UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

NOV 19 2018

OFFICE OF THE
ADMINISTRATOR

Margaret Weichert
Acting Director
U.S. Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20415

Dear Ms. Weichert:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is requesting an exception to the Qualifications Review Board case processing moratorium for Mara J. Kamen for the position of Director of the Office of Human Resources (OHR) within the Office of Administration and Resources Management.

It is critical that EPA have the ability to move forward to fill this extremely important position at this time. The position reports to the Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator and leads and manages a staff of 80 employees. The position of the Director of the Office of Human Resources is critical to the mission accomplishment of EPA. The Director is responsible for planning, organizing, directing, controlling, and coordinating OHR which involves developing and assessing implementation of human resources/human capital (HR/HC) management policies and practices necessary for EPA to meet its present and future workforce needs. The Director provides supervision and direction to, and serves as the steward for the EPA's HR/HC programs and organizational services.

However, not filling the position at this time would have a significant impact on the EPA because of the critical nature of the Administrations priorities. The Director of OHR plays a vital role in developing all EPA HR/HC workforce related policies which support the President's Management Agenda Cross-Agency Priority (CAP) Area 3 – Developing a Workforce for the 21st Century. The Director of OHR is EPA's primary representative in ensuring that EPA is engaged and completing action plan requirements in all three sub goals: Improve Employee Performance Management and Engagement, Reskill and Redeploy Human Capital Resources, and Simple and Strategic Hiring. The Director of OHR is also critical to EPA's Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, a key performance indicator for CAP goal 3 effort. This position takes the lead on all aspects of communication, assessment, and reporting for EPA. It is highly unlikely the new agency head will take a personal interest in the selection.

This particular candidate is uniquely qualified to fill the position. She has significant HR/HC experience as she has held very challenging positions in several federal agencies. She currently serves as the Acting Deputy Chief Human Capital Officer for the Small Business Administration. The candidate is not currently acting in this position and is not on a Schedule C/noncareer SES appointment.

The position of the Administrator of the EPA recently became vacant. The President has asked me to take over the duties as Acting Administrator for the foreseeable future.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Jeremy Taylor, director, Human Resources Management Division, at taylor.jeremy@epa.gov or (919) 541-0537, or Dorothy Carr, lead Human Resources Specialist, at carr.dorothy@epa.gov or (919) 541-4356. We appreciate your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Andrew R. Wheeler
Acting Administrator

Enclosures

# Mara J. Kamen

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(b) (6) [redacted]

**SUMMARY**

Human Capital professional with a unique combination of analytical expertise and experience in designing and leading change; a proven track record of developing and implementing successful strategies resulting in increased efficiency and productivity across multiple agencies, as well as large, complex organizations.

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

2017, 4 month assignment — Small Business Administration, Washington DC

**Deputy Chief Human Capital Officer (Acting)** — Office of Human Resources Solutions

Directing 7 subordinate managers, office staff of 60

- Served as subject matter expert on transformation for SBA's response to *Reshaping the Federal Government* initiatives; represented Agency at OPM, OMB and with outside entities.
- Coordinated support for Office of Disaster Assistance during 2017 hurricane relief efforts, including development of guidance, FLSA and bargaining unit status changes for details, outreach to other Federal agencies. Continued operations while 30% of OHRS staff was deployed or involved full time with ODA.
- Prepared executives for Congressional testimony; conducted executive briefings on a various HR topics.
- Closed Office of Inspector General audit findings concerning executive pay setting, Agency reshaping efforts, systems modernizations and most serious management challenges.
- Addressed sensitive issues for on-boarding political appointees.
- Facilitated leadership off-site to solidify transformation of HR from transactional to consultative.

2016 – 2017, Cohort 11, 6 month assignment — Initiative Manager for IRS

**Presidential Management Council Rotational Fellow** — Research, Applied Analytics & Statistics

- Directed and applied research and advanced data analytics to frame compliance risks, identify opportunities and trends, detect high-risk areas of noncompliance and prioritize enforcement approaches.
- Engaged, collaborated and provided enterprise-wide, data-driven, innovative approaches to improve compliance in the Tax Exempt/Government Entity initiatives for increasing effectiveness by working to implement recommendations, meeting with customer to share recommendations and progress.
- Provided oversight for development of testing plan aligned to strategy, review analyst's design and modeling code, and advocate with customer to gain approval for a preliminary test.
- Preliminary results showed a 5 fold increase in audit findings.

2010 – Present — Small Business Administration, Washington DC

**Supervisory Human Resources Specialist** — Leading Strategic Human Capital Management, policy

**(Chief, Strategy, Policy & Accountability Division)** — and accountability programs, managing staff of 10

*Strategy (Leading Change, Results Driven)*

- Served as business partner and subject matter expert in Strategic Human Capital with an emphasis on the creation, integration and alignment of workforce planning and strategic planning with SBA's mission goals.
- Operationalized transformational change by developing options for service delivery models, garnering stakeholder support, addressing logistics, resources and budgets, conducted risk assessments for proposed changes. Analyzed organizational structures for supporting success.
- Led a diverse work group to address Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (EVS) indices resulting in a seven point increase over two years and a one year increase of 7.4% in the Best Places to Work index.
- Twice led effort within SBA to reshape positions and address pending retirements by successfully conducting a VERA/VSIP window of opportunity. Directed analysis on workforce demographics and impacts, created the business case to OPM and OMB for approval, crafted communications to impacted employees and negotiated with the union. Addressed financial and budget issues. Received Administrator's Award for this work.
- Created Strategic Workforce Plan aligned with Agency strategic plan, benchmarked agencies of similar size and scope to incorporate best practices in addressing needs; embedded metrics to track progress.
- Responsible for action planning and execution of a variety of strategic programs – Workforce Analysis, Diversity and Inclusion, Hiring Reform, Veterans Outreach, etc. ensuring SBA addresses current concerns and future needs. Introduced creative and innovative solutions.
- Reorganized program offices, including Human Resources to better match services with customer needs, match employee skill sets with work and individual development, and ensure a customer service focus.

*Policy (Building Coalitions)*

- Managed policy team and consulted on agency policies and procedures for employee discipline and adverse actions, SES-specific issues, performance management, telework, separation clearance, time and attendance, organizational structures, accountability, awards, merit promotion, delegated examining, classification, position management, telework and FMLA. Brought SBA into compliance on these issues.
- Streamlined the policy clearance process by involving key stakeholders at the onset of writing or updating policies and at review stages, resulting in clearance time being reduced by 40%.
- Initiated *The HR5*, an informative 5 minute briefing for program office management on hot HR topics. The result was higher customer satisfaction scores on internal surveys and improved rapport with customers.
- Established a Policy Community of Practice across the Federal government for sharing information on common policies and Executive Orders such as Pathways and Addressing Domestic Violence.
- Introduced new policies through educational podcasts and learning sessions.

*Accountability (Business Acumen)*

- Developed a new accountability system to evaluate program success and managed accountability team, ensuring strong measures, program effectiveness, and process improvements to ensure program success. Assessments were conducted on delegated examining, merit promotion and special hiring authorities, performance management and awards, training and employee development, employee relations, and work life wellness programs resulting in greater compliance and efficiencies.
- Implemented best practice of issuing action plans along with accountability reports. The result was program managers having a road map for resolving issues and clear expectations were established.
- Addressed audit findings from OPM, KPMG, GAO, and OIG, Management Challenges and other internal controls. OPM's audit extensive findings (110 actions) were closed out in less than 15 months. Nominated for an Administrator's Award for this work.

*Leadership (Leading People)*

- Served as Agency representative to OPM/OMB for strengthening employee engagement and organizational performance. Led a cross-functional team representing SBA's diversity to make significant inroads.
- Partnered with SBA's unions for long range planning and setting agency direction. Developed several strong relationships resulting in greater cooperation for key initiatives.
- Built a cohesive team by fostering a continuous learning environment. Staff appreciated continuous growth opportunities in tight budget times and resulted in more engaged employees.
- Dealt with disability accommodations issues by partnering with Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Office of General Counsel and Workforce Relations. Resolved a number of complex EEO issues.
- Addressed poor performer through the use of progressive discipline and performance improvement plan, up to and including proposal for removal.
- Served as Acting Deputy CHCO, an SES position, both on a regular basis and for extended periods.

2008 – 2010 Department of Homeland Security, Washington DC
Supervisory Human Resources Specialist Started new division to manage strategy programs;
**(Human Capital Strategy Division Deputy Chief)** U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services, managed staff of 7

*Strategy (Leading Change, Results Driven)*

- Migrated Burlington HR Service Center from CBP to USCIS, including 48 FTEs, all logistics, scope and cost projections; when budget was reduced by one-third, renegotiated contract services to meet allocations.
- Revised $8.2M shared services agreement to define roles and responsibilities, performance based metrics and return on investment factors, resulting in more targeted services with no increase in costs.
- Served as subject matter expert for policy and SOPs related to time and attendance, schedules of work and strategic planning.
- Addressed change management initiatives for migration to a paperless time and attendance system.

*Leadership (Business Acumen, Leading People)*

- *Strategize to Capitalize* team member responsible for creating USCIS Strategic Human Capital Plan, Accountability Plan and Annual Operating Plan.
- Served on Presidential Transition Team, crafting issues papers, functional profiles and accomplishment reports in order to inform the new administration "parachute team."
- Partnered with the Department to produce a DHS Strategic Human Capital Plan and usher the Human Capital Management Report.
- Terminated a federal employee for conduct issues.

2006 – 2008 U. S. Office of Personnel Management, Washington DC
**Supervisory Human Resources Specialist** Managed staff of 12-17, accountable for 7 agencies.
**(Operations Manager)** Promoted from Human Capital Officer

*Leadership (Leading Change, Leading People, Results Driven, Business Acumen, Building Coalitions)*

- Developed and implemented organizational vision integrating government-wide programs and priorities while designing strategies to maximize employee potential.
- Through strategic planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs and policies, made continuous improvements and obtained timely and effective results.
- Managed resources – staff, budget, contracts, and information - to accomplish OPM's mission.

- Communicated, advocated, and negotiated to develop internal OPM and external networks to achieve the advancement of the strategic management of Human Capital.
- Reenergized two low performers by matching strengths to work assignments. Interventions resulted in value added work and more positive attitudes.

*Consultation (Leading Change, Building Coalitions)*

- Provided guidance on workforce planning and deployment, strategic alignment, leadership and knowledge management, building a results-oriented culture, talent management and accountability, organizational design, and new OPM regulations resulting in a greater understanding of issues, compliance and best practices.
- Built consensus around the Human Capital Assessment and Accountability Framework to drive results and create measures indicating agency progress. Contributed to 5 CFR 250 regulation updates.

*Special Projects (Leading Change, Building Coalitions)*

- Served on Accountability Work Group. Contributions included creating process for providing face-to-face consulting feedback sessions for presenting panel findings, initiated a Community of Practice as a way to link agencies, and facilitated after action review with agencies. Conducted similar session during Executive Team retreat to ensure division's leadership were on the same page, gave everyone a chance to constructively vent and move on, drafted objectives paper as a follow up action.
- Led division-wide team to redesign performance plans. Served as a subject matter expert on creating strong individual work plans, valid metrics and measuring results rather than transactional outputs. Earned *Director's Award for Excellence* for this work.
- Facilitated several sessions with F.E.B.s at annual meetings. Feedback from the program manager said, "*You were able to capture all the information I was hoping for. The Chairs were very comfortable opening up to you and as a result, we can move forward with a common objective.*"
- Participated in numerous internal work groups, including program management, Proud to Be, and operational functions. Contributions added client agencies perspective and streamlined many processes.

2004 – 2006 U. S. Office of Personnel Management, Washington DC
**Human Capital Officer** Served as liaison between Executive Branch agencies and OPM, focusi on
the President's Management Agenda (PMA) for Human Capital;
Guided the Department of Justice (DOJ) from a red a green status score in 5 quarters

*Consultation (Leading Change, Building Coalitions)*

- Proactively partnered with agencies to provide consultative advice, leadership, oversight, tools and programs to meet customer's human capital needs and ensure the observance of merit system principles.
- Developed human capital metrics for government-wide applications. Serve as strategic partner in defining agency's human capital plan, milestones and actions.
- Assessed feasibility, merit and potential impact of proposed personnel flexibilities and policy initiatives.
- Conducted in-depth research on legislative actions and advised customers on how to mitigate impacts.
- Reviewed SES and manager level performance plans to bring plans into compliance with regulations.
- Consulted on voluntary early retirement and separation payment authorities, dual compensation waivers, temporary and term appointments, veterans' pass overs, selective service waivers, biennial SES requests and other needs.

*Strategy (Leading Change, Results Driven)*

- Enabled agency to transform the overall human capital strategy. Ensured clear line of sight between customer activities and PMA. Advocated for the customer with OMB, allowing DOJ to change status on PMA scorecard.
- Created new and innovative strategies for recruiting, workforce planning, HR systems implementation and training, creation and execution of communications plans.

*Team Building (Leading People, Building Coalitions)*

- Created team environment for DOJ staff and OPM by assimilating into the DOJ culture, facilitating sessions between DOJ, OPM and OMB on PMA scorecard metrics, strategic planning documents, and reshaping of the workforce through early retirements and buy outs. The relationship created willingness for DOJ to work more closely with OPM.
- Worked with DOJ component human resources to bring them "into the fold" of DOJ. Helped components see their requests were not in sync with DOJ and OPM policy while still preserving the relationship.
- Developed relationships within OPM's policy group to obtain responds to inquiries, give input into compliance reviews to address outstanding issues and provide feedback and validations for reporting.
- Fostered superior client relations with variety of constituents including agency's Chief Human Capital Officer, Director of HR, senior management team, political officials and agency employees in order to define and implement DOJ's strategic human capital plan across all DOJ components.

Prior to 2004 **PRIVATE SECTOR EXPERIENCE:**

- Consultant to private and public sector clients
- Director of Human Resources for a 900-person private sector firm
- Pension Actuary

*Strategy (Leading Change, Results Driven)*

- Facilitated strategic planning for a charitable organization. Created metrics aligned with core objectives. The resulting plan has been used for grant proposals and addressing donor inquiries.
- Conducted needs assessments and created action plans for integrating training and strategic planning; linked plan to individuals and company initiatives.
- Created workforce planning programs for a public sector client facing massive pending retirements. Strategies included knowledge sharing, mentoring programs, and varied task to keep long-term staff engaged in work.
- Conducted an Effectiveness Assessment survey for a government agency's HR department. The survey created a baseline for evaluating process improvements and determined the total cost of providing HR-related services through Activity Based Costing methods resulting in new, more efficient business processes.
- Performed a needs analysis study for a government agency's HR department. Most processes were manual and labor intensive, including paper time sheets. Evaluated IT solutions, budget implications and impact of efficiencies on the workforce. The recommendations projected streamlined processes, savings to recover the investment in a new system within six months of implementation, address storage issues and error rates.

*Organizational Design (Leading Change, Business Acumen)*

- Restructured the executive board of a grassroots organization experiencing growing pains; crafted job descriptions and individual development plans for all leadership positions. The result has been board activities supporting the mission and better communication among the board and with regional offices.
- Consulted with a large international company on HR strategy issues including management transitions and outsourcing initiatives. Evaluated proposals received, crafted communications to employees, and performed demographic analysis on the affected employee populations to inform senior leader decisions.

*Performance Management (Leading Change, Results Driven)*

- Introduced all aspects of performance cycle to a change resistant government agency by creating educational programs, policy development, and by providing advisory services. The result has been an increased awareness of goal setting, measurable and observable performance standards, the importance of feedback and staff development, along with greater accountability and fewer union grievances.
- Designed employee-driven, reality-based performance management system which minimized bureaucracy; aligned individual performance plans with team goals and departmental objectives. For the first time, staff saw how they fit into the big picture.
- Conducted team assessments and created development plans tailored to business needs, resulting in improved performance and productivity. Utilized competency modeling, individual development plans, and career ladders to achieve results.
- Served as *Performance Liaison* between the Board of Directors and 36 performance coordinators across North America. Provided training and guidance on incorporating the system into local office cultures.
- Conducted compensation studies linking pay and performance through competency modeling, broad banding.

*Executive Coaching (Building Coalitions)*

- Coached executives in the areas of leadership development and succession planning.
- Facilitated board level retreats for the purpose of executive team building.
- Consulted with HR executives of a multi-national corporation on the handling of personnel matters.

*Communications (Building Coalitions, Leading People)*

- Served as *Regional Liaison* between the Board of Directors and 32 regional chapters of a children's charity. Fostered open communication between all parties, managed expectations and ensured regional chapters had the tools, volunteers, and support needed to follow the charity's mission. The result was a change in attitude from "us" vs. "them" to a unified approach.
- Coordinated communications to 250 employees for a change in office location, including FAQs on move logistics and orientation to the new location. The relocation was achieved with no disruption to business.
- Developed and conducted training on management topics, including design of manuals, train-the-trainer programs, new hire orientations, project planning and review meetings, and focus groups.

*HR Policy & Administration (Business Acumen, Results Driven)*

- Performed salary audits to address internal equity issues; developed compensation incentive program.
- Designed and delivered training for managers on HR policies and compliance practices. Managers learned how actions could put the company and themselves at risk by not operating within key guidelines.
- Conducted actuarial evaluations for pension funding purposes, ran retirement projections as input to workforce planning efforts. Converted defined benefit plans into defined contribution plans, and completed all required ERISA and IRS reporting documents.
- Authored a pension administration manual outlining policies and practices. The manual addressed independent audit findings and added consistency to plan administration.
- Enhanced the quality of candidates at minimal cost by developing relationships with colleges, business and trade schools, and workforce development agencies. Worked with local employment offices for filling high turnover positions. Of over 100 placements, only one involved a placement agency.
- Produced tools for managers to use during the hiring process, allowing managers to obtain more pertinent information, while minimizing surprises and hiring mistakes.

## EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

### Top Secret Clearance

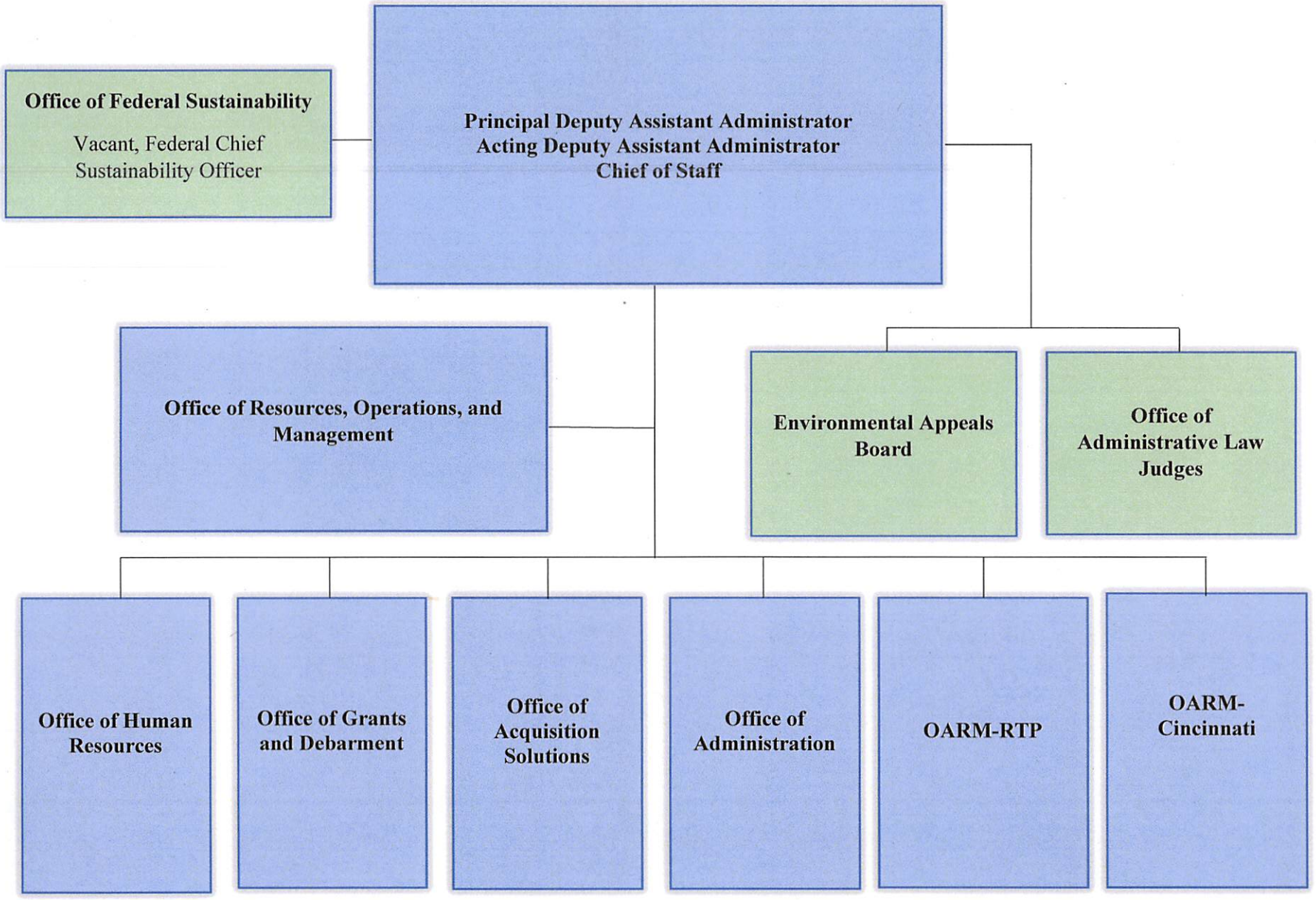
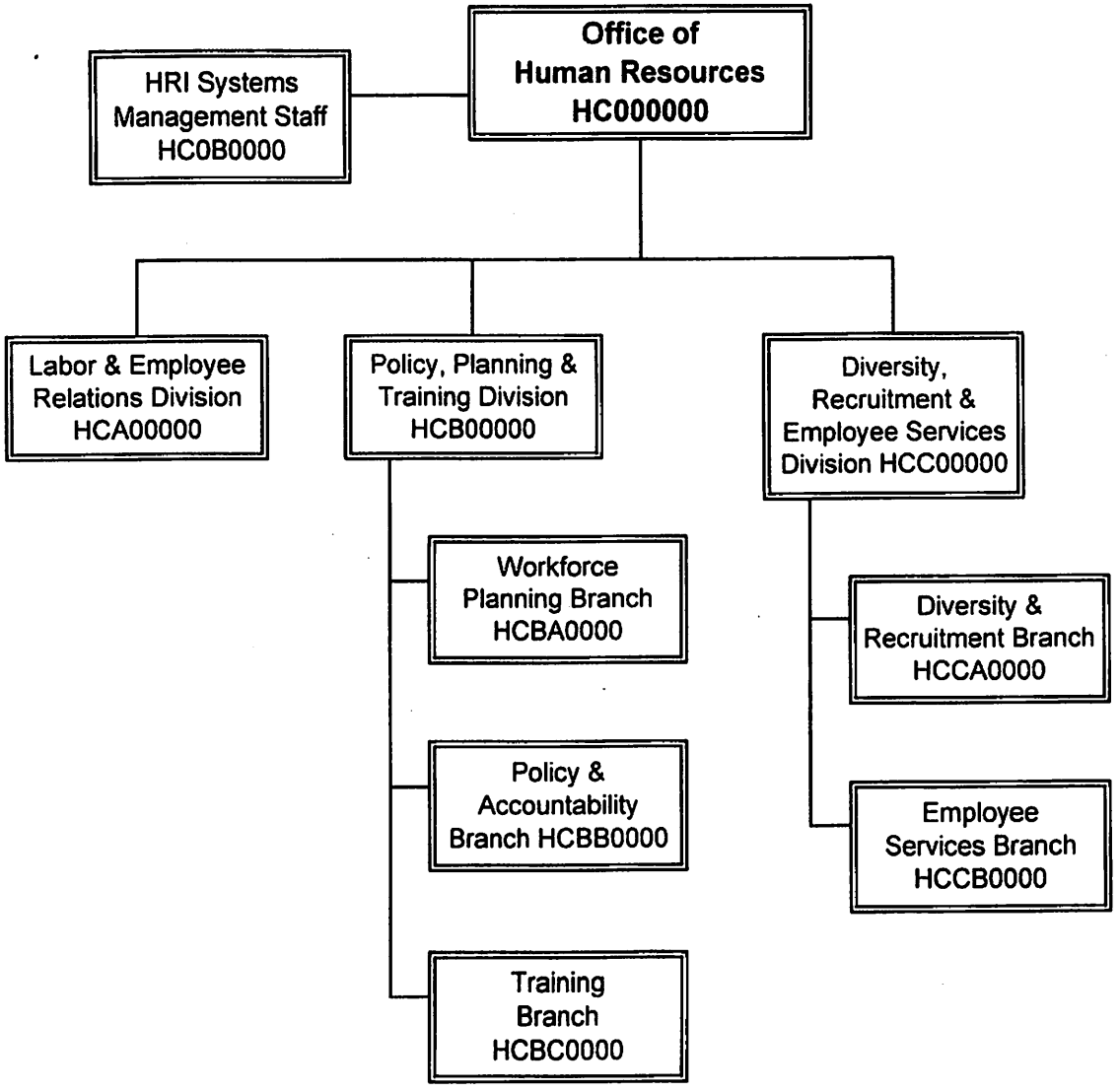
Delegated Examining Unit certification, expires 2019
Leadership course work at OPM's Management Development Centers

Recipient, "Angels in Adoption" Congressional Award, 2003

Member, Society of Actuaries, Associate Actuary, 1993
Member, American Academy of Actuaries, 1994

M.S. Applied Mathematics
C.W. Post/Long Island University
B.S. Mathematical Sciences with a concentration in Psychology
State University of New York at Binghamton

# Office of Administration and Resources Management



**Proposed Organizational Structure**
Office of Human Resources