



National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
Office of the Administrator  
Washington, DC 20546-0001

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TO: Officials-in-Charge of Headquarters Offices  
Directors, NASA Centers

FROM: Associate Administrator

SUBJECT: NASA Strategic Workforce Planning Guidance for Mission Workforce

To ensure success in meeting the Agency's evolving mission requirements, NASA must be able to adjust the size and composition of the workforce more rapidly than is possible today. NASA also needs to manage its workforce strategically to address technological advances, a thriving aerospace industry, and increasing reliance on commercial and academic partners. Over the past few years, NASA leadership has taken steps toward a more strategic approach to planning and managing our workforce. Previous Agency Strategic Implementation Planning (ASIP) meetings have enabled this strategic push by sponsoring:

- Establishment of Center Roles (2016)
- Development of NASA Civil Service Framework to guide decisions about use of the civil servant workforce (2017)
- Development of enduring and flexible workforce concepts (2017)
- Establishment of guidelines for Strategic Workforce Planning (2018)
- Development of a workforce roles framework for our civil servant and contractor workforce (2018)

These ASIP efforts established the foundation for the Strategic Workforce Planning process developed this past year. As a result of these efforts, the Agency established the following guiding principles for our workforce:

***Demand-driven-In-house*** technical workforce at NASA Centers will be shaped and scaled by mission requirements. NASA will move away from a supply-based workforce model where Mission Directorates are given an allocation requiring funding for civil service employees regardless of mission needs. Instead, mission requirements will be established, consistent with acquisition strategies and Center Roles, and workforce resources will be matched to those requirements.

***Agile-*** The size and composition of the NASA workforce will flex with the work demand as defined by the Mission Directorate requirements. The intent is for NASA Centers to deploy their permanent civil servant workforce to activities that are strategically governmental in nature and for projects and activities with little or no equivalent found in Industry or Academia. Non-permanent civil servant hiring options should be used to fill requirements

that are of uncertain duration, are project-based, or where expertise is needed for a short period of time.

***Strategically-shaped*** – The size and composition of NASA’s mission workforce will be shaped utilizing Agency strategic guidance rather than hiring plans developed by individual Centers and organizations.

Building upon previous ASIP efforts, the 2019 ASIP meeting focused on creating strategies to build the workforce of the future. As a result of these discussions, NASA is establishing new workforce requirements to adjust the complement of the civil service workforce to optimize toward mission needs, while continuing to utilize our contractors and including the use of term-limited employees. The specific guidance will be outlined in the FY2022 budget Strategic Planning Guidance (SPG).

The intent is as follows:

1. *Between FY 2021 and FY 2025, new targets will be established for the Mission technical and programmatic permanent civil service workforce.* FTE ceilings will be adjusted from FY20 levels, and include FTE of permanent civil service employees only, rather than FTE of all civil servants.
  - a. OCHCO will work with Centers and Mission Directorates to create FTE ceilings for fiscal years 2021-2025 including year by year and Center by Center ceilings.
  - b. These new ceiling tables will be included in the Strategic Planning Guidance for PPBE22.
  - c. *Beginning in FY 2022, Mission Directorates will no longer be assigned FTE allocations.* Following this change, Mission Directorates will work with Centers to determine workforce demand and ensure funding for permanent FTE.
  
2. *Centers may choose how to meet workforce requirements not fulfilled by full-time permanent employees.* Centers are encouraged to use available workforce flexibilities such as hiring non-permanent or term-limited civil service employees, or they may procure contractor support. Centers should consider the nature of the work, labor market, and cost considerations in determining which non-permanent workforce solutions are most appropriate for meeting requirements. Additionally:
  - a. *There will not be a limit on the number of non-permanent civil service employee FTEs.* Therefore, there is no overall FTE ceiling or floor with respect to term-limited appointments, only a ceiling on permanent FTE.
    - i. Term-limited appointment lengths should match project requirements. Centers should take a conservative approach to establishing the length of these term-limited appointments to insure they can adjust FTE levels as project requirements evolve.
    - ii. There must be mission requirements and an agreed-upon funding source for the duration of the term appointments.
  - b. Appendix A includes further instructions from the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer on these flexibilities.

3. NASA will continue to use the PPBE process to monitor the year-to-year progress of the permanent workforce adjustments and the size of the term-limited workforce. Additional workforce guidance may be included in future PPBE cycles.
4. For the 2020 performance year, the senior leadership directly reporting to me will have a performance element in their plans related to NASA's strategic workforce efforts.

During the next PPBE cycle, I will work closely with the Chief Human Capital Officer, the Mission Directorates Associate Administrators, and the Center Directors to ensure effective implementation of this strategic workforce planning guidance for the mission workforce. Thank you in advance for your support.



Stephen G. Jurczyk

APPENDIX:

- A. Guidance for the use of term-limited appointments

## APPENDIX A: Guidance for the Use of Term-Limited Appointments

To assist Centers in implementing the new workforce requirements, as established in the “NASA Strategic Workforce Planning Guidance for Mission Workforce” memo, the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer is issuing the following guidance. Your local Human Resource Office is available to assist you with specific questions regarding hiring regulations.

### **Interim Ceiling and Hiring Guidance**

For FY 2020, the FTE ceilings and mission allocations listed in Table 1 apply only to the Permanent Civil Service FTE rather than all FTE (i.e., we will calculate FTE for hours worked by permanent employees only). Organizations may hire project-based/term-limited civil servants above their permanent FTE ceilings based on the following:

- Agreed-upon funding level with Mission Directorates.
- Assigned term-limited work must be in accordance with regulations on term-limited appointments.
- The duration of term-limited appointments should not automatically default to the maximum duration allowed. We encourage the flexibility of using shorter durations with options to extend based on factors such as surge support, end of program/project cycle, funding, skills transferability to other projects, etc.

Project-based/term-limited civil servants are well suited for surge support, specialized competencies for short term efforts, work supporting the end of a program/project cycle, work with uncertain funding, work requiring skills that may not easily transfer to other projects/programs, and work/skills being impacted quickly by technology advances.

NASA has a number of hiring authorities to use, many of which allow for a direct hire-like process that will expedite the time to hire and give you more access to talented candidates. Your Human Resources Director and Human Resources Business Partners can assist you with determining which are appropriate for your needs. Examples include: NASA Excepted Service (NEX) appointments, NASA Flexibility Act Term appointments, Government-wide Term Appointments, Veteran Appointing Authorities, Schedule A, and Government Direct Hire Authority. See Table 2 for guidance on accounting for common hiring authorities.

As a reference, the NASA Excepted (NEX) Direct Hire Appointing Authority is limited to 425 positions across NASA. We have distributed these positions to Centers and Phase 1 and 2 MAP organizations as reflected in Table 3. We have held the remaining allocations in reserve to be used for special initiatives, Center/Mission needs, and functions as they transition to consolidated status under MAP. Requests for additional NEX allocations can be made through the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer, Talent, Strategy, and Engagement Division, Strategy and Innovation Branch, Ms. Charlotte Cannon at [charlotte.b.cannon@nasa.gov](mailto:charlotte.b.cannon@nasa.gov).

If you have questions about this memo or your ceilings, please contact Rich Shaffer, Chief, Workforce Planning Branch, at [richard.a.shaffer@nasa.gov](mailto:richard.a.shaffer@nasa.gov) or (202) 358-2397.

Table 1: FY2020 Permanent Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Ceilings and Mission Allocations

Table 2: Guidance on Accounting for Common Hiring Authorities

Table 3: NEX allocations

Table 1: FY2020 Permanent Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Ceilings and Mission Allocations

FY2020 Permanent FTE Ceilings										
Center/Mission Support Function	Science	Aeronautics	HEO (DSES + LEO)	Exploration Research and Technology	SSMS	MAP Phase 1	MAP Phase 2	Reimb/WCF	STEM	FTP FTE Ceiling
Ames Research Center	141.1	220.6	125.4	85.5	551.5	(76.5)	(74.9)	22.0		994.7
Armstrong Flight Research Center	89.3	196.0	2.7	15.5	201.2	(29.5)	(28.7)	15.0		461.5
Glenn Research Center	73.8	323.8	343.6	123.3	622.6	(74.0)	(66.4)	3.0		1,349.7
Goddard Space Flight Center	1,175.7		168.3	109.2	1,420.7	(218.9)	(174.5)	225.0		2,705.5
Johnson Space Center	30.9		1,996.8	54.8	832.9	(154.8)	(116.9)			2,643.7
Kennedy Space Center	9.0		1,014.0	48.5	826.7	(85.7)	(121.8)	1.0		1,691.7
Langley Research Center	179.0	453.5	121.4	118.3	894.3	(95.6)	(65.5)	15.0		1,620.4
Marshall Space Flight Center	131.7		1,052.7	100.2	977.7	(125.9)	(99.6)			2,036.8
NASA Headquarters	20.0			7.0	1,121.1	(226.2)	(208.5)			713.4
NSSC								179.0		179.0
Stennis Space Center			103.7	5.7	152.7	(25.5)	(31.2)	19.4		224.8
Human Capital						285.7				285.7
CFO						794.2				794.2
OLIA						32.7				32.7
Procurement							478.1			478.1
Small Business							19.1			19.1
Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity							75.3			75.3
Communications							206.9			206.9
Protective Services							169.3			169.3
STEM Engagement							39.3			39.3
<b>Ceiling</b>	<b>1,850.5</b>	<b>1,193.9</b>	<b>4,928.6</b>	<b>668.0</b>	<b>7,601.4</b>	<b>(0.0)</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>479.4</b>		<b>16,721.8</b>

Table 2: Guidance on Accounting for Common Hiring Authorities

The table below is supplemental information to assist Centers in managing their Permanent FTE Ceiling. It provides guidance of which appointment types are counted as part of the Permanent FTE Ceiling and which are excluded.		
Hiring Authority	Permanent FTE Ceiling	Not within Permanent FTE Ceiling
<b>“Regular” External Hire”</b>		
Full-Time Appt.	X	
Part-Time Appt.	X	
<b>OPM STEM/Cyber Direct Hire Authority</b>		
Full-Time Appt.	X	
Term Appt. (up to 6 yrs.)		X
<b>Schedule A(r) Authority</b>		
		X
<b>NASA Flexibility Act (Term)</b>		
Term Appt. (up to 6 yrs.)		X
Term Conv to Perm	X	
<b>NASA Excepted Authority (NEX)</b>		
		X
<b>Pathways Intern</b>		
Intern Hire		X
Intern Conversion to Perm	X	
Intern Conversion to Term		X
<b>Pathways Recent Grad</b>		
Recent Grad Hire		X
Recent Grad Conversion to Perm	X	
Recent Grad Conversion to Term		X
<b>Pathways PMF</b>		
PMF Hire	X	
PMF Conversion	X	
<b>SES/SL/ST</b>		
SES/SL/ST Perm	X	
SES/SL/ST Term		X
Experts/Consultants		X
NOTE: There are many hiring authorities beyond the ones identified above that can be used for term-limited appointments.		
RULE OF THUMB: Any appointment leading to a permanent status needs to be planned ahead of time to ensure that it fits within the Permanent FTE Ceiling.		

Table 3: NASA Excepted Service (NEX) Allocations by Center/Functional Office

<i>NASA Excepted Service Allocations</i>	
Center & MAP	NEX Allocations
<b>Ames Research Center</b>	15
<b>Armstrong Flight Research Center</b>	8
<b>Glenn Research Center</b>	10
<b>Goddard Space Flight Center</b>	18
<b>Johnson Space Center</b>	21
<b>Kennedy Space Center</b>	10
<b>Langley Research Center</b>	10
<b>Marshall Space Flight Center</b>	16
<b>NASA Headquarters</b>	20
<b>NSSC</b>	
<b>Stennis Space Center</b>	3
<b>Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer</b>	5
<b>Office of the Chief Financial Officer</b>	5
<b>Office of Legislative Affairs</b>	1
<b>Procurement</b>	5
<b>Small Business</b>	
<b>Office of Diversity &amp; Equal Opportunity</b>	1
<b>Communications</b>	2
<b>Protective Services</b>	1
<b>STEM Engagement</b>	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	152