Building for the Future:
Employee Engagement in the United States Secret Service

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF
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A Report by a Panel of the
NATIONAL ACADEMY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
for the United States Secret Service

Building for the Future:
Employee Engagement in the United States Secret Service

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Foreword

"Mission First, People Always" is the motto that guides the U.S. Secret Service. More than 7,600 Special Agents, Uniformed Division Officers, Technical Law Enforcement personnel, and Administrative Professionals carry out a complex and difficult mission to protect the President of the United States, the Vice President, and other key dignitaries against ever-present and increasingly complex threats. The Secret Service also investigates financial crimes that have evolved from counterfeiting on a printing press to sophisticated online attacks. Ensuring the Secret Service lives up to its people-focused slogan is vital for the Agency's success and, in turn, the country's basic security.

In October 2019, the Secret Service engaged the National Academy of Public Administration (the Academy) to analyze the results of the Federal Viewpoint Survey, obtain perspectives of agency leaders, and to identify opportunities to improve employee morale and engagement. Building on the research and analysis of the Academy's 2016 report that provided recommendations to improve organizational management at the Secret Service after high-profiled incidents, this report identifies a series of findings and recommendations that address both division-specific issues and enterprise-wide strategies for success.

An Academy Panel of Fellows with extensive backgrounds in leadership, human resources, and management guided a professional study team which interviewed Secret Service leaders, officers, and staff members; examined the agency's policies and practices; and reviewed best practices in federal law enforcement. The project unfolded against the challenging backdrop of a global pandemic, a presidential election, and the transition of administrations.

This study intersects with one the Academy's 12 Grand Challenges, Modernizing and Reinvigorating Public Service, as it explores issues of morale and job satisfaction within this critical sphere of public service. This effort also revealed how acutely mission support tools (information technology, agile acquisition programs, and financial management tools) impact the day-to-day work experience and satisfaction of employees.

We have appreciated the candor and cooperation of the Secret Service at every stage as the Agency traversed these historically challenging times in our nation's history. I am grateful for the thoughtfulness, expertise, and leadership of the Panel of Academy Fellows and the Academy study team. The Panel's report is well positioned to serve as a blueprint from which the Secret Service can build to further engage its workforce and ensure it can carry out its unique and vital missions in decades to come.

Teresa W. Gerton

President and Chief Executive Officer

National Academy of Public Administration

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym or Abbreviation	Definition
Academy	National Academy of Public Administration
AD	Assistant Director
ALIS	Applicant Lifecycle Information System
AOD	Administrative Operations Division
APT	Administrative, Professional, Technical
CHCO	Chief Human Capital Officer
CIO	Chief Information Officer
COO	Chief Operating Officer
CTO	Chief Technology Officer
COTS	Commercial off-the-shelf (software)
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
DAD	Deputy Assistant Director
DSAIC	Deputy Special Agent-in-Charge
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
EEI	Employee Engagement Index
EPS	Enterprise Personnel Scheduling
ERB	Executive Resources Board
ELAC	Entry Level Assessment Centers
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FERS	Federal Employees' Retirement System
FEVS	Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey
FLETC	Federal Law Enforcement Training Center
FY	Fiscal Year

GAO	Government Accountability Office
HBS	Office of Human Resources Business Solutions
HOGR	House Oversight and Government Reform Committee
HRP	Human Resources Policy and Accountability Division
HRR	Human Resources Research and Assessment Division
HUM	Office of Human Resources
IGL	Office of Intergovernmental and Legislative Affairs
INV	Office of Investigations
ISP	Inspection Division
IT	Information Technology
OCFO	Office of the Chief Financial Officer
OCIO	Office of the Chief Information Officer
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
OPO	Office of Protective Operations
OSP	Office of Strategic Planning and Policy
PALMS	Performance and Learning Management System
PMP	Protective Mission Panel
PPD	Presidential Protective Division
PSS	Physical Security Specialist
RES	Office of Professional Responsibility
ROTA	Rotational Assignment
SAF	Safety, Health, and Environmental Programs Division
SAIC	Special Agent-in-Charge
SARC	Special Agent Reassignment Committee

SII	Office of Strategic Intelligence and Information
SMD	Security Management Division
SSA/SRA	Senior Special Agent/Senior Resident Agent
SOD	Special Operations Division
TAD	Talent and Employee Acquisition Division
TEC	Office of Technical Development and Mission Support
TLE	Technical Law Enforcement
TNG	Office of Training
TSD	Technical Security Division
VPD	Vice Presidential Protective Division
VPN	Virtual Private Network

Executive Summary

The United States Secret Service is one of the most unique and critical law enforcement and national security organizations, carrying out two distinct but integrated missions. The Agency executes a no-fail mission to protect the President, Vice President, and dignitaries, ensuring for the American people and foreign counterparts that their elected leaders will be safe. It also conducts investigations of crimes against financial systems that threaten the basic workings of the nation's economy. The Secret Service brings to bear advanced technologies, tried and true strategies and tactics, and a robust network of field offices. But it is the people—their energy, drive, and determination—that make this organization work. Employee engagement—the ability to tie people to mission, to ensure job satisfaction, and to drive commitment to getting the job done every day—is vital to the Agency's success in carrying out its complex, inextricably linked missions.

The mission demands placed on the Secret Service are stressing the workforce, negatively impacting employee focus, engagement, readiness, and effectiveness. Secret Service employees are asked to do more than ever within tight resources. Threats against the President and other protectees have grown in intensity and scale with the emergence of new technologies and the heightened level of violence in the country. Financial crimes have migrated from the basement counterfeiting press to the cyber domain with greater stealth and sophistication. Budget pressures have grown, and the Agency has only in the last few years recovered from significant budgetary reductions and personnel measures, like hiring freezes, instituted because of sequestration.

These workforce stresses contributed to some of the high-profile incidents that garnered negative attention to the Secret Service during the past decade. The Agency has moved forward from these challenges, implementing recommendations from such prominent outside reviews as the Protective Mission Panel (PMP) and the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee (HOGR). Additionally, in 2016, the Secret Service engaged the National Academy of Public Administration (the Academy) to review its progress in transforming the Agency and the effectiveness of the business support and organizational management actions undertaken to address concerns involving culture and leadership, personnel issues (staffing levels, morale, engagement), budget, and technology.

In the Secret Service's ongoing efforts to ensure a focused, engaged, ready, and effective workforce in the face of burgeoning mission demands, the Agency again turned to the Academy in 2019 to convene a Panel of experts to review employee engagement and suggest areas for improvement. This Panel guided a professional study team in an effort lasting over 18 months and taking place over two phases of work. The research included intensive employee and leadership interviews and focus group discussions among employees located in selected field offices and all headquarters divisions, as well as extensive document reviews and detailed data analysis.

The Panel found that the Secret Service remains dedicated and committed to its mission. Additionally, it determined that overall employee engagement continues to improve from the low point the Agency faced nearly a decade ago. However, employee satisfaction and morale plateaued

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or declined until 2019 in several important offices prompting the Service to ask the Academy for a review in some specific areas.

The overall progress across the Agency is the result of the Secret Service's commitment to improving the organizational climate and employee satisfaction levels in key areas, such as accelerating hiring, updating the information technology (IT) infrastructure to allow for wide-scale employee telework, and implementing policies and programs to enhance diversity and inclusion. These steps are a strong indication of the Agency's intent to address the ongoing challenges that hinder the focus and performance of the Agency's employees.

Mission demands continue to increase, while staffing levels have not risen at the same pace, requiring the workforce to work significant overtime. Longer hours mean more fatigue and an increased sense of monotony on the job, along with less time to train, and less time at home spent with family or pursuing outside interests. Along with more time to train and be with family, Secret Service employees would like to have increased opportunities to develop professionally and acquire the skills and experiences needed to advance in the organization.

Today's Secret Service employees, more than ever, value having a work-life balance. The Agency's use of competitive compensation, robust retention programs, and targeted employee support programs have yet to significantly prevent more than eight percent of the Agency's workforce from leaving every year. Attrition is especially problematic within the Uniformed Division (UD or the Division), which has seen an average attrition rate of 13 percent over the past five years. Thirty percent of UD has less than three years on the job, and sixteen percent of Special Agents have less than three years on the job. This presents the Secret Service with the challenge of a large portion of their law enforcement personnel possessing limited experience.

The Agency has made significant strides at enhancing how it operates as a business, especially in its financial management, acquisition, and IT programs that provide essential administrative underpinnings to Agency operations. Top-level communications provide information for the workforce to understand the direction and issues impacting the Agency, thus allowing employees to understand how their work fits into the overall mission. The Agency has come a long way from a time when there was outright hostility among various categories of employees (UD, Special Agent, Technical Law Enforcement [TLE], and Administrative, Professional, and Technical [APT] employees), but some lingering differences remain, preventing the workforce from coming together around the mission and central purpose of the Agency.

In addition, there are several unique issues affecting specific Agency organizations that impact employee satisfaction. These include leadership opportunities within the Office of Technical Development and Mission Support (TEC), fragmented IT systems within the Office of Human Resources (HUM), leadership instability in the Office of Professional Responsibility (RES), and generalized employee dissatisfaction within the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO).

Of particular concern is the state of employee morale and engagement in UD. In recent years, UD leadership has placed major emphasis on improving UD programs and operations, including enhancements to the Officer merit promotion process and allowing UD Officers to participate in senior level training such as the SES Candidate Development Program and military War Colleges.

The Division is experiencing increased op-tempo with simultaneous staffing shortages and attrition forcing Officers to work an unsustainable amount of overtime, taking away meaningful time for employees to train or spend time with their families. Low staffing levels make it difficult for UD leaders to develop their employees and to supervise and manage performance. UD Officers have difficulty understanding how to further their careers as there are no clearly articulated career paths to follow.

Recommendations

Building on progress made over recent years, the Secret Service can take several steps and measures to deepen the focus of the workforce, improve engagement, and address the issues found during this review. The Panel offers a series of 48 recommendations: 17 are Agency-wide recommendations, while 31 are targeted recommendations to address challenges in particular divisions, offices, or branches, including 18 within UD. Recommendations, with associated action steps, are detailed throughout the report and summarized in Chapter 10.

The recommendations are grouped under seven categories of objectives that the Panel believes the Secret Service should prioritize:

1) Focus Employee Engagement Efforts

2) Improve Hiring and Retention

3) Create a Better Work-Life Balance and Enhance Compensation

4) Develop the Next Generation of Secret Service Employees

5) Operationalize for the Future

6) Reinvigorate the Uniformed Division

7) Address Individual Office Matters

Focus Employee Engagement Efforts

The Secret Service should focus its many programs, initiatives, and actions to improve job satisfaction around a new vision for employee engagement, aligned with the Agency's broader mission strategy. The vision should set forth the collaborative, driven, and professional work climate it strives to create while detailing actionable and measurable steps to get there. Fostering teamwork and creating a collaborative, open, and inclusive atmosphere should be a special emphasis of that vision. The Secret Service has taken many actions to show that it follows the motto "Mission First, People Always." Creating and pursuing a new vision for employee engagement will further ingrain and institutionalize the direction the Secret Service is heading. The Agency should revitalize its communications to include both delivering strategic messaging and soliciting employee feedback.

Improve Hiring and Retention

The Secret Service should ensure it has sufficient personnel with the right skills and experience to fill its ranks and execute the mission. The Secret Service should continue its ongoing hiring surge, working with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Congress to acquire the necessary support and funding for staffing level increases. While there have been significant improvements in data analytics and technology supporting growth, an increased emphasis on accelerating hiring through greater capacity and process improvements within the organizations charged with talent acquisition and background investigations is necessary. Given how long it takes to hire a new employee and the high value of experience within the Agency, the Secret Service should place renewed emphasis on retaining the experienced employees already within its ranks.

Create a Better Work-Life Balance and Enhance Compensation

While the hiring surge evolves and has time to take effect, the Secret Service should pursue new initiatives to provide a valuable work-life balance, while ensuring that pay and benefits appropriately compensate its hard-working employees. To improve work-life balance, the Agency should codify and make permanent the widespread availability of telework that enabled the Agency to continue operations so successfully through the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. The Secret Service should also more actively manage its overtime program to reduce the time personnel are required to involuntarily work extra hours while avoiding repeatedly tapping the same individuals for overtime hours. The Agency should focus its pay and benefits to compensate for the inevitable long hours that hard-pressed Secret Service employees will work and design ways to retain the personnel most likely to leave the Agency.

Develop the Next Generation of Secret Service Employees

The Secret Service should ensure all its employees can grow professionally and have concrete career paths open to them to advance throughout the organization as they gain experience and work to exceed performance expectations. The Agency should put in place leadership and professional development programs for all employee categories, fully implementing recently developed programs for APT personnel and UD Officers. Leadership should provide information on career paths and the requirements for promotion, along with more mentorship and guidance on how to manage their careers with the Agency.

Operationalize for the Future

The Secret Service should continue to enhance and upgrade the mission-support, business, and administrative functions that serve as a critical backdrop to the mission and impact how employees, including those performing administrative functions, feel about their work. The Secret Service should solidify the role that career mission-support professionals have in leading such key functions, such as human resource management, financial management, and other administrative operations. The Agency should better communicate with employees its plans for upgrading key IT systems and infrastructure while validating its current strategy for procuring key systems.

Reinvigorate the Uniformed Division

The Secret Service should place more focused, prominent, and sustained emphasis on employee engagement issues within UD, pursuing a multi-year strategy that boosts hiring and retention, minimizes the turbulence in staffing levels, and implements new policies on compensatory (comp) time and new schedules to help mitigate some of the worst effects of staffing shortfalls. In the long-term, the Secret Service should explore new operational and recruiting approaches for the Division to support a more sustainable model. The Secret Service should expand professional opportunities and foster the development of UD Officers.

Address Individual Office Matters

The Secret Service should address the range of employee engagement challenges unique to the various offices and divisions. These recommendations include providing greater promotion opportunities within TEC, undertaking an intense employee recognition and engagement effort within the OCFO, relocating policy development responsibilities within the HUM, moving RES to a location outside of the headquarters building, and building more experience within the Office of Investigations (INV) field offices through the promotion of individuals already assigned to an office.

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Chapter 1:   Introduction

Since 1865, the United States Secret Service has been at the forefront of national security. Over 7,600 employees, spread across 162 field and resident offices in both the United States and abroad, execute a demanding mission: protecting the President of the United States, Vice President, Cabinet Officials, former presidents, their families, and visiting foreign leaders; and investigating financial crimes like counterfeiting of currency, wire fraud, and money laundering. Throughout its 155-year history, the Secret Service has carried out this mission through an evolving and increasingly complicated environment, adapting to challenges and taking advantage of new opportunities.

One of the most pronounced challenges the Secret Service has faced in recent years is the increase in its protection responsibilities. The President's family size and outside activities can vary from presidency to presidency, leading to constantly changing protection requirements. Plans, budgets, and staffing become stretched, depending on the Administration.

The Secret Service maintains physical protection of the White House and its adjacent buildings, the Naval Observatory and the Vice Presidential Residence, and foreign diplomatic residences in Washington, D.C.[1] These protective duties are set against a backdrop of an increasingly sophisticated and diverse array of threats.

The protection mission of the Secret Service is "no-fail" and demands the highest level of commitment of staff and resources. The consequences of a failure in protection could be catastrophic. For the Secret Service, this means doing whatever it takes to get the job done and using the resources available to their fullest capacity.

The investigative mission, though perhaps not as visible to the public, requires sophisticated techniques that only an experienced, well-trained workforce can carry out. The responsibility to investigate financial crimes stems from the Agency's legacy in the Department of the Treasury, which mostly centered around counterfeiting cases. Special Agents now undertake investigations of a wide variety of financial infractions, like wire fraud, money laundering, and as new technologies have emerged, associated cybercrimes.

Protection and investigation, the two mission areas of the Agency, are strongly linked. The expertise and tools that Special Agents learn and acquire during their initial investigation assignments are directly applicable in the following protection assignment. Agents return to investigation assignments in field offices or staff assignments at the Washington, D.C. headquarters more seasoned, skilled, and experienced. This mixture of protection and investigation is critical to maintaining operational readiness, supporting its model for sustaining its workforce, and is outlined in its Special Agent Career Progression Plan.[2]

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[1] U.S. Secret Service Protection of Persons and Facilities, 7-5700, Congressional Research Service, October 2018

[2] U.S. Secret Service Budget Request for FY 2018

The Secret Service cannot carry out its responsibilities without a highly skilled, dedicated, and energetic workforce. The Agency requires the utmost commitment of some of the finest individuals in law enforcement, in both time and focus. The rapid pace of work, complex operating environment, and unique pressures of the integrated mission mean that Agency employees confront challenges that are faced by few other federal personnel. Long working hours and potentially weeks without breaks or seeing family are common and become routine during election years. To maintain the Secret Service's operational readiness, it is imperative that its people are appropriately trained, provided with the necessary resources, satisfied with their work, and committed to the mission, so that they can execute their responsibilities professionally and effectively every day.

It is perhaps not a surprise that employee satisfaction and commitment, known as employee engagement, at the Agency has been a challenge in recent years. Employee engagement is more than simply looking at whether a workforce's spirits are high, but instead is the sense of dedication, outlook, and whether an individual's work is valued. Part of the engagement challenges of the Agency has come from the public scrutiny that followed some of the high-profile incidents almost a decade ago, and part has come from the sheer relentlessness of the protection and investigative missions and the never-ending scrutiny of an agency charged with a no-fail mission. The Secret Service has made addressing employee engagement a high priority, undertaking several initiatives to improve engagement, deepen the commitment of the workforce, and drive even stronger dedication. Those efforts, whether enhancing benefits or ensuring its Special Agents receive adequate overtime pay, among many others, are a result of external recommendations and by the Secret Service's own accord.

Scope of Work

As part of this ongoing focus on employee engagement, the Secret Service sought outside expertise, turning to the National Academy of Public Administration (the Academy). In October 2019, the Agency asked the Academy to undertake a study of the workplace climate and functions in key organizations throughout the Agency and review efforts it has undertaken to improve operations and provide additional recommendations where appropriate. This engagement followed a 2016 effort to have the Academy review the Agency's progress in implementing recommendations on enhancements to mission support functions put forward by the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform (HOGR) and the Protective Mission Panel (PMP).

For this latest study, the Scope of Work shifted in scale and focus as the study evolved. At the start, the Agency charged the Academy to look at employee engagement within several key field offices and such critical mission support offices as the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO), Office of Human Resources (HUM), and the Office of Technical Development and Mission Support (TEC). The Secret Service subsequently requested the Academy broaden the focus by interviewing leaders of every major office and Directorate of the Agency that make up the Executive Resources Board (ERB) to gain perspective on employee engagement and areas of concern. From November 2020 through May 2021, the work moved into a new phase, as the Academy reviewed employee engagement within the Uniformed Division (UD), including its four main branches. Thus, the

Academy was asked to examine employee engagement in the Secret Service from numerous angles and vantage points. Deep-dives in some offices, and more high-level insights from others, provided a broad picture of employee engagement, which resulted in a range of associated recommendations to improve the workforce's focus and job satisfaction.

Results in Brief

The Secret Service workforce remains highly dedicated and focused on carrying out a challenging and complicated, integrated mission. The Agency's continued success rests on the engagement of its skilled and trained workforce that includes Special Agents, UD Officers, Technical Law Enforcement (TLE) personnel, and administrative, professional, and technical (APT) employees. The commitment level of the workforce faces several identifiable stresses, as it meets increasing and more complicated mission demands without a commensurate increase in staffing levels. The Agency's size has rebounded after a precipitous fall in the early 2010s, though the recent growth will not be enough to meet the ever-growing demand. Hiring to fill vacant positions remains a challenge, as the Agency faces ongoing turnover of more than eight percent with employees leaving for opportunities in other agencies or outside government. While eight percent turnover is not egregious, the time to hire, train, and season new personnel creates a larger vacuum than that figure alone suggests. The workforce wants time away from the office with family, along with pay and benefits to compensate for the inevitable long hours and overtime. The Secret Service workforce would like the opportunity to grow professionally and better understand what is required to move up within the organization. The Agency's business operations—financial management, acquisition programs, and information technology (IT)—provide essential underpinnings to the workforce and contribute directly to the sense of dedication and commitment. The tenor, tone, and specific messages of communication from the Agency's top leadership create a work climate that holds the workforce together and affects whether its employees feel like they belong and are a part of a highly functioning team. The Agency climate is overall positive, but there are notable divisions.

The Agency has taken many specific actions to enhance engagement. The Secret Service is working with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and congressional staff to highlight its staffing needs while accelerating recruiting. Work-life balance has become an open priority, as supervisors are encouraged to find opportunities for staff to have more time at home. The Agency offers a robust pay and compensation package to ensure the Special Agents and UD Officers, who receive full overtime pay for their protection work, receive the pay they have earned and deserve. The Agency has undertaken efforts to delineate career paths and provide information on the assignments and promotions processes that historically have felt byzantine and inscrutable, especially for newer members of the workforce. However, employees continue to have concerns about work assignments and career advancements. The Agency has been drawing together a broad development program for APT employees that has only been partially implemented. With a number of professionalized leaders in place, starting with an experienced Chief Operating Officer (COO), the Agency has laid out an extremely strong set of underlying business operations, marked by streamlined acquisition programs, more efficient financial management systems, enhanced IT resources, and human resources functions. There is a strong focus on efficiency and business process improvement. The Agency has worked to end the tensions among the employee categories

and has enhanced the team-like spirit while encouraging greater diversity that provides staff of all backgrounds the opportunity to contribute to the Agency's critical mission.

Employee engagement is particularly challenging within the almost 1700-person UD that provides physical protection to the White House, the Naval Observatory, and Foreign Missions, along with special teams and capabilities. Insufficient staffing is driving significant overtime. Officers routinely work days off, providing little work-life balance, and the limited opportunities for concentrated skill refresher training. Officers look ahead and have difficulty understanding how they can grow and develop. While dropping, attrition rates (including external and internal attrition from UD) averaged 13 percent during Fiscal Years (FY) 2015-2020. During these same years, UD experienced overall net growth of over 20%, but this has created an experience gap. Agency and Division leadership have identified these issues and are working to increase staffing and open new opportunities for Officers as they advance.

These initiatives, as well as the many others discussed in this report, have successfully raised employee engagement and, as a result, Agency performance. Agency leadership should be commended for making employee engagement a priority. As part of its dedication towards employee engagement, the Secret Service should pursue a number of new initiatives discussed in subsequent chapters. Through a continual focus and willingness to invest in its talented people, the Agency should be able to build for the future and ensure it has an engaged workforce that is essential for the success of the Secret Service and, in turn, our nation's democracy.

Methodology

To accomplish the tasks set out in the Scope of Work, the Academy conducted interviews and reviewed both qualitative and quantitative data derived from primary and secondary research. The Academy team:

- Interviewed close to 300 Secret Service employees (including high-level agency leadership) in over 90 interviews.[3] These interviews—individual, group, and follow-up sessions used a structured question set provided to the interviewees in advance.
- Reviewed a wide range of Agency policy documents and internal memoranda obtained from an extensive document request.
- Analyzed the results of multiple years of Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) results and other assessments of Agency staff engagement and morale.
- Studied past reports on the Secret Service by the Academy, Eagle Hill, HOGR, PMP, Government Accountability Office (GAO), Congressional Research Service, and others.
- Examined existing best practices literature surrounding employee engagement at federal law enforcement agencies.

Throughout the study, the Academy had frequent, detailed communication with the Secret Service and worked closely with Agency leaders to arrange interviews and request data. The Academy found the Secret Service to be welcoming and eager to share information when requested. As

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[3] See Appendix D for a selected list of organizations interviewed.

mission requirements permitted, Secret Service staff made themselves readily available for interviews.

All Academy studies follow a unique model that brings together a professional study team and a Panel of experts, drawn from the Academy's more than 900 distinguished Fellows who come with deep experience from long careers in academia, business, and government. The Panel for this study has extensive government experience in managing diverse organizations, experience within and evaluating the Secret Service, and broad human capital knowledge and experience. The study team conducts interviews, analyzes key materials, and identifies major themes, while the Panel provides insights and guidance. Ultimately, the final report is that of the Panel of experts. The study team and Panel gathered on multiple occasions throughout the study, including several all-day meetings.

The 2020 Presidential Election and the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic created some challenges throughout the study. While significant amounts of research were completed before the onset of the pandemic, the response to the virus made travel for in-person interviews at the Phoenix, Arizona Field Office impossible. Further, due to conditions imposed by the pandemic and the election, staff in the New York Field Office were not available to be interviewed. Though an intensive personal engagement would have been far more preferable, the Academy did speak with Special Agents coming off recent New York assignments, along with headquarters staff who could speak to the work environment and the challenges of operating at a high cost and in a high tempo field office. In-person interviews in meetings and panel discussions turned to phone calls and video-teleconference engagements. Other elements of the study were generally unaffected by the situation, with both the Academy and Secret Service shifting to telework with relative ease following an adjustment period.

Report Organization

This report focuses on employee engagement at the Secret Service. Chapters 1 through 7 cover issues that affect all members of the Secret Service. Chapters 8 and 9 deal with the engagement-impacting issues that are more specific, unique, and localized to divisions, offices, or branches.

This report breaks these component areas down into discrete discussions outlined below:

Chapter 1: Introduces the scope of work, methodology, organization, and results of the study**.**

Chapter 2: Discusses the concept of employee engagement within the federal government, reviews recommendations of other recent blue-ribbon panels, and provides a framework to understand the Agency's employee engagement.

Chapter 3: Examines the state of staffing levels at the Agency relative to its mission demands, looking at efforts to fill position vacancies and reduce turnover.

Chapter 4: Analyzes the effort to give greater work-life balance to the Secret Service workforce, along with the benefits, pay, and compensation provided to mitigate the inevitable long-hours and overtime that come with a no-fail mission.

Chapter 5: Reviews the desire of the workforce for ongoing training, transparency in assignments and promotions, and the ability to grow and develop to be ready for new tasks and responsibilities.

Chapter 6: Looks at the business process functions that affect every employee in the Agency, ensuring they have the tools to do their jobs.

Chapter 7: Examines the overarching work climate and culture of the Agency; specifically, the Agency's communication efforts and the ongoing efforts to bring about a more closely-knit team and enhanced diversity.

Chapter 8: Reviews and analyzes the employee engagement challenges and opportunities within UD.

Chapter 9: Reviews and analyzes the employment engagement challenges and opportunities within certain Secret Service field offices in the Office of Investigations (INV), the Office of Professional Responsibility (RES), the OCFO, the Office of TEC, and HUM.

Chapter 10: Provides a comprehensive list of recommendations for the Agency and the particular divisions and offices studied.

Appendix A: Includes the biographies of Panel members and the professional study team.

Appendix B: Provides an organizational chart of the Secret Service and a description of division and office responsibilities.

Appendix C: Summarizes overlapping recommendations provided to the Secret Service through various reviews over the past decade.

Appendix D: Lists the organizations and offices interviewed over the course of the study.

Appendix E: Details the works cited throughout the report and over the course of the study.

Interspersed within several chapters are sidebar discussions of the specific employee engagement issues faced by several critical mission support organizations, including OCFO, RES, HUM, TEC, and two key field offices: Miami, Florida, and Phoenix, Arizona.

Chapter 2: Employee Engagement — A Critical Success Factor to Organizational Health and Performance

This chapter reviews the concept of employee engagement as it is used and understood across the federal government, highlights the recent state of employee engagement at the Secret Service, and reviews some of the recommendations related to employee engagement from recent high-profile congressional reports and blue-ribbon commissions. This chapter also provides a framework for employee engagement within the Secret Service, highlighting the considerations that are most important to employees and how those issues affect one another.

The years 2012 to 2015 saw a number of high-profile incidents that involved the Secret Service, prompting questions from Congress, the press, and the broader public about the state of the Agency. The workforce's morale and level of engagement plummeted. The Secret Service ranked last in the Partnership for Public Service's 2015 *Best Places to Work in the Federal Government* rankings among federal law enforcement agencies.[4] It also ranked, according to the Partnership's score, in the lowest quartile for employee engagement for the Government as a whole each year from 2013 to 2020.[5] The deteriorating situation prompted multiple analyses and reports on the Secret Service, which included several recommendations on how to specifically enhance employee engagement.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is a critical enabler of individual and organizational performance. Employee engagement manifests in the dedication, persistence, and effort employees commit to their work or their overall attachment to their organization and mission. Multiple studies have demonstrated the impact of employee engagement on workplace performance. In 2013, the Harvard Business Review tied higher levels of reported employee engagement to higher performance enterprise-wide.[6] A 2012 study published in the Journal of Applied Social Psychology found that lower employee engagement was a predictive factor in lower overall employee performance.[7] Indeed, in federal agencies, employee engagement is considered critical, as a 2008 report published by the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board stated:

"We have found evidence that a heightened connection, or engagement, between Federal employees and their organization that surpasses job satisfaction is related to better organizational outcomes. As Federal agencies face stiff competition for new talent, employee engagement

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[4] Partnership for Public Service, Employee Job and Workplace Satisfaction in the Law Enforcement Community, Washington, D.C., May 2016

[5] Partnership for Public Service, https://bestplacestowork.org/rankings/detail/?c=HS14

[6] Harvard Business Review, *The Impact of Employee Engagement on Organization Performance*, June 2013. hbr_achievers_report_sep13.pdf

[7] Dalal, et al. 2012

strategies may help them to attract the best new employees available and retain the talented employees already on board. By fully engaging their employees as recommended, agencies can improve their operations despite a highly competitive labor market."[8]

In the 12 years since that report, the federal government intensified its focus on employee engagement as a key factor driving success among federal employees, with multiple initiatives undertaken to both chart and enhance employee engagement throughout the federal government.

Among federal law enforcement agencies, employee engagement is especially important. For an agency such as the Secret Service, low employee engagement contributes to workforce attrition and reduces the ability of the law enforcement agency to keep pace with community demand.[9] As described further in Chapter 3, this dynamic is reflected at the Secret Service, where low employee engagement drives attrition, further reducing employee engagement, and fueling a cycle that only increases the magnitude of the challenges facing the Agency.

In 2016, the Partnership for Public Service and Deloitte examined 12 federal law enforcement agencies, "including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Secret Service, Customs and Border Protection, the Bureau of Prisons and Transportation Security Administration," and held a workshop with law enforcement officials from various federal law enforcement agencies. Their analysis identified three critical workplace challenges that all 12 federal law enforcement agencies face: (1) wellness in a demanding environment, (2) opening up communication in a 'need to know' atmosphere, and (3) the importance of employee satisfaction and commitment to accomplish the mission."[10] To address the three critical workplace challenges, the Partnership for Public Service recommends making engagement issues a part of a "broader human capital strategy," and recommends agencies begin addressing problems by "starting small" at the office and unit level.

Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) and Federal Perspectives on Employee Engagement

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) began administering biennial government-wide employee feedback surveys – the Federal Human Capital Survey – in 2002 and migrated to the annually administered FEVS in 2010, with employee engagement measures being core elements of those surveys.[11] OPM conducted regression analyses of 2013, 2014, and 2015 FEVS data, identified key drivers of employee engagement among federal agencies, and correlated the impact

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[8] U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, *The Power of Federal Employee Engagement,* September 2008, p. i, https://www.mspb.gov/netsearch/viewdocs.aspx?docnumber=379024&version=379721

[9] Police Recruitment and Retention for the New Millennium, RAND Corporation, 2010, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2010/RAND_MG959.pdf

[10] The Partnership for Public Service & Deloitte, *Employee Job and Workplace Satisfaction in the Law Enforcement Community,* May 2016, p. 2, https://bestplacestowork.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/09/2015_Best_Places_to_Work_in_the_Federal_Government_reg___An alysis___Employee_Job_and_Workplace_Satisfaction_in_the_Law_Enforcement_Community-2016.05.11.pdf

[11] For more information on the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, visit the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's website at www.opm.gov/fevs/about

of engagement on employee retention. The data led OPM to conclude that "Engagement Matters!" (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. Excerpt from FEVS Engagement Index
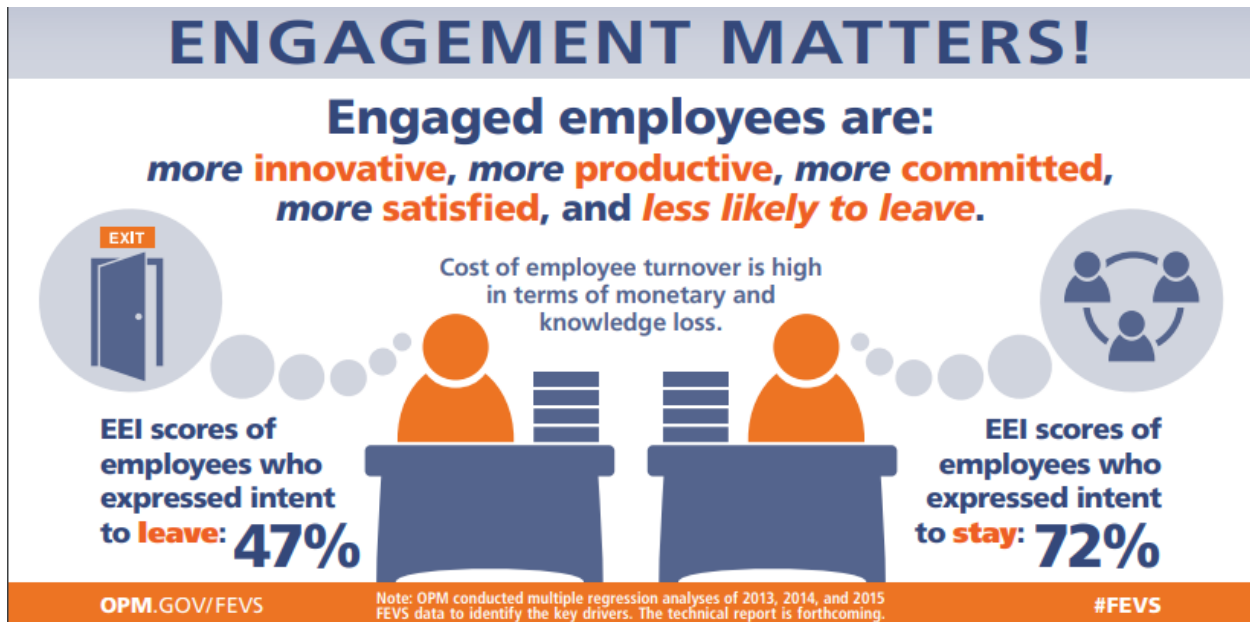
Source: United States Office of Personnel Management, 2015

Employees who expressed the intent to leave their positions were found to rate an average of 47 percent on the EEI, whereas those intending to stay rated at 72 percent. Retention is contingent largely on the level of engagement employees feel in their position. According to the same OPM analysis, the key factors driving that engagement are:

- Performance Feedback
- Collaborative Management
- Merit System Principles[12]
- Training and Development
- Work-Life Balance

Enhancing employee engagement was a governmental priority well before the FEVS more consistently and rigorously measured progress in the area. One of the most notable recent initiatives on employee engagement emerged as guidance from the President's Management Agenda, issued by OPM in October 2018.[13] This guidance calls upon all major department

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[12] Defined by OPM as: "support fairness and protect employees from arbitrary actions, favoritism, political coercion, and reprisal"

[13] Office of Personnel Management, President's Management Agenda Cross-Agency Priority Goal 3: Improve Performance Management and Engagement, Memorandum to federal Chief Human Capital Officers, October 2018

components to identify the bottom 20 percent of scorers on the EEI and target a 20 percent improvement by the end of 2020.

The Secret Service and Engagement

As reflected in the survey results, the working environment and climate of the Secret Service have fluctuated significantly over the past decade. The scores have trended upwards after multiple years of decline and plateaued between 2015 and 2017. The primary reason for the precipitous decline of engagement after 2011 was the implementation of severe budget reductions, known as Sequestration. The budget reductions led to reorganizations and reduced personnel levels. A series of high-profile incidents in the following years led to public questioning of the Agency's effectiveness, leading to a further drop in engagement.

Figure 2. Secret Service Employee Engagement Score, 2003–2020
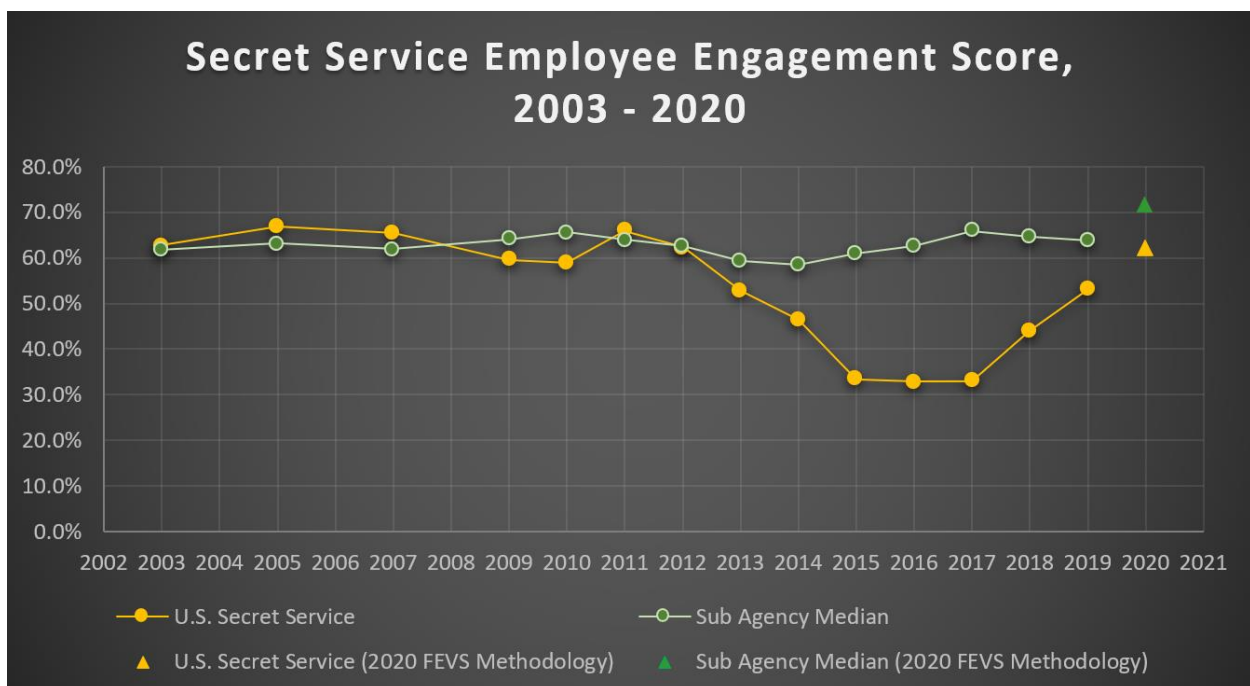
Data Source: Partnership for Public Service[14]

While the Agency has shown improvement in the Partnership's scores, engagement at the Secret Service is below the sub-agency median as of 2020. Most of the Agency scores are in the lowest 25 percent of all sub-component federal agencies, except for the category of Pay, which is above the median, and Effective Leadership (Senior Leaders) which is within the lower 50 percent. Overall, the Agency ranks 347th out of 411 sub-component federal agencies, landing in the bottom 25 percent of sub-components. However, the Secret Service scores slightly higher than DHS's overall Employee Engagement Score.

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[14] In 2020, the Partnership for Public Service adjusted the Best Places to Work methodology used to calculate engagement scores, resulting in slightly higher engagement scores for agencies than in previous years. https://bestplacestowork.org/rankings/detail/HS14#trends

While the Panel requested details regarding the 2020 FEVS results for individual offices and units, the Secret Service had not provided that information at the time this report was completed. The Agency cited the delayed administration of the survey brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to follow a methodical internal release of the results as reasons for not being able to provide the detailed results.

Previous Studies' Findings and Recommendations

The various studies, both internally directed efforts and externally commissioned reviews that followed from the high-profile incidents of 2012 to 2015 included numerous findings and recommendations on employee engagement. This study was able to draw on a number of other efforts to develop findings and recommendations to help improve the performance at the Secret Service, with employee engagement, climate, and job satisfaction a top focus. These reports provided helpful data, history, and, when taken together, a comprehensive list of many of the suggestions put to the Secret Service for improvement (See Appendix C for a summary of overlapping recommendations provided to the Secret Service through various reviews over time).[15] Four reports, in particular, formed the core of this background information.

First, DHS convened the PMP in 2014 to assess the organizational issues that contributed to a White House perimeter breach earlier that year.[16] In addition to calling for such significant actions as the construction of a new White House fence, the PMP emphasized the need for greater levels of training for Special Agents and UD Officers with no less than "10 percent of their time" training. The PMP noted that a staffing deficit prevented the Agency workforce to take the time for training. These staffing shortfalls, the PMP further noted, were having negative effects on the morale, focus, and readiness of the wider workforce.

In 2015, in response to some of the same incidents, HOGR issued a report entitled "United States Secret Service: An Agency in Crisis."[17] HOGR found, like the PMP, that the Agency was experiencing a staffing crisis that started in 2011 as a consequence of the 2011 Sequestration budget reductions. The difficulties in managing through such precipitous reductions created an environment where employee morale was so low as to cause increased attrition. The environment was observed to have deteriorated to the point that Agency employees had lost confidence in Secret Service leadership and believed that there was no longer accountability in the organization.

As the external reviews of the PMP and HOGR were underway, the leadership of the Secret Service brought in Eagle Hill Consulting to conduct a third-party assessment of work-life integration at the Secret Service. Eagle Hill's work was centered around surveys, focus groups, interviews

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[15] U.S. Government Accountability Office, U.S. Secret Service: Further Actions Needed to Fully Address Protective Mission Panel Recommendations, May 2019, https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/699267.pdf

[16] United States Secret Service Protective Mission Panel, Report from the United States Secret Service Protective Mission Panel to the Secretary of Homeland Security, December 2014, https://www.dhs.gov/publication/executive-summary-report-usss-protective-mission-panel

[17] United States House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, United States Secret Service: An Agency in Crisis, December 2015, https://www.congress.gov/114/crpt/hrpt385/CRPT-114hrpt385.pdf

conducted with Secret Service staff, data review from metrics like FEVS, and external benchmarking and best practices research. Eagle Hill found that work-life integration was lacking at the Agency and that Secret Service employees wanted to see the health of the organization improve.[18] The report made multiple recommendations, with an emphasis on establishing consistency in scheduling, maintaining effective communication between leaders and employees, increasing transparency surrounding Agency policies, and enhancing employee support functions.

In 2016, the Secret Service engaged the Academy to conduct a study on the Secret Service's implementation of reforms in response to recent events. This effort culminated in the report, *United States Secret Service: Review of Organizational Change Efforts*.[19] Among many other recommendations on how the Agency could lock in the progress made in putting the PMP and HOGR recommendations in place, the report included several key recommendations centered around employee engagement, work climate, and mission support functions including:

- The Secret Service should conduct a comprehensive assessment of human capital functions and organizational structure, focusing on what is core to strategic human capital management and practices and the efficient and effective delivery of human capital services.

- Secret Service leadership should adopt an integrated strategic management approach, applying a formal change management strategy and enterprise architecture to establish a roadmap that will drive organizational change and institutionalize Agency transformation efforts.

- The Secret Service should staff and build out the Agency's enterprise architecture program and establish an IT roadmap to support Agency transformation efforts.

- The Secret Service should conduct an organizational assessment of the OCFO.

A Framework for Secret Service Employee Engagement

Throughout this project, several themes regarding employee engagement began to emerge. Employees repeated statements, with only slight variation, about the programs, policies, and practices that allowed them to focus on their responsibilities. Similarly, issues and concerns that hindered their efforts were repeated, whether by, for example, a Special Agent interviewed at a field office or an APT at Headquarters. These areas of concern led to a framework that shows the key elements and drivers of employee engagement at the Secret Service. The components of the framework are largely in line with the factors of employee engagement at other federal agencies

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[18] Eagle Hill Consulting, United States Secret Service Work/Life Integration Assessment, August 2016

[19] National Academy of Public Administration, United States Secret Service: Review of Organizational Change Efforts, Washington, D.C., October 2016, https://www.napawash.org/uploads/Academy_Studies/USSS-Final-Report-10.31.16.pdf

measured through the FEVS, though there are some considerations of more unique (business processes) and greater concern (staffing levels) the framework brings to the fore.

As Figure 3 illustrates, employee engagement at the Secret Service reflects an interlocking set of specially focused and cross-cutting issues that are of central concern to its workforce. The focused areas, called core elements, include:

- **Staffing Levels and Hiring:** The extent to which the Secret Service has sufficient trained and ready personnel focused on key mission areas, along with its efforts to retain personnel and the pace at which it fills open positions.

- **Work-Life Balance and Compensation**: The ability of employees to have time away from work for family and other outside pursuits, while providing sufficient pay and benefits to attract and retain employees.

- **Training and Career Development**: The ability to take on additional skills and improve in a chosen career specialty, to develop a broader understanding of the Secret Service, and understand the requirements for promotion.

The cross-cutting areas, called key drivers, include:

- **Professionalization of Mission-Support and Business Operations:** The working of mission-support functions, including business processes, associated IT, and decision-making bodies and executive governance.

- **Mission and Culture:** Whether the work climate promotes teamwork, reduces divisions, and fosters professionalism.

The latter drivers are often operating in the background, but are foundational, affecting employee engagement and the Agency's workings. Both the core elements and the key drivers need to be addressed to enhance employee engagement.

Figure 3. Core Elements and Key Drivers of Organizational Engagement

Source: National Academy of Public Administration

The Secret Service, as this report details, has worked vigorously across all of these areas to improve job satisfaction and employee engagement. Whether as part of follow-up from the PMP, the 2016 NAPA study, or its basic effort to better support its workforce, a vast array of initiatives are underway. The Agency has not brought these diverse activities together under a unifying effort, like a broad vision and accompanying strategy, which would concentrate focus, avoid overlap, and find synergies.

Recommendation

2.1   Develop, implement, and internally publicize a new vision and strategy for healthy employee engagement that aligns with the Agency's strategy, including outcomes desired and steps needed to achieve the vision. Steps include:

- **Setting the ideal picture for healthy engagement, such as the work-life balance, staffing levels, and access to developmental opportunities the Secret Service strives to achieve;**

- **Detailing the type of inclusive work environment that the Secret Service wishes to achieve in order to foster greater teamwork among all personnel;**

- **Acknowledging the current state of engagement and setting forth specific steps;**

- **Detailing assignment of office responsibilities to enact that strategy, along with specific actions and timelines; and**

- **Evaluating desired outcomes and measuring concrete progress.**

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Chapter 3: The Dueling Pressures of Operations Intensity and Inadequate Staffing Levels

Staffing to carry out the Secret Service's no-fail mission emerged as the first core element of employee engagement, a dominant issue that affects the workforce's outlook and their sense of connection to the mission. The Agency's mission requirements continue to grow more intense and complex. The Secret Service has significantly increased its recruiting efforts, which has alleviated some of the challenges of taking on more and more responsibility without the trained, skilled, experienced, and appropriately placed people.

This chapter examines the reasons for the increase in the Agency workload and potential options to address mission expansion. It reviews the push to expand hiring over the past decade and reviews some of the dynamics that have led to a diminished rate of staffing increases that do not match the commitments the Agency is undertaking. The chapter further explores the state of hiring, along with retention efforts. Figure 4 highlights the close connection between staffing levels, attrition, and employee engagement, as there emerges a strong relationship between increased staffing levels, decreased attrition, and higher engagement.

Figure 4. Engagement Scores correlated with Secret Service staffing and attrition, FY 2010–FY 2020
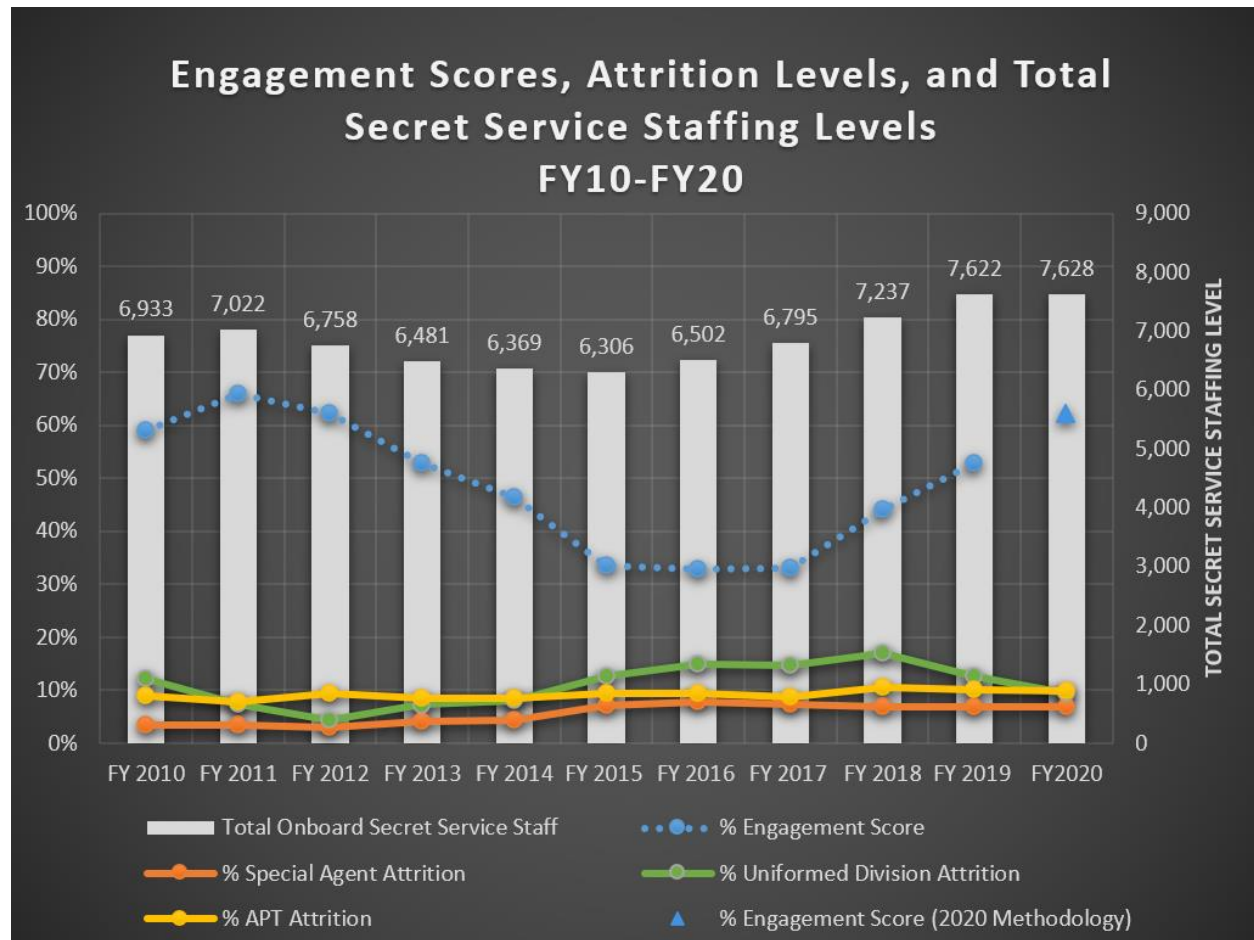
Operations: An Increasingly Intense Environment

There is a strong sense across the Agency that the intensity of operations has significantly increased in recent years. All those interviewed in the course of the study, including experienced Special Agents, UD Officers, and APT employees, reported that the Agency is busier than at any point in their career. For Special Agents, the increased workload means more time traveling for protection, less time to train, and less time at home. For UD Officers, mission demands translate to canceled leave and vacation requests at the last minute, more frequent travel for special events, and less time with family. For APT employees, high operation tempo means more late nights and extensive travel for those who support the protective mission. The stresses of a relentless mission ripple through every Division and office, according to those interviewed for this study. The workforce grows fatigued, negatively affecting performance, and distracting managers and supervisors.

The Agency's responses to the 2019 FEVS illustrate the concerns of the Agency's employees over staffing levels and the workload imbalances that can be created. Among the OCFO, HUM, TEC, and RES - the offices specifically targeted for review as part of this study - the FEVS results revealed negative responses to the statements, "My workload is reasonable" and "My work unit is able to recruit people with the right skills." Looking at these two responses together provides insights as to whether employees feel they are being asked to carry out a fair number of tasks and whether they believe assistance and additional support are on the way. Several of the mission support offices on which the study focused, such as the OCFO and TEC, scored extremely low in both categories.

The Academy's 2016 report highlighted the extreme pressures low staffing levels and high workload create. Similar to the PMP and the HOGR report, the Academy report highlighted the negative consequences of staffing shortfalls with high operational tempo. "Taken together with increased turnover, the impact on the remaining workforce was a burgeoning workload leading to increased overtime and travel, canceled leave, and declining morale," the Academy wrote. An internal work-life assessment completed by Eagle Hill reinforced the challenges of intense operations without the right staffing levels and the right skills.

Analysis of the current state of the organization's integrated mission underscores some of the reasons that the workforce feels that the intensity has significantly increased. Under 18 U.S.C. Section 3056(a), the Secret Service must provide protection for the following individuals:[21]

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[20] In 2020, the Partnership for Public Service adjusted the Best Places to Work methodology used to calculate engagement scores, resulting in slightly higher engagement scores for agencies than in previous years. https://bestplacestowork.org/rankings/detail/HS14#trends

[21] List quoted from Congressional Research Service, "U.S. Secret Service Protection of Persons and Facilities," In Focus 7-5700, October 2018, Washington, D.C. https://fas.org/sgp/crs/homesec/IF10646.pdf

President, Vice President, President- and Vice President-elect; immediate families of those listed above;[22] former presidents, their spouses, and their children under the age of 16; former Vice Presidents, their spouses, and their children under the age 16; visiting foreign Heads of State or Governments; distinguished foreign visitors and official United States representatives on special missions abroad, as designated by Presidential memorandum; and major presidential and vice presidential candidates within 120 days of the general presidential elections, and their spouses.

The President can designate additional individuals to receive protection. The Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of the DHS, along with several White House officials, have received protection. Former President Trump authorized protection for family members and White House Officials for the first six months of the new Administration, placing an unprecedented protection burden on the Service.   The number of White House Officials receiving protection can vary between administrations based on external threats in certain portfolios.   The protection designation can last for a full administration or be time-limited, making it difficult for the Agency to plan for, and fund, the required protective details.

The main reason cited by interviewees for the increase in pace is the growing complexity of the Secret Service's basic protection mission. The threats against the President and other protectees have grown more intensive and complex, which has made the protection mission a more elaborate undertaking, requiring not only the personnel immediately surrounding the protectee but also the teams that provide intelligence, ongoing monitoring, and technical support.

In the realm of investigations, the Secret Service reports that the scale, scope, and complexity of financial crimes has changed fundamentally in recent years, requiring cybersecurity experts who can conduct elaborate and complicated computer forensics investigations. The two mission areas are tightly intertwined, as the content of investigations and investigative techniques feed into the protection mission. The Secret Service coordinates, directs, and holds ultimate responsibility for National Security Special Events (NSSEs), such as political party Presidential nominating conventions or Presidential Inaugurations. These events are complex operations, bringing together multiple federal, state, and local agencies, as well as Secret Service's two mission areas.

The second area cited for the increase in operational intensity is protectee travel. The Secret Service draws on its Special Agents, UD Officers, Physical Security Specialists (PSS), and TLE personnel to provide protection on travel visits. The extent of travel has consistently increased in recent years (See Figure 5).[23] Presidential campaigns that occur every four years create an additional dynamic that puts stress on the entire organization. The INV must support a great deal of the additional workload as field offices provide the Special Agents to augment the various protection details. The previous Secret Service Director, Randolph Alles, cited a 32 percent

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[22] The size and makeup of the immediate family changes drastically with each protectee and recently this has been the major challenge. President Trump has a number of children who have careers in international business and travel extensively while the President served in office.

[23] The data in Figure 5 does not include Presidential Candidates/Nominees, Foreign Dignitaries, off the record trips, or in-town travel stops, not requiring a seven-day advance. Department of Homeland Security, *U.S. Secret Service Budget Overview for Fiscal Year 2020, p. 55, https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/19_0318_MGMT_CBJ-Secret-Service_0.pdf*

increase in protection events during the 2016 presidential campaign over the 2008 campaign, the last comparable campaign without an incumbent.[24]

Figure 4. Secret Service protectees over time, FY 2010—2018
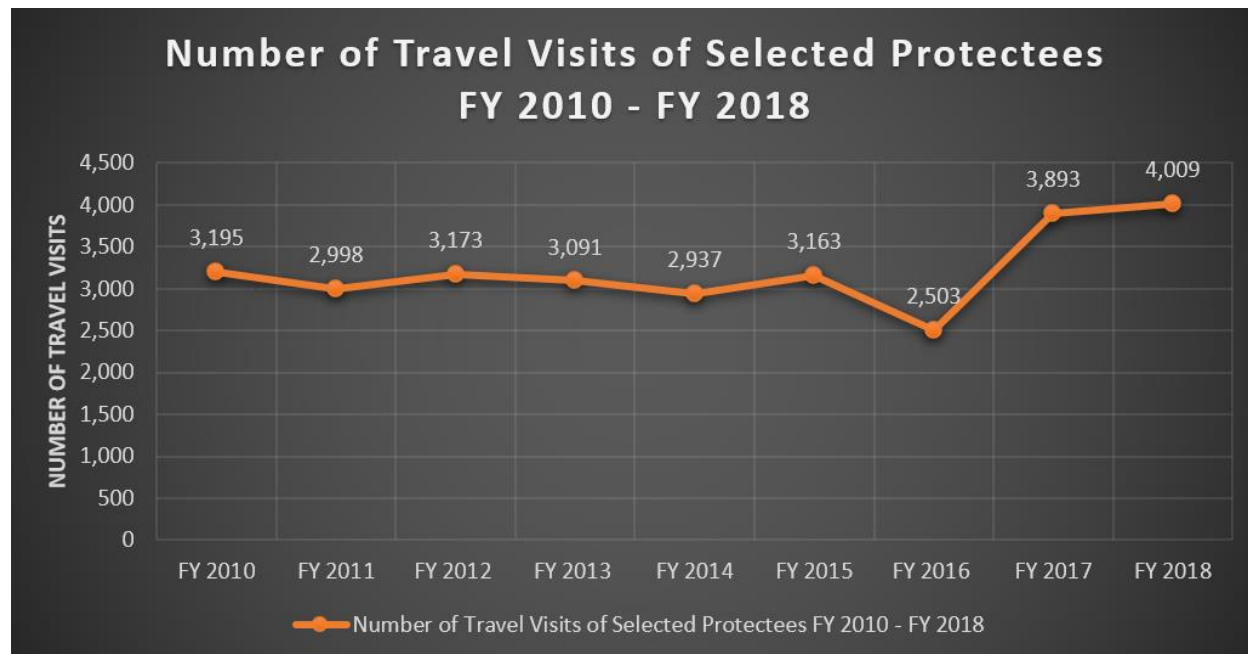
Source: National Academy of Public Administration

The third area cited for the noticeable increase in the pace of operations was the former President's family. By statute, the Secret Service must protect the President and his immediate family. President Trump has a number of children with careers in international business who traveled extensively. Closely related to this operational demand is the fact the Secret Service is also providing protection for others beyond the occupants of the White House and their family. The Panel made several requests for the total number of protectees for which the Secret Service is responsible. However, the Secret Service has not provided the information before the submission of the report citing safeguards to specific protective operational information, including threat analysis requirements.

The Secret Service covers not only the already large number of elected officials and family members associated with the incumbent Administration, but also former Presidents Trump, Obama, George W. Bush, Clinton, and Carter. The Former Presidents Protection Act of 2012 rescinded a limitation implemented by a previous act of Congress in 1994, which would have reduced protection to 10 years after leaving office for all presidents after 1997.[25] During campaign seasons, such as 2016 and late-2019 into 2020, the protective slate expanded further to include

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[24] Alles, June 8, 2017, https://www.dhs.gov/news/2017/06/08/written-testimony-usss-director-house-homeland-security-subcommittee-transportation

[25] Pub. L. 112-257

presidential and vice-presidential candidates, further exacerbating the demand placed upon the Agency.

The response to the COVID-19 pandemic created new stresses for an Agency facing relentless operational pressures. The initial months of the pandemic response provided something of an operational pause for the Agency, as the travel of protectees slowed to a trickle during the spring and summer of 2020. The national political conventions moved to virtual and more limited gatherings to varying extents, lessening the intensity of these NSSEs. It would be a stretch, however, to call the pandemic response downtime, as the candidates began to travel more extensively for campaign events towards the end of the summer. To prevent the spread of the virus, the Agency significantly increased testing and the supply of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE). It also instituted and implemented new procedures for travel to protection events and provided for the quarantining and care for those who contract COVID-19. Despite these countermeasures, several employees contracted the COVID-19 virus, which has placed a premium on caring for and supporting these employees through a dangerous illness, while heightening measures to protect individuals. Agency officials do not foresee the virus fundamentally changing the nature and intensity of protection and investigations and believe the intensity of operations will return to its usual high intensity as vaccination rates continue to increase and the nation returns to some kind of normal work and travel pattern.

The Secret Service has addressed its increased commitments in a number of ways. With the evolution of investigations—changing from short-term investigations of the past to current, long-term, complex, transnational investigations—the INV has some flexibility to focus on key investigative cases that have high impact. This includes deterring future criminal activity, highlighting the capability of the Agency to crack down on newly emerging nefarious activities or shut down financial crimes of a particularly high scale. The INV contributes field staff into a pool of Special Agents available for protective assignments during the campaign, an arrangement known as the Rotational Assignments (ROTA) onto protective assignments. At the time of this report, the Secret Service goal is for 25 percent of available personnel to be part of the ROTA; however, INV is consistently in excess of the goal. This leaves fewer Special Agents for investigations, placing a premium on close management and balancing caseload.

Notably, the PMP and HOGR reports suggested that the Secret Service's mission scope should be reduced to enable the Agency to commit more resources to the no-fail protective mission. However, in conversations with Secret Service frontline employees, the importance of maintaining the investigative mission at its current scope was emphasized. Synergies in investigative operations are frequently found, and while the protective mission is the most visible face of the Agency, investigations are tied to the Agency's core identity. Removal of that element of the mission is liable to be deleterious to Agency morale and lead to a loss of critical talent.

The Agency is reluctant to advocate for a reduction in the number of protectees and residences it covers. The Agency could work with the White House, in coordination with DHS, to request relief on the number of individuals it protects. This should include identifying direct, indirect, and opportunity costs associated with each additional protectee. The focus of the Secret Service's protective operations could also center exclusively around those required under statute. Cabinet members or key White House staff currently receiving Secret Service protection could receive

protection from other federal law enforcement agencies that currently protect other cabinet officials. This process of education and discussion could occur with a change of Administration almost on an automatic basis.

The Panel understands the reluctance of the Secret Service to request a re-centering of its protective operations, given its strong orientation and responsiveness to its protectees, and above all the President. Requesting a reduction in protectees goes against the basic "ethos" of the Agency that is very focused on supporting the President and carrying out its mission. The Agency, understandably, does not want to give the impression that it is anything other than entirely focused on supporting its protectees however possible. This is a sensitive and complex topic and should be approached delicately. The Panel believes that it is critical for these discussions, informed by cost data, to occur.

Recommendation

3.1   Stabilize the relative size of the protection portfolio, providing the Agency more planning predictability for the protection and investigative missions. Steps include:

- **Identifying the historically standard protection portfolio that is in addition to statutory protectees (Cabinet Members and White House Officials).**

- **Identifying, and continually updating, the fully burdened cost per type of protectee (e.g., young family member, adult family member, White House Official) at various risk levels.**

- **Continuing to engage the DHS, White House and Congress to review the impact of covering protectees beyond those required in statute, including a threat-based requirement as a condition of providing or extending protection.**

Staffing Level Challenges

The main way that the Secret Service has sought to address the challenge of increasing mission requirements is to increase staffing. An increase in staffing levels and associated hiring helps the Agency carry out what is an extremely labor-intensive mission. After the high-profile incidents in the early 2010s, Congress, DHS, and the Agency aligned themselves around the need for an increase in funding to recruit Special Agents and UD Officers. Those significant increases stabilized the situation, enabling the Agency to better balance mission demands.

The Agency received staffing increases of almost 300 positions each year beginning in FY 2015. The Agency successfully fulfilled its human capital plan goals for additional staff for FY 2015-2019, increasing staffing levels from a low point of 6,369 to 7,628 that included an increase of more than 379 Special Agents, 291 UD Officers, and 652 APT employees, which includes TLE personnel (see Table 1 for years FY 18—20).

Table 1. Secret Service Attrition and Hiring FY 18–20

Secret Service Attrition and Hiring FY18 – FY20	Hires (FY18)	Attrition Rate (FY18)	Total Staff (FY18)	Hires (FY19)	Attrition (FY19)	Total Staff (FY19)	Hires (FY20)	Attrition Rate (FY20)	Total Staff (FY20)
Special Agents	458	6.89%	3611	350	6.82%	3708	174	6.88%	3632
Uniformed Division	356	17.05%	1560	309	12.52%	1661	111	9.38%	1620
APT	36*	10.55%	2066	373	10.04%	1942	303	9.83%	2044
Technical Law Enforcement	-	N/A**	N/A***	35	8.36%	311	35	4.21%	332
Agency Wide	990	7.57%	7237	951	7.42%	7622	544	7.05%	7628

APT hires include TLE in FY 18.
*** Attrition rate for TLE included in APT figures in FY 18.*
*** TLE not a standalone job category until FY 19, with Total Staff figures included in APT counts in years prior.*

The Agency has developed a new hiring plan considering changing mission demands. The Agency foresees the need to reach a staffing level of 9,595 personnel by FY 2026 and 11,669 in the later years. The Secret Service uses multiple Staffing Allocation Models to develop these requirements reflecting different segments of the workforce, looking at considerations like protection and investigation requirements, which are the dominant mission-based factors for the Agency. The models also take into consideration training requirements and that sufficient personnel are available to work to avoid excessive overtime. As indicated in interviews, DHS reviewed and validated these models. Specific hiring targets have yet to be established, but it is understood that the Agency will require an additional 300 people per year among its various employee categories— Special Agent, UD Officer, APT, and TLE—to meet the staffing level goals.

The Agency, however, struggles to receive the support for funding to meet the staffing level increases that are needed to reach the goal of an average of 300 new employees per year. Although the Secret Service initially requested an increase of 300 employees in their FY 2021 budget, it was reduced to 150 new employees before the release to Congress. Congress enacted an increase of 120 new employees in FY 2020 from FY 2019, as per the formal budget request. As the Agency loses hiring momentum with fewer hires authorized than what the Agency needs, the Agency's leadership is greatly concerned that the Agency will not have sufficient personnel to carry out its mission in a stable and balanced fashion unless its staffing levels can increase. Without the funding for sustained increases to match the rising commitments and activity of the Agency, all parts of the Agency will continue to be stretched thin, and continued overtime expenses will increase personnel costs, decrease morale, and exhaust the workforce. Secret Service will always meet its protective mission, but it will come at the expense of the investigative mission and employee morale and engagement.

Position Vacancies and Hiring

Whatever the personnel levels, it is always incumbent on an organization to fill vacant positions as soon as possible with candidates who have the right qualifications and background. A fully staffed office allows employees to focus on their main responsibilities. Supervisors can supervise,

and employees can carry out the tasks for which they have trained and prepared. A fully-staffed organization, even one that might require more positions in the longer term is healthier and more functional, as productivity and quality of work increase along with job satisfaction. The pressure to fill jobs and reduce vacancies will only increase if the Agency does not receive support for its staffing increases.

Members of the offices interviewed discussed the challenges position vacancies create. Employees are required to fill more than one role, getting stretched to the point where the quality of work suffers, or they must work so much overtime that burn-out becomes a threat. Given the sensitivity of its mission to protect the President and other designated protectees, the Agency has extremely high security requirements for most of its positions. Most employees are required to obtain a Top Secret clearance, and Special Agents, UD Officers, TLE, and some APT employees, including cyber and other law enforcement professionals, are required to go through a polygraph screening. That background/polygraph process comes on top of the already complicated federal hiring process. The time to fill a position is going to be substantial under the best of circumstances, given the hiring and clearance steps that have to be taken.

Many APT employees described a negative cycle where the increased workload due to vacancies leads to more departures, which only stretches individuals further and leads to even more departures.

The current Special Agent and UD Officer hiring targets are 192 calendar days and 132 business days. The process has three main phases, qualification evaluation, medical fitness, and security. During the qualification evaluation phase, applicants are evaluated against the requirements outlined in a job vacancy announcement. The Agency evaluates applicants' initial qualifications, interviews the candidates, and reevaluates their qualifications. The Agency then issues a conditional job offer. The medical phase involves a detailed physical, drug screening, and an eye exam. In the security phase, candidates complete a very detailed security questionnaire, participate in a security interview, have an extensive background investigation conducted on them, and, for Special Agents, UD Officers, TLE, and selected APT employees, participate in a polygraph examination.

A Partnership between TEC and HUM to Fill Vacancies Faster

Understaffing in the Office of TEC, especially in the field, has a negative and outsized impact on the morale of the TEC workforce. The impact on morale is felt across TLE, PSS, and other APT employees within TEC. The Chief Technology Officer (CTO) and Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) acknowledge the impact understaffing has on the TEC workforce, and have been successful in obtaining a fairly significant increase in the number of funded positions. In an attempt to increase the hiring tempo, the CTO has provided three TEC-funded positions to the CHCO to focus specifically on filling positions within TEC. This partnership is promising; however, even when TEC positions are filled, there is still be a period of 18-24 months before the new employees are capable of contributing to TEC in a manner that doesn't require supervision by others within the division.

For more on TEC organizational challenges and recommendations, see Chapter 9.

Special Agent and UD applicants experience a very high drop-out rate through the hiring and security clearance process. During the latter phase, for example, the failure rate as characterized by interviews is upwards of 70 percent. Anecdotally, interviewees claimed that to fill 50 vacancies, around 400 candidates need to be selected. This number is pared down to 200 through the background investigation checks and cut to 100 in the polygraph. For cost reasons, the Agency takes a linear approach to fill each position. The Agency does not carry out simultaneous background checks for alternates candidates; those checks only occur once the primary drops out. Filling a Special Agent training class of 24 requires an average of 3775 candidates to apply at the outset.

Because most APT employees do not have to complete a medical examination or polygraph test, the timeline for hiring can be considerably less, often upwards of 40 fewer days, though the initial qualification phase can be longer than that of Special Agents.

The 2016 Academy report highlighted some of the significant improvements the Secret Service put in place to improve hiring timelines for Special Agents and UD Officers. The Agency leverages Schedule B excepted service hiring authorities to narrow the pool of candidates and establish its own exams. Experience requirements on job announcements were more clearly articulated, and the resume review process was streamlined to speed review and improve scoring. An extensive interview, known as SUPER interview, ensures a detailed, consistent interview of candidates while providing a realistic understanding of the day-to-day requirements of the job. Those enhancements remain in place.

Recent interviews, as well as the 2016 Academy study, highlighted the benefits for speeding Special Agent and UD Officer hiring by holding a candidate screening event called an Entry Level Assessment Center (ELACs). These events are typically held over a multiple-day period, and it brings applicants together for an intensive round of tests, SUPER interviews, and security interviews. This approach provides an effective means to expedite hiring and speed up timelines. However, Special Agents and UD Officers are required for the events to conduct interviews and background checks on candidates. Additionally, the shutdowns and stay-at-home orders as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic have temporarily reduced the ability for ELACs to operate. These sessions can be incredibly complex to schedule, as it requires strong participation from the field offices that provide the Special Agents to conduct interviews. As a result, the Agency often only carries out these ELACs during hiring pushes, instead of on a regular basis.

The hiring process can be fragmented within HUM, where hiring for Special Agent and UD Officer positions is distributed among several of its constituent divisions. The Talent and Employee Acquisition Division (TAD) focuses on the initial qualification phase and the Security Management Division (SMD) focuses on the security phase. The Safety, Health, and Environmental Programs Division (SAF) conducts required medical examinations. Outside of HUM, the INV conducts the polygraph examination using trained Special Agents, UD Officers, and re-employed annuitants. INV also conducts a very detailed review of all the factors – typically about 23 – requested by SMD in the background investigations of applicants. There is a good working relationship among these offices, and there is a regular standing meeting or group that reviews progress on each part of the process and discusses areas of improvement.

The divisions of TAD and SMD also utilize separate personnel management software systems to manage each part of the recruitment and personnel security process, and the systems are not mapped to directly transfer data between one another. TAD utilizes a staffing application called Secret Service Hire as its main hiring platform. Secret Service Hire is used to document the job analysis, recruitment, and selection of candidates. This system interfaces with USAJOBS to advertise the position and is the system that captures candidate applications. SMD uses the Applicant Lifecycle Information System (ALIS), a software system developed in-house with contract support, as its main platform for personnel security documentation gathering and approval. ALIS and Secret Service Hire are not interfaced and candidate information from Secret Service Hire must be manually keyed into ALIS. According to information provided by the Agency, the ALIS database houses highly confidential Publicly Identifiable Information (PII), creating numerous security issues if connected directly to Secret Service Hire that is interfaced with USAJOBS.

The separation between ALIS and USAJOBS, while understandable, means the databases need to be populated by hand to ensure a smooth transition between processes, in effect, introducing both additional workload and the potential for entry errors. The creation of a new HUM IT office within HUM, known as Human Resources Business Solutions, provides an opportunity to examine options to smooth data transfer between ALIS and Secret Service Hire and to explore how to address security issues to enable the use of one system instead of two can be used.

Finally, in 2017, the Agency began to use metrics to track progress and cycle times at the various stages of the law enforcement hiring process to drive systemic improvements. More recently, this data has fed hiring models that capture yield rates at each stage to more accurately project performance against hiring goals. Continuing to gather this kind of data - and expanding the analysis to include APT hiring - will help HUM determine where inefficiencies exist to continue to improve the hiring process.

The hiring of APT employees has emerged as a lower priority within the Agency, though the challenges are similar in scale with similar hiring timelines. Challenges in hiring APT employees inevitably impact those Special Agents and UD Officers they support. The hiring of APT employees did not come under the scrutiny of the PMP or the HOGR report and was beyond the scope of the 2016 Academy Study. The latter encouraged the Secret Service to review its processes of hiring APT employees to see where they could streamline those processes, while looking at process improvement, utilizing available flexibilities, and benchmarking against other federal agencies. The Agency has engaged a federally funded research and development center to specifically document hiring business processes.

The Secret Service has staffing level shortfalls in its talent acquisition unit, which slows down the process of APT employee hiring. It can take upwards of 29 days to issue a certificate of eligible applicants that provides hiring managers a list of the best-qualified candidates from which managers make a selection. The standard duration, according to the OPM, for this period between when a job announcement is closed and when this list of interview-eligible applicants is provided is usually half that time. Similarly, the interview stage of Secret Service hiring often takes upwards of 30 days, often a week longer than the federal average. Officials within the Agency say that the timelines are extended in this manner because of the agency focus on UD and Special Agent hiring.

Hiring managers typically have many other responsibilities, and they balance their workload and the hiring of new employees against the deadlines set by TAD for the return of the certificate of eligible applicants. Reviewing and updating the timelines for issuing a certificate of eligible applicants and the interview selection process would be a way to accelerate hiring. Because of the rigorous security standards for most APT positions, many selected APTs do not pass the background investigation, exacerbating the APT staffing challenges.

A July 2019 GAO report highlighted best practices that federal agencies can follow to improve hiring.[26] One key element is using the flexibilities and authorities to expedite hiring and reduce the steps necessary to hire a new employee. The Secret Service has identified areas to explore to ask for relief or make changes to better meet its unique hiring needs. The Agency plans to engage on this issue with OPM, which is responsible for the oversight of these authorities.

Attrition and Retention

The Agency's staffing level and hiring challenges place a premium on holding onto the talent the Agency already has in its ranks. Interviews and analysis point to attrition as a significant area of concern. Departures of experienced personnel have created leadership and skills gaps that have impacted readiness, taken on additional mission risk, and impacted morale and job satisfaction. The retention issues of the Agency come in three different forms that require different tools and approaches to address.

The Agency has experienced 1,811 non-retirement separations of Special Agents and Uniform Division Officers since October 2012. Almost 50 percent of those separations come from Special Agents and UD Officers with between four and 16 years of service. Sixteen percent of Special Agents in the force have between zero and three years, as there has been an intense hiring surge in recent years. This number would be higher if Secret Service was able to hire during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the field, this trend in attrition can mean extremely flat field offices with many Phase 1 field Special Agents. On the surface, high attrition means a less experienced workforce. Less noticeably, but even more significant, is the loss of experience and the knowledge of how to conduct a criminal investigation, administrative investigation, protective intelligence investigation, background investigation, applicant interviews, and how to protect a visiting dignitary or another protectee or assist with an NSSE.

The Secret Service's exit surveys point to high workload, long hours, irregular schedules, and inadequate staffing levels to carry out its mission as major reasons for these departures. It is also easy for Special Agents to transfer to a less intense federal law enforcement position in another agency at the same grade level while keeping their government retirement benefits wholly intact. Along with this intangible loss are concrete costs, as it takes a significant amount to hire, train, and season a new Agent to the point where they can fully integrate within a team. In a 2010 RAND Corporation study, the costs associated with hiring and training new federal law enforcement Officer were identified as a range of $58,000 - $250,000 depending upon hiring efforts and the

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[26] Government Accountability Office, "Improving Federal Recruiting and Hiring Efforts, GAO-19-696T", July 30, 2019, Washington, D.C.. https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-19-696T

level of training needed.[27] The Agency estimates a $128 million cost from onboarding the replacement Special Agents filling the positions of the non-retirement separations.[28] During the time it takes to fill a vacancy, the rest of the workforce must take up the slack, increasing the work stresses and taking time away from loved ones.

The Agency also faces particularly acute management challenges in retaining Special Agents who are part of the Cyber Technical Agent Career Progression track, who are uniquely postured to assist and conduct investigations of financial crimes. Often due to the relentless demands of protection and other demands placed on Special Agents in a field office previously cited, Special Agents who are trained in the field get drawn into protection assignments that take the Special Agents away from their families for extended periods and do not permit them to utilize the specialized skills they possess. Interviewees claimed that ten Special Agents who had completed cybersecurity training recently left Secret Service for the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), all in a short period of time. These Special Agents are also particularly prized by private sector firms that offer attractive benefits and better hours without the requirement to carry out additional duties away from home. The Agency has developed a specialized career track for Special Agents with cybersecurity skills, which will provide the Special Agents a path to apply their specialized skills at every point. However, there are limited opportunities to advance beyond the GS-14 level in a cybersecurity career, according to those interviewed (see Chapter 5 for more on the importance of career pathing).

The Agency reports that it is taking steps to monitor, track, and oversee the group to ensure it addresses the unique issues more carefully. The Secret Service highlights how it is a fundamentally different organization than the FBI with its 35,000 employees compartmentalized in many branches and divisions to carry out its singular mission of investigations. FBI agents often spend their entire career in only one field such as counterterrorism. Several Secret Service officials said that creating separate career tracks and more specialization would detract from the protection and investigations mission, as a smaller agent pool would be dedicated to both. Very few Agents would choose the protection mission because it is too physically and mentally demanding to do for more than a few years.

Another significant area where the Agency's retention challenges have come to the forefront is with APT employees. The interviews conducted in the course of this study revealed that the departure of APT employees occurs for a variety of reasons, often because of a desire for promotion, lack of recognition for one's work and overall contribution, and what is seen as poor communication with supervisors. The Agency captured many of these same justifications for departures in the annual collation of exit surveys pulled together by HUM. It is not clear that this type of survey is routinely conducted, and each office is often left to its own devices to conduct surveys. The Agency has yet to make exit interviews more systematic, and it is not clear that senior leaders track attrition and the issues that lead to APT employees departing Secret Service.

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[27] Police Recruitment and Retention for the New Millennium, The State of Knowledge, Jeremy M. Wilson, Erin Dalton, Charles Schear, Clifford A. Grammich, RAND Corporation, 2010

[28] According to internal Secret Service analysis provided to the Academy.

The Agency is taking several steps to address retention, especially among Special Agents. These initiatives, as well as others related to overtime and retirement, are covered in the next chapter related to compensation, benefits, and work-life initiatives. Unsurprisingly, the same considerations that make a member of the workforce engaged in the mission and committed to their jobs are the same factors that make him or her question their decision to continue in the workforce.

Recommendations

3.2   **Pursue support from DHS, Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and approval from Congress to accelerate and fund staffing increases consistent with validated, manpower models. Steps include:**

- **Including messaging that points to how the conditions and challenges that precipitated the last personnel size increase still exist, albeit less severely, and it is those increases that have prevented high-profile events from otherwise occurring and improving conditions.**

3.3   **Accelerate hiring for current, open positions among all personnel categories, seeking to meet and exceed time standards at each hiring stage set by the OPM. Steps include:**

- **Setting up a schedule to conduct regular ELACs sessions across the country. The Agency, particularly HUM in partnership with the INV field offices, should ensure the associated offices have the appropriate staffing to carry out these sessions regularly.**

- **Conducting regular meetings among the various process owners for hiring, ensuring regular communication, sharing best practices, and documenting issues identification.**

- **Reducing time requirements for completing such key steps in the hiring process as issuing a certificate of eligibles or conducting interviews.**

- **Exploring consolidating hiring of Special Agent and UD Officers into a single office, drawing on positions and personnel from the relevant offices and branches.**

3.4   **Renew emphasis on retention, placing as much focus and energy on retaining Agency talent as recruiting and training new personnel. Steps include:**

- **Conducting regular exit surveys across the workforce to identify drivers for attrition.**

- **Analyzing and highlighting the drivers of attrition to senior leadership.**

- **Performing a formal study to document the fully burdened cost of hiring and training new Special Agents and UD Officers.**

Chapter 4: Work-Life Balance, Telework, Benefits, and Compensation

The work demanded of Secret Service employees requires a significant amount of time and commitment, and it often entails multiple moves to different geographic locations throughout a career. Employees from every employee group (Special Agent, UD Officer, TLE, and APT employees) expressed a willingness to go above and beyond in carrying out the Agency mission, but employees did not want to sacrifice their home life. Issues related to work-life balance, telework, benefits, and compensation consistently arose in interviews with all Secret Service employees. These concerns impact employee engagement and are key factors for employees considering staying with the Agency.

This chapter discusses this second core element of employee engagement at the Secret Service: the important role that work-life balance, telework, benefits, and compensation play in employee engagement and retention, within the Secret Service. The chapter highlights the strong desire among all employees for greater time for personal activities. The chapter reviews the Agency's initiatives to provide greater work-life balance despite mission demands. Because the Agency simply does not have the staff to cover all its mission areas, there are limits to how much time the Agency can give back to its employees, and many Special Agents, TLE personnel, and UD Officers work a great deal of overtime. The Agency works within the confines of statutes and regulated pay-caps to provide overtime pay, as well as a range of other benefits.

The Desire for Work-Life Balance

During interviews with Secret Service personnel, it became apparent that work-life balance was a significant concern. Ongoing mission demands—like protecting key individuals and guarding critical facilities—take a considerable toll on personal time. Interviewees frequently reported that Special Agents in the field may work for weeks at a time with few, if any, days off, and significant time away from family due to the responsibilities associated with the protective mission. Though travel is expected of Special Agents, particularly on protective details, this level of work is more commonplace in key geographic areas due to the density of protectees and a heightened level of protectee travel.

Special Agents, in the field, are tasked with conducting investigative, protective, and human capital operations (conducting SUPER and personnel security interviews) as their region demands. In the words of one interviewee, Special Agents may have a "25-year career in which they are only available [to their families] for a month [a year]." The stressors of long working hours in Field Offices may be further compounded by socioeconomic factors. In cities such as New York City or San Francisco where the cost of living is significant, Special Agents, particularly those with families, may choose to live in the suburbs, or outside of the main city. Depending on the region, this can result in extremely long commutes, further reducing the amount of time Special Agents spend at home. Should Special Agents choose to live closer to their workspace, they risk financial difficulties associated with the significant cost of living.

The Agency's FEVS scores tell the story in vivid detail: the 2019 FEVS EEI scores show the Agency scoring in the lower 25 percent for work-life balance, ranked at number 356 out of 414 federal agencies.[29] Internal separation surveys also reinforce this point, with Special Agents and UD Officers reporting that workload, work schedule, and overtime pay caps are key pain points for those leaving the Agency.

Indeed, even in less formal evaluations of Secret Service, employees across the Agency highlight the struggle with establishing a healthy work-life balance. The website Glassdoor has a page on the Secret Service as an employer, which shows a 3.5 out of 5 aggregate score.[30] A great many of the complaints are centered on the Agency's poor work-life balance and almost all reviews since 2017 emphasize work-life difficulties as a central issue. Figure 3 provides a sample of some of the pros and cons listed on the website for working at the Secret Service.

Investigation and Protection Responsibilities at the Miami, Florida Field Office

The Miami, Florida Field Office is tasked with a high volume of investigations associated with crimes centered in Miami, Florida, and dignitary travel from South and Central America to Florida. One of the office's principal roles was the protection of former President Trump and his family, who frequently visited the area. This high operational tempo required Special Agents to find an effective balance of time between protection assignments, conducting criminal investigations, and personal time—a balance that, frequently, is hard to attain without sacrificing off-duty hours.

For more on field office organizational challenges and recommendations, see Chapter 9.

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[29] Partnership for Public Service, 2019 Best Places to Work in the Federal Government, https://bestplacestowork.org/rankings/detail/HS14#tab_category_tbl

[30] Glassdoor is a company feedback and job-search site that gathers reviews on employers from current and former staff members. The scores represent 1 being the lowest level of satisfaction and 5 the highest level of satisfaction.

Figure 5. Glassdoor at-a-glance pros/cons of Secret Service employment

Found **98** of over **104** reviews   Sort Popular ⌄

3.5 ★★★⯪ ★ ⌄

52% Recommend to a Friend   66% Approve of CEO   James Murray
11 Ratings

Pros

"Truly great people in the Field" (in 5 reviews)

"An honorable career, giving you every opportunity to achieve your law enforcement goals and education" (in 5 reviews)

"Extremely challenging, exciting and rewarding work in executive protection within the Department of Homeland Security" (in 5 reviews)

"Travel the world, be a part of history in the making and a rich tradition of excellence" (in 4 reviews)

"Unbelievable experience with an ability to truly make a difference in the world" (in 3 reviews)

Cons

"First and foremost, work-life balance is completely nonexistent" (in 9 reviews)

"long hours, often unpaid when unscheduled" (in 9 reviews)

"Hard work/family life for agents but that doesn't affect analysts as much" (in 6 reviews)

"There are several of them and most do not have the crazy issues with extreme forced overtime and scheduling deficiencies" (in 5 reviews)

"Lots of travel outside of the United States" (in 4 reviews)

Source: Glassdoor, Screenshot taken on April 30, 2021, https://www.glassdoor.com/Reviews/US-Secret-Service-Reviews-E131896.htm

Previous research and internal Secret Service documentation acknowledge the Agency's struggles with work-life balance. The HOGR, PMP, and 2016 Academy report all highlight work-life balance and perceived overwork as key stressors for Agency employees and recommended multiple solutions to address the situation. Common to all of them is the need for additional personnel and the retention of the personnel already in the ranks as the ultimate solution to solving workload concerns. The Agency's FY 2018 – 2025 Human Capital Strategic Plan noted the importance of additional personnel to reduce the workload burden on existing employees, with overtime as an incidental but meaningful benefit to the Agency.

Agency Reforms to Address Work-Life Imbalance

Interviews highlighted that longstanding issues associated with work-life balance are well known and acknowledged by Agency leaders at all levels, from frontline managers to the Agency's leadership C-suite. The Secret Service has taken several actions to address the need for additional personnel, as described in Chapter 3. Staffing level increases would contribute substantially to

ending the cycle of attrition in the Agency, as much of the workload issues are directly linked to a lack of staff capacity to handle the demands put upon the Agency. However, other reforms may reduce employee attrition in the interim while Agency efforts to increase staffing levels continue.

The 2016 Eagle Hill report recommended that the Secret Service engage professional schedulers to ensure that UD employees work overtime at the lowest extent possible within the bounds of the mission's demands and available resources. The UD contracted with at least one professional scheduler, but the professional scheduler reportedly struggled with the complexity of Secret Service's scheduling requirements. The UD also tried appointing an APT employee with scheduling, but it did not work. Further, Eagle Hill recommended that the Agency provide predictability and consistency in scheduling to reduce the uncertainty employees may experience with unscheduled overtime. The Secret Service did implement a new scheduling program, called the Enterprise Personnel Scheduling) (EPS), that provides more predictability. EPS was built by the Secret Service's Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO). The Eagle Hill report concluded that both actions would help reduce the stress put on employees while additional employees are hired.

The Secret Service has taken some actions to address aspects of the Agency's culture driving work-life imbalance, including pressing supervisors to encourage employees to take leave and work from home when needed, as well as to communicate more openly with employees. Such openness and employee actions have been well received.

Field offices particularly need relief from ongoing workload pressure. Staff at high-tempo field offices, like New York City, New York, and Miami, Florida, expressed the desire for additional support when there is a significant demand for Special Agents and Technical staff. Temporarily moving staff from lower-tempo offices to these high-tempo offices during times of significant demand grants relief to those employees stationed at the offices that see the most protection assignments.

The Role of Telework in Work-Life Balance

One best practice among federal agencies to provide greater work-life balance is to provide increased telework to as many employees as possible. During interviews, employees repeatedly expressed the desire for expanded telework access, and a shift away from the Agency's existing telework policy, which is far more restrictive. The Agency's telework policy, which was in place at the beginning of this study, takes a one-size-fits-all approach and applies to every employee category.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, telework was generally restricted. The prior telework policy allowed for situational telework, such as in the case of inclement weather or other OPM-directed closure, but restrictions applied (as in the case of a child being ill or other home situation, which were cited as generally invalid reasons to telework). This inflexible telework policy, coupled with a reluctant attitude among Agency leaders and managers, was a significant source of dissatisfaction among employees. For APT employees, the inability to telework was seen as needlessly restrictive. For Special Agents, not having the option to telework was seen as an impediment to their reducing in-office hours and reclaiming some of their work-life balance.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic forced the Secret Service to embrace Agency-wide telework rapidly, with the entire staff, where possible, moving to work from home by the end of March 2020. This project was four months underway at that point. The Academy was able to see and document the impact on employee attitudes as they transitioned to telework. Staff interviewed after the move reported strong satisfaction with the arrangement, noting that the technical tools and infrastructure went live without significant issues and that work was being completed at usual speed and quality. Multiple interviewees, both line staff and Secret Service leaders, noted the immediately apparent benefits of enabling staff to telework (acknowledging the unusual circumstances surrounding that transition). These positive observations came from staff of all categories and included increased time with family and around the home, more time and flexibility to get work done, less stress associated with commuting, and less pressure associated with working in the office. Some Secret Service leaders mentioned in interviews that before COVID-19, they did not support telework but, as they began using it and could see its effectiveness, their attitude completely changed.

After the transition to working from home, interviewees frequently remarked about the likelihood of (and desire for) adopting a long-term, expanded telework policy. This new policy came about in May 2020, when the Agency issued new guidelines for telework that allow staff to opt-in to unconditional telework, pending supervisor permission. The key to the future of telework in the Secret Service will be ensuring that it is used appropriately and for the right kind of jobs and assignments.

The Secret Service is, of course, just one of many agencies moving from primarily in-office to mostly telework in short-order. In addition to putting the basic technology necessary for remote work in place and creating new policies to facilitate remote work, many federal organizations are actively communicating to their employees that telework will be the new normal, even after the COVID-19 pandemic is in the past. The Department of the Air Force leadership, for example, at a September 2020 online conference underscored the positive results of telework, including increased productivity and employee satisfaction. Many leaders proclaimed that the Air Force is "not going back."[31]

Recommendation

4.1   **Revise and update the use of telework in mission directives, policies, and operations, to reflect recent trends in telework, while updating training to allow supervisors to effectively oversee remote work, ensure continued high-performance, and foster office and organizational cohesion. Steps include:**

- **Encouraging supervisors to be cognizant of the amount of travel, time at post, or hours in-office an individual may log.**

- **Including messaging that employees can conduct duties from home where possible and appropriate, especially given the expansion of the**

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[31] Scott Maucione, "'We're not going back,' Air Force leadership says telework is here to stay," Federal News Network, September 15, 2020. https://federalnewsnetwork.com/air-force/2020/09/were-not-going-back-air-force-leadership-says-telework-is-here-to-stay/

Virtual Private Network (VPN) and the experience of teleworking during COVID-19.

- **Releasing strategic communications from the top leadership that embrace telecommuting as a permanent feature of work.**

Agency Actions to Improve Benefits and Compensation

While the Secret Service deploys some tools to address work-life balance, including better scheduling and telework to give more home time back to its employees, work-life issues will persist until the Agency can increase and fill its ranks or lower its turnover. Interviews and a review of exit surveys reveal that employees recognize that reality and remain deeply committed to the mission of the Agency; however, they desire full compensation for that extra time and that commitment invested to get the job done. A heightened focus on pay and benefits has emerged as a result.

One goal of this focus is to make up for the enormous time and energy commitment required of employees; another goal is managing the workforce more broadly and retaining personnel. The Agency recognizes that if employees are not adequately compensated for that extra time, they will move to private-sector jobs or transfer to another federal agency. Other federal agencies can offer the same pay with the employee's full retirement benefits and with far less stress and required work hours. While the Secret Service acknowledges that benefits are not a total solution to the retention problem, the Agency views various packages as a salve. When used in combination with other reforms like the expansion of telework, the Agency and its employees consider the benefit packages as important retention tools.

Benefits

The Agency has rolled out many benefit programs to support the workforce and adequately compensate employees for their efforts. Some measures were implemented for specific groups, such as the UD, who are the beneficiaries of a Retention Payment Program. Other initiatives are broader, such as programs for Tuition Assistance, Student Loan Repayment, and a new Child Care Subsidy Program. Currently, the Secret Service focuses on providing the following benefits programs to staff:

- **Student Loan Repayment Program:** Eligible employees may receive up to $10,000/year for a maximum of $60,000.
- **Tuition Assistance Program:** Eligible employees may be reimbursed for the cost of tuition for approved courses.
- **Child Care Subsidy Benefit Program:** Subsidies are provided to eligible, full-time Agency employees whose total family income is under $170,000/year. These subsidies may be up to $400/month, per household, to pay for eligible childcare fees.
- **Uniformed Division (UD) Group Incentive Program:** A new retention benefit implemented for UD Officers offers a rank-specific bonus of 10 percent for employees at or below the rank of Sergeant, with diminishing amounts as one rises in rank (7.5 percent for Lieutenants, 5 percent for Captains, and 2.5 percent for Inspectors). Eligible Officers

that opt into the program commit to a one-year service obligation period (beginning on January 1 and ending December 31 of the calendar year following enrollment).

- **Cybersecurity Retention Incentive Program:** Designed to boost Agency retention of in-demand cybersecurity talent, eligible employees who maintain job-related cybersecurity certifications may opt into the incentive. Those who opt-in must agree to stay with the Agency for a specified time period, and, in turn, receive group incentive payments up to 10 percent of basic pay, and individual payments of up to 25 percent of base pay for eligible employees.
- **Senior Special Agent/Senior Resident Agent (SSA/SRA) Program:** Established to recognize eligible non-supervisory Senior Special Agents who "embody expertise, initiative, and consistent productivity,"[32] the SSA/SRA program offers a title promotion to Senior Special/Resident Agent and an annual bonus to those selected.

Though not strictly by definition benefits, additional measures like family days, can be explored that offer a morale boost for employees.

The tactical use of new and existing benefits can smooth out some of the sharper edges of the Secret Service's employee engagement challenges. Programs like Tuition Assistance and Student Loan Repayment, for example, can prove fruitful as both are a source of economic assistance to staff, and a way to encourage their growth as professionals. In addition to the traditional Employee Assistance Program,[33] the Secret Service has established a Chaplain program to provide employees avenues of communication and support.[34] These programs can help maintain stability in a staff member's home life and reduce stressors from outside of the office. When provided in concert with other human capital program improvements, such as the addition of sufficient new hires to reduce workloads or the adoption of flexible work schedules, these benefits may be sufficient to alleviate remaining tensions and retain staff who may otherwise consider making a lateral move.

Enrollment in the existing retention programs that require opting-in (such as Tuition Assistance) is not yet widespread. This is a circumstance that Agency leadership is aware of and has made a priority to rectify. Awareness campaigns and outreach surrounding available benefits, as well as feedback gathering campaigns, are reportedly underway. These awareness campaigns could yield greater enrollment and respond to the desire for more communication from leaders.

When employees do enroll, Agency benefit programs outlined above can increase employee morale. It is important to note, however, in separation surveys, across all employee categories (Special Agents, UD Officers, TLE, or APT employees) it was found that, while valued, these benefits had a more limited effect on retention than work-life balance and overtime

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[32] Memo from the Chief Human Capital Officer on Retention Programs, Number 200.000, December 11, 2019

[33] The Employee Assistance Program, like at other agencies and organizations, connects Secret Service employees and their family with resources to address life situations.

[34] The Chaplain Program offers discreet resources, assistance, and support to Secret Service employees in personal and professional crises.

compensation. As discussed further below, the primary issue for those leaving the Agency is still the total number of overtime hours worked, and, for those employees in the higher grade levels, the unpaid overtime hours due to mandatory pay limits.

Despite the limitations of bonuses when individuals are stretched thin and have little work-life balance, special pays and bonuses can still have an impact, influencing some and communicating the Agency's desire to hold on to its talent. The Secret Service can more carefully target its retention incentives when it believes that the employee might leave the Agency. It could also develop a program for Special Agents similar to the UD Group Incentive Program that targets low- to mid-level ranks that do not typically max out their pay. While many employees might reach overtime limits that put their combined pay above federal pay-cap restrictions, there are a large number of new and mid-rank personnel who would not be maxing out their pay who might consider receiving a retention incentive enough to keep them in the Secret Service. An agency may pay a retention incentive to a current employee if the Agency determines that, given the Agency's mission requirements and the employee's competencies, the employee would be likely to leave for a different position in the Federal service in the absence of a retention incentive.[35]

It is important to note that the Secret Service has not been able to fully utilize its ability to more broadly offer traditional retention incentives. For FY 2021, the Agency requested $20.3 million. DHS and OMB reduced the amount in the President's budget to stay within guidance and maintain the Agency's $9.6 million budget base. In FY 2021, Congress adjusted the base funding for this program to $17.4 million.[36]

Overtime

Employees, particularly Special Agents, expressed in interviews that receiving overtime pay was overwhelmingly the most important way that the Agency addressed the sheer commitment of time and energy that they must make to do their jobs. On the flip side, exit surveys reveal that not receiving the full compensation that a Special Agent feels she or he has earned is one of the most common reasons to leave the Agency. While most claimed that their main salary was satisfactory or extremely satisfactory, overtime compensation was given an average to a negative rating.

The more expansive protection mission in recent years has led the Agency to pay increased amounts of overtime to Special Agents. There are statutory pay caps that prevent a federal employee, including law enforcement Special Agents, from receiving more in overtime than a GS-15, Step 10 equivalent.[37] The Secret Service reports that after Special Agents reach a grade and pay level that would trigger their so-called pay Max-Out they often seek opportunities in other agencies where one can get the same pay for fewer hours. In 2018, Public Law 115-383 amended the Overtime Pay for Protective Services Act of 2016 from the limitation on premium pay (Max-Out limits) elevating those limits, allowing Special Agents to receive $187,000 in FY 2019 and

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[35] Retention Incentives, 5 U.S.C. 5754; 5 CFR 575.315; 5 CFR Part 575, subpart C; https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/5/part-575/subpart-C

[36] U.S. Secret Service FY 2021 Budget Request, Program Change 19, https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/u.s._secret_service.pdf

[37] Special Pay Authority, 5 U.S.C. 5305(a), https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/5/5305

$197,300 in FY 2020.[38] The limits under this modification are the same as the pay of senior political officials paid under Level 2 of the Executive Schedule. Congress provided authorization for this temporary increase, known as the Super-Max, beyond FY 2020. The expectation from Congress is that increased staffing levels will, over time reduce the reliance on overtime:

> "The Secret Service received funding in FY 2020 to hire additional personnel and is requesting funds in FY 2021 for additional staff. As the Secret Service continues to hire and increase staffing, the Secret Service will see decreases in overtime in its Special Agents and UD workforce, including the need for overtime in excess of annual pay."[39]

Even with the enhanced Max-Out cap provided to the Secret Service, employees working protection often reach the limit. A January 2020 GAO report estimated that more than $1 million in wages were lost due to earned-but-unpaid overtime among Special Agents from 2016 to 2018.[40]

Portability of Benefits

Prior to the establishment of the Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS) in 1984, Special Agents and UD Officers could be covered under the District of Columbia Police and Firefighter Retirement and Disability System, which provided retirement compensation benefits beyond the Civil Service Retirement System. Special Agents and UD Officers hired after January 1, 1984, were required to be covered under FERS. With federal retirement funds readily portable to other agencies under the FERS, it is easy for employees to move between agencies without sacrificing any retirement benefits received from the Secret Service. Consequently, there is less of an incentive for employees to stay exclusively with the Secret Service to keep their full government retirement.

The Secret Service is exploring ways to retain Special Agents by asking for authority from Congress to offer a supplement to its Agent retirement system. The supplement can lead to an enhanced benefit particularly in the later years of a career but cannot transfer with them if they move to a new agency. The Agency has briefed this proposal across the federal government, including DHS. The Secret Service proposal would require congressional authorization. The proposal, the Agency says, has several benefits, including addressing its Special Agent retention challenges in a more cost-effective way.

Phase 1 First Assignment Moving Costs

One compensation matter that impacts Phase 1 Special Agents arose during many interviews in the course of the project. Many new Special Agents spoke of the challenges of entering the Secret Service workforce, going through training, and moving to their new assignments. They said they are not paid for their initial move to their first field office assignment. New Special Agents must

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[38] Limitation on Premium Pay, 5 U.S.C. 5547, https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/5/5547

[39] Secret Service Budget Request for FY 2021, Program Change 13, https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/u.s._secret_service.pdf

[40] U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), "Investigative Operations Confer Benefits, but Additional Actions Are Needed to Prioritize Resources", GAO-20-239, January 2020, Washington, D.C., pp. 31, https://www.gao.gov/assets/710/703990.pdf

pay all of their moving expenses without any reimbursement from the Secret Service, which creates financial hardship and difficulties for new Agents, particularly those with young families. The Agency has recognized this problem and is considering implementing a new policy.

Recommendations

4.2   **Undertake a detailed review to determine whether the Agency could more cost-effectively manage the overtime program for Special Agents to ensure fewer Special Agents reach overtime caps by leveling assignments across the force.**

4.3   **Rebalance the bonus and benefit programs to encourage Agency mid-career personnel to continue with the Secret Service through their entire career by exploring, developing, and implementing a program that commits employees to staying in the Agency for a specific period of years, such as enhancement/supplement to the current government retirement solution, or through a continuation pay/bonus solution.**

4.4   **Pay for the first move of Special Agents at the start of their careers.**

Chapter 5: Developing the Next Generation of Secret Service Leadership

This chapter discusses the importance of career pathing, training, and leadership development within the Secret Service, the third core element of employee engagement at the Secret Service. A RAND monograph study of law enforcement organizations, also cited in the Academy's 2016 report, found that organizational characteristics such as (1) lack of career growth, (2) unmet job expectations, and (3) a lack of training affect attrition and organizational health.[41] These characteristics can be mitigated by career development plans, with defined career paths that allow employees to understand what they need to accomplish to reach a certain position within the Secret Service, and by providing employees with more opportunity to train. That same RAND study found three additional organizational characteristics that result in attrition: (4) the negative characteristics of their immediate supervisor, (5) inadequate feedback, and (6) insufficient recognition. These three additional areas could be mitigated by developing the next generation of Secret Service leaders in what many consider to be critical management skills, such as communication, listening, delegation, employee recognition, and team building. Taken together, the combination of career pathing, training, and leadership development could serve as a powerful retention tool for the Secret Service.

Career Paths

Special Agents, UD Officers, TLE personnel, and APT employees all expressed frustration at what they perceive to be limited promotion potential and an unclear understanding of what it takes to reach higher levels at the Secret Service. Career paths demonstrate a commitment to employees that they will be invested in and that homegrown leadership is valued. It provides employees with the motivation to keep their skills current, to better themselves professionally and personally, and to contribute to the mission in greater ways as they progress throughout their careers. The establishment of career paths helps engage the workforce, reduce turnover, and therefore improve employee retention. The Society for Human Resources Management cites several important benefits that career paths provide an organization, including improved engagement, "morale, career satisfaction, motivation, productivity, and responsiveness in meeting departmental and organizational objectives."[42]

Special Agents

The typical career path for a Special Agent involves three phases. Phase 1 is an assignment to a field office where Special Agents coming out of the Rowley Training Center (RTC) focus on the investigative mission and are introduced to the protective mission by rotating on and off protective mission assignments. Interviewees indicated that Phase 1 Special Agents are allowed

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[41] Police Recruitment and Retention for the New Millennium, RAND Corporation, 2010, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2010/RAND_MG959.pdf

[42] Society for Human Resources Management, *Developing Employee Career Paths and Ladders,* https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/toolkits/pages/developingemployeecareerpathsandladders.aspx

to express interest in certain field offices for their initial job posting; however, they are provided no guarantee on placement. INV indicates that it does what it can to accommodate a Special Agent's preference for initial job posting, but it must place Phase 1 Special Agents where there are mission requirements. A Special Agent's Phase 2 assignment is a protective assignment within Office of Protective Operations (OPO), TEC, INV, or in protective intelligence. Phase 1 Special Agents entering their Phase 2 assignment have an opportunity to identify their desired Phase 2 assignment; however, the majority ask for an assignment to the Presidential Protective Division (PPD) and only a handful can be accommodated. The remaining Special Agents are placed where there is a need, but Special Agents are not provided any reasoning for the Phase 2 protective detail assignment that they receive. Agents then move to their Phase 3 assignments, which can be any of the following: post-protection field assignment, protection assignment, or headquarters assignment. Placement in Phase 3 is accomplished through one of two established mechanisms:

1) Applying for a Job Opportunity Announcement and getting selected for the position; or
2) Through the Special Agent Reassignment Committee (SARC), which selects Special Agents for assignments. Agents can identify their preference based on a wish list approach that gives priority to Agents who have been in the Secret Service longer.

Special Agent interviewees find that the current career phasing process lacks transparency and predictability while limiting their ability to pursue areas of the Secret Service mission that inspires them the most. Phase 1 and Phase 3 Agents feel that the process is not transparent in that they are not made aware of why certain decisions regarding phase assignments are made, and they do not understand what they need to do to end up where they want within Secret Service. This lack of transparency feeds a cycle of unpredictability because Agents cannot plan for the assignments or potential locations where they might land. And finally, it prohibits Special Agents from pursuing the areas of the Secret Service mission that matter most to them. For example, there is only one way around this generic phasing for Special Agents, and that is to pursue the Cyber Technical Agent Career Progression, which is a relatively new career path within Secret Service. Special Agents who choose this career path hit a ceiling at the GS-14 level. Special Agents in this career path conduct online crime investigations, computer forensics, systems protection, and assist on other cyber/technical efforts.

There was a second career path called the Special Operations Division (SOD) Targeted Recruitment Program, which reverses Phase 1 and Phase 2 for Special Agents who possess the skills and experience necessary to serve on a special operations team protective assignment for Phase 1. Special Agents would serve a total of 6-9 years on the SOD, which fulfills their Phase 1 and Phase 2 career requirements. SOD Special Agents then complete a minimum of two years in a post-protective assignment at a field office. Once that is completed, they are then considered traditional Phase 3 Agents. However, the SOD Targeted Recruitment Program was paused in late 2019 because of limited success.

The unpredictability continues beyond a Special Agent's first Phase 3 assignment. After September 2015, Phase 3 Special Agents at the GS-13 level generally move (permanent change of station) a minimum of two times with the potential of moving four to five times throughout the

remainder of their career.[43] These moves can include moving from protection to a field office, moving within field offices, moving to Washington, D.C. for a required D.C. rotation, and returning to the field after completing the Washington, D.C. assignment. These requirements are laid out in a Special Agent Career Progression Plan, which follows the phasing approach explained in the preceding paragraphs.

The Secret Service is working to improve the SARC process. In one example, the Secret Service is working to keep employees satisfied by giving them the option to end up on the protective detail that an Agent most desires. For example, a Phase 1 Special Agent is sent to the Vice President's protective detail, which is a 6-year commitment. The Secret Service recently changed its policy and now allows that Agent to move to the President's detail after 4 years on the Vice President's detail, and with a commitment by the Special Agent to serve on the President's detail for 4 years (total Phase 2 commitment of 8 years).

When leaving a Phase 2 protective detail assignment for a Phase 3 field office (or the Washington, D.C. headquarters) assignment, the Secret Service is trying to help those Special Agents transfer to the field office of their preference. They have done so by adding a 1-year deferment option. The SARC now publishes a list of available field offices from which Agents may choose. If an Agent does not see a field office location of their preference, they can opt-in for another year at their current assignment location in the hopes that a field office location of their preference opens up.

When a Phase 3 Special Agent reaches the GS-14 level or higher, they are then subject to a "Five-Year Notice and Directed Reassignment Process." Any Special Agent who is in the same GS-14 (or higher) position for four years will receive a letter from the SARC directing the Special Agent to apply for a vacant reassignment or promotional opportunity. If the Special Agent does not voluntarily apply for a vacant reassignment or promotional opportunity, then they receive a directed reassigned to a new position by the SARC one year after receiving their letter encouraging them to voluntarily apply for a new position. Interviews with Special Agents reveal that this policy requiring Special Agents to change positions (and likely locations) after four years discourages some Special Agents from moving up the GS-14 level, meaning they effectively hit a max grade of GS-13 within the Secret Service. This results in some GS-13 Secret Service employees seeking employment outside of the Secret Service to take a GS-14 position in an Agency that can afford the Special Agent more predictability both professionally and personally. For others who choose to continue with the Secret Service at the GS-14 level (or higher), it means they must subject their family to potentially more moves and unpredictability in order to reach higher grade levels in the Secret Service's leadership structure. This constant movement can create leadership instability, which was raised by some interviewees and highlighted in the Chapter 9 sections on RES and the Phoenix, Arizona field office.

The Eagle Hill report from 2016 found similar statements from Special Agents. Focus groups involving Special Agents resulted in a finding that Special Agents "believe the career path needs to be adjusted to give people something to look forward to after completing a protection detail….[and] expressed a desire for the Secret Service to consider the post-detail as an

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[43] FY 2018 Department of Homeland Security Budget Overview, *U.S. Secret Service,* p. 19. https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/USSS%20FY18%20Budget.pdf

opportunity to provide specialized training to a proven Special Agent on investigations or protection that will help them build a meaningful and valuable role that continues to advance their skills throughout their career."[44]

Uniformed Division Officers

A substantial portion of this review was spent examining employee engagement within the UD. UD Officers are highly trained, understand the protective mission, and have significant experience within the Washington, D.C. region protecting foreign dignitaries, the White House, and other facilities. Each year, senior leaders at the Secret Service agree on the number of UD Officers they will allow to transfer to be Special Agents. However, many Officers apply as external applicants because some years the limit on UD to Special Agent transfers is low, so they feel they are more likely to become a Special Agent within the Secret Service by applying externally. This arrangement is perplexing to them, especially given that UD Officers have cleared the same background check and medical requirements that are used to qualify prospective Special Agents from outside of the Secret Service. Providing a career path for UD Officers to become Special Agents presents an opportunity for the Secret Service to retain UD Officers while creating a pipeline of future Special Agents.

Additionally, the Eagle Hill report identified through focus groups with UD Officers that they too, "believe a defined career path that allows them to build skills and specialized knowledge would be beneficial to the employees and the organization."[45] Similar to Special Agents, UD Officers would like to have career paths that allow them to pursue a field within the UD that most interests them. UD has a career path that sends a UD Officer to the Emergency Response Team if they have the skills and experience to serve on a special operations team upon entry into the UD. They also have some other specialized operations team positions such as a countersniper unit and a K-9 unit. More detail on career paths and training within UD can be found in Chapter 8 of this report.

Technical Law Enforcement

In several interviews, TLE personnel, which are part of all the major focus offices addressed in this review, expressed a desire to understand their role, as a relatively small and very specialized career category within the larger Agency. TLE personnel fall into three major categories, including protective operations support, investigative operations support, and technical operations. The perception among these individuals is that the more immediate focus of the agency is standing up this relatively new job group that started only in FY 2019, ensuring the positions are filled with trained and ready personnel with those slots are placed appropriately. There is less focus, according to TLE interviewees, on career paths and growth. Chapter 9 provides more detailed context recommendations for TLEs within TEC.

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[44] Eagle Hill Consulting, United States Secret Service Work/Life Integration Assessment, August 22, 2016, p. 74.

[45] Eagle Hill Consulting, United States Secret Service Work/Life Integration Assessment, August 22, 2016, p. 75.

Administrative, Professional, and Technical (APT) Employees

In multiple interviews, APT employees said that they have a limited understanding of what it takes to reach higher echelons of leadership at the Secret Service. The Academy's 2016 report found that the Secret Service was piloting a career progression program for APT employees; however, it was limited to a small number of job series as a proof of concept. This developmental problem requires expanded training to enhance skills and competencies.[46] There seems to be little change since the Academy's 2016 report. On more than one occasion, the study team learned that APT employees have been told by their superiors that they would need to leave the Agency and reapply for a higher-level position within the Secret Service to gain a promotion. The Eagle Hill report found the same to be true, using one prominent quote to elucidate what it heard more broadly in its focus groups with APT employees – "APT employees just don't have career progression and that's limiting. I love the Service. This is my work family. But when you cannot go any further sometimes you need to look outside and not limit yourself."[47] This does little to generate a sense of employee engagement, morale, and enthusiasm for the work they perform.

Training

The PMP, HOGR, Eagle Hill, and the 2016 Academy study all focused on training as an important factor that affects employee attrition and morale. All newly hired Special Agents, UD Officers, and TLE employees attend the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) for months of basic law enforcement and criminal investigator training. All three groups then go to the Secret Service's RTC for more specialized Secret Service training with an emphasis on Secret Service policies and tactics. Training that occurs after basic training at FLETC and the Secret Service's RTC is dependent on the Secret Service's staffing levels and the intensity of the protective and investigative missions. For example, Presidential Protective Division (PPD Agents spent only two percent of their time training in FY 2013 because of mission demands and low staffing (they had an established goal of 25 percent of time spent training for FY 2013).[48] As of FY2013, the UD received the equivalent of about 25 minutes of training for each of its 1,300 UD Officers.[49]

Noting the importance of training on mission capability and individual capacity, the PMP (in 2014) recommended: "the Secret Service should be staffed at a level that enables it to provide a true Fourth Shift for training to its protective forces, and to ensure that UD Officers are in training

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[46] National Academy of Public Administration, *United States Secret Service: Review of Organizational Change Efforts,* October 2016, p. 45, https://www.napawash.org/uploads/Academy_Studies/USSS-Final-Report-10.31.16.pdf

[47] Eagle Hill Consulting, *United States Secret Service Work/Life Integration Assessment,* August 22, 2016, p. 75

[48] This contrasts with the Secret Service of the 1980s, which instituted a fourth two-week shift to PPD where agents spent their time training and refreshing skills. The Secret Service is implementing a fourth and fifth shift for PPD, and a fourth shift for VPD. United States Secret Service Protective Mission Panel, *Report from the United States Secret Service Protective Mission Panel to the Secretary of Homeland Security,* December 2014, p. 13

[49] Ibid, p. 13

for no less than 10 percent of their time."[50] In February 2015, the Secret Service created an independent Office of Training (TNG) that reports directly to the Deputy Director of Secret Service: TNG was originally in HUM. The purpose of this move was to provide greater institutional visibility and focus on training. A new leadership team was put in place and charged with conducting a comprehensive review of capabilities, staffing, and resourcing of the operational training functions with a focus on curriculum, facilities, and career development, and continuing education.

TNG is now made up of 400 employees that include Special Agents, UD Officers, engineers, trainers, and other APT employees. TNG has demonstrated an increase in the total number of students trained in classrooms or other venues from 20,556 in 2015, to 28,877 in 2019. Total students completing online training courses has increased from 81,925 in 2015, to 94,507 in 2019. TNG has also continued its development and deployment of a Regional In-Service Training Program that first began in 2017. The in-service training program is now fully deployed, and TNG has deployed eight TNG employees to field offices who are called Regional In-Service Training Coordinators. Each Regional In-Service Training Coordinator is a full-time, post-detail, Phase 3 Agent who will spend no less than three years in the field ensuring that every Special Agent and UD Officer meets the 25 percent (Special Agent) and 10 percent (UD Officer) training goals in the PMP report. The regional coordinators will have access to the Secret Service's training application called Performance and Learning Management System (PALMS), which reportedly will help regional coordinators ensure that every Special Agent in the field receives the training they need.[51]

While these are promising achievements, there is a sense among Special Agents, UD Officers, and TLE interviewees that more training is needed. This is especially true of younger Phase 1 Special Agents that do not have any law enforcement experience before joining the Secret Service. These Phase 1 Agents rely heavily on the informal network of Phase 1 and Phase 3 Special Agents with whom they work within their field office to provide training. This means that the hands-on training a Phase 1 Special Agent receives at one field office might be different than what one would receive at a different field office. Additionally, Special Agents interviewed for this study found in some cases, that they were primarily focused on investigations and rarely had the opportunity to work on protective details. This leaves a gap in their development that worries Phase 1 Special Agents as they prepare for their Phase 2 protective detail assignment.

To address these concerns, TNG offers a required three-week transition training for Phase 1 Special Agents who are going to a protective detail. In addition to this, TNG is piloting an on-the-job training program to standardize the lessons all Phase 1 Special Agents receive, but it has not been fully implemented. At the end of a Special Agent's phase 2 protective detail assignment, TNG has a three-week reintegration course for those who are returning to the field for their phase 3 assignment.

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[50] United States Secret Service Protective Mission Panel, *Report from the United States Secret Service Protective Mission Panel to the Secretary of Homeland Security,* December 2014, p. 14

[51] PALMS provides learning history, including courses taken, training progress, and required training. The data is populated into a dashboard. More on PALMS can be found here: https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/privacy-pia-usss-eperson-b-december2019.pdf

FEVS shows that concerns remain about the adequacy of training within the Secret Service over the past five years. In 2014, 32.3 percent of respondents to FEVS answered positively (40.7 percent answered negatively) that their training needs are assessed, and 35.2 percent answered positively that they are satisfied with training (38.4 percent answered negatively). In 2019, 45 percent of respondents to FEVS answered positively that their training needs are assessed (33 percent responded negatively), and 47 percent answered positively that they are satisfied with the training they receive (33 percent responded negatively). The improvement is promising, but 33 percent still responded negatively meaning there is more work to be done here.

There is also some concern regarding the quality and applicability of training received. The Secret Service does not collect satisfaction scores for online training courses it provides to employees. The Secret Service does collect course evaluations after in-person training courses it provides but course evaluations are kept as raw survey results. Analyzing surveys requires viewing in person at RTC. Field Office Special Agents interviewed for this study reported that training is often online with an emphasis on compliance-based tasks. So, while Secret Service has increased the number of classes it has provided since 2015, it may not be able to determine whether those classes address the needs of the workforce.

In 2019, GAO was tasked with assessing the Secret Service's progress responding to the recommendations of the PMP. GAO found that "the Secret Service instituted a fourth and fifth shift for PPD and a fourth shift for [the Vice Presidential Protective Detail] …. implementation is still in progress because neither PPD nor Vice Presidential Protective Division (VPD) Special Agents consistently used this time to train and missed the training targets established by this recommendation."[52] As for the 10 percent training goal for UD Officers, GAO found that "Secret Service does not have a documented process for collecting complete and appropriate UD training data that the Agency can use to determine whether Officers trained for 10 percent of their work hours."[53]

Leadership Development

Related to career pathing is leadership development. During interviews across the Secret Service and in all employee groups, it became clear that the Secret Service is full of talented individuals who are competent, confident, and motivated by the mission. A majority of those interviewed for this report are not supervisors at this time but hope to be so in the future. These junior- and mid-level employees feel that the Secret Service could do more to develop them as aspiring leaders. The PMP recognized the same opportunity in 2014 when it found that "the [Secret Service] needs to do a better job of identifying future leaders and preparing them for the role." In 2016, employee focus groups that participated in the Eagle Hill study reiterated the concern, stating "employees across the organization pointed to a lack of leadership development to prepare future supervisors for their roles."

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[52] U.S. Government Accountability Office, U.S. Secret Service: Further Actions Needed to Fully Address Protective Mission Panel Recommendations, May 2019, https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/699267.pdf

[53] Ibid.

The Secret Service views rotations to different offices and locations as leadership development. While rotational assignments are certainly one element of development, rotations are often considered part of a broader leadership development strategy. As the PMP noted– "exposure to different functions is not the same as training them to lead. There are a variety of models that can work. Some agencies administer their own mid-career executive training program; for example, the FBI has put thousands of its managers through a Kellogg School of Management change-management program. Others, like the military, have utilized career-ladder programs to identify and grow leadership."

The Secret Service is also in the process of developing a competency-based leadership development program called Secret Service Leadership Development System (LEADS). A component of this development is leadership coursework at American University. This leadership development program is moving from the pilot phase to full implementation. Those who have participated in the American University program cite it as a rewarding and worthwhile activity but said that more should be done to develop the next generation of the Secret Service. The view of the interviewees for this study is that leadership development should begin earlier in one's career, and certainly well before an employee takes their first GS-14 team leadership position. One interviewee reported that the Secret Service is beginning to train GS-13 employees before taking a GS-14 supervisory position, and that is a promising step in the right direction. There are graduate-level programs available to employees, such as at the National Defense University, that allow an employee to leave the Secret Service for graduate-level studies for one to two years.

Recommendations

5.1 **Implement a more comprehensive leadership development program that brings together Special Agents, UD Officers, TLE personnel, and APT employees for courses, workshops, and career-broadening assignments. Steps include:**

- **Developing a tracking and reporting mechanism to drive implementation and measure success across employee groups.**

- **Ensuring training before an employee's first supervisory assignment.**

- **Prioritizing helping leaders learn basic critical management skills, such as communicating with and listening to employees, delegation, employee recognition, and team building.**

5.2 **Develop and implement an Agency-wide policy with associated directives, guidance, and communications about career paths and the promotion process, including the ability to switch career paths. Steps include:**

- **Detailing competencies personnel must demonstrate and the experiences they must seek out in order to continue their professional growth within Secret Service.**

- **Communicating broadly the career paths for Special Agents, UD Officers, and APT employees.**

- **Providing opportunities for employees to switch career paths with some ease in order to retain employees rather than losing them.**

5.3 **Review senior executive positions to ensure that as many as possible are open to full competition from as many employee categories as possible. Steps include:**

- **Communicating to eligible candidates the desire to put in place the most experienced and qualified leaders, whatever employee status, while highlighting that the positions are not now "reserved" if a candidate from a different position fills the vacant senior position.**

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Chapter 6:   Professionalism and Business Operations

One of the most consistent themes during interviews was the way that the Agency's mission support organizations directly contribute to engagement, emerging as a key driver that enables core elements, like employee development and staffing levels. Interviewees indicated that these operations are working more smoothly than at any point in recent history. Support in the areas of human resources, acquisition, finance, and IT has increased substantially in the years since the PMP and the Academy 2016 report. There are still issues among mission support functions, but the Agency continues to examine ways to perform critical support functions faster, better, more efficiently, and affordably.

This chapter outlines some of the Agency's key initiatives to ensure there is a professional leadership cadre that understands management and can address specific functional issues impacting the Secret Service. It also addresses some of the challenges in the acquisition, human resources, and IT functions that provide critical support across the Agency. The chapter looks at the efforts to create a culture of responsive and effective customer service, as well as one focused on process improvement.

Professionalized, Balanced Leadership

The placement of expert, longtime managers and professionals into mission support offices has reaped great benefits to the Agency. More than five years ago, the Secret Service created the position of the COO to oversee key management and administrative functions, like acquisition, IT, human resources, and finance. Previously, this position did not exist, leaving the Deputy Director, traditionally a Special Agent, to oversee these mission support functional components with all their unique rulesets, issues, and standards. The Director and Deputy Director now can focus more closely on law enforcement, protection, and investigation-related mission matters. After the COO was established, the Agency took action to fill senior administrative leadership positions with professionals who had deep backgrounds within their respective functional areas. Using experienced mission support leaders with a clear understanding of how the Secret Service operates along with a detailed understanding of technical matters, the Agency now takes a more strategic approach to mission support, ensuring a close tie between these activities and its larger goals. Similarly, the Agency is better able to manage crises and resolve issues.

Members of the workforce interviewed in the course of this study mentioned how the placement of professionals as office heads in human resources, finance, and IT has helped the Agency run more smoothly and efficiently. There are many values a professional leader brings, starting with continuity. An experienced professional can stay in a position for many years while Special Agents tend to move to new positions relatively quickly as they move up in the ranks. The model the Secret Service uses allows it to have professional leaders with organizational continuity while also providing Special Agents rotational assignment to obtain a broad understanding of the mission support programs. In addition to providing a leader who is not rotating frequently, a professional is viewed as more experienced in shaping the organization, directing an office to meet strategic goals, enhancing performance, and resolving inevitable issues and conflicts.

Interviewees noted that the most effective mission support organizations at the Secret Service have found a way to ensure leadership receives advice and guidance from Special Agents and UD Officers. These Special Agents and UD Officers provide an understanding of how policies will work when put in place, as well as explaining to others why certain rules and practices are or are not put in place. A dynamic synergy exists when professionals rely on operational advisors and vice versa. The opposite dynamic can also arise. Organizations that have not included sufficient Special Agents or UD Officers in mission support divisions can, at best, be seen as somewhat disconnected and, at worst, not caring and "anti-Agent" and/or "anti-Officer."

The establishment of an ERB allows the Secret Service to engage its senior leaders in large-scale management decisions. The ERB is the senior decision-making council on management matters. Board members are leaders of key operational entities throughout the Service, such as the Chief Financial Officer, Chief Information Officer (CIO), and CHCO. While most ERB members are voting members, some are on in a limited capacity, such as the Communications Director. Members belonging to the latter group do not participate in the weekly meetings.

Each week, the ERB convenes to discuss the most pressing matters, budget allocations, performance, and alternatives to address problems. The ERB is vital to the smooth functioning of the Agency, according to the discussions with the directors and office heads interviewed during this study.

Despite the positive role of the ERB, it is not codified in Agency mission directives beyond the specification of membership.[54] There is not a broader policy description of the ERB, though some of the subordinate level boards or committees in the Agency have responsibilities and membership specified. Similarly, the COO position is not defined in Secret Service policy or mission directive. Several policies refer to the COO, including delegations of authorities, orders of succession, and budget process directives, as well as the job description used for the position. A position of such importance for the smooth-functioning and success of the Agency is typically codified in the Agency's internal directives. The danger in not codifying this important position and management boards or committees is that new Agency leadership may eliminate these critical positions, boards, and committees. Institutionalizing professional leadership and management structures provide stability and continuity to agencies in the long term.

Acquisition Improvements

Acquisition, how the Secret Service goes about obtaining the goods and services necessary to carry out its mission, emerged as an area of significant concern and interest among all the employee groups encountered during the Academy's work. The acquisition process in the Secret Service has faced dramatic changes; the functions were transferred from the OCFO and split into three

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[54] The Government Accountability Office, in a broader study on information technology, has noted for the Secret Service that the ERB does not have a codified charter. GAO, "Information Technology Investment Management: A Framework for Assessing and Improving Process Maturity," GAO-04-394G, Mar 1, 2004, Washington, D.C. Government Accountability Office, "U.S. Secret Service – Action Needed to Address Gaps in IT Workforce Planning and Management Practices," GAO-19-60, November 2018, Washington, D.C. p. 27.

different divisions to improve the processes and outcomes that have a direct positive impact on Agency employees. As these changes occurred, the way the new divisions have faced process integration, change management, and employee engagement made a major difference in the success of these programs.

The Secret Service's Enterprise Readiness Office (ERO) is home to Secret Service's two operational divisions responsible for acquisitions and procurements:

1) Procurement Division is responsible for procuring goods and services on behalf of the Secret Service.
2) Administrative Operations Division (AOD) is responsible for maintaining Secret Service's government leases on field offices, vehicles, etc.

Both divisions have a direct impact on the morale of Secret Service employees because the workforce relies on ERO to provide the support and equipment Special Agents, UD Officers, and APT employees need to do their jobs. Employees interviewed throughout the study said that the Agency's performance in this mission support function has noticeably improved in the past several years, and the story is particularly informative. ERO improved employee morale and engagement by refocusing on the Agency's mission and demonstrating to employees the direct impact acquisitions and procurements have on that mission.

The Procurement Division and AOD were previously located in the OCFO. The Academy's 2016 report found that having both divisions within OCFO "could be diverting attention away from the attainment of strategic goals for budget and financial management." It went on to recommend that the Secret Service "conduct an organizational assessment of the OCFO," with particular emphasis on "evaluating the placement of the Acquisition Executive, Procurement Division, and Administrative Operations." The Secret Service conducted an organizational assessment of these three functions and found that both the Procurement Division and the AOD were not meeting the required performance levels. Recognizing that the performance of both divisions has a direct impact on the morale of the Secret Service, leadership at the time decided to remove both the AOD and the Procurement Division from the OCFO and placed them in what is now ERO.

ERO is led by a Deputy Assistant Director (DAD). Upon reorganizing both divisions into ERO, the DAD noticed that the workforce felt disconnected from the Secret Service mission. One of the leading reasons for this, according to interviews, was the removal of operational voices, particularly Special Agents, from the office itself. In response, the DAD appointed a Deputy Special Agent-in-Charge (DSAIC) to each of the divisions. One of the DSAICs brought experience in hiring and helped expedite the onboarding process. That DSAIC is now working to improve retention incentives as well as hiring bonuses for new employees. ERO also implemented telework and flexible work schedules (before COVID-19) to provide employees with more flexibility and to improve employee engagement and morale.

The DAD communicates more frequently with employees through all-hands meetings. In doing so, the DAD draws attention to the impact of the work of employees within ERO and the mission. An example of this is when ERO made a significant armored vehicle purchase. The DAD took the team to see the vehicles the office worked hard to procure. The DAD is also working to expose

employees to unique opportunities such as traveling on a protective assignment to better connect them with the mission.

The third organization involved in acquisition program management is the Office of Strategic Planning and Policy (OSP). The Component Acquisition Executive (CAE) function, including liaison with DHS, was transferred from the OCFO to OSP to better align strategic acquisition and program reviews with both the planning and financial programing functions. This merger has anecdotally led to improved program management and communication between the multiple organizations involved with long term, systemic improvements in lines of business and operations.

Activities that connect employees to the mission have an outsized impact on the morale of the workforce, and it shows in their performance as well. Interviews with ERB members indicate that ERO has greatly improved customer service, especially in the field. It also shows improvement in the FEVS scores of the AOD.[55] In one year, the AOD saw a 37 percent jump in the FEVS Leadership Index, improving from 30 percent satisfaction in 2018 to 67 percent satisfaction in 2019. The AOD also saw a significant one-year increase of 21 percent increase in the category of "openness," and a 29 percent increase in the category of "cooperative." The office generally saw increases of approximately 5 to 10 percent in all other reporting indexes within FEVS, except for a small (1 to 4 percent) backslide in a couple of indexes that were previously higher than average.

Customer Service and Business Process Improvement

Employees interviewed during the study mentioned that the Secret Service had made great strides in two key areas of ongoing operations: creating a culture of internal customer service and improving business processes. The two areas are closely related, as a heightened sense of customer service—a desire to improve how key communities receive support—can lead to a desire to improve day-to-day workings. A greater focus on business process improvement often leads to customer service improvements, especially when stakeholders are closely involved, and the changes are communicated throughout an organization. High-functioning organizations incorporate a positive feedback loop fostering a more focused and engaged workforce.

The Secret Service has made strides in putting into place concrete improvements in customer service, which is generally marked by several characteristics. First, an organization focused on customer service will seek to eliminate the overlap, duplication, gaps, and seams that can slow down actions, cutting through the silos that get in the way of good communication and eliminating turf-wars that can get in the way of the experience of a supported partner. Second, a customer

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[55] Due to the newness of the office and a lack of employees to meet the reporting threshold (a minimum of 10 employees), the Procurement Division is not currently represented in the 2018 and 2019 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey scores the study assessed.

service-oriented organization ensures that it has set standards and measures success against those standards.[56]

There are numerous processes that the Secret Service streamlined in recent years that improved customer service and overall Agency performance. Offices within the Secret Service, for instance, were maintaining paper copies for time and attendance records, which created storage issues, limiting space available for adding additional staff to the office. TEC personnel believed that those records would be audited. A staff member checked with the inspectors to ask whether paper records were actually reviewed. Once it was confirmed that those records were not reviewed, the office stopped collecting the paper time and attendance records and was able to reclaim the office space when they removed the storage cabinets. In this example, the communication between the auditor and executing office broke down the stovepipe, allowing TEC to take an action that enhanced effectiveness and efficiency.

Similarly, travel reimbursement is a particularly sensitive area for Special Agents and those who frequently travel to accomplish their mission assignments. The Secret Service reduced the time for reimbursement from a matter of months to weeks upon document submission. Here, the improvement came because of leaders focusing on the problem, reinforcing the need for quick reimbursement, and applying the staffing necessary to expedite the process.

The Agency has also improved communication via computer networking software. In response to communication issues during the work at home orders associated with COVID-19, the CIO quickly put a new VPN in place to allow its workforce to work remotely. The Agency had long planned to enhance this network, as the demand for telework opportunities was already increasing. OCIO worked with stakeholders to understand and define requirements and develop an accompanying plan. When the pandemic struck, Secret Service leaders collectively recognized that the Agency did not have the capacity for every employee to work on the VPN network. Agency leadership provided the funding, and the CIO was able to quickly procure a new system. The installation of the new VPN demonstrated where problem identification and planning put the Agency in a position to significantly enhance how it does business and support all aspects of the organization when the resources are available.

While there has been significant attention to the processes associated with Special Agent hiring, discussed extensively in Chapter 3, additional steps are necessary to expedite and improve the professional and mission support processes.

Several interviewees expressed concerns about customer service in a specific high-profile financial management area. Office directors have had difficulty tracking where they stand in program budgets and expenditures. Congress often asks how much funding has been spent against appropriations. Several interviewees said the Agency can be slow to respond to these

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[56] Partnership for Public Service, Colleagues as Customers: How Mission Support Services Can Improve the Customer Experience," August 2019, Washington, D.C. https://ourpublicservice.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Colleagues-as-Customers.pdf

inquires. The Secret Service acknowledges these delays, which the Agency attributes to changes in the Financial Management reporting structure and supporting IT system.[57]

Improving Information Technology Infrastructure

As shown by the significant business process improvement that arose from the installation of the new VPN, IT is one of the most vital tools for employees to carry out their work. Whether Secret Service employees have effective tools that are up-to-date affects productivity, motivation, and outlook. Employees interviewed said the IT available for main functional areas involving Special Agent activities, UD Officers' operations, and key administrative functions are well supported and generally updated. OCIO recently led the development of the EPS system and an Event Resources Scheduling system, a data-sharing system with state and local law enforcement. OCIO maintains a strategic plan and a technical roadmap that addresses the Agency's direction. These discussions and associated analyses revealed several areas where modernization impacts employee engagement.

The first centers around how to maintain forward momentum on IT modernization, as more and more services migrate to the cloud. There is a strong desire among various offices and divisions within the Agency to leverage big data and access data visualization tools: these types of systems are moving to the cloud or are currently cloud-based. The Agency must "section off" an area of the cloud to meet its high-security needs. The experience of other security-oriented agencies like the Department of Defense demonstrates that this migration can be considerably expensive and burdensome.

The OCIO provides risk assessments and remediation recommendations to ensure directorates securely operate in cloud environments. Several cloud initiatives are in various stages of development and deployment, including HRConnect, Secret Service Hire, Microsoft Office 365, PALMS, WebTA, and USA Performance, which is used by the entire Agency. The CIO follows the security authorization process set forth by the DHS Risk Management Framework (RMF) as in DHS 4300A and NIST guidelines. The Agency is striving to keep pace while maintaining its security practices.

The Secret Service will have to determine whether moving to the cloud will provide the necessary and appropriate return on investment. Decisions on cloud migration will ultimately turn on questions of basic effectiveness and capability. The Agency requires consolidated databases to have a complete picture of the Agency, and cloud vendors are often unable to provide complete and accurate data sets.

The second IT area that can strongly affect employee engagement relates to accessing specialized software. Several employees talked about delays in having specialized software packages installed. This software may be commonly used in the private sector and other federal agencies but is not a commonly used software across the Agency. The advanced statistical software program called Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, often referred to as SPSS, is an example. The stretched-out timelines for installation mean that an employee simply may not be able to do his or her job,

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[57] Prior to publication, the Agency indicated that the reporting structure has largely stabilized and both internal and external reporting is now timely.

which has a debilitating effect on whether the individual feels they are contributing to the mission. The CIO reported that it approves a majority of requests for specialized software put forth through its Enterprise Architecture Board (EARB), though it will deny requests when the requesting directorate has failed to include the budgeted lifecycle sustainment costs. Individual directorates must include funding for specialized software in the individual budgets, and some of the delays employees experience come from the need to cobble together and wedge in the necessary funding.

The third IT area that impacts engagement involves whether the Agency develops software tools "in-house" versus obtaining commercial off-the-shelf products (COTS). Employees interviewed during the study said they believed that the Agency can be overly reliant on developing systems internally versus adopting off-the-shelf systems that are readily available. That approach, according to interviewees, can result in slower-to-develop, less cost-effective software tools.

The OCIO reports it follows established policies and procedures on COTS versus governmentally developed systems, and it seeks to develop systems in the most timely, cost-effective manner. While interviewees across the Agency had the impression that the vast majority of new software was developed in-house, OCIO reports that 90 percent of software requests are COTS. The EARB discusses software solutions and recommends if there should be a custom development or COTS product. The OCIO stated in interviews that the office that will use the system, OCIO's "customer," makes the ultimate decision pending product funding, security, and support capability, though several of these customers interviewed during the study reported never receiving an option. OCIO says that it balances specific customer needs, the capability of a potential COTS solution, and budgeted resources in making recommendations. Several APT personnel in HUM interviewed believed that the Secret Service Hire could take on several additional functions and processes, but OCIO reports that the Agency opted against merging in merit promotion and applicant tracking after a review of the purpose and capabilities.

The Secret Service experienced significant challenges procuring COTS software for one of its most important areas – scheduling for Special Agents and UD Officers. The Agency indicated that it originally attempted to develop the system with three different contracts over 5 years at a cost of over $30 million. No usable product emerged. Those efforts involved implementing the best scheduling products, including those used in such high-profile organizations such as DOD Special Operations. After the third attempt, Secret Service OCIO developed a usable product in four months that met the needs of the Agency, using only federal employees' technical skills for no additional cost.

The Panel notes that there are several areas of concern as the Agency decides whether to take the "in-house" versus COTS solution. One is that there needs to be flexibility in adapting organizational business processes to take advantage of the efficiencies and performance improvements various software systems offer. When rigid processes and requirements are demanded during development the provider-contractor must include additional functionality, which adds time, cost, and complexity.

The other consideration is that OMB provided guidance in 2016, which can help an agency decide whether existing software could be used rather than developing new software in-house. [58] The OMB memorandum establishes three steps in determining the correct path of providing software support:

1) Step one involves a strategic analysis and a formal analysis of alternatives. Each agency must conduct research and analysis before initiating any technology acquisition or custom code development.

2) Step two directs Agencies to consider existing commercial software solutions. If an Agency's analysis of alternatives concludes that existing Federal software solutions cannot efficiently and effectively meet the needs of the Agency, the Agency must explore whether its requirements can be satisfied with an appropriate commercially available solution.

3) Step three is pursued only after an Agency's CIO concludes that an existing Federal software solution or commercial solution cannot adequately satisfy its needs. At that point, the Agency may consider procuring custom-developed code in whole or in conjunction with existing Federal or commercial code.

Whether in the case of COTS versus organic software or specialized software or IT strategy in general, there is a need for more communication on important decisions that impact employees' day-to-day work. There is a disconnect between what employees perceive and what steps the Agency is actually undertaking, according to the CIO. The misperceptions—employees not understanding the larger strategic efforts and management not grasping the very real concerns among employees—can have an all-too-real impact on the engagement, outlook, and productivity of employees. The OCIO does not have an integrated communications plan and strategy to explain IT process, modernization efforts, and equip division leaders and supervisors with the tools to communicate with the force.

Recommendations

6.1   Codify the directives that define the role and mission of the COO and critical mission support organizations to ensure the leadership of mission support organizations by professionals is balanced with Agent-filled leadership roles, such as deputy and branch-chief positions. Steps include:

- **Defining the COO role in the Agency leadership hierarchy and specifying in the implementation directive that this senior position will continue to require substantial administrative experience.**

- **Creating an explicit directive for the ERB that spells out its membership, roles, and responsibilities.**

6.2   Develop and implement a customer-focused, internal strategic communications campaign for the IT roadmap, including the modernization strategy, key initiatives, and progress as well as information on the process

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[58] OMB Memorandum M-16-21, Federal Source Code Policy: Achieving Efficiency, Transparency, and Innovation through Reusable and Open Source Software, August 8, 2016.

for employees to request IT tools and specialized software program. Steps include:

- **Acknowledging the key role of IT for employee engagement and effectiveness.**

- **Encouraging working with customers so that, when appropriate, rather than customizing COTS, encourage customers to change business practices.**

6.3 **Assess the implementation of the Agency's IT strategy to determine if it is moving in a positive direction on modernization, address the use of organically developed systems versus COTS, and improve customer service.**

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Chapter 7: Culture of Inclusion and Communication

This chapter examines some of the more intangible and less quantifiable aspects of the Secret Service workplace that are key drivers of employee engagement. These topics are challenging to put in neat categories and describe in purely objective terms, but they are significant because they motivate the workforce to carry out its mission. The Secret Service can put in place additional streamlined business operations, concrete hiring plans, and new work-life balance initiatives, but retaining employees will be a challenge if employee engagement and the workplace culture are not prioritized. This chapter describes the workplace culture as reflected in the various interviews and discussions. It looks at the Agency's communication, the sense of teamwork that exists across the Agency, the diversity of the workplace, and the Agency's change management approach.

Mission Demands Drive Workplace Culture

As noted earlier, among all the Agency employees engaged during this study, there is a noticeable dedication to the Agency's mission. Interviewees recognize that the safety of the President and his family ensures the basic workings of the country's constitutional democracy. The importance of the other aspect of the Secret Service's mission, investigation of financial crimes, is also well-understood. Almost every individual engaged during this study mentioned the overwhelming need for confidence in the nation's currency and the security of its money supply. Those who would try to tamper or steal must be investigated and prosecuted. Almost all respondents from the Agency responded affirmatively to the question in the 2019 FEVS scores that his or her work is important. Similarly, the employees of the Secret Service roundly agree with the statement that the Agency is successful in its mission. There is a recognition of the Agency's important role in the government and the country, as well as a basic pride in the organization, that is very similar to the nation's armed services.

Time and time again, interviewees described a culture of "doing more with less," and the FEVS scores in this area support that narrative. Secret Service employees score the Agency well below other federal agencies overall in terms of resource sufficiency.

Operational demands steer the Secret Service's organizational culture driving a wedge among the various employee groups. There is a pervasive perception of strong divisions among the various personnel– Special Agents, UD Officers, TLE and APT employees. These cleavages, which are so deleterious to a highly functioning organization, have become noticeably better in recent years with the professionalization of key support functions discussed in Chapter 6. As these organizations continually improve in performance, personnel of all categories see the benefit.

Interviewees, throughout this study, had the sense that leadership is working on improving employee engagement and morale but said they would like to see stronger affirmation that leadership is actively working to address workplace climate and culture concerns. The Agency has not disseminated a vision for its workplace culture, how that environment will specifically enhance employee engagement, through such steps as developing the next generation of Secret Service leaders in ways that improve teamwork among employee groups.

Strategic Communications Impacting Organizational Culture

Secret Services employees are generally satisfied with the communication they receive from the Director's front office, and, according to interviews and engagements, there are opportunities to be heard by upper-level leadership at the Secret Service. Interviewees generally expressed appreciation for what they perceive to be better and more frequent communication by the top leadership in the Agency. The Secret Service's top leadership has made improving communication to the workforce a priority, and the results of these efforts are positive.

There is, however, a desire for increased internal communication within divisions and offices. Offices with leading engagement scores in the Secret Service communicate frequently with their staff. They hold regular all-hands meetings, host employee recognition programs, and host social events throughout the year. These types of events help build an intra-division and intra-office culture that ideally becomes more open and supportive of one another. The pressure "to do more with less" often comes at the expense of employee engagement meetings and events. While there will inevitably be days and weeks where the mission makes these events undoable, it remains imperative that division and office leaders prioritize making time for their division and office teams to meet for events that contribute to a stronger sense of engagement and workplace culture. The challenges that division and office heads have in communicating with their teams likely derive from a lack of training and leadership development opportunities (as discussed in Chapter 5) to learn about best methods for connecting and motivating teams, as well as essential management skills.

Now that the Secret Service has improved its top leadership communication, the Communication and Media Relations (CMR) office is looking to focus efforts on improving intra-division and intra-office communication. To do so, CMR says it will work with divisions and offices to tailor their communications to the workforce so that employees find value in their engagements with division and office heads.

OCFO is an Example of an Organization Undergoing Major Change

The OCFO has undergone two major operational changes in recent history. Two divisions within OCFO moved to the Office of Enterprise Readiness, OCFO transferred the Component Acquisition Executive position and staff to OSP, and OCFO implemented a new financial management system that automated Secret Service manual processes (including paper/fax invoices) using modern tools and systems intended at providing more internal controls and rigor. The implementation of a new financial management system began in 2012 and has continued since then. Many employees had several years, if not decades, of experience with the old financial management system. While the new system brought with it many efficiencies, it also brought a sense of uneasiness among the employees who were used to the old system.

For more on OCFO organizational challenges and recommendations, see Chapter 9.

This is a promising development, and it also shows an awareness that intra-division and intra-office communication need to be improved.

An element of this effort includes improving "all-users" email blasts. Many offices, like HUM or OCFO, send out notes to the entire workforce, creating a high volume of communication. The Agency is working to tailor messages to ensure Agency-wide emails and communication are going out when necessary. There have been intensive efforts to ensure greater coordination on communication to ensure that, when an employee receives a note from headquarters, they will know it is truly important and worth their valuable time amidst their many responsibilities. A best practice followed by at least one other federal law enforcement agency, to send out very short emails with topic items that are hyperlinked to a more detailed description of the item in the email. That way employees who are not interested in the topic can disregard the hyperlink, avoiding the need to read long narrative emails to search for topics they might be interested in reading.

Throughout the interview process, Special Agents and APT employees said that they appreciate that the Secret Service leadership is providing various opportunities for employees to express opinions and provide feedback and suggestions for improving employee engagement and satisfaction. Employees generally said they could provide candid and open feedback, however, some long-term employees said they would never raise an issue in an open forum based on their experience in the Agency. The Agency continues to use SPARK!, an online forum designed to allow employees to bring issues to the fore and to offer suggestions for operational improvements. Employees can review, comment, and "vote" on ideas. Once there is discussion or comments at a certain level, leadership must address those issues.

However, the appeal of SPARK! seems to be wearing off, and interviewees said that SPARK! Is now used as a tool for forcing leadership to answer rumor mill questions as opposed to SPARK!'s original intention as an innovation tool. Rumors can arise within any organization and on a range of sensitive subjects: such as pay and benefits, assignments, or promotions - all items that are important to employees. These rumors create distraction and uncertainty, and the Agency has found it essential to be able to tackle misunderstandings and misconceptions. To return SPARK! to its original intention, the Secret Service is considering deploying another online forum called the Watercooler designed to quickly bat down rumors and set the record straight.

Recommendation

7.1   Implement a "SPARK! 2.0" with an enhanced appearance and end-user experience to address outstanding concerns regarding its utility.

Evolving Change Management Approach

In efforts to improve operations, organizations typically reorganize and realign functions or reporting structures, which as a by-product, can disrupt the day-to-day rhythms of the workforce. Change management is vital to reap the benefit and goals that the redesign was set up to achieve and to ensure that the workforce can contribute and succeed in the new arrangement. In recent years the Secret Service has instituted several significant office reorganizations, and the interviews revealed mixed success in the Agency's change management efforts.

For example, HUM embarked on several functional changes, including the creation of a division, called Human Resources Business Solutions (HBS), and the shifting of management of Secret Service Hire to TAD. These organizational changes were designed to enhance oversight over the various human resources IT systems and explore potential consolidations of systems and organizational efficiencies.

In conducting numerous engagements with federal agencies, the Academy has identified best practices for change management, based on extensive research on organizational transformation in the public and private sectors. Key change management success indicators include:

1) Ensure top leadership drives the transformation.
2) Establish a clear vision and integrated strategic transformation goals.
3) Design the organizational structure that will enable the vision.
4) Create a sense of urgency, implement a timeline, and show progress from day one.
5) Communicate frequently throughout multiple channels to multiple stakeholders.
6) Dedicate a powerful implementation guidance team to manage the transformation process.
7) Engage employees to seek their improvement ideas, build momentum, and gain ownership and transformation.
8) Sustain the effort by nurturing a new culture, rewarding risk, and measuring progress.

The PMP called on the Secret Service to commit itself to transformative and continuous change. The Academy's 2016 study reiterated that need and found a few important pieces that were already in play, including the establishment of OSP and the development of a "Strategic Outlook 2016-2026" that looks to synchronize personnel, technology, and other resources to meet tomorrow's needs. In May of 2018, the Secret Service issued its 2018-2022 strategic plan and is working on the release of a new human capital strategic plan.

What is missing, however, is a more tactical change management plan that is integrated with the Secret Service's strategic management documents. The Secret Service's change management strategy does not include an emphasis on division- and office-level results, often called "unit-level health and performance." In 2018, an Academy Panel released a report on strengthening unit-level health and performance and provided three strategic components to doing so:[59]

1) **Strengthen unit-level health and performance**. Start by using existing data, such as the EEI derived from the annual government-wide FEVS, to assess and diagnose the state of unit-level organizational health and performance. These survey data are available to 28,000 work units across the government. Expand and refine analyses over time to include the use of other data sources, such as operational and mission support performance data.
2) **Create a learning-based approach to improving results.** To act on these assessments, create a learning-based approach (rather than a directive approach) to

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[59] National Academy of Public Administration, *Strengthening Organizational Health and Performance in Government,* January 2018, https://www.napawash.org/uploads/Strengthening_Organizational_Health_and_Performance_in_Government.pdf

improve organizational capacity and performance in agencies by engaging organizational units to develop with employee input their own individually tailored plans for improvement. The specific elements would be defined within each major mission area. The strategy may cross the program and agency boundaries. Plans would be peer-reviewed.

3) **Employ the power of data analytics to manage.** To sustain the learning-based approach, help managers make effective use of a flood of new data relevant to their operations by giving them tools to access, analyze, and apply those data, as well as the skills to manage in this new data-rich environment. Encourage the creation of communities of practice where managers can learn from each other's experiences well as from more formal training opportunities.

Recommendation

7.2   Adopt an integrated strategic management approach applying a rigorous management strategy, which was a key recommendation in the Academy's 2016 report for the Agency.

Acknowledge Contributions and Build Office Cohesion

Along with the ability to grow as a professional, whether upward assuming new responsibilities or laterally broadening one's knowledge through acquiring new skills and experiences, employees of highly functioning, engaged federal organizations want to be recognized for their work and know they are contributing to a larger team.

Employee recognition and team cohesion at the Secret Service emerged as inconsistent and something of a patchwork based on interviews and analysis. Some offices make it a priority to have special orientation sessions for their division, regular office gatherings, and other special events. Often these gatherings provide an opportunity to announce awards, formal recognitions, or more informal "employee-of-the quarter" type awards. Offices that face especially significant personnel shortages tend to have a more difficult time gathering for recognition purposes.

The Agency's exit surveys indicate that departing employees often cite the lack of recognition as a reason for leaving. The lack of an effective awards program can accelerate the departures and have the effect of throwing oil on the fire of the Agency's attrition challenges. Even small changes that reduce recognition and team gatherings can elicit negative feelings among employees. Employees repeatedly mentioned instances when no holiday gathering occurred or when a plaque that recognizes achievement and real contribution had not been updated in years.

Diversity and Inclusion as a Pillar of Secret Service's Organizational Culture

Ensuring an environment of diversity and inclusion is one of the most important pillars of organizational success. When each member of the organization feels valued and possesses a sense of belonging, offices function at a higher level in several ways, from bringing multiple perspectives

and views to complicated problems to ensuring the organization more closely reflects the larger society. Diversity and inclusion improve organizational performance.[60]

Secret Service employees expressed the view that the organization performs satisfactorily but does not excel in creating a diverse workforce. The Agency FEVS scores closely mirror government-wide averages on the question of whether the Agency has the policies and approach to build diversity. The interviews for this study revealed concern but did not outweigh the staffing, work-life, development, and communication issues already discussed.

Matters of unconscious bias and structural barriers to the advancement of minorities did arise in discussions, as the country was in the midst of protests over the killing of George Floyd and the Agency was assisting in the federal response. The Agency's Director, in partnership with his entire leadership team, held an informative agency-wide virtual town hall meeting with the workforce to address current issues impacting law enforcement, African Americans, and other people of color communities. This virtual town hall meeting about racial justice and equal opportunity occurred in the weeks following the first nationwide protests.

Shortly thereafter, the Office of Equity and Employee Support Services (EES) formed an internal Social Injustice and Race Relations Working Group (SIRRWG), developed a "Facilitator's Guide to Courageous Conversations," and conducted sixteen 90-minute facilitator-led virtual discussions between the period of July–August 2020. EES also partnered with the Chief of UD to host a Guest Speaker from the National War College and conducted ten small (in-person) group discussions for the UD workforce to share their experiences and perspectives on the topics of social injustice and race relations. In those sessions and during several notable interviews during this study, several individuals expressed their appreciation for the Agency offering opportunities for these discussions. Many employees shared that their participation led to breakthroughs regarding their understanding of the issues that are the driving concerns of people of color.

Ensuring that the Secret Service is ethnically diverse and with a balance of male and female employees is a challenge. Men make up most of the employees at 76 percent of the Agency with women comprising 24 percent. Males hold most top leadership posts, representing almost 75 percent of these positions, while women comprise 25 percent, basically reflecting the larger workforce average. In terms of ethnicity, almost eight percent of the Agency's employees are Hispanic, 18 percent Black, three percent Asian, and 70 percent White. At the Senior Executive Service (SES) and Senior Leader (SL) level, 73.4 percent are White, 18.5 percent are Black, 6.3 percent are Hispanic, and 1.6 percent are Asian.[61]

The Agency takes very seriously its responsibilities under a 2017 consent decree that minimizes the potential for discrimination in the Special Agent promotion process, including providing greater visibility for the Executive of the Office of Equity and Employee Support Services who also

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[60] There is a breadth of literature on the importance of diversity and inclusion to organization performance. The Academy's report for the CDC, *Action Plan to Achieve a Diverse Workforce*, describes some of the benefits of a diverse workforce:
https://www.napawash.org/uploads/Academy_Studies/05ActionPlanAchieveDiverseWorkforce.pdf

[61] U.S. Secret Service, MD-715 Equal Employment Opportunity Program Status Report, FY 2019

serves as the Agency's Director of Equal Employment Opportunity. This position reports directly to both the Secret Service's Director and Deputy Director.

Senior leaders remain very concerned about ensuring greater representation at the higher grade levels. The Agency is monitoring the participation of women and minorities in key developmental courses and programs, completion of which can be a critical requirement for promotion to the senior ranks. As described in a 2017 GAO report on the status of equal employment within agencies of DHS, the Secret Service regularly conducts barrier analyses to track advancement across race, ethnicities, and gender. The Agency reviews such data as hiring in mission-critical career areas compared against relevant benchmarks. The Agency has intensified its quarterly tracking of ethnicity, race, and gender data, as well as tracking the net changes, in hires, resignations, and retirements. The Secret Service is exploring the expansion of its diversity recruiting efforts.[62] In 2018, the EES office launched the Inclusion, Diversity, Engagement in Action (IDEA) – New Inclusion Quotient (IQ) training course. The course offers a new approach to diversity training where facilitators use interactive exercises to reinforce how diversity can be used to increase performance by capitalizing on differences to solve complex problems. The skills taught in this course, according to the Agency, highlight how each employee is not only empowered to "create" – but "sustain" a more inclusive, diverse, and engaged workplace.

The Agency would benefit from even more support for the collective recognition that every person and position adds value. When those who support the Special Agents or UD Officers on the "front lines" feel valued, the quality and character of that support will only improve. When the environment feels more inclusive, recruitment and retention will be enhanced, and the Agency will be able to bring in and retain even higher quality groups of dedicated, sacrificing public servants.

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[62] Government Accountability Office, Report 19-573, "Equal Employment Opportunity", July 2019, Page 18-19.

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Chapter 8:   Uniformed Division

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the second phase of the review of Secret Service employee engagement focused on UD. Phase 2 used the same methodology as the first phase, interviewing in discussion groups and one-on-one sessions more than 125 Division members from each branch, reviewing a wide range of UD policies, directives, and internal analyses of issues like staffing levels, attrition, scheduling, pay, and retirement data. The review also looked at past reports on the Secret Service and federal law enforcement best practices by the Academy, Eagle Hill, PMP, and GAO, among others. The UD was welcoming and eager to share information when requested. The UD staff was readily available for interviews, successfully managing the difficulties of remote interaction due to the COVID-19 pandemic throughout the second phase. All interactions were virtual through phone calls and video-teleconference engagements.

The Uniformed Division (UD or the Division), established in 1922 as the White House Police with only 33 Officers, provides physical security and protection for U.S. Secret Service protectees. The facilities the UD protects include the White House and nearby Treasury Department, the Naval Observatory (Vice President's Residence), and Foreign Diplomatic Missions, primarily in Washington, DC. The Division's four branches largely correspond with these sites, supplemented by SOD that provides unique capabilities like counterassault, countersniper, K-9, and chemical protection.

The UD is responsible for a variety of duties at these facilities, including access control, vehicle patrols, foot patrols, bicycle patrols, and magnetometer operations. The nearly-1700 Officers of the Division have enforcement authorities for Federal and Washington, D.C., law among other responsibilities necessary to keep the facilities and venues housing the nation's highest leadership safe and secure. The Division's Officers also have important security responsibilities when the President or other protectees travel for public events, assisting in key physical security operations. Like their Special Agent counterparts, UD employees can spend a significant amount of time on the road performing their security and protection duties.

A high-quality, well-trained, ready workforce is key to ensuring the highest quality of security and protection for high-profile facilities. The Division requires strict qualifications for candidates applying for positions. To qualify, an applicant must be a U.S. citizen, high school diploma or equivalent, be between the age of 20 and 37 at the time of appointment, pass a written exam, be in excellent health and physical condition, and pass a polygraph interview. Once hired, Officers must graduate from the 12-week program at FLETC and the 14-week program at the Agency's training center, RTC, where they are taught protective techniques relevant to their specific mission.

Overall Observation

The UD carries out one of the many difficult aspects of the Secret Service's mission – physical protection of high-profile facilities and venues. They understand and believe in the importance of this mission. The prestige of working at the White House and a strong compensation package adds to the attraction of the Division. Yet, for the bulk of its Officers responsible for the main protective mission, the work, with long, repetitive hours, has become a grind. Many Officers encountered in

this study face burnout. The workforce is working considerable overtime, at times involuntarily, due to staffing level shortfalls and attrition. In FY 2020 this was compounded by the requirements to adjust schedules to have a Ready Reserve to decrease COVID contagion, staff a Civil Disturbance Unit for summer demonstrations, and the additional activities of an election year. As Figure 7 shows, the average Officer worked 537.83 hours of overtime in FY 2020, which equals about 3 months and a week of additional work hours in a calendar year. Due to the cost of living in the Washington, D.C. area, many Officers face long commutes with little time at home before returning to post, sometimes involuntarily as they are called back to work. Employees use compensatory (comp) time and take sick leave to avoid forced overtime and to guarantee time off, which has the domino effect of causing another Officer to involuntarily lose a day off and be forced to work overtime.

Figure 6: Uniformed Division Overtime Hours (Source: National Academy of Public Administration analysis of Uniformed Division overtime data)

FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
698,040 ⬤ Total UD Overtime Hours	**723,387** ⬤ Total UD Overtime Hours	**824,496** ⬤ Total UD Overtime Hours
493.66 ◷ Approx. Number of Overtime Hours per Officer in FY 2018	**471.57** ◷ Approx. Number of Overtime Hours per Officer in FY 2019	**537.83** ◷ Approx. Number of Overtime Hours per Officer in FY 2020
3.08 🗓 Approx. Number of Months of Regular Work Hours of Overtime Worked per Officer	**2.94** 🗓 Approx. Number of Months of Regular Work Hours of Overtime Worked per Officer	**3.36** 🗓 Approx. Number of Months of Regular Work Hours of Overtime Worked per Officer

Note: Only Officers, Officer Technicians, Sergeants, Sergeant Technicians, and Lieutenants are eligible for overtime.

Staffing shortages ripple across other aspects of employees' tasks and responsibilities, from taking away training opportunities, to preventing a closer relationship with peers and mentoring with supervisors. Officer attrition takes the form of departures to different non-UD positions within the Secret Service, other federal law enforcement agencies, or outside the federal service altogether. Attrition fluctuates but remains high and steady, placing additional demands on the already understaffed Division. Overall, job satisfaction and employee engagement as reflected in the interviews and surveys is low, and the current level of focus, commitment, and drive put the Division at a concerning level of risk.

This situation is structural, neither tied to an administration nor the demands of the election cycle. The Agency's workforce planning shows the necessary level of manpower, given an average level of effort and the number of days off that can be provided. The Division's staffing levels are significantly below the required numbers. The impact that plays out in the day-to-day lives of Officers, Sergeants, Lieutenants, and Captains is what the models, discussed below, would predict: significant overtime, canceled weekends, and days off. Employee engagement issues, while most pronounced at the White House Branch, exists in all the other branches, including the SOD.

The Secret Service has been aggressively tackling job satisfaction among UD Officers, adding substantial personnel to its ranks over the past half-decade, standing up training offices within each branch, and stepping up communications and outreach through rollcalls, along with several other measures. Other initiatives include enhancements to the Officer merit promotion process and allowing UD Officers to participate in senior level training, such as the SES Candidate Development Program and military War Colleges.

The Panel believes that there are additional short-term steps UD can take to mitigate some of the most immediate issues and address some of the relentless pressure many Officers face. Regardless, the risk level will remain significant until either additional staff members are hired and trained to fill posts, mission demands are reduced, or the way the Division conducts its mission changes.

Staffing Level Requirements

Issues relative to staffing the Division with ready and trained individuals carrying out the mission day-to-day—dominated the concerns of UD Officers. The view among Officers, especially at the White House Branch but also among the other branches, is that the sheer number of staff is not adequate to cover the mission requirements without requiring a significant, and unsustainable, level of overtime. The other overarching staffing concern is instability that results from staffing level shortages and how constant and uncontrolled overtime leads to high attrition levels and a constant influx of new, inexperienced personnel. The Secret Service faces remarkable challenges in determining staffing requirements, given the unpredictability of its missions.

An Officer Shortage

An examination of the Secret Service staffing requirements models reveals that UD is facing a built-in personnel shortage. These models, developed by the manpower experts within the Division, OSP, and HUM, were validated through several budget cycles and carefully scrutinized by DHS and Congress. The models account for the staff to cover shifts, fill full-time administration positions, and travel, while also accounting for training, sick leave, compensatory time, and annual leave. With the force working at a law enforcement standard 8-hour shift, 1967 Officers would be required.[63] To cover those same needs at 8-hour shifts, while relying on overtime work

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[63] That level of staffing would allow the Division to sustain a "fourth shift," as recommended by the PMP and reinforced by the 2016 Academy study. A fourth shift provides a reserve force who are ready to travel, train, and conduct preparedness and response exercises. This shift would rotate every two weeks. After a

that would essentially eliminate a day off for each Officer every two weeks, requires 1,733 personnel. The UD, as well as the entire Agency leadership, would like the workforce to receive all of their days off. However, given staffing constraints, leadership agrees that working one day off every two weeks is an acceptable necessity when spread workforce-wide, providing some downtime and home-life to Officers, as well as overtime pay that many value.

For FY 2021, UD is funded at 1,698 personnel. Complicating the situation is the actual staffing as of March 15, 2021, UD has almost 1,651 Officers, almost 50 below the budgeted number and 80 short of the staffing level goal to ensure Officers receive at least three of four days off every two weeks. The Secret Service budget anticipates a considerable amount of overtime, taking more than one day off from each Officer every two weeks.

As a result, the workforce is working significant overtime. On average, each member of UD is losing one day off a week, a 50 percent Working Day Off (WDO) level, to use the Secret Service parlance. The workforce in total worked 993,498 hours of voluntary and involuntary overtime in FY 2020.[64] As discussed in more detail below, a policy on earning compensatory time for the extra hours worked, which allows Officers to guarantee days off, exacerbates the situation, forcing Officers to work additional shifts to cover for those Officers taking their compensatory time.

The Agency has acknowledged this situation and has worked to increase staffing levels, adding more than 300 Officers over the past five fiscal years, ending in FY 2020. The FY 2022 budget, if approved by Congress, includes funding, to increase funded personnel to close to the 1733 number allowing for a 25 percent WDO, giving Officers on average at least three days off every two weeks. The long-term Human Capital Strategic Plan hiring goal for FY 2027 is 1,797 Officers. At that level, a considerable portion of the workforce will still be working overtime on their days off five years from now. UD faces real personnel shortages for the workforce for the foreseeable future under its current plans.

The Secret Service has been focused on accelerated hiring to fill vacancies and deal with these shortages. The Agency, as highlighted in earlier chapters, faces several internal and external hiring challenges. Internal challenges include the stretched hiring timelines, along with the competing need to increase hiring for Special Agents that can often draw on the same HUM and INV personnel. External challenges to accelerated hiring center primarily around the competition for candidates from other law enforcement agencies and the broader economy. Jobs within UD are especially comparable to positions within the National Park Police and the Capitol Hill Police, the latter of which is likely to undertake a hiring surge after January 6th.

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fourth shift is completed, the group would rotate back into the operational schedule count and a new group would rotate into the fourth shift. Officers would know when their fourth shift detail would be scheduled in advance, and the Officer could plan not to take annual leave. The fourth shift, according to the PMP, allows Officers to train, remove the reliance of travel protection on the operational manpower, and reduces overtime hours.

[64] UD Overtime and Compensatory Time, FY 2018-2020

Attrition and Turbulence

In addition to the overall shortage of personnel that leaves the Division often scrambling to fill shifts, the other central characteristic of UD's staffing situation is the constant influx and outflow of personnel, which is so notable that Division's leadership has named it, "The Churn." UD personnel interviewed said that the impacts of attrition, largely driven from overtime, have several negative effects on morale and retention for those remaining in the workforce. The effects include weak cohesion within the branches as so many Officers come and go, a widespread view that the branch is purely a stepping-stone for other opportunities, which in turn makes those looking to stay for a long-term career with the Secret Service feel abnormal.

The Division has experienced significant turnover. Over five years, from FY 2015 to FY 2020, 1220 UD personnel left the Division with 1495 new Officers hired, a positive balance that reflects the Agency's vigorous hiring efforts (see Figure 8). Turnover rates average more than 10 percent of the workforce per year with 11.27 percent leaving in 2019 and 11.24 percent in 2018, 10.9 percent in 2017, and 11.17 percent in 2016. As the current shortfall of 50 Officers indicates, the Agency has struggled to keep up pace with the employee departures.

Figure 7: Uniformed Division Officer Hires and Losses
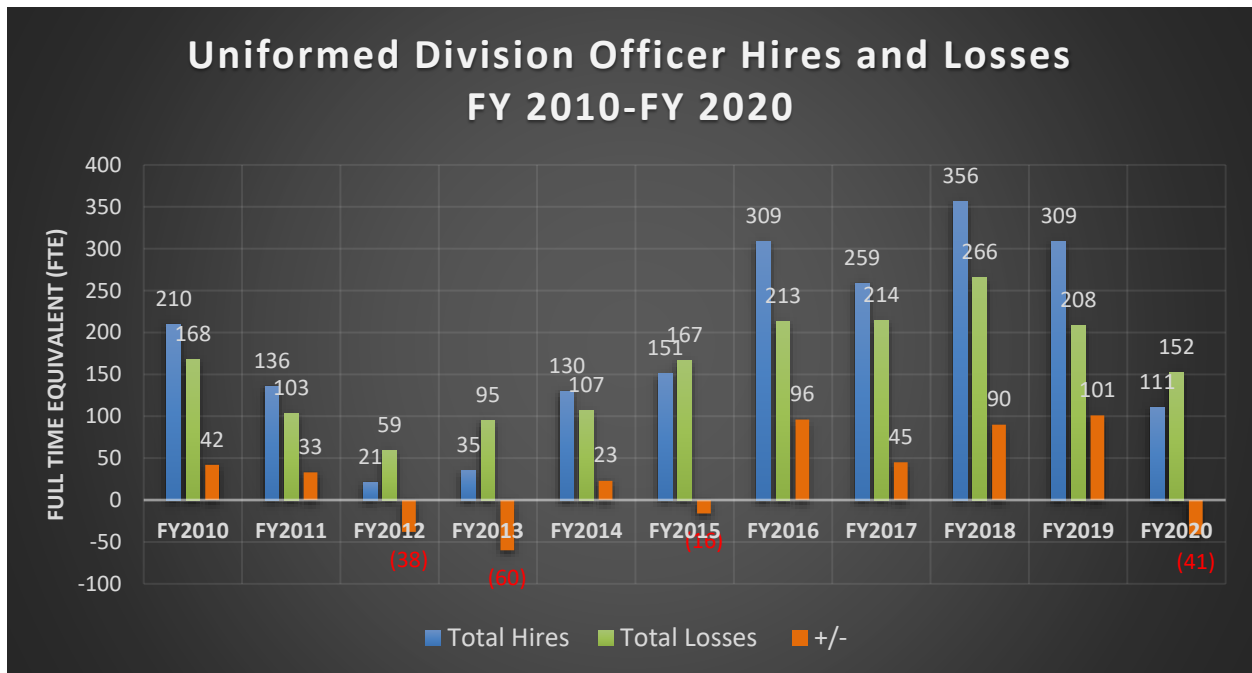
Source: National Academy of Public Administration analysis of Secret Service data

The levels of attrition seen in UD are similar to those faced at other law enforcement organizations. A certain amount of the Division's attrition is built into the Division's basic structure, its mission, and how it is situated within the Secret Service. Many individuals become Officers in the Division to position themselves to become Special Agents. Each year, Officers apply to the program described in Chapter 5 that brings over Officers to Agents in an expedited fashion. Last year, the Agency received more than 200 transfer applications. The number of candidates

selected depends on what Agency leaders, including the UD Chief, deem appropriate given the overall staffing situation. Those Officers not selected or who must wait, sometimes over many years, to transfer will look for opportunities elsewhere, given their goal to become a Special Agent. Another built-in contributor to attrition is the special credentials (security clearances, high-profile experience) Officers gain through their UD experience. Officers are very attracted to other law enforcement agencies and security firms inside and outside of government.

High UD attrition levels have a significant negative impact on the Agency, including negatively impacting readiness because the force has not received the training and gained the experience to appropriately respond to various scenarios. The readiness concerns are of particular importance given the strict requirements that must be enforced to protect the President, Vice President, and other key protectees. The high attrition also creates significant turbulence. As described earlier, hiring can take so long that the departures create gaps contributing to the staffing level shortages thus driving significant overtime. Due to constant attrition and subsequent hiring, UD staffing levels and demographics are constantly changing. Overall experience levels have also declined, as more experienced Officers have departed, and newly hired individuals require significant training and seasoning. Secret Service figures indicate that 31 percent of line UD Officers have less than three years of experience, and 62 percent have less than five years of experience.

Turnover, with experience-level and readiness consequences, remains a strong concern of Agency and Division leadership. The UD Chief and the Chief's staff conduct intensive interviews with departing personnel to understand the specific reasons for departures. Understanding the concerns of the workforce continues to be a focus of rollcalls and discussions, as the Leadership tries to monitor operations and keep a pulse on what the workforce is thinking. The Agency also analyzes the departures at a macro-level, which shows work-life balance is one of the most important elements of retaining Officers.

The factors that the Agency is scrutinizing and that are driving trained personnel to leave UD—work-life balance, compensation, room for career growth, and leadership development opportunities—are the focus of the remainder of this chapter, as they are closely related to employee engagement, morale, and outlook.

Unpredictable Mission Demands

UD has a challenging, often unpredictable, mission that drives its workforce staffing requirements, making it extremely challenging to determine its force structure requirements. Fluctuating threat levels at protection sites and unpredictable travel requirements create ever-changing, difficult-to-forecast needs. Threats continue to grow and take different shapes, creating pressure to ask the Division to do more.

Operational demands on the Division have grown more complex. The protests in May and June of 2020 have underscored the importance of monitoring and engagement outside the boundaries of the White House. Those events, as well as the January 6th event at the Capitol, have underscored the importance of the capability to respond to civil disturbances.

The Secret Service periodically reviews the number of security posts and patrol beats (e.g., static, walking, bicycle, vehicle) in and around all of the protective facilities. The number of posts is

dependent on leadership, technology, and a careful analysis of risk acceptance versus avoidance. It has also been reviewed by a third party. An anecdotal comment made by Officers is that posts have only increased over the past decade.

The PMP recommended the Secret Service "engage other federal agencies to evaluate the threats that the agency faces and its ways of doing business."[65] It went on to say that such an outside perspective could help Secret Service identify new technologies, training, best practices, and to "test assumptions that might be shared within an organization but are, in fact, contestable."[66] The 2016 Eagle Hill report recommended Secret Service "redesign the security plan for Uniformed Division posts using a risk-based approach to determine the appropriate number and location of posts," because UD Officers in focus groups suggested that the additional posts added after reactions to specific incidents "created additional workload without any justification as to the security need for the posts."[67] UD Officers consistently made similar statements in discussion groups for this project.

New approaches to UD operations and how it carries out its mission might allow the Division to provide the same level of protection and capability with fewer staff and resources in the long term. The Secret Service says it does not have a great deal of flexibility in carrying the physical security mission at the White House, Naval Observatory, or Foreign Missions with anything other than a substantial presence of federal Officers or employees of some kind. The Agency has not contemplated private contractors like some other federal national security agencies, due to the inherently governmental nature of its mission.

Similarly, new surveillance and other technologies might allow the Division to focus its personnel on fewer posts and critical areas of vulnerability. The completion of the new fence around the White House is a notable example of how new technologies have the potential to save staff levels. TEC continues to explore new technologies to supplement security, but the Agency reports that no technology has emerged that can fully substitute or replace a trained Officer who can put his or her eyes on a situation and immediately respond to a threat.

Many UD personnel at all levels suggested that a larger merger across the Agency with UD as an initial point of entry and first assignment would create significant manpower efficiencies. Under this approach, service in UD, particularly the White House Branch, would be the initial assignment for all operational personnel, moving along from there to such career tracks as Special Agent, UD Officer, or TLE. This single-point-of-entry arrangement would prevent the Secret Service from competing with itself from a narrow talent pool, provide a baseline experience for operational personnel, and prevent the pressure to deplete personnel from one part of the Secret Service to make another one healthier. The approach would, on paper, lead to streamlined administrative processes and policies, instead of having a separate set for UD and Special Agents.

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[65] United States Secret Service Protective Mission Panel, Report from the United States Secret Service Protective Mission Panel to the Secretary of Homeland Security, December 2014

[66] Ibid.

[67] Eagle Hill Consulting, *United States Secret Service Work/Life Integration Assessment,* p. 194-195, 2016.

The number of administrative personnel to manage these processes might be substantially less. Interviewees cited the success of the manpower model of the U.S. Marshals Service, which requires all its operational personnel to first serve assignments in the courts before moving to its nationwide field offices. The Secret Service has not explored the idea of this type of operational consolidation and specifically has not identified the costs and benefits relative to staffing levels and, more importantly, basic capability.

Recommendations

8.1 **Pursue a Grow, Stabilize, and Develop Strategy for UD that reduces forced overtime, gives downtime back to employees, provides more predictable schedules, increases training, boosts developmental opportunities, opens up more paths to a fulfilling career in the branch, and restores staffing. Steps include:**

- **Developing and implementing an employee wellness vision and action plan that includes the input of Officers and key stakeholders and requires ongoing communication that includes.**

- **Communicating with measurable near-, mid-, and long-term goals and accomplishments.**

8.2 **Plan for and execute the hiring surge for the Division, in the short term, to reach the 1797-Officer level included in the Human Capital Plan within three years. Steps include:**

- **Working with DHS and Congress to secure approval for the increase, along with the necessary funding.**

- **Increasing capacity within HUM and INV to expand recruiting, accommodate additional background checks, and speed-up hiring through organizational changes (exploration of a single office for Special Agent and Officer hiring), personnel details (additional UD personnel staffing HUM), and process improvements (additional ELACs and shortening time associated with hiring actions).**

8.3 **Conduct periodic third-party reviews of posts, perimeter security, and wider operations, including travel, to ensure appropriate staffing levels, address the impact of additional staffing requirements, operational intensity, and force-stress of these arrangements. Steps include:**

- **Using technology, whenever possible, to reduce the number and location of posts, which could benefit UD operations.**

8.4 **Conduct a study, in the long term, that delineates the basic characteristics and authorities of contract and federal law enforcement Officers, while working with TEC to explore how technology can enhance UD's mission execution.**

8.5   Study the option of restructuring Officer and Special Agent recruiting into a single point of entry along with dual and separate career paths for those remaining in UD and movement to Special Agents positions.

Work-Life Balance

Lack of work-life balance—the inability to have downtime outside of work and the sometimes monotonous nature of the work itself—contributes substantially to low employee engagement at UD and its high attrition. Position vacancies, widespread use of compensatory time, a high volume of Officers on sick leave contribute to the personnel shortages that are driving so much forced overtime, taking personnel away from families, outside pursuits, rest, and recovery. The Division has struggled to find an optimal schedule to mitigate the personnel shortages as fairly and openly as possible.

A Crisis in UD Work-Life Balance

Interviewees described the inherent challenges of the day-to-day responsibilities of a UD Officer, particularly one at the White House. Officers stand post for long shifts or walk patrols, of course, always at a heightened state of awareness. The work can become repetitive at best, monotonous at worst. "This is a very tough and hard job" was a refrain in this review's many discussions, as Officer described what it is like to come to work, day after day, week after week.

The additional overtime to carry out these difficult tasks contributes to the sense that UD work is relentless and grinding. In this situation, Officers may work with different groups of Officers and there is often little consistency amongst teammates with whom an Officer might staff a post or walk a patrol. Officers can go many days and sometimes weeks without interacting with their supervisors. Because staffing level shortages have become the norm and cynicism is pervasive, there is a sense that some Officers believe that the situation is not going to get better and despite what anyone at any level says about steps to fix the situation, nothing will change. Interviewees said that cynicism is often fueled by Officers near retirement embittered by the lack of career progression. Officers said during interviews that they are exhausted, frustrated, and unable to perform their best on the job.

The overtime that leads to the involuntary loss of so many weekends and days off for Officers means that UD personnel do not have the quality home life they need to balance against a very difficult job. The more than 900,000 hours of overtime that the workforce accrues means that Officers are on average losing two days off every two weeks, the equivalent of every other weekend. Officers have difficulty committing their availability to loved ones to attend evening outings and events, or day trips and visits due to the likely loss of days off. Officers report that notices of losing days off for work come with little or no advance notice, e.g., the prior evening.

The lack of work-life balance led several Officers to mention in interviews that they were searching for opportunities outside the Division, whether within the Secret Service as a Special Agent, with another federal law enforcement agency, or outside of the government altogether. Several Officers mentioned that the work is so interesting and important, and the benefits and compensation relatively strong, that they thought when they joined UD that this part of the Secret Service would

make up their whole career. The inability to spend time with family and engage in outside activities other than commuting, eating, showering, and sleeping has forced a change of thinking.

Based on interviewees, the UD branch with the greatest concern is the White House Branch. Unexpected protective travel primarily pulls from White House Branch personnel. Officers from the Naval Observatory and the RTC, as well as Special Operations, believe they have a better work-life balance because they have more manpower and flexibility to balance schedules.

Compensatory Time Off and Sick Days

While interviewees attributed the work-life concerns primarily to staffing levels, several Division policies exacerbate the situation. To guarantee downtime, Officers use their accrued compensatory time to guarantee they get the desired days off. Under UD policy, UD personnel can accumulate compensatory time and use it without it counting against their yearly maximum of 160 hours. Some individuals accumulate as many as 500 hours of compensatory time in a single year by working overtime but capturing it as compensatory time, then using that compensatory time and repeating the process because the 160-hour cap does not have a time limit, like per year. In a practice known as "Earn and Burn," Officers use the compensatory time as they earn it or as they get closer to the 160-hour cap. UD personnel said that the widespread use of compensatory time forces other personnel to work overtime to fill that gap, adding to the staffing shortages. Many officers feel they have no choice but to earn and use compensatory time to ensure time with their families. A similar dynamic plays out when it comes to sick leave. While the thought among UD leaders is that most of those Officers calling in sick are genuinely ill, there are cases where sick leave is being used to take days off.

UD leadership has identified the issues caused by compensatory time accrual and use and they are developing policies to help alleviate the stress on the workforce. The Division has developed an initiative to ensure compensatory time is used within 26 pay periods, reduce the maximum hours of compensatory time from 160 to 120, and eliminate the ability to "earn and burn" with time used counting against the yearly total of 120 hours. The Division will have to secure funding for compensatory time accumulated outside of the 26 pay period time frame. UD personnel who currently have compensatory time accumulated from outside this time frame will be compensated for that time as soon as the policy is implemented.[68]

Scheduling System

In addition to compensatory time use and the need to cover shift requirements, there is a view among many Officers that the scheduling system can either serve as an accelerant to the fire the

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[68] There is very little in current literature about the advantages and disadvantages of using compensatory time off. In a paper produced by the International Personnel Management Association on compensatory time off, the author notes, that employers should know compensatory time carries certain disadvantages. Since it is additional leave that an employee will take, it can be challenging to balance service to the customer or depending on the work, safety, and security. The International Public Management Association for Human Resources, *Compensatory Time Overview*, Amy Phillips, https://www.ipma-hr.org/docs/default-source/public-docs/importdocuments/pdf/hrcenter/compensatory-time/cpr-comp-phillips.

staffing level shortages have created or can mitigate and alleviate the worst effects. The scheduling system—the arrangement of shift lengths, size, and distribution, along with the associated IT system—is the interface between an Officer and the rippling effect of personnel shortages and attrition.

The Division takes a decentralized approach towards scheduling with each branch within UD scheduling their personnel independently and sometimes differently. According to UD Officers and their supervisors, the ideal shift length is 8-hours.[69] The response to COVID-19 forced several branches to move to a Ready Reserve week schedule with Officers working 12-hour shifts for 7 days while remaining ready to be called in for a shift but otherwise at home another 7-days. The White House Branch, with its more than 500 personnel, is so large that it had to revert to 8-hour shifts as the response to the pandemic evolved.

Interviewees had mixed thoughts on their preferences of 12-hours vs. 8-hour shifts. Many interviewees favored 12-hour shifts because it allows an increase in days off per pay period, despite frequently being forced to work on their days off due to the lack of manpower.[70] Other interviewees favored 8-hour shifts because the 12-hour shifts are strenuous, employee productivity suffers, and fatigue sets in at the end of a 12-hour shift. A National Police Foundation Study funded by the Department of Justice concluded that 10-hour shifts are optimal because the "shifts resulted in significantly more sleep by officers (approximately 30 minutes more per 24-hour period), significantly reduced overtime, and increased quality of work life."[71] UD has not explored a 10-hour shift schedule. There are benefits to 12-hour shifts, like an increase in the number of days off and reduced overtime; however, the National Police Foundation found that Officers "demonstrated significantly more sleepiness...[and a] small to moderate sized effect of alertness" during 12-hour shift lengths.[72]

The Division is considering implementing a new 12 hour-shift for the White House Branch to provide guaranteed days off for its Officers. Given the mixed views of these longer shifts, leadership is concerned about how well the branch can sustain such long days over many weeks. The associated risks of fatigue are seen as acceptable given the lack of days off and the consequences for engagement. The Division plans to test out the new 12-hour shift for a period of

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[69] "The [Protective Mission Panel] recognizes that law enforcement officers regularly work overtime, and the average UD officer has always worked more than a regular 40-hour week. Research of law enforcement agencies shows that offices working four ten-hour shifts per week show measurable drops in alertness. But even if the current workload is consistent with historical or other norms, the Panel's fundamental concern remains: The current workload for UD results in the complete and unacceptable elimination of training." United States Secret Service Protective Mission Panel, Report from the United States Secret Service Protective Mission Panel to the Secretary of Homeland Security, December 2014

[70] Some Officers worked the maximum allowed overtime hours during the 7 days working, which would almost guarantee that they would not be called in during their 7 days as a ready reserve.

[71] National Police Foundation, The Shift Length Experiment, December 2011, https://www.policefoundation.org/projects-old/the-shift-length-experiment/

[72] Ibid.

a month, though such a short test might not be sufficient time for branch members to get into the rhythm of the new schedule and understand its benefits and downsides.

As discussed in Chapter 6, despite UD's extensive efforts through commercial providers to develop a software system to manage its schedule, the Division, as of 2021, uses the EPS scheduling system that was developed in-house by the OCIO. EPS allows UD personnel to know their schedule, assigned shifts, and any issues resulting in last-minute changes to their shift. EPS allows personnel to sign-up for events, travel details, and training opportunities. Additionally, EPS has a leave request feature that allows the Assignments and Scheduling Office (ASO) to plan in advance of someone taking leave.

While the EPS scheduling system has many useful features, the system does not have a shift swap function. If, for example, two Officers want to swap shifts, they will go directly to ASO without the approval of their supervisor. In interviews, UD personnel suggested it would be a beneficial feature to include a shift swapping function in EPS that sends out a requested shift change to the force. A shift swapping feature would allow Officers who do not want to take leave to assume another Officer's shift in exchange for theirs. Officers would need to be cross-trained on the branch they wish to swap with. RTC training instructors typically work overtime shifts at other branches because they have the training experience to do so.

Supplemental Federal Law Enforcement Assistance

One additional alternative to mitigate the worst effects of staffing level shortages is to provide the Division with temporary duty assignments. The Secret Service has put new Phase I Special Agents through UD White House posts for two-week rotations to familiarize themselves with the grounds, the mission of the Division, and the Agency as a whole. The Special Agent personnel filling those shifts makes a real difference in providing real relief, according to several Officers interviewed in the course of the project. The Secret Service could also explore formal assistance from other DHS law enforcement agencies. The Agency has not explored this alternative, though other federal law enforcement agencies, with which they constantly coordinate, face similar staffing challenges.

Recommendations

8.6   Develop and implement a new approach and policy for UD that limits the accrual and use of compensatory time. Steps include:

- **Implementing the policy to reduce compensatory time from 160 to 120 hours during a calendar year, eliminating "earn and burn," and evaluating the reduction's impact on UD.**

- **Promulgating associated directives and communications.**

- **Exploring alternatives to further reduce the use of compensatory time.**

8.7   Implement the UD pilot 12-hour schedule at the White House and stand-up an internal working group to closely monitor employee's preferences compared to their previous 8-hour shifts. Steps include:

- **Conducting the pilot for at least 3 months to allow participants to adjust and settle into the new schedule.**

- **Assessing the results of the pilot and reporting them to UD leadership.[73]**

8.8   Conduct a third-party assessment, in the long term, of shift length and provide recommendations on appropriate shift schedules for UD and its branches.

8.9   Develop a shift-swapping function to be embedded in the EPS system that allows Officers to send a requested shift swap to the entire UD workforce. Steps include:

- **Clarifying UD policy to only permit shifts to be swapped between branches if the personnel have been trained or have experience at the other's respective branch.**

Compensation

Officers of the Division expressed general overall satisfaction with pay and compensation. The consensus during the many panel interviews was that the core set of pay and benefits, including the basic retirement under FERS, was fair and adequate. Officers said that they work so much overtime that pay is not a major issue when it comes to job satisfaction, engagement, or decisions about whether to stay or leave the Division. HUM's analysis of exit surveys in 2019 showed, like other workforce categories highlighted in Chapter 4, that programs like the childcare subsidy or tuition assistance played less a significant role in retention than staffing levels and work-life balance continuation decisions.

Officers underscored, however, that the continual efforts to improve benefits through such initiatives as the UD Group Incentive Program demonstrates the Agency's commitment to their well-being and to providing support to an overworked force. All Secret Service technicians receive 6% additional pay. The Secret Service is pursuing authority from Congress to increase from 6% to 10% Technician Pay for specialized teams that require additional training and periodic certifications. Technicians within SOD said this pay would be beneficial, and there is strong interest in its approval.

Leadership Development, Career Pathing, and Training

A theme that arose in nearly every discussion group with Officers was the need for better leadership development, career pathing, and training. Officers in UD are not satisfied in these

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[73] Prior to publication, the USSS adopted this recommendation and conducted the pilot. The results are being assessed.

three areas, and the concerns are not new; they were identified in 2016 in an Eagle Hill review entitled, *United States Secret Service Work/Life Integration Assessment.*[74]

As highlighted in Chapter 5, the RAND study *Police Recruitment and Retention for the New Millennium,* identifies career growth, training, and leadership as key concerns that drive engagement, attrition, and organizational health. Discussion groups with UD Officers confirm that these organizational characteristics are important influencers of employee engagement and morale.[75] There is also an important nexus between employee engagement and first-line supervisory support and competency. The RAND study found "the relationship that immediate and midlevel supervisors have with their employees often has the most influence on an Officer's decision to stay or leave a department."[76]

In the 2019 FEVS, UD scored particularly low on two questions: (1) "I am given a real opportunity to improve my skills in my organization," and (2) "How satisfied are you with the training you receive for your present job." Organizational breakout scores within the Uniformed Division indicate that training is a problem area within UD, especially within the countersniper Unit of the SOD (see Table 2). The Uniformed Division also scores poorly in the EEI on Leadership, while the EEI scores on Supervisors are satisfactory (see Table 3).

Table 2. FEVS Results on Skills and Training

Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey Question #1: "I am given a real opportunity to improve my skills in my organization."	Positive Response	Neutral Response	Negative Response
Uniformed Division	49%	18%	33%
• **Naval Observatory Branch**	44%	19%	37%
• **Foreign Missions Branch**	47%	42%	11%
• **Canine (K9) Unit**	50%	30%	20%
• **Countersniper Unit**	12%	21%	66%
Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey Question #68: "How satisfied are you with the training you receive for your present job?	**Positive Response**	**Neutral Response**	**Negative Response**
Uniformed Division	31%	23%	46%
• **Naval Observatory Branch**	27%	15%	57%
• **Foreign Missions Branch**	22%	58%	20%
• **Canine (K9) Unit**	27%	30%	43%
• **Countersniper Unit**	7%	32%	60%

[74] Police Recruitment and Retention for the New Millennium, RAND Corporation, 2010, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2010/RAND_MG959.pdf

[75] Ibid.

[76] RAND Corporation, 2010, *Police Recruitment and Retention for the New Millennium: The State of Knowledge, p. 41,* https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2010/RAND_MG959.pdf

Table 3. Employee Engagement Index Scores

Leaders Lead (Q53, Q54, Q56, Q60, Q61)	Leaders Lead Index Score	Supervisors (Q47, Q48, Q49, Q51, Q52)	Supervisors Index Score
Uniformed Division	41%	Uniformed Division	71%
• Naval Observatory Branch	36%	• Naval Observatory Branch	66%
• Foreign Missions Branch	32%	• Foreign Missions Branch	83%
• Canine (K9) Unit	36%	• Canine (K9) Unit	69%
• Countersniper Unit	27%	• Countersniper Unit	58%

Leadership Development

As demonstrated in the FEVS scores in Table 3 and confirmed through discussion groups, Officers do not believe they are adequately prepared to become leaders in the Division. The UD leadership acknowledges these concerns. The Division has implemented two promising leadership development programs but notes that more remains to be done to expedite and institutionalize a curriculum for all ranks.

Within the past year, the UD implemented a Field Training Officer (FTO) program and a Sergeant Training course to improve first-line supervisor training and readiness. The FTO and Sergeant Training courses are a step in the right direction in many Officers' views. However, Officers at all ranks and experience levels agree that more leadership training is needed. Currently, Officers who are promoted receive notice of their promotion and new assignment one pay period in advance of the promotion and reassignment date. Newly promoted Officers are often moved to new branches to broaden their experience and are left to reach out to their new branch informally to familiarize themselves.

The Field Training Officer (FTO) program is, in some ways, equivalent to the rank of corporal in the military. A FTO is an Officer with a couple of years of experience who is considered exemplary, serving as a role model for Officers within their Branch. The Sergeant training course is still in development. The course's intended purpose is to prepare Sergeants using real-world scenarios prior to promotion. Participants spend half of their training in the classroom, and half drilling scenarios discussed during the classroom session. These scenario-based exercises can include use-of-force situations, de-escalation tactics, and magnetometer scenarios. The training also

includes activities related to their day-to-day work, such as refreshers on administrative paperwork and arrest processes.

The FTO program is in the early stages of implementation, so the role and authority of FTOs are becoming more familiar to others. During discussion groups, Officers were aware of Field Training Officers, but the purpose of FTOs was not clear to them. Some discussion groups included FTOs who appreciate being selected to be among the first cohort, but those same Officers said that they need more direction on what they should be doing in their new role.

The Sergeant training course is still in development, and the primary limitation is classroom availability. Secret Service is having a challenging time reserving classroom space that can accommodate the scenario-based training at RTC. Discussion groups with RTC employees confirmed that not only is the classroom and scenario-based training space limited, but there is the added complexity of available instructors to conduct classroom and scenario-based learning. The goal is to have the Sergeant training course ready at the beginning of 2022.

Given mission demands, the UD is not able to create a leadership development curriculum themselves, nor is it their sole responsibility to do so. Chapter 5 highlighted the need for the Secret Service to implement a comprehensive leadership development program that brings together Special Agents, UD Officers, TLE, and APT employees for courses, workshops, and career-broadening assignments, develop a tracking and reporting mechanism for the leadership development program, and establish metrics to help Secret Service leadership drive the implementation and measure success across employee groups. Under this model, leadership development begins the day an Officer stands their first post.

Career Pathing

Like other employee groups, UD Officers would like a more structured career path. UD offers Officers a variety of opportunities and experiences through its three branches, each with different facility security requirements, all of which are supported by the SOD. Officers experience various security-related assignments (static post, foot beats, bicycle patrol, and vehicle patrol) at all three branches. Officers have many specialty opportunities they may experience throughout their careers. They could join the K-9 unit, the Emergency Response Team, the hazardous materials response team (HAMMER Team), countersniper team, crime scene search unit, motorcycle support unit, specialized rifle unit, protective intelligence team, training instructors (firearms, mission, protective driving), classroom instructors at the RTC and FLETC, countersurveillance team, polygrapher operations, and magnetometer operations. These opportunities are built-in retention incentives as Officers seek new experiences over the course of their career, and the Chief recognizes this and places a priority on moving Officers to new branches.

However, some assignments are more desirable than others, and Officers know this. Protection assignments at the White House Branch are exacting as Officers must be on guard and ready to intervene at a moment's notice. This requires that Officers remain alert throughout the entirety of their shift. The White House Branch is also UD's largest branch (over 500 Officers), meaning that Officers sometimes feel "lost" among all the Officers in the Branch. An Officer can work through multiple shifts at the White House Branch without seeing their immediate supervisor. Officers are not asked to chart out the experiences and positions they hope to have over the course

of their career at UD. This contributes to the sense of being "lost" or "forgotten" within the Division. During discussion groups, some Officers said that their colleagues lose track of their long-term goals and begin considering opportunities outside of the Secret Service that more immediately align with their career interests.

UD has not asked Officers to develop a career progression plan. Such a plan would chart out the experiences Officers would like over the course of their career with supervisors talking to their Officers about their career progression plan. To make the plans relevant, Officers would be asked to update their career progression often as they find new areas of career interest. Doing so would provide Officers with a vision for their career, reminding Officers of the many opportunities they have within UD.

A longer-term goal would be temporarily rotating Officers into their desired next posting to learn more about the Branch or Division. This sort of activity can help an Officer better understand the position and inform their career progression plan. It would also inform the training an Officer receives, and when they receive it. For example, some Officers might indicate that the Officer Technician role is their desired next promotional assignment, as opposed to Sergeant. Both require fundamentally different training courses.

Peer-to-Peer Mentoring

Both newer Officers and higher-ranking Officers mentioned in interviews that a mentorship program that pairs Officers with more experienced peers would be beneficial. This is especially true of newer Officers who feel that they are left without a peer mentor they can speak with regarding day-to-day challenges and for broader perspective and guidance. For newer Officers, their Sergeant (who is their direct supervisor) might not work on the same shift. Even if the Sergeant works on the same shift as the newer Officer, the span of control becomes an issue as Sergeants typically have many Officers under their command.[77] Although FTOs serve as mentors in each shift, higher-ranking Officers agreed that younger Officers could benefit from a peer mentorship program, adding that higher-ranking Officers could also benefit from such a program.

Discussion groups with Officers of similar rank revealed that Officers are collegial and willing to talk candidly about challenges they face at UD. Discussions at all ranks were constructive, realistic, and demonstrated that Officers generally get along with their peers. One of the concepts that came up at all ranks is the desire for a peer-to-peer mentoring program. Peer mentoring, as defined by OPM, "is usually a relationship with an individual within the same grade, organization, and/or job series. The purpose of peer mentoring is to support colleagues in their professional development and growth, to facilitate mutual learning, and to build a sense of community. Peer mentoring is not hierarchical, prescriptive, judgmental or evaluative."[78]

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[77] For example, at the White House branch there is an average ratio of ~1 Sergeant: 17 Officers.

[78] U.S. Office of Personnel Management, *Best Practices: Mentoring, https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/training-and-development/career-development/bestpractices-mentoring.pdf*

Training Coordination

Most Officers who participated in the discussion groups do not believe they are provided the proper level of training to accomplish their jobs, and the FEVS scores in Table 2 support the assertion.

As discussed in Chapter 5, Secret Service lacks the ability to collect and analyze training data to ensure that Officers are training for no less than 10 percent of their work hours. In 2019, GAO was tasked with assessing the Secret Service's progress responding to the recommendations of the PMP. GAO found that "Secret Service does not have a documented process for collecting complete and appropriate UD training data that the Agency can use to determine whether Officers trained for 10 percent of their work hours."[79]

Officers frequently highlighted several training issues during discussion groups. They feel that their training is not pertinent to their day-to-day duties, and they do not feel they are given enough time to train. They want a more actionable curriculum of on-the-job training, recertification training, training to introduce new skills to Officers, and training to refresh perishable skills.

Interviewees said that coordination between instructors at RTC, FTOs, and TNG employees dedicated to each branch could improve UD's training curriculum. Secret Service has three top-level training instructor groups within UD, all of whom are highly motivated and engaged Officers and employees. The three groups are the instructors at Secret Service's RTC, located 20 miles from the White House, the FTOs who can assist in day-to-day training matters while on duty, and the Secret Service Office of TNG employs points of contact for each UD branch to assist each Branch with training.

The three training groups (RTC Instructors, FTOs, and TNG-embedded branch training office) serve as a foundation that can be built upon, and better coordination between the three could be a quick win for improving employee satisfaction with the training staff receive. Currently, communication between all three training groups is limited. There is no coordinating body or meeting time for all three to discuss training needs and opportunities. For the most part, each training group exists within its own silo, working on what each group believes is needed within the Branch or at RTC.

Recommendations

8.10 Provide newly promoted UD Officers early notification of their promotion (at least two pay periods) before the promotion takes place. Steps include:

- **Connecting newly promoted UD Officers with their new branch and provide the Officer time to shadow their incumbent.**

- **Prioritizing classroom space for the Sergeant training program and expedite its implementation to the extent possible.**

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[79] U.S. Government Accountability Office, *U.S. Secret Service: Further Actions Needed to Fully Address Protective Mission Panel Recommendations,* May 2019, https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/699267.pdf

8.11   Ask UD Officers to develop a career progression plan early in their service and encourage supervisors to talk frequently to their Officers about career progression plans. Steps include:

- **Asking Officers to update their career progression plans as they find new areas of career interest.**

- **Rotating Officers into their desired next posting to learn more about the Branch or Division.**

- **Using career progression plans to inform necessary training.**

8.12   Implement a peer mentoring program, beginning with newly trained Officers, to help work through day-to-day challenges and to provide broader perspective and guidance. If successful, expand the program to all Officers at all ranks.

8.13   Charter a training committee that connects RTC Instructors with TNG-embedded training employees and FTOs at all three branches of the UD.

Communications

As addressed earlier under Strategic Communications, UD Officers appreciate the efforts taken by the Secret Service to provide open communication channels. UD Officers are interested in finding out what is planned for UD and the Agency with communication flowing up and down the chain of command. Officers, like their Special Agent, APT, or TLE counterparts, desire increased internal communications. There are multiple specific issues regarding communications that surfaced through interviews with UD Officers.

Vision and Policy Changes

Interviewees expressed a desire to better understand the long-term outlook for the Division and how it fits within the strategic direction of the Secret Service. Interviewees repeatedly commented on receiving only occasional glimpses of the big picture for the organization and the milestones and goals toward which the Division is driving as a group. The lack of vision can sometimes lead to inconsistency in decision-making. A new Deputy Chief, for example, can take command of a branch and initiate a new set of priorities, which may disrupt ongoing work within their command. Employees would like to see a plan for where the UD is going, as well as consistency and momentum in moving forward even through the inevitable leadership changes. The Division has not promulgated a larger message about the importance of UD work, how the mission is likely to evolve, and the steps necessary to get there. The effect is that some Officers do not feel the Division is "selling" the positive qualities and attributes of the work to help Officers contextualize all the daily challenges they face.

Officers would similarly like more clear and consistent communications on new policies, program changes, or initiatives. Division leadership frequently engages Officers at all ranks to discuss major topic areas through roll-calls and branch visits. These engagements present the opportunity for back-and-forth discussion. However, the study team was told that such engagements can be

inconsistent. One initiative can be rolled out with several emails and follow-on conversations, while another can emerge without a deliberative rollout and no explanation of the rationale for the change. When it comes to communications on policies and initiatives, there is a possibility of a breakdown where Officers feel that most of the information they receive is from other Officers informally relaying information they heard, while UD supervisors and leadership feel communications are more clear, timely, and informative.

Soliciting Feedback

Several mid-level supervisors attributed the potential for communications disconnects to inconsistency in tapping into the regular chain of command to disseminate information and solicit feedback. Sergeants, Lieutenants, and above said that regular chain-of-command is not a path for raising issues and suggesting improvements, as there is often a lack of receptivity or follow-up. Officers and supervisors expressed concern about the means and methods for the force to provide ideas on how to improve operations. Officers are reluctant to use SPARK! to present their ideas because they cannot submit anonymous suggestions and comments. There is some fear of retribution and ridicule, so SPARK! is not used frequently when an Officer has a suggestion or is trying to clarify policy or procedure.

Survey Utilization

Surveys are an important communications tool; the results of which are used to help drive policy and process direction. The response rate from the Division to the 2019 FEVS, one of the most important surveys to measure employee engagement and professional work climate, was low. The response rate divided by operational staff (i.e., not including Officers in training) is broken down in the following table. With the limited number of respondents, there may not be enough responses to legitimately apply them to the totality of UD to form impressions of employee satisfaction and morale unless the results are paired with other data gathering methods, such as interviews.

Table 4. FEVS Response Rate for UD

Division	Number of Responses	Staff Level	Response Rate
UD Overall	164	1432	11.45%
NOB	32	139	23.03%
FMB	14	167	8.38%
K9 Unit	15	120*	12.5%
Countersniper	13	53*	24.52%

Estimate based on UD manpower calculator

Note: The White House data is missing from this (or these) table (s) due to a sampling error of data collected from Special Agents and UD Officers, along with a very low rate of participation, which precludes using this data as representative of UD Officer opinions in the White House branch.

Before the release of this and any other surveys, consistent messaging must occur on the importance of responding to surveys. Opportunities for Officers standing post to complete the surveys would encourage and give insight into the feelings and responses of Officers on the topic surveyed.

Recommendations

8.14   Create and publish a Communications Plan for UD that provides guidance on how to (1) distribute key information on decisions and policies and (2) invite employee feedback and suggestions. Steps include:

- **Formalizing how results from surveys and other tools for soliciting feedback will be shared with UD Officers.**

8.15   Review communication mechanisms in place for Officers, especially through the chain of command.

Culture, Climate, and Professionalism

Members of UD work against the backdrop of how their efforts are perceived, valued, and rewarded both within the Division, across the Agency, and beyond. Like other non-Special Agent employees (e.g., APTs), there remains a sense among UD personnel that they are lesser and in some ways subordinate to Special Agents. This view of a lingering "caste" system is more common among more junior Officers who questioned in interviews whether they are seen as part of the team. Several Officers said the divide is something akin to the differences between Officers and Enlisted in the Military.

Senior leaders and higher-level supervisors believe the relationship and respect accorded to the Division's contributions has improved significantly in recent years with SAICs, senior administrators, and other senior officials expressing the strongest support. That respect is hard-earned, gained through the recognized contributions to achieving the mission. The Division's Officers are an integral part of the work with the Washington, DC Field Office of INV, while the Agency's training center uses a command structure that incorporates Officers and Special Agents. Interviewees there said they enjoy a close working relationship with Special Agents. UD Sergeants within some special teams oversee Special Agents, and, prior to the pandemic response, every recently minted Special Agent was required to stand post with Officers at the White House.

Officers, however, believe that more can be done to build pride more generally across UD, fostering the message that its members are part of a special and unique professional community, carrying out a high-profile, unique mission. They see little esprit-de-corps occurring. Some officers also do not feel that contributions and achievements are appropriately acknowledged and rewarded. There are very few UD-centered employee recognition events, parties, and the like. When events are hosted, they are often attended by higher ranks because Officers do not have the time to attend.

Recommendation

8.16   Develop and promulgate a new Officer recognition program that describes the range of awards available, along with specific criteria for UD Officers to earn recognition.

Unique Branch and Unit Issues

In the course of the Academy's engagement with UD, several issues unique to particular branches or teams arose.

K-9 Unit

A tactical group within the SOD, the K-9 unit is considered one of the most sought-after units in the UD to work in according to interviewees. The K-9 unit has no formal policies for when an Officer's dog retires or passes away. Currently, the unit allows the Officer to stay on the K-9 team for two weeks after their dog retires or passes away, then the Officer is rotated out of the team and back into the core workforce. The Officer can then apply for the new position opening in K-9 but must compete with other applicants within UD. Officers believe this re-application process is futile as they will not be selected to allow others the opportunity to work within K-9.

While the practice of rotating Officers in and out of the K-9 unit helps create job opportunities for other Officers and helps with retention within the Division, the practice has a downside. The unit struggles to retain Officers with K-9 experience and institutional knowledge, as a new handler brought in from the core workforce has no K-9 experience compared to the Officer they replace. A new Officer must receive significantly more training than an Officer who recently lost their dog.

Foreign Mission Branch Vehicles

The Division maintains more than 500 vehicles in its fleet, including patrol cars, motorcycles, special purpose, and cargo vehicles. The Division uses a General Service Administration lease program for two-thirds of that fleet, which has led to the steady upgrade and replacement of much of its fleet. The Secret Service is exploring pursuing the arrangement for the remainder of its vehicles after it secures funding.

As the branch responsible for the protection of over 500 diplomatic locations in the Washington, DC area, FMB especially relies on patrol vehicles. Branch interviewees spoke about the often-deplorable state of vehicles and the impact on their quality of work. The computers within the vehicles are out of date, the computer docking stations are broken, and floorboards are missing among other issues according to interviewees. Some of the vehicle damage is beyond normal wear-and-tear, inflicted by Officers during long watches, including cases of intentional damage. The vehicles in the Branch operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, which puts tremendous stress on the vehicle not built to be operated in that capacity. Officers feel that they do not possess the quality of equipment essential to effectively accomplish their job.

The Division relies on ongoing communications from the Branches on maintenance needs. Administrative approval requirements, limited staffing within the fleet-management office, and funding can create slowdowns in getting vehicles into the "shop" for repair.

Recommendations

8.17   Develop and promulgate a new K-9 policy that provides clear and transparent criteria for when a K-9 Officer Technician can continue working within the K-9 unit after a dog retires or passes away.

8.18 **Upgrade the state of the vehicle fleet within FMB and use accountability procedures to ensure proper handling.**

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Chapter 9:   Individual Organizational Challenges

Office of Technical Development and Mission Support (TEC)

Overview

TEC is responsible for developing and conducting extensive scientific and technical support programs, including the design, installation, and modification of technical security equipment used for Secret Service mission applications. TEC is headquartered in Washington, D.C., but embeds staff in field offices nationwide for a set number of years (typically five years), and frequently deploys TEC staff nationally and internationally to assist with protective movements and investigations. TEC is led by Secret Service's CTO and has one division – Technical Security Division (TSD), which itself is subdivided into multiple subdivisions and branches. TEC staff includes Special Agents, PSS, TLE, Scientists, Engineers, and Program Managers (APT).

Observations

Employees within TEC are highly skilled, specialized, and well-trained. As such, recruiting and hiring is a challenge because prospective TEC employees are in demand across government and industry. A lengthy and detailed Secret Service hiring process results in TEC losing many applicants over the months-long hiring and background clearance process. Because of this, position vacancies present a continuous morale challenge for TEC because the shortages force employees to travel more often, oftentimes on short notice, and with very limited ability to deny or find replacements for travel because it is often considered mission essential. The CTO is aware of this, talks to TEC employees frequently about these realities, and is working with HUM to fill positions as quickly as feasible. However, the frequent travel and other mission requirements limit the amount of time TEC spends developing employees through training and other opportunities, and this limits TEC's ability to carry out employee-centric events. Both are desired by employee groups.

Additionally, TLE, PSS, and APT employees within TSD have limited promotion potential, adversely affecting morale and tenure in TSD. The highest rank these employee groups can attain is a supervisory GS-15 position within TSD. In addition to affecting morale, employees report that they are more likely to leave TSD when they become retirement eligible due to the lack of vertical movement potential. TLE, PSS, and APT employees representing various lengths of tenure are discouraged by the limited prospects for vertical movement within TSD.

TSD has several subdivisions whose mission is to understand technology developments and trends, as well as creating sensors and other technologies to counter threats and enhance protective operations. The technologies these offices identify are often quickly put in place, drawing on the staff to operate, support, and sustain these technologies for ongoing operations. The pressure to make sure these new systems work and, directly supporting ongoing missions requires office personnel to refocus themselves away from their primary responsibility of understanding and tracking new technologies and trends that are coming across the horizon. The 2016 Academy report recommended that TEC create a separate organization or division to carry out these research and development activities known in the Agency as technology forging.

The TEC office employs PSS, a job series that the Agency is phasing out in favor of TLEs because that category lends greater flexibility. In 2017, the decision was made to no longer hire PSS positions, and to offer legacy PSS the opportunity to transition to a TLE position. The Agency originally told PSS personnel that conversion to the new status was optional. Some PSS staff are concerned about transitioning to TLE because the transition process requires multiple weeks of training at FLETC and at RTC, both of which are especially difficult for some PSS who have served at the Agency for decades and are therefore older in age. Subsequently, the Agency said that PSS employees would have to decide to convert within a year. This contradictory messaging created confusion among PSS personnel, leading to questions about whether there would be the ability to move up in the organization and have broader opportunities. As of FY 2019, there were 181 TLE positions, of which 150 are filled, and 63 PSS, per interviews.

TEC staff expressed concern about a policy that requires a return to headquarters after a five-year assignment to the field. Family circumstances or concern about the higher costs of living in the Washington Metropolitan Region have led to requests, often denied, for extensions. Several highly experienced TEC experts have opted to switch to other agencies or leave federal service rather than move back to Headquarters. The leadership of TEC explains the return-to-Washington, D.C. policy is designed to bring seasoned, experienced individuals back to Headquarters, as well as ensure Washington, D.C. personnel have the chance to live across the country and support Secret Service activities in the field.

Delays in the procurement process hinder TEC's ability to repair and field technologies in support of the investigative and protection missions. According to interviewees, a lengthy and unpredictable procurement process – with limited in-office advisory support – can cause disruptive delays even when procuring rather simple parts for repairs to equipment. TSD's field employees are often left to individually engage in complex and time-consuming procurements. Field staff also express a desire for increased procurement assistance.[80]

Recommendations

9.1   **Prioritize and encourage leadership development training for TSD employees and consider opening TSD leadership opportunities (some of which are currently reserved only for Special Agents) to all employee groups within TSD.**

9.2   **Prioritize hosting more regular employee-centric events, including employee recognition programs, and social events, and implement a more robust onboarding process to ensure that new employees feel like they are a part of the TEC team beginning on day one.**

9.3   **Establish a separate research and development branch within TEC and develop a TEC strategy and multi-year investment plan consistent with the 2016 Academy report.**

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[80] The Agency indicated employee engagement scores in TEC have improved in 2020. The individual office FEVS 2020 information, including those for TEC, were not provided. See discussion on page 11.

9.4   Reengage PSS personnel, develop a new conversion policy, and clearly articulate that policy, addressing questions and concerns during implementation.

9.5   Communicate the rationale for the move-back-to-D.C. policy and explain that the granting of policy waivers will likely be limited and sparing.

9.6   Explore alternatives to provide helpdesk-like procurement assistance to TEC staff both at headquarters and in the field.

Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO)

Overview

OCFO carries out several of the core business enterprise functions of the Agency: budget formulation and execution, financial management, relocation services, and financial systems. OCFO has two subdivisions: the Financial Management Division and the Budget Division. OCFO was broken out to be its own standalone office during FY 2015; it was previously housed within the Office of Administration. After the reorganization, three functions within OCFO were removed: the Procurement Division and AOD and are now a part of a directorate called the Enterprise Readiness Office, and the Component Acquisition Executive is now within the Office of Strategic Planning and Policy (OSP).

Observations

The OCFO has undergone two major (and somewhat disruptive) changes in recent history. The OCFO reorganized with two divisions (noted above) within OCFO moving to the Office of Enterprise Readiness, and the Component Acquisition Executive position and staff transferring to OSP. In addition, OCFO implemented a new financial management system that automated financial management manual processes (including paper/fax invoices) applying modern tools and systems intended at providing more internal controls and rigor. The implementation of new financial management systems initially began in 2012 but continues today. The implementation of new accounting software, R12, was one of the key capstones that improved the capability to manage the Agency's books but most significantly impacted previous ways of handling business processes. The new financial management system represents a major change in the way the Secret Service conducts its business, and as such, it was a major change for employees within the OCFO's office.

Many employees had several years, if not decades, of experience with the old financial management system, so the office had a considerable challenge ensuring the workforce could successfully navigate and take advantage of the new system. While the new system brought with it many efficiencies, it also brought a sense of uneasiness among employees who were comfortable with the old way of doing business. OCFO leadership tried to mitigate the disruption by providing employees with opportunities for training, but, rather than patiently proceeding with this training effort while applying change management practices, the office leadership opted to bring in contractors and others outside the office to operate the system. The result is that the office has experienced significant attrition within its ranks and a noticeable decrease in employee engagement without the benefit of improved performance. Employees feel that they were not given opportunities to grow professionally with the implementation of the new system.

The office emerged as the most troubled at the Agency in terms of employee engagement problems, in the areas of staffing, development, and a positive work climate focused on efficiency and effectiveness. Employees expressed concern about their workload with little hope for advancement, lack of recognition for contributions, and generally weak office cohesion. The office has tremendous difficulty hiring individuals with the right background and skills, citing

competition from other federal agencies and little desire to live in Washington, D.C., the main center of the office's work.[81]

OCFO leadership has taken several steps to improve communication—such as a monthly newsletter, a weekly message from the CFO, quarterly all-hands meetings, and CFO/Deputy CFO listening sessions with branches to improve communication. To recognize employee performance, OCFO conducts an annual awards ceremony to reward outstanding performance.

Recommendation

9.7 **Create and publicize a strategy for improving employee wellness and engagement and work with the staff to understand the sources of concern and identify opportunities for improvement. Steps include:**

- **Analyzing the FEVS scores and existing surveys and interviews to determine the cause and levels of dissatisfaction.**

- **Defining a vision for employee engagement and office culture so that leadership and employees have a shared understanding of cultural behaviors.**

- **Ensuring that employees within the office see demonstrable actions that consider their engagement and morale, including clearly articulating and documenting what it takes to receive internal promotions, providing the time needed and opportunities for training related directly to job responsibilities and for broader development, hosting employee-centric events and awards to demonstrate appreciation for the OCFO workforce, and connecting more frequently with other mission (OPO and INV) and mission support organizations to better understand the organization and customer needs.**

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[81] The Agency indicated employee engagement scores in OCFO have improved in 2020. The individual office FEVS 2020 information, including those for OCFO, were not provided. See discussion on page 11.

Office of Professional Responsibility (RES)

Overview

RES is home to the Inspection Division (ISP), which conducts internal accountability activities, including compliance inspections of Agency offices and divisions and employee integrity investigations. The division is staffed primarily with Special Agents who are at the GS-14 level or higher, and these Special Agents are supported by a small APT employee complement. All of the Special Agents in this office have at least 15 years of experience as a Special Agent and have generally gone through rotations throughout the Agency before their assignment to RES. Work hours in this office resemble that of a typical job (9 am-5 pm) with occasional travel as needed to conduct, compliance inspections and interviews. The Office is located in Secret Service's headquarters building in Washington, D.C.

Observations

ISP went through a period (approximately six years) of leadership instability that left ISP without clear and consistent direction beginning in 2012. ISP is led by a SAIC and two Special Agents at the DSAIC level. For those roughly six years of leadership instability, the office saw SAICs and DSAICs rotate for career advancement or retire sometimes as frequently as every six months. That changed in 2018 when Secret Service leadership appointed a new leadership team (SAIC and DSAICs) within RES that has been in place for about two years now. Both Special Agents and administrative staff within RES agree that the consistency of the RES leadership team has resulted in a stronger sense of employee engagement and morale, and interviewees report increased productivity because of the consistent leadership direction they receive. RES is a "very collaborative" office where there is a genuine feeling of support and a collegial attitude among staff.

The rotation of SAICs and DSAICs is an important element of Special Agent development; however, rotations that are less than 18-24 months in duration are disruptive to employees and the work of offices, which the SAIC and DSAIC are responsible for leading. RES is an example of both the disruption and consequences of frequent leadership change on employees, as well as the benefits of consistent leadership at the SAIC and DSAIC levels for employee engagement, morale, and productivity.

Given the nature of ISP's work, any morale issues they face are atypical of a normal Special Agent. Special Agents in ISP do not participate in protective assignments or investigations in the traditional Secret Service sense (financial-, cyber-, fraud-related crimes). Morale issues arise within RES due to the exposure to employee integrity investigations. The integrity group is responsible for conducting employee integrity investigations. Secret Service, writ large, maintains a supportive culture that works hard to assist those who are experiencing hardship. However, the Special Agents and administrative support staff in RES are responsible for investigating misconduct. This puts RES in a position not found elsewhere in the Secret Service.[82]

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[82] The Agency indicated employee engagement scores in RES have improved in 2020. The individual office FEVS 2020 information, including those for RES, were not provided. See discussion on page 11.

RES is in Secret Service's headquarters building in Washington, D.C. Putting RES in the same building as the people it may be investigating creates awkwardness at best and can impinge investigations at worst. An additional concern is that anyone seen even in the vicinity of the office could be viewed under investigation. Rank-and-file members of the office have repeatedly raised this issue but have been told that a move cannot be made because of limited resources and the low number of cases.

Recommendation

9.8   Move the RES office to a physical location where its Agents will not frequently encounter members of the workforce who are the target of an internal investigation.

Office of Human Resources (HUM)

Overview

HUM administers human capital operations for the Secret Service. It is responsible for human resources programs across the human capital life cycle along with personnel security and emergency preparedness. Some agent-related functions are outside of HUM's responsibilities, such as law enforcement training under TNG. HUM is made up of eight divisions that encompass core human capital functions. The nine divisions are: (1) SAF; (2) Benefits and Payroll; (3) Human Resources Research and Assessment (HRR), (4) Security Management; (5) Workforce Planning; (6) Performance Management and Employee Relations; (7) TAD; (8) Human Resources Policy and Accountability (HRP); and (9) HBM. HUM also includes two program-specific offices: (1) Emergency Preparedness and (2) Executive Resources Management. HUM's nine divisions and two program-specific offices are led by the Secret Service's CHCO, who was hired in late 2016.

Observations

The PMP recommended that the Secret Service reform and professionalize recruiting, hiring, promotion, and rotation programs in the Secret Service. Progress toward professionalization of the human capital function was achieved after the Academy's 2016 report. HUM is held up across the Agency as an exemplar of the success of having non-agent professionals who bring deep expertise and lead long-term continuity in a mission support function of the Secret Service. HUM has also placed Special Agents in key SAIC and DSAIC roles, ensuring that policies and processes remain sensitive to agent needs.

As mentioned earlier in this report in the discussion on hiring, HUM is operating two dueling personnel management software systems that are both focused on hiring. The first system is a COTS product, Monster Hiring, internally referred to as Secret Service Hire. The second is a hiring software built in-house, ALIS, used in the Safety, Health and Environmental Programs Division and Security Management Division. These two systems, used separately for the same hiring actions, have some duplicative functions. The two systems are not connected (i.e., they do not automatically share data) and the result is that there are occasionally inconsistencies between the two that must be resolved by HUM employees.

There is also confusion over the development of the official human resources policy. HUM interviewees indicated that there is no established process for policy development and that various directorates within HUM concurrently review draft policies. The policy development process does not flow consistently through HRP before moving to HUM leadership for review and approval. The lack of a documented and accountable process causes time delays and generates unnecessary inefficiencies.

Lastly, HUM's HRR conducts staff and climate surveys and assesses selection processes and exams. HRR is staffed by a combination of industrial and organizational psychologists, human resources specialists, and management analysts. The office is regarded by many as a capable group and are therefore frequently tasked with many ad hoc assignments outside its core responsibilities. These unexpected assignments create stress on the HRR workforce, and that

stress is compounded by the fact that HRR has multiple position vacancies. The stress drives staff attrition within the office.[83]

Recommendations

9.9 **Examine the connection between the recruitment (Secret Service Hire) and the candidate tracking/investigations (ALIS) IT systems to facilitate data transfer and, over time, bringing the functionality of the systems together. Steps include:**

- **Determining which one of the systems can perform the functions of the other or build a bridge between the two systems so that information is directly transferred rather than having to engage in dual data entry.**

9.10 **Review procedures to ensure that the human resources policy development process is transparent and provides full stakeholder participation and coordinates with necessary stakeholders (internal and external to HUM), and is managed by the HRP.**

9.11 **Set an annual work plan that prioritizes the work HRR is to accomplish each year. Steps include:**

- **Soliciting staff feedback to gain buy-in on the work plan and generate more engagement and boost morale.**

- **Avoiding creating new branches and office specialties to ensure maximum flexibility of the workforces.**

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[83] The Agency indicated employee engagement scores in HUM, including HRR, have improved in 2020. The individual office FEVS 2020 information, including those for HUM, were not provided. See discussion on page 11.

Field Offices within the Office of Investigations (INV) (Miami, Florida, and Phoenix, Arizona)

Overview

The primary role of Field Offices is to support the Secret Service's investigative mission. Special Agents conduct investigations to identify, locate, and apprehend criminal organizations and individuals targeting the nation's critical financial infrastructure and payment systems. In addition to investigating financial and electronic crimes, Special Agents conduct protective intelligence, which entails investigating threats against protected persons, including the President, and protected facilities, such as protectee residences. There are 162 Field Offices and Resident Offices in the United States and abroad, and 3,081 positions assigned to Field Operations in FY 2019. For this project, two site visits were conducted. The first, an in-person site visit to the Miami Field Office in January 2020, which is classified as a large field office. The second, a virtual site visit to the Phoenix Field Office, which is classified as a smaller field office. Both site visits included discussion groups with roughly three to eight individuals within the same peer group (Special Agents and APT employees). The team also interviewed the SAIC at both field offices.

Observations

Interviewees at both field offices described a strong workplace culture where staff is collegial and supportive of one another. The SAICs at both field offices are committed to the workforce, Special Agents and APT employees, they oversee. Supervisory Special Agents at both sites do an admirable job managing Phase 3 and Phase 1 Special Agents they oversee. Phase 3 Special Agents act as mentors and serve a very important role in the Secret Service by ensuring that Phase 1 Special Agents receive a wide range of experience during their time at the field office. Finally, Phase 1 Special Agents at both field offices were spoken of very highly for their dedication and tireless commitment to the mission. Interviews with Phase 1 Special Agents at both field offices revealed an outstanding cohort of Special Agents who are supportive of one another. The Phoenix field office has made it a priority to recruit locally for Special Agents.

Leadership stability in both Miami and Phoenix has improved mission effectiveness and improved morale and engagement within both field offices. The consistent leadership teams in both Miami and Phoenix have enabled the Secret Service to forge relationships with the surrounding community and local government agencies. The SAIC at the Phoenix field office has created stability and improved employee morale and engagement by providing a limited number of merit promotion opportunities internally. Phase 1 and Phase 3 Agents appreciate the stability and report that it has heightened experience, increased knowledge of the surrounding community and local stakeholders, and fostered a stronger sense of office culture and camaraderie.

Phase 1 Special Agents spoke of the challenges in entering the Secret Service workforce, going through training, and moving to their new assignments. As mentioned in the compensation discussion in Chapter 4, Special Agents said that they are not paid for their initial move to their first field office assignment, which creates several hardships. Additionally, newly hired Special Agents are provided limited time (in some cases, not all) before their entrance on duty. In one

case, the study team heard that an Agent had less than a week to prepare for his move to training – meaning he had to abruptly leave his prior law enforcement job without giving proper notice to his employer. Both issues are seen as an unfortunate beginning to a Special Agent's career, and both do not reflect the supportive culture that the Secret Service is driving toward.

Special Agents mentioned the difficulties in receiving IT support in field offices, which hinders their abilities to address casework and handle ancillary training activities. Additionally, IT staff in the field have indicated that they are stretched thin in providing support to the field, resident, and satellite offices, which may cover more than one state.

Recommendations

9.12   Examine the benefit of longer rotations at the SAIC level and prioritize the development and promotion of field-based, in-office personnel to higher levels of leadership as demonstrated by the Phoenix Field Office.

9.13   Review the IT support workforce that service field offices to ensure that there is sufficient staff to handle all IT issues that surface in not only the field office but also resident offices and other satellite facilities.

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Chapter 10: Summary of Recommendations

The Panel offers a series of 48 recommendations: 17 that would have Agency-wide impact, and 31 that address challenges in particular divisions, offices, or branches, including 18 within UD.

The recommendations that follow are grouped under seven categories of objectives that the Panel believes the Secret Service should prioritize:

1) Focus Employee Engagement Efforts

2) Improve Hiring and Retention

3) Create a Better Work-Life Balance and Enhance Compensation

4) Develop the Next Generation of Secret Service Employees

5) Operationalize for the Future

6) Reinvigorate the Uniformed Division

7) Address Individual Office Matters

Focus Employee Engagement Efforts

The Secret Service should focus its many programs, initiatives, and actions to improve job satisfaction around a new vision for employee engagement, aligned with the Agency's broader mission strategy. The Agency should revitalize its communications, through strategic messaging and soliciting employee feedback.

2.1 **Develop, implement, and internally publicize a new vision and strategy for healthy employee engagement that aligns with the Agency's strategy, including outcomes desired and steps needed to achieve the vision. Steps include:**

- **Setting the ideal picture for healthy engagement, such as the work-life balance, staffing levels, and access to developmental opportunities the Secret Service strives to achieve;**

- **Detailing the type of inclusive work environment that the Secret Service wishes to achieve in order to foster greater teamwork among all personnel;**

- **Acknowledging the current state of engagement and setting forth specific steps;**

- **Detailing assignment of office responsibilities to enact that strategy, along with specific actions and timelines; and**

- **Evaluating desired outcomes and measuring concrete progress.**

7.1   **Implement a "SPARK! 2.0" with an enhanced appearance and end-user experience to address outstanding concerns regarding its utility.**

Improve Hiring and Retention

The Secret Service should ensure it has sufficient personnel with the right skills, and experience to fill its ranks and execute the mission.

3.1   **Stabilize the relative size of the protection portfolio, providing the Agency more planning predictability for the protection and investigative missions. Steps include:**

- **Identifying the historically standard protection portfolio that is in addition to statutory protectees (Cabinet Members and White House Officials).**

- **Identifying, and continually updating, the fully burdened cost per type of protectee (e.g., young family member, adult family member, White House Official) at various risk levels.**

- **Continuing to engage the DHS, White House and Congress to review the impact of covering protectees beyond those required in statute, including a threat-based requirement as a condition of providing or extending protection.**

3.2   **Pursue support from DHS, OMB, and approval from Congress to accelerate and fund staffing increases consistent with validated, manpower models. Steps include:**

- **Including messaging that points to how the conditions and challenges that precipitated the last personnel size increase still exist, albeit less severely, and it is those increases that have prevented high-profile events from otherwise occurring and improving conditions.**

3.3   **Accelerate hiring for current, open positions among all personnel categories, seeking to meet and exceed time standards at each hiring stage set by the OPM. Steps include:**

- **Setting up a schedule to conduct regular ELACs sessions across the country. The Agency, particularly HUM in partnership with the INV field offices, should ensure the associated offices have the appropriate staffing to carry out these sessions regularly.**

- **Conducting regular meetings among the various process owners for hiring, ensuring regular communication, sharing best practices, and documenting issues identification.**

- **Reducing time requirements for completing such key steps in the hiring process as issuing a certificate of eligibles or conducting interviews.**

- **Exploring consolidating hiring of Special Agent and UD Officers into a single office, drawing on positions and personnel from the relevant offices and branches.**

3.4   **Renew emphasis on retention, placing as much focus and energy on retaining Agency talent as recruiting and training new personnel. Steps include:**

- **Conducting regular exit surveys across the workforce to identify drivers for attrition.**

- **Analyzing and highlighting the drivers of attrition to senior leadership.**

- **Performing a formal study to document the fully burdened cost of hiring and training new Special Agents and UD Officers.**

Create a Better Work-Life Balance and Enhance Compensation

While the hiring surge evolves and has time to take effect, the Secret Service should pursue new initiatives to give the greater work-life balance that is so prized by the workforce, while ensuring that pay and benefits adequately compensate its hard-working employees.

4.1   **Revise and update the use of telework in mission directives, policies, and operations, to reflect recent trends in telework, while updating training to allow supervisors to effectively oversee remote work, ensure continued high-performance, and foster office and organizational cohesion. Steps include:**

- **Encouraging supervisors to be cognizant of the amount of travel, time at post, or hours in-office an individual may log.**

- **Including messaging that employees can conduct duties from home where possible and appropriate, especially given the expansion of the VPN and the experience of teleworking during COVID-19.**

- **Releasing strategic communications from the top leadership that embrace telecommuting as a permanent feature of work.**

4.2   **Undertake a detailed review to determine whether the Agency could more cost-effectively manage the overtime program for Special Agents to ensure fewer Special Agents reach overtime caps by leveling assignments across the force.**

4.3 **Rebalance the bonus and benefit programs to encourage Agency mid-career personnel to continue with the Secret Service through their entire career by exploring, developing, and implementing a program that commits employees to staying in the Agency for a specific period of years, such as enhancement/supplement to the current government retirement solution, or through a continuation pay/bonus solution.**

4.4 **Pay for the first move of Special Agents at the start of their careers.**

Develop the Next Generation of Secret Service Employees

The Secret Service should ensure all its employees can grow professionally and have concrete career paths that show the road to advancing their careers as they gain experience and work to exceed performance expectations.

5.1 **Implement a more comprehensive leadership development program that brings together Special Agents, UD Officers, TLE personnel, and APT employees for courses, workshops, and career-broadening assignments. Steps include:**

- **Developing a tracking and reporting mechanism to drive implementation and measure success across employee groups.**

- **Ensuring training before an employee's first supervisory assignment.**

- **Prioritizing helping leaders learn basic critical management skills, such as communicating with and listening to employees, delegation, employee recognition, and team building.**

5.2 **Develop and implement an Agency-wide policy with associated directives, guidance, and communications about career paths and the promotion process, including the ability to switch career paths. Steps include:**

- **Detailing competencies personnel must demonstrate and the experiences they must seek out in order to continue their professional growth within Secret Service.**

- **Communicating broadly the career paths for Special Agents, UD Officers, and APT employees.**

- **Providing opportunities for employees to switch career paths with some ease in order to retain employees rather than losing them.**

5.3 **Review senior executive positions to ensure that as many as possible are open to full competition from as many employee categories as possible. Steps include:**

- **Communicating to eligible candidates the desire to put in place the most experienced and qualified leaders, whatever employee status, while highlighting that the positions are not now "reserved" if a candidate from a different position fills the vacant senior position.**

Operationalize for the Future

The Secret Service should continue to enhance and upgrade the mission-support, business, and administrative functions that serve are a critical backdrop to mission-execution and impact how employees performing administrative functions feel about their work.

6.1 **Codify the directives that define the role and mission of the COO and critical mission support organizations to ensure the leadership of mission support organizations by professionals is balanced with Agent-filled leadership roles, such as deputy and branch-chief positions. Steps include:**

- **Defining the COO role in the Agency leadership hierarchy and specifying in the implementation directive that this senior position will continue to require substantial administrative experience.**

- **Creating an explicit directive for the ERB that spells out its membership, roles, and responsibilities.**

6.2 **Develop and implement a customer-focused, internal strategic communications campaign for the IT roadmap, including the modernization strategy, key initiatives, and progress as well as information on the process for employees to request IT tools and specialized software program. Steps include:**

- **Acknowledging the key role of IT for employee engagement and effectiveness.**

- **Encouraging working with customers so that, when appropriate, rather than customizing COTS, encourage customers to change business practices.**

6.3 **Assess the implementation of the Agency's IT strategy to determine if it is moving in a positive direction on modernization, address the use of organically developed systems versus COTS, and improve customer service.**

7.2 **Adopt an integrated strategic management approach applying a rigorous management strategy, which was a key recommendation in the Academy's 2016 report for the Agency.**

Reinvigorate the Uniformed Division

The Secret Service should place more focused, prominent, and sustained emphasis on the employee engagement issues within UD, pursuing a multi-year strategy that boosts hiring and retention, minimizes the turbulence in staffing levels, implements new policies on compensatory time and scheduling to help mitigate the worst and most immediate effects of short-staffing.

Overall

8.1   Pursue a Grow, Stabilize, and Develop Strategy for UD that reduces forced overtime, gives downtime back to employees, provides more predictable schedules, increases training, boosts developmental opportunities, opens up more paths to a fulfilling career in the branch, and restores staffing. Steps include:

- **Developing and implementing an employee wellness vision and action plan that includes the input of Officers and key stakeholders and requires ongoing communication that includes.**

- **Communicating with measurable near-, mid-, and long-term goals and accomplishments.**

8.2   Plan for and execute the hiring surge for the Division, in the short term, to reach the 1797-Officer level included in the Human Capital Plan within three years. Steps include:

- **Working with DHS and Congress to secure approval for the increase, along with the necessary funding.**

- **Increasing capacity within HUM and INV to expand recruiting, accommodate additional background checks, and speed-up hiring through organizational changes (exploration of a single office for Special Agent and Officer hiring), personnel details (additional UD personnel staffing HUM), and process improvements (additional ELACs and shortening time associated with hiring actions).**

Staffing Requirements

8.3   Conduct periodic third-party reviews of posts, perimeter security, and wider operations, including travel, to ensure appropriate staffing levels, address the impact of additional staffing requirements, operational intensity, and force-stress of these arrangements. Steps include:

- **Using technology, whenever possible, to reduce the number and location of posts, which could benefit UD operations.**

8.4   Conduct a study, in the long term, that delineates the basic characteristics and authorities of contract and federal law enforcement Officers, while

working with TEC to explore how technology can enhance UD's mission execution.

8.5   Study the option of restructuring Officer and Special Agent recruiting into a single point of entry along with dual and separate career paths for those remaining in UD and movement to Special Agents positions.

Work-Life Balance

8.7   Develop and implement a new approach and policy for UD that limits the accrual and use of compensatory time. Steps include:

- Implementing the policy to reduce compensatory time from 160 to 120 hours during a calendar year, eliminating "earn and burn," and evaluating the reduction's impact on UD.

- Promulgating associated directives and communications.

- Exploring alternatives to further reduce the use of compensatory time.

8.7   Implement the UD pilot 12-hour schedule at the White House and stand-up an internal working group to closely monitor employee's preferences compared to their previous 8-hour shifts. Steps include:

- Conducting the pilot for at least 3 months to allow participants to adjust and settle into the new schedule.

- Assessing the results of the pilot and reporting them to UD leadership.

8.8   Conduct a third-party assessment, in the long term, of shift length and provide recommendations on appropriate shift schedules for UD and its branches.

8.9   Develop a shift-swapping function to be embedded in the EPS system that allows Officers to send a requested shift swap to the entire UD workforce. Steps include:

- Clarifying UD policy to only permit shifts to be swapped between branches if the personnel have been trained or have experience at the other's respective branch.

Leadership Development, Career Pathing, and Training

8.10   Provide newly promoted UD Officers early notification of their promotion (at least two pay periods) before the promotion takes place. Steps include:

- Connecting newly promoted UD Officers with their new branch and provide the Officer time to shadow their incumbent.

- Prioritizing classroom space for the Sergeant training program and expedite its implementation to the extent possible

8.11 Ask UD Officers to develop a career progression plan early in their service and encourage supervisors to talk frequently to their Officers about career progression plans. Steps include:

- Asking Officers to update their career progression plans as they find new areas of career interest.

- Rotating Officers into their desired next posting to learn more about the Branch or Division.

- Using career progression plans to inform necessary training.

8.12 Implement a peer mentoring program, beginning with newly trained Officers, to help work through day-to-day challenges and to provide broader perspective and guidance. If successful, expand the program to all Officers at all ranks.

8.13 Charter a training committee that connects RTC Instructors with TNG-embedded training employees and FTOs at all three branches of the UD.

Communications

8.14 Create and publish a Communications Plan for UD that provides guidance on how to (1) distribute key information on decisions and policies and (2) invite employee feedback and suggestions. Steps include:

- Formalizing how results from surveys and other tools for soliciting feedback will be shared with UD Officers.

8.15 Review communication mechanisms in place for Officers, especially through the chain of command.

Culture, Climate, and Professionalism

8.16 Develop and promulgate a new Officer recognition program that describes the range of awards available, along with specific criteria for UD Officers to earn recognition.

Unique Branch and Unit Issues

8.17 Develop and promulgate a new K-9 policy that provides clear and transparent criteria for when a K-9 Officer Technician can continue working within the K-9 unit after a dog retires or passes away.

8.18 Upgrade the state of the vehicle fleet within FMB and use accountability procedures to ensure proper handling.

Addressing Individual Office Matters

The Secret Service should address a range of employee engagement challenges unique to its various Offices and Divisions.

Office of Technical Development and Mission Support (TEC)

9.1   **Prioritize and encourage leadership development training for TSD employees and consider opening TSD leadership opportunities (some of which are currently reserved only for Special Agents) to all employee groups within TSD.**

9.2   **Prioritize hosting more regular employee-centric events, including employee recognition programs, and social events, and implement a more robust onboarding process to ensure that new employees feel like they are a part of the TEC team beginning on day one.**

9.3   **Establish a separate research and development branch within TEC and develop a TEC strategy and multi-year investment plan consistent with the 2016 Academy report.**

9.4   **Reengage PSS personnel, develop a new conversion policy, and clearly articulate that policy, addressing questions and concerns during implementation.**

9.5   **Communicate the rationale for the move-back-to-D.C. policy and explain that the granting of policy waivers will likely be limited and sparing.**

9.6   **Explore alternatives to provide helpdesk-like procurement assistance to TEC staff both at headquarters and in the field.**

Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO)

9.7   **Create and publicize a strategy for improving employee wellness and engagement and work with the staff to understand the sources of concern and identify opportunities for improvement. Steps include:**

- **Analyzing the FEVS scores and existing surveys and interviews to determine the cause and levels of dissatisfaction.**

- **Defining a vision for employee engagement and office culture so that leadership and employees have a shared understanding of cultural behaviors.**

- **Ensuring that employees within the office see demonstrable actions that consider their engagement and morale, including clearly articulating and documenting what it takes to receive internal promotions, providing the time needed and opportunities for training related directly to job responsibilities and for broader development, hosting employee-centric events and awards to demonstrate appreciation for the OCFO workforce, and connecting more frequently**

with other mission (OPO and INV) and mission support organizations to better understand the organization and customer needs.

Office of Professional Responsibility (RES)

9.8 Move the RES office to a physical location where its Agents will not frequently encounter members of the workforce who are the target of an internal investigation.

Office of Human Resources (HUM)

9.9 Examine the connection between the recruitment (Secret Service Hire) and the candidate tracking/investigations (ALIS) IT systems to facilitate data transfer and, over time, bringing the functionality of the systems together. Steps include:

- Determining which one of the systems can perform the functions of the other or build a bridge between the two systems so that information is directly transferred rather than having to engage in dual data entry.

9.10 Review procedures to ensure that the human resources policy development process is transparent and provides full stakeholder participation and coordinates with necessary stakeholders (internal and external to HUM), and is managed by the HRP.

9.11 Set an annual work plan that prioritizes the work HRR is to accomplish each year. Steps include:

- Soliciting staff feedback to gain buy-in on the work plan and generate more engagement and boost morale.

- Avoiding creating new branches and office specialties to ensure maximum flexibility of the workforces.

Field Offices within the Office of Investigations (INV)

9.12 Examine the benefit of longer rotations at the SAIC level and prioritize the development and promotion of field-based, in-office personnel to higher levels of leadership as demonstrated by the Phoenix Field Office.

9.13 Review the IT support workforce that service field offices to ensure that there is sufficient staff to handle all IT issues that surface in not only the field office but also resident offices and other satellite facilities.

Appendices

Appendix A: Panel and Study Team Member Biographies

Panel of Academy Fellows

Ms. Ellen Tunstall,* *Chair*: Adjunct Policy Analyst, RAND Corporation. Former Senior Advisor, FMP Consulting. Former Department of Defense positions including: Acting Deputy Under Secretary of Defense, Civilian Personnel Policy; Director, Workforce Issues and International Programs, Under Secretary of Defense, Civilian Personnel Policy; Division Chief, Civilian Assistance and Re-Employment Division, Defense Civilian Personnel Management Service; Senior Policy Specialist, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Office, Civilian Personnel Policy; various human resource positions with the Department of Air Force. Former positions with U.S. Office of Personnel Management: Deputy Associate Director, Talent and Capacity Policy; Program Manager, Office of Insurance Programs.

Mr. John Koskinen:* Former Commissioner, Internal Revenue Service, U.S. Department of the Treasury. Former Chairman of the Board and Director, Freddie Mac; President, U.S. Soccer Foundation; City Administrator, Government of the District of Columbia; Assistant to the President of the United States and Chair, President's Council on Year 2000 Conversion; Deputy Director for Management, U.S. Office of Management and Budget; President and Chief Executive Officer, The Palmieri Company; Administrative Assistant to Senator Abraham Ribicoff; Assistant to Mayor John Lindsay and to New York City; Special Assistant to Deputy Executive Director, "Kerner Commission."

Ms. Cynthia Heckmann:* Project Director, National Academy of Public Administration. Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) Strategic Advisor for Government Executives (SAGE), Partnership for Public Service. Former Strategic Advisor, Research, Partnership for Public Service. Former positions with U.S. Government Accountability Office: Chief Human Capital Officer, Deputy Chief Information Officer. Former policy and program positions in: Health Care Financing Administration, Office of Education, and National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare (now Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Education; and Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Mr. Reginald Wells:*Executive in Residence, American University. Former Deputy Commissioner for Human Resources, Chief Human Capital Officer & Chief Diversity Officer, U.S. Social Security Administration; Deputy Associate Commissioner for Disability Program Policy & Senior Advisor to the Deputy; Commissioner for Disability and Income Security Programs; Deputy Commissioner for the Administration on Developmental Disability, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Deputy Commissioner, Commission on Social Services, District of Columbia. Former positions at Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities Administration: Deputy Administrator/Acting Chief, Bureau of Community Services; Superintendent/Chief, Bureau of Habilation Services. Former positions at Department of Health & Rehabilitation, County of Essex, NJ: Division Director, Geriatrics Center; Deputy Department Director for Planning and Development; Chief of Program Monitoring and Evaluation. Former Research Associate, National Center on Black Aged.

*Academy Fellow

Mr. David Williams:* Distinguished Visiting Professor, Scholar School of Public Policy, George Mason University; Former Inspector General, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Postal Service; Deputy Assistant Administrator, Transportation Security Administration, U.S. Department of Homeland Security; Inspector General, Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration, U.S. Department of the Treasury.

Study Team

Brenna Isman, *Director of Academy Studies*: Ms. Isman has worked at the Academy since 2008 and oversees the Academy studies, providing strategic leadership, project oversight, and subject matter expertise to the project study teams. Prior to this, Ms. Isman was a Project Director managing projects focused on organizational governance and management, strategic planning and change management. Her research engagements have included working with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Social Security Administration, the Department of Veterans Affairs, as well as multiple regulatory and Inspector General offices. Prior to joining the Academy, Ms. Isman was a Senior Consultant for the Ambit Group and a Consultant with Mercer Human Resource Consulting facilitating effective organizational change and process improvement. Ms. Isman holds a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from American University and a Bachelor of Science (BS) in Human Resource Management from the University of Delaware.

Daniel Ginsberg, *Project Director*: Mr. Ginsberg has directed and provided subject matter expertise for a number of projects for the Academy and draws on his expertise as a defense, health care policy, and human capital consultant in Washington, DC. From 2009 to 2013, he served as the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, leading the Air Force's efforts to provide trained and ready personnel, while transforming human capital management for the almost 700,000-person armed service. Mr. Ginsberg served for a decade as the senior defense policy advisor to U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont. He is also a former member of the staff of the U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services during the Chairmanship of U.S. Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia.

Ginger Groeber, *Senior Advisor*: Ms. Groeber is a Senior Advisor at the Academy. She is also an Adjunct Senior Policy Analyst at RAND Corporation. Since 2010, she has owned Groeber Consulting Group providing consulting to federal agencies and companies providing service to federal clients. She is a former Vice President for Human Capital Line of Business at Lockheed Martin Corporation. As a presidential appointee she served as the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy. Ms. Groeber spent her civil service career in human resources, financial management, organizational design, and operations with the Department of the Army, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service and the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Adam Darr, *Senior Research Analyst*: Mr. Darr is a Research Analyst at the Academy. Mr. Darr joined the Academy in 2015 as a research associate, having previously interned in the summer of 2013. He has served on numerous Academy projects, including work for the National Science Foundation, National Nuclear Security Administration, Farm Service Agency, the Federal Aviation Administration, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons. His areas of emphasis have been governance and management reform, organizational change, human capital, and project and

acquisition management. Mr. Darr is currently pursuing a Master's in Public Administration at The George Washington University and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Homeland Security/Emergency Management from Virginia Commonwealth University.

Sean Smooke, *Senior Research Associate*: Mr. Smooke has worked for the Academy as a Research Associate since August of 2019. He has served on several Academy studies, including the Montgomery County Council: Legislative Branch Operations Assessment concluding in November of 2019, and Interim Report 4 and the Final Report on Tracking and Assessing Governance and Management Reform in the Nuclear Security Enterprise in the spring and fall of 2020 respectively. He provides additional support to the Academy's Quarterly Working Capital Fund Symposium. Mr. Smooke holds a Bachelor of Arts from Claremont McKenna College in Government and Legal Studies.

Richard Pezzella, *Senior Research Associate*: Mr. Pezzella joined the Academy in June 2018 following internships in the House of Representatives and at a boutique government relations firm. He recently worked on the Academy's Blue Ribbon Panel study of building renovation options for the Architect of the Capitol, and a study providing guidance on the design and implementation of an innovative personnel system for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). He previously supported the Academy's study of the organization of the research components of the Department of Transportation, and a two-study series with the National Coalition of STD Directors on addressing the epidemic of sexually transmitted infections in the United States. His areas of interest include infrastructure, public health, international relations, technology, and space policy. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology, and International Relations from the State University of New York at New Paltz.

**Jennifer Butler**, *Intern*: Ms. Butler joined the Academy in February 2021 as an intern for the spring semester. She is a student at Cornell University, working toward obtaining a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology with minors in Education and Inequality Studies. Her academic interests include understanding culture, diversity, and social problems in society.

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Appendix B: Agency Structure

Secret Service staff are distributed across the nation and the world between the Headquarters in Washington, D.C., and the 162 Field Offices (21 international and 141 domestic), out of which staff conduct investigations and protective operations.

Figure 8. Secret Service Organization Chart

United States Secret Service Organization Chart
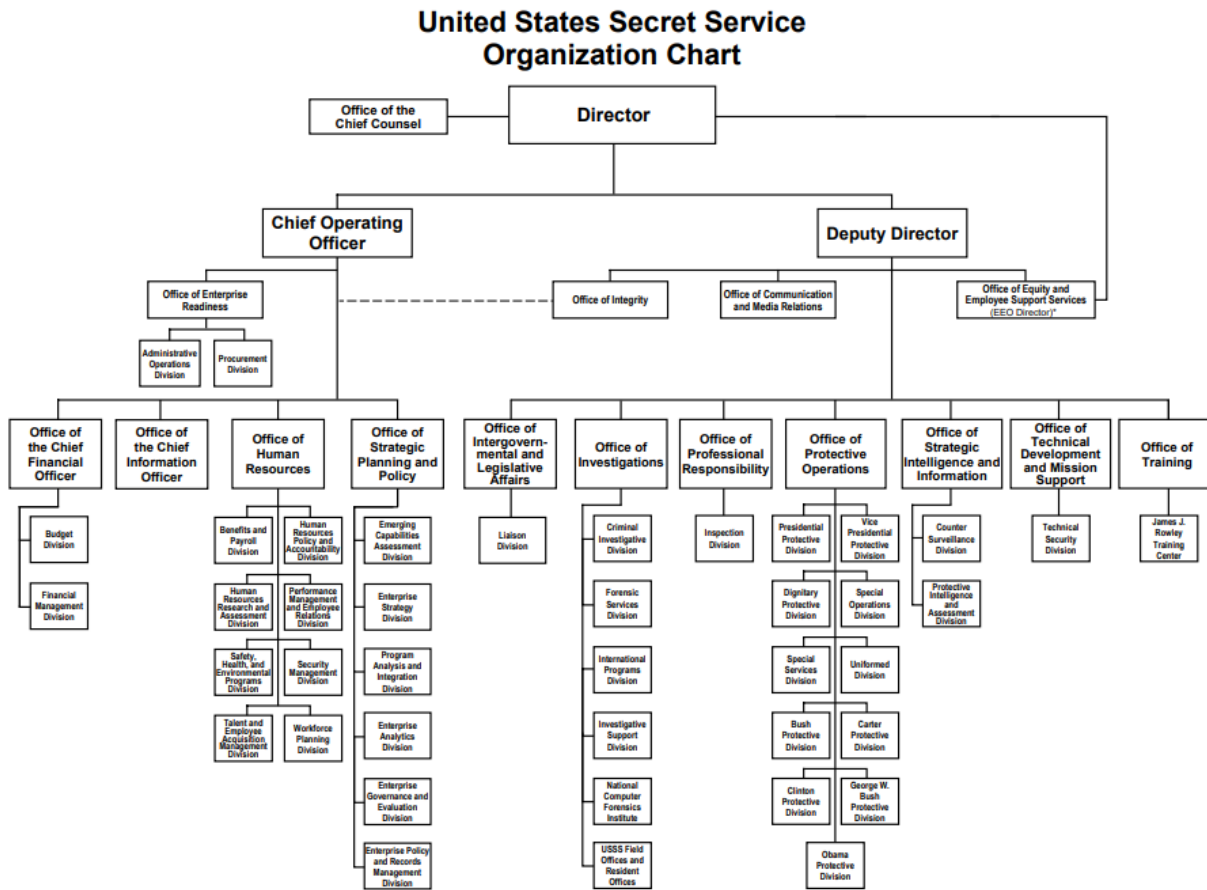
Source: U.S. Secret Service Office of Strategic Planning and Policy (March 17, 2019)

*Reports to USSS Director in EEO Director capacity

Subject Office Description and Areas of Responsibility

Office of Investigations (INV): In charge of investigative operations, INV also manages the Agency's Field Offices.

- **Field Offices:** The Academy study team spoke with the majority of employees and leaders at the Miami and Phoenix Field Offices, as well as individual employees from field offices throughout the country.

Office of Professional Responsibility (RES): Ensures that Secret Service offices and programs comply with agency policies, procedures, and protocols and with federal regulations; conducts investigations of alleged misconduct.

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Office of Protective Operations (OPO): OPO oversees the protective mission of the Agency, which includes providing guidance to 10 protective details and the Uniformed Division to protect our Nation's leaders and visiting dignitaries, and plan and execute security operations for National Special Security Events.

Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO): Headed by the Chief Financial Officer, OCFO manages the Agency's financial infrastructure.

Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO): Headed by the Chief Information Officer, OCIO manages the Agency's technical infrastructure and information technology.

Office of Human Resources (HUM): Headed by the Chief Human Capital Officer, HUM serves as the Agency's HR function, and encompasses several of the core business support functions.

Office of Strategic Planning and Policy (OSP): OSP manages short and long-term strategic planning for the Secret Service. OSP also coordinates whole-of-agency implementation of new business practices, marketing strategies, and enterprise policy development.

Office of Intergovernmental and Legislative Affairs (IGL): IGL manages the Agency's intergovernmental affairs, acting as a liaison between the Secret Service and other organizations of the federal government.

Office of Strategic Intelligence and Information (SII): Headed by an Assistant Director (AD), SII conducts data gathering and analysis on potential threats, as well as counterintelligence and data security operations. The division works with OPO and INV to ensure the information on threats is accounted for in planning. The division has two divisions: **Protective Intelligence and Assessment Division**, and **Counter Surveillance Division**.

Office of Technical Development and Mission Support (TEC): The CTO of the Secret Service leads TEC, which is responsible for technology-related security and countermeasures. The office differs from OCIO in that the technical elements developed, implemented, maintained, or assessed by TEC are generally operational, and linked directly to the investigative and protective missions—OCIO handles the Agency's technology needs insofar

as they apply to business processes and general information technology. TEC has a single division: **Technical Security Division (TSD)**.

Office of Training (TNG): Headed by an AD, TNG oversees the training of Special Agents and Uniformed Division Officers. This training is generally administered at the **James J. Rowley Training Center**.

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Appendix C: Cross-Report Recommendations Matrix

The following table provides a summary of overlapping recommendations provided to the Secret Service through various reviews over time. While this study highlights the Secret Service's progress addressing these overlapping findings, the Agency will benefit in continuing examination and the implementation of the recommendations in this study.

Table 5. Recommendations across Recent Secret Service Studies

Recommendations	2020 Academy Report	2016 Academy Report	2016 Eagle Hill Report	2015 HOGR Committee Report	2014 Protective Mission Panel
Promulgate a Strategic Vision for Employee Welfare	✓	✓	✓		
Encourage Openness and Transparency in Communication	✓	✓	✓		✓
Develop a Human Capital Operating Plan (HCOP)	✓	✓		✓	
Minimize Protective Responsibilities to Only Those Required by Statute	✓				✓
Continue to Request Personnel Increases and Tie to Mission Capability	✓	✓		✓	✓
Streamline HUM Hiring Processes	✓	✓		✓	✓

Recommendations	2020 Academy Report	2016 Academy Report	2016 Eagle Hill Report	2015 HOGR Committee Report	2014 Protective Mission Panel
Consolidate Hiring of Special Agents and Uniformed Division Officers into Single Office	✓	✓			✓
Make Retention a Priority	✓	✓		✓	
Ensure Regular Exit Surveys are Conducted	✓				
Support More Time at Home	✓		✓		
Foster a Greater Ability to Telework	✓				
Extend Authority to Provide Overtime Pay Above Statutory Limits	✓		✓	✓	
Develop A Contemporary Retention Program	✓			✓	
Implement a Leadership Development Model for all Employee Categories	✓			✓	✓

Recommendations	2020 Academy Report	2016 Academy Report	2016 Eagle Hill Report	2015 HOGR Committee Report	2014 Protective Mission Panel
Implement APT Employee Development Program that has Been Under Development since 2016	✔				
Provide Career-Paths with Clearly Set Expectations	✔		✔		
Provide Greater Transparency in the Assignment and Promotion Process	✔		✔		
Codify Professional Leadership Positions	✔	✔			✔
Open More Top Leadership Positions to APT Employees	✔				
Develop New Software Acquisition Strategy	✔	✔		✔	
Fill Vacant CIO Positions	✔				
Adopt a Formal Change Management Strategy	✔	✔		✔	✔

Recommendations	2020 Academy Report	2016 Academy Report	2016 Eagle Hill Report	2015 HOGR Committee Report	2014 Protective Mission Panel
Create a New Division in TEC Focused on Understanding Key Technologies and Technological Trends	✔	✔		✔	✔
Reengage Existing PSS Personnel and Develop a New Conversion Policy	✔				
Allow Field Employees the Ability to Apply for a Move Waiver	✔				
Document Strategy for Improving Morale and Engagement Within OCFO	✔	✔		✔	
Consider Telework or Alternative Work Location to Widen Recruitment Outside of Washington, D.C.	✔				
Move the RES Office to a Physical Location Outside of Washington, D.C. Headquarters	✔				
Consider the Impact of Frequent Special Agent-in-Charge Rotations on Staff Offices	✔				

Recommendations	2020 Academy Report	2016 Academy Report	2016 Eagle Hill Report	2015 HOGR Committee Report	2014 Protective Mission Panel
Move Towards a Single Recruitment and Staffing Software System	✓				
Review and Optimize the Human Resources Policy Development Process	✓	✓			
Develop an HRR Annual Work Plan that prioritizes its Work	✓				
Identify and Share Best Practices Across Field Office	✓				
Ensure Stable and Experienced Field Office Leadership	✓				
Develop a Process for Promotion of Field Office Personnel to Supervisory Jobs	✓				
Pay for First Move of New Special Agents	✓				

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Appendix D: List of Organizations Interviewed

The list below accounts for the various organizations and offices, which the Academy study team and Panel (in some cases) spoke with during this study. The study team only fully spoke to the Miami, Florida, and Phoenix, Arizona Field Offices: some employees of other field offices were spoken to for information regarding other topics, and their offices are reflected below.

Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO)

- Chief Financial Officer
- Financial Management Division (FMD)
- Internal Controls Division
- Budget Division

Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO)

- Chief Information Officer

Communication and Media Relations (CMR)

Office of the Director

- Chief Counsel
- Chief Operating Officer

Office of Enterprise Readiness (ERO)

Office of Equity and Support Services (ESS)

Office of Human Resources (HUM)

- Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO)
- Benefits and Payroll Division (BPR)
- Human Resources Policy and Accountability Division (HRP)
- Human Resources Research and Assessment Division (HRR)
- Performance Management and Employee Relations Division (PRF)
- Safety, Health and Environmental Programs Division (SAF)
- Security Management Division (SMD)
- Emergency Preparedness Program (EPP)
- Talent and Employee Acquisition Division (TAD)
- Workforce Planning Division (WPL)

Office of Investigations (INV)

Field Offices

- Dallas, Texas Field Office
- Detroit, Michigan Field Office
- Los Angeles, California Field Office

- Miami, Florida Field Office
- New York, New York Field Office
- Phoenix, Arizona Field Office
- San Francisco, California Field Office

Office of Professional Responsibility (RES)

Office of Protective Operations (OPO)

Uniformed Division (UD)

- Office of the Chief
- White House Branch
- Naval Observatory Branch
- Foreign Missions Branch
- Special Operations Division (SOD)

Office of Strategic Intelligence and Information (SII)

Office of Strategic Planning and Policy (OSP)

- Chief Strategy Officer

Office of Technical Development and Mission Support (TEC)

- Chief Technical Officer (CTO)
- Technical Security Division (TSD)

Office of Training (TNG)

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