

## Industrial and Organizational Psychology Priorities for the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress

The United States is poised to reinvigorate its workforce by implementing innovative policies and technology. Employers across sectors, including industry and the federal government, apply **industrial and organizational (I-O) psychology** evidence-based approaches to performance, training, recruiting, and retention, among others. Global workforce trends demand lifelong skill development to meet the needs of technology-driven, high skilled workplaces. Now is the time for Congress to integrate I-O psychology measures into legislation to meet workforce demands and to improve employee well-being, while promoting performance and productivity across the country.

I-O psychology is the scientific study of human behavior in organizations and the workplace. In practice, I-O psychology seeks to understand and measure human behavior to improve employee engagement; recruitment, selection, and training procedures; and general work environments. The field of I-O psychology has developed data-driven methods to predict successful teams, identify and develop successful leadership, address workplace dysfunction, improve the work experience of individuals, and enhance job performance and employee engagement. The application of science to the management of organizations and work improves both organizational and individual productivity, performance, efficiency, health, and well-being at work.

With a new Congress there are many opportunities to enhance American innovation and productivity. As the United States seeks to increase its global competitiveness and the prosperity and wellbeing of its people, the **Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP)** calls for policy makers to consider the following recommendations:

### **Enhance federal decision-making, policies, and programs by integrating measures of I-O psychology into economic metrics and analyses.**

Innovative measures of labor force characteristics—such as well-being, satisfaction, worker engagement, and underemployment, among others—complement traditional economic measures like gross domestic product (GDP), interest rates, inflation, and unemployment rates. Integrating I-O psychology into economic indicators, enable tracking and analysis of critical micro trends in U.S. economics, which would positively enhance federal decision-making, policies, and programs. To meet the needs of and actively recruit, train, and retain a high-skilled, diverse workforce, the U.S. needs to recognize the importance of measuring employee engagement and satisfaction, equality, well-being, and other workforce and workplace outcomes. Many major companies—including ExxonMobil, Pepsi Co., Advance Auto Parts, Intel Corporation, IBM, and others—in the U.S. have already adopted tools and procedures developed by I-O psychology to compete effectively. SIOP is prepared to collaborate with the House and Senate Joint Economic Committee to adapt I-O psychology-based measures to project the intricacies of the workforce and work environment.

### **Improve development, implementation, and evaluation by applying I-O psychology evidence-based research and principles to federal policies, programs, and decision-making.**

Policy makers are better equipped to develop, implement, and evaluate federal policies and programs that effect the nation's workforce when they apply I-O psychology evidence-based research to their decision-making. I-O psychology practices have already been adopted by several federal agencies, often

through their respective Chief Human Capital Officers, to overcome a diverse array of organizational challenges related to employment, diversity, and management. Others, like the National Aeronautical and Space Administration (NASA) work with I-O psychologists to enhance team cohesion among astronauts and ground crews for mission success. Additionally, I-O psychology approaches are fundamental to military readiness and success, ensure a smooth transition for veterans to the civilian workforce, to encourage skill development for an aging and technology-driven workforce, and to promote fairness, safety, and effectiveness for police across the country. SIOOP urges greater consideration and application of I-O psychology in legislation and is ready to serve as a resource for policy makers as they seek to promote efficient, evidence-based programs and policies.

**Enhance economic competitiveness, national security, and the health and well-being of Americans by investing in federal behavioral and social sciences research programs.**

Insights gained from behavioral and social sciences research are critical for ensuring economic competitiveness, national security, and the health and well-being of Americans. Through investments in the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences Directorate (SBE), the federal government supports basic and applied research to develop a scientific evidence base for improving performance, effectiveness, management, and development of organizations. The methods, measurements, and theories developed through this federal investment enhance business practices, policy-making, and inter-professional collaboration. The evidence-base derived from basic research in the Science of Organizations (SoO) program within NSF SBE is applied across all sectors and disciplines. Applications of I-O include: transitioning veterans and service members to civilian jobs; improving airline safety through Crew Resource Management; understanding recruitment and retention of science, technology, education, and math (STEM) students; and mitigating the impact of furloughs on the federal workforce, among others.

New pressures in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace, including efforts to address privacy, performance, and safety, have further expanded the need for federal support for behavioral and social sciences research, especially I-O psychology, emphasizing the importance of the entire work system, in addition to the individual. Recent events and conditions, including challenging economic circumstances, coping with talent shortages in technical jobs, and the implementation of new governmental regulations, catalyze the development and application of new methodologies for studying how people think and behave in the workplace.

With assistance from NSF, as well as other federal agencies, the field of I-O psychology has developed data-driven methods to predict successful teams, address workplace dysfunction, improve the work experience of individuals, and enhance job performance and employee engagement. Using this rich knowledge and understanding has informed and maximized private companies, as well as the public workforce. Continued federal support for I-O keeps the knowledge in the public domain and enhances shared workplace efficiency and understanding of worker well-being at all levels.

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The **Society for Industrial & Organizational Psychology (SIOOP)** is a community of more than 8,000 members worldwide with the common interest in promoting the science, practice, and teaching of I-O psychology to enhance human well-being and performance in organizational and work settings. SIOOP provides a platform for scientists, academics, consultants, and practitioners to collaborate, implement, and evaluate cutting-edge approaches to workplace challenges across sectors.

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