
The Business Case for AHROT™

Applied HR Operations Training™ · Federal Workforce Capability Development

01 · THE PROBLEM

Not New. Just No Longer Invisible.

How does a problem stay on the federal government's High Risk List for more than two decades — fully acknowledged, repeatedly documented, rarely solved?

This document is specifically about federal HR operations — the people, processes, and systems responsible for onboarding employees, processing personnel actions, administering benefits and payroll, and supporting the workforce through every stage of federal service. Not HR policy. Not HR strategy. The operational work that happens at the desk, on real cases, every day.

\$2.8T

~\$5B

45%

15–20%

110 days

The framework counted the cost. Nobody was required to find the cause. These are not the numbers of a problem being solved.

For more than two decades the federal government has acknowledged that skills gaps in HR operations are undermining agencies' ability to meet their missions. GAO has said it. OPM has said it. Inspectors General have said it. And every year the same findings recur — with limited sustained correction.

The Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019 (PIIA) and OMB Circular A-123, Appendix C establish the federal framework for identifying and reporting improper payments. Under this framework, agencies are required to assess their programs and determine which are susceptible to significant improper payments — and report accordingly.

Civilian payroll is classified by most agencies as internal administrative overhead rather than a reportable program. Because that determination belongs to the agency itself, an agency that does not designate its civilian payroll as susceptible is not required to measure the error rate, report the findings, or take corrective action.

Inspector General reviews assess whether agencies complied with PIIA reporting requirements. What falls outside that scope is whether the underlying HR actions — the PAR processing, benefits enrollments, T&A corrections, and retirement packages — were executed accurately at the desk. Compliance with the reporting process and accuracy of the work that drives it are not the same review.

\$2.8 trillion in improper payments since FY2003. Known. Reported. Unsolved.

That number does not include civilian payroll HR processing errors. Not because they don't exist. Because agencies are rarely required to find them. When DOD looked — they found nearly **\$5 billion in a single year**. One agency. One year. Just by measuring.

Sources: GAO-25-107753, March 2025 · DOD Annual Financial Report, FY2020 · OMB Circular A-123, Appendix C, M-18-20

AHROT™ was built for exactly this gap.

02 · WHAT THE DATA SHOWS

The Numbers That Define the Gap.

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DOD civilian
payroll errors —
one year

15–20%

Retirement
applications
arrive incomplete

110 days

Processing time —
one error vs. 30
days clean

45%

HR specialists
failing basic
certification

Sources: OPM Monthly Case Accuracy Report · PlanWell Financial Planning, 2025 · OPM/Federal News Network, Dec 2024

These are the numbers AHROT™ was built to move.

They Served. The System Should Have Too.

They chose public service. They showed up. They stayed. Some for five years. Some for thirty. And at every stage of that career — from the day they entered on duty to the day they separated, were RIFed, or retired — the accuracy of their HR record determined whether they were paid correctly, covered properly, and treated with the dignity their service earned.

That record is built one action at a time. A PAR processed correctly on day one. A benefits enrollment completed within the window. A payroll correction submitted before the next pay period closes. A retirement package submitted complete. When those actions are executed accurately the employee never notices. When they are not — the consequences follow them.

Onboarding	Wrong appointment type, incorrect pay setting, benefits enrollment missed. The employee starts their federal career already behind — and may not know it for months.
Mid-Career	T&A; errors compounding across pay periods, FEHB lapses, FLSA misclassifications accumulating. Errors the employee may not discover until the damage is already done.
Separation & RIF	Agencies restructuring, closing, reducing force. Final personnel actions processed under pressure, documentation incomplete, employees leaving without the accurate record their next opportunity or retirement calculation depends on.
Retirement	Incomplete packages, wrong retirement system codes, missing service credit deposits. An employee who gave decades to the mission waiting on interim pay at a fraction of their annuity while OPM adjudicates what the agency should have submitted correctly the first time.

These are not edge cases. They are the predictable result of HR operations that were not built to hold.

This is the human cost AHRROT™ was built to prevent.

Two Standards. One Government. Zero Equivalence.

Federal HR operations are held to two entirely different standards depending on what is being measured. Hire someone incorrectly — OPM has the authority to audit it, document it, and revoke the delegated authority that allowed it. Pay someone incorrectly, enroll them in the wrong benefits, misclassify their retirement system, process their personnel action wrong — no comparable authority currently exists. No equivalent standard governs it. Few consequences currently reach the operation that caused it.

STAFFING VIOLATIONS	HR PROCESSING ERRORS
<p>OPM conducts independent audits Findings documented and reported Corrective action mandatory Delegated authority can be revoked External standard exists Consequence reaches the operation</p>	<p>No oversight reaches the desk where error originated Authority rarely if ever suspended or revoked Agency self-assesses its own risk Agency designs its own sample No equivalent operational standard exists Employee absorbs the consequence alone</p>

When an error surfaces the agency may address the individual specialist. What is rarely examined is the systemic failure behind that individual — the training gap, the process breakdown, the operational environment that produced the error. No current framework connects what Treasury collects back to the operational failure at the desk that made it necessary.

Sources: 5 U.S.C. 1104 · OMB Circular A-123, Appendix C · 5 U.S.C. 5514 · 31 CFR 285.11

The BOSS Framework™ builds the accountability the system was never designed to provide.

05 · THE ROOT CAUSE

Two Layers. One Gap.

The errors are not random. They follow a pattern. And the pattern has two layers.

<p>Layer 1 — Practitioner Preparation</p>	<p>Agencies have reported a 45% failure rate of HR specialists on basic certification assessments. Not because they are incapable. Because the system that trained them rarely built the depth the work requires. Practitioners are placed into complex environments — FERCCA corrections, retirement deposits, FLSA determinations, retroactive T&A; adjustments — with limited applied training on real federal casework.</p>
<p>Layer 2 — Staffing-Level Operational Breakdown</p>	<p>When an HR office is understaffed, under-trained, or carrying vacancies — the work does not slow down. It still moves. It just moves wrong. Actions get processed late. Documentation is incomplete. Errors compound across pay periods, benefit enrollments, and retirement packages.</p>

The work requires more than most practitioners were ever given. That is not on them. That is the gap.

That gap is where AHROT™ begins.

The Solutions Being Deployed Do Not Match the Problem Being Described.

<p>Staff Augmentation</p> <p>Adds bodies to a broken system. Bodies without capability produce the same errors at higher volume.</p>	<p>Generalist Contractors</p> <p>Cover everything and master nothing. FEHB enrollment, FERS deposit calculations, FLSA determinations, and retroactive T&A; corrections each require deep technical knowledge generalists do not carry.</p>	<p>Classroom Training</p> <p>The federal government has world-class training institutions. The problem is the assumption that instructional learning alone translates to doing the work at the desk. It does not.</p>
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A practitioner who can pass a test cannot process a complex FERCCA case correctly under time pressure in a live federal system. Instructional training is not the answer. Applied training is.

Sources: Deloitte Gen Z and Millennial Survey, 2025 · OPM, Federal News Network, December 2024

Not a Training Program. A Performance Methodology. Built From the Inside Out.

Every section of this document has described a system that was never built to find the problem, measure the damage, or hold the right people accountable. AHROT™ is the answer that system never produced — built by a practitioner who rose from GS-4 to GS-15, processed the cases, found the errors, built the solutions, counseled the employees, wrote the SOWs, managed the contracts, and was accountable when the work didn't hold.

The methodology is built on one principle: the learning happens through the work itself. No classroom phase. No hypotheticals. No theory. Applied training delivered at the desk, on real federal casework, in live agency systems — from day one.

AHROT™ is the methodology. At-the-desk applied training on real federal casework, in live agency systems. The learning happens through the work. The capability is built where it will actually be used.

The BOSS Framework™ — Build · Operations Support · Sustain — is the three-phase delivery structure that operationalizes AHROT™. Where you enter the framework is determined by where your operation currently stands. How you move through it is determined by what the work requires.

THE BOSS FRAMEWORK™ · How AHROT™ Is Delivered

Build · Operations Support · Sustain

Each phase of the BOSS Framework™ addresses a specific stage of operational breakdown. Each phase is available as a standalone engagement or as part of the full framework. Where you enter is determined by your diagnostic assessment.

B · BUILD	OS · OPERATIONS SUPPORT	S · SUSTAIN
<p>AHROT™ Build</p> <p>At-the-desk applied training on live federal casework. Builds SMEs while backlogs clear. Meets practitioners exactly where they are — zero experience or deeply rooted habits — and builds from there. Confidence. Accuracy. Operational independence.</p> <p><i>The skills lock in.</i></p>	<p>AHROT™ Operations Support</p> <p>Embedded execution that stabilizes operations and corrects errors at the source. Not patching around problems — correcting the failures driving recurring errors. Backlogs clear. Production stabilizes. The function performs.</p> <p><i>The work moves.</i></p>	<p>AHROT™ Sustain</p> <p>Stay embedded. Absorb turnover. Knowledge never walks out the door. Capability never erodes after the base period ends. The organization is stronger after every engagement than before it started.</p> <p><i>The work holds. The mission is served.</i></p>

The Work in Motion. The Results on Record.

Every number below represents a federal program that was broken, stabilized, and built to hold — through AHROT™ delivered via the BOSS Framework™.

250+

Retirement actions
in 90 days — zero
backlog

\$2.4M

Corrected pay for
200+ employees

\$16.5M

In avoidable costs
prevented

96–100%

Satisfaction
across federal
service delivery

B · BUILD

275 practitioners built across 20 DOD components serving 2.5M employees. 3,600+ records audited. 59 errors and 12 FERCCA cases corrected. The skills locked in.

OS · OPERATIONS SUPPORT

250+ retirement actions processed in 90 days — zero backlog. \$2.4M in corrected pay for 200+ employees. \$16.5M in avoidable costs prevented. The work moved.

S · SUSTAIN

100% OPM grade sustained for nine consecutive months. Presidential transition: 600+ actions at 95% accuracy. The work held. The mission was served.

The work moves. The work holds. The mission is served.

The Errors Documented Here Do Not Happen in the Abstract.

They happen at specific desks. In specific agencies. On specific cases processed by specific people who were rarely given the applied training the work actually requires.

- ◆ If your HR staff are processing SF-50s incorrectly — you are contributing to the retirement backlog and the improper payments total
- ◆ If your benefits team is not processing FEHB enrollments within the 60-day window — you are contributing to employee grievances and financial liability
- ◆ If your payroll liaisons are not catching retroactive adjustment errors before transmission — you are contributing to the overpayment problem
- ◆ If your retirement specialists are submitting incomplete cases to OPM — you are contributing to the backlog and leaving retirees without income

4T does not ask agencies to acknowledge the problem. 4T — through AHROT™ and the BOSS Framework™ — positions agencies to begin solving it. At the desk. On live casework. From day one.

Start With the AHROT™ Organizational Diagnostic Assessment.

Complimentary. Confidential. Completed directly by Mickey Theall.

Ten questions. Five business days. A Diagnostic Insights Summary that names your highest-risk areas, identifies the root causes driving operational breakdown, and provides a clear recommendation for where you enter the BOSS Framework™ and how AHROT™ gets deployed. The assessment is the first step of the framework — not a general consultation.

Connect before the solicitation drops. Not after the problem starts.

Mickey Theall, President & CEO · Former GS-15 Division Chief, Compensation & Benefits
4T Training & Consulting Solutions, LLC
mtheall@4TConsultingLLC.com · 571.207.5434 · 4tconsultingllc.com