggressively and widely.
- Federal agencies need to expand outreach to young audiences, mid-career candidates and retiring boomers. To reach these potential applicants, agencies should update their messages to highlight opportunities to “do good and do well” in government service (including practical advantages such as the opportunity to work on interesting and important issues, competitive benefits and a good work-life balance).
- Just filling vacancies is inadequate. Federal agencies must craft job descriptions in a forward-looking manner, to address future skill needs.

EXPAND THE USE OF FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

- The president, working with Congress, should establish a new government-wide scholarship program to fund graduate-level study in exchange for a federal service commitment in targeted mission-critical jobs. The bipartisan *Roosevelt Scholars Act*, proposed by Reps. David Price (D-NC) and Chris Shays (R-CT), would create a graduate-level ROTC-like program that could restore prestige to federal service by more broadly raising awareness about federal opportunities and rebranding the government as a place where the best and brightest go to make a difference.
- Congress should fully fund agency requests for improvements to their human resources practices, including enhancement of existing recruitment tools, such as expanded use of recruitment bonuses or student loan repayments for hard-to-fill mission-critical occupations.
- Congress should enhance the value of loan repayment assistance by treating it as a non-taxable benefit.

FIX THE FEDERAL HIRING PROCESS

The federal hiring system must be fundamentally rethought. While adhering to long-standing federal public policy goals, such as merit-based selection and veterans' preference, the government can substantially improve its ability to attract and hire the best talent available. In particular, the president should encourage all agencies to adopt a "Federal Applicant's Bill of Rights" that ensures all candidates will be treated fairly, openly and promptly. This includes a clear description of the opportunity, a user-friendly application and a transparent process. Agencies should:

- Streamline the application process to better reflect what applicants expect. Rather than relying on lengthy essays, agencies should move toward a more resume-based application process. Improve job descriptions to make them easier to understand and follow.
- Open jobs that have traditionally been closed to the public if there is no compelling reason to limit them to internal candidates.
- For positions that require experience, allow adequate time to reach the most qualified applicants.
- Maximize the use of open continuous job postings for positions that need to be filled on a high-volume, ongoing basis.
- Make the hiring process more efficient and more effective by updating tools for assessing job candidates to make sure we select the most capable applicants.
- Continue to focus on improving the timeliness of the security clearance process, so top talent isn't lost due to excessive wait times.
- Allow greater flexibility for converting qualified individuals, like interns who have demonstrated superior job-related skills, into permanent career roles.

MAKE THE FEDERAL PAY SYSTEM MORE PERFORMANCE- AND MARKET-SENSITIVE

- Federal agencies must establish credible performance management systems. This is an essential pre-cursor to implementation of more performance-sensitive compensation systems.
- The president and Congress should phase out the existing General Schedule (GS) system and replace it with a fair, credible, transparent and market-sensitive pay system. Increases in compensation should be driven more by employee performance than under the GS system.
- Federal agencies should be allowed to tailor the system to their individual needs while ensuring that all agencies have a level playing field with regard to overall compensation levels for similar occupations and experience levels.

INCREASE OVERSIGHT AND REPORTING

Congress should exert oversight authority to hold agencies accountable. Members should hold hearings on recruiting and hiring, and agencies should issue regular reports on their workforce management. In addition, Congress should work with the next administration to:

- Require agencies to annually submit their hiring projections to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM). This data — broken down by occupation and grade level — should also be made easily accessible to the public through the USAJOBS Web site and the FedScope searchable database. This aids recruitment and enterprise-wide planning.
- Increase transparency and make more readily available information about the hiring mechanisms and incentives that agencies use to attract and retain employees. This information would enable potential applicants to compare, by agency, what percentage of recent hires were external, how many were converted from intern or fellowship programs, and the use of loan repayment, bonuses and other hiring incentives.
- Create a system of metrics to gauge the effectiveness of federal recruiting and hiring, which is essential to effective oversight.

EFFECTIVELY MANAGE THE MULTI-SECTOR WORKFORCE

- Federal agencies need to recruit individuals with the skills to manage private contractors and train existing workers to oversee federal contracts.
- Workforce planning efforts should be driven by consideration of how to most effectively achieve the aims of government.
- Contractors must be accountable to the public good. Federal agencies must have the capacity to accomplish that which is inherently governmental, determine what would be most efficiently and effectively done externally, and guide and evaluate the work of contractors.

2

AN ENGAGED WORKFORCE

Research consistently shows that increases in employee engagement lead directly to improvements in organizational performance. Engaged employees are satisfied with their jobs and organizations, derive a sense of personal accomplishment from their work, believe their talents are used well, and are given the chance to develop and innovate.

Government-wide, the key drivers of engagement are strong leadership, a good match between employee skills and a job's mission, and work/personal life balance. Government's track record on these fronts is a mixed bag. Relative to their counterparts in the private sector, federal employees are motivated by their agencies' missions and satisfied with their work-life balance. Unfortunately, the most important driver — leadership — is the area where government most dramatically lags the private sector. Federal civil servants also give government relatively low scores for creating a performance-based culture, sharing information and providing training. Many of these perceptions are rooted in reality.

CHALLENGES

INSUFFICIENT ATTENTION TO WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT

Historically, federal leaders have failed to take a strategic approach to improving workforce engagement. It has not been viewed as an indispensable means for improving agency performance.

UNEVEN PLANNING FOR HUMAN CAPITAL NEEDS

Federal agencies are required to develop and implement strategic human capital plans. Unfortunately, some agencies view this as a paperwork exercise rather than an opportunity to develop a valuable tool to improve engagement of their employees.

LACK OF EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Many agencies do not have effective employee performance management systems, which enable managers and employees to set — and strive for — specific goals directly linked to organizational mission and strategy. Such systems should also provide every federal employee clear performance expectations, regular feedback and an understanding of how their activities align with the agency's mission. Each year offers a cycle in which supervisors and employees should re-establish goals and discuss progress toward those goals.

SHORTCHANGING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development opportunities are another tool for engaging workers, but federal training dollars are regularly unavailable or unspent. Human resources budgets are often raided to meet other organizational needs, such as when Congress doesn't fully fund the annual pay increase and agencies must look elsewhere to make up the shortfall. Other development programs, which usually involve on-the-job training, are frequently uneven.

Most federal agencies also miss a huge opportunity to engage their employees by making scant effort to integrate and engage new employees. A typical welcome for a federal employee is a one-day orientation for new hires that consists of little more than filling out paperwork.

RECOMMENDATIONS

MEASURE ENGAGEMENT AND COMMIT TO IMPROVEMENTS

- Agencies should measure, track and document the link between employee satisfaction and individual and organizational performance.
- Agencies should systematically collect and analyze exit interview data and identify barriers to retention.
- Congress should enact — and financially support — a centrally administered, government-wide annual federal human capital survey.
- Managers should be held accountable, through effective performance management and reward systems, for high levels of employee engagement.
- Agencies should maximize workplace flexibilities that help attract, engage and retain talented employees (e.g., telework, flexible work schedules, part-time schedules, job sharing).

IMPLEMENT STRATEGIC HUMAN CAPITAL PLANNING

A strategic human capital plan serves as a roadmap for assembling and maintaining the right mix of talent to achieve the agency's mission. Employee engagement, training and development are critical components of a well-designed plan. Agencies should:

- Employ workforce planning to systematically identify future workforce needs, competencies, competency gaps and strategies to eliminate the gaps.
- Leverage employee engagement and effective training and development to help minimize competency gaps.
- Link training and development to the agency's mission, performance and desired outcomes.

DEVELOP CREDIBLE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

- Every federal employee should receive an annual written review from a capable supervisor who can effectively communicate performance expectations and provide constructive feedback.
- Federal leaders should establish regular feedback mechanisms, in addition to formal annual reviews. If a formal review includes new critiques not previously shared with the employee, there is a breakdown in the system.
- Managers should build a clear line of sight from an employee's work to accomplishments of broader objectives and the agency's mission.
- Establish a clear and valid correlation between employee performance and advancement.
- Enhance federal managers' flexibility to reward strong performers and fairly and efficiently deal with poor performers.

ENHANCE FORMAL TRAINING AND ON-THE-JOB DEVELOPMENT

Congress should ensure human resources budgets meet agency needs — and statutorily allocate money for training that can't be eliminated or re-budgeted. This could be done for specific critical skills areas such as contract management or leadership development. Additionally, agencies should:

- Develop and implement skill- and competency-based training curricula geared to key occupational and employee groups such as first-line supervisors, managers, human resources professionals, engineers, language specialists and procurement specialists.
- Be allowed to "roll over" unspent funds from one fiscal year to the next, to finance training opportunities.
- Make greater use of mentoring and coaching to prepare employees for advancement, including into supervisory and managerial positions.
- Provide cross-training/rotational assignments to broaden employees' experience bases and competencies and prepare them for advancement.
- Federal leaders should view the way they bring new workers on board as a year-long process of acculturating new employees into the organization and providing them with the tools, resources and knowledge to become successful and productive.

3

STRONG LEADERSHIP

Although leadership is the most critical factor in determining employee engagement and organizational effectiveness, it consistently ranks near the bottom of a list of 10 different workplace categories in the *Best Places to Work in the Federal Government* rankings compiled by the Partnership for Public Service and American University. Employees in the federal sector are twice as likely as their private sector counterparts to report that their leaders — political and career — do not have the leadership skills needed to do their jobs effectively.

CHALLENGES**LACK OF MANAGERIAL SKILLS AMONG SENIOR LEADERS**

The federal government has an inconsistent track record selecting, developing and retaining top political and career leaders with strong management skills. Senior political appointees' competence should be the foremost concern during the appointment and confirmation process, but sometimes political connections are given precedence. Selection of career leaders is often based on their technical expertise, not leadership and management skills such as communication, team-building and conflict resolution.

SHORTCHANGING LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

With reduced training budgets in recent years, the only option for leadership development often becomes no- or low-cost training, not the best training. As a result, effective leadership development is concentrated among an inadequate number of employees.

SHORT-TERM LEADERSHIP VS. LONG-TERM CHALLENGES

Federal leadership tends to be short-term, leaving political appointees little opportunity to focus on long-term issues as they seek to maximize their impact on an agency over the course of the average 18-month tenure. Career federal leaders can provide stability and continuity when the political leadership changes, but this cadre often lacks a broad perspective on government operations — and it is poised to retire in large numbers. Based on OPM retirement projections, it is likely that the number of federal leaders and managers who will retire in the next several years will exceed the number of qualified internal candidates ready to replace them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

PRIORITIZE COMPETENCIES FOR POLITICAL AND CAREER LEADERS

Effective leadership, whether in the public or private sector, begins with selecting individuals with the right knowledge, skills, abilities and behaviors required to drive program performance and needed management reforms.

- As a starting point for improving government leadership, our elected officials and career leaders must carefully consider the competencies required to effectively lead in the public sector. While relevant technical competencies should be a prerequisite for any leadership position in government, the selection process must also carefully consider a candidate's management skills.
- The administration and Congress should build upon the Government Accountability Office's (GAO) proposed questions on key management issues (August 2000) to assess whether an appointee is qualified to run a large and complex organization whose mission is likely to affect virtually every member of the American public.
- Leadership competencies should match government's unique challenges, with a special emphasis on leading people, driving innovation, building collaborative networks and delivering results.
- For both career and appointed managers and executives, performance reviews must include a focus on required management skills, to emphasize the importance of successful operations across government.
- Agencies should offer a "dual-track" for advancement that provides technical experts advancement opportunities that offer more seniority, responsibility and pay without also requiring leadership and management duties for which they may be ill-suited.

INVEST IN TRAINING FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE LEADERS

Federal agencies must invest in the training and development of their political and career leaders. While political appointees need more preparation around government's intricacies (e.g., budgeting, working with career employees, Government Performance and Results Act requirements) upon entering public service, career leaders need more robust training over the long-term.

- With an average tenure of less than two years, political appointees can't afford to learn the ropes gradually through trial and error. These managers should receive orientation regarding government operations, laws and policies immediately upon assuming their position and thereafter, as needed, throughout their time in government.
- Leadership development should include a blend of classroom training, performance feedback from managers and subordinates, developmental relationships (e.g., mentoring/coaching) and challenging job assignments.

- Require basic, mandatory training for all supervisors to improve their success and their employees' job satisfaction.

ESTABLISH LONG-TERM LEADERSHIP

- The president should appoint a chief management officer (or a chief operating officer) for each department to oversee implementation of management initiatives, particularly tracking program and organizational performance. In some cases, a Deputy Secretary may already fill this role through a focus on management. To address ongoing management challenges across administrations, this position could be a term appointment.
- Expand talent exchanges between agencies and other public, private and nonprofit employers, particularly for the Senior Executive Service. Agencies should also explore the idea of requiring service in more than one office to qualify for promotion to government's most senior positions. Our military has proven this idea can work with a "joint duty" requirement that was recently replicated by the intelligence community.

ROADMAP TO REFORM: A SUMMARY

CHALLENGES	RECOMMENDATIONS
1 THE RIGHT TALENT	
Lack of knowledge about federal opportunities	Engage in more aggressive, strategic recruiting
Student loan debt	Expand the use of financial incentives
Confusing and closed hiring practices	Fix the federal hiring process
Antiquated compensation system	Make the federal pay system more performance- and market-sensitive
Lack of accountability	Increase oversight and reporting
Increasing use of private contractors	Effectively manage the multi-sector workforce
2 AN ENGAGED WORKFORCE	
Insufficient attention to workforce engagement	Measure engagement and commit to improvements
Uneven planning for human capital needs	Implement strategic human capital planning
Lack of effective performance management systems	Develop credible performance management systems
Shortchanging professional development	Enhance formal training and on-the-job development
3 STRONG LEADERSHIP	
Lack of managerial skills among senior leaders	Prioritize competencies for political and career leaders
Shortchanging leadership development	Invest in training for current and future leaders
Short-term leadership vs. long-term challenges	Establish long-term leadership

HOW TO DO IT — IMPLEMENTATION METHODS

IMPROVING PERFORMANCE: MEASURING SUCCESS

Efforts to get the right talent, engage employees and strengthen leadership only matter if they help to achieve the ultimate goal of improving organizational performance. But our government lacks a proven system of indicators to measure programmatic success and to determine if federal agencies have the right people with the right skills to do our nation's work.

Creating performance measurement tools is harder in the public sector, where one cannot simply look at profits as a yardstick of success. As a result, our government has lagging indicators of performance, such as the failure to keep toxic toys out of the country, and fewer measures that are operationally useful in preventing problems and improving government effectiveness.

Since you can't change what you can't measure, creating new, useful metrics is an essential component of a successful workforce management plan. It will be a major challenge to develop real performance metrics for the federal government that are both outcome-oriented and in line with public expectations. The process will be iterative, requiring work with multiple stakeholder groups over time to ensure that our results are clear, accurate and practical.

A performance measurement tool can help pinpoint major problems in government when there is still time to do something about them. It can also uncover notable successes and best practices that can be replicated across government. This information will also help federal managers to understand what factors may cause these problems and successes, such as a lack of resources.

Recent administrations have emphasized results. Under Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, efforts to assess success represented progress toward measuring program performance and making data transparent for the general public. As a next step, such initiatives should emphasize public outcomes, rather than programmatic activities. Assessing how government deals with a subject like food safety across agency lines would offer the American people a better sense of how government is performing than grading individual programs.

Operational metrics are not only integral to promoting the ultimate goal of improved performance, but also to gauging efforts to secure the right talent, engage employees, improve federal leadership and build public support.

RECOMMENDATIONS

MAKE METRICS USEFUL BY FOCUSING ON OUTCOMES

- The administration and Congress should create measurement systems that enable government employees and citizens to identify where government is working well — and where it needs to improve.
- Federal leaders should evaluate performance by missions and outcomes, considering cross-cutting programs that require collaboration across agencies.
- The new administration should review existing practices, such as state and local government “Performance Stat” models, to identify techniques that manifest a culture of performance. With these tools, create an ongoing dialogue in which agencies engage in identifying deficiencies and crafting long-term solutions.

PROMOTE TRANSPARENCY

- Agencies should publish program performance results, providing ready access to interested parties and stakeholders, and clearly account for and justify the resources expended to achieve those results.

CLOSE DATA GAPS

- Although the federal government collects a great deal of human capital/workforce data, some is still not standardized, combinable across agencies or useful. Congress and the administration should require that essential data be uniformly collected, analyzed and made available to all agencies and relevant stakeholders.

LEVERAGING THE TRANSITION

Solving government’s operational challenges cannot be done overnight and will require patience. But the period of transition from one administration to the next is critical to the long-term hopes of any management reforms. It is also a time of great opportunity. The transition generally consists of three phases: pre-election, post-election and post-inauguration, which covers the first six months of the new administration. The following recommendations propose utilizing the post-election and post-inauguration phases to lay the foundation for meaningful management reforms.

RECOMMENDATIONS

BUILD ON THE FOUNDATION OF PREVIOUS REFORMS

- The next president can score some quick wins by building on pre-existing initiatives where a great deal of work has already been done. Methods

used in previous administrations, such as the balanced scorecard or the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART), offer a foundation. To shape assessment tools, attention should concentrate on forward-looking measurement, with a focus on outcomes.

FOCUS ON PEOPLE, PARTICULARLY IN THE MANAGEMENT ARENA

- The next president should select qualified and competent political appointees, recognizing the rigors and challenges of the appointment process. The administration should prepare presidential appointees to enhance their ability to manage effectively in the federal environment and to improve the quality of supervision across government.
- Special attention should be paid to attracting highly qualified individuals for key management positions (e.g., chief financial officers, chief information officers, chief human capital officers), which require specialized skills and focus on operational issues. Looking long-term, since these positions are non-ideological in nature, it would be wise to strongly consider making them career positions, to create continuity between administrations.

STREAMLINE THE CONFIRMATION PROCESS

- An astonishing 1,137 positions require Senate confirmation. Congress should reduce the number of Senate-confirmed positions dramatically so that only those jobs that are truly central to the functioning of the U.S. government require such enhanced scrutiny. This will save time, money, and — most importantly — ensure essential leadership positions in our government are filled in a more timely fashion.

REACH OUT AGGRESSIVELY TO CAREER CIVIL SERVANTS AND OTHER POTENTIAL ALLIES

- New political appointees should build relationships with key stakeholders and constituency groups, particularly to engage civil servants and outside expertise in the transition and subsequent reform efforts. People will offer you help. Take it.

CONCLUSION

Focusing on human capital management is not only smart from a policy perspective, it's smart politically. For too long, government operations have not gotten the kind of sustained attention the American people say they want. Regardless of political leanings — whether we favor “big government” or “small government” — everyone can agree that it should be effective government, and we should do it well.

Amid tremendous pressure to score major policy victories in the first 100 days, the new administration must quickly invest in government's long-term organizational health. The next president's overall success rests fundamentally on his ability to effectively manage federal operations. It's time for the president to set in motion long-term management solutions to help build the government that the times demand and the American people deserve.

METHODOLOGY

The Partnership for Public Service works to revitalize our federal government by inspiring a new generation to serve and by transforming the way government works. We believe that good government starts with good people. And we live by our name of Partnership — working with others whenever possible. Since our founding in 2001, we have aimed not to do the job of government, but to help government do its job better, focusing on goals that transcend ideology and politics.

In preparation for the upcoming presidential transition and subsequent government reform in the next administration, the Partnership crafted this proposed framework for federal workforce management as part of its *Presidential Management Initiative*. This report is the product of several sources, including meetings with — and other input from — representatives of good government organizations, past presidential transitions, government reform efforts and private-sector entities. We also conducted a two-day conference at the Pocantico Conference Center of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund focused on government reform and the presidential transition with leaders from the government, nonprofit and private sectors. With support from CNA, we coordinated a series of roundtable discussions to gain valuable input from federal employees in five cities: Atlanta, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York City, and Washington, D.C. As a foundation, we reviewed results of prior projects, research and Congressional testimonies.

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