

## **Module 2**

### **Module 2 Introduction**

A wide range of personnel play a role in the merit system. Let's begin by introducing you to some key Federal employees and find out about more about their roles and responsibilities.

I will be your host for this module. Throughout this course, my team members will guide you through the complexities of the Merit System Principles. My team will provide examples that will help you be successful in your expanded Human Resource responsibilities.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Employee - Until recently, I was concerned about the elimination of the specific protections afforded to me from the HR policies that were in place. At the same time, I realized that my agency has to have the flexibility to develop creative HR strategies to achieve our mission. In this less formal environment, I will work with my supervisor and fellow employees to make suggestions about how we can improve motivation and performance while still maintaining the critical employee protections that have evolved over the last 100 years.

I also know that the Whistleblower Protection Act of 1998 gives me the ability to go directly to the Office of Special Counsel if there is a violation that I am unable to resolve internally.

Human Resources Staff Member - Everything we do in the HR department is focused on people. Since we are dealing with succession planning, recruitment, training and equal opportunity, we are the source of most human resources policies. We ensured that all of our personnel within HR and managers and supervisors within our organization have received full training on the merit system. We make sure managers and supervisors make merit based decisions. We also look at the best practices and lessons learned from other agencies and we coordinate closely with OPM to look for creative ideas on getting the most out of our people.

First Line Supervisor - As a supervisor, my responsibilities include, motivating, retaining, and supervising Federal employees. All of these duties are covered by elements of the Merit System Principles. When I was promoted, I wanted to make sure that I understood the importance of fair hiring, employee training, and managing employees. I know that every personnel decision I make needs to be guided by my knowledge of the Merit System Principles.

Human Capital Officer - As Human Capital Officer, my mandate is to develop and implement a strategic plan for HR that gets us the best people, keeps them and aligns our goals and their personal goals to achieve the best performance. As a key member of senior management, I know that human capital policies can make

or break the future of our organization. With more than 50 percent of Federal employees eligible for retirement in the next five years, it is even more important that we have a visionary Human Capital policy. As a strategic planner, I am excited about the flexibility inherent in the new Merit System Principles emphasis. I believe that we can tailor our agency's policies and produce the best work that our agency has ever seen.

Manager - Since most of my responsibilities involve supervisors, my perspective is a little different. Typically, the supervisors who work for me also have an excellent knowledge of the merit system. My responsibilities regarding Merit System Principles is to hold the supervisors who work for me accountable for making HR decisions according to the MSPs. I have to make strategic decisions that will produce the best performance for the organization as a whole, since our most important asset is people. I want to make sure our policies are aligned with the organization's HR performance measures that are identified by the Human Capital Officer.

HR Director - My responsibilities include the development and implementation of Human Resources policies that support the agencies mission while adhering to the Merit System Principles. Especially, I ensure that managers and supervisors adequately staff, train, reward and retain high quality employees that contribute to the organization mission.

OPM Representative - The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has lead responsibility for implementation and oversight of the Merit System Principles. My goal, as a representative of OPM, is to serve as a consultant to help organizations develop the best HR policies that produce superior agency performance while still complying with the Merit System Principles. Our goal is not to be a "traffic cop" for the merit system, but really act as value-added consultant to help Federal agencies be successful. If you need our help, please feel free to call OPM and we will help you develop the best policies for your situation.

Union Representative - My responsibilities include protecting the employees in the bargaining unit from Prohibited Personnel Practices. An employee may come to me after an event has occurred which they believe might be a violation. I serve as a facilitator to investigate the complaint and attempt to resolve it to the satisfaction of the employee and the supervisor. For me to do this properly, I spent some time making sure I understood how the principles apply.

### **Knowledge Check**

1. Question: I help develop the overall HR policy that help our agency achieve its mission.

Answer: Human Capital Officer

2. Question: I work with HR to develop innovative approaches to HR that can ensure that my division or department achieves the HR performance measures for the organization.

Answer: Manager

3. Question: Since my department's primary responsibility is people management, it is even more important for me to understand how to use the Merit System Principles to benefit our organization and employees.

Answer: Human Resources Staff Member

4. Question: Since I am on the front line, my decisions need to be guided by merit systems as I make daily decisions affecting my employees and their careers. This includes hiring, firing, promoting and training my staff.

Answer: First Line Supervisor

5. Question: I know that I still have recourse if violations occur that affect my career.

Answer: Employee

### **Module Summary**

In this module, we introduced you to some key Federal personnel that play an important role in the merit system. During your daily routine, please keep in mind the following:

- All members of your agency team have a responsibility to collaborate to make the Merit System Principles work and produce the best performance.
- Even though the formal written procedures of the past have been removed, the philosophical protections of the Merit System Principles and the specific prohibitions of the Prohibited Personnel Practices still apply.

Remember, if you are not sure about your role, responsibilities or a particular decision, call your human resources department. Understanding the roles will help you in developing policies, making day to day personnel decisions, and achieving the highest level of organizational performance.