

# Developing & Applying Strategic Foresight for Better Human Capital Management

*Building a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce in the Face of Plausible Futures*

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# Introduction and Purpose

Planning and preparing for an uncertain future requires skill, agility, and focus. The challenge of applying strategic foresight and a systematic study of the future within Federal agencies is daunting, but not impossible. Strategic foresight seeks to look beyond the immediate horizon and provide organizations and their leadership different views of the future world, ones they may not have thought of or be comfortable with, but views that are plausible, challenging, and impactful. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is building a group that will use this resource to assist agencies in applying strategic foresight to their challenges and infusing it into their strategic culture.

Evolving technology, hybrid work, big data, shifting demographics, resource constraints, and climate change will present opportunities and challenges to the Federal government ecosystem. As we anticipate these rapid changes and uncertainties, governmental planning and policies must take multiple plausible future possibilities into account. Strategic foresight offers a means to do that. Federal agencies should strive to build greater anticipatory capacity and institutionalize such efforts across all levels to harness creativity and innovation and be prepared to address the challenges ahead. As of now, roughly 20-25 US government agencies have varying levels of expertise and experience in the application of strategic foresight principles in operation. More agencies are currently increasing their footprint and application of strategic foresight principles to inform their long-term planning.

Strategic foresight is not designed to replace traditional strategic planning principles and processes. Federal agencies are still required to follow the procedures laid out in the [GPRA Modernization Act of 2010](#) regardless of whether they employ strategic foresight. Instead, it is designed to complement the process, reframe the perspective of strategic planners, uncover potential blind spots, and enhance the strategic planning process. Working in collaboration, strategic planners and foresight practitioners can design a better long-term vision and plan a way forward that meets all current workforce and human capital requirements.

Key Takeaways
When dealing with Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity, human capital managers must take multiple future possibilities into account. Strategic Foresight offers a means to do that.
All U.S. Government agencies should strive to do more to build greater applied foresight capacity.
OPM offers support to U.S. Government agencies intent on designing and developing their foresight capabilities through tailored technical assistance, advice, and project-based guidance.

OPM is leading the application of strategic foresight in government because, regardless of the challenge that Federal agencies face, it will inevitably impact people and the workforce. Government cannot function without its most precious asset, the talented workforce that works tirelessly to promote efficient, effective, and inclusive government for everyone. Strategic foresight and the methods introduced in this guidebook can be applied to any challenge, big or small, and at the center of that challenge will be people and the need to have future looking human capital strategies in place. Decisions made by senior leaders to address agency challenges will impact the present and the future workforce and may necessitate policy and regulatory actions. By leading in the strategic foresight space, OPM will be better positioned to identify, understand, and address current human capital needs and proactively address challenges that lie beyond the horizon.

To assist planners and strategic foresight practitioners, the [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs](#) created the [Federal Foresight Community of Interest](#) (FFCOI). While not currently chartered by any agency, it is managed by three co-chairs from [OPM](#), the [US Secret Service](#), and the [Government Accountability Office](#). It is a voluntary forum with representation from Federal agencies, think tanks, and industry, designed to network, learn, analyze, develop, and communicate foresight methods and best practices to decision-makers and strategic planners. FFCOI also serves as a centralized connection point for agencies to share best practices, foster cross-agency support, and develop new and innovative ways to apply and improve the use of strategic foresight within the Federal government. Many practitioners within the FFCOI use this framework to apply foresight, which can serve as a valuable resource as agencies begin this journey.

This guidebook is designed to provide Federal agencies with a systematic approach to applying foresight to their unique challenges and missions. Agencies may apply the process and methods presented in this guide to a diverse set of internal and external challenges. The Framework Foresight process is a method to systematically apply foresight. OPM recommends that every agency identify ways to apply the principles contained within this guidebook and infuse strategic foresight into their agency strategic planning culture. By learning from the past, understanding the present, and studying the future in a systematic way, agencies will be able to understand the long-term implications of their plans, prepare for an uncertain future, minimize surprise, and contribute to a more efficient and effective Federal government for all.

# Audience

Anyone with an interest in or at any level in Federal government can find value in the principles in this guidebook. Every civil servant has a stake in the success or failure of the agency mission and at the heart of that mission is people. Every employee has unique life experiences and brings a wealth of knowledge to a foresight project. Some of the brightest ideas may come from the unlikeliest of sources within the organization. Those ideas may have the potential to radically impact institutions and may never have been developed had foresight been relegated to only one part of the agency or one occupational series.

Exploring the future is a team effort, one that requires empathy, creativity, imagination, and a strong desire to be prepared and ready for multiple plausible scenarios that may impact the Agency's mission. Everyone has something to offer in the process. Everyone working for the Federal government can benefit from the principles set forth in this guidebook and the application of foresight in each employee's sphere of influence.

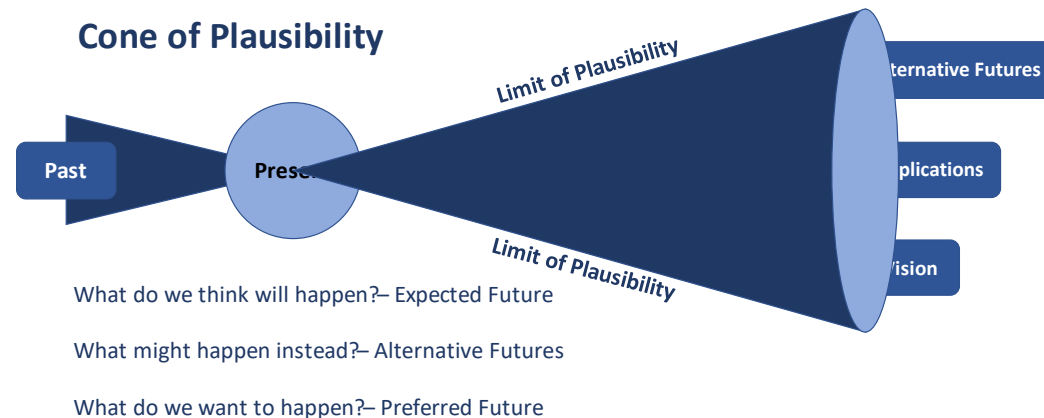
# Overview

## This guidebook will help agencies to:

1. Understand strategic foresight definitions, concepts, and methodologies.
2. Apply foresight methods to their unique missions and challenges.
3. Identify strategies and actions to better anticipate and prepare for the future.
4. Build a robust foresight program to augment and inform their current strategic planning capabilities.

Foresight is both an art and a science, and as such, creative foresight practitioners are continually creating, innovating, and designing different methods; and combining existing processes to advance the discipline. Collecting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data is critical to the success of a foresight program or project.

The cone of plausibility depicted to the right provides a model for a range of alternative futures and their implications. A study of the future will generate a baseline future along with several plausible alternatives. Some future scenarios will fall outside the range of plausibility. These can be explored but may not be as useful. Some questions used to guide the formulations of future scenarios are: What do we think will happen? (Expected future); What might happen instead? (Alternative futures); and What do we want to happen? (Preferred future).



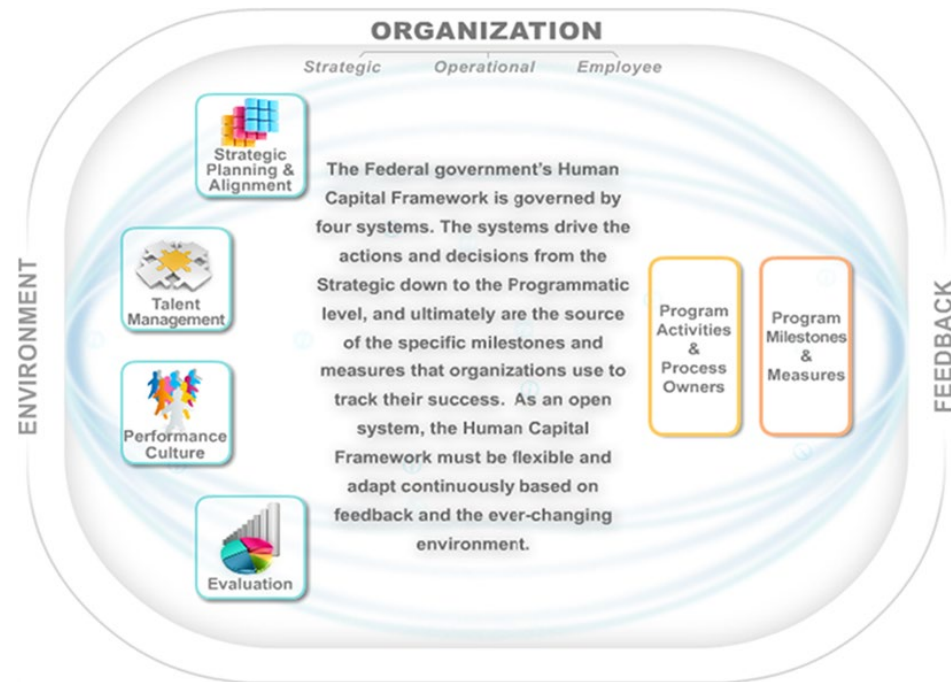
# Intro to Foresight – The Human Capital Framework

Organizational agility is essential for Federal agencies, as external environmental factors (e.g., budget fluctuations, changes in public expectations, unforeseen crises) become more complex and unpredictable. This requires all organizations to acquire a flexible and responsive approach to managing talent to achieve their missions.

## Why Use Foresight?

The current operational mode for most agencies is reactive instead of anticipatory. This can lead to undesirable strategic decisions within the Human Capital space. The unpredictability and multi-faceted nature of the challenges facing agencies requires a new approach, one that explores “what if” scenarios, and avoids short-term decisions that may be unfavorable in the long-term.

The Human Capital Framework (HCF) incorporates insights from strategic human capital management, organizational development, and complexity science to provide senior leaders, supervisors, HR practitioners, and employees with practical guidance and insights on how to align with their agency's mission, goals, and program objectives — even in the midst of constant change. As senior leaders grapple with an uncertain and evolving future, they must take actions to position their agency to succeed regardless of how the future unfolds. Because foresight inherently includes diverse perspectives from every facet of an organization, it can be used to inform strategic planning and to provide the organization with a clear vision and a path to achievement. Senior leaders, managers, and front-line employees will understand how the vision impacts everyone within the system, which will lead to better outcomes and a shared organizational purpose.



# Intro to Foresight – Key Definitions

Foresight defines certain words and concepts to ensure that everyone involved in the practice has a common understanding. Otherwise, foresight exercises risk devolving into esoteric debates on the validity of participant opinions, which detracts from the important work of future studies. Below are some key definitions to keep in mind as you use this guidebook:

**Cognitive Bias:** Psychological tendencies that result in systematic errors in the way human beings receive, process, retain or recall information, or make inferences, judgements, and predictions.

**Weak Signal:** A weak signal is an indicator of a potentially emerging issue, that may become significant in the future. Weak signals supplement trend analysis and can be used to expand on alternate futures.

**Drivers / Driving Forces:** Significant trends, observable in the present, which are expected to continue to affect the future.

**Scenario Planning:** A process that generates a group of plausible stories about the future. These can then be used to aid long-term planning. Well-written scenarios combine rigorous forecasts with immersive storytelling elements to bring possible futures to life. In so doing, they can help inspire readers to act in a way that more traditional methods of communication might not. To assist in Scenario Planning, OPM has [developed guidelines](#). See also [Center for Strategic Futures](#) in Singapore or [Future Motions](#).



# Intro to Foresight – Benefits

Over the years, two common criticisms of foresight that have emerged are that it is too vague or that it fails to adequately provide the basis for necessary action. However, in recent years, organizations have begun to recognize the benefits of thinking about the future and what it means to their organization. Recently, the Chief Financial Officers Council (CFOC) and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) successfully used foresight to help chart the course of their respective organizations. The CFOC foresight project culminated in a [strategic plan for the future of the Financial Management workforce](#) and in building capacity and expanding the scope of futures studies work in the NIOSH project.

The benefits to organizations that systematically apply strategic foresight can be seen in the Seven Key Benefits of Strategic Foresight chart.

Seven Key Benefits of Strategic Foresight
1. Thinking in more diverse, equitable, inclusive, balanced, and non-biased ways.
2. Focusing on the right questions and challenges.
3. Promoting awareness of underlying assumptions and mental models.
4. Anticipating change and avoiding surprise.
5. Prioritizing and making better, more informed decision.
6. Building a learning organization.
7. Fostering alignment, commitment, and confidence in decisions.

Foresight is a discipline. Application of strategic foresight can assist employees in their daily work, as well as prepare them to be a future leaders. The growth mindset calls on everyone to be lifelong learners – foresight is another tool to help in this endeavor.

# Intro to Foresight – Knowledge Grid

Strategic foresight aims to think beyond traditional day-to-day management and “fire control,” beyond the traditional strategic planning and budget cycles, and analyze a world that is uncertain, unclear, and inherently unknowable – the Unknown-Unknown quadrant. Foresight should challenge underlying assumptions and ask questions to assist Federal agencies in identifying future challenges, mitigating risks, and leveraging opportunities.

		Solutions	
		Known	Unknown
Challenges	Known	<i>Known Challenges, Known Solutions</i>  <b>Tyranny of the Present</b>	<i>Known Challenges, Unknown Solutions</i>  <b>Strategic Planning Foresight</b>
	Unknown	<i>Unknown Challenges, Known Solutions</i>  <b>Strategic Planning</b>	<i>Unknown Challenges, Unknown Solutions</i>  <b>Strategic Foresight</b>

# Applying Foresight – The Foresight Framework

The foresight framework was developed at the University of Houston by Dr. Andy Hines and Dr. Peter Bishop. For a more in-depth description of the framework, please refer to Dr. Hines' book – [Thinking About the Future](#).

The framework described in this guidebook illustrates the six critical steps in a generic foresight process. Some steps could include several, iterative phases and use multiple methods to achieve the desired end state. OPM can provide foresight assistance for either project-based or foresight development work. OPM is committed to helping agencies think differently about the future, assisting with scenario planning, and applying insights in developing plausible remedies and actions in an uncertain future.

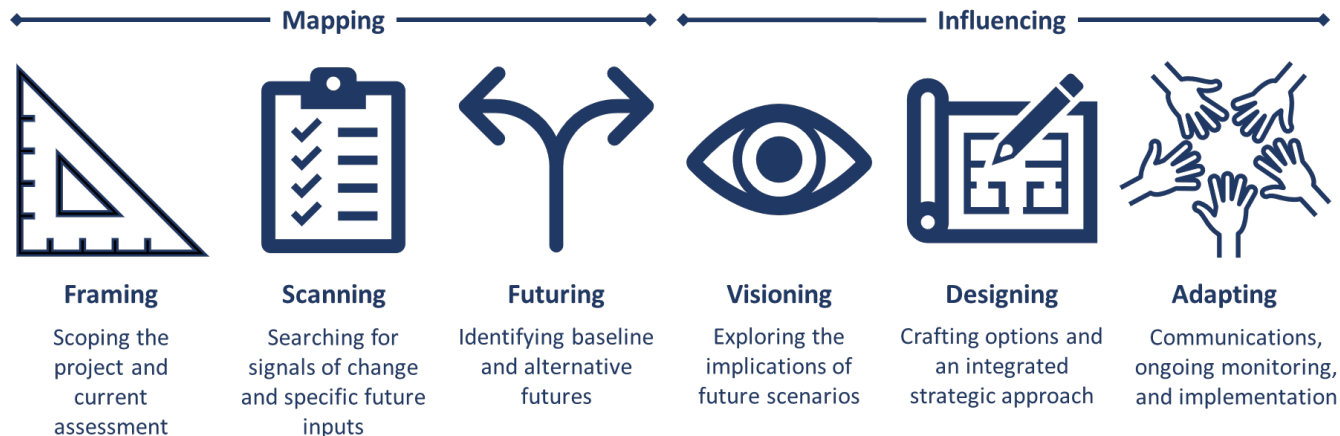
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“Foresight is not about predicting THE future but rather about uncovering a range of plausible alternative futures, and then identifying the indicators that suggest which way the future is unfolding.”

*Dr. Andy Hines, University of Houston*

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This framework centers on the development of baseline and alternative futures, while also helping agencies consider the implications as they develop plans to stimulate action.



# Applying Foresight — Framing

**What:** Framing is the process by which you scope your challenge and narrow the focus to concentrate on what is most important. Framing enables you to define the space requiring strategic foresight.

**Why:** Taking time at the outset of a project to clarify the objective and how best to address it will pay big dividends in the later phases. Framing prevents misunderstandings early on that may generate confusion and misdirect resources.

**Guidelines:** In this phase, it is imperative to know your audience, understand the rationale and purpose, clearly set objectives, select an energized team, and create a strategic work environment.

**HCF Links:** Framing is critical to strategic planning, Foresight, and alignment. If agencies do not properly frame future challenges, they will be unable to identify the proper methods, people, and skills required for the project. Agencies should link these efforts to OPM's [Human Capital Framework](#) (HCF).

**Case Study:** In accordance with [5 CFR 250 Subpart B](#), OPM published the [2018 Federal Workforce Priorities Report](#). Part of the research process involved a systematic approach to framing the research. Thoughtful consideration was given to a variety of topics but ultimately the research was conducted only in the areas beneficial to all Federal agencies. Following a similar process, the 2022 Federal Workforce Priorities Report identified the development of an agency foresight capability as a key priority for the future of the Federal workforce.

# Applying Foresight – Scanning

**What:** Scanning is the process by which an organization comprehensively researches and examines the internal and external factors that will influence the future.

**Why:** Understanding both the internal and external environments is a critical stage in the foresight process. Agencies must understand their history and present culture, in addition to identifying future trends and drivers. This will help mitigate conflict in future stages and build a solid foundation for exploring and leveraging different views and opinions.

**Guidelines:** In this phase, you and your team members map the challenge or problem, study the history and culture, scan the external environment, and collaborate with a diverse mix of agency colleagues and external stakeholders.

**HCF Links:** Scanning is a critical part of strategic planning and alignment, which requires: (1) understanding the culture and the external environment when managing people; (2) knowing what might impact current and future employees; and (3) understanding the skills and competencies your agency will require in the future to incorporate them directly into the strategic analysis.

**Case Study:** The [US Nuclear Regulatory Commission \(NRC\)](#) embarked on a project to understand the external environment in which the NRC might have to operate in 2030. [The results of their environmental scans, interviews, and trend mapping activities](#) resulted in the creation of a set of four scenarios that helped the NRC better inform its strategic choices to be resilient for the future. The study also highlighted that NRC may need to focus on five thematic areas:

- Increasing the Agility of the Organization
- Enhancing the NRC's Strategy, Governance, and Culture
- Preparing for Human Capital Changes
- Increasing Efficiency Through Technology
- Engaging with Future Stakeholders.

# Horizon Scanning Frameworks

There are many horizon scanning frameworks that Federal agencies may employ to analyze their internal and external environments. Some of these frameworks are provided to illustrate how agencies with different missions may want to use a different framework depending on their specific mission.

No scanning framework is incorrect, but some are better suited for agencies depending on its mission. In terms of human capital, all agencies should include the social aspect into every scanning exercise, as it will uncover trends related to culture, demographics, and people. OPM will be glad to offer guidance on the best scanning framework.



For example, agencies that address environmental challenges, may want to use the **STEEP** (Social, Technological, Environmental, Economic, Political) framework because of this mission.



Law enforcement agencies should consider using the **PESTLE** (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, and Ethics) framework because of the legal and ethical aspects of their mission.



Regulatory agencies should consider using the **STEER** (Social, Technological, Environmental, Economic, and Regulatory) framework to cover this important part of their mission.

# Applying Foresight — Futuring

**What:** Futuring is the process by which you and your foresight team members use the results of the scanning phase to develop plausible alternative futures to be used in later phases.

**Why:** Federal agencies typically believe that the future is going to be an extension of the present – that standard budget cycles, funding mechanisms, and the way work is accomplished will remain largely unchanged. Futuring inspires agencies to break that paradigm and imagine plausible alternative scenarios or visions of the future.

**Guidelines:** In this phase, your team, along with impacted stakeholders, identifies significant drivers and uncertainties impacting the challenge, chooses appropriate foresight tools, generates, and prioritizes ideas, and develops alternatives.

**HCF Links:** Futuring is a way for agencies to explore alternative futures and identify blind spots. It brings in a large and diverse number of stakeholders to think about different ways the future might unfold. It lays out a creative set of plausible futures that help strategic planners and agency leadership understand what the future internal and external environment could look like.

**Case Study:** The [US Coast Guard](#) has engaged in scenario-based planning and futuring since the commencement of Project Longview in 1998. The plausible future scenarios developed helped to inform strategic decisions at the highest levels of the organization. The US Coast Guard is one organization that is [learning from the future](#).

# Applying Foresight – Visioning

**What:** In the visioning stage, agency leaders must seek to answer the fundamental question – “So what does this mean for my organization?”

**Why:** Given the plausible futures outlined by the agency, what does the organization want to do in the future? This is the critical question that must be asked and answered to realize the full benefit of foresight.

**Guidelines:** In this phase, your team must clearly identify implications, challenge assumptions about the way things have always been done and think in a visionary manner.

**HCF Links:** The HCF's flexible structure supports organizational agility and adaptability, which agencies need to function successfully in the 21st century's dynamic environment. Visioning affords agencies the freedom to chart a course and integrate the results of strategic foresight directly into the strategic plans mandated by the [GPRA Modernization Act of 2010](#).

**Case Study:** The [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#) sponsored a foresight exercise that looked out to 2030. Using the US Coast Guard scenarios, participants explored the “So What” question. The process and answers to this question painted a possible vision of FEMA in 2030 – outlining essential capabilities it has developed, innovative models and tools it uses, and dynamic relationships and partnerships it has formed.



# Applying Foresight — Designing

**What:** This phase of the process uses the artifacts, insights, and ideas gathered from the previous phases to put foresight into action and design plans for how to achieve a preferred future.

**Why:** Designing solutions based on foresight is critical. Without a clearly articulated, actionable plan, senior agency leaders may not be willing to take the risk and gamble budgets, careers, and personal reputation. You, as a foresight practitioner, will help the agency understand what could happen and compare that to what the agency would like to see happen.

**Guidelines:** In this phase, your team thinks strategically and develops strategic options for senior agency leaders. This is an iterative process, and these options should be refined and clearly articulated to decision-makers.

**HCF Links:** This is where theoretical and strategic foresight meets the operational aspects of the HCF. The strategies uncovered and developed by studying the future must be translated into action plans that can be detailed in the individual agency [Human Capital Operating Plans \(HCOP\)](#).

**Case Study:** Designing an action plan for achieving a preferred future involves answering questions and honestly assessing what can be done and how it might be done given various constraints. Some of the questions that must be addressed are identified in this guidebook.

# Design Questions

- How can we complete the journey to our preferred future in an efficient and effective manner?
- How will we measure progress and ensure accountability?
- How will we attract the talent we need to thrive in an uncertain future?
- How will we build a collaborative decision-making team to support the goal of achieving the preferred future?
- How will we incorporate the growth mindset into the process to continually enhance our knowledge and support data-driven decisions?
- How will we build a culture that communicates effectively, works efficiently, supports a people-centered process, and champions diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility?
- How will we build systems to address setbacks and learn from mistakes while celebrating success and organizational sustainability?



# Applying Foresight — Adapting

**What:** This phase of the process uses developed criteria to monitor and measure the initiatives attached to the foresight process.

**Why:** Ultimately, foresight must provide tangible value to an organization, or it will quickly fall into disfavor. Building an organization that thinks and acts with strategic intent and ingraining the principles of strategic foresight within the workforce should be the goal of any foresight process. Most importantly, agencies must monitor and evaluate progress.

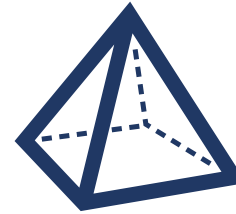
**Guidelines:** In this phase, the foresight team creates and updates action agendas, communicates the results of the foresight process, and works to ingrain strategic foresight into the organization.

**HCF Links:** Evaluation is critical to the Human Capital Framework as agencies must measure the success of their strategic plans and human capital management. Evaluation is a process and a system that operates at all levels to help the organization reach its goals. The strategies developed through a foresight process must be actionable and measurable.

**Case Study:** [HRStat](#) is a strategic human capital performance evaluation process that identifies, measures, and analyzes human capital data to inform the impact of an agency's human capital management on organizational results with the intent to improve human capital outcomes. The [HRStat](#) data-driven reviews can be leveraged to determine if the strategy employed is producing the desired results.

# OPM Tools to Support Your Agency

At times, an analysis of the workforce may reveal the need for new skills and types of work, the need for fewer or more positions in different places throughout the country, and/or the need to design new ways of working to leverage technology. Agency leaders and HR practitioners can shape the Federal workforce so that it is better able to serve the American people and fulfill agency missions.



## [Executive Playbook for Workforce Reshaping](#)

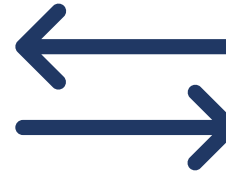
Supports senior leaders with informed, strategic decision making based on data

Foresight plays a critical role in identifying new skills or understanding the impact that technology may have on the Federal workforce. Foresight should be an input into agency strategic plans and, as agencies begin to develop action plans, they are encouraged to use the suite of tools OPM has developed to assist them.



## [Reskilling Toolkit](#)

Assists HR professionals, managers, and employees as they design reskilling and upskilling opportunities based on employee strengths and mission needs



## [Guidance for Change Management in the Federal Workforce](#)

Provides practical advice for leaders and managers as they plan for changes that align agency culture, values, people, and behaviors to encourage the desired results

# Closing Skills Gaps

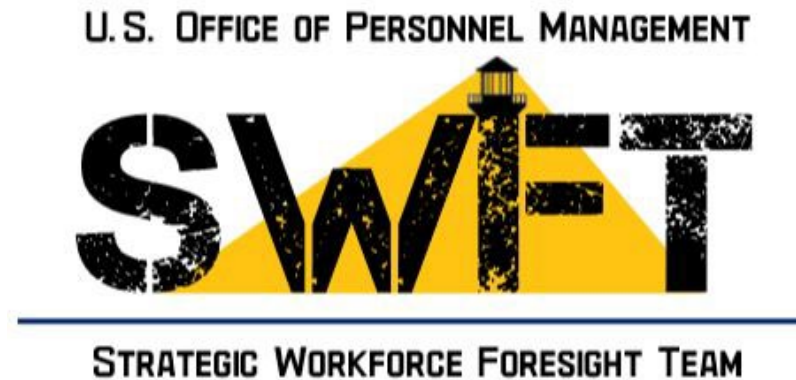
OPM, in its role to provide policy direction and leadership in designing, developing, and communicating Government-wide human resources systems, programs, and policies, and in partnership with the [Chief Human Capital Officers Council \(CHCOC\)](#), has designed and implemented a multi-year data-driven process called the [Closing Skills Gap Initiative](#). The focus of the initiative, which is authorized via [Title 5 § 1103\(C\)](#) and the alignment of [5 CFR, Part 250, Subpart B to GPRA-MA](#), is to develop methodologies that assist Federal agencies in identifying both agency-specific and Government-wide mission critical occupations (MCO), and to train agencies in the creation and implementation of strategies to mitigate those gaps.

Strategic foresight techniques are closely aligned with closing skills gaps methods, especially as agencies increasingly look to the future of work and what that might mean for critical (and non-critical) occupations and competencies. Future skills gaps can be identified by applying foresight principles. Any future gap(s) can be used as input to an agency's established process and a more in-depth root-cause analysis should be performed. While this analysis may seem theoretical, the data gathered from the foresight process can assist workforce planners and inform agencies in identifying and remediating potential gaps. Using foresight methods to address skills gaps further enhances an agency's anticipatory culture.

# Technical Assistance

The mission of OPM's Strategic Workforce Foresight Team (SWFT) is to position the Federal human capital community to navigate emerging strategic workforce challenges and harness potential opportunities. To achieve this, SWFT believes in both Applied Project-Based Foresight and Foresight Training. Ingraining the principles of strategic foresight into all levels of the Federal government is key to building an anticipatory, proactive, and resilient government that thinks and acts with strategic intent.

If you would like assistance with applying strategic foresight in your agency or learning more about foresight, please contact SWFT at [OPMForesight@opm.gov](mailto:OPMForesight@opm.gov)



# Conclusion

The Framework Foresight process is offered to provide agencies with a method to systematically apply foresight to their current and future challenges. OPM recommends that every agency identify ways to apply the principles contained within this guidebook and infuse strategic foresight into their agency strategic planning culture. In addition, the use of a diverse group of foresight practitioners to think about the future will benefit agencies as they strive to internalize and realize the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. By learning from the past, understanding the present, and studying the future in a systematic way, agencies will be able to understand the long-term implications of their plans, prepare for an uncertain future, minimize surprise, and contribute to a more efficient and effective Federal government **for all**.

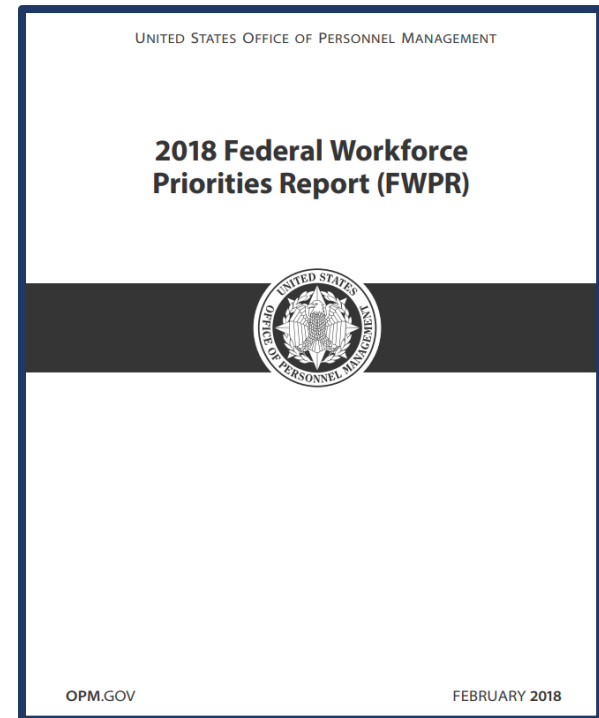


# Appendix A: U.S. Code and Regulatory Links

[Title 5 § 1103\(C\)](#) mandates that OPM design a set of systems, including appropriate metrics, for assessing the management of human capital by Federal agencies. Specifically enumerated are systems to align human capital strategies of agencies with the missions, goals, and organizational objectives of those agencies, and to integrate those strategies into the budget and strategic plans.

Additionally, the alignment of [5 CFR, Part 250, Subpart B to GPRA-MA](#), requires that the strategic human capital management processes used to cultivate and manage the workforce be integrated into agency planning and management processes, remain current with research and best practices, allow for proactive responses to anticipated environmental changes, and seek to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of human resources (HR) service delivery.

To meet these requirements, OPM leverages foresight methods and outputs to inform strategic human capital management. Foresight is a discipline that can add richness and depth to any strategic workforce analysis and is used to inform the [Federal Workforce Priorities Report](#).



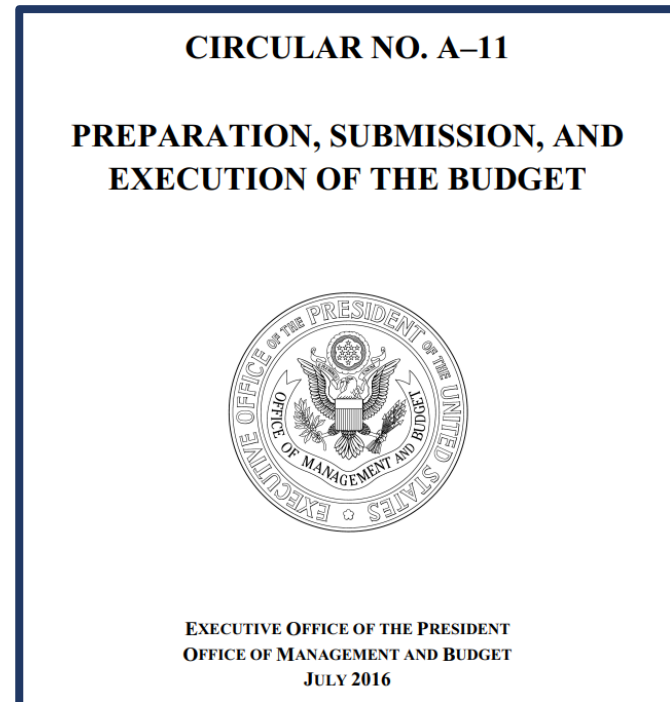


# Appendix B: Office of Management and Budget Links

[OMB Circular A-11](#), encourages the integration of strategic foresight within the strategic planning process.

- Incorporating strategic foresight is one method for facilitating the achievement of long-term goals.
- Strategic foresight is a method for systematically considering a longer time horizon and broader scope of issues than other forms of planning.
- Integrating strategic foresight also facilitates a systems approach to problem solving and may help an agency better prepare for future threats or take early advantage of emerging opportunities.
- The systems approach of strategic foresight also encourages organizational communication to avoid the silo effect.
- Foresight methodologies may vary by agency depending on its mission and operating environment.
- Exploration of opportunities for cross-agency foresight coordination are also encouraged, where appropriate.

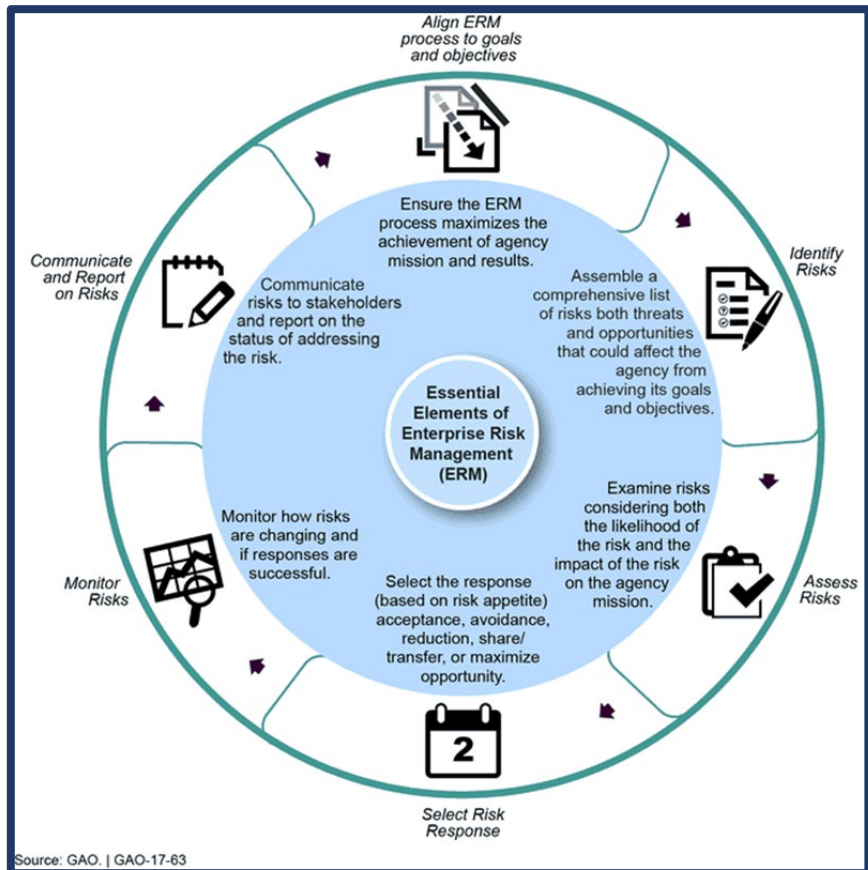
Part 6, Section 200.22 defines **Foresight** – In the context of a strategic planning best practice, foresight is generally characterized as insight into how and why the future might be different from the present. Foresight practices include environmental scanning, trend analysis, scenario-based planning, and other methods to engage individuals in thinking about the long-range future. While foresight is often considered as the “act of looking forward” to plan for the future, strategic planning is not the same as forecasting, which seeks to make statements or assertions about future events based on quantitative and qualitative analysis and modeling. By incorporating foresight into strategic planning, an agency can develop an appropriate strategic posture by analyzing and preparing for multiple possible futures.



# Appendix C: Enterprise Risk Management Links

[OMB Circular No. A-123](#) provides guidance to Federal managers on improving the accountability and effectiveness of Federal programs and operations by identifying and managing risks, and by establishing requirements to assess, correct, and report on the effectiveness of internal controls. It complements Section 270 of [OMB Circular No. A-11](#), which discusses agency responsibilities for identifying and managing strategic and programmatic risk as part of agency strategic planning, performance management, and performance reporting practices.

Foresight is one discipline that can assist agencies in identifying and analyzing these future risks. While not the only input into the process, foresight can provide valuable insights that should be leveraged by enterprise risk management practitioners and managers. Strategic foresight does not attempt to offer definitive answers about what the future will hold. Foresight reinforces the future as an emerging entity that is only partially visible in the present (emerging trends) and that cannot be fully known in advance (predicted), as foresight facts and evidence will be incomplete. The goal of the foresight process is not to 'get the future right,' but to expand and reframe the range of plausible developments for consideration, and for organizations to be proactive and ready to address sudden changes. Foresight should reframe the perspective of Federal agency leaders and help them challenge their assumptions.



# References

- [Thinking About the Future - Andy Hines & Peter Bishop](#)
- [University of Houston College of Technology](#)
- [Foresight: A Glossary](#)
- [Scenario-Based Workforce Planning](#)
- [The Value of Strategic Foresight](#)
- [5 CFR 250 Subpart B](#)
- [5 USC 1103 Subpart C](#)
- [OMB Circular No. A-11](#)
- [OMB Circular No. A-123](#)
- [Complexity Science: A Mechanism for Strategic Foresight and Resiliency in National Security Decision-Making](#)
- [The Dynamic Futures for NRC Mission Areas](#)
- [Learning From the Future](#)
- [GPRM Modernization Act of 2010](#)
- [Escaping the 'Faster Horses' Trap: Bridging Strategic Foresight and Design-Based Innovation](#)
- [Crisis Response & Disaster Resilience 2030: Forging Strategic Action in an Age of Uncertainty](#)
- [Envisioning a Preferred Future](#)
- [GAO 2019 High Risk List – Strategic Human Capital Management](#)
- [Future Motions: Introduction to Strategic Foresight](#)