UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

November 13, 2025

Memorandum for Chief Human Capital Officers

From: Veronica E. Hinton
Associate Director
Workforce Policy and Innovation

Subject: Reduction in Force Actions Affected by Continuing Appropriations Act, 2026

The Continuing Appropriations, Agriculture, Legislative Branch, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Extensions Act of 2026 (i.e., the Act) enacted on November 12, 2025 includes provisions that limit the use of reductions in force only through the period of the short-term continuing resolution. (See Section 120 of Division A of the Act). The attached guidance is provided to assist agencies with complying with these provisions.

The legislation provides that no Federal funds may be used to initiate, provide notice of, carry out, or otherwise implement a reduction in force to reduce the number of Federal employees during the period between the date of enactment and January 30, 2026. The Act also requires agencies to rescind certain RIF notices and declares that certain RIF actions taken between October 1, 2025 and November 12, 2025 have no force or effect.

Additional Information

For additional guidance, agency headquarters-level human resources offices may contact the OPM contacts listed in the attachment. Employees should contact their agency human resources offices for assistance.

cc: Deputy Chief Human Capital Officers and Human Resources Directors

Attachment: Guidance on Reduction in Force Actions Affected by the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2026

Under section 120 of the Continuing Appropriations Act of 2026 (i.e., division A of the Act), and notwithstanding section 106(1) of the Act, no Federal funds may be used to initiate, provide notice of, carry out, or otherwise implement a reduction in force through January 30, 2026. This prohibition applies to all civilian positions—permanent, temporary, term, full-time, part-time, or intermittent—without regard to the source of funding for those positions. For purposes of section 120, "reduction in force" means actions taken under 5 U.S.C. 3501–3504 (competitive service and excepted service) and 5 U.S.C. 3595 (Senior Executive Service), as well as any similar reduction of positions, unless expressly provided for in the Act. The prohibition does not apply to (1) voluntary separations or retirements; (2) actions necessary to comply with a court order; or (3) actions taken, beginning only on the first day of a lapse in appropriations, necessary to implement or maintain an orderly shutdown of government operations.

Any RIF proposed, initiated, executed, implemented, or otherwise taken by an Executive agency between October 1, 2025 and November 12, 2025 has no force or effect. Employees who received notice of a RIF during that period must have the notice rescinded.

Required Actions—

- Agencies must immediately cease issuing RIF notices pursuant to 5 CFR parts 351 and 359 until January 31, 2026.

- Agencies must review all RIF notices issued between October 1, 2025, and November 12, 2025; rescind those notices; and restore each affected employee affected by a RIF notice issued between October 1, 2025 and November 12, 2025 to their September 30, 2025 employment status (appointment type, grade/step, salary, duty station, work schedule, and other conditions of employment) without interruption.

- If, at the time of a RIF notice, an employee was already in a valid non-pay status (e.g., pre-scheduled LWOP or suspension), rescission under section 120 does not create entitlement to retroactive pay for that previously scheduled non-pay status period. Agencies must reconstruct pay and benefits only for the periods the employee would have been in a pay status but for the RIF (e.g., beginning on the date the employee would otherwise have returned from LWOP). Time charged to AWOL remains non-pay status time.

- Within 5 calendar days of enactment, agencies must notify all affected employees of the withdrawal of the RIF notice and the employee's reinstatement, including the reinstatement date for any employee who was separated via a RIF. The notice to employees must include information on the amount of retroactive pay the employee will receive, which must equal the pay to which the employee would have otherwise been entitled but for the now-canceled RIF. For employees whose positions were affected by a lapse in appropriations (whether excepted or furloughed), retroactive pay is provided under section 116. For lapse-exempt employees whose RIF notice is rescinded, any retroactive pay for periods after a canceled RIF separation is provided under section 120.

- Non-RIF adverse actions based on performance or conduct (5 U.S.C. chapters 43 and 75) and probationary or trial period terminations under Civil Service Rule 11 may proceed.

- The natural expiration of time-limited appointments at their established not-to-exceed (NTE) date may proceed.

- Within 5 calendar days of enactment, agencies must notify the Chairs and Ranking Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees of the withdrawal of RIF notices issued between October 1, 2025 and November 12, 2025, and the reinstatement of any affected employees who had been separated via RIF.

Data Call

Agencies must submit to OPM at employ@opm.gov confirmation that the agency has issued a notice to rescind any RIFs that were noticed between October 1, 2025 and November 12, 2025, no later than **November 19, 2025**.

Additional Information

For additional guidance, agency headquarters-level human resources offices may contact the OPM contacts listed below. Employees should contact their agency human resources offices for assistance.

- Pay: PayPolicy@opm.gov
- Leave: LeavePolicy@opm.gov
- Labor Relations and Adverse Action Furlough Procedures: awr@opm.gov
- Executive Resources: SERS@opm.gov
- Hiring: employ@opm.gov
- Documentation of Personnel Actions: OPMDataHelpDesk@opm.gov
- Retirement: benefits@opm.gov