

DOCUMENT RESUME

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Review of Upward Mobility Using Job Restructuring: Department of the Army. B-70896(3); FPCD-77-3. December 13, 1976. 2 pp. + enclosures (5 pp.).

Report to Martin R. Hoffman, Secretary, Department of the Army; by H. L. Krieger, Director, Federal Personnel and Compensation Div.

Issue Area: Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity Programs: Employment Discrimination in the Federal Sector (1004).

Contact: Federal Personnel and Compensation Div.

Budget Function: Education, Manpower, and Social Services: Training and Employment (051); National Defense: Department of Defense - Military (except procurement & contracts) (504).

Organization Concerned: Department of the Army; Department of Defense.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Armed Services; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Defense Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Armed Services.

Authority: Government Employees Training Act (5 U.S.C. 41); Executive Order 11478. F.P.M. Letter 713-27. OMB Circular A-11. Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972.

A limited review of the Army's Upward Mobility program at the department level, 25 field installations, and 13 commands, indicated that progress has been made but improvements are needed. Findings/Conclusions: There has been no systematic analysis of factors inhibiting advancement of lower-level employees, and guidelines do not provide procedures for comprehensive skills surveys. Also, there are inaccuracies in reporting costs of the program as required by OMB. Recommendations: The Department of the Army should issue guidelines to provide for identification of problems as part of the planning process; use skills surveys; and collect and report program costs. (HTW)

00586



UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

FEDERAL PERSONNEL AND
COMPENSATION DIVISION

DEC 13 1976

B-70896(3)

The Honorable Martin R. Hoffmann
Secretary, Department of the Army

Dear Mr. Hoffmann:

Recently we completed a limited review of the Department of the Army's Upward Mobility program to review the progress which has taken place. We reviewed Upward Mobility efforts at the Department level and program information for 25 field installations under 13 commands. We also examined Departmental, command, and installation policies, procedures, and guidance issued on Upward Mobility as well as program evaluation procedures.

In 1973 and 1974 we reviewed Upward Mobility programs, including that of the Department of the Army, and in April 1975 we issued a report to the Congress entitled "Upward Mobility Programs in the Federal Government Should Be Made More Effective" (FPCD-75-84).

On June 13, 1974, we discussed with Army officials the Department's program and proposed program guidelines. We indicated that the proposed guidelines included many segments of an effective program, and stressed that implementing the guidelines would determine the success of the Department's programs.

The Department issued guidelines on Upward Mobility in June 1974. The guidelines require all personnel offices with 500 or more civilian employees to have a formal Upward Mobility program.

Although the Department has experienced reductions in force, major reorganizations, and hiring and promotion freezes, it has made positive efforts to implement its Upward Mobility programs. In our opinion, however, the programs can be improved by issuing guidelines on

- identifying the size and nature of the Upward Mobility problem as a first step in the program planning process,
- using skills surveys, and
- collecting and reporting Upward Mobility costs.

FPCD-77-3

Each of the above matters and our recommendations are discussed in the enclosures to this letter. We believe that adopting these recommendations would strengthen the Department's programs. We discussed this report with Army personnel, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), and Upward Mobility officials who generally agreed that improvements could be made in the areas addressed.

We would appreciate being advised of any actions planned or taken with respect to our recommendations. In addition, as you know, section 236 of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 requires the head of a Federal agency to submit a written response on actions taken on our recommendations to the House and Senate Committees on Government Operations not later than 60 days after the date of the report and the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations with the agency's first request for appropriations made more than 60 days after the date of the report.

Copies of this letter are also being sent to the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare; the House Committee on Education and Labor, Subcommittee on Equal Opportunities; and the Civil Service Commission.

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesy extended to us by Army officials during our review. If you wish to discuss the above matters or need further information, please contact Donald G. Goodyear, Assistant Director (275-5140).

Sincerely,



H. L. Krieger
Director

Enclosures - 3

NEED TO PERIODICALLY DEFINE
EXTENT OF UPWARD MOBILITY PROBLEM

The Civil Service Commission's (CSC's) Federal Personnel Manual System Letter 713-27, "Upward Mobility for Lower-Level Employees," dated June 28, 1974, advises that most agency Upward Mobility programs should focus on providing opportunities for employees below the GS-9 (or equivalent) level. CSC noted, however, that the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 does not specify minimum or maximum grade levels for Upward Mobility efforts, but directs each agency to apply Upward Mobility concepts to develop a variety of opportunities adapted to its own organizational and mission requirements.

Our April 1975 report to the Congress (FPCD-75-84) stressed the need to identify situations inhibiting Upward Mobility. Management must systematically identify and analyze job patterns which prevent qualified, lower level employees from advancing. Such occupational analyses should include

- rate of personnel changes from lower to higher skilled occupations by grade and job series;
- number of employees in apprentice, technician, and other developmental positions;
- ratio of jobs filled by promotions and reassignments to those filled from outside in apprentice, technician, developmental, or entry-level professional positions by grade level; and
- job series and grade levels in which many employees appear impacted.

These analyses will show the target population an Upward Mobility program should be directed toward, and they are essential because needs vary among and within agencies.

Although the Department's Upward Mobility coordinator believes there is a significant problem within the Department, an analysis was not made to identify the extent of Upward Mobility inhibitors before defining the target population. Departmental guidelines do not require Army installations to systematically analyze their work force to identify the size and nature of their Upward Mobility problem. Consequently, target populations for Upward Mobility programs generally were established without a determination of where Upward Mobility inhibitors exist.

Installation officials generally defined their target population in accordance with higher echelon guidelines. Installation officials informed us that the Department's guidelines did not adequately address their Upward Mobility needs. Consequently, they were confused about which approaches to implement.

This preliminary analysis is the first step in the program planning process. However, additional information on employees' desires and skills and availability of opportunities within the organization should also be considered.

Conclusions and recommendations

There has been no systematic analysis by either the Department or field installations to determine specifically where lower level employee Upward Mobility has been inhibited. An effective Upward Mobility program requires that the nature of the problem be specifically defined before the program is implemented. Otherwise, program efforts may be misdirected.

We recommend that the Secretary of the Army require program officials to issue detailed guidelines on identifying the need for Upward Mobility programs as a first step in the planning process. They should include procedures to systematically and periodically identify the extent of Upward Mobility problems.

NEED TO PERFORM SKILLS SURVEYS

Executive Order 11478, dated August 8, 1969, states that agencies must utilize each employee's present skills and provide the maximum feasible opportunity to employees to enhance their skills. Chapter 41, Title 5 U.S.C. prohibits training in a non-Government facility for a position involving a promotion if there is a qualified employee currently available. CSC stated in its guidelines, therefore, that agencies must be cognizant of the knowledge, skills, and abilities of their employees. The ability, potential, and suitability of employees already qualified for positions must be considered prior to training employees in non-Government facilities to qualify for these positions.

Departmental Upward Mobility guidelines, dated June 1974, require each field installation to conduct skills surveys. Only 12 of the 25 field installations, however, had conducted skills surveys. Furthermore, six of the installations which had conducted surveys did not survey the entire work force. In addition, only 8 of these 12 installations had conducted any type of periodic update since the initial surveys. Reasons for not conducting surveys, according to installation officials, were limited resources, heavy manpower turnover, reductions in force, and extensive advertising of vacancies.

Twenty of the 25 installations were conducting formal training in non-Government institutions as a part of their Upward Mobility programs. CSC instructions (Bulletin No. 410-83) state that such training cannot be provided where the agency already employs people with the necessary skills, knowledge, and abilities for the target position. Because installations have not properly conducted skills surveys, they may be violating the Government Employees Training Act, Chapter 41, Title 5 U.S.C.

Conclusions and recommendations

Although Departmental guidelines recognize the need to perform annual skills surveys as an integral part of an Upward Mobility program, only a limited number of installations have made comprehensive surveys. Moreover, Departmental guidelines do not provide either procedures or methodology for conducting or using skills surveys.

We recommend that the Secretary of the Army require program officials to issue definitive policy and guidelines on the use of skills surveys in Upward Mobility programs.

NEED TO IMPROVE COLLECTION AND REPORTING
OF UPWARD MOBILITY COST DATA

Each year agency EEO officials are required by Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-11 to report the cost of internal EEO programs including Upward Mobility. Agencies are required to include a concise description of each program, including comments on program effectiveness, significant cost-effectiveness or other analytic findings, pertinent comments concerning reliability of the data, and actions planned to improve data collection.

Each EEO program, including Upward Mobility, must include cost data on obligations and outlays. The Department has not reported obligation data for Upward Mobility because it was not included in the Army's budget. The Army formally advised CSC of this problem in its 1974 A-11 report. However, Upward Mobility outlays were reported in both the 1974 and 1975 A-11 reports. Although Department officials recognized that these Upward Mobility outlay figures were incomplete, they did not advise CSC of these problems as required. The Department's A-11 submissions to CSC did not address data reliability problems or actions planned to improve data collection.

Although the Department has tried to have Upward Mobility program costs reported in a standardized format, it has not specified which elements, such as formal training costs, on-the-job training costs, and administrative costs, should be reported. Consequently, field activities are reporting costs inconsistently. For example, several field installations that provided formal training as part of their Upward Mobility programs did not include the costs of such training in their A-11 reports. Twenty-two field installations did not include on-the-job training costs. Seven field activities did not include administrative costs associated with Upward Mobility. Only 2 of the 25 field offices included all required cost elements.

Officials at several field installations attribute inaccurate reporting of Upward Mobility program costs to a lack of Departmental guidance.

Conclusions and recommendations

Lack of Departmental guidelines has resulted in reporting inaccurate Upward Mobility program costs.

We recommend, therefore, that the Secretary of the Army require (1) program officials to develop guidelines for accurate collecting and reporting of Upward Mobility costs and (2) the Department to report to CSC problems associated with data collection and reliability.