

Guidance from AFGE NVP Jason Anderson, on OPM proposals.

Dear Members,

We are reaching out to ask for your support in protecting the integrity of the federal civil service and our ability to effectively serve the public.

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has recently introduced three proposed rules that could significantly weaken longstanding civil service protections. These changes may undermine the stability and independence that federal employees rely on to perform their duties with professionalism and integrity.

1. [The Suitability Appeals Rule](#)

This proposal would broaden management's authority to remove or discipline federal employees using loosely defined "suitability" criteria. Because these standards can be interpreted broadly, there is concern that they could be applied inconsistently or without sufficient safeguards.

2. [The RIF Appeal Rule](#)

The proposed rule would limit employees' ability to challenge layoffs and reductions-in-force. By narrowing the appeal process, the rule could make it easier for agencies to remove experienced public servants without adequate oversight.

3. [The Performance Appraisal Rule for General Schedule, Prevailing Rate, and Certain Other Employees](#)

While this proposal includes several updates to existing regulations, two of the most concerning changes are the removal of employees' ability to grieve performance ratings and the elimination of mandatory second-level reviews for Level 1 ratings. An overview of these proposed changes was recently covered in a FEDweek [article](#).

Taken together, these proposals could weaken key safeguards that help maintain a professional, nonpartisan federal workforce. They may also increase the risk of politically motivated decisions, retaliation, or inconsistent personnel actions—factors that ultimately affect the government's ability to deliver services to the public.

One of the most effective ways to respond is through the **public comment process**. Submitting comments can help highlight potential consequences of these rules, bring attention from Congress and the media, and support future legal challenges if necessary.

We encourage you to work with your coworkers and fellow union members to submit comments before the deadlines. When federal employees collectively share how policy changes could affect their agencies and the communities they serve, it can have a meaningful impact.

Upcoming Public Comment Deadlines

Suitability Appeals

- Civil Service Strong [Rulemaking Comment Guide for Suitability Appeals](#)
- Deadline for [Public Comment - Suitability Action Appeals](#): **March 9, 2026**

RIF Appeals

- Civil Service Strong [Rulemaking Comment Guide for RIF Appeals](#)
- Deadline for [Public Comment - Reduction in Force Appeals](#): **March 12, 2026**

Performance Appraisal Rule

- Deadline for [Public Comment - The Performance Appraisal Rule for General Schedule, Prevailing Rate, and Certain Other Employees](#): **March 26, 2026**

Ways to Take Action

- Host a public comment session: Consider setting aside time during a union meeting or organizing a dedicated "comment party." Invite coworkers to bring laptops, review the guidance materials together, discuss potential impacts, and draft comments as a group.
- Coordinate a union response: Your local may choose to compile comments into a formal statement or resolution that can also be shared with management and relevant congressional committees. Highlight how workforce reductions or politicization could affect your agency's mission.
- Connect with affected employees: Encourage participation from workers who have been impacted by reductions-in-force or who have previously had to challenge performance evaluations. Their perspectives are valuable in illustrating the real-world impact of these proposals.

Ensuring that OPM hears directly from the employees who keep federal agencies functioning is critical. While these proposed changes directly affect federal workers, they also have broader implications for the public services millions of Americans depend on each day. Maintaining a professional and impartial civil service is essential to effective government.

How to submit comments on the rules governing Reduction in Force (RIF)

Link for additional information [Federal Register :: Reduction in Force Appeals](#)

AGENCY:

Office of Personnel Management.

ACTION:

Proposed rule.

SUMMARY:

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is issuing a proposed rule to revise its regulations governing appeals of reduction-in-force (RIF) actions. OPM proposes to transfer appeal rights for employees who have been furloughed more than 30 days, separated, or demoted by a RIF action from the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) to OPM. OPM expects this change will promote greater efficiency and reduce costs to agencies in effectuating RIF actions, which may be necessary in a variety of circumstances, such as to eliminate duplicative or unnecessary functions or align agency workforces with new technology, changing mission needs, or budgetary constraints.

DATES:

Comments must be received on or before March 12, 2026.

ADDRESSES:

You may submit comments by using the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <https://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

All submissions must include the agency name and docket number or RIN for this **Federal Register** document. Please arrange and identify your comments about the regulatory text by subpart and section number. If your comments relate to the supplementary information, please reference the heading and page number in the supplementary section. All comments must be received by the end of the comment period for them to be considered. All comments and other submissions received generally will be posted on the internet at <https://regulations.gov> as they are received, without change, including any personal information provided. However, OPM retains discretion to redact personal or sensitive information, including but not limited to, personal or sensitive information pertaining to third parties.

As required by [5 U.S.C. 553\(b\)\(4\)](#), a summary of this rule may be found in the docket for this rulemaking at www.regulations.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Carol Matheis by email at employeeaccountability@opm.gov or by phone at (202) 606-2930.

How to submit comments for the Performance Rule listed below,

Link for additional information <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/02/24/2026-03619/performance-appraisal-for-general-schedule-prevailing-rate-and-certain-other-employees>

AGENCY:

Office of Personnel Management.

ACTION:

Notice of proposed rulemaking.

SUMMARY:

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is issuing a proposed rule to increase the efficiency of performance management for non-Senior Executive Service (SES) employees, including General Schedule (GS) and prevailing rate employees. The proposed rule amends the approved patterns of summary levels by removing a “Level 2”; requires agencies to undergo biennial appraisal system certifications with OPM; requires a supervisory critical element for all supervisors covered under this subpart; removes the prohibition of a forced, or standardized, distribution of performance-rating levels; removes the option to grieve a performance rating; and removes the mandatory review of level 1 ratings.

DATES:

Comments must be received on or before March 26, 2026.

ADDRESSES:

You may submit comments, identified by RIN number “3206-AP06,” and title using the following method:

- Federal.eRulemaking.Portal;<https://www.regulations.gov>; Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

The general policy for comments and other submissions from members of the public is to make these submissions available for public viewing at <https://www.regulations.gov> without change including any personal identifiers or contact information.

As required by [5 U.S.C. 553\(b\)\(4\)](#), a summary of this rule may be found in the docket for this rulemaking at www.regulations.gov;

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Noah Peters, Senior Advisor to the Director, 202-606-8046 or by email at SESpolicy@opm.gov;