



PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

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“Revitalizing the Federal Workforce”

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Introduction

Chairman Connolly, Ranking Member Hice, and members of the Subcommittee on Government Operations, thank you for the opportunity for the Partnership for Public Service to submit a written statement for the record on revitalizing the federal workforce.

The Partnership is a non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to inspiring public service and increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the federal government. The Partnership was founded on the premise that any organization's best asset is its workforce.

Over the past year, changes in the way the federal workforce does its business have happened at warp speed when they used to move at a crawl. As we move past the pandemic, we must sustain and build on these innovations. We are on the cusp of achieving a remarkable transformation and revitalization of the federal government and its workforce. If we seize the moment, the government will have an opportunity to recruit talent wherever that talent is, ensure that the federal workforce reflects the diversity of our country, create a culture more in line with today's mobile workforce, spur innovation and use of new technologies, raise federal employee morale to meet or exceed private sector benchmarks, develop more customer-focused services, and strengthen the federal government's collaboration with state, local and tribal governments and the private and non-profit sectors. It is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to drive meaningful, systemic and lasting improvement in how government runs.

At the same time, we need to recommit to a workforce that is held to high standards of performance and nonpartisanship. Our civil service is the envy of the world for its professionalism and skill. We must never enable, endorse or allow efforts to undermine its independence or replace professional competence with political loyalty.

Challenges Facing the Federal Workforce

An important role for the leader of any organization is to continuously plan how to recruit, engage, develop, and retain a first-rate workforce that fills short- and long-term critical needs. Too often in the federal government, leaders have focused almost exclusively on policy, to the detriment of strategic workforce planning and the management of their agencies.

The size of the federal civilian workforce has remained stable over the last six decades. In other words, the federal workforce today is about the same size as it was during the Kennedy administration, but the economic, national security, social, health, environmental and safety challenges it faces are increasingly complex. More so than any other time in recent history, this has been on display in 2020 and into 2021, as our nation responds to a historic pandemic and its damage to the economy, while confronting racial injustices. And amidst all that, federal employees continue to deliver for the American people – whether it is providing health care to our veterans, enforcing our borders, ensuring safe travel or any of the other services that our government provides. The urgencies of the past year have shown how important it is for government to be able to attract top talent in the marketplace in order to do its job for the American people.

At the same time, the disincentives for talented people to join federal service are significant. The private and nonprofit sectors have more agile hiring and talent management systems, the political crosscurrents

are strong, and many federal employees have been maligned as members of a “deep state.” This is unfair and wrong. Public servants – be they surgeons at the VA, national park rangers, FBI agents, social workers, astronauts, cybersecurity specialists, TSA officers or diplomats – are not the enemy; they are incredibly smart, dedicated people working to serve your constituents. They deserve our respect, and they deserve to work in a modern system that makes good use of their talents, provides them with updated technology to do their jobs and allows them to work collaboratively to solve problems.

To revitalize the workforce, the administration and Congress must both repair recent damage to the federal workforce and address long-standing problems. Key data points signal the need for attention to the workforce.¹ These trends are not new but will be harder to fix the longer we wait:

- Just 6.8% of full-time federal workers are under the age of 30. By comparison, almost 20% of the employed U.S. labor force in 2020 was under age 30. In the federal IT workforce, more than 19 times more employees are over 50 than under 30.
- On the other end of the spectrum, of the full-time employees on board as of the beginning of fiscal year 2019, 25% will be eligible to retire by the end of 2021; 35.5% will be eligible to retire by the end of 2024.
- Use of the federal Pathways intern program, which should be a main pipeline into federal service, has plummeted. According to the [fiscal 2020 budget request](#), the number of new hires of student interns fell from 35,000 in 2010 to 4,000 in 2018.²
- Of the full-time employees under 30 who voluntarily quit federal service in fiscal 2019, over 73% did so with less than 2 years of federal tenure, suggesting that many young people do not have a positive work experience in the federal government.
- Data also shows major diversity challenges in the federal workforce, which grow even greater at the higher echelons of service. For example, only 35.5% of the career Senior Executive Service are female, and only 22.6% of the career SES are people of color.
- The government’s brand has suffered. Government shutdowns, hiring freezes, and negative rhetoric have hurt the image of government and the people who serve. An [Axios Harris poll](#) in March 2019 examined the reputation of America’s 99 most high-profile companies and the federal government, and the government ranked dead last.³
- The 2019 [Best Places to Work in the Federal Government](#)^{®4} employee engagement score was 61.7 out of 100, lagging behind the private sector by more than 15 points.
- It takes the government an average of 98 days to bring new talent on board – more than double the time in the private sector.⁵

¹ Statistics on federal employees are drawn from Office of Personnel Management FedScope data on the federal workforce unless indicated otherwise.

² “Analytical Perspectives, Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2020,” March 18, 2019, p.77. Retrieved from <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/BUDGET-2020-PER/pdf/BUDGET-2020-PER.pdf>.

³ Axios and The Harris Poll, “The 100 Most Visible Companies,” 2019. Retrieved from <https://theharrispoll.com/axios-harrispoll-100-2019/>

⁴ Partnership for Public Service, Best Places to Work in the Federal Government[®]. Retrieved from <https://bestplacestowork.org/>

⁵ Office of Personnel Management, “OPM Issues Updated Time-to-Hire Guidance,” February 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.opm.gov/news/releases/2020/02/opm-issues-updated-time-to-hire-guidance/>.

- About 83% of major federal departments and agencies struggle with staffing shortages and 63% report gaps in the knowledge and skills of their employees.⁶
- According to the [Survey on the Future of Government Service](#),⁷ just 32% of respondents say their agency has a strategic recruitment plan that is aligned to its workforce needs.

The Pandemic Experience: Creating a Moment for Transformation

The past year has shown the dedication, resiliency and resourcefulness of the federal workforce. At many agencies, most federal employees shifted quickly to telework as the pandemic spread, while others bravely remained on the front lines in jobs that cannot be performed remotely. On all fronts, federal workers have found innovative ways to serve the people during the pandemic.

Thus, out of crisis comes opportunity. We have a once in a generation moment now to transform the workforce and the way it works, and to inspire Americans to enter public service.

Last year, the Partnership submitted a statement to this committee about the many achievements of the government during the pandemic, one of which was shifting from working on-site to maximum teleworking in a few short weeks.⁸ The necessity of working virtually during the pandemic has broken down both logistical and cultural barriers to telework. Telework is here to stay. The message the Partnership is hearing from career agency leaders across the government is that their workforces will expect a telework-heavy schedule after the pandemic.⁹

The experience of the last year has shattered old expectations about the workplace. While some jobs cannot be performed by telework, agencies should embrace the new reality that an overwhelming number of jobs can be performed outside the traditional office setting. Telework has enabled federal employees to be more productive, nimble, and resilient. And it will help agencies reduce their real estate footprint while being able to recruit, hire and retain talent wherever it is, allowing more Americans to serve their country and bringing a more diverse workforce into the federal government. To be clear, this is not about a larger workforce; it is about a workforce that is more efficient and effective on behalf of the public it serves.

The shift to telework is not the only change. The urgency of the pandemic has also spurred federal employees to break through an array of longstanding problems and find better ways to serve the public.

⁶ Office of Personnel Management, “2018 Federal Workforce Priorities Report,” February 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/human-capital-management/federal-workforce-priorities-report/2018-federal-workforce-priorities-report.pdf>.

⁷ “Survey on the Future of Government Service,” October 13, 2020. The survey is a collaborative effort by the 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. Retrieved from <https://ourpublicservice.org/publications/survey-on-the-future-of-government-service/>.

⁸ Statement of Max Stier before the House Committee on Oversight and Reform Subcommittee on Government Operations, “Frontline Feds: Serving the Public During a Pandemic,” June 25, 2020. Retrieved from <https://ourpublicservice.org/publications/frontline-feds-hearing/>.

⁹ See also the results of a survey of 300 federal employees released in October 2020 by SAIC, finding that 41% of respondents expect to telework an average of three days post-pandemic and another 41% expect to telework four or five days a week – compared to an average two days of weekly telework prior to the pandemic. Retrieved from <https://investors.saic.com/press-releases/press-release-details/2020/Federal-Executives-Expect-the-Significant-Changes-to-Their-Work-Operations-Due-to-COVID-19-to-Continue-Post-Pandemic-According-to-SAIC-Survey/default.aspx>.

The Partnership has collected [examples](#)¹⁰ and [case studies](#)¹¹ of these bright spots. A few examples:

- At the Veterans Health Administration, the need to quickly hire additional medical professionals to combat the pandemic led the agency to rethink its hiring process. VHA has shortened the time it takes to bring new staff onboard from 94 days to just 10 to 12 days. The agency overcame well-known federal hiring challenges to on-board more than 55,000 new employees between March and October 2020.
- The Veterans Benefits Administration has reported increased productivity, including exceeding targets for claims completed.
- The Small Business Administration, responsible for overseeing the \$350-billion Paycheck Protection Program in 2020, was able to overcome the traditionally slow federal hiring process by using new and existing hiring authorities to bring employees on board more quickly, ultimately increasing the size of its workforce by about 50 percent.
- SBA also was able, in six hours, to set up a new web portal as a stopgap measure for applying for disaster loans while a new portal was developed. This stopgap solution received about 500,000 files in the first 100 hours after going live. Around the same time, SBA, within a few days, developed a new cloud-based case management tool to organize incoming e-mails from SBA customers, allowing the agency to scale up customer support. Over a 40-day period, a million cases were created in this tool.
- The Department of Energy built a virtual biotechnology laboratory to connect national laboratories and provide researchers with remote access to the technical and scientific capabilities of the labs so they could respond to COVID-19.
- The Department of Agriculture adopted new digital tools for online file sharing of loan paperwork, electronic signatures and videoconferencing, enabling its staff to work on farm loan applications even when field offices were closed.
- In mid-December, Veterans Health Administration staff members were conducting more than 206,000 weekly video visits with veterans for both mental health and medical services, a more than 1,700% increase from the beginning of the crisis—enabling veterans to receive critical services during the pandemic.
- The Department of Veterans Affairs added virus-related tags and keywords into its customer feedback system for an immediate sense of how veterans were affected, and how the department could help.
- A new, high-pressure ventilator the National Aeronautics and Space Administration engineers created in 37 days, tailored to treat COVID-19 patients, was approved by the Food and Drug Administration under an emergency use authorization specifically for people with the coronavirus.
- Indian Health Service facilities across the nation extended their Wi-Fi into parking lots and donated tablet devices, so visitors without an internet connection at home and unable to visit in person safely, could park and connect with loved ones inside the facilities.

¹⁰ Partnership for Public Service, “Bright Spots in the Federal Government’s Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic,” February 21, 2021. Retrieved from <https://ourpublicservice.org/publications/bright-spots-federal-government/>.

¹¹ Partnership for Public Service, “Bright Spots: Federal Success Stories from the COVID-19 Pandemic,” February 21, 2021. Retrieved from <https://ourpublicservice.org/publications/bright-spots/>.

In the post-pandemic era, we must not go back to the old ways of doing business when the new ways make more sense. We should seize this moment to modernize the ways in which government operates, which in many instances are predicated on laws and practices that are decades old and out of sync with today's fast-paced digital economy.

What can Congress do?

Here are ten ways that Congress can accelerate this revitalization and transformation of the federal workforce:

Sustain momentum for transformation and celebrate success.

Congressional committees should be examining the ways in which the government has already transformed over the past year and finding ways to sustain momentum for further innovations. This subcommittee in particular can keep moving the ball forward in a number of ways, including:

- holding a hearing on successes at various agencies that should be embraced across the government;
- encouraging agencies to update strategic plans and policies to align with the new reality of work, and working with agencies to identify needed legislative fixes to further additional reforms; and
- establishing a new framework where, for jobs that are conducive to telework, telework is the norm and not the exception.

This subcommittee can also play an important role in encouraging colleagues to recognize the successes of the federal workforce. Federal employees are often blamed for policy failures, and rarely acknowledged when things go right. One way to revitalize the workforce is simply to change the tone and get away from the demeaning rhetoric that frequently characterizes discussion of the federal workforce. Political leaders should celebrate outstanding contributions, such as the remarkable achievements of the nominees and winners of the Partnership for Public Service's annual [Service to America Medals](#)¹² and the Presidential Rank Awards.

Create high expectations for federal leaders.

A transformation of the workforce and how federal employees do their jobs will not be possible without also reimagining leadership in the federal government. Good leaders motivate and advocate for their employees, build trust and create the conditions necessary for employees to perform at their best. The civilian side of government should take a lesson from the military side, where people are viewed as an asset, not a cost, and where investments in leadership development are critical to the strategy for success.

In 2019, the Partnership developed the [Public Service Leadership Model](#),¹³ recognizing the unique nature of leadership in government, centered on stewardship of public trust and commitment to public good. We believe this model should be the standard for leaders – both career and political – across the federal government. The model identifies the core values that leaders must prioritize and the critical

¹² <https://servicetoamericamedals.org/>

¹³ <https://ourpublicservice.org/our-work/public-service-leadership-model/>

competencies they must master to achieve their agencies' missions and desired impact. These include setting a vision, empowering others and being accountable for results. We were proud to create this model with a nonpartisan group of distinguished leaders from across sectors, and in the months to come we hope to work with Congress, the executive branch and others to improve and measure overall leadership effectiveness.

Congress also should hold political and career federal leaders accountable not only for owning policy but also for the organizational health of their agencies. With respect to the workforce, Congress should hold political appointees responsible for recruiting and retaining highly qualified talent, developing future leaders, engaging employees, and holding subordinate managers accountable for addressing performance.

Additionally, Congress should require training for employees moving into managerial or supervisory positions on how to perform those roles. Too often, individuals are promoted for their technical skills and are ill-prepared to lead their teams.

Take up the recommendations of the National Commission on Military, National and Public Service.

Congress should start the hard process of updating the legal framework for the civil service, much of which dates back to laws passed in 1949 and 1978. The federal government needs doctors, economists, emergency response specialists, and cybersecurity experts, but we have a personnel system designed for phone operators. The antiquated system is an impediment to the government's ability to meet the needs of today's interconnected, technology-driven world and prepare for the challenges of the future.

As a starting point, Congress should enact the civil service recommendations of "[Inspired to Serve](#)," the final report of the National Commission on Military, National and Public Service.¹⁴ On a bipartisan and consensus basis, and after studying the federal civil service for over two years, the Commission issued last year a bold and thoughtful set of recommendations for improving talent management. We urge Congress to move forward as quickly as possible to enact these proposals.

Value an engaged workforce.

Congress should urge agency leaders to use the annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey and the Best Places to Work in the Federal Government® rankings to drive better results in their agencies. Employee engagement is not just about happy employees. Higher scores in employee engagement equate to better performance and higher-quality service. This subcommittee has a long, bipartisan history of emphasizing the importance of employee engagement. By urging OPM to administer the FEVS in 2020, and by holding hearings to spotlight agencies that have improved engagement, the subcommittee has helped show that agency leaders are accountable for the health of their organizations and has shone a spotlight on agency successes that can be replicated elsewhere.

¹⁴ National Commission on Military, National and Public Service, "Inspired to Serve," March 25, 2020. Retrieved from <https://inspire2serve.gov/reports>.

This subcommittee should also consider modernizing the FEVS. The statute requiring annual employee satisfaction surveys dates to 2003.¹⁵ Congress should update the law to ensure that OPM administers the FEVS every year, that all executive branch agencies be required to participate in the survey and that the data is comparable across agencies and agency components. The survey itself should be easy for federal employees to take, including employees in the field like border patrol agents and TSA screeners, and agencies should receive their data in a timely way that allows them to act on the results before the next survey is in the field.

Congress and the administration should also embrace the bold goal of closing the over 15-point gap between the government and the private sector in the Best Places to Work in the Federal Government® engagement index, and even increasing the federal score over the private sector score. The government has a powerful asset in having a mission-driven workforce. This purpose-driven work, if combined with excellent leadership, will lead to much more engaged employees and better outcomes for the American public.

Make diversity, equity and inclusion a central part of workforce strategy.

A commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion must be a cornerstone in the transformation of how the government recruits, hires, develops and retains talent.¹⁶ This commitment ultimately leads to higher organizational performance by ensuring the door is open for top talent and by enabling new and creative ways of thinking that empower better decision making. Also, a government that better reflects its people also will increase public trust in our democratic institutions.

One indicator of the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion lies in the Partnership’s recent analysis of the internal management of the Department of State and our recommended strategies for overcoming challenges. In [“State of Renewal: The Department of State Today, Tomorrow, and Beyond,”](#)¹⁷ the Partnership identified a commitment to diversity and inclusion as the first of four key goals for revitalizing the department. An institutional culture that commits to and fosters these principles will not only better support the workforce but will maximize operational performance and best represent America abroad.

The State Department is not alone in needing to bring diversity, equity and inclusion to the forefront. President Biden has issued a memorandum prioritizing diversity, equity and inclusion as a national security imperative, in order to ensure that critical perspectives and talents are represented in the entire national security workforce.¹⁸ Congress should support these efforts, and should help ensure that

¹⁵ Pub.L. 108-136, National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004 (Nov. 24, 2003), Section 1128.

¹⁶ For example, see Jennifer Milller, “For young job seekers, diversity and inclusion in the workforce aren’t a preference. They’re a requirement,” Washington Post, February 18, 2021, retrieved from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2021/02/18/millennial-genz-workplace-diversity-equity-inclusion/>

¹⁷ Partnership for Public Service, “State of Renewal: The Department of State Today, Tomorrow and Beyond,” January 8, 2021. Retrieved from <https://ourpublicservice.org/publications/state-of-renewal-the-department-of-state-today-tomorrow-and-beyond/>.

¹⁸ President Joseph R. Biden Jr., “Memorandum on Revitalizing America’s Foreign Policy and National Security Workforce, Institutions, and Partnerships,” February 4, 2021. Retrieved from

diversity, equity and inclusion are in the DNA of every department and agency in the federal government.

Get young people in government and improve recruiting and hiring.

Government needs young talent, not only to replace those nearing the end of their careers, but also to bring new skills that will help the country confront a range of public challenges and opportunities. Multiple factors account for the dearth of young talent in the public sector: the federal government's brand is suffering; job opportunities are both hidden and scarce; jobseekers face many barriers to finding work; and federal agencies are failing to retain young people who do join government.

Today's college students are interested in making a difference, but rarely consider the federal government as a place where they can do so. Programs that Congress should reinvigorate include the Pathways programs, which provide younger, early career talent with exposure to and positive experiences working in government. Needed improvements include ensuring internships are paid and easing agencies' ability to convert interns into full-time positions. Congress should also lift the caps on the expedited hiring authority for students and recent graduates, consider a ROTC-like program for federal service, and hold agencies responsible for recruiting on campuses.

To attract talent at all levels, Congress and the administration should work together to create new and innovative pathways – and expand existing ones – for mission-critical talent to join public service through fellowships, talent exchanges and service corps. A government-wide initiative could help agencies improve the hiring processes so they can more easily attract, assess, hire and onboard highly qualified applicants. This effort should include simplifying and demystifying the application processes, including the USAJOBS portal.

Invest in the HR workforce.

The Partnership's recent studies reinforce the need for investment in the federal human resources workforce. For example, our "State of Renewal" report lays out recommendations for improving the State Department's talent management life cycle over six to twelve months, without the need for any additional legislation, as well as changes that will take longer and require Congressional action. Our report "[Time for Talent: Improving Federal Recruiting and Hiring](#)"¹⁹ lays out practical approaches that agencies can take within the existing system to attract mission-critical talent. And in "[Rapid Reinforcements: Strategies for Federal Surge Hiring](#),"²⁰ we identified strategies that can help agencies when faced with circumstances that require a rapid growth in the workforce, such as national emergencies, large-scale attrition, new mission requirements, or the need for emergent skills.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/02/04/memorandum-revitalizing-americas-foreign-policy-and-national-security-workforce-institutions-and-partnerships/>.

¹⁹ Partnership for Public Service, "A Time for Talent: Improving Federal Recruiting and Hiring," August 26, 2020. Retrieved from <https://ourpublicservice.org/publications/a-time-for-talent/>.

²⁰ Partnership for Public Service, "Rapid Replacements: Strategies for Federal Surge Hiring," October 29, 2020. Retrieved from <https://ourpublicservice.org/publications/rapid-reinforcements-strategies-for-federal-surge-hiring/>.

Agencies cannot move forward on these recommended strategies, though, unless they have human resource offices with the requisite skills, capacity and tools. There are outstanding and innovative HR professionals across the government, but there are also skills gaps in their offices. They are often overwhelmed by responsibilities and the complexities of federal human capital law. Often, HR specialists are not familiar with the authorities they have available to them, and do not have the technologies, data and analytical skills that would better enable them to recruit and hire while also engaging in strategic workforce planning for the future. Congress should jump-start efforts to increase the skills and professionalism of the federal HR community by requiring OPM to start providing technical training to HR specialists again, conducting a review of overall training needs and how those needs can be met, and funding IT needs of the HR community. Congress should also ensure that agencies undertake strategic workforce planning and make sure that Chief Human Capital Officers have a voice in the strategic and budget planning processes so that agency leaders will be informed of the HR needs necessary to carry out their policies and programs.

Strengthen OPM.

The Partnership hopes that the President will soon nominate highly qualified individuals, with extensive government experience and deep expertise in federal talent issues, as OPM Director and Deputy Director. Through oversight, Congress can ensure that OPM has an elevated, forward-leaning role in helping agencies solve problems. OPM could have an immediate and positive impact by prioritizing the modernization of recruiting and hiring and should provide the vision to help Congress to create a modernized personnel system for government. In the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020, Congress tasked the National Academy of Public Administration with conducting a review of OPM and delivering recommendations to Congress by March 2021. This study will provide the opportunity for Congress to consider how best to position OPM to lead the workforce into the future. Congress will also need to continue to closely monitor OPM's budget needs. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 provided an additional \$32 million to OPM to compensate for lost revenues due to the transfer of the background investigation function to the Pentagon and increased IT modernization needs, but the agency will continue to face funding challenges.

Preserve the merit principles.

The merit principles should remain the bedrock of the federal civil service system.²¹ These principles serve the goal of providing the American people a competent, honest, productive government through an apolitical and professional career workforce. Thank you, Chairman Connolly, for your leadership in opposing President Trump's executive order creating a new Schedule F class of employees who could be hired or fired for political reasons. This executive order threatened to destroy the merit principles and replace professionals with partisans. Thankfully, President Biden has revoked the executive order.²² The Partnership is committed to working with this subcommittee to ensure that appropriate changes to the law are made to prevent this type of executive assault on the merit principles in the future.

²¹ 5 U.S.C. § 2301.

²² Executive Order 14003 of January 22, 2021, revoking Executive Order 13957 of October 21, 2020.

Urgent attention also is needed at the Merit Systems Protection Board. This small, independent and quasi-judicial agency serves as the guardian of the merit principles by adjudicating disputes related to personnel decisions, assessing implementation of the merit principles and human capital management, and reviewing OPM regulations and major actions. The three-person board lost its quorum in January 2017 and has been without any board members since February 2019 – an unprecedented situation in MSPB’s history that leaves it virtually inoperable. It is an egregious waste of taxpayer dollars to allow an entire federal agency to languish for over four years without a full complement of leaders. While many cases are resolved at the administrative judge level, there is now a backlog of over 3,000 cases awaiting review by the board. MSPB has also been unable to issue whistleblower stays in Office of Special Counsel investigations, and the issuance of studies has been halted. The nomination and confirmation of MSPB board members should be a priority for the administration and the Senate, and we urge Congress to consider steps to better enable MSPB to function in the event of an extended lack of a quorum. Congress should reauthorize MSPB and ensure that it is equipped to recover from the harm caused by the board vacancies. The Partnership is pleased to support the Merit Systems Protection Board Empowerment Act of 2021 introduced by Chairman Connolly today.

Create a workforce culture that embraces technology, innovation and collaboration.

Our new report “[Resilient: Keeping Your Wits – Workforce, Innovation, Technology, Security – About You](#),”²³ summarizes a survey of 300 federal leaders and a series of roundtable discussions on the lessons of the pandemic. A key takeaway is that an agile workforce, cutting-edge cybersecurity, modern technologies and continual innovation are all interdependent in creating resiliency in the federal government. Also, when asked what a resilient federal government looks like, more respondents linked resiliency to an agile workforce than the other issue areas discussed in the report.

The success of the federal workforce depends not only on the quality of its talent and its leaders, but also on a culture where employees are encouraged to try new ideas and make smart technology investments. The new workplace environment must also involve more collaboration between federal, state, local and tribal governments and the private and non-profit sectors, a frequent lapse that is on full display now with the uneven rollout of the coronavirus vaccines.

Recognizing that revitalizing the government requires attention to leadership and stewardship, talent, innovation and technology, and collaboration, the Partnership’s “[Roadmap for Renewing the Federal Government](#),”²⁴ launched last fall, describes the challenges the government faces in each of these areas, bright spots showing improvements, and needed solutions. The Roadmap provides a checklist of actions that the new administration can take in the first 100 days to begin to lay the groundwork for renewing the federal government, and the issue pages on the website summarize proposals that we believe should have the support of both Congress and the administration.

²³ Partnership for Public Service, American Council for Technology and Industry Advisory Council, and Meritalk, “Resilient: Keeping Your Wits – Workforce, Innovation, Technology, Security – About You,” January 25, 2021. Retrieved from <https://ourpublicservice.org/publications/resilient-keeping-your-wits-about-you/>.

²⁴ Partnership for Public Service, “Roadmap for Renewing the Federal Government. Retrieved from <https://ourpublicservice.org/roadmap-for-renewal/>.

Conclusion

Thank you again for holding this hearing. Revitalizing the workforce is a complex endeavor, and this testimony only scratches the surface of the efforts that are needed across the executive and legislative branches. We look forward to working with you and your staff as you move forward with your legislative and oversight agenda for the federal workforce in the 117th Congress.