UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Climate Action Plan

OPM.GOV

SEPTEMBER **2021**

Table of Contents

I. Introduction 1
II. Policy Statement 1
III. Approach 1
A. Strategy to Tackle the Climate Crisis 1
B. Designated Senior Climate Change Adaptation Official 2
IV. Agency's Priority Adaptation Actions 2
A. Leveraging workforce flexibilities as a strategic asset to promote climate resilience and adaptation 3
B. Increasing support for wildland firefighters and other occupations critical to Federal adaptation and resilience efforts 5
C. Attracting top talent to promote adaptation across agencies through the creation of the President's Sustainability Executives Program 8
D. Expanding availability of effective training to expand government's awareness and competencies related to climate adaptation and resilience 10
V. Specific Topic Areas 12
A. Topic 1: Update Climate Vulnerability Assessments 12
B. Topic 2: Describe Agency Efforts to Enhance Climate Literacy in its Management Workforce 14
C. Topic 3: Describe Agency Actions to Enhance Climate Resilience 15
Appendix: OPM Policy Statement 17

I. Introduction

On January 27, 2021, the White House issued Executive Order (EO) 14008, "Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad."[1] Section 211 of the EO requires each agency to submit an action plan which describes steps that the agency can take to "bolster adaptation and to increase resilience to the impacts of climate change."

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) leads and serves the Federal Government in enterprise human resources management by delivering policies and services to achieve a trusted, effective civilian workforce.

OPM shares the President's concern that climate change poses an existential threat to the well-being of the nation and is committed to supporting the Federal workforce as it powers a government-wide response to this urgent challenge.

II. Policy Statement

Appendix A includes OPM's policy statement which reaffirms our commitment to integrating climate information within our mission, across all relevant programs, and through partnerships with our stakeholders.

III. Approach

A. Strategy to Tackle the Climate Crisis

OPM is committed to leveraging its role as the government's strategic workforce advisor to advance policies that will provide agencies with the tools they need to continue to deliver services to the American people in the face of disruptions caused by climate change. OPM will also help agencies

[1] United States, White House. "Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad." 86 Fed. Reg. 7619 (January 27, 2021).

recruit, hire, retain, and train a workforce with the skills to advance the Administration's goals for adaptation and resilience work at the local, national, and international level. Within OPM itself, we will also take steps to promote the agency's own internal resilience to deliver on our critical mission.

Specifically, OPM will:

1. Establish a Climate and Action Plan Working Group;
2. Review and update existing policies and programs to integrate a recognition of the threat posed by climate change and promote adaptation, review, and confirm new policies are aligned with adaptation and resilience goals, within applicable laws; and
3. Look for opportunities to promote resilience within OPM's programs and policies.

B. Designated Senior Climate Change Adaptation Official

OPM's Chief Management Officer will be the Senior Climate Change Adaptation Official responsible for carrying out the climate adaptation management activities of this Plan.

IV. Agency's Priority Adaptation Actions

OPM has identified the following four (4) Priority Adaptation Actions: (1) Leveraging workforce flexibilities as a strategic asset to promote climate resilience and adaptation; (2) Increasing support for wildland firefighters and other occupations critical to Federal adaptation and resilience efforts; (3) Attracting top talent to promote adaptation across agencies through the creation of the President's Sustainability Executives Program; and (4) Expanding availability of effective training to expand government's awareness and competencies related to climate adaptation and resilience.

Each priority adaptation action is described below:

A. Leveraging workforce flexibilities as a strategic asset to promote climate resilience and adaptation

Item	Response
Action Description	The COVID-19 pandemic transformed how Federal work is done. In 2019, 3% of Federal workers reported that they worked remotely full time. In the 2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, over 50% of employees reported teleworking full time. This rapid increase in the use of telework and other workplace flexibilities allowed agencies to continue to deliver on their mission even when they were not onsite. As OPM helps agencies plan for how they will leverage workplace flexibilities as a strategic asset in the post re-entry environment, there is an opportunity to assist agencies so that their operations can continue even during acute weather events or other future disruptions that prevent access to the worksite. Furthermore, increased telework furthers the goals of the EO by limiting Federal employees' commute and reducing commuting-based carbon emissions.
Action Goal	Enable agencies to have the tools and support to use telework, remote work, and other workplace flexibilities to strengthen their operations.
Agency Lead	The Associate Director of Employee Services (ES) will lead this priority adaptation action.
Risk or Opportunity	Agency leadership and supervisors need a clear understanding of existing flexibilities and significant support to capitalize on the lessons learned during the pandemic to continue the Federal government's progress toward a more resilient workforce.
Scale	Government-wide.
Timeframe	FY2022 and ongoing.

Item	Response
Implementation Methods	OPM will support agencies via: 1. Robust and iterative guidance on strategies to use telework as a strategic asset; 2. Hands on technical assistance to agency leadership and tools for managers; and 3. An examination of HR regulations necessary to effectively use telework.
Performance	We will measure government-wide statistics on telework and remote work.
Intergovernmental Coordination	OPM will continue to work closely with agencies across the government via the Chief Human Capital Officers Council and the President's Management Council. OPM will also continue to support Federal re-entry efforts via its role as a co-chair of the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force.
Resource Implications	OPM is able to align existing resources to this initiative.
Challenges / Further Considerations	Agency leadership and supervisors need continued support to understand how to leverage these tools most effectively in areas such as performance management.
Highlights of Accomplishments to Date	OPM issued a comprehensive set of frequently asked questions for agencies on the use of telework.

B. Increasing support for wildland firefighters and other occupations critical to Federal adaptation and resilience efforts

Item	Response
Action Description	The Federal government is struggling to recruit and retain staff in certain occupational series, including those critical to Federal climate resilience efforts. One example is Federal wildland firefighters who earn less than $15 per hour and suffer burnout from increasingly long and intense fire seasons.[2] President Biden committed that no wildland firefighter would earn less than $15 per hour under his Administration. OPM will work to develop solutions to fulfill this commitment and to increase the government's ability to recruit and retain these critical occupations. It will also seek to identify other occupations critical to the Federal climate adaptation efforts and review compensation levels.
Action Goal	Promote recruitment and retention of positions that are critical to the Federal government's adaptation response by modernizing compensation for employees filling these positions.
Agency Lead	The Associate Director of Employee Services (ES) will lead this priority adaptation action.

[2] Sarah Kaplan, "Underpaid Firefighters, Overstretched Budgets: The U.S. Isn't Prepared for Fires Fueled by Climate Change," Washington Post (July 1, 2021) *available at* https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2021/07/01/underpaid-firefighters-overstretched-budgets-us-isnt-prepared-fires-fueled-by-climate-change/.

Item	Response
Risk or Opportunity	OPM provides leadership on Federal pay and develops policies to administer pay throughout the Federal government. Specifically, OPM is authorized to establish higher rates of basic pay for a group of General Schedule employees to address existing or likely significant handicaps in recruiting or retaining well-qualified employees.[3]
Scale	The work performed by wildland firefighters to reduce hazard fuel loads and restore degraded forest landscapes promotes climate resilience at the state and national level. OPM hopes to further expand its impact by improving recruitment and retention of other occupations that are critical to the national response.
Timeframe	OPM initiated this work in FY2021 and will continue this work throughout FY2022.
Implementation Methods	• Support administration efforts to develop on long term solution to wildland firefighter pay. • Issue regulations creating special hiring authority for land management positions. • Evaluate other Federal occupations critical to combatting the climate crisis and assess whether other interventions (e.g., related to pay or occupational series) are warranted.
Performance	Deliver on the President's promise to raise wildland firefighter pay to no less than $15/hour.
Intergovernmental Coordination	OPM will work closely with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the United States Department of Interior (DOI), and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

[3] https://apps.opm.gov/SpecialRates/Index.aspx.

Item	Response
Resource Implications	OPM is able to align existing resources to support this initiative.
Challenges / Further Considerations	A $15 minimum wage is just a first step. OPM will work with stakeholders on additional policy interventions to promote long term recruitment and retention efforts.
Highlights of Accomplishments to Date	Broadly, OPM has begun an occupational assessment to consider policy interventions to assist agencies with recruiting and retaining the workforce needed to combat the climate crisis. With respect to Federal firefighters, OPM assisted with the following: • Enabled permanent firefighters up to the GS-9 level to earn a 10% pay award. • Enabled seasonal workers who commit to staying on for the season to earn a $1,000 spot bonus. • Extended USDA's direct hire authority for additional Federal firefighting personnel. • Supported DOI in converting 153 tribal positions into permanent jobs that can support wildfire response.

C. Attracting top talent to promote adaptation across agencies through the creation of the President's Sustainability Executives Program

Item	Response
Action Description	This new prospective program, which is being co-developed by OPM and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), will bring innovative senior leaders from the private, non-profit, and academic sectors directly into Federal agencies to support agencies' efforts to address challenges and help solve complex problems related to the climate crisis. OPM and CEQ will work with agencies to identify opportunities to significantly improve adaptation, resilience or sustainability programs. It will also identify and recruit top private sector leaders interested in sharing their expertise for time limited engagements. OPM will leverage its unique understanding of the Federal hiring process to specifically help agencies determine the appropriate hiring authority to use to bring Executives onboard.
Action Goal	Bring in world-class talent into the Federal sector to answer President Biden's call to think boldly and differently to meet this climate crisis.
Agency Lead	OPM Deputy Associate Director for Center for Leadership Development (CLD) and Deputy Associate Director for Talent Acquisition, Employee Services (ES) will serve as co-leads for this priority adaptation action.
Risk or Opportunity	Federal agencies have opportunities to extend their impacts on their own adaptation and sustainability programs as well as extending their impacts externally with their customers and stakeholders. To realize these opportunities, senior level innovators with the influence, creativity, and extended networks will be able to propose and design solutions that can increase adaptation, resilience, and sustainability in the communities, organizations, and agencies they work with.

Item	Response
Scale	This program will start by recruiting a small number of executives, but each could have significant impact on agency operations. Executives will work on issues that have local, regional, national, and global impacts. Over time, OPM hopes to support placement of more executives across government.
Timeframe	OPM and CEQ anticipate launching this program in FY22.
Implementation Methods	• Together with Federal agencies, OPM and CEQ will identify critical climate and adaptation challenges. • OPM will partner with CEQ to develop a Role Profile outlining the general areas of focus / activity during an appointment. OPM will also work with relevant agency CHCOs to add any unique agency descriptors to the role. • CEQ will lead in the identification and recruitment of senior talent from the private, non-profit, and academic sectors. • OPM will liaise with the agency CHCOs and provide optional appointing authorities that can be used. • OPM and CEQ will develop a module around the President's mandate / agenda on the Climate, in addition to an introduction to the Federal world of work and critical things to know. • OPM to develop streamlined performance reporting template.
Performance	OPM and CEQ will refine criteria used to evaluate program performance.
Intergovernmental Coordination	OPM and CEQ will partner with agencies to identify highest priority adaptation, resilience, and sustainability needs.
Resource Implications	Agencies will be expected to cover the costs of the Executive's pay and benefits as well as contribute to the program costs.

Item	Response
Challenges / Further Considerations	A key consideration is enabling Sustainability Executives to have the position and reporting relationship to drive change in agency programs and stakeholder relationships.
Highlights of Accomplishments to Date	OPM has a strong track record of bringing early, mid-career, and senior level talent to close gaps in agency capabilities and performance.

D. Expanding availability of effective training to expand government's awareness and competencies related to climate adaptation and resilience

Item	Response
Action Description	OPM's Center for Leadership Development (CLD) will assess its current program and identify opportunities to expand its climate adaptation content through its leadership, management, and professional development curricula. Presently, delivery mechanisms include open enrollment programs (both in-person and virtual) as well as custom programs provided to agency partners. CLD will also work with agencies that have existing sustainability, adaptation, and resilience learning content (e.g., Department of Energy (DOE), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and others) to integrate their courses into OPM offerings and offer them through agency learning management systems. OPM will work with the Chief Learning Officers Council to identify other means of distribution, engagement, and continual learning to create awareness and adoption in the Federal workforce.
Action Goal	Increase availability of effective climate adaptation resilience training for Federal employees.
Agency Lead	The OPM Deputy Associate Director for Center for Leadership Development (CLD) will serve as the Agency Lead for this Priority Adaptation Action.

Item	Response
Risk or Opportunity	Opportunity to accelerate adoption of adaptation and resilience through Federal employees deploying these skills and behaviors to the benefit of their agency programs.
Scale	Government-wide.
Timeframe	OPM anticipates initiating this work in FY 2022, with full implementation in FY 2024.
Implementation Methods	• Embed climate adaptation and resilience skills and behaviors in existing OPM learning and development programs. • Identify climate adaptation learning content from across the government and academic / non-profit organizations. • Curate, revise, and deploy content for the Federal workforce through OPM distribution, other agency learning management systems, and interagency councils. • Convene special events with adaptation leaders to build awareness and adoption.
Performance	OPM will measure success by the degree of skill and learning transfer through the learning assessments that are part of the training programs.
Intergovernmental Coordination	OPM will work with the Chief Learning Officers Council as well as agencies with existing expertise in training around climate adaptation resilience (e.g., DOE, EPA, FEMA).
Resource Implications	OPM will recoup the costs of training delivery from agencies.
Challenges / Further Considerations	N/A at this time.
Highlights of Accomplishments to Date	N/A at this time.

V. Specific Topic Areas

Per the *Interim Instructions for Preparing Draft Climate Action Plans Under Executive Order 14008* (CEQ 2021) requirements, OPM's plan includes information on the current status and desired end state on three (3) topic areas.

A. Topic 1: Update Climate Vulnerability Assessments

OPM conducted a climate vulnerability assessment in its 2014 Climate Change Adaptation Plan that identified the following two vulnerabilities: (1) managing its three delegated leased buildings; and (2) preparing for weather-related events affecting the Federal government's operating status and promoting the health and safety of employees. Given the internal nature of the first vulnerability which OPM's Facilities, Security, and Emergency Management (FSEM) team has and continues to address, this section will focus on the government-wide nature of preparing for weather-related events affecting the Federal government's operating status and promoting the health and safety of employees.

Desired End State: OPM incorporated the latest climate information referenced in the Fourth National Climate Assessment and continues to make progress against vulnerabilities that impact management functions and/or decision points for managing procurement, real property, and programs that are most susceptible to climate change.

Current State: Because OPM last conducted a vulnerability assessment in 2014, OPM's climate adaptation team will conduct a new assessment as part of the implementation of EO 14008. This assessment will focus on how OPM can better prepare for weather-related crises affecting the government's operating status and promote the health and safety of employees.

Vulnerability: Preparing for weather-related crises affecting the government's operating status and promoting the health and safety of employees.

Item	Response
Climate Threat and Expected Impact	Weather-related crises affect the Federal government's operating status, the health and safety of employees, and the ability for Federal employees to execute their responsibilities to help agencies deliver on their missions.
Recommended Adaption Action and Barriers to Implementation	Based on the vulnerability identified in 2014, OPM will examine its policies and procedures to identify ways OPM can, within existing laws, enhance response to extreme weather events. OPM will begin with a review of the following responsibilities: 1. The OPM Director makes decisions on the operating status of the Federal government during emergencies and inclement weather-related events that impact the Federal Government's operation status in the national Capital region. 2. OPM provides guidance to Federal agencies on how to appropriately use leave and flexibilities such as weather and safety leave — to support impacted employees who cannot safely come to the worksite. 3. Following natural disasters and a formal Declaration of Emergency, OPM can — with OMB concurrence — approve Emergency Leave Transfer Programs for Federal employees.
Estimated Implementation Timeline and How to Measure Progress and Success	OPM will review these procedures starting in FY 2022.

Item	Response
Resource Considerations for Managing Risks	OPM will continue to collaborate and consult with officials in affected regions as well as the National Weather Services (NWS) to address how to respond to severe weather, emergency situations, and other disruptive events. For example, in the National Capital Region (NCR), OPM would collaborate and consult with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) as well as the Metropolitan Area Transportation Operation Centers (MATOC) in the DC, MD, and VA areas. Decisions regarding emergencies and weather-related events outside of the national Capital region are made by the appropriate regional bodies, including the Federal Executive Boards and other Federal agencies.
Disclosure in Financial Reporting and Integration into Enterprise Risk Management Processes	OPM is evaluating the financial impact of this vulnerability. As appropriate, it will include impacts within disclosure reports and enterprise risk management processes.

B. Topic 2: Describe Agency Efforts to Enhance Climate Literacy in its Management Workforce

Climate literacy is essential to helping employees and stakeholders understand how they can support adaptation and resilience efforts. OPM seeks to refine and expand climate adaptation training content available to Federal workers.

Desired End State	Current Status
OPM offered expanded climate adaptation content through its leadership, management, and professional development criteria. This content is available to OPM leaders.	OPM is at the beginning stages of an effort to identify best in class climate adaptation training content to be made available through The Center on Leadership Development (CLD).

Desired End State	Current Status
OPM developed an awareness campaign to enhance the climate ambition and integrate climate considerations across OPM programs.	OPM will collaborate with other stakeholder agency workgroups to develop best practices which incorporate policies from EO 14008. Information garnered from these best practices will be disseminated throughout the OPM workforce.

C. Topic 3: Describe Agency Actions to Enhance Climate Resilience

a) Describe Agency Actions for Climate-ready Sites and Facilities

Desired End State	Current Status
OPM continued to improve operational efficiencies at the three (3) OPM leased facilities at its: (1) Theodore Roosevelt Federal Building (TRB) in Washington, DC; (2) Data Center facility in Macon, Georgia; and (3) Federal Executive Institute (FEI) training facility in Charlottesville, Virginia.	The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) has given OPM Delegation of Authority to operate and maintain the three (3) facilities. These facilities account for 75% of OPM's energy and water consumption. OPM has endeavored to reduce its carbon footprint despite challenging circumstances due to the age of the buildings. Even as the TRB—a historic building erected in the 1950's—faced the second highest number of cooling degree days in 2019, OPM simultaneously experienced a 25.4% decrease in energy intensity as a result of efficiency improvements such as infrastructure improvements, onsite generation of renewable energy, purchasing of green power, and renewable energy credits (RECs). OPM will continue to build upon these improvements to improve operational efficiencies at its leased facilities.

b) Describe Agency Actions to Ensure a Climate-ready Supply of Products and Services

Desired End State	Current Status
Vendors awarded contracts have reduced their emissions.	The Office of Procurement Operations (OPO) informs vendors to reduce their impacts on emissions on awarded contracts to conform to EO 14008 and is reviewing and updating OPM acquisition policies accordingly.
OPM helped promote climate adaption-focused acquisitions through category management initiatives.	To promote climate adaptation-focused criteria through category management initiatives, OPM will: (1) identify core areas of expenditures; (2) develop heightened levels of expertise; (3) leverage shared best practices; and (4) provide acquisition, supply, and demand management solutions. OPM will do its part to help the Federal government eliminate redundancies, increase efficiencies, and deliver more value and savings from the government's acquisition programs.
OPM fully complied with the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP)'s efforts in updating policies and practices Federal agencies use to acquire the goods and services needed to carry out EO 14008.	To support OFPP's efforts, OPM will: (1) review its sustainable procurement policy and confirm that it is in accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) clauses; (2) have its Sustainable Program Manager update the Sustainable Acquisition Policy as well as procurement policy; and (3) increase the acquisition of sustainable products using metrics identified in the 2020 Sustainability Report and Implementation Plan.[4]

[4] OPM, "Office of Personnel Management 2020 Sustainability Plan."

Appendix: OPM Policy Statement

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) leads and serves the Federal Government in enterprise human resources management by delivering policies and services to achieve a trusted, effective civilian workforce. OPM shares the President's concern that climate change poses an existential threat to the well-being of the nation and is committed to supporting the Federal workforce as it powers a Government-wide response to this urgent challenge.

OPM is committed to integrating an awareness of climate threads into our daily work across all relevant programs and through partnerships with our stakeholders. Our Climate Action Plan is an agency-wide plan to integrate climate change adaptation planning and actions into OPM's programs, policies, and operations that is consistent with the requirements of Executive Order (EO) 14008, "Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad."

To address the climate crisis and promote resilience and adaptation, OPM will:

- Integrate climate information to address and promote climate change adaption and climate resilience across our mission, programs, and operations.
- Develop, implement, and evaluate climate-ready policies and programs which address climate change challenges and further Government-wide climate change adaptation, climate literacy, and climate resilience goals.
- Establish and maintain strong partnerships with other agencies in addition to local, regional, state, and other Federal entities to develop policies and programs that promote / enhance climate adaptability and resilience, mitigate climate-related risk to Federal workers and property, and address climate change-related effects.

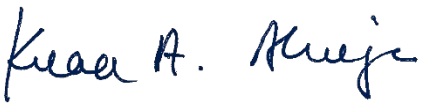
- Review acquisition policies so that climate adaptation and resilience are reflected in its policies and applicable contracts.
- Advocate for necessary resources in our annual budget formulation process in areas where budget adjustments are necessary to carry out the actions identified under this Policy.

To build momentum, OPM's Climate Action Plan specifies four priority actions that will serve as our areas of initial focus. These actions build on OPM's core mission as the government's strategic human capital leader to make sure agency partners have the support they need to deliver on their ambitious adaptation missions.

OPM has identified its Chief Management Officer as its designated official responsible for executing its Climate Action Plan. The Chief Management Officer will assemble a Climate Action Plan Working Group which will not only conduct an annual review of the Climate Action Plan, but it will also review our prior Climate Change Adaptation Plan and vulnerability assessments. Through these assessments, the team will evaluate OPM's progress against its programs and previously identified vulnerabilities and make updates as appropriate.

Through these efforts, I am confident OPM can make significant strides in improving its own internal climate resilience, while also serving as a vital resource to support Government-wide adaptation and resilience efforts. We look forward to executing this important work.

Sincerely,



Kiran A. Ahuja
Director

U.S. Office of Personnel Management

Office of the Director

1900 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20415

OPM.GOV

OD/CAP-03431-9-21