



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

JAN 30 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Solicitation of Exemptions from the Office of Personnel Management Deferred Resignation Program

Reference: Acting Director, Office of Personnel Management Memorandum, "Guidance Regarding Deferred Resignation Program," January 28, 2025 (copy attached)

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has announced the Deferred Resignation Program for full-time Federal civilian employees, including Department of Defense (DoD) civilians (see attached reference). All civilian employees should have received the "Fork In The Road" email from OPM over the past 48 hours. Please ensure that all your civilians have received the notice or are directed to <https://www.opm.gov/fork> to find instructions on how to reply to OPM by February 6, 2025.

This is a voluntary program aimed at reducing the Federal workforce while providing a transition period for eligible employees. The program is intended to allow Agencies to reduce their workforce in a controlled and efficient manner, while also providing eligible employees with an opportunity to transition to new employment opportunities. The program aligns with broader efforts to streamline the Federal workforce, promote a performance culture, and enhance standards of conduct.

Federal Departments and Agencies are granted authority to exempt critical functions where warranted, although OPM indicated that this should be utilized prudently. The DoD civilian workforce plays a vital role in the defense of our Nation and in supporting our active duty forces in both peacetime and combat missions. With a vast and complex mission set spanning nearly 675 occupations, it is essential that we identify core functions that may need to be exempt. It is imperative that we carefully consider functions essential to operations, considering the potential consequences of their absence on our overall effectiveness.

On behalf of the Secretary of Defense, I am soliciting your input on proposed DoD Component functions to be exempted by no later than Tuesday, February 4, with justifications in plain language outlining the impacts to national security. Your submissions should clearly articulate the reasons why certain positions or functions are critical to DoD's operations and why they cannot be disrupted by the Deferred Resignation Program. Your input will be consolidated for the Secretary of Defense's consideration and decision. If Component functions are approved as exempt by the Secretary of Defense, employees will be notified that their deferred resignation is cancelled.

Your prompt response is appreciated. Please submit your requests for exemptions and justifications to osd.pentagon.ousd-p-r.mbx.cpp-saco@mail.mil, including position details such as pay plan, occupational series, grade, title, and detailed rationale as described above.

OPM has committed to providing daily lists over the coming days of employees that have opted in. DoD Components will be provided these lists starting February 3, 2025, and will coordinate with my staff to reconcile exemption decisions and impacted employees.

Continued implementation guidance will be provided on the Deferred Resignation Program through the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy in the coming week, and initial Frequently Asked Questions have been posted at <https://www.opm.gov/fork/faq>.



Darin S. Selnick
Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary of
Defense for Personnel and Readiness

Attachment:
As stated

Reference



The Director

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

MEMORANDUM

TO: Heads and Acting Heads of Departments and Agencies
FROM: Charles Ezell, Acting Director, U.S. Office of Personnel Management
DATE: January 28, 2025
RE: Guidance Regarding Deferred Resignation Program

Pursuant to its authority under 5 U.S.C. § 1103(a)(1) and (a)(5), the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (“*OPM*”) is providing guidance to agencies regarding OPM’s government-wide deferred resignation program. This program provides employees with an option to submit a deferred resignation letter with resignation effective on September 30, 2025. Deferred resignation exempts those employees who choose it from return-to-office requirements.

Employees who accept deferred resignation should promptly have their duties re-assigned or eliminated and be placed on paid administrative leave until the end of the deferred resignation period (generally, September 30, 2025, unless the employee has elected another earlier resignation date), unless the agency head determines that it is necessary for the employee to be actively engaged in transitioning job duties, in which case employees should be placed on administrative leave as soon as those duties are transitioned.

In addition, each week (no later than Friday at 5:00 PM) through September 30, 2025, agencies should email to tracking@opm.gov the following information:

- The number of employees who have offered their resignations as part of the deferred resignation program;
- The number of agency employees who are part of the deferred resignation program placed on administrative leave;
- The number of agency employees who have applied for early and normal retirement since January 27, 2025;
- The number of agency employees who have actually resigned (and whether or not such employee had previously submitted accepted Deferred Resignation) beginning January 27, 2025;
- The number of employees who have sought to rescind their resignations, and the status of each request;



- The number of applications to extend the deferred resignation deadline (beyond February 6);
- The number of applications from potential retirees to extend the deferred resignation end-date beyond September 30, 2025 (to accommodate impending retirement); and
- The roles and number of personnel excluded by your agency from the deferred resignation program.

Attached as Appendix 1 are FAQs that OPM is providing for Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCOs) regarding the deferred resignation program.

Please contact tracking@opm.gov if you have any questions regarding this memorandum.

cc: CHCOs, Deputy CHCOs, Human Resources Directors, and Chiefs of Staff

Appendix 1: Deferred Resignation FAQs for CHCOs

Q: Why is the federal government offering deferred resignation to the federal workforce?

A: The federal workforce is expected to undergo significant near-term changes. As a result of these changes and uncertainty, or for other reasons, some employees may wish to depart the federal government on terms that provide them with sufficient time and economic security to plan for their future.

Q: Who is eligible for deferred resignation?

A: Deferred resignation is available to all full-time federal employees except for military personnel of the armed forces the U.S. Postal Service, positions related to immigration enforcement and national security, and any other positions specifically excluded by your employing agency.

Q: What do we do if employees did not receive the deferred resignation email?

A: Either:

- 1) Send the email directly to the employee from your agency.
- 2) Direct the employee to visit the OPM website where they can review the email and all associated instructions.

Q: What happens if employees do not respond to the email or accept deferred resignation?

A: Nothing. Employees have no obligation to respond to the email. Accepting deferred resignation is in employees' sole discretion and is completely voluntary.

Q: For employees who become eligible for early/normal retirement during the deferred resignation period (i.e., before September 30, 2025), will they be able to accept deferred resignation and still accept early/normal retirement during the deferred resignation period?

A: Yes. Employees will continue to accrue retirement benefits during the deferred resignation period. Should employees elect to retire (either early or normal) before their final resignation date, the retirement election will override the deferred resignation.

Q: Will employees who become eligible for normal (or early) retirement shortly after September 30, 2025 be permitted to accept deferred resignation without compromising their impending retirement?

A: Agencies should review any such requests on a case-by-case basis and may extend a waiver to accommodate reasonable requests.

Q: How do we handle employees who were on approved leave during some or all of the period between January 28, 2025 and February 6, 2025 and who, as a result, did not get a sufficient opportunity to evaluate and/or accept the deferred resignation letter?

A: Employees who missed the February 6, 2025 deadline due to approved absence for some or all of the period from January 27, 2025 to February 6, 2025 are entitled to request an extension and employing agencies may grant reasonable extensions.

Q: If an employee decides after February 6, 2025 that they would like to resign under the terms offered in the January 28, 2025 deferred resignation letter, will they still be allowed to?

A: Deferred resignation will generally **not** be available to those who resign after February 6, 2025. Certain exceptions might be made for employees who were on approved absence for some or all of the period from January 28, 2025 to February 6, 2025.

Q: If an employee resigns and later changes their mind, will the employee be able to rescind their resignation?

A: Employees have the right to request a rescission of their resignation at any time and the employing agency will need to review such rescission requests. As noted in the deferred resignation letter, it is the objective of the program to move quickly to consolidate and/or reassign roles and in many cases place employees on administrative leave which would likely serve as a valid reason to deny rescission requests.

Q: May employees accelerate their resignation date to earlier than September 30, 2025?

A: Yes, employees may unilaterally accelerate their final resignation date for any reason.

Q: Can employees extend their final resignation date?

A: The terms of the deferred resignation letter do not allow for an extension of the final resignation date. As noted above, there is a narrow possible exception for employees with impending retirement dates.

Q: Can employees get another job outside of their current employing agency during the period between submission of their resignation and the final resignation date?

A: Nothing in the deferred resignation letter prevents agency employees from seeking outside employment during the period from submittal of their resignation to their final resignation date. Employing agencies should assess what restrictions, if any, exist for employees who have resigned but remain employed (including on administrative leave) by their employing agency.

Q: Can employees return to work in the federal government?

A: Deferred resignation does not affect employees' ability to apply to work for the federal government in the future.

Q: How will employees know their resignations have been received and accepted?

A: Employees will receive an email confirming receipt with additional information on next steps. Given the volume of emails, this confirmation email may take up to 48 hours. Employees should retain the record of their resignation email.

Q: What if somebody resigns for on behalf of another employee without that employee's authorization?

A: Deferred resignation can only be submitted from a secure government email. If someone has accessed an employee's email without authorization, you should immediately follow your agency's protocol for addressing such unauthorized use.

Q: Is there any additional paperwork needed to resign?

A: An employee's acceptance of the deferred resignation letter will serve as a formal acceptance of deferred resignation. If the employing agency requests additional documentation, the

deferred resignation letter obligates employees to cooperate with their employing agency to complete all reasonable and customary documentation.