Press Release

Evaluating Trump's Newest Hiring Freeze

PAULINA ENCK | FEBRUARY 7, 2025

Among President Trump's flurry of day-one executive orders is a 90-day hiring freeze on the federal civilian workforce. In a new insight, Labor Policy Analyst Emmet Bowling and Policy Editor Joseph Brown review the history of similar hiring freezes to evaluate this recent freeze's potential impact.

Key points:

- *President Trump's hiring freeze orders the directors of the Office of Management and Budget, the Office of Personnel Management, and the United States DOGE Service (USDS) to submit a plan "to reduce the size of the Federal Government's workforce through efficiency improvements and attrition."*
- *Although the stated goal of the president's hiring freeze is to streamline the government workforce to reduce waste and inefficiency, the historical evidence indicates that blanket hiring freezes have not been an effective tool to that end: Past hiring freezes have not significantly reduced federal employment levels, and there is no clear evidence as to whether freezes reduce operating costs.*
- *This hiring freeze, however, differentiates itself from its predecessors in one significant way: It precedes a plan to incorporate USDS, signaling perhaps some greater level of commitment from this administration to shrinking the size of the federal government.*

Read the analysis