

## PART 6 – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### Building a High-Performance Government

High-performing private and public sector organizations have developed a set of routines that drive a results-oriented culture. And within the Federal government, Federal managers have an important obligation to ensure that every dollar spent delivers results for the American people. Whether these routines are explicit or implicit, every organization implements a performance management system or framework—a set of routines for regularly engaging senior leaders, defining success for the organization and a way of assessing progress using data and evidence.

Since 2010, the Executive Branch of the Federal Government has worked to apply effective organizational performance management within and across agencies. Leaders have established clear roles and responsibilities, set ambitious goals that define success through strategic planning and priority goal-setting, personally conduct regular reviews of progress, and take action based on evidence and on opportunities to coordinate across silos while reporting results transparently. To further advance these efforts and deliver results for the American people, OMB has worked closely with agency Performance Improvement Officers and other senior agency management officials to develop this guidance for implementing the Federal Performance Framework. Originally authorized by Congress in 1993 with the Government Performance and Results (GPRA) Act and updated in 2010 with the [GPRA Modernization Act](#), the Federal Performance Framework provides the foundation of routines and processes by which management functions and skillsets supporting decision-making capabilities can be coordinated – and work in concert together – as part of an integrated, synchronized management system at the enterprise level for improving the organizational performance and program service delivery of Federal agencies. Federal agencies will use the Framework and its practices and routines to shift the Government's focus from programs to people; from the means of Government to its ends; and from rules to values. Moreover, this systems-focused approach allows the Federal Government's budget and performance frameworks to operate concurrently, helping to ensure that objectives are resourced efficiently, effectively, and with accountability.

Importantly, as new policies and management initiatives have been introduced, the Federal Performance Framework has expanded to accommodate a more integrated and coordinated government-wide management approach aimed at advancing performance improvement and management efforts at agencies, including [Enterprise Risk Management](#) in 2016; [Program and Project Management](#) and [Customer Experience](#) in 2018; [Evaluation and Evidence-building](#), [Sharing Quality Services](#), and [Category Management](#) in 2019; and modernizing the Federal grants management process for award-making agencies

in 2020 by updating the regulations that provide uniform guidance on Federal awards (2 C.F.R. part 200) to improve the balance between compliance requirements and performance outcomes and results.

### Clarifying Key Roles and Responsibilities

Perhaps the most important aspect of any effective performance management system is ensuring active leadership engagement. Leadership engagement fosters a high-performance culture that empowers employees at all levels within an Agency or Department and enables the organization to work across silos to solve problems. In particular, Agency leaders are responsible not just for establishing goals and priorities but also for conducting data-driven reviews that are critical for creating a results-oriented culture that emphasizes learning, where leaders and staff debate questions that help them find, sustain, and spread promising practices and policies. This guidance describes key roles and responsibilities in performance, program, and enterprise risk management for the Agency Head, Chief Operating Officer (COO), Performance Improvement Officer (PIO), Program Management Improvement Officer (PMIO), Goal Leaders, Chief Risk Officer (CRO), Evaluation Officer, the Performance Improvement Council (PIC), and Program Management Policy Council (PMPC). These roles and responsibilities importantly disperse across and down within agencies to bureaus and components.

- **Agency COOs**, who must be the Deputy Secretary or equivalent, provide organizational leadership to improve performance.
- **Agency PIOs**, who must report directly to the COO, are responsible for supporting the agency head and COO in leading efforts to set goals, make results transparent, review progress and make course corrections.
- **Agency PMIOs**, who must report directly to the COO or other equivalent senior agency official responsible for agency program performance, and are responsible for leading efforts to enhance the role and practice of program and project management (P/PM).
- **Agency CROs**, or a senior agency official leading an equivalent function, who champion agency-wide efforts to manage risk within the agency and advise senior leaders on the strategically-aligned portfolio view of risks at the agency.
- **Goal Leaders** are officials named by the agency head or COO who are held accountable for leading implementation efforts to achieve a goal. This role includes laying out strategies to achieve the goal, managing execution, regularly reviewing performance, engaging others as needed and correcting course as appropriate.
- **Agency Chief Financial Officers (CFO)**, who reports directly to the head of the agency, oversees all financial management activities relating to the programs and operations of the agency, and serves as a resource for the agency's performance management and improvements, planning, reviewing, and reporting.
- **Agency CXOs** are the Chief Executives who lead an array of agency management functions, such as the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) identified above, as well as the Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO), Chief Acquisition Officer (CAO), Chief Information Officer (CIO), and Chief Data Officer (CDO). Executives leading these management functions work closely with the PIO, agency head, COO, as well as cross-functionally, to ensure that mission support resources are effectively and efficiently aligned and deployed to achieve the agency mission. This includes such activities as routinely leading efforts to set goals, make results transparent, review progress, and make course

corrections as needed to ensure that the agency's management functions are effective in supporting agency goals and objectives.

- **Evaluation Officers**, who play a leading role in overseeing the agency's evaluation activities and capacity assessments, learning agenda, and information reported to OMB on evidence, as well as collaborating with, shaping, and making contributions to other evidence-building functions within the agency.
- **The Performance Improvement Council (PIC)** is comprised of agency PIOs and OMB and advises on the development of Government-wide policies designed to strengthen agency management and facilitate cross-agency learning and cooperation. The PIC is supported by the General Service Administration's (GSA) Office of Shared Solutions and Performance Improvement (OSSPI) which works with agencies to develop solutions to matters that affect mission activity, management functions and performance, as well as support OMB and Goal Leaders in analyzing progress on Priority Goals.
- **The Program Management Policy Council (PMPC)** is comprised of agency PMIOs and OMB and advises on the development and implementation of policies and strategies for strengthening program and project management within the Federal Government by facilitating cross-agency learning, cooperation, and sharing best practices identified by agencies and private industry.
- **Delivery partners**, the organizations or entities outside a Federal agency that help a Federal agency accomplish its objectives, and are consulted and engaged to support objectives and mission execution.

### **Engaging Leaders in Goal-Setting and Sharpening Focus on Priorities across Mission, Service, and Stewardship Outcomes**

The Administration expects agencies to set a limited number of ambitious goals that encourage innovation and adoption of evidence-based strategies. Agency leaders at all levels of the organization are accountable for choosing goals and indicators wisely and for setting ambitious, yet realistic targets. Wise selection of goals and indicators reflects careful analysis of the characteristics of the problems and opportunities an agency seeks to influence to advance its mission, service, and stewardship objectives.

- **The Director of OMB** sets long-term Cross-Agency Priority Goals every 4 years with annual and quarterly targets.
- **Agency heads** develop Strategic Plans with long-term goals and objectives every 4 years, Agency Priority Goals (APGs) every two years, and performance goals at least annually.

### **Promoting Increased Use of Performance Information and Other Evidence through Regular Reviews**

Frequent data-driven performance reviews give agency leaders a mechanism for focusing an agency on priorities, diagnosing problems, and finding opportunities. Successful reviews include analyzing disaggregated data, learning from past experience, identifying risks that could affect the agency's ability to reach objectives, and deciding next steps to increase performance and productivity. Annual assessments of agency progress on strategic objectives can also improve program outcomes and inform longer-term decision making.

- The OMB Director and Performance Improvement Council run quarterly reviews on Cross-Agency Priority Goals.
- Agency heads and OMB conduct annual strategic reviews of progress on outcomes and cross-cutting efforts, considering the entire body of both qualitative and quantitative evidence and guided by the agency's Learning Agenda which describes their plan for building evidence to address agency priority questions. These reviews integrate evidence and evaluation across silos including enterprise risk management and program and project management.
- Agency COOs, along with key personnel from components or other agencies, run at least quarterly data-driven reviews of Agency Priority Goals, to better understand challenges, factors affecting change, and the costs of delivery.
- Agency leaders and CXOs run frequent data-driven reviews focusing on the health of the workforce (HRStat) and other management functions (e.g., AcqStat, TechStat, PortfolioStat, Evaluation Capacity Assessments) to drive improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of agency management, and in a manner that complements Agency COO reviews to drive progress on achieving agency goals and objectives.

### **Building and Using Evidence to Support Continuous Learning and Improvement for Programs and Operations**

Evidence-building activities and planning requirements established by the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 ("Evidence Act") serve to complement and strengthen agency performance improvement initiatives and implementation strategies to achieve goals and objectives reflected in agency Strategic and Performance Plans. Included in agency Strategic Plans, Learning Agendas are developed to outline the agency's systematic approach to addressing the most pressing policy, programmatic, and regulatory questions related to the agency's long-term goals and objectives. Capacity Assessments, also part of agency Strategic Plans, require agencies to look at the coverage, quality, methods, effectiveness, and independence of the agency's statistics, evaluation, research and analysis efforts. This information can help agencies assess whether they have the capacity to meet the agency's key priorities identified in the Strategic Plan. Finally, Annual Evaluation Plans describe the significant evaluations the agency plans to conduct related to its Learning Agenda and other priority evaluation activities.

### **Improving Utility of Program Information through Transparent Reporting**

A central website, [Performance.gov](https://www.performance.gov), makes finding and consuming performance information easier for the public, the Congress, delivery partners, agency employees, and other stakeholders. The site improves transparency about what Federal programs do and how they relate to budget, performance, and other information requirements. Performance.gov is the central website that serves as the public window to Federal goals and performance in key areas of focus that reflect Administration and agency policy objectives and management priorities. Reporting on performance in these areas include:

- Descriptions of Cross-Agency Priority Goals established to drive progress in implementing the President's Management Agenda (PMA), including associated indicators, targets, action plans, goal leaders, and contributing programs.
- OMB and agencies' quarterly updates of progress on Priority Goals.

- Agency Strategic Plans, Evidence-Building Plans (i.e., Learning Agenda), Annual Performance Plans, Annual Evaluation Plans, and Annual Performance Reports.
- Other key management priorities and initiatives of the Administration.

### The Performance Management Cycle

As important as it is to sustain a strong performance culture through the practices and routines described in this guidance, it is equally important to have reliable and effective processes which support continuous improvement, organizational learning, and opportunities for capacity building. The Framework's major policy provisions create a cycle of management routines that govern organizational planning and goal-setting, data-driven reviews of progress against those goals, and reporting for agencies to use to drive organizational performance and management improvements. Importantly, its construction across four-year, annual, and quarterly update cycles provides a key mechanism for incorporating the organizational learning that stems from the management routines of data-driven reviews. Agencies have the opportunity to revise implementation strategies and programmatic operations using evidence in order to address and overcome any identified barriers or challenges to delivering on its mission. The description below gives an overview of the Federal Performance Management Cycle.

- **Planning.** Strategic Plans present the long-term objectives an agency hopes to accomplish at the beginning of each new term of an Administration, describing the strategic direction and vision as expressed through the general and long-term goals the agency aims to achieve, what actions the agency will take in coordinating resources to realize those goals, and how the agency will address challenges or risks that hinder progress. Agencies translate the longer-term strategic goals and objectives in their Strategic Plans to programmatic performance goals, including Agency Priority Goals, in the Agency's annual Performance Plan. Complementing the Strategic Plan, Agency Performance Plans have a two-year coverage period that is reviewed and updated annually. The Agency Performance Plans communicate the agency's strategic objectives and performance goals with other elements of the agency's budget request, detailing how goals will be achieved, identifying priorities among the goals, and explaining actions to monitor progress. Agencies identify objectives in the three areas below, along with accompanying implementation strategies for effective goal achievement. While the types of objectives are presented separately for discussion, in practice the establishment of mission and service objectives will often overlap.
  - *Mission.* The core functions and activities of Federal agencies that are reflected in statutory requirements or leadership priorities and which serve to drive their efforts in addressing pressing and relevant national problems, needs, and challenges.
  - *Service.* The activities that reflect the interaction(s) between individual citizens or businesses and Federal agencies in providing a direct service on behalf of the Federal Government, and which is core to the mission of the agency.
  - *Stewardship.* The responsibilities of Federal agencies to provide appropriate safeguards in executing mission and service related activities effectively and efficiently, including minimizing instances of waste, fraud, and abuse.
- **Evidence, Evaluation, Analysis, and Review.** From the strategic goals and objectives in the Strategic Plan, as well as the longer-term research questions agencies seek to answer as part of their Learning Agendas, agencies establish internal management processes to set and monitor the performance of strategic objectives, portfolios of programs, Agency Priority Goals, and performance goals that are focused on mission, service, and stewardship outcomes, and appropriate

performance indicators that can be used to assess progress in those areas. Incorporating a range of quantitative and qualitative evidence, these regular reviews provide a mechanism for agency leaders to review the organization's performance and bring together the people, resources, and analysis needed to drive progress on agency priorities, both mission focused and management goals. Frequent data-driven performance reviews on both a quarterly and annual cadence identified below reinforce the agency's priorities and establish an agency culture of continuous learning and improvement, sending a signal throughout the organization that agency leaders are focused on effective and efficient implementation to improve the delivery of results.

- *Agencies use quarterly data-driven reviews* as a tool for management to focus on targeted, short-term progress to make changes to implementation strategies as needed to advance goal accomplishment.
- *Agencies use annual strategic reviews*, which incorporate portfolio reviews of programs and updates to ERM risk profiles along with evaluation and evidence-building activities, as a tool for management to assess progress toward longer-term objectives and ensure major programs are being managed effectively.
- **Reporting.** Finally, agencies report quarterly progress updates on Agency Priority Goals to Performance.gov, and summarize the full years' past performance in their annual Agency Performance Report, which along with other key organizational planning documents including the strategic plan, the annual performance plan, and annual evaluation plan, are consolidated and made available on the centralized websites of Performance.gov and Evaluation.gov. These materials communicate publicly to external stakeholders about progress and help inform the development of the next Strategic Plan, which includes a section for an Evidence-Building Plan (i.e., Learning Agenda), as well as annual Agency Performance Plans and Evaluation Plans.

