



Building the Future of Federal Hiring, Together



**A Summary of MonsterGov's
Federal Hiring Roundtable**

Held on April 26, 2022

Executive Summary

In late April 2022, the MonsterGov team hosted a Federal Hiring Roundtable with HR representatives from 16 federal agencies and the DC Courts. The goal was to reunite hiring stakeholders and offer a forum to share their challenges, learn from their colleagues, and find ways to work together for the betterment of the federal service.

As expected, we heard repetitive themes around limited budgets, bandwidth, resources, and familiar challenges around the complexity and length of the federal hiring process. And given the many hiring policies issued over the last couple of years, agencies are finding themselves unclear on federal mandates, their requirements, and how they'll enforce them. With that, agencies are also facing tougher competition than ever against the private sector – especially regarding the younger workforce and their demands for maximum telework flexibility.

The good news is: we're all on the same team. Federal HR teams are ready and willing to work together to leverage the power of the collective federal government. And as always, MonsterGov is in your corner and ready to support federal hiring initiatives through the enablement of technology and human capital services. By sharing resources, implementing the right solutions, and nurturing a more collaborative environment, federal HR teams can offload its many transactional tasks and focus on its true role as a strategic partner for their agency.



Click to view brief summaries of the breakout sessions:



- [Implementing hiring assessments](#)
- [Bettering the applicant experience](#)
- [Sharing hiring information across agencies](#)
- [Bringing internal hiring stakeholders together](#)



Implementing Hiring Assessments

With the approaching EO 13932 deadlines to implement skills-based hiring this year, we were not surprised that the hiring assessments breakout was the most attended.

We heard a range of situations from different agencies – some have already been piloting assessment programs and building out talent teams, and others are facing budget and resource

constraints. HR doesn't want to further burden already-limited SMEs, nor do they want to make the application process even longer.

In support of the White House's push away from purely education-based assessments, many agencies have started using Monster's Applicant Assessment platform. These assessments, used in conjunction with a variety of competency-based evaluation methods, provide agencies with the tools to hire the most qualified candidates based on merit and real-world experience.

And while, yes, implementing skills-based assessments can be a budget or resource concern, HR teams should look at these requirements as an investment in qualified talent.

Reaching the 2022 deadlines for the federal hiring assessments mandate seems to be the first goal of many agencies. But looking beyond compliance, HR teams will be tasked with determining how well these programs work. And this is not just to optimize the program and find opportunities to enhance it. Understanding the value of assessments will help HR continue to sell this concept internally – especially with hiring stakeholders who might not agree with this policy – and externally with job seekers. But how do we prove this?

Yes, you guessed it – data. Collecting, validating, and analyzing data. Of course, data analysis presents its own concerns – does more data require I/O resources? Does more data define “effectiveness” or “success”? We’ve spoken with a few agencies that are pulling in their HR/data analytics teams to look at their hiring data to extract insights. Others are surveying SMEs and applicants to get feedback. But, if you want to measure success, you have to answer: **“What are your hiring goals?”**



The money and time spent enhancing assessments could save agencies money later with reduced time-to-hire, reduced employee turnover, and higher-performing teams.



**DID YOU
KNOW?**

Our I/O Psychology team offers local validation studies that are reliable and based on established metrics that can provide a better look at adverse impacts or predict how a candidate will perform based on their scores.

Bettering the Applicant Experience

By now, HR teams and job seekers have had lots of time to adjust to virtual recruiting and hiring.

The MonsterGov team has worked with several agencies to support this shift – not just to operate online but to also centralize and automate processes and resources – so they could best serve job seekers and compete with the private sector. Being able to operate faster and more effectively has allowed agencies to keep more candidates engaged in the hiring process, rather than losing them due to long hiring journeys.

When it comes to attracting and recruiting potential employees for federal jobs, telework flexibility was one of the biggest points of contention. Job seekers have more power than ever when it comes to their job options, and with the continuing labor shortage, agencies are competing hard for talent. As expected, job seekers are looking for more telework and remote flexibility, especially the younger generations, but we're also hearing that they may not always understand the terminology used in announcements.

Alongside the telework/remote battle, HR is frustrated applicants aren't reading through announcements. They struggle with finding the right amount of details to share, while keeping the job seeker engaged.

Luckily, agencies found the status indicator in their Monster Applicant Tracking System, which has helped reduce inbound inquiries from applicants regarding their application. But still, other questions remain, and federal hiring teams don't feel they have the bandwidth to provide this one-on-one service applicants request.

In terms of positioning agencies as an attractive employer, we heard instances of HR regularly partnering with marketing/communications departments for outreach support and content – like developing mission statements for job announcements.

How one agency is improving the applicant experience:

“One thing that we are doing is using the MHM application status so that applicants are aware where the application is in the process.”

**DID YOU
KNOW?**

Monster offers comprehensive employer branding services, like building career pages, that can help agencies better present themselves to candidates.



Sharing Hiring Information Across Agencies

MONSTER
Government Solutions

Traditionally, federal agencies are used to working in silos when it comes to hiring, but we've seen gradual progress moving away from this trend.

The 2015 Competitive Service Act expanded the flexibility in sharing resumes and certificates of eligible applicants so that these could now be exchanged across federal agencies. And the good news is that the federal agencies we spoke with are on board. Agencies are interested and willing to share a multitude of hiring information, such as applicants, resumes, and certificates of eligible candidates – to leverage the work already done to hire quality candidates in a shorter time.

Especially
as HR teams are facing
limited budgets and bandwidth, there are
several noted opportunities – like transcript hours/
credits verification, pay-banding, adjudication, veteran
status, and background checks – repeated for each applicant that
may only need to be done once.

Some concerns come from confusion around the Competitive Service Act and its requirements. And the biggest hesitation we've seen is around how to exchange varying data, documents, and forms with other agencies. How can this be done securely, consistently, and with validation? Questions came up around how a receiving agency can trust the original hiring agency; what if they rate applicants differently? And how can we build a program like this without overburdening hiring teams?

In the past, we saw more standard documents, and standard documents may be something that returns. In conjunction with this, developing systems better able to interpret, communicate, and even update standardized materials consistently, will greatly reduce the complexity of exchanging information as it's presented now.

Apart from optimizing processes and sharing data, federal hiring teams are looking at what resources can be centralized for the federal government – like a library of assessment questions or a talent pool.

How one agency gets it done!

"We have agency-wide announcements that are shared throughout the different modes. We, the executive agent, do the qualifications review and create the certificates that can be shared."



Bringing Internal Hiring Stakeholders Together

Nothing challenged the internal collaboration of hiring teams like the pandemic.

Agencies who were not already set up for virtual or hybrid offices had to quickly implement systems to support this new work environment. Most HR teams have been using a mix of emails, phone calls, virtual meetings, and their MonsterGov federal hiring system to collaborate on their hiring goals – and pulling in classifiers, hiring managers, and specialists, as needed. Thankfully, most agencies reported that it didn't take too long to get up and running, and once they did, the hiring teams were comfortable with trusting the new process and happy to see the hiring

progress being made. Educating colleagues about special hiring authorities and the flexibility they offer has also proven helpful in engaging their teams.

While federal hiring teams indicate they have adapted well to communicating remotely, the issue of sharing qualified candidates internally continues to be a challenge. There appear to be breakdowns in communication process when, for example, a qualified candidate who is not selected by a hiring manager in one division is not shared with a counterpart in another division who posted the same job series.



How one agency collaborates with hiring managers:

There have also been some struggles around vacancies that involve several hiring managers and disciplines. Different hiring managers may have different interpretations of what is considered more qualified, or there may be several referred candidates and debates about which applicant is prioritized.

This is where collaboration on the foundational parts of the hiring process is critical. Defining and classifying a position, conducting a job analysis and agreeing on competencies and their weights must be done thoroughly and correctly. It starts at the beginning of the process.

We all agree: communication is key, and HR can't do it all on their own. HR teams who have made an adamant effort to set expectations and engage their colleagues have found this goes a long way. As federal hiring stakeholders continue to collaborate through automated processes, made possible by MonsterGov's hiring management enterprise system, improvements in communication will lead to increases in qualified candidates throughout the federal space.

"Having that 1-on-1 conversation... it builds trust, honesty, and a relationship. If I can get them to be honest with me, I can get them to tell me anything and everything. And if I'm honest right back with them... they'll be more likely to listen to what I have to say."

Collaborate with one another leveraging Monster Hiring Management Enterprise:



Position
Classification



Job
Analysis



Applicant
Assessment



Hiring
Management



Onboarding
Plus+

Looking Ahead

While we may not be able to solve everything at once, our MonsterGov team is **hearing you and listening intently**. As the federal hiring partner of choice to 60+ agencies, MonsterGov has its eyes and ears ready to continue its delivery of human capital solutions agencies can implement to modernize, streamline and optimize their talent acquisition programs while still maintaining the right balance of the human touch and technology.

We already have a great list of ideas from the roundtable and other challenges we look forward to figuring out together. We appreciate the enthusiasm for our federal hiring events and we plan to continue hosting these in the future. If you have any questions, ideas or reactions, [please connect with us](#).



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