



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Heads of Departments and Agencies

FROM: Scott Kupor, Director, U.S. Office of Personnel Management

DATE: December 1, 2025

RE: Guidance on Senior Executive Service Reassignments

The Senior Executive Service (SES) comprises the Federal government's "top management leaders." S. Rep. 95-969, 67, 1978 U.S.C.C.A.N. 2723, 2789. The SES was a new classification created by the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 (CSRA) to provide "strong executive leadership, which can respond to rapidly changing conditions and circumstances surrounding federal programs" while achieving "presidential and congressional goals." *Id.*

In passing the CSRA, Congress did not intend for the SES to be mere subject-matter experts. Instead, Congress directed that the SES "shall be administered so as to . . . enable the head of an agency to reassign senior executives to best accomplish the agency's mission." 5 U.S.C. § 3131. In creating the SES, Congress was concerned that the previous system "fail[ed] to provide agency heads with sufficient flexibility to fill critical positions with executives of their own choosing," "limit[ed] rotation and reassignments for career employees," and "prevent[ed] the best use of executive talent." S. Rep. 95-969, 10, 1978 U.S.C.C.A.N. 2723, 2732. Congress believed that the SES would "permit more lateral mobility for executives," and that this increased mobility "will mean decreased parochialism of outlook in the government's top managers." *Id.* at 11, 2733.

Unfortunately, since passage of the CSRA, the SES has too often failed to fulfill Congress's expectation that it would serve as a mobile corps of managers responsive to the public interest and presidential priorities. Instead, SES members frequently become entrenched at a single agency and place the parochial interests of particular departments above the national interest.

President Trump has directed the comprehensive reform of the SES "to reinvigorate the SES system and prioritize accountability."¹ In his first year in office, President Trump's Administration has delivered the most sweeping reform of the SES since its creation—transforming the way the SES is hired, trained and managed to ensure that the SES is held to the highest standards of performance and integrity.²

¹ Presidential Trump, Memorandum for the Heads of Departments and Agencies, [Restoring Accountability for Career Senior Executives](#) (Jan. 20, 2025).

² See OPM, [New Senior Executive Service Performance Appraisal System and Performance Plan, and Guidance on Next Steps for Agencies to Implement Restoring Accountability for Career Senior Executives](#) (Feb. 25,

President Trump has additionally directed that agency heads shall, consistent with applicable procedural requirements, “reassign agency SES members to ensure their knowledge, skills, abilities, and mission assignments are optimally aligned to implement my agenda.”³

To fulfill the purpose of the SES, agencies are encouraged to review their current executive corps and consider SES reassignments to ensure effective implementation of President Trump’s priorities and agency missions. Executive reassignments are a critical tool to:

- Maintain a responsive and agile executive corps capable of advancing Administration priorities in a dynamic policy environment;
- Align leadership talent with evolving mission needs;
- Address organizational change and policy implementation;
- Fill leadership gaps and support succession planning; and
- Enhance cross-functional collaboration and mission delivery.

Under 5 U.S.C. § 3395 and 5 CFR § 317.901, agencies may direct the reassignment of career SES appointees, including during the probationary period, to any SES position in the agency for which the executive qualifies, provided procedural conditions are met (15 days’ notice for reassignments within the commuting area; 60 days’ notice plus advance consultation for reassignments outside the commuting area, unless the executive waives the notice period). Agencies may also temporarily detail SES to any other position within the SES or outside the SES (although details of more than 240 days to a lower-graded position require OPM approval). *Id.* § 317.903.

Questions regarding this memorandum should be directed to SESPolicy@opm.gov.

cc: Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCOs), Deputy CHCOs, Human Resources Directors, Deputy Secretaries, Chiefs of Staff

2025) (reforming SES performance appraisal system); OPM, [Hiring and Talent Development for the Senior Executive Service](#) (May 29, 2025) (reforming the SES hiring process and creating new Executive Core Qualifications); OPM, [Issuance of Regulations on Assuring Responsive and Accountable Federal Executive Management and Additional Guidance and Fiscal Year 2026 Senior Executive Service Rating Level Distribution Cap](#) (September 16, 2025) (reforming SES regulations to implement a forced distribution of the highest rating levels); OPM, [New Senior Executive Service, Senior Professional, GS-15 and GS-14 Development Programs](#) (November 19, 2025) (overhauling SES training programs).

³ Presidential Trump, Memorandum for the Heads of Departments and Agencies, [Restoring Accountability for Career Senior Executives](#) (Jan. 20, 2025); see also OPM, [Guidance Regarding Redesignating SES CIO Positions](#) (Feb. 4, 2025) (encouraging agencies to redesignate Chief Information Officers as SES “general” positions); OPM, [Guidance on Career Reserved SES Positions and Agency Redesignation Requests](#) (Feb. 24, 2025) (directing a broader review of SES designations); OPM, [Guidance Regarding Redesignating CHCO Positions](#) (Mar. 6, 2025) (encouraging agencies to redesignate Chief Human Capital Officers as SES “general” positions).