

FY 2026 Annual Evaluation Plan



FY 2026 Annual Evaluation Plan

Purpose

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) will conduct three formative, implementation-focused assessments in Fiscal Year (FY) 2026. These assessments meet the Evidence Act requirement to identify priority evaluation activities. They reflect OPM's current capacity constraints and the need to build foundational evidence to support hiring reform, Human Resources Information Technology (HRIT) modernization, and performance management guidance.

Evaluation Capacity Statement

OPM no longer has a permanent, dedicated performance and evaluation team. Given this, OPM will limit FY 2026 evaluations to descriptive, qualitative, and feasibility-oriented assessments using existing administrative data, document reviews, and self-reported information from agencies. Findings will inform quarterly performance reviews and future learning agenda work.

OPM Assessment Plan – Merit Hiring Plan

Program Background

Executive Order 14170 (May 29, 2025) directed major reforms to federal recruitment and hiring. The Merit Hiring Plan (MHP) requires skills-based hiring, streamlined applications, Subject Matter Expert (SME) resume and interview evaluations, pooled hiring, and leadership involvement in selection. OPM's Talent Team is responsible for government-wide recruitment strategy and for monitoring metrics such as cost-per-hire, speed-of-hire, and quality-of-hire. FY 2026 is the first year of implementation, and key success metrics and tools are still under development. OPM faces central data access constraints due to the Databricks migration.

Purpose

Document early implementation, identify gaps, and determine what data exists to support required MHP metrics.

Key Questions

- Has OPM issued required MHP guidance and tools?
- To what extent have agencies begun using Talent Teams, skills-based assessments, pooled hiring, SME evaluations, and leadership interviews?
- What implementation barriers are agencies reporting?
- What data exists to begin tracking MHP metrics?

Methods

- Review OPM guidance and Talent Team materials
- Descriptive review of USA Staffing, USA Hire, USAJOBS data
- Review Agency Merit Hiring Action Plans
- Short qualitative survey or interviews with agencies

Data Sources

USA Staffing, USA Hire, USAJOBS; Agency Action Plans; Talent Team documentation; survey responses

Anticipated Challenges

- No evaluation staff; limited analytic capacity
- Incomplete government-wide hiring data
- Databricks migration delays

Timeline

- Q1: Scope
- Q2–Q3: Data review
- Q4: Findings and recommendations

OPM Assessment Plan - Chance to Compete and Federal HR 2.0 HRIT Workstream

Program Background

The Chance to Compete Act (2024) requires agencies to shift to technical assessments and enables cross-agency sharing of validated assessment materials. It directs OPM to conduct a feasibility study on securely sharing assessments, ensuring compliance with 5 CFR Part 300, and estimating associated costs. In parallel, OPM is advancing the Federal HR 2.0 HRIT workstream, which seeks to centralize and modernize HR systems, streamline HR operations, improve interoperability, and support enterprise-wide workforce management. Agencies express mixed readiness levels, and OPM faces cost, capability, and data challenges.

Purpose

Determine feasibility, not outcomes or ROI, of developing a centralized, government-wide platform for sharing and managing technical assessments.

Key Questions

- What HRIT capabilities exist to support secure assessment sharing?
- What are current cost ranges and workload implications for implementing Chance to Compete under existing systems?
- What benefits, risks, or barriers do agencies identify?
- How well does the HRIT workstream align with statutory requirements?

Methods

- Review HRIT inventories and cost data
- Map current systems against Chance to Compete requirements
- Qualitative interviews and user feedback review
- Review implementation plans, system gaps, and technical constraints

Data Sources

USA Staffing, USA Jobs, USA Hire; BDR 25-23 data; system inventories; customer experience surveys; agency documentation

Anticipated Challenges

- Mandatory nature may influence feedback
- Heterogeneous HRIT landscapes across agencies
- Resource constraints and year-to-year funding variability

Timeline

- Q1: Capability scan
- Q2–Q3: Feasibility analysis
- Q4: Summary and options

OPM Assessment Plan – Performance Management and Awards

Program Background

OPM issued FY 2025 guidance to strengthen performance management and awards systems for non-SES employees. The memo outlines required and recommended actions to improve accountability, prevent unacceptable performance, and better reward high performers. Agencies must update policies, train supervisors, apply standards aligned to law and regulation, and strengthen awards alignment. Implementation varies significantly because of collective bargaining obligations, legacy systems, and uneven supervisory practices. Central data access remains constrained during the Databricks migration.

Purpose

Assess whether agencies implemented required and recommended actions and identify common barriers to effective application of the guidance.

Key Questions

- Which “must implement” requirements were adopted?
- Which “should implement” actions were adopted?
- What factors delayed or prevented implementation?
- What early indicators suggest whether agencies understand and are applying expectations?

Methods

- Review agency policies, project plans, and communications
- Descriptive review of USA Performance and personnel action data (as accessible)
- Short survey to document implementation status and barriers

Data Sources

OPM guidance memos; agency policies; agency implementation plans; USA Performance; Databricks/eOPF (as available); surveys.

Anticipated Challenges

- Major variation in agency readiness
- Delays due to collective bargaining
- Limited availability of performance management data

Timeline

- Q1: Develop criteria and data call
- Q2–Q3: Review submissions
- Q4: Summary and recommendations

Use of Results

Findings will inform:

- Quarterly performance reviews
- FY 2027 guidance
- HRIT modernization requirements
- Priority-setting for OPM’s Learning Agenda



U.S. Office of Personnel Management

Office of Chief Information Officer
1900 E Street NW, Washington DC 20415

[OPM.gov](https://www.opm.gov)