



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

Friday, August 22, 2014
CPM 2014-11

MEMORANDUM FOR: Heads Of Executive Departments And Agencies

FROM: Katherine Archuleta Director

Subject: Enhancing Workplace Flexibilities and Work-Life Programs

Since the beginning of his Administration, the President has focused on how we can create real, lasting security for the middle class by strengthening our nation's workplaces to better support working families. On June 23, 2014, President Obama signed a memorandum to further promote a workplace culture for the 21st century that will support the Federal Government's ability to attract, empower, and retain a talented and productive workforce by expanding the use of workplace flexibilities and work-life programs as appropriate and consistent with agency mission. ([See Attachment 1.](#))

To achieve this goal, the President directs the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to work with agencies to (1) support agencies in their efforts to educate and train the Federal workforce on the various workplace flexibilities and work-life programs available, (2) support agencies in promoting workplace environments that incorporate workplace flexibilities and work-life programs into their organizational cultures, (3) ensure employees are aware of the right to request work schedule flexibilities without fear of retaliation, (4) review the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey data related to supervisor and senior leadership support for work-life, as well as use and satisfaction with alternative work schedules, telework, and work-life programs; (5) implement the President's Management Agenda efforts in a manner that improves Senior Executive Service focus on creating inclusive work environments where workplace flexibilities and work-life programs are used effectively; (6) establish a Workplace Flexibility Index using data from the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, reporting required by the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010, and other appropriate measures of agencies' effective use of workplace flexibilities, (7) report to the White House on agency best practices, potential barriers or limitations, and recommendations for improvements, and (8) review the relevant trends related to workplace flexibility issues in the annual reports that agencies provide to OPM under the No FEAR Act. Agencies are encouraged to begin the process of identifying appropriate contacts who will communicate with OPM on these various deliverables. In doing so, we can help ensure that the Federal workforce is engaged and empowered to deliver exceptional and efficient service to the American public while meeting family and other needs at home.

The following sections and noted attachments provide guidance on the right of an employee to request work schedule flexibilities without fear of retaliation, and an overview of the various workplace flexibilities and work-life programs available to agencies and employees for their use.

Right to Request Work Schedule Flexibilities without Fear of Retaliation

Federal employees have the right to request, without fear of retaliation or adverse employee action as a consequence of making such a request, work schedule flexibilities available to them under law, pursuant to any applicable collective bargaining agreement or under other agency policy. Federal agencies and supervisors should ensure that procedures and policies are in place that will allow Federal employees to make such requests without fear of retaliation. As stated in the President’s memorandum, “nothing in this section shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect the discretion granted to an employee’s supervisor in making a decision on the request for work schedule flexibilities, in accordance with the agency’s mission-related requirements.” (See Attachment 2 for additional information.)

Overview of Leave and Workplace Flexibilities

The Federal employee leave program is a dynamic system that has evolved to meet the needs of both employees and Federal agencies. Combined with other workplace flexibilities, the program has progressed to serve the contemporary workforce in a manner that is both generous to employees and responsive to agency mission requirements. Although employees have a wide-range of flexibilities available to them, supervisors and employees must understand both the entitlements and flexibilities in order to make decisions that will allow employees to balance their work and family obligations in a manner consistent with agency mission. (See Attachment 3 for additional information.)

Overview Work-Life Programs

Work-life is the business practice of creating a flexible, supportive environment to engage employees and maximize organizational performance. Work-life programs are critical management, recruitment, and retention tools for the Federal community as we strive to maintain an excellent, engaged workforce. Key work-life programs offered to Federal employees include worksite health and wellness, Employee Assistance Programs, workplace flexibilities, telework, and dependent care. When implemented according to today’s best practices, work-life programs can demonstrate significant benefits for agencies and employees. (See Attachment 4 for additional information.)

Study of Workplace Flexibilities and Work-Life Programs

In response to the President’s memorandum, OPM will be issuing separate guidance regarding the agency's review of its workplace flexibilities and work-life policies and programs to assess whether they are being effectively used to the maximum extent practicable. The President’s memorandum requires agencies to submit a report to OPM that includes—

- (a) *any best practices the agency has employed to create a culture and work environment that supports the productive and efficient use of workplace flexibilities and work-life programs; and*
- (b) *any barriers to or limitations that may unnecessarily restrict the use of existing workplace flexibilities and work-life programs and recommendations for addressing or eliminating such barriers or limitations.*

We look forward to working with you on the upcoming report. Agencies should review the information in the attachments to this memorandum and look for a separate information request in the near future.

Additional Information

Employees should contact their agency human resources office for further information on this memo. Agency headquarters-level human resources offices may contact the Pay and Leave office at pay-leave-policy@opm.gov or (202) 606-2858 or the Work-Life Office at worklife@opm.gov.

Attachment 1: [President's Memorandum](#)

cc: Chief Human Capital Officers
Human Resources Directors