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Washington, DC 20548

Comptroller General
of the United States

Accessible Version

May 28, 2024

The Honorable Robert Shriver
Acting Director
Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20415-1000

Priority Open Recommendations: Office of Personnel Management

Dear Mr. Shriver:

The purpose of this letter is to provide an update on the overall status of the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) implementation of GAO's recommendations and to call your personal attention to areas where open recommendations should be given high priority.¹ In November 2023, we reported that, on a government-wide basis, 75 percent of our recommendations made 4 years ago were implemented.² OPM's recommendation implementation rate was about 33 percent. As of April 2024, OPM had 78 open recommendations. Fully implementing these open recommendations could significantly improve both OPM's operations and its efforts to assist federal agencies in addressing various human capital management issues.

Since our May 2023 letter, OPM has implemented one of our 15 open priority recommendations. Specifically, from June 2023 to July 2023, OPM improved the timeliness for confirming that its actions to implement the U.S. Computer Emergency Readiness Team's cybersecurity recommendations were effective, as we recommended in our August 2017 report.³ These actions help ensure that OPM has effectively mitigated vulnerabilities that can expose its systems to cybersecurity incidents.

We ask that you direct your attention to the remaining 14 priority recommendations. We are also adding two new priority recommendations. One is related to identifying ineligible recipients of federal health benefits, and the second is related to better managing software license inventories. This brings the total number of priority recommendations to 16. (See the Enclosure for the list of recommendations.)

The 16 priority recommendations fall into the following seven areas.

¹Priority recommendations are those that GAO believes warrant priority attention from heads of key departments or agencies. They are highlighted because, upon implementation, they may significantly improve government operations, for example, by realizing large dollar savings; eliminating mismanagement, fraud, and abuse; or making progress toward addressing a high-risk or duplication issue.

²GAO, *Performance and Accountability Report: Fiscal Year 2023*, [GAO-24-900483](#) (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 15, 2023).

³GAO, *Information Security: OPM Has Improved Controls, but Further Efforts Are Needed*, [GAO-17-614](#) (Washington, D.C.: Aug. 3, 2017).

Preventing improper payments. OPM is responsible for administering the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) program. FEHB is the largest employer-sponsored health care program in the country. It provided health insurance benefits to more than 8 million federal employees, family members, and others at a cost of about \$65 billion in fiscal year 2023. We encourage you to implement a monitoring mechanism to identify and remove ineligible family members from FEHB. By doing so, OPM could prevent improper payments, which OPM and the OPM Inspector General have estimated to be up to \$1 billion to \$3 billion per year.

Improving the federal classification system. Questions have been raised about the General Schedule's (GS) ability to keep pace with the evolving nature of government work. We identified one priority recommendation for OPM to examine ways to make the GS system's design and implementation more consistent with the attributes of a modern, effective classification system. Implementing this recommendation could help OPM ensure that the federal classification system is keeping pace with the government's evolving requirements.

Making hiring authorities more effective. To ensure agencies have the talent they need to meet their missions, federal agencies must have a hiring process that is applicant friendly and flexible while also meeting applicable requirements, including hiring on the basis of merit. By implementing one priority recommendation—to refine, consolidate, eliminate, or expand hiring authorities—OPM could improve the federal hiring process and strengthen the government's ability to compete in the labor market for top talent.

Improving payroll data. OPM is responsible for supporting federal agencies' human capital management activities, which includes ensuring that agencies have the data needed to make staffing and resource decisions to support their missions. The Enterprise Human Resource Integration (EHRI) system is OPM's primary data warehouse to support these efforts. We have three priority recommendations in this area. These include (1) increasing the availability of payroll data for analysis, (2) creating a schedule for executing data integration plans, and (3) developing or improving internal control activities to ensure the quality and security of EHRI data. Implementing these three recommendations will help support OPM's strategic and open data goals, which include making these data available to the community currently served by its FedScope data website.

Addressing employee misconduct and improving performance management. OPM has a role in ensuring that agencies have the tools and guidance needed to effectively address misconduct and maximize the productivity of their workforces. Implementing one priority recommendation—for OPM to provide guidance on agency training for managers and supervisors—would help agencies more effectively address employee misconduct and maximize the productivity of the workforce.

Additionally, managing employee performance has been a long-standing government-wide issue, and without effective performance management, agencies also risk losing the skills of top talent. OPM could help inform agencies' decision-making related to performance management by implementing two performance management-related priority recommendations: (1) to develop and implement a mechanism for agencies to share information, and (2) to develop a strategic approach for identifying and sharing emerging research and innovations.

Strengthening IT security and management. OPM collects and maintains personal information on millions of individuals. Protecting this sensitive information is imperative. We have six priority recommendations in this area, such as establishing (1) a process for conducting an organization-wide cybersecurity risk assessment, (2) a timeline to develop a plan to manage permanent electronic records, and (3) a time frame for fully defining the role of the

senior agency official for privacy. Implementing these six recommendations is critical for ensuring that OPM can effectively protect and manage sensitive information that it collects as the chief human resources agency and personnel policy manager for the federal government.

Addressing mission critical skills gaps. Mission-critical skills gaps in federal agencies and the federal workforce pose a high risk to the nation. These gaps can impede agencies from cost effectively serving the public and achieving desired results. A 2022 assessment of OPM's workforce found skills gaps in areas such as project management, organizational performance, leadership development, and data analysis.⁴ Implementing the one priority recommendation in this area—to establish an action plan to address skills gaps identified in its workforce assessment—will help OPM improve its capacity in these areas. It would also help OPM to provide human capital services and guidance to agencies.

As the auditor of the consolidated financial statements of the U.S. government, I have noticed that the Office of Personnel Management had one material weakness in its internal control over financial reporting for fiscal year 2023 related to information system controls. This weakness, as well as related auditor recommendations, is an important issue and I encourage you to address it.

In April 2023, we issued our biennial update to our [High-Risk List](#). This list identifies government operations with vulnerabilities to fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement. It also identifies the need for transformation to address economy, efficiency, or effectiveness challenges.⁵ OPM has oversight responsibility for one of our high-risk areas, [strategic human capital management](#). This [area](#) was added to the [High-Risk List](#) in 2001. Mission critical skills gaps are a factor in 23 of the 37 high-risk areas.

OPM plays a critical leadership role in addressing this issue government-wide. For example, OPM is leading multiple efforts to address skills gaps across the federal government and has resumed stewardship of the Chief Human Capital Officers Council to help connect OPM's government-wide policy efforts with agencies' human capital leaders.

Several other government-wide high-risk areas also have direct implications for OPM and its operations. These areas include (1) the [government-wide personnel security clearance process](#), (2) [ensuring the cybersecurity of the nation](#), (3) [improving the management of IT acquisitions and operations](#), and (4) [managing federal real property](#).

In addition to OPM's high-risk area, we urge your attention to the other government-wide high-risk issues as they relate to OPM. Progress on high-risk issues has been possible through the concerted actions and efforts of Congress, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and the leadership and staff in agencies, including within OPM. In March 2022, we issued a report on key practices to successfully address high-risk areas, which can be a helpful resource as your agency continues to make progress to address high-risk issues.⁶

⁴GAO, *Federal Workforce: OPM Advances Efforts to Close Government-wide Skills Gaps but Needs a Plan to Improve Its Own Capacity*, [GAO-23-105528](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 27, 2023).

⁵GAO, *High-Risk Series: Efforts Made to Achieve Progress Need to Be Maintained and Expanded to Fully Address All Areas*, [GAO-23-106203](#) (Washington, D.C.: Apr. 20, 2023).

⁶GAO, *High-Risk Series: Key Practices to Successfully Address High-Risk Areas and Remove Them from the List*, [GAO-22-105184](#) (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 3, 2022).

We recognize the key role Congress plays in providing oversight and maintaining focus on our recommendations to ensure they are implemented and produce their desired results. Legislation enacted in December 2022 includes a provision for GAO to identify any additional congressional oversight actions that can help agencies implement priority recommendations and address any underlying issues relating to such implementation.⁷

Congress can use various strategies to address our recommendations, such as incorporating them into legislation. Congress can also use its budget, appropriations, and oversight processes to incentivize executive branch agencies to act on our recommendations and monitor their progress. For example, Congress can hold hearings focused on OPM's progress in implementing GAO's priority recommendations, withhold funds when appropriate, or take other actions to provide incentives for agencies to act. Moreover, Congress could follow up during the appropriations process and request periodic updates.

Congress also plays a key role in addressing any underlying issues related to the implementation of these recommendations. For example, Congress could pass legislation providing an agency explicit authority to implement a recommendation or requiring an agency to take certain actions to implement a recommendation.

Copies of this report are being sent to the Director of OMB and the appropriate congressional committees. In addition, the report will be available on the GAO website at [Priority Open Recommendation Letters | U.S. GAO](#).

I appreciate OPM's continued commitment to these important issues. If you have any questions or would like to discuss any of the issues outlined in this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me or Michelle Sager, Managing Director, Strategic Issues, at (202) 512-6806 or SagerM@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this letter. Our teams will continue to coordinate with your staff on all of the 78 open recommendations, as well as those additional recommendations in the high-risk areas for which OPM has a leading role. Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gene L. Dodaro". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Gene L. Dodaro
Comptroller General
of the United States

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable Shalanda Young, Director, Office of Management and Budget

⁷James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023, Pub. L. No. 117-263, § 7211(a)(2), 136 Stat. 2395, 3668 (2022); H.R. Rep. No. 117-389 (2022) (accompanying Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, H.R. 8237, 117th Cong. (2022)).

The Honorable Margaret Pearson, Associate Director, Retirement Services, OPM

Enclosure

Priority Open Recommendations to the Office of Personnel Management

Preventing Improper Payments

Federal Employees Health Benefits Program: Additional Monitoring Mechanisms and Fraud Risk Assessment Needed to Better Ensure Member Eligibility. [GAO-23-105222](#). Washington, D.C.: December 9, 2022.

Year Recommendation Made: 2023

Recommendation: The Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) should implement a monitoring mechanism to identify and remove ineligible family members from the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) program.

Action needed: OPM agreed with this recommendation. In March 2024, OPM stated that it was working to identify potential actions it can take to address the identification and removal of ineligible family members. Consequently, it is too early to determine whether these potential actions will address GAO's recommendation. To fully implement this recommendation, OPM needs to verify eligibility for those already enrolled, identify the ineligible population, and remove them from the FEHB program. Taking these actions would provide an annual cost savings for the FEHB program by reducing the amount of ineligible enrollees and corresponding improper payments.

Potential Financial Benefit if Implemented: Hundreds of millions of dollars or more annually

Director: Seto J. Bagdoyan, Forensic Audits and Investigative Service

Contact information: BagdoyanS@gao.gov, (202) 512-6722

Improving the Federal Classification System

Human Capital: OPM Needs to Improve the Design, Management, and Oversight of the Federal Classification System. [GAO-14-677](#). Washington, D.C.: July 31, 2014.

Year Recommendation Made: 2014

Recommendation: To improve the classification system and to strengthen OPM's management and oversight, the Director of OPM, working through the Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) Council, and in conjunction with key stakeholders such as the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), unions, and others, should use prior studies and lessons learned from demonstration projects and alternative systems to examine ways to make the General Schedule (GS) system's design and implementation more consistent with the attributes of a modern, effective classification system. To the extent warranted, develop a legislative proposal for congressional consideration.

Action needed: Although OPM originally partially agreed with this recommendation, it later reported that it concurred with the recommendation. In March 2024, OPM reported that it is preparing to modernize the GS classification system into a skills-based system. For example, it plans to update work fields such as artificial intelligence, information technology, cybersecurity,

and human resources, among others. First, OPM plans to develop a white paper and a modernization plan that will include resource needs and a timeline. OPM also reported it is partnering with stakeholders such as OMB, the Office of the National Cyber Director, and OPM's offices of Human Resources Solutions and Merit System Audit and Compliance.

To fully implement the recommendation, OPM needs to finalize its modernization plan while continuing to work with key stakeholders such as the CHCO Council, OMB, and unions. If warranted, OPM should also develop a legislative proposal to make the GS system's design and implementation more consistent with the attributes of a modern, effective classification system. Implementing this recommendation could help OPM better position itself to help ensure that the federal classification system is keeping pace with the government's evolving requirements.

High-risk area: [Strategic Human Capital Management](#)

Director: Dawn G. Locke, Strategic Issues

Contact information: LockeD@gao.gov, (202) 512-6806

Making Hiring Authorities More Effective

Federal Hiring: OPM Needs to Improve Management and Oversight of Hiring Authorities. [GAO-16-521](#). Washington, D.C.: August 2, 2016.

Year Recommendation Made: 2016

Recommendation: To help strengthen the government's ability to compete in the labor market for top talent, and to improve the federal hiring process, the Director of OPM, in conjunction with the CHCO Council, should determine whether opportunities exist to refine, consolidate, eliminate, or expand agency-specific authorities to other agencies and implement changes where OPM is authorized, including seeking presidential authorization (as necessary) to do so. To make these determinations, OPM should use (1) the information from its assessment of agencies' use of certain hiring authorities, and (2) insight agencies may have regarding their authorities or processes. In cases where legislation would be necessary to implement changes, OPM should work with the CHCO Council to develop legislative proposals.

Action needed: OPM agreed with this recommendation. In March 2024, OPM reported expanding the government-wide direct hire authority for science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and cyber positions; establishing a government-wide direct hire authority for artificial intelligence positions; and creating an excepted service Schedule A hiring authority for positions needed in support of hiring artificial intelligence positions. However, our August 2016 report also concluded that OPM should analyze if and how specific authorities contribute to the effectiveness of the hiring process and use this information to simplify and improve the hiring process by refining, consolidating, eliminating, or expanding some authorities. To fully implement this recommendation, OPM needs to analyze the authorities and determine where to implement changes and, as appropriate, develop legislative proposals in consultation with the CHCO Council. By doing so, OPM could improve the federal hiring process and strengthen the government's ability to compete in the labor market for top talent.

High-risk area: [Strategic Human Capital Management](#)

Director: Dawn G. Locke, Strategic Issues

Contact information: LockeD@gao.gov, (202) 512-6806

Improving Payroll Data

Federal Human Resources Data: OPM Should Improve the Availability and Reliability of Payroll Data to Support Accountability and Workforce Analytics. [GAO-17-127](#). Washington, D.C.: October 7, 2016.

Year Recommendation Made: 2017

Recommendations: The Director of OPM should take the following three actions:

- Improve the availability of the Enterprise Human Resource Integration (EHRI) payroll data—for example, by preparing the data for analytics, making them available through online tools such as FedScope, and including them among the EHRI data sources on the OPM website and Data.gov.
- Develop a schedule for executing plans to integrate payroll data into the larger suite of EHRI databases.⁸
- Evaluate existing internal control activities and develop new control activities for EHRI payroll data, such as implementing transactional edit checks that leverage the information in the other EHRI datasets.

Action needed: OPM agreed with these recommendations. For the first recommendation, OPM told us in March 2024 that a plan had been developed to help improve the quality of the data with a goal of making them available to the community currently served by its FedScope data website. However, the plan does not contain any milestones for making the data available. To fully address this recommendation, OPM needs to develop these milestones, implement the plan, and improve the availability of EHRI data.

For the second recommendation, OPM has developed a schedule for functionally integrating payroll data with other EHRI databases. This schedule includes key milestones for implementing transactional edit checks in fiscal year 2025, but does not have milestones for making the data more widely available. To fully implement this recommendation, OPM needs to develop plans and milestones for improving the availability of EHRI data.

For the third recommendation, OPM had developed and implemented validation checks specific to the payroll data, but had not leveraged any relational edit checks with other EHRI datasets. In March 2024, OPM officials provided documentation of their plan to develop and implement such edit checks in fiscal year 2025. To fully implement this recommendation, OPM needs to finish updating control activities, including evaluating opportunities to leverage other EHRI datasets to improve integration and data quality. Fully implementing these three recommendations would help OPM support its strategic and open data goals.

⁸According to OPM officials' original response in [GAO-17-127](#), this recommendation would be addressed through implementing other recommendations in the report.

High-risk area: [Strategic Human Capital Management](#)

Director: Rebecca Shea, Forensic Audits and Investigative Service

Contact information: SheaR@gao.gov, (202) 512-6722

Addressing Employee Misconduct and Improving Performance Management

Federal Employee Misconduct: Actions Needed to Ensure Agencies Have Tools to Effectively Address Misconduct. [GAO-18-48](#). Washington, D.C.: July 16, 2018.

Year Recommendation Made: 2018

Recommendation: The Director of OPM, after consultation with the CHCO Council, should provide guidance to agencies to enhance the training received by managers/supervisors and human capital staff to ensure that they have the guidance and technical assistance they need to effectively address misconduct and maximize the productivity of their workforces.

Action needed: OPM partially agreed with this recommendation. In March 2024, OPM reported that it had taken several steps toward implementing this recommendation. In December 2023, OPM issued guidance to agencies on effectively using probationary periods. According to OPM, it is also updating an online supervisory training course and written guidance for supervisors and human resources staff on handling employee misconduct. OPM plans to finalize this guidance in fall 2024. To fully implement this recommendation, OPM needs to complete the update of its guidance and training and make this information available to agencies. Implementing this recommendation would enhance the guidance and technical assistance needed to effectively address misconduct and maximize the productivity of the workforce.

High-risk area: [Strategic Human Capital Management](#)

Director: Dawn G. Locke, Strategic Issues

Contact information: LockeD@gao.gov, (202) 512-6806

Federal Workforce: Opportunities Exist for OPM to Further Innovation in Performance Management. [GAO-19-35](#). Washington, D.C.: November 20, 2018.

Year Recommendation Made: 2019

Recommendations: The Director of OPM, in consultation with the CHCO Council, should take the following two actions:

- Develop and implement a mechanism for agencies to routinely and independently share promising practices and lessons learned, such as through allowing agencies to post such information on OPM's Performance Management portal.
- Develop a strategic approach for identifying and sharing emerging research and innovations in performance management.

Action needed: OPM agreed with these recommendations. In March 2024, OPM reported that it had transitioned to Connect.gov, a new platform for supporting performance management certification and community sharing. To encourage collaboration, OPM also plans to expand its

Executive Resources Forums to include agency presentations on best practices, processes, and challenges related to improving performance management.

However, OPM also reported that it had not made substantive progress on establishing a strategic partnership to produce emerging research and innovations in performance management. To fully implement these recommendations, OPM needs to continue its efforts to develop and implement a mechanism that encourages agency stakeholders to share promising practices and lessons learned, and develop a strategic approach for identifying and sharing emerging research and innovations in performance management. Doing so would help inform agencies' decision-making related to performance management.

High-risk area: [Strategic Human Capital Management](#)

Director: Dawn G. Locke, Strategic Issues

Contact information: LockeD@gao.gov, (202) 512-6806

Strengthening IT Security and Management

Privacy: Dedicated Leadership Can Improve Programs and Address Challenges. [GAO-22-105065](#). Washington, D.C.: September 22, 2022.

Year Recommendation Made: 2022

Recommendation: The Director of OPM should establish a time frame for fully defining the role of the senior agency official for privacy or other designated privacy official in reviewing and approving system categorizations, overseeing privacy control assessments, and reviewing authorization packages, and document these roles.

Action needed: OPM partially concurred with this recommendation. OPM officials told us that their privacy team is involved in various activities related to this process. In addition, they said their privacy and security teams are currently examining roles and responsibilities for the selection and evaluation of the controls. As of March 2024, OPM stated that the agency planned to look for opportunities to more fully document the role of the senior agency official for privacy in these activities during fiscal year 2024. To fully implement this recommendation, OPM needs to ensure that policies and processes for involving the senior agency official for privacy or other designated privacy officials in these steps are fully defined and documented. Doing so will help OPM ensure that privacy protections are adequately incorporated into systems that contain personally identifiable information.

High-risk area: [Ensuring the Cybersecurity of the Nation](#)

Director: Jennifer R. Franks, Information Technology and Cybersecurity

Contact information: FranksJ@gao.gov, (404) 679-1831

Cybersecurity: Agencies Need to Fully Establish Risk Management Programs and Address Challenges. [GAO-19-384](#). Washington, D.C.: July 25, 2019.

Year Recommendation Made: 2019

Recommendation: The Director of OPM should establish a process for conducting an organization-wide cybersecurity risk assessment.

Action needed: OPM agreed with this recommendation. As of March 2024, OPM stated that it is finalizing its Organizational Risk Assessment Plan to outline the agency's approach to planning and conducting an organization-wide cyber risk assessment. To fully implement this recommendation, OPM needs to ensure that the process it implements aggregates information from across the agency to help consider the totality of risk derived from the operation and use of its information systems. Doing so could help OPM identify trends or prioritize investments in cybersecurity risk mitigation activities to target widespread or systemic risks to its systems and organization.

High-risk area: [Ensuring the Cybersecurity of the Nation](#) and [Strategic Human Capital Management](#)

Director: Marisol Cruz Cain, Information Technology and Cybersecurity

Contact information: CruzCainM@gao.gov, (202) 512-5017

Federal Retirement: OPM Actions Needed to Improve Application Processing Times. [GAO-19-217](#). Washington, D.C.: May 15, 2019.

Year Recommendation Made: 2019

Recommendation: The Associate Director of OPM's Retirement Services, working in coordination with the Chief Information Officer, should develop, document, and implement a Retirement Services IT modernization plan for initial project phases that is consistent with key aspects of IT project management, such as determining objectives, costs, and time frames for each initial phase.

Action needed: OPM partially agreed with this recommendation. In March 2022, OPM stated that it was developing a Retirement Services IT modernization plan, which it planned to finalize in June 2022. As of March 2024, OPM has not provided documentation of its IT modernization plan. To fully implement this recommendation, OPM needs to develop, document, and implement a Retirement Services IT modernization plan that is consistent with key aspects of IT project management, such as determining objectives, costs, and time frames. Having such a plan is especially important since OPM anticipates that implementing the plan will be an iterative, multiyear effort.

High-risk area: [Strategic Human Capital Management](#)

Director: Dawn G. Locke, Strategic Issues

Contact information: LockeD@gao.gov, (202) 512-6806

Information Technology: Agencies Need to Fully Implement Key Workforce Planning Activities. [GAO-20-129](#). Washington, D.C.: October 30, 2019.

Year Recommendation Made: 2020

Recommendation: The Director of OPM should ensure that the agency fully implements each of the eight key IT workforce planning activities it did not fully implement.

Action needed: OPM agreed with this recommendation. As of February 2023, OPM had implemented six of the eight recommended IT workforce planning activities—developing competency and staffing requirements; assessing gaps in competencies and staffing; developing strategies and plans to address gaps in competencies and staffing; implementing activities that address gaps; monitoring progress in addressing gaps; and reporting to agency leadership on progress in addressing gaps. In March 2024, OPM stated that it expects to finalize a workforce plan by the end of fiscal year 2024, and assess competency needs by the end of fiscal year 2025. To fully implement this recommendation, OPM needs to complete these two workforce planning activities. Doing so would provide OPM greater assurance that it has the IT staff with the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to support its mission and goals.

High-risk area: [Ensuring the Cybersecurity of the Nation](#) and [Improving the Management of IT Acquisitions and Operations](#)

Director: Dave Hinchman, Information Technology and Cybersecurity

Contact information: HinchmanD@gao.gov, (214) 777-5719

Information Management: Selected Agencies Need to Fully Address Federal Electronic Recordkeeping Requirements. [GAO-20-59](#). Washington, D.C.: February 27, 2020.

Year Recommendation Made: 2020

Recommendation: The Director of OPM should establish a time frame to develop a plan to manage permanent electronic records.

Action needed: OPM agreed with this recommendation. In March 2024, OPM stated that it is in the process of procuring a contract to meet OMB’s electronic recordkeeping requirements. Specifically, OPM reported that it has developed a procurement package which is being reviewed by the agency’s Office of Procurement Operations before the agency publishes its Request for Quotes. OPM estimates an award date of July 2024. To fully implement this recommendation, OPM will need to finalize a contract that describes how it will maintain permanent electronic records. Doing so should help better position OPM to manage its permanent electronic records.

High-risk area: [Strategic Human Capital Management](#)

Director: Marisol Cruz Cain, Information Technology and Cybersecurity

Contact information: CruzCainM@gao.gov, (202) 512-5017

Federal Software Licenses: Agencies Need to Take Action to Achieve Additional Savings. [GAO-24-105717](#). Washington, D.C.: January 29, 2024.

Year Recommendation Made: 2024

Recommendation: The Director of OPM should ensure that the agency compares the inventories of software licenses that are currently in use with information on purchased licenses to identify opportunities to reduce costs and better inform investment decision making for its

widely used licenses on a regular basis. At a minimum, it should consistently implement its procedures for comparing the inventories of licenses in use to purchase records.

Action needed: OPM agreed with this recommendation. In March 2024, OPM stated that its efforts to compare the inventory of current software licenses with information on purchased licenses are in progress. To fully implement this recommendation, OPM needs to provide evidence that it has compared its inventory of software licenses with known purchases for its widely used licenses and has a plan to continue this comparison regularly. Doing so should help identify opportunities to reduce costs on duplicative or unnecessary licenses.

High-risk area: [Improving the Management of IT Acquisitions and Operations](#)

Potential Financial Benefit if Implemented: Less than \$1 million

Director: Carol Harris, Information Technology and Cybersecurity

Contact information: harriscc@gao.gov, (202) 512-4456

Addressing Mission Critical Skills Gaps

Federal Workforce: OPM Advances Efforts to Close Government-wide Skills Gaps but Needs a Plan to Improve Its Own Capacity. [GAO-23-105528](#). Washington, D.C.: February 27, 2023.

Year Recommendation Made: 2023

Recommendation: The Director of OPM should establish an action plan to address OPM's skills gaps identified in the workforce assessment, either as an update to its Human Capital Operating Plan or a separate effort.

Action needed: OPM agreed with the recommendation. In March 2024, OPM reported it had taken several actions to address its skills gaps, including targeting early career talent through an internship program and providing employees with on-demand training through an e-learning content library. To fully implement this recommendation, OPM needs to develop an action plan that includes key information, such as a list of its mission-critical occupations, which occupations have skills gaps, and how it will measure progress toward closing skills gaps within its own workforce. Doing so will help OPM improve its capacity to provide human capital services and guidance to agencies.

High-risk area: [Strategic Human Capital Management](#)

Director: Dawn G. Locke, Strategic Issues

Contact information: LockeD@gao.gov, (202) 512-6806