

Trump Administration Escalates Layoffs of Federal Workers

Federal officials circulated a memo asking agency leaders to plan even more job reductions after thousands of federal workers were fired in recent weeks.

**By Chris Cameron
New York Times**

The Trump administration moved forward on Wednesday with plans for more mass firings across the government, hours after President Trump [reiterated his support for Elon Musk](#) and his effort to shrink the federal bureaucracy.

Thousands of federal workers have already been fired in recent weeks, primarily those with probationary status. The Office of Personnel Management, the agency that manages the federal work force, also said that [about 75,000 workers](#) had accepted deferred resignation offers to quit their jobs in exchange for [seven months of pay and benefits](#).

[Several recent polls show](#) more Americans disapprove of Mr. Musk's efforts to cut the federal work force than approve, and Republican House members have been met with raucous opposition at [town halls](#). At his first cabinet meeting, Mr. Trump made clear he fully backed Mr. Musk, asking, "Is anybody unhappy with Elon?" As nervous laughter began to ripple around the room, he continued: "If you are, we'll throw him out of here."

Russell T. Vought, the [head of the White House budget office](#), and Charles Ezell, the acting head of the Office of Personnel Management, circulated a memo to government leaders calling for agencies to prepare plans for additional "large-scale reductions" in the federal work force in March and April.

Denigrating the federal bureaucracy as "bloated" and "corrupt," the seven-page memo called for agencies to be drastically cut — in some instances to the fullest extent allowed by the law. One line in the memo said agencies "should focus on the maximum elimination of functions that are not statutorily mandated."

The memo said that plans for the next stage of the cuts should be submitted by March 13. Plans for "phase 2" of the cuts should be submitted by April 14.

In addition to the layoffs, the memo also suggested that possible "proposed relocations of agency bureaus and offices from Washington" could occur, indicating that some agencies based in or near the nation's capital may be moved "to less-costly parts of the country."

It is unclear which agencies may be targeted for relocations. In his cabinet meeting earlier on Wednesday, President Trump suggested that the Education Department — which he has previously said [should be shut down entirely](#) — was one agency that could be relocated.

“You go around Washington, you see all these buildings, the Department of Education,” Mr. Trump said. “We want to move education back to the states where it belongs.”

The memo also outlined a few exceptions to the sweeping plans for layoffs, saying that the Postal Service, military service members and positions related to national security, border security, immigration or public safety would be exempt.

Implementation of the cuts would be left to agency leaders, the memo said, while adding that they “should collaborate with their DOGE team leads.” Members of Mr. Musk’s team have been assigned to government agencies and [gained access to agency computer systems and records databases](#).

Late on Wednesday, Mr. Trump signed an executive order that further empowered DOGE, or the Department of Government Efficiency, to scrutinize and withhold payments by agencies. The order directed each agency to compile a database of all payments issued — each with a written justification for the payment — that would be posted publicly.

The order also appeared to enact a freeze on all government credit cards used by employees — with exceptions for disaster relief and “other critical services” — for the next 30 days. That order appeared to acknowledge that the freeze could stretch the limits of executive authority, saying that it should be carried out “to the maximum extent permitted by law.”