

# FY 2026 Strategic Capacity Assessment



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## Executive Summary

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) conducts this Strategic Capacity Assessment to fulfill requirements under the Foundations for Evidence Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (Evidence Act) and OMB Circular A11, Section 290. This assessment evaluates OPM's organizational capacity to conduct statistics, evaluation, research, and analysis activities supporting the agency's FY 2026-2030 strategic planning cycle.

OPM serves as the champion of talent for the Federal Government, leading agencies in workforce policies, programs, and benefits in service to the American people. This assessment examines our capacity across five critical dimensions: coverage, quality, methods, effectiveness, and independence of evidence building activities that support strategic decision making and mission delivery.

## Methodology and Approach

### Multi-Method Assessment Framework

This capacity assessment employs a methodology consistent with best practices observed across federal agencies. The approach includes:

#### Data Collection Methods:

- Focus groups with program managers and analytical staff
- Desk review of existing strategic planning documents and performance data
- Analysis of budget allocations for research and evaluation activities
- Review of workforce planning and competency gap analyses
- Analysis of various federal data sources e.g., Enterprise Human Resources Integration (EHRI), Federal Workforce Data

#### Stakeholder Engagement:

- Interviews with senior leadership and program officials
- Consultation with the Chief Human Capital Officers Council
- Publicly share data through new Federal Workforce Data (formerly FedScope)

### Assessment Dimensions

Following Evidence Act requirements and federal best practices, this assessment evaluates OPM's capacity across five key dimensions:

- Coverage assesses the distribution of evidence building activities across OPM's organizational structure, identifying workforce gaps, skill deficiencies, and resource allocation patterns that impact evidence generation capabilities.
- Quality examines the standards, practices, and processes OPM employs to ensure rigorous and credible evidence building activities that meet professional evaluation and research standards.
- Methods evaluates the appropriateness and variety of research methods and analytical approaches used across different types of evidence building activities and research questions.
- Effectiveness measures the extent to which OPM's evidence activities support organizational learning, program improvement, strategic decision making, and mission achievement.
- Independence assesses the objectivity, credibility, and autonomy of evidence building functions within OPM's organizational structure and decision-making processes.

## OPM's Evidence Building Context

### Strategic Goals and Objectives

OPM's FY 2026-2030 Strategic Plan establishes the following strategic goals that frame the agency's evidence needs:

- **Goal 1: Attract and Retain Top Talent-** OPM will partner with stakeholders to bring in and keep the best talent for the federal workforce by employing a merit-based hiring process, a total compensation package, and a performance management system that significantly rewards accountability, outstanding performance, financial stewardship, operational efficiency, and innovation.
- **Goal 2: Deliver High-Quality, Efficient Service-** OPM serves as a model of operational excellence and fiscal responsibility by putting customers first and maximizing the value of every taxpayer dollar. We are streamlining operations, harnessing technology, cutting red tape, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement to deliver services better, faster, and more cost effectively.
- **Goal 3: Lead America's AI-Ready Workforce-** As AI reshapes the future of work, OPM must enable the federal workforce to lead in this evolving landscape. OPM will work to ensure that the federal government has the appropriate talent (via hiring, skills development, and re-training) to deploy and lead the adoption of AI technologies across all agencies.

### Core Functions Requiring Evidence Support

OPM's mission as the federal government's human capital leader generates substantial evidence needs across multiple functional areas:

- **Human Capital Policy Development:** Requires research and analysis to inform workforce policies affecting over 2.2 million federal employees, including compensation, benefits, and performance management frameworks.
- **Strategic Workforce Planning:** Demands forecasting capabilities, trend analysis, and demographic modeling to anticipate future workforce needs and guide succession planning efforts across government.
- **Employee Benefits Administration:** Needs actuarial analysis, customer satisfaction research, and program evaluation to manage retirement and health benefits programs serving millions of current and former federal employees.
- **Federal Hiring and Talent Management:** Requires assessment of recruitment strategies, hiring process effectiveness, and talent acquisition outcomes to improve government-wide human capital practices.
- **Performance Management Oversight:** Demands evaluation capabilities to assess the effectiveness of performance management systems and leadership development programs across federal agencies.

## Current Capacity Assessment

### Coverage Analysis

OPM's evidence building activities span multiple organizational units with varying levels of analytical capacity and expertise. The agency conducts research and evaluation activities through several key offices or functions:

- **Office of Strategic Workforce Planning:** Leads workforce analytics, demographic analysis, and strategic foresight activities supporting long-term human capital planning.
- **Office of Chief Financial Officer:** Provides performance measurement, budget analysis, and program evaluation capabilities aligned with strategic planning and performance management requirements.
- **Human Resources Solutions:** Offers analytical services to federal agencies, including workforce assessments, competency gap analyses, and organizational development evaluations.
- **Data Analytics and Performance Management:** Provides measurement capabilities, dashboard development, and outcome tracking across strategic objectives.

### Workforce Capacity

OPM's analytical workforce includes professionals with expertise in statistics, program evaluation, survey research, and data analysis. The agency has invested in building analytical capabilities through recruitment of data scientists and evaluation specialists, professional development programs for analytical staff, and participation in government-wide evaluation communities of practice.

However, capacity gaps exist in specialized areas including advanced statistical modeling, quasi-experimental evaluation methods, and longitudinal research design capabilities.

## Infrastructure and Systems

OPM maintains data systems and analytical infrastructure supporting evidence building activities:

- **Federal Workforce Data:** Provides public reporting on federal civilian workforce data from an official U.S. Government source, with improvements to its public statistical communication capabilities.
- **Enterprise Human Resources Integration:** Provides comprehensive workforce data for analysis and reporting across government agencies.
- **Federal Employee Surveys:** Generates data on employee engagement, satisfaction, and organizational culture across the federal workforce through instruments such as the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS), or other employee surveys as applicable.
- **Performance Management Systems:** Tracks progress on strategic objectives, agency priority goals, and performance measures aligned with strategic planning requirements.
- **Customer Experience Measurement:** Supports ongoing assessment of service delivery effectiveness and customer satisfaction across major OPM programs.

## External Utilization

OPM's evidence products serve broader federal government needs:

- **Government-wide Guidance:** Incorporates research findings into policy guidance and best practice recommendations for federal agencies.
- **Congressional Reporting:** Utilizes performance data and evaluation findings to inform budget justifications and oversight responses.
- **Public Reporting:** Through Performance.gov and agency publications, makes evidence available to stakeholders and the public.

## Effectiveness and Utilization

### Decision Making Integration

OPM integrates evidence into strategic decision making through several mechanisms:

- **Results OPM Meetings:** Provide regular data-driven performance reviews chaired by senior leadership to diagnose problems, identify opportunities, and adjust strategies.
- **Strategic Reviews:** Occur annually to assess agency progress and determine priority areas requiring focused improvement efforts.
- **Budget Formulation:** Processes incorporate performance data and evaluation findings to inform resource allocation decisions and program justifications.

- **Policy Development:** Utilizes research findings and analytical assessments to inform human capital policy recommendations and regulatory development.

## Capacity Building Priorities

### Strategic Workforce Planning Enhancement

OPM requires enhanced analytical capabilities to support strategic workforce planning across government. Priority areas include:

- **Advanced Analytics:** Capabilities for predictive modeling, scenario planning, and workforce forecasting to anticipate future human capital needs.
- **Strategic Foresight:** Methods and processes to identify emerging trends, environmental factors, and disruptions affecting federal workforce requirements.
- **Competency Assessment:** Tools and methodologies to identify skill gaps and guide workforce development investments across government agencies.

### Data Integration and Modernization

The agency needs improved data integration capabilities to maximize the value of existing data assets:

- **Enterprise Data Architecture:** To connect human capital data systems and enable comprehensive workforce analytics.
- **Realtime Analytics:** Capabilities to support dynamic decision making and responsive policy development.
- **Data Quality Management:** Processes to ensure accuracy, completeness, and reliability of data used for evidence building activities.

### Evaluation Capacity Expansion

OPM requires enhanced evaluation capabilities to assess program effectiveness and inform continuous improvement:

- **Impact Evaluation:** Methods including randomized controlled trials and quasi-experimental designs for assessing program outcomes.
- **Cost Benefit Analysis:** Capabilities to evaluate the return on investment of human capital programs and policies.
- **Longitudinal Studies:** Capacity to track long-term outcomes and career progression patterns across the federal workforce.

### Organizational Learning Culture

Building a stronger evidence-based culture requires:

- **Staff Development:** Programs to build analytical skills and evaluation competencies across OPM's workforce.
- **Knowledge Management:** Systems to capture, organize, and disseminate evaluation findings and research results.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Processes to ensure evidence products meet user needs and inform decision making effectively.

## Resource Requirements and Investment Priorities

### Human Capital Investments

OPM requires strategic investments in analytical workforce capacity:

- **Specialized Recruitment:** Of data scientists, evaluation specialists, and research methodologists to expand technical capabilities.
- **Professional Development:** Programs to build advanced analytical skills among existing staff members.
- **Retention Strategies:** To maintain institutional knowledge and analytical expertise within the organization.

### Technology and Infrastructure

Priority technology investments include:

- **Data Analytics Platforms:** To support advanced statistical analysis and predictive modeling capabilities.
- **Survey and Data Collection Systems:** To improve efficiency and quality of primary data collection efforts.
- **Knowledge Management Tools:** To organize and disseminate evaluation findings and research products.

## Implementation Timeline and Milestones

### Near-term Priorities (FY 2027-2028)

- Complete workforce capacity assessment and skill gap analysis.
- Implement enhanced data integration capabilities.
- Establish evaluation project management processes.
- Launch staff development programs for analytical capabilities.

### Medium-term Objectives (FY 2029-2030)

- Deploy advanced analytics and forecasting capabilities.
- Complete major program evaluations aligned with Learning Agenda priorities.

- Establish comprehensive knowledge management systems.
- Expand external research partnerships and collaborations.

## **Long-term Goals (FY 2031 and beyond)**

- Achieve full integration of evidence-based decision making across OPM operations.
- Establish OPM as a model for evidence-based human capital management.
- Provide comprehensive analytical support for government-wide workforce planning.
- Maintain cutting-edge evaluation and research capabilities.

## **Conclusion**

This Strategic Capacity Assessment demonstrates OPM's commitment to evidence-based decision making and continuous organizational improvement. The agency possesses substantial analytical capabilities and maintains appropriate infrastructure for evidence building activities. However, significant opportunities exist to enhance capacity in strategic workforce planning, advanced analytics, and program evaluation.



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