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RELEASE: Kiran Ahuja to Step Down as Longest Serving OPM Director in a Decade

Ahuja Leaves Lasting Legacy of Rebuilding the OPM Workforce, Championing Federal Workers, and Supporting Federal Agencies

Washington, D.C. – The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) announced today that Director Kiran Ahuja will depart from her role in the next several weeks. Ahuja, the longest serving director in more than ten years, leaves a lasting legacy of rebuilding the OPM workforce, championing federal workers, and supporting federal agencies. Ahuja was confirmed as the first South Asian and first Asian American woman to lead the agency.

“Serving in the Biden-Harris Administration, and in support of the 2.2 million federal workers who dedicate themselves to the American people, has been the honor of my life,” **said OPM Director Kiran Ahuja**. “From my time as a civil rights lawyer in the Department of Justice, to my years as OPM’s Chief of Staff, I’ve seen the power that public service has to change lives, rebuild communities, and make our nation stronger. We have accomplished so much these last three years at OPM, but I am most proud of the friendships and bonds we built together in public service. Thank you most to the OPM workforce for your service and dedication. We serve the people who serve the nation – and without you, our country could not move forward. Thank you.”

“Kiran leaves an incredible legacy as a strong and indefatigable champion of the 2.2 million public servants in the federal workforce,” **said OPM Deputy Director Rob Shriver**. “Under Kiran’s leadership, OPM has bounced back stronger than ever and partnered with agencies across government to better serve the American people. Kiran represents the very best of the Biden-Harris Administration, and I am honored to call her a dear colleague and friend.”

“At VA, I’ve seen firsthand how Kiran has built OPM into a critical strategic partner on flexible hiring and innovative pay authorities,” **said Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Denis McDonough**. “This work has helped us hire and retain employees at near-record rates – and, therefore, it’s helped us do what matters most: increase access to world-class care and benefits for Veterans. That’s the true impact of Kiran’s great work.”

“Kiran brought a wealth of expertise and creativity to OPM. I got to work closely with her to address the need to invest in early career talent in the federal government,” **said Acting Secretary of Labor Julie Su**. “We expanded registered apprenticeships and paid internship opportunities to open jobs in the federal government to more communities and to build a federal workforce that looks like America. Kiran made so much possible.”

“It has been a privilege to work alongside Director Kiran Ahuja for these past three years—her relentless focus on strengthening and empowering the federal government’s 2.2 million civilian workforce has been critical to everything that the Biden-Harris Administration has been able to accomplish, from implementing historic legislation to improving service delivery across the federal government,” **said Deputy Director for Management at the Office of Management and Budget Jason Miller.** “Director Ahuja’s passion for public service shines through every single day, inspiring those around her and serving as a model for leaders across the federal government.”

As the lead human resource official in the Biden-Harris Administration, Ahuja led efforts for nearly three years to recruit, retain, and honor more than 2.2 million federal employees. Under her leadership, OPM positioned the federal government as a model employer, helped thousands of talented individuals join government service, and reinforced the agency’s role as a strategic partner for federal agencies.

Confirmed by the Senate in June 2021, Ahuja led efforts to empower federal agencies to bring the best and brightest talent into government; ensure every federal job is a good job; reset relationships with national union partners; uphold and protect the country’s 140-year history of a nonpartisan, merit-based civil service; and renew the government’s commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Major accomplishments and highlights under Director Ahuja include:

Director Ahuja is a champion of the federal workforce, positioning the federal government as a model employer and employer of choice. Under her leadership, OPM has:

- [Strengthened the merit-based civil service](#) by implementing strong protections for the nonpartisan civil service. The final rule issued by OPM helps ensure that employees are hired and fired based on merit and that they can carry out their duties based on their expertise and not political loyalty.
- [Implemented a \\$15 minimum wage for U.S. federal employees, impacting 67,000 federal employees.](#) Federal employees who will benefit from \$15 per hour minimum pay rate policy are found in every state in the country in a variety of occupations that are vital to delivering important services to the American taxpayer.
- [Reinstated the Presidential Rank Awards \(PRA\), the premier awards program for federal employees,](#) after the last administration canceled them in 2020. 2021 recipients were [honored in an event at the White House](#) with President Biden.
- Issued a [final regulation that prohibits the use of previous non-federal salary history in setting pay for federal employment offers.](#) By helping to close gender and racial pay gaps, these regulations will attract and retain a qualified, effective workforce drawn from the full diversity of America.

- Worked to implement [a new health insurance program for 1.9 million Postal employees and their families in 2025](#). The new program will serve Postal employees, annuitants, and their families.
- Issued a final regulation [prohibiting federal agencies from requesting criminal history during hiring](#), ensuring those qualified and willing to serve the American public have a fair chance to compete for employment within the federal government. The regulation builds on the Biden-Harris Administration’s efforts to expand opportunities for people who have been incarcerated and aligns with the Administration’s [evidence-informed, multi-year Alternatives, Rehabilitation, and Reentry Strategic Plan](#) to strengthen public safety, including by facilitating successful reentry.
- Created the Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (ODEIA) and launched the [first-ever government-wide Chief Diversity Officers Executive Council to advance DEIA](#), build and model a workforce that draws from the diversity of America. The Council is chaired by the OPM Director, OMB Deputy Director for Management, and EEOC Chair.
- Released a [2023 Equity Action Plan](#) as a part of the agency’s effort to implement the President’s Executive Order on “*Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through The Federal Government*,” which reaffirmed the Administration’s commitment to deliver equity and build an America in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.

Director Ahuja strengthened the federal government’s ability to recruit, hire, develop, promote, and retain the nation’s best talent. Under her leadership, OPM has:

- Issued a [final rule to significantly expand federal opportunities for early career talent and recruit the next generation of government leaders through the Pathways Programs](#). The final rule is one of the most significant actions the federal government has taken since the program’s inception 14 years ago.
- Updates include expanding skills-based hiring through qualifying career or technical education programs, raising the ceiling for starting salaries for recent graduates, and easing the path for interns to be converted into permanent positions, including lowering the number of hours required to convert and expanding the time given to agencies to complete such a conversion.
- Released [guidance on increasing opportunities for internships, fellowships, apprenticeships, and other student and early career programs in the federal government](#). The guidance encouraged agencies to increase the number of interns, fellows, apprentices, and early career hires across government with an emphasis on increasing paid internship opportunities and decreasing reliance on unpaid internships. The final regulation builds on a series of actions OPM has taken to help federal agencies recruit early career talent:
 - Issuing [guidance](#) on promoting internships, fellowships, and apprenticeships;

- Issuing interim regulations providing for direct hire authority for certain [post-secondary students](#) and [recent graduates](#);
 - Directing agencies to use [skills-based assessments](#) to evaluate talent rather than proxies for skills, such as degree requirements or occupational self-assessments;
 - Launching an [Intern Portal](#) on USAJOBS for agencies to post internships centrally, making it easier for applicants to find and apply for internships;
 - Creating a centralized Intern Experience Program with resources for [current](#) and [prospective](#) interns as well as programing that reached more than 2,100 federal interns in its first year, with a second summer series for interns government-wide planned in June 2024;
 - Developing [resources](#) and training sessions for hiring managers and supervisors to enhance interns' experiences;
 - Developing an Intern Talent Program (“database” of interns eligible for conversion) that connects federal managers with interns looking for continued service opportunities at the end of their Pathways Internship;
 - Increasing the number of PMF Finalists selected, making more ready-to-hire early career talent available to agencies than ever before; and
 - Launching the Talent Sourcing for America “Level Up to Public Service” pilot program to improve and formalize outreach and recruitment at Minority Serving Institutions.
- Led government-wide efforts to recruit talent [to implement President Biden’s landmark Bipartisan Infrastructure Law \(BIL\)](#). Thanks to OPM’s support, the Biden-Harris Administration exceeded its goal of hiring 5,800 targeted positions.
 - Led as a strategic partner to the White House and federal agencies as a member of the AI and Tech Talent Task Force in support of implementing President Biden’s landmark Executive Order on Safe, Secure, and Trustworthy AI ([EO 14110](#)).
 - Partnered with OMB to release [the first-ever government-wide Military-Connected Strategic Plan for FY 2024-2028](#) to support agencies in their efforts to recruit, hire, and retain military-connected spouses, caregivers, and survivors within the federal government. The Biden-Harris Administration understands that advancing economic opportunity for military-connected spouses, caregivers, and survivors strengthens our federal workforce and the nation.
 - Made a significant and targeted effort to recruit tech talent into the federal government amid the ongoing tech sector layoffs. OPM recognizes that technology can power the

federal government's ability to deliver on its mission and to provide a simple, seamless, and secure experience for the American people.

- Associated Press: [Still hiring: Big Tech layoffs give other sectors an opening](#)
- Atlanta Journal-Constitution: [Spelman and UGA grad leads federal workforce, seeks Atlanta tech talent](#)
- Seattle Times: [Next-gen tech leaders, ask what you can do for your country](#)
- CNET: [For New Tech Jobs, Forget Amazon and Microsoft. Try the US Government Instead](#)
- Government Executive: [OPM Pushes to Rebrand Government and Capitalize on Tech Layoffs](#)

Director Ahuja has reenergized OPM's role as a strategic human capital partner with federal agencies, enabling better services across government. Under her leadership, OPM has:

- [Reinstated the Chief Human Capital Officers Council at OPM](#) and celebrated the council's 20th anniversary in 2023. OPM has prioritized strengthening the HR workforce, including developing a robust plan for elevating HR for the FY25 budget.
- Led on navigating and supporting agencies to with tools to ensure they can deliver on their mission as they navigate a hybrid work environment. OPM hosted a series of [government-wide trainings](#) for federal employees to succeed in hybrid work environments, training over 25,000 federal employees.
- Partnered with federal agencies to build a workforce of the future to serve all Americans. OPM released a new [Workforce of the Future Playbook](#) supporting a federal workforce that is inclusive, agile and engaged, and equipped with the right skills to deliver for the American people and launched a series of [free trainings](#) for supervisors and managers to implement the Playbook strategies.
- Reinforced OPM's role as a premier provider of human capital data services by building innovative service delivery models, analytics, and digital solutions that enable federal agencies to make better decisions. OPM released a [comprehensive data strategy plan for FY 2023-2026](#), which lays out a vision to fully leverage OPM and agency human capital data, and to provide federal agencies, federal employees, and public users seamless access to OPM data products and services.
- In addition to the overarching strategy, OPM released a set of initial data dashboards to the updated OPM Data Portal at www.opm.gov/data, including FedScope datasets which can now be accessed at www.opm.gov/data/datasets. The OPM Data Portal is a redesigned OPM webpage providing increased access to OPM data products and services.
- Supported the Biden-Harris Administration's effort to reset and advance labor relations with union partners by implementing Executive Order [14003](#) and participating on the Taskforce on Worker Organizing and Empowerment.

Director Ahuja’s historic leadership reinforced that the federal workforce should be as talented and diverse as the American people. Ahuja has served as a role model for historically underrepresented communities.

- Following her confirmation from the U.S. Senate in June 2021, Ahuja became the first South Asian and Asian American woman to be director of OPM.
- Ahuja is currently the longest-serving OPM Director in more than decade.
- In [commencement remarks to the University of Georgia’s School of Public and International Affairs](#), Ahuja urged students to follow their passion and find a career that “feeds your soul.” She is an alumna of the University of Georgia School of Law.
- Ahuja delivered remarks at a Naturalization Ceremony at the M.O. Campbell Educational Center in Houston and [welcomed 1,304 new citizens, presenting certificates to members of the military and citizens with disabilities](#). Ahuja urged these new citizens to serve in the federal government as she has.
- Ahuja [met with Asian American and Pacific Islander \(AAPI\) leaders in Central Indiana and hosted a powerful conversation](#) sharing her personal journey and career experiences with a diverse room of AAPI leaders.

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