PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE RELEASES PRELIMINARY FEDERAL EXECUTIVE SURVEY DATA, ANNOUNCES NEW INITIATIVE TO RENEW THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Early survey results show concerns among federal executives about a range of federal management issues; the Partnership for Public Service rolls out "Roadmap for Renewing Our Federal Government"

WASHINGTON – The federal government is failing to recruit, hire and retain employees with the skills needed to meet our nation's urgent and complex challenges, according to the preliminary findings of a new survey of federal leaders.

Early results from the 2020 Survey on the Future of Government Service found that 60% of the federal executives surveyed believe that an inadequately skilled workforce is a significant obstacle to fulfilling their agency's mission. When asked what contributes a "good bit" or a "great deal" to the problem, 82% of those executives cited a hiring process that takes too long and 54% cited civil service rules that prevent agencies from hiring the best candidates. Only 32% of federal executives surveyed believe their agency has a strategic recruitment plan that is aligned to its workforce needs.

While demonstrating that federal leaders are highly mission-driven and committed to their jobs, the survey reflects a level of concern among the federal leaders surveyed about a range of other workforce issues, including the ability to retain the best employees, the aging employee population and the role of contractors.

The survey is a collaborative effort by the nonprofit, nonpartisan Partnership for Public Service, the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University, the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions at Vanderbilt University and Georgetown University.

The survey coincides with the release of the Partnership's "Roadmap for Renewing Our Federal Government," an initiative to revitalize our nation's most important democratic institution. The Partnership has identified key issues that the next administration—a second Trump term or first-term Biden team— should make a priority: leadership and stewardship, talent, innovation and technology modernization, and collaboration.

The Partnership recommends early action and a first 100 days checklist to begin laying the groundwork for renewing our federal government. These action items include addressing some of the workforce challenges identified in the survey. This new initiative also highlights bright spots and innovations from the government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The survey's findings come at a time when the devastating pandemic, an economic crisis, a racial reckoning and a string of wildfires and other natural disasters have demonstrated that an effective government with skilled public servants and competent leaders is essential to the nation's well-being.

"Our government is struggling to meet many of the major challenges we face today, in part because we have neglected to invest in and strengthen this critical institution for decades," said Max Stier, president and CEO of the Partnership for Public Service.

"The new survey highlights several key issues, including the need for improve the way the government attracts, hires and retains skilled employees," Stier said. "To meet America's current and future needs, the White House, Congress and agency leaders need a comprehensive plan to rebuild our government, which is why we are launching the Roadmap for Renewing Our Federal Government."

Early actions for the next administration include:

- **Select and promote capable leaders**. Political appointees should be better prepared to lead in the public sector, career executives need greater opportunities for growth and development, and all must recognize their responsibilities as stewards of the public trust.

- **Revamp the hiring process**: The hiring and recruiting process should be modernized along with a renewed call to public service designed to bring skilled talent into the government.

- **Promote innovation and upgrade technology**: The White House and agency leaders should encourage and reward innovation, invest in modern technology and empower employees with a customer-service mindset.

- **Foster cross-agency and intergovernmental cooperation**: Federal agencies need to do a better job of collaborating with each other, across the legislative and executive branches, between levels of government, and with the private and nonprofit sectors to more effectively solve problems and deliver services.

The early results of the 2020 Survey on the Future of Government Service echo the findings of the Partnership's recent research report, "A Time for Talent: Improving Federal Recruiting and Hiring," that identifies strategies agencies can employ to improve the hiring and recruiting process, and strengthen the federal workforce.

The survey will remain open for several more weeks. While the final numbers will change slightly as additional federal executives complete the survey, substantial changes are not anticipated. Additional results will be released later this year, including findings on government performance, the impact of workplace stressors like the possibility of a presidential transition, operating under continuing appropriations resolutions, the COVID-19 pandemic and data comparing the views of federal executives with their private sector counterparts.

During the past 19 years, the nonpartisan, nonprofit Partnership for Public Service has been dedicated to making the federal government more effective for the American people. We work across administrations to help transform the way government operates by increasing collaboration, accountability, efficiency and innovation. Visit ourpublicservice.org to learn more. Follow us on social @publicservice and subscribe today to get the latest federal news, information on upcoming Partnership programs and events, and more.

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