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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20580

Re: FOIA-2021-01304

This is in response to your request dated August 26, 2021, under the Freedom of Information Act seeking access to the two most recent issues of the FTC HCMO newsletter. In accordance with the FOIA and agency policy, we have searched our records on Sept. 14, 2021.

The Commission's fee regulations specify that fees less than \$25 will be waived. *See* 16 C.F.R. § 4.8(b)(4). Because the fees associated with the processing of your request did not exceed \$25, we have processed your request free of charge. In the future, please provide a fee agreement to facilitate the processing of your request.

We have located 18 pages of responsive records. I am granting partial access to the accessible records. Portions of these pages fall within the exemption to the FOIA's disclosure requirements, as explained below.

I am denying access to personal information and any other identifying information found in the newsletter. This information is exempt from release under FOIA Exemption 6, 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(6), because individuals' right to privacy outweighs the general public's interest in seeing personal identifying information. *See The Lakin Law Firm v. FTC*, 352 F.3d 1122 (7th Cir. 2003).

If you have any questions about the way we handled your request or about the FOIA regulations or procedures, please contact Amber Howe at 202-326-3498.

If you are not satisfied with this response to your request, you may appeal by writing to Freedom of Information Act Appeal, Office of the General Counsel, Federal Trade Commission, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20580, or via email at FOIAAppeal@ftc.gov, within 90 days of the date of this letter. Please enclose a copy of your original request and a copy of this response.

You also may seek dispute resolution services from the FTC FOIA Public Liaison Richard Gold via telephone at 202-326-3355 or via e-mail at rgold@ftc.gov; or from the Office of Government Information Services via email at ogis@nara.gov, via fax at 202-741-5769, or via mail at Office of Government Information Services (OGIS), National Archives and Records Administration, 8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, MD 20740. Please note that the FOIA Public Liaison's role relates to comments, questions or concerns that a FOIA Requester may have with

or about the FOIA Response. The FOIA Public Liaison's role does not relate to taking action in matters of private controversy nor can he resolve individual complaints.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dione J. Stearns".

Dione J. Stearns
Assistant General Counsel

HCMO QUARTERLY

HUMAN CAPITAL SERVICES FOR FTC EMPLOYEES

February 2021 - Volume 2, Issue 1

Message from the CHCO

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Hello, FTC!

I'm Vicki Barber, your Chief Human Capital Officer, and I hope all of you are having a safe, happy, and healthy start to the new year.



As for me, my plans for staying healthy this year include lots of walking! In fact, HCMO implemented a virtual "Walk to the Regions." Seven teams represent a few offices within the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and each week, teams count up their total miles walked to see how far we've traveled from one region to another. So far, we've collectively walked *20,000 miles!* If you are interested in joining one of the teams for encouragement to exercise during these homebound days, as well as for the opportunity to learn more about our regions and connect with others at the FTC, please let us know and you will be placed on an eager and welcoming team.

I'm pleased to present the newest issuance of the Human Capital Management Office's (HCMO) quarterly newsletter. Not only is this our first issue of 2021, but this month marks our **one-year anniversary** since we began delivering *HCMO Quarterly—Human Capital Services for FTC Employees* to agency staff! Thank you for taking the time to read our previous issues, as well as for all of the kind remarks, thoughtful feedback, and encouragement for the newsletter over the past year. We're proud to have reached this milestone and we're excited to continue delivering important human capital information and updates from within HCMO for many issues to come.

On a separate note, it's been almost a full year since the majority of us began teleworking. While overall, all of us have succeeded in making the necessary adjustments, I also recognize that it hasn't been easy. As we look forward to a post-COVID future state, remember that there are still services available to assist you, including the [Employee Assistance Program](#).

This issue highlights the Training and Employee Development Division, whom we like to call the TEDD Team. Not only will you have the opportunity to meet the TEDD Team and learn what they do, but you will also explore how to access certain materials from within e-Train2. In addition, the TEDD Team will share its new strategic plan for training at the FTC.

In this issue, you will discover how the recent presidential transition affects the FTC, identify the internal advancement opportunities that are available to select staff via the Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Plan, receive tips on reviewing your performance plan ahead of the mid-year performance review cycle, and more!

Before I close, I'd like to leave you with what I like to call a "Barberism," which is something for you to think about as you engage in your routine work. This quarter's Barberism is "Own your desk," which means that only you have firsthand knowledge of your assignments, projects, and responsibilities. *Only you* are in control of what you do in your job and its impact, so own it and deliver in the best way that you can!

Take care of yourself, your family, and the FTC, and once again, thank you for supporting our newsletter!

Vicki A. Barber
Chief Human Capital Officer

One-Year Anniversary Reflection

It's been one year since HCMO first began delivering *HCMO Quarterly—Human Capital Services for FTC Employees*, but did you know that a different HCMO newsletter used to exist?

That's right! From November 2007 to March 2011, HCMO issued *FTC Human Resources Connection: Keeping FTC Employees Connected to HR News & Information*. This newsletter provided FTC employees with general tips, important dates, payroll information, and news updates from within the world of Human Resources. In fact, there are still archived issues of the former newsletter that show just how much has changed over the last decade. These older issues definitely serve as our office's own personal time capsules, and we're keeping them to ourselves! Well, here's at least a look at the header for the July 2008 issue:



FTC Human Resources Connection

Keeping FTC Employees Connected to HR News & Information

JULY 2008

On behalf of everyone in HCMO, thank you for reading our newsletter. You have helped us to reach this one-year milestone of delivering the *HCMO Quarterly* and it is with your overwhelming support that we are able to improve our content with each issue. We appreciate each and every one of you!

As always (and we're sure you know this by heart), we welcome your feedback, questions, and suggestions for future columns with open arms. Please let us know your thoughts by emailing HCMO's Honors Paralegal, [Andrew Rayo](#). If you need assistance with accessing your Bureau or Office's servicing HC Specialist, please visit [HCMO's intranet site](#). There, you will find a table containing HCMO Contacts by Program Area.

2021 Presidential Transition

January 20, 2021 was a historic day in our nation, as it marked a change in the presidential administration and was the catalyst for a change in agency administrations across the federal government.

Before we discuss how the presidential transition affects the Commission, it is important to recognize how our agency's Commissioners are selected. The FTC is headed by five Commissioners, nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate, each serving a seven-year term. No more than three Commissioners can be of the same political party. The President chooses one Commissioner to act as Chairman or Chairwoman. This individual carries out administrative responsibilities in addition to their mission work.

Our leadership is subject to change during a presidential transition. This includes the following positions:

- Chairman or Chairwoman (and staff members);
- Commissioners (and staff members);
- Non-Career Senior Executive Service (NC-SES); and
- Schedule C (Sch-C) employees.

However, while most federal agencies are required to make changes effective at noon on the day of the presidential transition, the FTC is a bit of an exception. Due to our status as an independent agency, our transition begins when the Chairman or Chairwoman announces their departure from the agency.

Once their departure is announced, the Chairman or Chairwoman's requested departure date is the date that our NC-SES and Sch-C employees are required to resign as well, unless there are extenuating circumstances that would prevent the member from departing on that date. It is also common for the Chairman or Chairwoman to ask certain members to remain in their positions during the transition to ensure continuity of operations during the initial period of new staff hiring. The agency may also establish limited-term SES positions and/or temporary transitional Sch-C positions for similar non-executive positions to help with transitions.

If you have any questions about presidential transitions, please contact [Lawrence Austin](#), Executive Resources Program Manager (ext. 3716).

The Training and Employee Development Division

Within HCMO, a small (but fierce) division is energetically working to support all agency employees in meeting the FTC mission. The TEDD Team exists to ensure that all FTC employees have a wide variety of opportunities to learn and grow.

The TEDD Team’s mission is to provide high quality training, education, and development opportunities that create and sustain a highly skilled, competent workforce and enhance organizational excellence. In its commitment to providing you with programs, events, policies, and opportunities that promote training, education, and development, the TEDD Team collaborates with FTC Bureaus and Offices to determine the most efficient and effective methods of conducting training within the agency.

The TEDD Team operates several established programs to meet its objectives to enhance job satisfaction, employee engagement, organizational performance, and individual competence. The TEDD Team’s established programs include:

Technical Programs:	Leadership Programs:	General Programs:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LegalEducationCenter • ABA Conferences • Investigator Training • Program/Project Management • Economists (Python, ArcGIS) • Administrative Professionals • Cybersecurity Workforce • Contracting Officer’s Representative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership Framework • Leadership Advantage • Leadership Academy • Leadership Development Program (Excellence in Government) • Mentoring • Manager Series • Supervisor and Manager Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory Training • Desktop Applications • Writing Skills • Library of General Skill Courses • Toastmasters • FTC University • Financial Planning

The TEDD Team also gains insights, advice, guidance, and agency awareness through collaboration with the **Training Council**, consisting of representatives from the FTC Bureaus, the Offices of the General Counsel and Executive Director, and the Regions. The Training Council greatly aids the TEDD Team in determining strategies for assessing, designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating training and development throughout the agency.

Now that you’ve been introduced to what the TEDD Team does, let’s meet the people that make it happen!



Mark Kern is the Chief Learning Officer (CLO) of the FTC. As the CLO, Mark directs the planning, development, management, administration, implementation, and evaluation of FTC learning programs. This includes leadership training, competency modeling, continued legal education, career development, mandatory training, and delivery mechanisms that enhance and foster the training, education, and development of all 1,100+ members of the FTC. Before joining the Commission, Mark served as the Director of Enterprise Training in the Department of Veterans Affairs, during which he earned a Lean Six Sigma Green Belt and became a certified Program Manager. After 30 years of serving in the U.S. Coast Guard, Mark retired as a Captain in 2006.

(b)(6)



Karen Hoffman has served as the FTC’s Training Officer for 13 years. In her 20+ years of service in the federal government, Karen has worked in two small, independent agencies, devoting her entire career in support of the training and development of the federal workforce. Through the years, she has represented the Small Business Administration and the FTC on interagency and public-private sector groups on legal, administrative, and management training issues. She has collaborated with the Small Agency Council, the Training Officers Consortium (TOC), the FTC Diversity Training Council, and the Federal CLOs Council to assess and plan for future training programs. She currently volunteers extensively as an Executive Board Member at TOC and has served in many executive board positions since 2001.

(b)(6)

(b)(6)



Alesha Hernandez is a Training Specialist who supports workforce-planning initiatives with strategic and program planning efforts while also identifying communication needs. Alesha initially joined the TEDD Team as a detailee. She first joined the FTC in December 2016 as a Consumer Education Specialist in the Division of Consumer and Business Education within the Bureau of Consumer Protection. In this role, she wrote on consumer protection issues, conducted partnership outreach, cultivated partnerships with outside organizations, and spoke at regional conferences. In her spare time, Alesha dedicates herself to event planning, mentoring, and many community service projects. She is an active member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Navigating e-Train2 and SkillSoft

In the last issue of *HCMO Quarterly*, we discussed “Training at Your Fingertips 24/7.” However, knowing exactly where to find books, courses, videos, or leadership exercises in e-Train2 and SkillSoft can be tricky.

Whenever you’re stuck and don’t know where to go, the quickest thing you can do is ask for help! HCMO has arranged a 24/7 help line that is always ready to answer your questions.

In e-Train2, you can click the [Need Help?](#) tab at the top of the site to access the following features:

1. **Live Support** is a Chat feature that takes you to a real person in a chat room. The trained helpdesk individual can guide you to the right place in e-Train2 within minutes.
2. **FAQs** take you to the same place as the Live Support button. However, you will also see a list of questions that you may use to find your answer.
3. **Inline/Online Help** directs you to help designed specifically for the current page you are viewing in e-Train2. It is located in the gear symbol at the top right corner of any page within e-Train2.



There are also shortcuts available for your convenience in e-Train2. Within **Featured Learning**, you can move onto SkillSoft Leadership Advantage to access a wide variety of leadership development courses, videos, live events, and exercises. **External Training** includes links to the Federal Acquisition Institute site and the LegalEducationCenter. Finally, **Your Transcript** lists your recently assigned or registered classes.

Navigating the e-Train2 site can be challenging at times, but remember that there is always help available. If you have any suggestions or feedback for the TEDD Team regarding e-Train2 or any training and development topic, please email HCMOTraining@ftc.gov.

The Training and Employee Development Strategic Plan

What training can we organize with a reduced budget? How do we provide some effective means of training and development when we do not have sufficient resources? What is the best way to ensure that everyone at the FTC can “be all that they can be”?

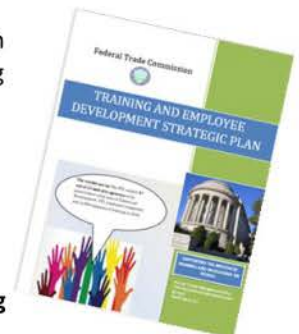
The Seven Goals

1. Re-instate de-funded programs in FY21 budget and for future fiscal years.
2. Improve efficiency and effectiveness through increased collaboration and coordination of all training events.
3. Create leadership development programs for every staff level.
4. Implement training programs that address every function within the agency.
5. Generate FTC-specific competency models, self-assessments, and competency mapping.
6. Improve compliance training design and delivery.
7. Improve evaluation techniques (pre and post training) that demonstrate agency impact and a positive return on investment.

The TEDD Team asked these very questions in order to assemble a strategic plan for training and employee development at the FTC over the next several years. First, the team established seven goals.

These goals were created to reach the strategic direction, which is to develop the workforce by **sharing resources and achieving greater levels of coordination and collaboration**. This means that every Bureau and Office currently has several terrific training and development programs underway. They have individually generated classes, series, features, and programs that are designed to promote and grow their employees’ capabilities and competencies.

However, there are others outside of each Bureau and Office who can equally benefit from that same training. Opening events and training opportunities to more FTC individuals provides efficiencies of scale and allows for inputs, creative feedback, various applications, diversity of thought, and overall effective learning.



The Training and Employee Development Strategic Plan provides a roadmap to get from the current state to a desired end state that promotes individual, group, and organizational development for the FTC’s employees. It aligns the goals and objectives within

the TEDD Team to the HCMO and FTC missions while simultaneously giving every person in the agency as many growth opportunities as possible to learn and become more proficient in their personal capabilities and their services to others around them.

For any effective plan, there must be several courses of action to follow in order to achieve set goals. The TEDD Team developed **Action Steps** that give us the path to success. Several of them include:

1. Improve efficiency and effectiveness by showing the return on investment that training produces;
2. Combine training events and opportunities when possible;
3. Create and use FTC-specific competency models and self-assessments;
4. Expand leadership development opportunities;
5. Build cross-functional support teams through skill development;
6. Make mandatory training more interesting and palatable; and
7. Provide timely reports on training, education, and development events.

“So what? What does this mean to me?” Excellent questions! While it is nice that the TEDD Team has a plan, what should you do about it? Here are some ideas.

- A. **Complete an Individual Development Plan.** Start with the end in sight. What are your goals for where you want to be months or years from now? Perhaps you want to advance to a higher pay grade, expand your litigation skills, become a team leader, or start a new program. Beginning with a stated goal helps ensure that you orchestrate a path to take you there. Then, determine what learning events you could use to get you across the finish line. Your options include:



- B. **Respond to surveys, questionnaires, and assessments that you receive.** Over the next several months and year, the TEDD Team, in coordination and collaboration with the Diversity Council, Bureaus, and other partnerships, will be sending out instruments to gather your thoughts and concerns. Please take the time to fill them out. We need your ideas and input!
- C. **Participate in competency modeling projects or meetings.** Your knowledge about what it takes to do your job and how unique behaviors and skills are necessary for effectively meeting the tasks, objectives, and mission are critical to creating meaningful FTC competencies and behavioral indicators.
- D. **Be willing to cross-train.** We gain tremendous benefits and knowledge when we take on a new assignment, learn a new craft, tackle a stretch goal, or accept a task that we are not sure we can handle. Be honest about your current skill level and let your supervisor know when a new task may be challenging for you. Of course, you need to be willing to commit. As the wise Yoda says, “Do or do not. There is no try.” This quote is a simple lesson in commitment and the power in giving something our all—not just giving it a try.
- E. **Ask for training opportunities.** No one knows your training needs better than you do! The TEDD Team is eager to hear your ideas for the learning opportunities that you feel will benefit your development and growth at the FTC.

If you want to learn more about the Training and Employee Development Strategic Plan or would like a copy, please let the TEDD Team know by emailing HCMOTraining@ftc.gov.

Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Plan: Internal Advancement Opportunities

Each year, HCMO is required to submit a report to the Office of Personnel Management on the prior fiscal year’s Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Plan (DVAAP) accomplishments and certify that a DVAAP Plan is in place for the current fiscal year. A key section of the accomplishments report outlines how the agency provides or improves internal advancement opportunities for disabled veterans. The FTC currently uses its intranet and the FTC Daily to apprise employees, including disabled veterans, of such

internal advancement opportunities as internal job vacancies, detail opportunities, and available professional development trainings.

To support internal advancement opportunities surrounding training, the FTC's agency-wide individual development plan (IDP) program provides a tool for managers, supervisors, and employees to assess professional development and individual training needs. The FTC strongly encourages each employee, including disabled veterans, to complete an IDP each year to ensure individual and organizational success. As mentioned earlier in this issue, many online courses are available to all FTC employees in [e-Train2](#).

The FTC also has internal mentoring programs that help employees, including disabled veterans, further their professional development and growth, hone their expertise, expand their network, and improve internal advancement opportunities. Additionally, the agency sponsors a wide variety of Communities, such as the Book Group, Diversity Council, Toastmasters, and more. These Communities provide a positive environment for members to connect, collaborate, and learn new skills that promote greater self-confidence and personal growth. You can learn more about the FTC's different Communities by visiting the [FTC Communities](#) intranet page.



For questions about disabled veterans employment or reasonable accommodations for any internal or external trainings, please Contact [Liz Kraszewski](#), Disability Program Manager (ext. 3087).

Warm Up with the Workplace Wellness Program!

Did 2020 impact your progress toward achieving your wellness goals? Not to worry! It's a new year, and the FTC is here to help you get back on track!

Throughout the year, HCMO sponsors various events and activities geared toward getting employees up and moving. HCMO also offers workplace wellness support through its [Employee Wellness](#) and [WorkLife4You](#) intranet pages. Currently, HCMO is in the process of expanding its formal health and wellness program.

The Workplace Wellness Program will assist those who are interested in maximizing their job productivity and health through participation in workplace wellness activities. These activities may include a range of both formally organized events (e.g., trainings, lectures, demonstrations, interactive workshops, etc.) and individual/self-initiated actions that support wellness throughout the workday. Examples may include, but are not limited to, nutrition seminars, education about preventive screenings, consultations with the [Employee Assistance Program](#), exercise, assistance through tobacco cessation resources, walking, meditation, participation in health and wellness forums, and more!

Keep an eye out for further announcements in subsequent *HCMO Quarterly* issues and the FTC Daily. In the meantime, consider reaching out to [Mark Kern](#) and ask to join other FTC employees in *A Walk to the Regions*, an exciting cross-country journey. This voluntary group activity requires nothing but your interest to get outside and move, or get in some physical movement whichever way you prefer.

As you await further announcements about the Workplace Wellness Program, check out these other great wellness resources:

- [Mental Health and Coping During COVID-19 | CDC](#)
- [The COVID-19 Wellness and Coping Toolkit | Psychology Today](#)
- [How to Stay Physically and Mentally Healthy While at Home | Time](#)
- [Health & Wellness | Kaiser Permanente](#)
- [Health and Wellness | UnitedHealthcare \(uhc.com\)](#)



Take Time for Yourself

Exercising is just one of the many ways that you can take time to care for yourself. Whether you enjoy reading books, cooking, crocheting, home improvement, video chatting with loved ones, or getting some good old-fashioned sleep, you owe it to yourself to listen to your own needs.

For many of us in HCMO, watching Super Bowl LV with our friends and families was a great opportunity to unwind...



...or not, for those of us rooting for Patrick Mahomes and the Kansas City Chiefs.

Regardless, it's important to find ways to decompress and connect with ourselves. Try scheduling yourself some time each week to do the things that you enjoy doing. If you have the ability to do so and with your supervisor's approval, consider using annual leave to give yourself a small break from work. Many of us have been teleworking for almost year, and it can be especially difficult to separate ourselves from work while our homes double as workspaces. However, even taking a day or two for a staycation can help your home environment feel less like an office. Even if you can only devote a small amount of time to yourself, take advantage of that opportunity. Time invested in your welfare now will pay dividends later.

And even if you're still feeling the pangs of disappointment from the Super Bowl (or you didn't watch the game), hopefully we can all agree that The Weeknd's dazzling halftime show has made for some of the best memes to come out of 2021 so far. Here are some of our favorites:

my camera roll when I take my iPad back from a toddler



When you have stage fright before performing at the Super Bowl.



What my pizza rolls see as the microwave hits single digits #PepsiHalftime #SuperBowl



Review Your FY2021 Performance Plan

Mid-year performance reviews may be a couple months away, but now is an excellent time to revisit your FY2021 performance plan! By looking over the goals you set for FY2021, as well as your overall performance and development from the past few months, you can focus on what you need to do to achieve your goals and get the most out of the upcoming mid-year review process. Much like the formal year-end performance review, the mid-year performance review is a discussion-based tool for managers and employees to communicate expectations, including any necessary updates to objectives or development plans. Mid-year performance reviews also serve as an opportunity for managers and their employees to check in with each other, which helps to prevent any surprises from occurring during the year-end performance review.

Notice for managers: the rating of record should only be provided to the employee at the year-end performance review. Do not forget to sign the rating of record and have the employee sign to confirm that the mid-year performance review was completed.

Here are a few things to know in order to get the most out of your mid-year performance review.

Review Your Critical Elements and Performance Standards

What is a “Critical Element”?

A **critical element** is a work assignment or responsibility that is required of the employee at the individual level. At the FTC, employee performance plans must include at least three critical elements. In addition, the total number of critical elements should be an odd number. Unacceptable performance on a critical element would result in a determination that the employee's overall performance is unacceptable. As such, it is important to know your critical elements and what's expected of you in order to be fully successful in your performance. This is where performance standards come in...

What is a “Performance Standard”?

A **performance standard** articulates how well an employee must perform their duties in order to meet a certain rating level. Performance standards are usually determined by the general measures that are important for each of the employee's critical elements (e.g., quality, quantity, timeliness, cost effectiveness, customer perspectives). Each critical element has performance standards assigned to it.

- a) At the FTC, performance standards are written at the *Satisfactory*, *Outstanding*, and *Unacceptable levels*. While performance standards may not be written at the *Commendable* level, the absence of such a written standard does not preclude the assignment of a rating at that level.
- b) Performance standards should be objective and as precise as possible in expressing the performance expected by the employee. In addition to being clearly communicated, the standards must also be consistent with the grade level of the position and the duties and responsibilities described in the employee's position description (see [Chapter 3: Section 430 - Performance Appraisal System and Program for GS and Prevailing Rate Employees](#)).
- c) Managers must note that all critical elements and performance standards need to be aligned to the strategic plan goals and objectives of the Bureau/Office and the FTC (again, see [Chapter 3: Section 430 - Performance Appraisal System and Program for GS and Prevailing Rate Employees](#)).

Together, critical elements and performance standards establish the expected performance for each employee in their assigned position at the FTC. As an agency employee, you are responsible for reviewing and understanding each performance standard assigned to each critical element. Since mid-year performance reviews are meant to serve as a two-way conversation between employees and their supervisors, take this time to prepare to discuss your goals (both completed and new), accomplishments, challenges, successes, and all questions or concerns that you feel should be brought to the attention of your manager.

USA Performance Features

[USA Performance](#) is the FTC's dedicated performance management system. This user-friendly, web-based application enables the FTC to automate the performance appraisal process throughout the performance rating cycle. In addition, USA Performance allows FTC managers and employees to track and monitor employee performance, provide feedback, and electronically sign performance plans and appraisals.



As another added feature, USA Performance includes a “Notes” section within each performance plan for recording notes throughout the performance cycle. You can use this section as a resource to document and track feedback, accolades, and goals. For more information on Notes, please access our guidance on [Using Notes for Progress Reviews](#).

We're also here to help! For additional support or assistance with questions, please contact [Alvina Brooks](#) (ext. 2323) or [Kevin Lee](#) (ext. 2419).

Glossary of Human Capital Terms

Critical Element: A work assignment or responsibility that is required of the employee at the individual level. At the FTC, employee performance plans must include at least three critical elements. In addition, the total number of critical elements should be an odd number.

DD-214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty: A federal form issued upon a military service member's retirement, separation, or discharge from active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States.

Detail: A temporary assignment to a different position and/or office.

Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Plan: A plan that federal agencies are required to establish and follow each fiscal year. Agencies reporting their plan accomplishments highlight their efforts to provide or improve internal advancement opportunities for disabled veterans.

Employee Assistance Program: A voluntary, work-based program that offers free and confidential assessments, short-term counseling, referrals, and follow-up services to employees who may be experiencing a broad or complex body of issues affecting mental and emotional well-being.

e-Train2: The FTC's learning management system, which is accessible to FTC employees any time and from anywhere.

FTC Communities: FTC-sponsored groups that are voluntarily led and attended by agency employees. FTC Communities cover a wide-range of subjects and provide a positive environment for members to connect, collaborate, and learn new skills that promote greater self-confidence and personal growth.

Individual Development Plan: A guide to help FTC staff reach career goals within the context of organizational objectives.

LegalEducationCenter: Designed to address learning and development for agency attorneys. All FTC attorneys can access the LegalEducationCenter to take courses that are accredited towards their bar's annual Continuous Legal Education requirements.

Performance Standard: Articulates how well an employee must perform their duties in order to meet a certain rating level. Performance standards are usually determined by the general measures that are important for each of the employee's critical elements.

Position Description: The written description of a federal employee's major duties and responsibilities.

SkillSoft Leadership Advantage: A leadership skills training and development program solution designed to make learning quick and engaging. By accessing SkillSoft Leadership Advantage through e-Train2, FTC employees can access a wide variety of leadership development courses, videos, books, live events, and exercises.

Training Council: An assembly consisting of representatives from the FTC Bureaus, the Offices of the General Counsel and Executive Director, and the Regions to determine strategies for assessing, designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating training development throughout the agency. Other offices may occasionally have representation on the Training Council.

USA Performance: The Office of Personnel Management's software solution to assist federal agencies in implementing their SES and GS performance management programs and systems.

Veterans' Preference: A hiring preference given to honorably discharged veterans and military retirees who are a disabled veteran or who retired below the rank of major or its equivalent.



HCMO QUARTERLY

HUMAN CAPITAL SERVICES FOR FTC EMPLOYEES

May 2021 - Volume 2, Issue 2

Message from the CHCO



It's springtime, and our Chief Human Capital Officer, Vicki Barber, is bringing you a message from the great outdoors!

Click on Vicki's picture to watch her message!

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BREAKING NEWS! 2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey Results

The FTC's 2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) results are here! To view the results, please visit [HCMO's FEVS intranet page](#).

The FEVS is one of the many tools that the FTC uses to seek employee insight into improvement opportunities for the agency. Using the results for their organizations, supervisors and their employees should work together to create actionable plans that address the improvement opportunities reflected by the 2020 FEVS. This effort will require effective communication between employees and their management, as employees who feel that their leadership values their feedback are more likely to provide input to influence positive change. In fact, 75.8% of FTC employees believe that the 2020 FEVS results will be used to make the agency a better place to work.

While the FEVS provides a snapshot of what has worked well and what can be improved, it is up to all of us to determine the needs of our team members, as well as how we can best support those needs. Supervisors, please take the time to engage with your employees to discuss the necessary steps for developing an effective action plan on which you and your team can follow through. We encourage you to access the [FTC FEVS Data: Guide to Action Planning Facilitation Using Your Bureau/Office Results](#) to serve as guidance on how to make use of these results to improve your organization's work environment, as well as the quality of work and engagement of your employees, in order to achieve organizational priorities and goals.

We appreciate everyone's efforts in completing the 2020 FEVS and determining ways that we can make our agency even stronger. If you have any questions, please contact [Cindee Smith](#), Human Capital (HC) Policy and Accountability Specialist (ext. 3681). Thank you for all that you do to help make the FTC a best place to work!

BREAKING NEWS! COVID-19 Relief Bill: New Federal Employee Leave

The recently enacted **American Rescue Plan Act of 2021** will provide FTC employees with a new category of paid leave for those affected in various ways by COVID-19.

Please note that while some of the categories of coverage are identical to those provided under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, **this new leave is not the same.**

This new paid leave is available to employees regardless of time spent working in the federal government and will cover absences from March 11, 2021, to September 30, 2021. Full-time employees are authorized up to 600 hours (i.e., 15 weeks) of paid leave while part-time employees receive paid leave proportionate to their work schedule. The leave can be used to recover from COVID-19, to quarantine, or to care for a sick family member or a child who is attending virtual classes due to the pandemic.

However, there are a few exceptions. For instance, employees cannot use this new leave at the same time as any other kind of paid time off. In addition, the leave benefits are capped at \$1,400 a week. ***Of particular importance, the time for which this leave is used will reduce an employee's total service for the purposes of calculating federal retirement benefits.***

HCMO is working with the FTC's payroll provider, the Interior Business Center, to implement this new leave as quickly as possible. More information will be shared via the FTC Daily once it is available.

In the meantime, please refer to the [COVID-19 Relief Bill, American Rescue Plan Act of 2021](#) for additional information. If you have any questions, please contact webta@ftc.gov.

BREAKING NEWS! Public Service Recognition Week



[Public Service Recognition Week](#) is May 2-8, 2021! Every year since 1985, the first week of May has been known as Public Service Recognition Week—a time to recognize and thank dedicated public servants from federal, state, and local governments across the country. As we face this pandemic, it is especially important to commemorate the amazing work that we do to accomplish the FTC's mission.

One way for you to join in this year's festivities is by participating in the "I Serve Because" campaign (federal employees only). Here is how it works:

- By completing the "I Serve Because" campaign [questionnaire](#) (five questions), you can share and highlight the importance of public service to you.
- Your responses may be posted on the FTC intranet during this week. Please note that no personally identifiable information will be collected or disclosed.

You may also consider joining in a full wellness week that will run Monday, May 3, to Friday, May 7.

Meditation Monday	Take a break and join us for a calm and relaxing session of Meditation.
Total Body Tuesday	Let's get LIIT! Low Intensity Interval Training is a great form of exercise, so take a break from your desk with this low impact work out.
Wake Up Wednesday	This session will feature HIIT, High Intensity Interval Training, so make sure to have a water bottle!
Throwdown Thursday	Join us for a fun but relaxed hour of Cardio Yoga.
Foodie Friday	This session will focus on seasonal eating and making the most out of local farmer's markets.

To join these complimentary sessions hosted by UnitedHealthcare (UHC) Federal Programs and view the other sessions that UHC offers throughout the year, please [register online](#). If you experience technical difficulties or have questions related to these sessions, please contact the UHC Federal Programs Team at uhcfeds@uhc.com.

For more information on local events and observances in honor of this year's Public Service Recognition Week, please visit the [Partnership for Public Service's Events page](#). If you have any questions about Public Service Recognition Week, please contact [Cindee Smith](#), HC Policy and Accountability Specialist (ext. 3681).

Thank you again for your dedication to the FTC and your service to the American people!

BREAKING NEWS! Details to the U.S. Southern Border

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has partnered with the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement (HHS-ORR) to recruit federal employees for voluntary detail assignments to support unaccompanied children at the U.S. southern border. Over the past few weeks, HCMO has been working with the Financial Management Office to support this effort by coordinating deployment for FTC detailees.

By taking part in this important initiative, our detailees will deploy to facilities that house unaccompanied children and help expedite their placement and discharge to a U.S. family member or sponsor. Facilities include convention centers, military bases, school dormitories, and outdoor areas located along the U.S. southern border.

We are incredibly proud of all agency employees who have expressed an interest in assisting our federal partners, as we recognize how difficult it is to commit to such an endeavor. The detail requires employees to deploy between 30 days to 120 days and to work 12-hour shifts, 7 days a week with predominantly Spanish-speaking children. A handful of our detailees will soon depart for orientation in Irving, Texas to receive their assigned deployment sites and roles. Thank you to each of our detailees for participating in this critical effort!

Since HHS-ORR has continued to extend the deadline to apply for the detail, anyone interested in volunteering should coordinate with their supervisor to complete the Supervisor Permission Form and submit it to [Morris Doyle](#), HC Specialist (ext. 2614). Once forms have been received, only those receiving authorization from HCMO will be provided the USAJobs application link to apply for the detail. Please note that all costs associated with this detail (e.g., salary, overtime, per diem, lodging, and travel) will be covered by the FTC.

If you would like to learn more about the detail, please contact [Andrew Rayo](#), Honors Paralegal (ext. 2045).

Personnel Security

Did you know that the FTC contains two different security offices, known as Physical Security and Personnel Security? While Physical Security resides within the Office of the Chief Administrative Services Officer, Personnel Security is a part of HCMO.



Personnel Security is the office in charge of implementing and maintaining the FTC's Personnel Security and Suitability Program (PSSP) for FTC employees, contractors, detailees, consultants, international and presidential fellows, temporary employees, student volunteers, interns, and visitors. It operates in accordance with federal laws and Commission regulations, policies, and procedures to ensure that the agency only employs and retains those who meet federal suitability requirements. Personnel Security's role also includes verifying that the employment and conduct of individuals joining the agency will not jeopardize the efficiency of the civil service or pose a risk to national security.

All Personnel Security team members adhere to the Personnel Security Policy, which establishes the guidelines and procedures for the administration of the FTC's PSSP. Through the PSSP, Personnel Security assists in the development of security procedures, collaborates with others throughout the agency to determine the sensitivity and risk level appropriate for each position, conducts background investigations, and makes security and suitability determinations for prospective employees, as well as current employees, contractors, and others.

The PSSP also supports the requirements of Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12, which establishes the policies, standards, and procedures for the issuance and use of Personal Identity Verification (PIV) credentials. This is especially noteworthy, as PIV cards are what allow employees to access FTC facilities and the agency's network. An employee's duties and "need-to-know" will determine their level of access to FTC facilities and systems.

Here are the individuals that make up the FTC's incredible Personnel Security office:

Vanessa Barclift is the Chief Personnel Security Officer (CPSO) of the FTC. As the CPSO, Vanessa is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the FTC's PSSP, which includes administering, developing, implementing, and managing the initial and continuous vetting of all applicants, employees, contractors, and volunteers. Before joining the Commission, Vanessa worked as a supervisor with the Department of Defense's Washington Headquarters Services (WHS), an Adjudicator for the Transportation Security Agency (TSA), a Personnel Security Specialist Case Analyst for the Defense Security Service (now known as the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency), and a Personnel Security Specialist for the Naval Air Warfare Center at Patuxent River, Maryland. (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Sharonda Posey is the Senior Personnel Security Specialist of the FTC. After graduating from high school, Sharonda enlisted in the United States Air Force and served as an F16 Crew Chief Maintainer for 6 years. She has worked in the Personnel Security field since 2008, supporting WHS, TSA, and the Department of Justice's Executive Office for United States Attorneys before joining the FTC in May 2016.

Sonya Wilson is an FTC Personnel Security Specialist responsible for determining the suitability/fitness and security clearance eligibility of applicants, employees, contractors, and volunteers. Sonya joined the agency in June 2019. With over 10 years of federal service, Sonya has worked at WHS as a Personnel Security Specialist and the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service as both a Human Resources Specialist and a Program Support Assistant. (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Anissa Sankey is an FTC Personnel Security Specialist who joined the agency in November 2020. After graduating from high school, Anissa enlisted in the United States Navy and served as an Intelligence Specialist aboard the USS Nimitz CVN-68—a Nuclear Aircraft Carrier—for 4 years. Prior to joining the FTC, she worked for Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Federal Protective Service, TSA, and Customs and Border Protection.

Continuous Evaluation

In March 2018, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence's (ODNI) National Counterintelligence and Security Center announced an effort to overhaul and improve the security clearance process via the **Trusted Workforce (TW) 2.0** initiative. This initiative seeks to implement **continuous evaluation** for reviewing the background of an individual who has been determined to be eligible for access to classified information, including additional or new checks of commercial databases, government databases, and other information lawfully available to security officials. As a part of continuous evaluation, **continuous vetting** enables such review to occur at any time to ensure that an individual continues to retain a security clearance or the assignment to sensitive duties, as applicable.

The TW effort was organized in the following two phases:

Phase 1: Reduce and eliminate the background investigation backlog. Replace periodic reinvestigations with a continuous vetting process.

Phase 2: Establish a new government-wide approach to personnel vetting.

You may be wondering about the significance of continuous vetting and how it relates to you as an FTC employee. The truth is that most FTC employees do not have a security clearance and based on ODNI's plans to implement continuous vetting for public trust investigations (a category that most FTC employees fall in), you will eventually need to undergo this security clearance process. That is to say, continuous vetting will replace periodic reinvestigations entirely as we transition to the TW 2.0 initiative.

As indicated by the two phases listed, TW is a new model for federal personnel vetting that works to ensure that the federal workforce is trusted to protect people, property, information, and mission. It enables government-wide continuous vetting that replaces the periodic reinvestigation through a series of automated checks with varying periodicities. Required checks include eligibility, terrorism, criminal activity, foreign travel, suspicious financial activity, credit bureau checks, public records checks (judgments, liens, bankruptcies, etc.), and employment conduct.

The biggest change for the FTC surrounds how we will establish trust with an individual and continuously vet that person's trust over time. Personnel Security's goal is to give both employees and contractors more flexibility to move around the government using these methods:

- **Initial vetting:** Establish a baseline of trust with an individual who is just joining the government or who is applying for a security clearance.
- **Continuous vetting:** Replace traditional five-or-ten-year periodic reinvestigations with a model that constantly identifies and flags risks for a trusted insider. Periodic reinvestigations apply to military, civilian, contractor, and foreign national personnel and have been required to maintain continued eligibility and access to classified and non-classified information. However, continuous vetting enables the background of a covered individual to be reviewed at any time to determine whether that individual continues to meet applicable requirements.
- **Upgrade level of vetting:** Upgrade an individual's level of vetting, which will be commensurate with an employee or contractor's move to a position with higher-level risk.
- **Reestablishing trust:** Restore trust with an individual who has a break in service and who has not been subject to continuous vetting.
- **Transfer of trust:** Allow a trusted individual to transfer their security clearance from one agency to another.

Personnel Security seeks to transition all employees into TW vetting model by adopting a phased approach. Currently, the transition has been defined for individuals with security clearances, who must complete the transition by September 30, 2021. While the transition of employees in public trust positions is still pending, all positions are eligible for continuous vetting of criminal activity via the Federal Bureau of Investigations' (FBI) Record of Arrest and Prosecution Background (Rap Back) program.

The Rap Back Program -----

What is the Rap Back Program?

The FBI's Rap Back program is a service that is available through the National Background Investigations Bureau (NBIB). It is used to continuously monitor an employee's criminal and arrest records by generating alerts from the FBI when any additions are made to an employee's FBI record. To do so, the Rap Back Program uses the capabilities of the FBI's Next Generation Identification (NGI) program, which is the world's largest electronic repository of biometric and criminal history information.

Whom Does the Rap Back Program Affect?

The Rap Back program directly involves any FTC employee or contractor that has onboarded with the agency within the last year, received a new badge, had an upgraded investigation for a new position, or who will undergo any future reinvestigation.

What Does the Rap Back Program Entail?

The Rap Back program requires the submission of fingerprints, as all enrollment, searching, and dissemination of FTC employees or contractors uses fingerprint-based identification. Per a joint memorandum between OPM and ODNI, agencies can defer reinvestigations of their personnel using a risk management approach by reviewing the subject's investigative forms, fingerprint results, and enrolling them in applicable continuous vetting products offered by NBIB.

What Else Should I Know About the Rap Back Program?

With Rap Back, authorized agencies can receive ongoing national status notifications of any criminal history reported to the FBI after the initial processing and retention of a criminal or civil transaction. The Rap Back program also offers notification of future events that may affect the hiring of people serving in positions of trust.

When an agency enrolls (or subscribes) an individual in Rap Back, the FBI's NGI Rap Back program uses a set of classifiable fingerprints provided by the subscribing agency and continuously compares those fingerprints with new criminal history and civil records, as provided to the FBI by State Identification Bureaus. If the FBI receives information on the enrolled individual, the FBI provides NBIB with the rap sheet. NBIB then immediately notifies the subscribed agency or agencies via email, while also making the new Identity History Summary immediately available via OPM's Clearance Verification System.

If you would like to learn more about the Rap Back program, please contact [Sharonda Posey](#), Senior Personnel Security Specialist (ext. 3554).

A Friendly Reminder: You Never Know Who Might Be Listening! -----

One of the most critical of Personnel Security's many responsibilities is supporting an informed and alert workforce at the FTC in order to protect sensitive and controlled unclassified information. This effort is especially important while the majority of the agency is teleworking. As FTC employees, each of us must be careful of the conversations that we have about work, whether we are at home or in a public area. After all, even topics that we don't consider to be sensitive or noteworthy can contain just enough information that, if overheard by someone else, can be harmful to the agency. To help illustrate the importance of staying vigilant, Personnel Security brings you the following anecdote.

An Overly Informative Carpool

Have you ever heard of "slugging"? Slugging is a term known to commuters in the Washington, D.C. area and is a system of organized carpooling with total strangers that uses specific pick-up and drop-off locations. You may be thinking, "Oh, I would never do that! It doesn't seem safe." However, even our own CPSO, Vanessa Barclift, tried it with a friend and saw how much quicker it took to get to and from work.

Slugging is a way of life in D.C. and can come with some interesting benefits and risks. Vanessa can count on one hand how many times she has told herself that she would never ride with a particular person again, but she typically felt safe with every trip. In fact, if you are in the market for a new ride and are not sure what vehicle suits you, slugging offers you the ability to test out multiple models of cars. Of course, the best benefit is that slugging is completely free for the driver and passengers alike.



The biggest risk to slugging involves talkative drivers and passengers. When Vanessa first started slugging, she was an employee with the Department of Defense's WHS, stationed in Rosslyn, Virginia. WHS had satellite locations in Alexandria, Crystal City, and Rosslyn, Virginia, with the Pentagon as the headquarters location. She rode multiple times with a person who was *very* talkative about her job. From the moment she pulled out of the commuter lot until she arrived at the drop-off point, she was on her headset talking the whole ride. One could say she was "spilling the tea" on things going on at the office.

It just so happened that Vanessa had no idea who this person was until Vanessa was introduced as a new WHS employee at an agency All Hands meeting. At the meeting, the person, who was also in attendance, announced that she was about to retire. Once Vanessa learned her name and that she had worked for the front office, all the tea that she was spilling was contextualized. Essentially, all Vanessa had to do was pull out an organization chart and she could figure out everyone who the person had been discussing.

As always, it is important to watch what you say in public—whether you are in an elevator, the cafeteria, or a carpool. You never know what little information can help others to contextualize otherwise need-to-know information!

Reminder! Administrative Leave for COVID-19 Vaccinations

Effective February 14, 2021 (pay period 05), all employees can use up to four hours of administrative leave to obtain their COVID-19 vaccine. This administrative leave also covers travel and wait times for receiving the vaccine. If the vaccine received requires two doses, employees may use up to four hours of administrative leave for each of the two doses. To document the administrative leave on the time card, employees should use code 060 – Admin Leave – Other and in the remarks section of the leave request, employees should note: "COVID-19 Vaccine." As with any other vaccination or medical procedure, employees may use accrued sick leave if additional recovery time is needed.

These administrative leave hours for vaccinations will not count against the 20 hours of excused absence leave granted by the Chairwoman (also coded as 060 – Admin Leave – Other), if employees qualify to use excused absence leave.

If you have any questions or concerns, please email webta@ftc.gov.

Employee Resource Groups—How They Drive Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

In high school, groups reigned supreme. Informal groups, such as "the Jocks," "the Geeks," or "the Goths," thrived alongside the officially sanctioned "Chess Club," "Black Students Union," "La Raza Unida Club," and "Glee Club." These organizations provided safe spaces while each of us learned to navigate the sometimes-awkward teen years.

In April 2015, the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity and Workplace Inclusion (Office of EEOI) created a policy to establish a path for creating Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) at the FTC. Thought leaders in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) actively advocate for business organizations to establish and collaborate with ERGs for several reasons:

1. ERGs foster community by promoting a sense of belonging and therefore, they align with broader DE&I efforts.
2. ERGs are often comprised of members who possess institutional knowledge and, as a result, are equipped to serve as mentors to newer members, which is a critical component for success in any professional setting.
3. ERGs provide a safe space for diverse groups to feel connected through common interests or common demographic traits.

In October 2018, several weeks after the Office of EEOI delivered training on diversity, inclusion, and EEO to the Midwest Regional Office, Elizabeth "Libby" Scott, Karen Mandel, and Sarah Schroeder contacted the Office of EEOI to discuss their interest in establishing the FTC's first ERG. From that first email, the Women's Employee Resource Group (WERG) began its meteoric rise, embodying all of the reasons why it is a no-brainer to support ERGs. Several years later, the WERG is an invaluable component in the fabric of what we know and love about the FTC. To learn more about the WERG and to remain apprised of its meetings and activities, contact werg@ftc.gov.

Now that you are acquainted with the WERG's success story, you now understand that you too have the ability to launch a new ERG at the FTC! If you are interested in learning how you can form an ERG and contribute to DE&I at the FTC, [click here](#) to access the agency's ERG policy. If you have any questions, please contact [Namon Friends](#), Acting Director, Office of EEOI (ext. 2582).

Celebrating the FTC's Mission Support Professionals

Mission Support Professionals make critical contributions to our workplace every day, as their work is essential in enabling our agency to protect consumers and promote competition. In appreciation of the FTC's Mission Support Professionals, the Training and Employee Development Division (TEDD Team) launched an agency-wide initiative to identify, celebrate, and recognize the people that work diligently to advance the mission of the agency.

The Mission Support Professionals initiative was a collaborative effort between the Diversity Council's Employee Engagement Committee and the TEDD Team. From March 11 to April 1, 2021, these organizations conducted the Mission Support Professionals Survey to receive more information from non-attorneys, non-economists, and non-executive staff on their career development and training needs. The data from the 145 responses received is currently helping the agency identify ways to serve this population's various career journeys.

One of the most critical aspects of this initiative was the recognition and celebration of Mission Support Professionals. Throughout April, the Employee Engagement Committee and the TEDD Team orchestrated a month-long recognition program to honor several Mission Support Professionals. Banners and a new page on the FTC intranet delivered personalized messages to commemorate top agency employees. So far, over a dozen offices, including seven regional offices, have participated in the recognition program. We are still accepting nominations.

The [Mission Support Professionals](#) intranet page features the ability to build courses in [e-Train2](#), as well as a series that reviews such foundational skills as communications, flexibility, tact, and relationship building. The duties of Mission Support Professionals, including Executive Assistants, Staff Assistants, and Administrative Assistants, vary depending on the office. However, these roles share many commonalities. Therefore, the e-Train2 courses are designed to strengthen Mission Support Professionals, who are considered the gatekeepers and first points of contact for the various bureaus and offices.

On April 21, 2021, the agency celebrated Mission Support Professionals Day with 73 people in attendance. In honor of the FTC's Mission Support Professionals, the event opened with remarks delivered by Acting Chairwoman Rebecca Slaughter and included a motivational message from author and leadership specialist James Kennedy, as well as special presentations from various Commission experts. Several attendees noted the "fascinating results" from the Mission Support Professionals Survey and are looking forward to learning how better to support our colleagues. Other comments included praise for the keynote speaker's tactical advice for all occupations, as well as remarks that this event captured an inclusiveness attitude across the agency.

Mission Support Professionals continue to amaze us every day as we count on them to guide us in administrative processes, aid us in investigations, perform ideal analyses, and provide us with systems to accomplish the FTC mission. To all of our FTC Mission Support Professionals, thank you for all you do!



Glossary of Human Capital Terms

American Rescue Plan Act of 2021: Signed into law on March 11, 2021 to support U.S. recovery from the economic and health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing recession.

Continuous Evaluation: Reviewing the background of an individual who has been determined to be eligible for access to classified information (including additional or new checks of commercial databases, government databases, and other information lawfully available to security officials). Continuous evaluation can occur at any time during the period of eligibility to determine whether that individual continues to meet the requirements for eligibility for access to classified information.

Continuous Vetting: Reviewing the background of a covered individual at any time to determine whether that individual continues to meet applicable requirements.

Employee Resource Groups: Grassroots groups formed by

employees across all demographics—race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, education, geography, military status, occupation, hobby, etc. ERGs function as strategic partners to the Office of EEO/IE in areas such as targeted outreach, recruitment, retention, training, and programmatic events. ERGs are established by submission and approval of an Employee Resource Group Charter Application by the Office of EEO/IE.

e-Train2: The FTC's learning management system, which is accessible to FTC employees any time and from anywhere.

Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey: OPM's annual survey that measures employees' perceptions of whether, and to what extent, conditions characteristic of successful organizations are present in their agencies.

Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12: DHS' policy for a common identification standard for federal employees and contractors.

Mission Support Professionals: Non-attorneys, non-economists, and non-executive staff whose work is essential in enabling the FTC to protect consumers and promote competition.

Next Generation Identification Program: System that provides the criminal justice community with the world's largest and most efficient electronic repository of biometric and criminal history information.

Periodic Reinvestigation: Required to maintain continued eligibility and access to classified and non-classified information based on the investigation and the investigation closed date at the five, ten, and fifteen-year interval.

Personal Identity Verification Credentials: Used government-wide to control access to federally controlled facilities and information systems at the appropriate security level.

Personnel Security and Suitability Program: Operated by Personnel Security in accordance with federal laws and

Commission regulations, policies, and procedures to ensure that the agency only employs and retains those who meet federal suitability requirements.

Public Service Recognition Week: Celebrated the first week of May since 1985 (beginning on the first Sunday of the month) to honor the people who serve our nation as federal, state, county, local, and tribal government employees.

Record of Arrest and Prosecution Background Program: Service available through NBIB that continuously monitors an employee's criminal and arrest records by generating alerts from the FBI when any additions are made to an employee's FBI record.

Trusted Workforce 2.0: Major overhaul of the security clearance process that works to end the record backlog in pending security clearance investigations in order to usher in a transformed, more relevant security clearance application process.

Announcements

We are proud to welcome a new member to the HCMO family: Cindee Smith! Cindee joined HCMO in March 2021 as an HC Policy and Accountability Specialist. Previously, Cindee worked at the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency within DHS, where she served as a Team Lead in the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer for the Medical, Safety and Health, and Work-life/Wellness Team. Cindee is from North Carolina and graduated from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Economics. **Welcome to the family, Cindee!**



Thank you for reading *HCMO Quarterly—Human Capital Services for FTC Employees*. We hope that through this issue, you were able to learn many new processes and procedures related to human capital that you did not know before, as well as gain a deeper understanding of the HC components that the Personnel Security Office manages. To view previous newsletter issues, please [click here](#).

As always, HCMO is here to support you—through this pandemic and beyond. If you have any questions or comments on topics covered within this issue, or suggestions for future newsletter columns, please contact HCMO's Honors Paralegal, [Andrew Rayo](#) (ext. 2045). To access your servicing HC Specialist, please visit [HCMO's intranet site](#) for contact information.