SECTION 200 – OVERVIEW OF THE FEDERAL PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

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Summary of Changes

Updates overall performance planning and reporting timeline through the FY 2021 President’s Budget, including new evidence and evaluation-related planning requirements established by the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (i.e., “Evidence Act”). Incorporates implementation of evaluation and evidence-building activities of the Evidence Act as a complement to the Performance Framework. Provides a link to a Performance Calendar established on MAX Community to assist agencies in managing submission and publication timelines.

200.1 To which agencies does Part 6 of OMB Circular A–11 apply?

In Part 6 of this Circular, agency is defined by section 306(f) of title 5, which includes executive departments, government corporations, and independent establishments but does not include the Central Intelligence Agency, the Government Accountability Office, the United States Postal Service, and the
Postal Regulatory Commission. The Legislative Branch and the Judiciary are not subject to these requirements. In cases where sections of Part 6 guidance are applicable only to a subset of executive departments, government corporations, and independent establishments, the section will specify to which subset of agencies the guidance applies.

Except for statutory exemption, agencies are required to submit Strategic Plans, Annual Performance Plans, Annual Performance Reports, and Annual Evaluation Plans to the President, the Congress and OMB in accordance with these instructions. OMB may exempt independent agencies with $20 million or less in annual outlays from the requirements for a Strategic Plan, Annual Performance Plan, and Annual Performance Report. The GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 does not authorize any exemption of a component of a department or independent agency, such as a bureau or office that annually spends $20 million or less.

Organizational components of agencies are not considered independent establishments or separate from executive departments, rather are a part of them. Therefore, agency components are not defined as an agency in the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 or in this guidance. Agencies subject to this guidance should work with their components to implement the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 in a manner that is most useful to the whole organization. Agencies are expected to work with their components to identify priorities, goals, performance indicators, and other indicators relative to the mission and strategic objectives of the agency.

Other Sections of this guidance address specific agency applicability as it relates to those individual Sections.

200.2 What other laws or policies are relevant to Part 6 of OMB Circular A–11?

Aside from the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 and the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010, several other laws affect the agency requirements included in Part 6 of OMB Circular A–11. The Chief Financial Officers (CFO) Act of 1990 requires the head of each of the 24 executive agencies to prepare and submit to the Director of OMB audited financial statements. The list of agencies in the CFO Act is used to identify agencies that must develop Agency Priority Goals under the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 or as otherwise determined by the Director of OMB.

Most recently, the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (i.e., “Evidence Act”) was enacted in January, 2019. Recognizing data and evidence are key inputs to prioritizing agency efforts to support civic engagement, deliver on mission, service, and stewardship objectives, and support decision-making, the Evidence Act emphasizes collaboration and coordination to make better use of existing Federal data by statutorily mandating federal evidence-building activities, open government data, and confidential information protection and statistical efficiency. Importantly, section 290 has been established to discuss the relationship of evaluation and evidence-building activities required by the Evidence Act to the performance improvement efforts advanced by the Federal Performance Framework.

Enacted in December 2016, the Program Management Improvement Accountability Act (PMIAA) aims to further strengthen the performance of the Federal Government through improved program and project management. Specifically, the law requires the development of practices and standards for effective program management. It also establishes an interagency Council to provide an interagency forum for improving agency practices related to program management while overseeing implementation efforts. The Act requires agency heads to designate a senior executive to serve as the Program Management Improvement Officer (PMIO), with responsibility for implementing program management policies and developing strategies for enhancing the role of program and project managers at agencies. Additionally, agencies must conduct annual portfolio reviews of programs in coordination with OMB to ensure programs
are being managed effectively and efficiently. Section 270 of this Circular provides information and guidance for agencies on implementing this legislation as a complement to the Federal performance framework.

In July 2016, OMB released the update to Circular A-123, Management’s Responsibility for Enterprise Risk Management and Internal Control. The update strengthens Federal agency management by ensuring all agencies implement an Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) capability coordinated with the strategic planning and strategic review process established by the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010, and the internal control processes required by FMFIA and Government Accountability Office (GAO)’s Green Book. This integrated governance structure will improve mission delivery, reduce costs, and focus corrective actions towards key risks. While OMB Circular A-123 is traditionally owned by the Chief Financial Officer community, effective implementation of the current policy will engage all agency management and require leadership from the agency COO and PIO working in close collaboration across all agency mission and mission-support functions when considering the full spectrum of risks to the successful execution of an agency's strategic goals and objectives. Section 270 of this Circular describes the relationship between key parts of the Enterprise Risk Management framework in A-123 and its integration with the federal performance framework established by the GPRAMA, including the consideration of enterprise risks during the development of agency Strategic Plans and strategies to mitigate risks as part of the annual strategic review assessments.

The Chief Human Capital Officers Act of 2002 tasked each Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) with “aligning the agency’s human resources policies and programs with organization mission, strategic goals, and performance outcomes.” See section 200.14 for the role of the CHCO. The GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 reinforced the CHCOs’ role in agency performance planning. As one means of implementing these expectations, the Senior Executive Service performance appraisal policy requires that every SES clearly identify the goals and objectives in the agency Strategic Plan, Annual Performance Plan, or other organizational planning documents for which the SES has full or partial leadership responsibility. Agency strategic objectives must have individuals clearly responsible for their implementation, at SES or other levels of manager or team leader. See section 200.15 for guidance on the role of a goal leader. Additionally, effective April, 2017, revised Federal regulation 5 C.F.R. 250 Subpart B requires agencies to align their strategic human capital management practices with agency performance and strategic planning processes under the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010.

As a part of the capital planning process, pursuant to the Clinger-Cohen Act, agency heads under the direction of OMB must “analyze the missions of the executive agency and, based on the analysis, revise the executive agency's mission-related processes and administrative processes, as appropriate, before making significant investments in information technology to be used in support of those missions.” Agency plans for capital acquisitions, including plans for information technology, supported by OMB’s Office of the Chief Information Officer (OFCIO) agency engagement activities that should align with and support advancement of the goals identified in agency Strategic Information Resource Management Plans (as per Circular A-130), as well as Strategic and Annual Performance Plans, including Agency Priority Goals. The Reports Consolidation Act of 2000 allows agencies, at the discretion of the Director of OMB, to consolidate the publication of financial and performance information as a Performance and Accountability Report (PAR). A few small agencies continue to use this option and may still use it for the FY 2018 Annual Performance Report. However, in light of the GPRA Modernization Act’s performance reporting on a central website, CFO-Act agencies must provide the FY 2018 Annual Performance Report with the FY 2020 Annual Performance Plan. See section 240 on Annual Performance Reporting.
200.3 Our agency is subject to special laws or other governing regulations related to our agency’s performance planning, reporting, or management reviews. How does this guidance relate?

The guidance related to the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 requirements accompanies the agency’s existing requirements established by other government laws or policies. For example, where agencies are authorized to keep information secret in the interest of national defense or foreign policy, pursuant to applicable policies and laws, agencies should continue to follow those existing laws or policies in their performance planning and reporting. Further, in cases where it is appropriate and feasible, agencies can meet the requirements of the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 and other statutory requirements in a single report or management review, such as the Department of Defense’s Quadrennial Defense Review which could serve as the agency’s Strategic Plan provided it meets the appropriate goal-setting requirements of associated laws. If agencies find that GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 requirements conflict with or complement other requirements, contact OMB to discuss how related and overlapping requirements from separate statutes can be integrated in order to resolve the issue.

200.4 Overview of the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010

The GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 was enacted in January, 2011. The Act modernized the Federal Government’s performance management framework, retaining and amplifying some aspects of the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA 1993) while also addressing some of its weaknesses. GPRA 1993 established strategic planning, performance planning and performance reporting for agencies to communicate progress in achieving their missions. The GPRA Modernization Act established some important changes to existing requirements. Building on lessons agencies have learned in setting goals and reporting performance, a heightened emphasis is placed on priority-setting, cross-organizational collaboration to achieve shared goals, and the use and analysis of goals and measurement to improve outcomes. The GPRA Modernization Act serves as a foundation for engaging leaders in performance improvement and creating a culture where data and empirical evidence play a greater role in policy, budget and management decisions.

The purposes of the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 are to:

- Improve the confidence of the American people in the capability of the Federal Government, by systematically holding Federal agencies accountable for achieving program results;
- Improve program performance by requiring agencies to set goals, measure performance against those goals and report publicly on progress;
- Improve Federal program effectiveness and public accountability by promoting a focus on results, service quality and customer satisfaction;
- Help Federal managers improve service delivery, by requiring that they plan for meeting program goals and by providing them with information about program results and service quality;
- Improve congressional decision-making by providing more information on achieving statutory objectives and on the relative effectiveness and efficiency of Federal programs and spending;
- Improve internal management of the Federal Government; and
- Improve usefulness of performance and program information by modernizing public reporting.
Progress continues to be made in implementing the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010,¹ and the framework has proven effective at establishing management process and routines at agencies that reinforce data-driven decision-making.²

200.5 What are agencies, their managers and their employees accountable for with regard to their performance goals and measurement?

The GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 requires agencies to set long-term goals and objectives as well as specific, near-term performance goals. 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 should reflect careful analysis of the characteristics of the problems and opportunities an agency seeks to influence to advance its mission, factors affecting those outcomes, agency capacity and priorities. Agency leaders are expected to consider the available evidence, including any available evaluation results, when conducting this analysis. As appropriate, such analysis should consider whether the goals and indicators have been validated through research to be well correlated with ultimate outcomes, implications of available research on the appropriateness of the measure, and whether the available research indicates that the use of the measure may encourage negative unintended consequences. To successfully deliver services to the public in a cost-effective way, agencies strive to maintain a performance culture where both leaders and staff constantly ask and try to answer, using the most rigorous methods feasible and appropriate, questions that help them find, sustain, and spread proven or promising practices and policies. Agencies are expected to set ambitious goals in a limited number of areas that push them to achieve significant performance improvements beyond current levels. In pursuing these ambitious goals, agencies are encouraged to expand the adoption of strategies that are based on rigorous evidence of effectiveness, where feasible and appropriate, and innovate strategies that show promise to be more effective, efficient, or cost-effective than current practice and evaluate their results. OMB generally expects agencies to make progress on all of their ambitious goals and achieve most of them, but at the same time will work with an agency that consistently meets a very high percentage of its ambitious goals to assure it is setting sufficiently ambitious goals. It will also work with agencies to develop performance improvement plans to support progress on the more challenging goals and objectives. Agencies are accountable for constantly striving to achieve meaningful progress and find lower-cost ways to achieve positive results.

200.6 How does the GPRA Modernization Act affect the roles and responsibilities of leadership at the agency?

The GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 builds upon a performance management leadership structure that begins with the agency head, the Chief Operating Officer (COO), the Performance Improvement Officer (PIO), and the goal leaders. The Act’s performance framework must translate across and cascade down the organization to all agency managers and team leaders. The three primary responsibilities of agency performance leaders are:

1. **Goal-setting.** Leaders at all levels of the organization, starting with the agency head, are responsible for choosing and communicating near-term and long-term goals, distinguishing those that are the highest priority and for driving progress on those priorities.

¹ GAO-17-775 (September, 2017). *Managing for Results: Further Progress Made in Implementing the GPRA Modernization Act, but Additional Actions Needed to Address Pressing Governance Challenges.*

2. **Assuring timely, actionable performance information is available to decision-makers at all levels of the organization.** COOs, PIOs, Evaluation Officers, and senior program managers, along with agency CXOs (e.g., CIO, CFO, CHCO, CAO, PMIO, CDO, etc), should make sure that the agency gathers and analyzes performance and other evidence, including evaluations and other research as needed, to better understand the problems they are trying to tackle, the effectiveness of past efforts to address problems, factors affecting change, and the costs of delivery.

3. **Conducting frequent data-driven reviews that guide decisions and actions to improve performance outcomes, manage risk, and reduce costs.** Each agency head and/or COO, with the support of the PIO, must run data-driven progress reviews and include in the reviews key personnel and management officials from other components, programs, or agencies, which contribute to the accomplishment of the goals reviewed. At a minimum, these reviews must include Agency Priority Goals. However, the agency head and/or COO may choose to expand these reviews to encompass other performance goals and objectives as appropriate.

As the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 is implemented, increased use of performance information should spread across the organization and to program delivery partners. The emphasis by GPRAMA and the Federal Performance Framework on data-driven and evidence-based decision-making by agencies is complemented by the Evidence Act, and its focus on the data and evidence-building functions and activities of Federal agencies.

### 200.7 How does the agency designate the COO and PIO and notify OMB of the designations?

The GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 requires all agency heads to designate a COO, who is the deputy head of the agency or equivalent. Agency heads, in consultation with the COO, will designate a senior executive as the agency PIO. The PIO must report directly to the COO or agency head. Agencies naming a political appointee senior executive or other individual with a limited-term appointment as PIO should name a career senior executive as the Deputy PIO.

For the purposes of assigning a PIO, agencies have flexibility to name a senior executive, depending on the organizational needs and structure of the agency. For agencies with 500 or more full-time-equivalent employees (FTEs), a senior executive should be at the Executive Schedule, Senior Executive Service or equivalent level. For agencies with less than 500 FTEs, a senior executive should be a senior-level manager or leader within the organization. If necessary, and within available resources, agencies subject to the Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990 may submit to the Office of Personnel Management a request for consideration of an SES allocation adjustment for the PIO position.

The head of each agency with more than five hundred FTEs must notify OMB of the name of the agency COO. This should be done by emailing the OMB Deputy Director for Management/Chief Performance Officer and the OMB Associate Director for Performance and Personnel Management the name of the COO, copying performance@omb.eop.gov and PICStaff@pic.gov. The COO must also notify OMB of the name of the PIO (and Deputy PIO) by emailing the Associate Director for Performance and Personnel Management and copying performance@omb.eop.gov and PICStaff@pic.gov. Agencies that have fewer than 500 FTEs are encouraged, but not required, to notify OMB of the name of the agency COO and PIO (and Deputy PIO if named). The agency head or COO, as appropriate, must update the designations as they change.

### 200.8 Does an agency have to name an acting COO or acting PIO if the position is vacant?

Yes. If the COO or PIO position is likely to remain vacant for more than one month, the agency head or the COO should notify OMB of the name of the acting COO or acting PIO by emailing notifications to the...
Associate Director for Performance and Personnel Management, copying performance@omb.eop.gov. The Deputy PIO will be presumed to serve as the acting PIO unless the COO names another person to serve as the acting PIO.

200.9 Are the PIO designations available to the public?

Yes. The names of PIOs are available to the public on the Performance Improvement Council’s website for the 24 CFO Act agencies.

200.10 What is the role of the Chief Operating Officer (COO)?

Critical to the success of agency efforts to improve results and reduce costs is leadership engagement at all levels – led by the COO. The GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 states that the COO “shall provide overall organization management to improve agency performance and achieve the mission and goals of the agency through the use of strategic and performance planning, measurement, analysis, regular assessment of progress, and use of performance information to improve the results achieved.” The law charges the COO with advising and assisting the head of the agency in these efforts, with support from the PIO. COOs, assisted by PIOs, are expected to assume the following roles and responsibilities for delivering an efficient, effective, and accountable government:

1. **Set clear and ambitious goals to improve results and reduce costs.** COOs will advise and assist the agency heads in selecting and communicating near- and long-term goals for their agencies that accelerate performance on Administration priorities and agency missions, save money, and enhance agency responsiveness to customers and citizens.

2. **Assign and empower senior accountable officials to lead.** Agency heads or COOs will designate a goal leader responsible for driving progress for each strategic objective and Agency Priority Goal. COOs will ensure these senior accountable officials have the tools and authority needed to manage both within and across organization boundaries to deliver better results in the most cost-effective way.

3. **Conduct frequent reviews to accelerate progress.** At least every quarter, the COOs will conduct data-driven reviews to speed performance and efficiency improvements on priority and other goals, including savings and management goals, coordinating with agencies that contribute to shared goals. Quarterly performance reviews on Agency Priority Goals are required both by Executive Order 13576 and the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010. COOs are responsible for ensuring these reviews are implemented in a way that is useful to the organization and for strengthening the agency’s analytic capacity to support data-driven progress reviews.

4. **Identify and implement actions that improve results, enhance efficiency, manage risk and reduce waste.** The COOs, working with component managers, program managers, risk managers, research and evaluation offices, PIOs, Chief Financial Officers (CFOs), Chief Acquisition Officers (CAOs), Chief Information Officers (CIOs), Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCO), Program Management Improvement Officers (PMIOs), Evaluation Officers, and other management function leaders, will actively engage in delivering results on agency goals in more effective and efficient ways, including re-directing budget and staffing resources and expanding the use of strategies that have been shown to be effective based on rigorous evidence. In general, these types of decisions should take into consideration the portfolio of available evidence on the topic, and high-stakes decisions should, in particular and when available, be based on a preponderance of evidence developed using rigorous methods. The COOs will also work with the CFOs and other agency leaders to ensure that managers and employees continually look for and act on opportunities to cut
waste and increase productivity. As part of this effort, COOs will ensure that other leaders within the agency such as program managers, information technology managers and acquisition leaders are working closely with the CFOs to meet goals for reducing unnecessary spending and to increase agency participation in Government-wide savings initiatives, such as strategic sourcing. COOs will also ensure that an agency’s leadership team reviews the program improvement and cost saving recommendations identified in the Government Accountability Office’s (GAO) annual report on program duplication, overlap, and fragmentation, as well as areas GAO has identified as high-risk, and that the agency has a plan in place that addresses the recommendations.

5. **Ensure transparency of performance information that increases accountability, results, and cost-effectiveness.** COOs are responsible for making sure that performance information is regularly updated to inform agency and OMB performance reviews. In addition, COOs, with assistance from the PIO and PMIO, will make sure that program managers regularly communicate actionable performance metrics and analyses to those in the field, other parts of the Federal Government and delivery partners so they can improve performance and reduce costs. Also, on an annual basis, COOs are responsible for assuring that each agency identifies opportunities for eliminating or modifying duplicative or outdated congressionally-required plans and reports.

6. **Instill a performance and efficiency culture that inspires continuous improvement.** COOs, supported by PIOs, CHCOs, PMIOs, in addition to research and evaluation offices, Evaluation Officers, and officials leading other management-focused offices, are responsible for establishing a performance, program management, and evidence culture within the agency that sets priorities and challenges for managers and employees at all levels of the organization to focus on better outcomes and lower-cost ways to operate. They should work to establish a culture of continual learning where staff identify critical questions and search for, test, and expand the use of effective practices. They are also responsible for using the annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey to identify areas of personnel strength and areas of weakness needing attention. Further, COOs are responsible for assuring that SES performance expectations support progress on agency strategic objectives, performance goals, and indicators.

200.11 Why is COO leadership engagement important to performance management?

Engagement of agency leadership in performance management is critical for several purposes. COOs need to:

- Provide organizational leadership to improve performance relative to mission and management functions. Importantly, this requires careful consideration be given to the agency’s organizational structure and management processes when designating officials to serve in key agency management positions such as the CXOs (PIO, PMIO, CIO, CFO, CHCO, etc.). Agency heads and COOs must balance statutory provisions that govern the designation and reporting of these officials along with agency-specific organizational structures, processes, and lines of accountability or authority that will enable officials to effectively perform their roles and responsibilities throughout the agency.

- Bring together other leaders and staff within the agency, including component managers, program managers, research and evaluation experts, and other leaders of key management functions such as the CIO, CFO, CHCO, CAO, Chief Data Officer, PMIO, Evaluation Officer, in addition to the PIO, to solve problems and pursue opportunities that help the agency operate more effectively and efficiently. This collaboration includes identification of critical questions that, when answered, will help the agency operate more effectively or efficiently, and the development of a plan to answer those questions in the most rigorous method feasible and appropriate.
- Make timely and consequential decisions, including program, budget, and staffing decisions, to drive performance results in more effective and cost-effective ways.

- Maintain or shift focus of other leaders and staff to the priorities that advance Administration and agency mission.

- Convene and chair data-driven performance reviews with appropriate representatives from components, key management functions, other offices, and other agencies, if needed, challenging those involved in the review to identify opportunities for improvement and decide next steps.

- Promote adoption of performance improvement practices across the whole organization, fostering a high-performance culture that empowers and engages managers and employees at all levels. Examples include creating demand for useful performance information and other evidence during data-driven reviews, holding managers accountable for knowing what works that is worth continuing, knowing what does not and that needs to be fixed, and following up on actions assigned during the performance reviews.

200.12 What is the role of the Performance Improvement Officer?

The GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 requires agency heads, in consultation with the COO, to name a PIO who is a senior executive reporting directly to the COO. Agency PIOs are expected to advise and assist the agency leadership to ensure that the mission and goals of the agency are achieved through strategic and performance planning, measurement, analysis, regular assessment of progress, and use of high-quality performance information and other evidence to improve results. This includes driving performance improvement efforts across the organization by using goal-setting, measurement, analysis, evaluation and other research, data-driven performance reviews on progress, cross-agency collaboration, and personnel performance appraisals aligned with organizational priorities.

The PIOs are expected to support the head of the agency and COO functions by playing the following roles within their agencies:

1. Support the agency head and COO in leading agency efforts to set goals, make results transparent, review progress and make course corrections by:
   - advising and assisting all organizational components in strategic and performance planning to advance the agency’s mission;
   - supporting frequent data-driven reviews, at least quarterly, to learn from experience, descriptive research, descriptive and predictive analyses, evaluations, and work in coordination with agency managers to decide next steps to improve program performance; and
   - communicating goals, progress, problems, and improvement plans, including quarterly reporting of progress on agency priorities and Annual Performance Reports, to those who need the information to make better decisions.

2. Reach out to other offices to improve operational effectiveness and efficiency by:
   - assisting other agency managers, including component and program office managers, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Human Capital Officer, Chief Acquisition Officer/Senior Procurement Executive, Chief Information Officer, Program Management Improvement Officer, Chief Data Officer, Statistical Official, risk managers, research and evaluation offices and Evaluation
Officer, and legislative and communication offices, in efforts to improve and communicate organizational performance;

- working with the Chief Human Capital Officer and other agency managers to effectively align strategic human capital management planning and practices (see 5 C.F.R. 250 Subpart B), including personnel performance objectives, feedback, appraisals, recognition, and incentive structures to advance agency goals and priorities;

- working with CIOs and CAOs to ensure agency capital investments advance organizational goals set forth in strategic and annual plans; and

- assisting the COO, in collaboration with the CFO, in evaluating the efficient stewardship of resources across all agency activities, incorporating the use of performance information and other evidence, particularly high-quality evidence identified in partnership with research and evaluation offices, in budget preparation and execution;

- working with PMIOs to ensure program and project management practices are strengthened across the agency and applied by program managers to achieve improved program performance;

- working with the Evaluation Officer to strengthen the integration of evaluation and evidence-building activities with performance management to advance progress towards the agency’s goals and outcome objectives;

- working with the agency’s Data Governance Body to help ensure that priorities for managing data assets support the agency’s mission, including its strategic plan and other high-level priorities;

- working with Chief Data Officers in identifying and using data to carry out various functions delegated to PIOs; and

- promoting the application of risk management practices in strategic planning, strategic reviews as well as other budget and performance activities.

3. Help components, program office leaders, goal leaders, and CXOs to identify and promote adoption of effective practices to improve program outcomes, responsiveness and efficiency, by supporting them in:

- selecting meaningful and appropriate goals and indicators, designating goal leaders, collecting and analyzing data in ways that inform targeting, identifying and promoting adoption of increasingly effective practices, and securing evaluations and other research as needed;

- preparing for data-driven reviews;

- communicating performance goals, indicators and related analyses;

- managing risks to performance goals and objectives;

- running effective data-driven performance reviews and triggering focused follow-up questions that inform future action and research; and
• creating a network for learning and knowledge sharing about successful outcome-focused, data-driven performance improvement methods across all levels of the organization and with delivery partners.

200.13 Who supports the work of the PIO?

Agencies may create a dedicated PIO staff and/or identify a cross-agency team that supports the PIO to assist the COO in strengthening the performance improvement culture and practices that improve outcomes and cost-effectiveness. COOs should identify organizational resources, staff or units with analytic and evaluation capacity to work with the PIOs to support the data-driven reviews. Close collaboration between the performance improvement and measurement functions overseen by the PIO and the evaluation functions overseen by the agency Evaluation Officer is critical to ensuring an evidence-based decision-making approach is exercised by agency management officials. Finally, the PIO and Chief Data Officer should work together to ensure that the agency identifies and uses the appropriate data necessary to achieve the agency’s broader goals, objectives, and outcomes.

200.14 What is the role of the Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO)?

The agency CHCO plays an important role in supporting agency strategic planning and performance improvement efforts, including specific responsibilities identified by statute in the GPRA Modernization Act, and further detailed in the Federal regulations for Strategic Human Capital Management, 5 C.F.R. 250 Subpart B (refer to section 250.201, Coverage and Purpose for agency applicability). The CHCO supports the agency head, COO, and PIO by ensuring human capital plans, strategies, and investments advance organizational goals set forth in the agency’s strategic and annual plans by:

• working with agency leaders to identify and establish the human capital goals and strategies needed to achieve the strategic goals and objectives in the Agency Strategic Plan;

• partnering with the PIO to include relevant human capital performance goals and indicators in the agency Annual Performance Plan;

• establishing the agency Human Capital Operating Plan (HCOP), and updating it annually, as an implementing document that describes how an agency will execute the human capital elements stated within the Agency Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Plan;

• updating the agency HCOP on the same annual cycle as the agency Annual Performance Plan in order to identify and focus on the human capital goals and measures that need to be implemented each year to achieve the strategic goals set forth in the Agency Strategic Plan; and

• conducting quarterly data-driven HRStat reviews, in collaboration with the PIO, to monitor the progress of HCOP implementation.

To further support agency strategic and annual performance planning, the CHCO is responsible for identifying and promoting relevant human capital programs and policies by providing information about:

• future workforce challenges that will affect the organization’s ability to meet its mission objectives (e.g., pipeline challenges) and continuously conducting environmental scans to identify future human capital issues;
• workforce analysis profiles, to include information about current and future staffing and competency requirements;

• human capital programs and initiatives established to support the agency's mission, such as the agency’s plan to maintain an agile and well-equipped workforce;

• human capital policies, programs, initiatives and training solutions that can mitigate risks identified; and

• requests for positions, training and programs, especially to support the Chief Financial Officer and agency budget decisions.

To align agency human capital management practices with the Human Capital Framework (HCF), pursuant to 5 C.F.R. 250 (B), and to identify and achieve agency-specific and government-wide strategic human capital goals and priorities, the CHCO should:

• oversee forward-thinking workforce planning and analysis within fiscal restraints, including identifying and continuously working to close skill gaps in mission critical occupations and managerial and executive positions using effective hiring and workforce development strategies;

• collaborate with the PIO and other senior leaders to emphasize and develop plans to improve and sustain meaningful employee engagement efforts;

• in collaboration with the COO and PIO, use their HRStat quarterly review sessions to measure progress and identify actions to enhance organizational culture and employee engagement, including tracking employee engagement metrics and targets;

• work with the PIO and senior leaders and managers across agency components and programs in developing aggressive, results-based individual performance plans that are aligned to and support agency goals and priorities, and in providing effective employee feedback, appraisals, recognition, and incentive structures to recognize excellence;

• recommend effective human capital solutions that can mitigate identified risks; and

• collaborate with other executive department CHCOs through the CHCO Council to share best practices and develop and support cross-cutting HC initiatives.

For more information about the CHCO role in agency performance management see the April 26, 2013 memorandum from OPM to CHCOs.

200.15 What is the role of a goal leader?

A goal leader is an official named by the agency head or COO who will be held accountable for leading implementation efforts to achieve a goal. A goal leader will lay out strategies to achieve the goal, manage execution, regularly review performance, engage others as needed and make course corrections as appropriate. Agency goal leaders will be individual(s) authorized to coordinate across an agency or program to achieve progress on a goal. Certain goals may require two goal leaders or co-goal leaders who share accountability for progress.
200.16 Do all agencies need to assign a goal leader for every goal?

Agencies responsible for Priority Goals must identify to OMB the goal leader for each Agency Priority Goal and strategic objective that was included in the agency’s Strategic Plan or updated in the most recent Annual Performance Plan. Unless otherwise noted, the goal leader for each strategic objective also has responsibility for driving progress on the individual performance goals supporting that strategic objective and managing associated risks. OMB will work across the Administration to identify goal leaders for Cross-Agency Priority Goals. OMB expects that Chief Human Capital Officers and PIOs to work together to ensure that every Agency Priority Goal and strategic objective has an official clearly responsible for it.

200.17 What is a Deputy Goal Leader?

Where a goal leader is assigned, agencies should identify a deputy goal leader to support the goal leader. A deputy goal leader should be a career Federal employee designated to assist the goal leader.

200.18 What is the relationship between the individual performance plans of Goal Leaders and Deputy Goal Leaders and the organizational performance goals they lead?

Agencies are required to establish performance management systems that hold senior executives accountable for individual and organizational performance. Individual performance plans of goal and deputy goal leaders should be aligned with the results and outcome oriented organizational performance goals required by the GPRA Modernization Act or other agency or Administration performance and management initiatives. Additional information can be found on OPM’s Performance Management website outlining individual performance management system requirements and their relationship to organizational performance goals and objectives.

200.19 What is the role of the Performance Improvement Council (PIC)?

The GPRA Modernization Act establishes the Performance Improvement Council (PIC) in statute. The PIC assists agencies, the Director of OMB, and the Deputy Director for Management of OMB in improving the performance of the Federal Government. The PIC’s primary focus is to help make performance management and improvement policies and principles operational in an applied, experiential setting at agencies.

The Deputy Director for Management of OMB, or designee, shall act as chairperson of the PIC and preside at the meetings of the PIC, determine its agenda, direct its work and establish and direct subgroups of the PIC, as appropriate, to deal with particular subject matters.

The PIC shall:

- Assist the Director of OMB in improving the performance of the Federal Government and achieving the Federal Government Cross-Agency Priority Goals and in implementing the planning, reporting and use of performance information requirements related to the Cross-Agency Priority Goals;
- Analyze and advise how to resolve specific Government-wide or cross-cutting issues;
- Facilitate the exchange of useful practices within specific programs or across agencies;
- Coordinate with other interagency management councils;
• Consider the performance management and improvement experience of others (private sector, other governments and other levels of government, nonprofit sector, public sector unions, customers of government services, etc.);

• Receive assistance, information, and advice from agencies;

• Develop and submit recommendations to streamline and improve performance management policies and requirements and, when appropriate, leads implementation of them; and

• Develop tips, tools, training, and other capacity-building mechanisms to strengthen agency performance management and facilitate cross-agency learning and cooperation, especially by considering the performance improvement experiences of entities both within and outside the Federal Government.

200.20 Who makes up the PIC?

The Performance Improvement Council is chaired by the Deputy Director for Management (DDM) of OMB and is supported by a number of full-time staff from the General Services Administration (GSA) Office of Shared Solutions and Performance Improvement (OSSPI). The membership of the PIC includes Performance Improvement Officers (PIO), Deputy PIOS, and associated staff and other individuals from Federal agencies as determined by the chair. The PIC may create working groups, task forces, and subcommittees made up of other agency officials to carry out the work of the Council and support efforts to improve the performance of the Federal Government.

200.21 What is the PIC’s relationship with agencies?

The PIC is made up of agency representatives and serves agencies on matters of performance management and improvement. Agency staff, managers, and executives can engage PIC resources, such as dedicated staff and detailees reporting to the PIC, working groups, and online collaboration opportunities provided by the PIC, to solicit solutions to matters that impact mission activity, management functions and performance management. As provided by law, the heads of agencies with Performance Improvement Officers serving on the PIC shall provide, at the request of the chairperson of the PIC, up to 2 personnel authorizations to serve at the direction of the chairperson.

200.22 Definitions

**Administrative Data.** Data collected by government entities for program administration, regulatory, or law enforcement purposes. Examples include: data on employment and earnings collected through the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program, data on medical conditions and payments collected through Medicare and Medicaid, data on local pollution levels collected to administer the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts, and criminal histories maintained as part of police records or arrests. Such data are usually collected on the universe of individuals, businesses, or communities affected by a particular program, in contrast to survey data that are collected for samples of broader populations, typically for research evaluation, or other statistical purposes.

**Actionable Information/ Data of Significant Value.** Data or other evidence that is sufficiently accurate, timely and relevant to affect a decision, behavior, or outcome by those who have authority to take action. For information to be actionable, it must be prepared in a format appropriate for the user. (See section 240.)
**Agency.** OMB Circular A–11 Part 6 uses the same definition of agency as the GPRA Modernization Act in section 306(f) of title 5. This definition of agency includes executive departments, government corporations and independent establishments but does not include the Central Intelligence Agency, the Government Accountability Office, the United States Postal Service, and the Postal Regulatory Commission.

**Agency Financial Report (AFR).** A report on the agency end of fiscal year financial position that includes, but is not limited to, financial statements, notes on the financial statements and a report of the independent auditors. The report also includes a performance summary. (See section 240 on Annual Performance Reporting).

**Annual Performance Plan (APP).** Under the GPRA Modernization Act, an agency’s Annual Performance Plan defines the level of performance to be achieved during the fiscal year in which the plan is submitted and the next fiscal year. The APP may be used to structure the agency’s budget submission or be a separate document that accompanies the agency’s budget submission. An Annual Performance Plan must cover each program activity of the agency set forth in the budget. (See section 240 on Annual Performance Planning).

**Annual Performance Report (APR).** A report on the agency performance that provides information on the agency's progress achieving the goals and objectives described in the agency’s Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Plan, including progress on the Agency Priority Goals. The report is delivered to the Congress every February with an agency’s Congressional Budget Justification or, alternatively, the APR may be delivered as a performance section of the Performance and Accountability Report that is published by agencies in November. (See section 240 on Annual Performance Reporting).

**Component (of an agency).** Used to describe major organizational units, such as a bureau, administration, or office, within a department or agency.

**Crosscutting.** Across organizational boundaries within an agency or across multiple agencies.

**Data-Driven Review.** Routine and periodic assessments led by agency leaders that incorporate a broad range of qualitative and quantitative inputs and indicators to review the organization’s performance. Data-Driven Reviews bring together the people, resources, and analyses needed to drive progress and performance improvement on agency priorities, both mission-focused and stewardship-focused goals. While performance management often leverages data-driven reviews to track results on the implementation of agency goals, evaluations are carried out periodically and use rigorous designs and methodologies, particularly to estimate impacts and determine causality. See section 260.

**Delivery Partner.** Organizations or entities outside a Federal agency that provide support or assistance in helping a Federal agency accomplish its objectives (e.g., state and local governments, grantees, non-profits, associations, other agencies, contractors).

**Efficiency.** For the purposes of A-11 Part 6, efficiency gains may be described as maintaining a level of performance at a lower cost, improving performance levels at a lower cost, improving performance levels at the same cost, or improving performance levels to a greater degree than costs are increased. Efficiency may be applied to the management of programs and their supporting activities as well as performance goals and objectives.

**Enterprise Risk Management (ERM).** A discipline that deals with identifying, assessing, and managing an organization’s risks. Agencies should coordinate the implementation of their ERM capability that assesses and manages risks as part of their strategic planning and review process (section 260). For a complete
description of management’s responsibilities for Enterprise Risk Management and internal control within the Federal Government see OMB Circular A-123.

Evaluation. As defined by 5 U.S.C. 311(3), “evaluation” means an assessment using systematic data collection and analysis of one or more programs, policies, and organizations intended to assess their effectiveness and efficiency. Evaluations may address questions related to the implementation of a program, policy, or organization; the effectiveness of specific strategies related to or used by a program, policy, or organization; and/or factors that relate to variability in the effectiveness of a program, policy, or organization or strategies of these. Evaluations can also examine questions related to understanding the contextual factors surrounding a program, as well as how to effectively target specific populations or groups for a particular intervention. Finally, evaluations can and should be used be used for learning and improvement purposes, as well as accountability purposes.

While evaluation can provide information on a program’s performance (i.e., its activities, outputs, and outcomes), its overall goals and approach are different from performance measurement. A principle focus of performance measurement is assessing progress toward organizational goals and established targets in helping determine whether an implementation strategy is achieving its stated output or outcome objectives. In contrast, evaluation, as defined above, is a systematic effort to understand effectiveness. However, both evaluation and performance measurement generate information that falls along the continuum of evidence, serve as methods for systematic assessment, and aim to facilitate learning about and improve results of government activities. Evaluation and performance measurement should be aligned and complementary, where appropriate.

Examples of major types of evaluations include:

- **Impact Evaluation**: This type of evaluation assesses the causal impact of a program, policy, or organization, or aspect of them on outcomes, relative to a counterfactual. In other words, this type of evaluation provides an estimate of what would have happened in the absence of the program, policy, or organization, or aspect of these, which is the only way to measure the actual impact of program, policy, program, or aspect of these. Impact evaluations include both experimental (i.e., randomized controlled trials) and quasi-experimental designs. An impact evaluation can help answer the question, “does it work?”

- **Outcome Evaluation**: This type of evaluation measures the extent to which a program, policy, or organization has achieved its intended outcome(s), and focuses on outputs and outcomes to assess effectiveness. Unlike impact evaluation above, it cannot show causal impacts because this type of evaluation does not assess what would have happened in the absence of the program, policy, or organization (i.e., outcome evaluation lacks a counterfactual). Importantly, it is distinct from, but complementary to performance measurement, as noted above. An outcome evaluation can help answer the question, “did the program, policy, or organization do what it intended to do?”

- **Process or Implementation Evaluation**: This type of evaluation assesses how the program or service is delivered relative to its intended theory of change, and often includes information on content, quantity, quality, and structure of services provided. These evaluations can help answer the question, “was the program, policy, or organization implemented as intended?” or “how is the program, policy, or organization operating in practice?”

- **Formative Evaluation**: This type of evaluation, typically done before full implementation of a program, policy, or organization, assesses whether a program, policy, or organization, or aspect of these, is feasible, appropriate, and acceptable before it is fully implemented. It may include some of the activities described above, such as process evaluation or outcome evaluation. However,
unlike summative evaluation designs like impact and outcome evaluations, which seek to answer whether or not the program, policy, or organization met its intended goals or had the intended impacts, a formative evaluation focuses solely on learning and improvement and does not answer questions of overall effectiveness.

- **Descriptive Studies:** These studies, which can be quantitative or qualitative in nature, seek to describe a program, policy, organization, or population without inferring causality or measuring effectiveness. These studies are used for various purposes, such as to understand relationships between program activities and participant outcomes, measure relationships between policies and particular outcomes, describe program participants or components, and identify trends or patterns in data.

The questions to be answered must drive the research methods (and not vice versa), and evaluations should include the most rigorous methods possible that align to the identified questions and are feasible in a given circumstance. Rigor is important for all types of evaluations. Evaluations require that (1) inferences about cause and effect are well-founded (internal validity); (2) there is clarity about the populations, settings, or circumstance to which results can be generalized (external validity); (3) measures accurately capture the intended information (measurement reliability and validity); (4) samples are large enough for meaningful inferences; and (5) evaluations are conducted with an appropriate level of independence by experts external to the program either inside or outside an agency.

**Evidence.** As defined by 44 US.C. 3561(6), “evidence” means information produced as a result of statistical activities for a statistical purpose. However, evidence, as applied in the context of the Federal Performance Framework for improving organizational and agency performance, is viewed more broadly as the available body of facts or information indicating whether a belief or proposition is true or valid. As such, evidence can be quantitative or qualitative and may come from a variety of sources, including foundational fact finding (e.g., aggregate indicators, exploratory studies, descriptive statistics, and other research), performance measurement, policy analysis, and program evaluation. Evidence has varying degrees of credibility, and the strongest evidence generally comes from a portfolio of high-quality, credible sources rather than a single study.

The credible use of evidence in decision-making requires an understanding of what conclusions can be drawn from the information and, equally important, what conclusions cannot be drawn. For example, multiple rigorous impact and implementation evaluations may provide strong evidence that a particular intervention is effective in a particular setting or with a particular population. However, they may be less definitive on how effective that intervention would be in other settings or with different populations. Quasi-experimental evidence from large, diverse samples of administrative data may address concerns about generalizability, but could lack definitive evidence on causality or be silent on important outcomes not captured in the administrative data. Descriptive analyses from Federal statistical series provide context to examine societal, economic, and environmental trends over time but do not speak to program outcomes or impacts. Qualitative and quantitative implementation studies can complement other evidence on outcomes and impacts by providing insight into how programs and practices can be successfully implemented in particular settings and with particular populations. Similarly, high-quality performance metrics that are valid, reliable, and strongly correlated with outcomes can be valuable to understand agency progress toward achieving a desired outcome. In sum, using evidence credibly involves being able to assess the quality and rigor of the information and align the resulting insights with their appropriate use.

**External Factors.** Economic, demographic, social, environmental, or other influences that are not of the agency's own making but can affect the goals or outcomes an agency seeks to influence. Some external factors, such as safety practices, can be influenced by agency action, while others are more difficult to affect.
**Goal.** A statement of the result or achievement toward which effort is directed. Goals can be long or short-term and may be expressed specifically or broadly. Progress against goals should be monitored using a suite of supporting indicators. For the purpose of this guidance, there are Cross-Agency Priority Goals, strategic goals, strategic objectives, Agency Priority Goals and performance goals, all of which have uniquely defined properties.

**Goal, Cross-Agency Priority (CAP Goals)** (referred to as Federal Priority Goal in GPRA Modernization Act). A statement of the long-term level of desired performance improvement for Government-wide goals set or revised at least every four years. These include outcome-oriented goals that cover a limited number of crosscutting policy areas and management goals addressing financial management, strategic human capital management, information technology management, procurement and acquisition management, and real property management.

**Goal, Strategic.** A statement of aim or purpose that is included in a Strategic Plan. Strategic goals articulate clear statements of what the agency wants to achieve to advance its mission and address relevant national problems, needs, challenges and opportunities. These outcome-oriented strategic goals and supporting activities should further the agency’s mission.

**Objective, Strategic.** Strategic objectives reflect the outcome or management impact the agency is trying to achieve and generally include the agency’s role. Included in a Strategic Plan, each objective is tracked through a suite of performance goals and other indicators. Strategic objectives and performance goals should facilitate prioritization and assessment for planning, management, reporting, and evaluation purposes. Agencies should use strategic objectives to help decide which indicators are most valuable to provide leading and lagging information, monitor agency operations, show how employees contribute to the organization’s mission, determine program evaluations needed, communicate agency progress, and consider the impact of external factors on the agency’s progress. The set of all agency strategic objectives together should be comprehensive of all agency activity.

Objectives are usually outcome-oriented to reflect core mission and service related functions; however, stewardship and other objectives may be established to communicate the breadth of agency efforts. Strategic objectives may be described in strategic plans and on Performance.gov as:

- **Mission / Service Focused.** A type of strategic objective that expresses more specifically the path an agency plans to follow to achieve or make progress on a single strategic goal. **Mission focused** strategic objectives typically reflect the core functions and activities of the agency based on statute or leadership priorities, and which serve to drive their efforts in addressing pressing relevant national problems, needs, and challenges. For programs which deliver direct services to customers, this may also include the objective of providing a good experience for customers, and is therefore **Service Focused.** Service Focused objectives should be considered as those 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.

- **Mission / Service Focused (Crosscutting/Other).** A type of strategic objective that is not directly tied to a single strategic goal, but may be tied to several or none. In some circumstances agencies perform statutory or crosscutting activities which are not closely tied to a single strategic goal.

- **Stewardship Focused.** A type of strategic objective that reflect the agencies activities and responsibilities to provide appropriate safeguards in executing mission and service related activities effectively and efficiently, including minimizing instances of waste, fraud, and abuse. These objectives typically communicate improvement priorities for management functions such as
strategic human capital management, information technology, or financial stewardship. Often management objectives support more than one strategic goal.

**Goal, Agency Priority (APG).*** A limited number of goals, usually 2–8, identified by CFO Act agencies or as directed by OMB. An APG advances progress toward longer-term, outcome-focused goals in the agency’s Strategic Plan, near-term outcomes, improvements in customer responsiveness, or efficiencies. An APG is a near-term result or achievement that leadership wants to accomplish within approximately 24 months that relies predominantly on agency implementation (as opposed to budget or legislative accomplishments). APGs reflect the top near-term performance improvement priorities of agency leadership, not the full scope of the agency mission.

**Goal, Performance.*** A statement of the level of performance to be accomplished within a timeframe, expressed as a tangible, measurable objective or as a quantitative standard, value, or rate. For the purposes of this guidance and implementation of the GPRA Modernization Act, a performance goal includes a performance indicator, a target, and a time period. The GPRA Modernization Act requires performance goals to be expressed in an objective, quantifiable, and measurable form unless agencies in consultation with OMB determine that it is not feasible. In such cases an “alternative form” performance goal may be used. The requirement for OMB approval of an alternative form goal applies to performance goals only. Milestones are often used as the basis of an alternative form performance goal. Performance goals specified in alternative form must be described in a way that makes it possible to discern if progress is being made toward the goal.

**Example Performance Goal:** Reduce the number of homeless veterans on any given night to 35,000 by June 2012.
- Performance Indicator: Number of homeless veterans on any given night
- Target: 35,000
- Time period: June 2012

**Example “Alternative Form” Performance Goal:** Obtain an unmodified audit opinion on the agency’s financial statements at the by the end of FY 2017.
- Performance Indicator: Audit opinion on the agency financial statements
- Target: Unmodified
- Time period: By the end of FY 2017

**Goal Leader.*** The person designated by the agency head or COO to lead, oversee and be accountable for the implementation of an agency goal. A goal leader will lay out strategies to achieve the goal, manage execution, regularly review performance and make course corrections when needed. The agency’s goal leaders should be empowered to coordinate across the agency to improve performance.

**Government Corporation.*** A corporation owned or controlled by the Federal Government, as defined in section 103 of title 5, United States Code.


**Human Capital Evaluation Framework.*** Underlies the three human capital evaluation mechanisms (e.g., HRStat, Audits, and Human Capital Strategic Reviews) to create a central evaluation framework that integrates the outcomes from each to provide OPM and agencies with an understanding of how human capital policies and programs are supporting missions. More information can be found at OPM’s website for Human Capital Management.
**Human Capital Operating Plan (HCOP).** An agency’s human capital implementation document, which describes how an agency will execute the human capital elements stated within the Agency Strategic Plan (SP) and Annual Performance Plan (APP). The Chief Human Capital Officer establishes the HCOP and updates it annually, in collaboration with the agency’s senior management team. The HCOP operates on the same annual cycle as the agency APP in order to identify and focus on the human capital goals and measures that need to be implemented each year to achieve the strategic goals set forth over the course of the SP. Effective April 11, 2017, pursuant to revised Federal regulations (5 C.F.R. 250 Subpart B), each agency must develop and update the HCOP in alignment with GPRAMA strategic and performance planning timelines.

**Indicator.** A measurable value that indicates the state or level of something.

**Categories of Indicators:** For the purposes of this guidance and the Performance.gov data standards, two categories of indicators are distinguished, performance indicators and other indicators.

1. **Performance Indicator.** The indicator for a performance goal or within an Agency Priority Goal statement that will be used to track progress toward a goal or target within a timeframe. By definition, the indicators for which agencies set targets with timeframes are performance indicators.

2. **Other Indicator.** Indicators not used in a performance goal or Agency Priority Goal statement but are used to interpret agency progress or identify external factors that might affect that progress. By definition, indicators that do not require targets and timeframes are other indicators.

**Types of Indicators:** Various types of indicators (e.g. outcome, output, customer service, process, efficiency) may be used as either performance indicators or other indicators. Agencies are encouraged to use outcome indicators as performance indicators where feasible and appropriate. Agencies also are encouraged to consider whether indicators have been validated through research conducted to be well correlated with what they are intended to measure. Some examples of types of indicators in alphabetical order include, but are not limited to:

- **Indicator, Contextual.** Data that provides situational information for the purpose of understanding trends or other information related to a goal or a program. Examples could include data about warning signals, unwanted side effects, external factors the government can influence, or external factors where the government may have a limited effect.

- **Indicator, Customer Service.** A type of measure that indicates or informs the improvement of government’s interaction with those it serves or regulates.

- **Indicator, Efficiency.** A type of measure, specifically, a ratio of program activity inputs (such as costs or hours worked by employees) to its outputs or outcomes. Efficiency indicators reflect the resources used to achieve outcomes or produce outputs. Measuring the cost per unit of outcome or output tends to be most useful for similar, repeated practices. In other circumstances, it tends to be more useful to find effective practices and then look for lower cost ways of delivering them.

- **Indicator, Input.** A type of measure that indicates the consumption of resources, especially time and/or money, used.
**Indicator, Intermediate Outcome.** A type of measure that indicates progress against an intermediate outcome that contributes to an ultimate outcome, such as the percentage of schools adopting effective literacy programs, compliance levels, or the rate of adoption of safety practices. Intermediate outcome indicators are especially helpful if they are based on strong theory and have been validated through research to have a strong positive correlation with the ultimate outcome desired.

**Indicator, Process.** A type of measure that indicates how well a procedure, process or operation is working, (e.g., timeliness, accuracy, fidelity or completeness).

**Indicator, Outcome.** A type of measure that indicates progress against achieving the intended result of a program. Indicates changes in conditions that the government is trying to influence.

**Indicator, Output.** A type of measure, specifically the tabulation, calculation, or recording of activity or effort, usually expressed quantitatively. Outputs describe the level of product or activity that will be provided over a period of time. While output indicators can be useful, there must be a reasonable connection, and preferably a strong positive correlation, between outputs used as performance indicators and outcomes. Agencies should select output indicators based on evidence supporting the relationship between outputs and outcomes, or in the absence of available evidence, based on a clearly established argument for the logic of the relationship.

**Inherently Governmental.** An inherently governmental function, as defined in section 5 of the Federal Activities Inventory Reform Act, Public Law 105–270, means a function that is so intimately related to the public interest as to require performance by Federal Government employees. Additional guidance is available at Performance of Inherently Governmental and Critical Functions. The application of the term inherently governmental for functions described in the legislation does not change from the 1993 GPRA legislation to the 2010 GPRA Modernization Act. The preparation of agency Strategic Plans, Annual Performance Plans, and Annual Performance Reports is considered an inherently governmental function. COOs, PIOs, and Deputy PIOs must be Government employees, but contractors may provide support to these officials in executing their functions.

**Intended Use.** The concept implied by ‘intended use’ of data in the GPRA Modernization Act allows agencies to set expectations for data accuracy levels appropriate to the specific purpose for which the information will be used. Agencies should consider the intended use of data, and potential value of reusing the data for statistical purposes, to determine the level of accuracy needed and to manage data collection costs. Agencies can calibrate the accuracy of the data to the intended use of the data and the cost of improving data quality. At the same time, agencies should consider how data limitations can lead to inaccurate performance assessments. Examples of data limitations include 1) imprecise measurement and recordings, 2) incomplete data, 3) inconsistencies in data collection procedures and 4) data that are too infrequently collected to allow for adjustments of agency action in an effective way. The ‘intended use’ of evidence concept implies that high-stakes decisions should be based on a preponderance of evidence developed using sound methods when feasible. For example, when making a decision about approving a drug, the agency will need a high level of credibility and precision in the portfolio of evidence on which they are basing the decision. This may require multiple randomized controlled trials assessing the effectiveness and safety of the drug within the portfolio of evidence. However, decisions about how to improve the outreach of a given program may not require the same level of precision or as large of a portfolio of evidence.

**Machine Readable Format.** Format in a standard computer language (not English text) that can be read automatically by a web browser or computer system. (e.g., xml). Traditional word processing documents, hypertext markup language (HTML) and portable document format (PDF) files are easily read by humans.
but typically are difficult for machines to interpret. Other formats such as extensible markup language (XML), (JSON), or spreadsheets with header columns that can be exported as comma separated values (CSV) are machine readable formats. It is possible to make traditional word processing documents and other formats machine readable but the documents must include enhanced structural elements.

**Management Function.** Describes offices or activities within agencies that support the agency divisions delivering programs that more directly advance mission. These functions tend to be common across agencies (e.g., financial, human capital, acquisition, information technology, performance management, risk management, legal, communication, intergovernmental).

**Major Management Challenge.** Programmatic or management functions, within or across agencies, that have greater vulnerability to waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement (such as issues the Government Accountability Office identifies as high risk or issues that an Inspector General identifies) where a failure to perform well could seriously affect the ability of an agency or the Federal Government to achieve its mission or goals.

**Measure.** See indicator.

**Milestone.** A scheduled event signifying the completion of a major deliverable or a phase of work.

**Objective.** See goal.

**Output.** Quantity of products or services delivered by a program, such as the number of inspections completed or the number of people trained.

**Outcome.** The desired results of a program. For example, an outcome of a nation-wide program aimed to prevent the transmission of HIV infection might be a lower rate of new HIV infections in the U.S. Agencies are strongly encouraged to set outcome-focused performance goals to ensure they apply the full range of tools at their disposal to improve outcomes and find lower cost ways to deliver. However, there are circumstances where the effects of a program on final outcomes are so small and confounded with other factors that it may be more appropriate to base performance goals on indicators or intermediate outcomes. Ideally, those indicators and intermediate outcomes should have strong theoretical and empirical ties to final outcomes.

**Performance and Accountability Report (PAR).** A combined annual report of agency performance Annual Performance Report (APR) and financial position Agency Financial Report (AFR). The report contains the agency’s audited financial statements and information on efforts to achieve goals during the past fiscal year. The AFR, combined with an APR, serves as an option to reporting the agency’s end of fiscal year status through a consolidated Performance and Accountability Report. (See section 240 on Annual Performance Reporting).

**Performance Improvement Council (PIC).** The PIC consists of Performance Improvement Officers from the 24 CFO Act agencies and other agencies and is chaired by the Chief Performance Officer and Deputy Director for Management at OMB or the Associate Director for Performance and Personnel Management as the designee. The purpose of the Council is to develop recommendations relating to performance management policies, requirements, and criteria for analysis of program performance. In addition, the Council is responsible for facilitating the exchange of performance management information among agencies to accelerate improvements in program performance. The Council also coordinates and monitors continuous reviews of the performance and management of Federal programs.
Performance Management. Use of goals, measurement, evaluation, analysis, and data-driven reviews to improve results of programs and the effectiveness and efficiency of agency operations. Performance management activities often consist of planning, goal setting, measuring, analyzing, reviewing, identifying performance improvement actions, reporting, implementing, and evaluating. The primary purpose of performance management is to improve performance and then to find lower cost ways to deliver effective programs.

Performance.gov. Web-based system that includes performance information about the Executive Branch, and is the Government-wide performance website required under the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010. The site encompasses the Federal Performance Plan of the current Administration, and is being developed to include more agency-specific detail in accordance with the GPRA Modernization Act.

Portfolio. A strategically structured, organized grouping of programs, activities, resources, or other efforts whose coordination and coherence in implementation enables the achievement of agency goals and objectives. Agencies will group programs and associated activities into portfolio in a manner that will best enable effective management and oversight of the portfolio.

Portfolio Manager. A senior official, typically at the Assistant Secretary or Bureau Administrator level, responsible for defining the vision and roadmap for a logical, coordinated grouping of programs or systems. The Portfolio Manager principally focuses on the high-level, executive aspects of managing programs throughout the portfolio, and addresses such key strategic areas as long-term financial health and resource requirements, policy considerations and direction, risk management, stakeholder management, and the impact of environmental factors on the portfolio’s effectiveness to achieve the agency’s overall mission and objectives.

Program. Generally, an organized set of activities directed toward a common purpose or goal that an agency undertakes or proposes to carry out its responsibilities. Within this broad definition, agencies and their stakeholders currently use the term “program” in different ways. Agencies have widely varying missions and achieve these missions through different programmatic approaches, so differences in the use of the term “program” are legitimate and meaningful. For this reason, OMB does not prescribe a superseding definition of “program”; rather, consistent with the GPRA Modernization Act, agencies may identify programs consistent with the manner in which the agency uses programs to interact with key stakeholders and to execute its mission. (See section 270 on Program and Project Management.)

Program Activity. Activities or projects listed in the program and financing schedules of the annual budget of the United States Government. For the purpose of preparing an Annual Performance Plan, an agency may aggregate, disaggregate, or consolidate program activities, except that any aggregation or consolidation may not omit or minimize the significance of any program activity constituting a major function or operation for the agency.

Program Evaluation. See Evaluation.

Program Management. The coordinated application of general and specialized knowledge, skills, expertise, and practices to a program for effective implementation. Effective program management requires programs be managed by both individuals and organizations as whole that work in concert to achieve benefits and advance outcomes towards the accomplishment of the agency mission, goals, and objectives.

Project. A temporary endeavor to create a unique product or service with a start date, a completion date, and a defined scope. Projects are executed in a manner to improve the efficient and effective implementation of programs and contribute to or aligned with agency goals and objectives.
**Project Management.** The coordinated application of general and specialized knowledge, skills, expertise, and practices to a project to achieve its stated goals and outcomes.

**Reasonable Administrative Burden.** The concept of reasonable administrative burden is related to decisions about the frequency and granularity of reporting performance in the GPRA Modernization Act. It refers to considering the cost compared to the benefit of reporting information more frequently or at a more disaggregated level. Because it is not uncommon for more frequent or more granular data to have a higher benefit yet also a higher cost, agencies should increase the frequency and granularity of their performance reporting when the expected value justifies the estimated cost.

**Regulatory Review.** The process by which agencies identify and review existing regulations in order to eliminate those that are obsolete, unnecessary, burdensome, or counterproductive or to modify others to increase their effectiveness, efficiency, and flexibility. *Executive Order 13563* calls for periodic review of existing significant regulations, with close reference to empirical evidence. Such reviews may be incorporated into the annual strategic review of objectives, as appropriate. Retrospective analyses conducted, including supporting data, should be released online wherever possible. Consistent with the commitment to periodic review and to public participation, agencies should continue to assess its existing regulations to the extent that review findings specify that a particular regulation, or its language, is impeding progress of achieving the strategic objective.

**Risk Management.** Coordinated activities to direct and control challenges or threats to achieving an organization’s goals and objectives. A risk management process is a systematic application of management policies, procedures and practices to the activities of communicating, consulting, establishing the context, and identifying, analyzing, evaluating, treating, monitoring and reviewing risk. (See also “Enterprise Risk Management”).

**Risk Profile.** The agency’s risk profile provides a thoughtful analysis of the risks an agency faces towards achieving its strategic objectives arising from its activities and operations, and identifies appropriate options for addressing significant risks. See OMB Circular A-123.

**Statistical Activities.** The term “statistical activities,” per 44 U.S.C. 3561(10), (A) means the collection, compilation, processing, or analysis of data for the purpose of describing or making estimates concerning the whole, or relevant groups or components within, the economy, society, or the natural environment; and (B) includes the development of methods or resources that support those activities, such as measurement methods, models, statistical classifications, or sampling frames. Statistical activities include the use of data to describe outcomes and descriptors of interest, such as through estimates of population characteristics, summaries of test results, indices of economic activity, measures of environmental conditions, and incidence rates for a wide range of events. They may include relative measures among subgroups, geographies, and time periods, as well as relationships among measured variables. They also include a wide range of analytic applications, such as research reports, program evaluations, and experiment-based program studies. Finally, they encompass transparency and accountability efforts, such as scorecards, that provide Federal agencies, State and local governments, and the public with information on the relative performance of different programs, providers, and systems.

**Statistical Purposes.** The term “statistical purpose,” as defined by 44 U.S.C. 3561(12), (A) means the description, estimation, or analysis of the characteristics of groups, without identifying the individuals or organizations that comprise such groups; and (B) includes the development, implementation, or maintenance of methods, technical or administrative procedures, or information resources that support the purposes described in (A). Statistical purposes include the use of data to better understand the characteristics, behavior, or needs of groups of people, businesses or organizations. But they do not include the description of or decision-making about individual people, businesses or organizations.
Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan presents the long-term objectives an agency hopes to accomplish, set at the beginning of each new term of an Administration. It describes general and longer-term goals the agency aims to achieve, what actions the agency will take to realize those goals and how the agency will deal with the challenges likely to be barriers to achieving the desired result. An agency’s Strategic Plan should provide the context for decisions about performance goals, priorities, and budget planning, and should provide the framework for the detail provided in agency annual plans and reports. (See section 230 on strategic planning.)

Strategic Review. An agency’s management process (or set of processes) that synthesizes available performance information and other evidence, including evaluations, to assess progress on its strategic objectives, in consultation with OMB. (See section 260 on strategic reviews.)

Target. Quantifiable or otherwise measurable characteristic typically expressed as a number that tells how well or at what level an agency or one of its components aspires to perform. In setting and communicating targets, where available, agencies should include the baseline value from which the target change is calculated.

200.23 Example Illustration of Goal Relationships

![Diagram illustrating goal relationships](image-url)
### Performance Timeline and Calendar

The 2019 and 2020 Performance Timeline is aligned to the President's Budget for Fiscal Years 2021 and 2022, respectively. The Timeline provides a summary of agency submission requirements related to strategic and performance planning and reporting within OMB Circular A–11, Part 6. The Timeline reflects general timelines for strategic and performance planning and reporting, and subject to revision. Any changes to deadlines identified in the table below will be communicated by OMB to agency PIOs and Deputy PIOs. More details on exact data standards will continue to be available in section 210 and on MAX.

**Performance Calendar.** An unofficial Performance Calendar is also maintained on MAX Community. This MAX Calendar is designed to provide an additional tool to agencies in managing the submission and publication requirements reflected in the Performance Timeline below. [Click here](#) to hyperlink to the MAX Community Performance Calendar.

**Performance Timeline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Section of A-11, Part 6</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 10, 2019</td>
<td>-Agency Priority Goals (250)</td>
<td>Agencies submit for OMB review: -Strategic Objective Summary of Findings resulting from the agency’s 2019 Strategic Review -Draft FY 2020-2021 Agency Priority Goal statements (impact statement only)</td>
<td>MAX Page “Performance Submission Portal”</td>
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<tr>
<td>September, 2019</td>
<td>-Public Reporting (210) &lt;br&gt;-Annual Performance Planning and Annual Performance Reporting (240) &lt;br&gt;-Agency Priority Goals (250) &lt;br&gt;-Performance and Strategic Reviews (260)</td>
<td>Agencies submit for OMB review: &lt;br&gt;-draft FY 2021 Annual Performance Plan &lt;br&gt;-draft summary of Progress Update for each Strategic Objective (the draft component of the FY 2019 Annual Performance Report) &lt;br&gt;-draft FYs 2020-2021 APG statements (impact and achievement statements)</td>
<td>MAX Page “Performance Submission Portal”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September, 2019</td>
<td>-Evaluation and Evidence-Building Activities (290)</td>
<td>Agencies submit for OMB review FY 2021 Evidence Template documenting agency progress in developing: &lt;br&gt;-Learning Agenda (i.e., Evidence-Building Plan) &lt;br&gt;-Annual Evaluation Plan &lt;br&gt;-Approach for Capacity Assessments</td>
<td>MAX</td>
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<tr>
<td>September, 2019</td>
<td>-Public Reporting (210)</td>
<td>Draft list of Unnecessary Plans and Reports the agency would like to propose to the Congress for modification</td>
<td>MAX</td>
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<td>-PMA, Cross-Agency Priority Goals (220)</td>
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<td>For OMB review, agencies submit annual Category Management Plan</td>
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<td>-Agency Priority Goals (250)</td>
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</table>
| January 10, 2020    | -Annual Performance Planning and Annual Performance Reporting (240)  
-Agency Priority Goals (250)  
-Performance and Strategic Reviews (260) | For OMB review and clearance, agencies submit **final draft**:  
-FY 2021 Annual Performance Plan  
-FY 2019 Annual Performance Report  
-FYs 2020-2021 Agency Priority Goal statements  
For initial OMB review, agencies submit:  
-draft implementation action plans (minus FY 2020 Q1 summary of progress) | MAX Page “Performance Submission Portal”                                                                                                           |
| January 31, 2020    | -Managing Customer Experience and Improving Service Delivery (280)                      | For OMB review, agencies submit annual CX Self-Assessment                                                                                                                                             | MAX Page “CX Portal”                                                                                                                                |
| February, 2020      | -Public Reporting (210)  
-Annual Performance Planning and Annual Performance Reporting (240)  
-Agency Priority Goals (250)  
-Performance and Strategic Reviews (260) | Publish:  
-FY 2021 Annual Performance Plan  
-FY 2019 Annual Performance Report  
-FYs 2020-2021 Agency Priority Goal statements | Agency website/Performance.gov                                                                                                                      |
| February, 2020      | -Public Reporting (210)                                                                  | **Publish** list of Agency Identified Unnecessary Plans and Reports                                                                                                                                       | Performance.gov                                                                            |
| February 7, 2020    | -Public Reporting (210)  
-Agency Priority Goals (250)                                                                  | Agencies submit **full initial** draft FY 2020 Q1 Quarterly Performance Update for FYs 2020-2021 APGs for OMB review                                                                                   | MAX Page “Performance Submission Portal”                                                                                                           |
<p>| February 21, 2020   | -PMA, Cross-Agency Priority Goals (220)                                                 | CAP Goal Team Leads submit <strong>initial</strong> draft FY 2020 Q1 Quarterly Performance Update for CAP Goals for review                                                                                   | MAX Page “CAP Goal Submission Portal”                                                                                                               |</p>
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| February 28, 2020 | -Public Reporting (210)  
-PMA, Cross-Agency Priority Goals (220)  
-Agency Priority Goals (250) | Agencies and CAP Goal Teams submit **final** draft FY 2020 Q1 Quarterly Performance Update for FYs 2020-2021 APGs and CAP Goals for OMB review and clearance | **MAX** Page “Performance Submission Portal”                                |
| March 19, 2020  | -Public Reporting (210)  
-PMA, Cross-Agency Priority Goals (220)  
-Agency Priority Goals (250) | **Publish** FY 2020 Q1 Quarterly Performance Update for FYs 2020-2021 APGs and CAP Goals                                                                 | Performance.gov                                                          |
| March 31, 2020  | -Managing Customer Experience and Improving Service Delivery (280)                      | For OMB review, agencies submit CX Action Plan                                                                                                    | **MAX** Page “CX Portal”                                                 |
| May 15, 2020    | -Public Reporting (210)  
-Agency Priority Goals (250)                                                                  | Agencies submit **initial** draft FY 2020 Q2 Quarterly Performance Update for FYs 2020-2021 APGs for OMB review                                           | **MAX** Page “Performance Submission Portal”                               |
| May 15, 2020    | -Public Reporting (210)  
-Performance and Strategic Reviews (260)  
-OMB Circular A-123                                                                          | Agencies submit for OMB review: -Strategic Objective Summary of Findings resulting from the agency’s 2020 Strategic Review                     | **MAX** Page “Performance Submission Portal”                               |
| May 22, 2020    | -PMA, Cross-Agency Priority Goals (220)                                                  | CAP Goal Team Leads submit **initial** draft FY 2020 Q2 Quarterly Performance Update for CAP Goals for review                                         | **MAX** Page “CAP Goal Submission Portal”                                 |
| June 5, 2020    | -Public Reporting (210)  
-PMA, Cross-Agency Priority Goals (220)  
-Agency Priority Goals (250)                                                                | Agencies and CAP Goal Teams submit **final** draft FY 2020 Q2 Quarterly Performance Update for FYs 2020-2021 APGs and CAP Goals for OMB review and clearance | **MAX** Page “Performance Submission Portal”                               |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 7, 2020</td>
<td>-Public Reporting (210) -Agency Priority Goals (250)</td>
<td>Agencies submit initial draft FY 2020 Q3 Quarterly Performance Update for FYs 2020-2021 APGs for OMB review</td>
<td>MAX Page “Performance Submission Portal”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 21, 2020</td>
<td>-PMA, Cross-Agency Priority Goals (220)</td>
<td>CAP Goal Team Leads submit initial draft FY 2020 Q3 Quarterly Performance Update for CAP Goals for review</td>
<td>MAX Page “CAP Goal Submission Portal”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September, 2020</td>
<td>-Public Reporting (210) -Annual Performance Planning and Annual Performance Reporting (240) -Performance and Strategic Reviews (260)</td>
<td>Agencies submit for OMB review: -draft FY 2022 Annual Performance Plan -draft summary of Progress Update for each Strategic Objective (the draft component of the FY 2020 Annual Performance Report)</td>
<td>MAX Page “Performance Submission Portal”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September, 2020</td>
<td>-Evaluation and Evidence-Building Activities (290)</td>
<td>Agencies submit for OMB review: -draft Interim Learning Agenda (i.e., Evidence-Building Plan) -draft FY 2022 Evaluation Plan -interim Capacity Assessment</td>
<td>MAX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September, 2020</td>
<td>-Public Reporting (210)</td>
<td>Draft list of Unnecessary Plans and Reports the agency would like to propose to the Congress for modification</td>
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<td>September 17, 2020</td>
<td>-Public Reporting (210) -PMA, Cross-Agency Priority Goals (220) -Agency Priority Goals (250)</td>
<td><strong>Publish</strong> FY 2020 Q3 Quarterly Performance Update for FYs 2020-2021 APGs and CAP Goals</td>
<td>Performance.gov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2, 2020</td>
<td>-Annual Performance Planning and Annual Performance Reporting (240) (See OMB Circular A-136)</td>
<td>Agencies submit draft FY 2020 Agency Financial Report (AFR) or Performance and Accountability Report (PAR) for final OMB clearance</td>
<td>MAX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 13, 2020</td>
<td>-Public Reporting (210) -Agency Priority Goals (250)</td>
<td>Agencies submit <strong>initial</strong> draft FY 2020 Q4 Quarterly Performance Update for FYs 2020-2021 APGs for OMB review</td>
<td><strong>MAX</strong> Page “Performance Submission Portal”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 27, 2020</td>
<td>-PMA, Cross-Agency Priority Goals (220)</td>
<td>CAP Goal Team Leads submit <strong>initial</strong> draft FY 2020 Q4 Quarterly Performance Update for CAP Goals for review</td>
<td><strong>MAX</strong> Page “CAP Goal Submission Portal”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 4, 2020</td>
<td>-Public Reporting (210) -PMA, Cross-Agency Priority Goals (220) -Agency Priority Goals (250)</td>
<td>Agencies and CAP Goal Teams submit <strong>final</strong> draft FY 2020 Q4 Quarterly Performance Update for FYs 2020-2021 APGs and CAP Goals for OMB review and clearance</td>
<td><strong>MAX</strong> Page “Performance Submission Portal”</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 23, 2020</td>
<td>-Public Reporting (210) -PMA, Cross-Agency Priority Goals (220) -Agency Priority Goals (250)</td>
<td><strong>Publish</strong> FY 2020 Q4 Quarterly Performance Update for FYs 2020-2021 APGs and CAP Goals</td>
<td>Performance.gov</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Subject to revision; however, agencies should plan on meeting these reporting requirements unless otherwise informed by OMB.

** No separate Q1 reporting will occur in FY 2019. FY 2019 Q1 and Q2 data should be merged into one updated implementation action plan for publication on Performance.gov.