



# **I/O Psychology in the US Government: An Overview for Graduate Students**

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# Purpose

- **Discuss key workforce development challenges facing the US government**
- **Discuss key federal agencies where many I/O psychologists work**
- **Provide an overview of some of the important workforce initiatives**
- **Discuss research & expertise needs for these initiatives**



# Background

- **Much, if not most of the most important work in I/O psychology was sponsored by the US government**
  - Cognitive ability testing: Army Alpha, ASVAB, GATB
  - Organizational climate: Navy
  - Job Analysis: FJA, DOT, O\*NET, Job Evaluation
- **Currently, US government faces key challenges in maintaining and modernizing their workforce**



# Federal Workforce Challenges

- **Aging workforce: retirement bubble, skills/technology,**
- **Hiring: faster, more validity, fairness**
- **Pay: comparability with private sector, pay-for-performance**
- **Technology: adoption, database magnitude, telecommuting**
- **Motivation: morale, performance evaluation**



# Key Agencies

- **Office of Personnel Management**
- **Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration**
- **Department of Defense**
- **Department of Homeland Security/Office of the Director of National Security (ODNI)**
- **Merit Systems Protection Board**
- **Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs**



# OPM's Hiring Initiatives

- **OPM's End-to-End Hiring Initiative**

- Speed up hiring process, can currently take between 6 months and 2 years to get a new employee on board
- Applicants frustrated, often find other jobs before they get contacted
- Major problem as baby-boomers retire
- Goal: 90 days

- **Un-proctored internet testing**

- Working to provide agency support for most common occupations
- Goal to have it up by the end of 2010



# OPM's Telework Initiative

- **Two bills in Congress to push for telework for federal workforce**
- **“Continuity of operations” (COOP): swine flu, weather, terrorism**
- **Key issues:**
  - Defining standards, expectations
  - Eligibility policies: must have a “fully successful” performance rating, no secure work, no disciplinary actions
- **Each agency must have a telework coordinator**



# Department of Defense

## ■ Pay-for-Performance

- Goals: pay equity with private sector, increased motivation
- Replaced 14 GS grades with about 40 bands
- National Security Personnel System (NSPS) repealed
  - Studies by SRA, Defense Business Board
  - Union opposition
  - Fairness, complicated payout formula
  - Pay bands viewed as too wide
  - Potential unintended EEO consequences
- Currently in a “wait and study” mode



# ODNI, Consolidation

- **Civilian Joint Duty Program**
  - Problem: lack of communication among IC
  - Job rotation program
  - Participants spend a year working for another IC community agency
  - Outcomes: better communication, understanding of various missions, resources
  - Winner of Harvard Business School's Ash Award



# Social Security Administration

- **Need for accurate occupation information for the Disability Determination Process**
- **Goal: determine if a disabled person can work in *any* job in the national economy**
- **Decisions based on medical information, age, education, and work history**
- **DOT: out of date**
- **O\*NET: occupational units too broad to allow inferences about individuals**
- **Solution: seeking private sector replacement to the DOT**



# More Pay Issues

- **Comparability of Federal worker pay to private sector pay**
  - USA Today: avg federal worker \$67k, private sector \$60k
  - Fed HR managers: cannot recruit for federal salaries
  - Issues: experience, education, pay-at-risk, recent economic downturn, benefits
  
- **Dept. of Education**
  - Pay-for-performance
  - Linking “Race to the Top” funds to multi-dimensional teacher performance evaluation



# Research Needs

- **Workforce development: research paradigms/program evaluation, efficient data collection**
- **Telecommuting: virtual teams, performance monitoring, motivation/leadership**
- **Job analysis: efficiency**
- **Pay: motivation, equity (internal, external)**
- **Efficacy in education: core skills, transition to the workforce, career choice**



# Future Agencies

- **National Science Foundation: STEM workforce development (science, technology, engineering, math)**
- **Department of Education: pay-for-performance, STEM careers**
- **Census Bureau: occupational/workforce surveys, response rates**



# Web links

- **OPM.gov**
- **Telework.gov**
- **DOLETA.gov**
- **ODNI.gov**
- **Socialsecurity.gov/OIDAP/**
- **Govexec.com**
- **Fedsmith.com**