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For the Federal Government to be effective, its programs and activities must be effectively implemented. Sound implementation can be weakened by too many employees, resulting in costly nonproductivity, or by too few, resulting in an unmanageable workload. Over the past several years, GAO has issued many reports illustrating the problems caused by insufficient staff. These problems, affecting a wide range of Government programs, include work backlogs, ineffective implementation of statutory mandates, excessive use of overtime and consultant services, in several cases, criminal abuses. Findings/Comments: Staff shortages are sometimes the result of agency mismanagement. However, some programs are inadequately staffed for reasons over which the agency has little or no control. Insufficient funding can prevent an agency from hiring the employees it needs, and personnel ceilings can have similar restrictive effects. Mechanisms for controlling personnel resources are needed; however, other elements such as travel, equipment, working space, and supplies must also be carefully analyzed for their effect on program management. Recommendations: Congress should carefully assess the impact of personnel ceilings and cutbacks if it is to avoid reducing staff at the expense of effectively administered programs. (RRS)

5344

# *REPORT TO THE CONGRESS*



*BY THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL  
OF THE UNITED STATES*

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## **Personnel Restrictions And Cutbacks In Executive Agencies: Need For Caution**

Program administration can be weakened by too few, as well as too many, employees.

This report illustrates the problems caused by insufficient staff.

The Congress should carefully assess the impact of personnel ceilings and cutbacks if it is to avoid reducing staff at the expense of effectively administered programs.



COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

B-165959

To the President of the Senate and the  
Speaker of the House of Representatives

In recent years, much emphasis has been placed on reducing the total number of employees in the executive branch. For a government to be effective, its programs and activities must be effectively implemented. Sound implementation can be weakened by too many employees, resulting in costly nonproductivity, or by too few, resulting in an unmanageable workload. While we fully support the goal of an efficient, streamlined work force, we believe the Congress must carefully examine the impact of future personnel reductions on specific programs and activities.

In the past several years, we have issued many reports illustrating the problems caused by insufficient staff. (See app. I.) The problems, affecting a broad range of Government programs, include work backlogs, ineffective implementation of legislative mandates, excessive use of overtime and consultants, and, in several cases, criminal abuses. For example, our report:

- "Slow Progress in Developing and Implementing a National Dam Safety Program" (CED-77-94, June 29, 1977), noted that the Congress did not authorize funds for the Corps of Engineers to carry out inspections authorized under the National Dam Inspection Act of 1972. The Corps' pending proposal for 200 additional personnel to help inspect dams was rejected by the Office of Management and Budget.
- "The National Direct Student Loan Program Requires More Attention by the Office of Education and Participating Institutions" (HRD-77-109, June 27, 1977), reported weaknesses in program administration resulting in problems such as unnecessary write-offs of loans as uncollectable, increased possibility of program abuse because of limited monitoring of participating institutions, and a backlog in resolving audit exceptions. The Office of Education said that a lack of staff was the main reason it had not devoted more attention to improving administration.

- "Problems in Administering Supplemental Security Income for the Aged, Blind, and Disabled" (MWD-76-73, June 11, 1976), noted that during its first year, the Social Security Administration's Supplemental Security Income Program was operating with insufficient staff. The results were heavy use of overtime, overcrowding and long waiting lines at many district offices, large backlogs of pending work, and delays and errors in processing claims.
- "Assessment of the National Grain Inspection System" (RED-76-71, Feb. 12, 1976), pointed out serious weaknesses in the U.S. grain inspection system, which had led to serious criminal abuses. The report also pointed out that the effectiveness of the Department of Agriculture's administration and supervision of the system had been limited, in part, because it did not have enough staff to handle its heavy workload.
- "Suggested Improvements in Staffing and Organization of Top Management Headquarters in the Department of Defense" (FPCD-76-35, Apr. 20, 1976), included a discussion of the effects of across-the-board reductions at Defense. Our findings, supported by industry experience, showed that (1) such reductions do not achieve permanent, effective, and consistent results and (2) when the workload does not decrease with the staff, the "survivors" tend to become overburdened and demoralized.

In addition, we are currently reviewing the Veterans Administration's (VA's) compliance program, which verifies and insures the propriety of educational assistance payments to veterans. Our review shows that VA had not completed the number of surveys required by its December 1975 time schedule largely because it did not have enough compliance survey specialists. As of April 30, 1977, VA had identified \$2.4 billion in educational assistance overpayments, a figure which we believe can be substantially reduced by timely and thorough compliance surveys. One of our proposals is that VA acquire additional staff to carry out the required surveys.

Staff shortages sometimes are the result of agency mismanagement. When program priorities have not been effectively set, the total number of personnel may be adequate but certain programs may have too few employees while others

have too many. However, some programs are inadequately staffed for reasons over which the agency has little or no control. For example, insufficient funding can prevent an agency from hiring the employees it needs; personnel ceilings can have a similar restrictive effect. Once the Congress is assured that an agency is balancing its personnel resources as effectively as possible, it can then evaluate each agency's specific staffing needs and avoid across-the-board cutbacks which do not take those needs into account.

Mechanisms for controlling resources are, of course, needed. However, any approach which involves controlling only one element of the total resources, such as personnel, runs the risk of distorting overall management decisions. Management and balancing of personnel needs are the focus of this report; however, other elements such as travel, equipment, working space, and supplies must also be carefully analyzed to achieve an effective balance. In any of these areas, whether the cause be inadequate internal management or external constraints, unbalanced allocation or use of resources can result in failure to carry out necessary programs.

We made our report pursuant to the Budget and Accounting Act, 1921 (31 U.S.C. 53), and the Accounting and Auditing Act of 1950 (31 U.S.C. 67).

Copies of this report are being sent to the Acting Director, Office of Management and Budget.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "James B. Steils". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Comptroller General  
of the United States

## C o n t e n t s

### GAO REPORTS, BY AGENCY, CONTAINING FINDINGS OF INADEQUATE STAFFING LEVELS

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**ABBREVIATIONS**

AFDC      Aid to Families with Dependent Children  
GAO      General Accounting Office  
HEW      Department of Health, Education, and Welfare  
HUD      Department of Housing and Urban Development  
INS      Immigration and Naturalization Service  
VA      Veterans Administration

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTUREWAYS TO IMPROVE EFFECTIVENESS OF  
RURAL BUSINESS LOAN PROGRAMS  
(B-114873, May 2, 1973)

Farmers Home Administration's State, district, and county office employees often lacked the training, time, or experience to effectively supervise the 10 cooperatives we reviewed. As a result, many of the cooperatives' problems went undetected, were detected late, or went uncorrected.

THE AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE ROLE OVERSEAS:  
WHAT HE DOES AND HOW HE CAN BE MORE  
EFFECTIVE FOR THE UNITED STATES  
(ID-75-40, Apr. 11, 1975)

Although Agriculture's objective is to assign attaches to posts at least 2 years in advance to allow for appropriate experience, training, and overlap of personnel, there is little chance this can be done without increasing personnel or eliminating some attache functions.

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENTS INITIATED  
OR NEEDED TO HELP FARMERS HOME ADMINISTRATION  
MEET ITS EXPANDED MISSIONS  
(RED-76-16, Sept. 10, 1975)

The report concluded that until the Farmers Home Administration hired enough employees with the necessary technical expertise, implementation of its newer rural development programs would be hampered.

ASSESSMENT OF THE NATIONAL GRAIN  
INSPECTION SYSTEM  
(RED-76-71, Feb. 12, 1976)

The report discussed weaknesses in the national grain inspection system which led to extensive criminal abuses. The effectiveness of the agency's administration and supervision of the system had been limited because, among other things, Agriculture did not have enough staff to carry out its heavy workload. Also, its requests for staff increases were not realistic in relation to workload increases.



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCEIMPROVED FEDERAL EFFORTS NEEDED TO EQUALLY  
CONSIDER WILDLIFE CONSERVATION WITH OTHER FEATURES OF  
WATER RESOURCE DEVELOPMENTS  
(B-118370, Mar. 8, 1974--  
ALSO DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR)

For wildlife conservation to be equally considered with other development features, more effective implementation of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act's coordination process is necessary. Wildlife officials frequently cited inadequate funding and staffing as reasons for breakdown in coordination.

REPORTING, STAFFING AND OTHER CHANGES WOULD ENHANCE  
THE INTERNAL AUDIT FUNCTION  
(CED-77-58, June 1, 1977)

Although, in general, the Office of Audits has performed its duties satisfactorily, improvements could be made if more personnel were available. For example, the average estimated cycle for auditing the Department's programs was unduly long--once every 12 to 13 years.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSEMEANS FOR INCREASING THE USE OF  
DEFENSE TECHNOLOGY FOR  
URGENT PUBLIC PROBLEMS  
(B-175132, Dec. 29, 1972)

Defense's personnel ceiling has been a major barrier in its efforts to transfer its technical expertise to the solution of civilian problems (i.e., from assigning scientists and engineers to nondefense interagency support).

OPERATIONS AUDITING BY THE DEFENSE CONTRACT  
AUDIT AGENCY--ACCOMPLISHMENTS, PROBLEMS,  
AND ACTIONS TO IMPROVE  
(PSAD-76-35, Dec. 18, 1975)

The Defense Contract Audit Agency was not completing a number of its programmed operations audits in a timely manner. These audits, designed to evaluate the efficiency and economy of contractor operations, are one of the principal bases on which Defense accepts claimed contract costs of about \$22 billion a year. The agency attributed its problems to a lack of staff.

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS IN STAFFING  
AND ORGANIZATION OF TOP MANAGEMENT  
HEADQUARTERS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
(FPCD-76-35, Apr. 20, 1976)

After several across-the-board reductions in headquarters staff, the experience in the Department of Defense has shown that headquarters streamlining should be based on a detailed analysis of the type of work conducted. Our findings, also supported by industry experience, indicate that across-the-board reductions do not achieve permanent, consistent, or effective results. Such reductions limit the capability of headquarters to perform required work. When workload does not decrease along with staff, the "survivors" tend to become overburdened, frustrated, and demoralized.

PROCUREMENT OF BEEF BY THE DEPARTMENT OF  
DEFENSE--ARE WE GETTING OUR MONEY'S WORTH?  
(PSAD-76-142, May 25, 1976)

Government verification inspections were inadequate to insure that beef procured by and delivered to Defense met military specifications. One reason for the problem was that there was not enough inspection personnel to do the job.

CONTINUING PROBLEMS WITH U.S. MILITARY  
EQUIPMENT PREPOSITIONED IN EUROPE  
(LCD-76-453, July 27, 1976)

The report pointed out that the Army was faced with a serious shortage of personnel with important maintenance skills and that this affected its ability to keep equipment in a required condition of readiness.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED IN DEFENSE EFFORTS  
TO USE WORK MEASUREMENT  
(LCD-76-401, Aug. 31, 1976)

The military services were not sufficiently emphasizing work measurement programs. One of our recommendations was that the Secretary of Defense monitor the number of personnel assigned to insure that proper attention be given to the program.

27 YEARS' EXPERIENCE WITH DEFENSE  
INDUSTRIAL FUNDS  
(FGMSD-76-51, Oct. 5, 1976)

Defense personnel ceilings tended to deprive management of its flexibility to use the most efficient and economical sources of labor in accomplishing its work.

CONTRACTOR PENSION PLAN COSTS:  
MORE CONTROL COULD SAVE  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE MILLIONS  
(PSAD-77-100, May 19, 1977)

Of nine Department of Defense contractors reviewed, eight had questionable pension plan costs, totaling over \$100 million, which were charged to Government contracts. One of the reasons this occurred was that auditing and contracting activities lacked personnel with actuarial skills to evaluate pension plan costs.

SLOW PROGRESS IN DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING  
A NATIONAL DAM SAFETY PROGRAM  
(CED-77-94, June 29, 1977)

The Congress did not authorize funds for the Corps of Engineers to carry out inspections authorized under the National Dam Inspection Act of 1972. The Corps' pending proposal for 200 additional personnel to help inspect dams was rejected by the Office of Management and Budget.

STAFFING SHORTAGES WITHIN  
THE DEFENSE AUDIT SERVICE  
(FGMSD-78-02, Oct. 31, 1977)

The authorized staffing level of the Defense Audit Service makes it incapable of conducting required audits. Staff reductions have been made and planned without a detailed evaluation of the extent of staffing needs. The Service has been unable to provide adequate coverage in the past because of staff shortages and is currently staffed at half the required staff.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFAREFUNCTIONING OF THE MASSACHUSETTS SYSTEM FOR  
REVIEWING THE USE OF MEDICAL SERVICES  
FINANCED UNDER MEDICAID  
(B-164031(3), Nov. 24, 1972)

The Medical Services Administration in the Social and Rehabilitation Services' <sup>1</sup>/ regional office in Boston helps the six New England States administer their Medicaid programs. Service officials said that, because of their small staff, they could provide only limited assistance to the States in developing adequate utilization review systems.

REVIEW OF VENDING OPERATIONS ON  
FEDERALLY CONTROLLED PROPERTY  
(B-176886, Sept. 27, 1973)

The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) is responsible for administering a program which gives preference to the blind in selecting persons to operate vending stands on Federal property. Because of insufficient staff, HEW has neither provided appropriate guidance to other Federal or State agencies nor conducted sufficient examinations of State actions under this program.

COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH PLANNING AS CARRIED  
OUT BY STATE AND AREAWIDE AGENCIES  
IN THREE STATES  
(B-164031(2), Apr. 18, 1974)

Lack of staff in HEW's Community Health Program headquarters and regions caused problems in (1) providing technical assistance to States, communities, and volunteer community health program groups and (2) conducting reviews and monitoring activities of community health programs.

CONGRESSIONAL OBJECTIVES OF FEDERAL LOANS AND  
SCHOLARSHIPS TO HEALTH PROFESSIONS  
STUDENTS NOT BEING MET  
(B-164031(2), May 24, 1974)

The Health Professions Student Assistance Program, administered by HEW, gives long-term, low-interest loans

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<sup>1</sup>/The Social and Rehabilitation Service was abolished in March 1977.

and scholarships to health professions students. Because HEW did not provide specific guidance, participating schools often used imprecise, inequitable, and ambiguous criteria for determining financial need. HEW said it did not have enough staff to monitor the program and it relied too heavily on the schools to use good management procedures.

ROLE OF THREE CONSULTANTS IN AWARD OF  
EMERGENCY SCHOOL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM/  
COMMUNITY GROUPS GRANTS  
(B-164031(1), Aug. 20, 1974)

The Office of Education hired three consultants to supplement its program staff and used them to perform operating functions contrary to the Federal Personnel Manual. The program director said he was not allowed to augment his staff and had to hire consultants to get the job done.

IMPLEMENTATION OF SECTION 205  
OF PUBLIC LAW 92-603  
(B-164031(3), Oct. 25, 1974)

Although the Social and Rehabilitation Service's regional offices are responsible for monitoring the development and implementation of Medicaid Management Information Systems and for insuring that implementation complies with State plans, they have not adequately done so because they have lacked the necessary staff.

ADEQUACY OF CONTRACTING FOR SERVICES AT  
SELECTED HEW AGENCIES  
(B-164031, Feb. 6, 1975)

HEW Audit Agency officials said it would take an estimated 700 staff years to eliminate the backlog of cost-reimbursement-type contracts awaiting final audit. On this basis, at the time of our audit, it would have taken the current staff about 18 years to audit the backlog of contracts.

PROJECT HEAD START: ACHIEVEMENTS  
AND PROBLEMS  
(MWD-75-51, May 20, 1975)

Head Start has not been serving severely handicapped children. Local officials said that before this could be done, additional professional staff would be required.

STUDY OF AREA AGENCIES ON AGING  
(MWD-75-95, 96, 97, June 19, 1975)

Many area agencies on aging officials said that area agencies should not be responsible for all their assigned functions because they did not have the staffs to implement their responsibilities. A number of the State agencies attributed their understaffing to funding limitations.

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION NEEDS  
TO BETTER MANAGE THE TRAVEL  
OF ITS ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES  
(MWD-76-18, Dec. 5, 1975)

The Social Security Administration has been sending its administrative law judges to Puerto Rico on temporary assignments since 1970 to control the case backlog there--a backlog caused in part by not having enough judges.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED IN REHABILITATING SOCIAL  
SECURITY DISABILITY INSURANCE BENEFICIARIES  
(MWD-76-66, May 13, 1976)

The Beneficiary Rehabilitation Program, administered by the Social Security Administration, needed improvement in its overall administration. One reason for its problems was that adequate staff had not been devoted to the program.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION: AN UNMET NEED  
(MWD-76-25, May 19, 1976)

The Office of Education had not established a formal monitoring system with the necessary staff to implement it. Although it had developed a monitoring guide and increased its monitoring staff, the staff increase was offset by the increased number of projects.

FEDERAL FIRE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS DO NOT  
INSURE LIFE SAFETY IN NURSING HOME FIRES  
(MWD-76-136, June 3, 1976)

The Department of Housing and Urban Development had not insured loans made to nursing facilities for the purchase and installation of fire safety equipment, as required under Public Law 93-204, because HEW had not supplied the necessary supporting documentation. HEW's Office of Nursing Home Affairs said the regional offices were overloaded with work

and could not process the loan applications in a timely manner.

PROBLEMS IN ADMINISTERING SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY  
INCOME FOR THE AGED, BLIND, AND DISABLED  
(MWD-76-73, June 11, 1976)

During its first year, shortages of staff, space, and other necessary resources adversely affected the Supplemental Security Program. Shortages caused (1) heavy use of overtime, (2) overcrowding and waiting lines at district offices, (3) backlogs of work, and (4) delays and errors in processing claims.

PROGRESS, BUT PROBLEMS IN DEVELOPING EMERGENCY  
MEDICAL SERVICES SYSTEMS  
(HRD-76-150, July 13, 1976)

Inadequate staff resources limited the effectiveness of the emergency medical service delivery program legislated by the Emergency Medical Services Act of 1973. The program lacked (1) effective HEW management and monitoring of grants and (2) the ability to provide technical assistance to grant projects.

REVIEW OF CSA'S POLICIES AND PROCEDURES  
FOR EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ITS  
LOCAL COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES TO  
DELIVER SOCIAL SERVICES TO THE POOR  
(HRD-76-151, July 20, 1976)

Limited staff resources have made it difficult for the Community Services Administration to monitor and evaluate its community action agencies. Efforts to use a self-evaluation process have also been delayed because of insufficient personnel.

ADMINISTRATION OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS--  
A CASE STUDY SHOWING NEED FOR ADDITIONAL IMPROVEMENTS  
(HRD-76-91, July 28, 1976)

The report discusses a private, nonprofit foundation operating with Federal funds. As a result of allegations of improperly managed funds, HEW--the primary funding agency--audited the foundation, a Federal grand jury indicted some of its officials, and a Federal court placed it in receivership. Had the foundation been properly audited and problems remedied, deficiencies could have been averted or resolved or funding would have been terminated earlier.

A reason for these deficiencies was that the regional HEW General Management Office did not have the staff to properly monitor the program. Staff shortages were also noted at the former Social and Rehabilitation Services' Management Services Office and at the Community Services Administration which also had monitoring responsibilities.

FACTORS THAT IMPEDE PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE  
HEALTH MAINTENANCE ORGANIZATION ACT OF 1973  
(HRD-76-128, Sept. 3, 1976)

The Health Maintenance Organization staff was too limited, in numbers and expertise, to efficiently administer the financial assistance and regulatory aspects of the Health Maintenance Organization Act of 1973.

TRAINING EDUCATORS FOR THE HANDICAPPED:  
A NEED TO REDIRECT FEDERAL PROGRAMS  
(HRD-76-77, Sept. 28, 1977)

This report discussed the importance of adequate project monitoring in obtaining full benefits from the Special Projects Program. We found weaknesses in the monitoring function and concluded that, although agency action should somewhat improve project monitoring, the small staff may limit successful implementation.

PROBLEMS AND PROGRESS IN HOLDING TIMELIER  
HEARINGS FOR DISABILITY CLAIMANTS  
(HRD-76-173, Oct. 1, 1976)

The Social Security Administration had not been able to obtain enough administrative law judges for all hearing offices. As a result, some hearing offices had a consistently large backlog and claimants in these areas generally waited a longer time for a hearing.

LACK OF REVIEW OF OHIO'S AFDC PROGRAM  
AND ITS CONSEQUENCES  
(HRD-77-6, Oct. 21, 1976)

Overpayments were made involving Ohio's Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and Medicaid programs. The payments were made because of delays in communicating information from counties to the State's centralized payment center. HEW's region V office could have detected the problem through an administrative review of Ohio's AFDC program. However, the program was not reviewed in fiscal year 1975 because of insufficient staff.



SERVICES TO INDIAN HEAD START GRANTEES  
UNDER A SPECIAL PROGRAM  
(HRD-76-141, Nov. 4, 1976)

The Indian and Migrant Programs Division of the Office of Child Development (HEW) apparently supplemented a perceived staffing shortage by using grantee personnel to perform agency functions.

RETURNING THE MENTALLY DISABLED TO THE  
COMMUNITY: GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO DO MORE  
(HRD-76-152, Jan. 7, 1977)

We identified 135 Federal programs either directly or indirectly affecting the mentally disabled. Most of these programs are administered by HEW. Our report pointed out many program deficiencies which have hampered the delivery of services to the mentally disabled--many of these deficiencies were attributable, at least in part, to insufficient staffing.

CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE INSTITUTIONS--STEPS  
GOVERNMENT CAN TAKE TO IMPROVE THEIR CARE  
(HRD-77-40, Feb. 22, 1977)

Our review showed that HEW was not adequately monitoring the foster care program in which the Government provides funds to States for foster care of children receiving unsuitable care at home. The regional offices' workloads were too heavy to enable any personnel to be assigned to the program full time.

PROGRESS AND PROBLEMS IN TREATING  
ALCOHOL ABUSERS  
(HRD-76-163, Apr. 28, 1977)

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse had failed to meet its responsibility for coordinating all Federal alcohol-related activities to assure a coordinated approach to the alcohol abuse problems. One reason for this failure was that the institute did not have enough staff to coordinate and monitor the activities of all Federal agencies involved with alcohol abuse.

THE NATIONAL DIRECT STUDENT LOAN PROGRAM  
REQUIRES MORE ATTENTION BY THE  
OFFICE OF EDUCATION AND  
PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS  
(HRD-77-109, June 27, 1977)

We reported weaknesses in program administration resulting in problems such as unnecessary write-offs of loans as uncollectable, increased possibility of program abuse because of limited monitoring of participating institutions, and a backlog in resolving audit exceptions. The Office of Education said that a lack of staff was the main reason it had not devoted more attention to improving administration.

LOCAL AREA AGENCIES HELP THE AGING, BUT  
PROBLEMS NEED CORRECTING  
(HRD-77-82, Aug. 27, 1977)

Of the 28 area agencies on aging we reviewed, 17 stated they did not have enough staff and did not foresee an immediate solution to the problem.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

NEED FOR IMPROVED CONSUMER PROTECTION  
IN INTERSTATE LAND SALES  
(B-118754, June 13, 1973)

The Interstate Land Sales Full Disclosure Act provides for Federal regulation of the sale of undeveloped land to the public. The act, administered by the Office of Interstate Land Sales Registration, requires land developers to give prospective buyers property reports on the properties for sale. Because of its small staff and lack of field support, the office could not properly implement the act. The office requested authorization for additional positions for fiscal year 1974.

PROCESSES FOR APPROVING AND MONITORING  
NON-SUPERVISED MORTGAGEES  
(B-114860, Nov. 8, 1973)

We recommended that the agency reexamine the staffing priorities to provide enough employees to effectively monitor the financial statements of mortgagees who participate in HUD's mortgage insurance programs. As of August 1973, the agency had a backlog of about 2,200 financial statements for audit.

LOCAL MANAGEMENT BROKER CONTRACT  
(B-178507, Nov. 23, 1973)

The report concerned the agency's award of a management broker contract for the Norfolk-Virginia Beach, Virginia, area. Agency officials said that, because of their limited staff, they were not as familiar with the contracting requirements as they should have been and could not thoroughly investigate the qualifications of prospective management brokers.

PROPERTY DISPOSITION POLICIES AND ACTS IN  
NEW YORK'S 16TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
(B-114860, Mar. 26, 1974)

Representative Elizabeth Holtzman questioned whether the department's staff was sufficient to dispose of properties acquired as a result of defaults on department-insured mortgages in the 16th congressional district. We concluded that a lack of adequate staff appears to have hindered prompt disposition of properties.

GETTING THE NEW COMMUNITIES PROGRAM STARTED:  
PROGRESS AND PROBLEMS  
(B-170971, Nov. 15, 1974)

The department guaranteed the obligations of three new community projects without having adequately determined whether the projects could be successfully marketed. The department approved the projects when only an average of four and one-half professional staff members were reviewing project applications--too few to adequately evaluate the applications' merits.

THE FEDERAL CRIME INSURANCE PROGRAM:  
HOW IT CAN BE MADE MORE EFFECTIVE  
(RED-75-333, Apr. 11, 1975)

The crime insurance program has been slow in getting started. One reason for the delay is that the department has assigned only one professional to administer the program which is carried out in 14 States and the District of Columbia.

EFFECTIVENESS OF HUD'S OVERSIGHT OF FEDERAL  
SUBSIDIES PAID UNDER THE SECTION 235  
HOME OWNERSHIP ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
(RED-76-21, Sept. 5, 1975)

We recommended that the department implement a program to periodically visit mortgagees to evaluate the way they (1) obtain homeowners' income recertifications and (2) recompute the Federal subsidy to be paid under this program.

REVIEW OF HUD'S MANAGEMENT AND DISPOSITION  
OF ACQUIRED MULTIFAMILY PROPERTIES  
(RED-75-37, Oct. 29, 1975)

We concluded that the department was not making adequate efforts to dispose of acquired properties and was not managing the properties so as to improve their marketability. Department officials said the problems we noted were in part caused by lack of or inexperienced staff.

USING INDEPENDENT PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS TO AUDIT  
PUBLIC HOUSING AGENCIES--AN ASSESSMENT  
(CED-76-133, Aug. 25, 1976)

We recommended that the Secretary of HUD implement a program requiring periodic reviews of the Independent Public Accountant's reports to identify nationwide problem areas needing management attention in the low-rent housing program. HUD said it had been intermittently performing reviews of the type we suggested, but that at the time of our review they were not being done because of limited staff and, after having done them for a time, HUD felt their value was not commensurate with the effort involved.

PROTECTING AND DISPOSING OF SINGLE-FAMILY  
PROPERTIES ACQUIRED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF  
HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT  
(CED-76-141, Aug. 31, 1976)

HUD's supervision of area managers-contractors responsible for onsite management of acquired properties had been inadequate to insure that its properties were being properly managed. Supervision had been hampered by a lack of staff continuity and a personnel shortage.

LITTLE ACCOMPLISHED IN INSURING THAT PROPER  
RENTS ARE CHARGED UNDER THE SECTION 236  
RENTAL ASSISTANCE HOUSING PROGRAM  
(CED-76-146, Oct. 5, 1976)

We determined that HUD had not effectively monitored tenant income and recertification of rent in multifamily housing projects and recommended that it implement an effective monitoring program. HUD said it did not have enough staff to make required visits to projects to insure that proper income recertifications were being made. HUD requested and received 148 additional positions.

MAJOR CHANGES ARE NEEDED IN THE NEW  
LEASED HOUSING PROGRAM  
(CED-77-19, Jan. 1977)

Over 2 years after the section 8 leased-housing program was enacted, fewer people had been provided housing than was originally anticipated. Two reasons HUD field office staff and local public housing agency officials gave for the program's slow start were staffing shortages and inexperienced staff within HUD.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

IMPROVED FEDERAL EFFORTS NEEDED TO  
EQUALLY CONSIDER WILDLIFE CONSERVATION WITH  
OTHER FEATURES OF WATER RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT  
(B-118370, Mar. 8, 1974)

Fish and Wildlife Services uses direct appropriations to study permits, small watershed projects, and other Federal activities. Wildlife officials frequently cited insufficient funds and staff as reasons for lack of adequate wildlife studies.

CONCESSION OPERATIONS IN THE NATIONAL PARKS--  
IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED IN ADMINISTRATION  
(RED-76-1, July 21, 1975)

The Park Service operates under a tight personnel ceiling and, as a result, there is a shortage of fulltime personnel at many parks. Since the Park Service has given priority to preserving the basic resources, the concession management staff, which does not directly deal with this function, has remained insufficient to adequately perform its responsibilities.

INDIAN NATURAL RESOURCES--OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
IMPROVED MANAGEMENT AND INCREASED  
PRODUCTIVITY--PART I: FOREST LAND,  
RANGELAND, AND CROPLAND  
(RED-76-8, Aug. 18, 1975)

Bureau of Indian Affairs forest managers said that lack of forestry staff has been the primary obstacle encountered in trying to (1) meet the allowable harvest level, (2) conduct an intensive forest management program, (3) perform commercial thinning, and (4) harvest additional volumes of dead and dying timber.

INDIAN NATURAL RESOURCES--PART II:  
COAL, OIL, AND GAS - BETTER MANAGEMENT  
CAN IMPROVE DEVELOPMENT AND  
INCREASE INDIAN INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT  
(RED-76-84, Mar. 31, 1976)

Limited minerals management staff at the Bureau of Indian Affairs headquarters office has prevented the office from providing leadership, guidance, and technical assistance to its field offices. In addition, as a result of the limited number of mineral experts in its field offices, the Bureau has provided only limited assistance to the Indian people for minerals development.

BETTER FEDERAL COORDINATION NEEDED TO  
PROMOTE MORE EFFECTIVE FARM IRRIGATION  
(RED-76-116, June 22, 1976--  
ALSO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE)

We concluded that over half the water delivered to farms for irrigation is wasted and that Federal agencies should determine the extent and causes of overirrigation and the role the Government should play in solving this problem. Interior noted that additional time, personnel, and funding would be required to insure more efficient use of water.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED IN REVIEW OF PUBLIC LAND  
WITHDRAWALS--LAND SET ASIDE FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES  
(CED-76-159, Nov. 16, 1976)

Our review of land withdrawals in California showed that the Bureau of Land Management had not established a comprehensive program to review land withdrawals primarily under its jurisdiction. In addition, the Bureau had not processed, in a timely manner, revocation applications submitted by other agencies so that land withdrawn could be returned to

the public land inventory. Interior officials said that a comprehensive withdrawal review and revocation program had not been implemented because its staff had to concentrate on higher priority land use programs.

PUBLIC RANGELANDS CONTINUE TO DETERIORATE  
(CED-77-88, July 5, 1977)

The Nation's public rangelands have been deteriorating. In 1965, the Bureau of Land Management began a more intensive form of range management by using land management plans. However, a number of the land management plans since implemented are obsolete and should be updated and/or redesigned. The Bureau said it needed additional staff to revise the plans.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE TO REDUCE  
THE NUMBER AND ADVERSE IMPACT OF  
ILLEGAL ALIENS IN THE UNITED STATES  
(B-125051, July 31, 1973)

Insufficient staff and resources have hampered the Immigration and Naturalization Service's (INS's) enforcement of the immigration laws. The INS district offices in Los Angeles and New York, at the time of this review (1973), had a backlog of about 77,000 uninvestigated complaints.

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE FOREIGN AGENTS  
REGISTRATION ACT OF 1938, AS AMENDED,  
AND ITS ADMINISTRATION BY THE  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
(B-177551, Mar. 13, 1974)

The Department of Justice has been unable to adequately monitor foreign agents' activities and has made little effort to enforce the act or related regulations. One of the factors contributing to its problems was its failure to allocate enough staff to carry out its responsibilities.

IDENTIFYING AND ELIMINATING SOURCES OF DANGEROUS  
DRUGS: EFFORTS BEING MADE, BUT NOT ENOUGH  
(B-175425, June 7, 1974)

Although, in many cases, the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs made a concerted effort to locate drug sources and arrest traffickers, it generally did not assign enough staff to effectively challenge drug traffickers.

DEPARTMENT OF LABORCERTIFYING WORKERS FOR ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE--  
THE FIRST YEAR UNDER THE TRADE ACT  
(ID-77-28, May 31, 1977)

The Trade Act of 1974 authorized assistance for workers, firms, and communities affected by import competition. During the program's first year, 75 percent of the workers' petitions for assistance required 61 to 89 days to process because there was no permanent staff. (Processing within 60 days of receipt was the requirement.)

DEPARTMENT OF STATECOMMERCIAL OFFICES ABROAD NEED SUBSTANTIAL  
IMPROVEMENTS TO ASSIST U.S. EXPORT OBJECTIVES  
(B-172255, Oct. 24, 1972)

For several years, the State Department has unsuccessfully requested funds for additional commercial officers. The officers' workload is so heavy that only 20 to 30 percent of their time can be used in reporting on commercial activities and opportunities.

NEED FOR BETTER IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS  
OF NONTARIFF BARRIERS TO TRADE  
(B-162222, Jan. 21, 1974)

Embassies and Missions which have contacts with foreign governments and which can collect tariff information can alert policymakers to a nontariff barrier before it is implemented. However, Missions do not have enough trained employees for the work and the heavy workload of Embassy personnel limits the time they can work on nontariff barriers.

THE GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN EAST-WEST TRADE--  
PROBLEMS AND ISSUES  
(ID-76-13A, Feb. 4, 1976)

The lack of or need for more trained and experienced personnel was noted in the (1) Office of Export Administration and Advisory Committee on Export Policy, (2) Office of Strategic Trade, and (3) Office of Trade Policy and Analysis. All of these groups have vital roles in controlling the export of commodities affecting national security.



GREATER U.S. GOVERNMENT EFFORTS NEEDED  
TO RECRUIT QUALIFIED CANDIDATES FOR  
EMPLOYMENT BY U.N. ORGANIZATIONS  
(ID-77-14, May 16, 1977)

U.S. recruiters have submitted candidates for only a small percentage of published U.N. vacancies because there are not enough recruiters to find suitable candidates.

CONSULAR SERVICES ABROAD CAN BE IMPROVED:  
PROCESS OF EVALUATING NEED  
FOR POSTS QUESTIONED  
(ID-77-52, Dec. 29, 1977)

From 1971 to 1976, the total worldwide consular workload increased by approximately 44 percent, while consular staff years increased by 11 percent. Using 1971 as the base year, projected increases indicate that by 1978 consular workloads will have increased by 60 percent and staff years by 19 percent.

The State Department needs to improve its administration and execution of consular services to U.S. citizens and those of other countries. Accordingly, we will recommend that the Secretary of State review consular activities to determine if consular staffing is adequate to carry out existing responsibilities.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

NONDISCRIMINATION PROVISION OF THE REVENUE  
SHARING ACT SHOULD BE STRENGTHENED  
AND BETTER ENFORCED  
(GGD-76-80, June 2, 1976)

We recommended that the Secretary of the Treasury and the Congress authorize the Office of Revenue Sharing to increase its staff to improve its civil rights program. The Office of Revenue Sharing agreed that enforcement of the nondiscrimination requirements had been seriously impaired by lack of staff and that more staff was needed to achieve the objectives of the nondiscrimination provision.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCYHEALTH MONITORING NEEDED FOR  
LABORATORY EMPLOYEES  
(CED-76-160, Oct. 8, 1976)

The Environmental Protection Agency had not instituted an agencywide program for the health monitoring of laboratory personnel because it was short of staff. We recommended additional health staffing.

NOISE POLLUTION--FEDERAL PROGRAM TO CONTROL IT  
HAS BEEN SLOW AND INEFFECTIVE  
(CED-77-42, Mar. 7, 1977)

Under the Noise Control Act of 1972, the Environmental Protection Agency must require that certain products be labeled as to noise levels or effectiveness in reducing noise to the consumer. Most of the labeling program funding went to one contract which turned out to be unsatisfactory. Poor agency management, stemming from insufficient staffing, contributed to the contracts' deficiencies.

FEDERAL ENERGY ADMINISTRATIONTRANSPORTATION CHARGES FOR IMPORTED CRUDE  
OIL--AN ASSESSMENT OF COMPANY PRACTICES  
AND GOVERNMENT REGULATION  
(EMD-76-105, Oct. 27, 1976)

We reviewed seven companies' transportation charges reported to the Federal Energy Administration over 2 years and found overcharges and other questionable charges and practices not identified by audit efforts. In addition, the Federal Energy Administration had never verified much of the data reported by importing refiners. A factor contributing to these problems was the limited availability of qualified employees to perform indepth audits.

FEDERAL POWER COMMISSIONPROBLEMS IN LICENSING HYDROELECTRIC PROJECTS  
(RED-76-13, Sept. 23, 1975)

We found that the Federal Power Commission's backlog of hydroelectric project applications has grown steadily. At the time of our review, we estimated it would take 15 years to complete action on the existing backlog. The Chairman of the Commission said additional staff would be necessary to reduce processing delays.

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATIONFURTHER ACTIONS NEEDED TO CENTRALIZE PROCUREMENT  
OF AUTOMATIC DATA PROCESSING EQUIPMENT TO  
COMPLY WITH OBJECTIVES OF PUBLIC LAW 89-306  
(LCD-74-115, Oct. 1, 1975)

Under Public Law 89-306, the General Services Administration was to be the single purchaser of automatic data processing equipment for the Government. This objective had not been fully realized because the Office of Management and Budget had denied the agency resources necessary for the law to be effectively implemented. For example, in its fiscal year 1973 5-year plan, the agency asked for 21 additional positions, but its request was denied.

ADMINISTRATION OF REPAIR CONTRACTS  
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT  
(PSAD-76-119, Dec. 27, 1976)

We concluded that the agency was not providing adequate contract administration and contractor surveillance as required by Federal Procurement Regulations for time and materials contracts. As a result, some contractors were overcharging the Government. Agency officials said they were seeking additional personnel authorizations, but could not predict the outcome.

AWARDING OF REQUIREMENT-TYPE CONTRACTS FOR  
REPAIR OF ELECTRICAL MOTORS, GENERATORS, ETC.,  
BY GSA REGION 3  
(PSAD-77-136, July 29, 1977)

Report criticized the agency's contract award and administration. Agency officials said that because of budgetary limitations, personnel were not available for adequate contract administration.

MULTIAGENCYU.S. ACTIONS NEEDED TO COPE WITH  
COMMODITY SHORTAGES  
(B-114824, Apr. 29, 1974)

Over 20 Government organizations and numerous private sector organizations are involved in formulating commodity policies. Limited staffing and lack of expertise have hampered (1) implementation of export controls over commodities in short supply, (2) commodity information-gathering and

forecasting, (3) analyses of commodity information, and (4) long-range policy planning.

SYSTEM FOR PROCESSING INDIVIDUAL EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS: IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED  
(FPCD-76-77, Apr. 8, 1977)

Although the Civil Service Commission has established and other Federal agencies have implemented an extensive system for processing complaints, the system still needs improvement in a number of areas, including personnel resources. Insufficient staffing, due in some cases to tight personnel ceilings, contributed to a timeliness problem in processing complaints and to program management that reacted to rather than anticipated problems.

MOST AGENCY PROGRAMS TO ASSIST EMPLOYEES WITH ALCOHOL RELATED PROBLEMS STILL INEFFECTIVE  
(HRD-77-75, Sept. 7, 1977)

Many programs were ineffective partly because of insufficient staff to effectively implement an ongoing program and unqualified staff to carry out its assigned duties. Where programs were effective, the availability of sufficient and qualified staff was an integral part of the program's success.

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

MORE EMPHASIS NEEDED ON DATA ANALYSIS PHASE OF SPACE SCIENCE PROGRAMS  
(PSAD-77-114, June 27, 1977)

Scientific data acquired from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's space programs have not always been made promptly available to the scientific community for further analysis. One reason for this was that the Space Science Data Center had been staffed at about half the level considered necessary by Center management.

OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

HOW THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET CARRIED OUT ITS RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE FEDERAL REPORTS ACT  
(GGD-77-38, May 25, 1977)

In this report, one of our principal observations pertained to staff limitations which precluded the office

from adequately assessing the need for data collected by Federal agencies.

### SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

#### THE SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION NEEDS TO IMPROVE ITS 7(a) LOAN PROGRAM (GGD-76-24, Feb. 23, 1976)

A review of the 7(a) program revealed problems requiring management attention. For example, loans were approved for questionable purposes, loans were approved when it was questionable whether they would be repaid, and the agency did not act effectively after loans were made to increase the chances of borrower success and loan repayment. A problem permeating the entire loan process was a shortage or improper alinement of personnel at the district level.

#### MANAGEMENT CONTROL FUNCTIONS OF THE SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION-- IMPROVEMENTS ARE NEEDED (GGD-76-76, Aug. 23, 1976)

In this report we reviewed the Small Business Administration's management control functions--(1) "Rules and Regulations" on standards of conduct, (2) audit, investigative, and review activities, and (3) management information reporting system.

In our review of the activities of the groups responsible for auditing, investigating, or evaluating Small Business Administration internal/external program activities, we reported each group had experienced problems which weakened their effectiveness as management tools. Generally the weaknesses noted in the internal/external audit functions resulted from understaffing.

### U.S. POSTAL SERVICE

#### REVIEW OF THE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE'S PROGRAM FOR ALCOHOLIC RECOVERY (Letter report to James Conway, Senior Assistant Postmaster General, Oct. 26, 1976)

Employees with alcoholic problems must be referred to counselors before they can be helped. However, the counselors' caseloads in some locations were generally too heavy and the quality of the program has suffered. In one instance, a unit could have used nine additional counselors; however, local management was reluctant to expand the program due to budgetary constraints.

VETERANS ADMINISTRATIONADEQUACY OF MEDICAL STAFFING IN SELECTED  
VETERANS ADMINISTRATION HOSPITALS  
(MWD-75-83, May 5, 1975)

We reviewed 15 general VA hospitals. Those hospital officials reporting staffing shortages attributed the shortages to budgetary constraints, recruitment deficiencies, and increased workload. Most hospitals which reported staff shortages stated that the quality of care would improve with more professional staff.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE NEW ORLEANS  
VETERANS ADMINISTRATION HOSPITAL  
(MWD-76-119, Apr. 14, 1976)

The critical shortage of nurses at the New Orleans VA Hospital was one of the major factors causing the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals to suspend its accreditation of New Orleans in April 1975. The hospital had also experienced problems in physician staffing.

REVIEW OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF  
THE DENVER VA HOSPITAL  
(MWD-76-104, May 4, 1976)

The staffing level of the nursing service was much less than that required by VA to provide adequate nursing care to patients. This was also true, to a lesser extent, for physicians, technicians, and other professionals. VA's corrective action included hiring 28 additional staff members.

FURTHER ACTIONS NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT GAO'S  
RECOMMENDATIONS TO RESOLVE A BILLION DOLLAR  
OVERPAYMENT PROBLEM  
(Code 40659, due to be issued in winter of 1978)

VA had not completed the number of surveys required by its December 1975 time schedule largely because it did not have enough compliance specialists. VA has indicated that it needs approximately 190 additional survey specialists to meet the ratio specified in Public Law 94-502.