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The Honorable David Pryor  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Federal  
Services, Post Office, and Civil Service  
Committee on Governmental Affairs  
United States Senate

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Today we issued our report Federal Employment: Poor Service Found at Federal Job Information Centers (GAO/GGD-92-116). It describes the obstacles and inconveniences job seekers may encounter when trying to obtain information on federal employment from the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Federal Job Information Centers (FJIC).

In discussing our findings with Subcommittee staff, they asked about federal job information services available to residents of Arkansas.

There is no FJIC in Arkansas. Arkansas residents must either call the "Career America Connection"--a 900 number costing 40 cents a minute--or contact the Oklahoma City FJIC, which has information on job opportunities in Arkansas. The Oklahoma City FJIC provides information by mail or telephone only.

Because our report was limited to those FJICs offering walk-in service, it did not cover the Oklahoma City FJIC. However, we did have a staff member contact the Oklahoma City FJIC to see what services Arkansas residents might receive. As discussed below, our staff member's experiences in contacting that FJIC were similar to those discussed in the report. As with many of the walk-in FJICs, she encountered a number of problems with the Oklahoma City FJIC that would likely frustrate job seekers.

GAO/GGD-92-24R, Federal Job Information

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Our staff member's difficulties began when she attempted to call the Oklahoma City FJIC. Because of busy signals, several attempts were required before she finally got through. On a Friday afternoon, our staff member called the Oklahoma City FJIC three times and got a busy signal each time. A fourth attempt to reach the FJIC the following Tuesday also resulted in a busy signal. On her fifth attempt, an half hour later, she got through to an information specialist and requested information on job availability. On Wednesday she called to get some additional information and received busy signals in five attempts between 1:00 and 2:00. On Thursday she got through to the information specialist after two more calls and asked eight questions a typical job seeker might ask (see enclosure).

The answers our staff member received were inaccurate or incomplete in three instances. For example, when she asked the information specialist whether she qualified for OPM's Outstanding Scholar program with a 3.4 grade point average, she was told she needed a 3.5. The information specialist did not tell her that she could also qualify for the Outstanding Scholar program if she graduated in the upper 10 percent of her class.

When our staff member inquired about OPM's Presidential Management Intern (PMI) program, she was told that internships are awarded to students in their senior year of undergraduate work or to individuals working on their master's degree. This is incorrect. The PMI program is only open to applicants in the final year of their master's program, and they must possess their degree at the time they take a position.

In a third instance, when our staff member asked what jobs were available for a person with a degree in international relations, the information specialist told her "entry-level." She was not told about specific jobs or agencies that employ persons with such a degree (e.g., the Department of State). Instead, she was told about the Administrative Careers With America (ACWA) program, which has tests in six job categories. The information specialist did not tell her that international relations is one of several ACWA positions that does not require a written test but does require the completion of specific college course work.

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Our work suggests that Arkansans trying to obtain information on federal employment from the Oklahoma City FJIC will likely face frustrations, delays, and the possibility of getting inaccurate or incomplete information.

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I trust the information in this letter will be helpful. Please contact me on (202) 275-6204 if you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,

*Rosslyn S. Kleeman*  
Rosslyn S. Kleeman  
Director, Federal Workforce  
Future Issues

Enclosure

ENCLOSURE

ENCLOSURE

QUESTIONS POSED BY GAO TO THE OKLAHOMA CITY FJIC

1. My college grade point average is 3.4. Can I qualify for the Outstanding Scholar program?
2. How are upper-level positions (GS-9 and above) filled?
3. What is the Presidential Management Intern Program? How do I apply for it?
4. I have a degree in international relations. Are there jobs? Which exam do I take and does it require specific qualifications?
5. How do I get a job with the Central Intelligence Agency?
6. Are college transcripts required to get a federal job?
7. Do I have to complete an SF-171 application form to get a federal job?
8. What benefits would I receive as a federal employee?

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