FAQ: How Does Rule of Many Support Skills-Based Hiring?

What is skills-based hiring in the federal government?

Skills-based hiring means evaluating candidates based on their ability to perform the work using tools like job simulations, skills tests, or other structured assessments which directly reflect the skills needed for the role.

How does the Rule of Many promote skills-based hiring?

The Rule of Many supports skills-based hiring by:

- Expanding the referral pool to include a broader range of candidates with job-relevant skills.
- Allowing selecting officials to consider multiple candidates, enabling consideration of candidates with diverse skillsets, experiences, and backgrounds.
- Encouraging the use of more comprehensive assessment tools (e.g., structured interviews, work samples, job simulations) that are aligned with skills-based hiring practices.
- Facilitates selection of a referral pool that is aligned with quality and operational requirements.
- Supporting improved hiring outcomes, particularly for non-traditional candidates, veterans, and those with varied career paths.

Does the Rule of Many eliminate the need for degrees or credentials?

No. The Rule of Many is a selection method. It does not change or remove the qualification requirements set by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) under 5 CFR part 338. These requirements, such as minimum experience, education, or a combination of both, must still be met when they are legally required or tied to the qualifications of the job.

The Rule of Many gives agencies more flexibility after candidates have been found qualified. It allows hiring managers to focus more deliberately on job-relevant skills and practical experience when choosing among the most qualified applicants, rather than relying solely on proxies for hiring.

Can agencies implement skills-based hiring without using the Rule of Many?

While agencies can apply skills-based hiring principles under category rating, the Rule of Many offers greater flexibility to select from among multiple highly qualified individuals.

Are there best practices for combining the Rule of Many with skills-based hiring?

Yes. Best practices include:

- Using structured interviews and other validated assessments tied to critical job competencies.
- Clearly defining competencies based on skill levels and job performance indicators.
- Training HR and hiring managers on how to use skill-based practices to make merit-based selections.
- Implementing data-driven evaluation methods that improve the quality of hires and increase transparency in hiring decisions.