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NEW MSPB REPORT EXAMINES EFFECTIVENESS OF FIRST-LEVEL SUPERVISORS

In a newly released report, "[*A Call to Action: Improving First-Level Supervision of Federal Employees*](#)," MSPB examines the how the Federal Government selects, develops, and manages its first-level supervisors. The report is based on survey data from Federal supervisors and employees, review of supervisory job announcements, and analysis of statistical data.

The need for effective first-level supervisors has long been recognized. However, MSPB found that Federal agency practices in four critical areas—selection, training and development, guidance and support, and accountability—may be contributing to less-than-optimal supervision. For example, when filling supervisory positions, Federal agencies often provide minimal or no information about supervisory responsibilities in job advertisements; give insufficient weight to “people management” skills; or use ineffective assessment methods to gauge those skills and refer candidates. In addition, many Federal supervisors reported that their training and development has been inadequate, and that they do not receive the information, support, or feedback they need to discharge their day-to-day responsibilities effectively.

As Chairman Grundmann stated, “First-level supervisors, as the link between leadership and front-line employees, are the nexus between Government policy and agency action. First-level supervisors are also indispensable to employee engagement and workplace fairness. Therefore, Federal agencies cannot afford to leave the success of their first-level supervisors to chance. Fortunately, there are specific measures that every agency can take to improve the effectiveness of first-level supervisors. But the first and most important step is for agency leaders to recognize

that first-level supervisors are, first and foremost, supervisors—and that they should pay special attention to how they select and develop employees for this role.”

The report outlines measures to strengthen the management of Federal supervisors, from initial hiring to accountability. Recommendations are directed to the full range of organizations and individuals who play a role in first-level supervision, including Federal agencies, Federal supervisors, and applicants and employees considering supervision in the Federal Government as a career option.

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