

Social Security

Workforce Planning
at the Social Security
Administration





SOCIAL SECURITY

Office of the Commissioner

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For many years, the Social Security Administration (SSA) has been known for the quality service provided by its knowledgeable, experienced and dedicated workforce. Our employees are truly our Agency's most important assets, and no internal management task has higher priority than ensuring that the Agency's 21st century workforce is ready for the challenges we will face.

However, we do face serious long-term challenges. For example, Social Security and Supplemental Security Income disability claims can be expected to rise in the next 5 years as the 76 million members of the baby boom generation move into disability-prone years. And, beginning in about 2008, those baby boomers will begin to retire in unprecedented numbers. These, and other increasing workloads, will further strain our ability to continue to deliver the high quality of service expected of SSA.

Another challenge to delivering high-quality service is that our Agency's workforce is also aging. Many of our employees will themselves be eligible for retirement in the next few years, and many of these are in senior staff and leadership positions. About 3,000 employees per year have been projected to retire in the 2007-2009 period.

How can we meet this challenge? We have already begun to plan for this eventuality, and our workforce planning efforts have been shaped to a considerable degree by a "Retirement Wave" study, which predicts the who, where and when of retirement losses. Based on these projections, we have decided to take actions to mitigate the impact of the retirement wave. Over the past 2 years, we have replaced retirees with about 4,000 new employees. Later this Fiscal Year, we will rely on another "early out" program to adjust imbalances between workload and overhead functions, which will allow us to hire approximately 2,000 additional new employees for customer service positions. These actions will allow us to have more experienced employees in place at a time when our greatest workload increases are expected. In addition, working with our union partners to ensure that we will retain our best employees, and make the most of their skills, we are significantly expanding our efforts in ongoing employee training and career development, instituting executive development programs, and emphasizing workforce diversity, flexibility and skills for a changing environment.

But these investments alone will not be enough to address future demands. Along with explosive growth in workloads, we face a shift in the nature of our work, for example, toward helping disabled individuals return to independence. At the same time, in our surrounding environment, business practices and customer demands

are changing so rapidly that it is very clear that incremental service improvements are unlikely to satisfy the needs of our customers for very long.

With all of this in mind, it is critically important to think much further into the future than we have before, and we are moving forward now to develop a long-term vision of service in the year 2010. Our "2010 Vision" will be about the Agency of the future—what work we will be doing and how we will do it. This Vision will guide the plans for the human resource needs that we will require in the future. We will work in partnership with our unions to ensure the realization of this Vision.

After the release later this year of the 2010 Vision and our next Agency Strategic Plan, we will produce human resource plans for the longer term. We are already beginning analyses and activities that will form the bases for these plans. Americans can be confident that we have credible plans for dealing with what's ahead, and that our 21st century SSA workforce will be equal to the nation's highest expectations.



Kenneth S. Apfel
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WORKFORCE PLANNING
AT THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

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WORKFORCE PLANNING AT THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

INTRODUCTION

The Social Security Administration (SSA) is fortunate to have an experienced and dedicated workforce that is highly committed to the Agency's mission and values. This workforce, one of the Agency's greatest strengths, faces tremendous challenges now and even more so in the future. We are already experiencing significant strains due to increased workloads, and the aging of America will place even greater strains on our ability to continue to deliver the high quality of service that Americans have come to expect from SSA.

Increasing workloads and resource constraints will have an impact on our employees and managers. So we have undertaken the workforce planning initiatives described in this report to ensure that the employees and managers in our Agency remain highly trained and highly skilled so that our capacity to serve the nation remains strong. We know that our workforce is the key to providing high quality service to the public and effectively managing the nation's Social Security programs.

BACKGROUND

In 1980, SSA had over 84,000 employees, but this number decreased by more than 17,000 (over 20 percent) during the downsizing that occurred between 1980 and 1989. And while our staffing level has remained at about 65,000 employees in the decade since then, our workloads continue to grow and are projected to rise even more in the next 10 years as the "baby boomers" reach retirement age.

Today, SSA has a mature workforce. Our average worker is 46.7 years old and has an average of about 20 years of Federal service. External oversight bodies, such as the Social Security Advisory Board, have cautioned us that we need to prepare ourselves for the large number of retirements that loom in the future and for the difficulties we will face in replacing current workers. It seems clear that as career civil servants leave the Agency, often with 25-35 years of service, those who follow are not likely to remain in the organization for such lengthy periods, and our recruitment and retention strategies will need to be reshaped.

In 1996, the General Accounting Office (GAO) provided a report to the Congress entitled "SSA Faces Challenges." The report said:

- "SSA must build a workforce with the flexibility and skills to operate in a changing environment."
- "SSA must invest in ongoing employee training and career development."
- "It has been 4 years since SSA participated in HHS executive-level management development programs."

- "SSA has not selected candidates for its mid-level management development programs since 1993. The Agency recognizes the need for management development programs, but has not scheduled future programs."

In February 1997, GAO reported to the Congress "Significant Challenges Await New Commissioner." Among the challenges identified in the report were:

- "SSA knows that it must increasingly rely on technology and build a workforce with the flexibility and skills to operate in a changing environment."
- "Compounding the challenge [of an increasing workload] will be the possible loss of many senior managers and executives. Over the next 5 years, about half of SSA's senior executives will be eligible to retire."
- "Complicating SSA's effort is an aging workforce."
- "SSA has acknowledged the importance of having skilled managers to prepare for the demands of heavier workloads, new technology, and expected changes in its employee and client base."

STRATEGIC AND WORKFORCE PLANNING

The challenges identified by GAO were very timely and useful to SSA in preparing its Agency Strategic Plan. In September 1997, SSA published its first strategic plan as an independent agency within the Executive Branch. In accordance with the Government Performance and Results Act, the plan covered a 5-year period (Fiscal Years 1997-2002).

The importance of workforce planning was reflected in the SSA Strategic Plan. Among the five goals identified in the plan was the goal: "To be an employer that values and invests in each employee." To realize this goal, the Strategic Plan outlined four objectives:

- To create a workforce to serve SSA's diverse customers in the 21st century.
- To promote an Agency culture that successfully incorporates our values.
- To provide the necessary tools and training to achieve a highly skilled and high-performing workforce.
- To provide a physical environment that promotes the health and well being of employees.

To accomplish these objectives, the Strategic Plan called for creation of a plan for transitioning from the workforce of today to the workforce of the future. A number of aspects needed to be considered, including recruitment of a diverse workforce committed to the ideals of customer service, and training and development for new and current employees. Managing the upcoming "retirement wave" of SSA employees was to be an initial centerpiece of the plan.

OUR NEAR-TERM CHALLENGE: THE RETIREMENT WAVE

In 1997, SSA began to analyze the upcoming retirement wave by looking at potential retirements in the next 5 years. As shown in Appendix A, we found that a large percentage of employees would be eligible to retire by the year 2002, especially at the higher grade levels. For example, those eligible for regular retirement included about 40 percent of SSA's Senior Executive Service (SES) employees, grade 15s, and grade 14s. If eligibility for both regular and early retirement was included, the percentage rose to about 80 percent of SES employees and about 90 percent of grade 15s and grade 14s.

We realized we needed to go beyond looking only at how many employees would be eligible to retire, so we examined how many employees we actually expect to retire. We determined how many eligible employees had actually left the Agency on regular retirement over the past 10 years. We found, for example, that the average SSA employee retiring on regular retirement does so at age 61. Based on our historical pattern, we developed a model for projecting how many employees would retire in future years.

In 1998, we prepared a more comprehensive study of our retirement wave attrition, focused on predicting the who, where and when of retirement losses. Our SSA-wide projections through the year 2020 showed the peak of our retirement wave occurring in the years 2007-2009 (see Appendix B), when we expect to see about 3,000 employees retire each year compared to an average of 851 yearly retirements from 1990 through 1999. We compiled data at the nationwide, organizational component, and regional levels. Our projections included the impact of the losses on the diversity of SSA employees. In addition, our data analysis indicates that between 1999 and 2010, we will experience increased retirements in many of our key positions. For example, about 66 percent of our supervisors, 45 percent of claims representatives and 48 percent of computer specialists are projected to retire.

We later validated the model by comparing the actual number of retirements with the number projected, and we found the model was a good predictor (Appendix C).

We also projected the succession flow of new hires into our key positions and the movement of employees between those positions (Appendix D). This assumes we will be able to maintain our current staffing levels in SSA and will be able to backfill positions as employees leave.

We are quite concerned about training new employees, especially if they come on board after our experienced workers retire. If there is no period of overlap, it will be difficult to ensure that new employees are adequately mentored and trained in all the program complexities and the methods of providing high-quality customer service.

We are continuing to expand our analysis of attrition at SSA, so that we can see the total picture of how many employees we expect to lose through regular, disability and other types of retirement, as well as other types of separations such as resignations, terminations, deaths, and transfers. This will enable SSA to plan ahead for our future

workforce needs so we will know what resources are necessary to provide world-class service to our customers.

INITIAL STEPS TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM

As mentioned above, although timing is going to be very important in the management of the Agency's human resources, we will have to pursue a number of efforts to deal with the challenges we now face. First, to the extent possible, we will seek to "flatten the retirement wave." In addition, we will need to provide appropriate and effective career development as the backbone of our succession planning strategy, take advantage of the synergies offered by our success in achieving a diverse workforce and provide better and more technologically advantageous training methods.

Flattening the Wave

As indicated earlier, SSA's estimates show that retirements will peak in 2007-2009 to more than double our regular retirements this year. At the same time, SSA will face unprecedented workloads as the baby-boomer generation ages. To handle these workloads we must have experienced employees in our key positions.

While we have a number of initiatives underway to enhance our recruitment and training abilities, replacing staff now and in the immediate years to come will be critical to having an experienced workforce on hand in 2007 and beyond.

We can mitigate the effect of the projected peak year retirements by seeking to influence retirement behavior, in effect "flattening the wave." This means moving retirements forward in time (through early retirement programs) and further minimizing the effect of retirements by approaches such as hiring Federal retirees to perform limited work. (The concept is discussed later in the section on meeting our future challenges.)

During the last four years, SSA has offered early retirement to its employees. About 5 percent of those eligible for early retirement took it (524 in 1996, 825 in 1997/1998, and 1381 in 1999). These early retirements significantly raised the total number of retirements and made up an increasing percentage of the total retirements each year it was offered. In 1999, early retirements accounted for 50.5 percent of all retirements. Early retirement programs have contributed to the Agency's ability to hire 4,000 new employees over the past 2 years. In addition to allowing the Agency to replace employees who would have retired during the peak retirement years, the early retirements bring new workers, with appropriate and up-to-date technological skills to the Agency.

By accelerating retirements, we are able to have in place experienced employees in the peak years to follow. Typically it takes about 3 years for an employee to be considered "experienced."

Accelerating retirements is not an easy choice. SSA clearly faces workload challenges today and needs experienced staff. However, allowing retirements to occur at their current projected rate presents an even darker picture for the future. Our retirement

wave analysis shows that without early retirements, approximately 30 percent of employees would still be in trainee status during the 2007-2009 peak years.

We cannot overstate the importance of having experienced staff in sufficient numbers in key positions as retirements increase. Not only are experienced staff needed to process increasing workloads, they are needed to train and mentor new hires. Virtually all of SSA's key positions use both formal training (classroom or Interactive Video Teletraining) and on-the-job mentoring. Mentoring allows new employees to learn from experienced staff in a real job setting. Mentoring is also a way to "pass on" the dedication and knowledge of today's work force to those who will carry out the Agency's work in the future. While mentoring is resource intensive, it clearly produces the most knowledgeable and productive employees.

The success of these efforts is predicated on the Agency's ability to replace employee losses now. SSA's administrative budget request was not fully funded for FY 2000. A budget reduction generally means fewer people, less overtime or fewer supplies and equipment. SSA has reduced its service goals for FY 2000 as a result of these cuts. Despite these cuts, we will make every effort to replace all losses this year. Regular attrition, coupled with early out losses, will allow us to hire approximately 2,000 new employees this year.

The President's budget request for FY 2001 is more than a 5 percent increase in funding for SSA. Adequate funding is critical not only to meeting current workloads, but also to building the workforce of the future. By accelerating our recruiting and hiring now and evenly in the coming years, we will ensure that we have a sufficient, well-trained and experienced staff to provide high-quality, timely service to the public.

Career Development Programs and Succession Planning

One of the necessities for dealing with both the retirement wave and management and leadership succession is building employee skills for the future. As mentioned earlier, our losses in management positions are expected to be very high. Therefore, it is essential that we take steps to ensure that we retain our best employees and cultivate and train them to fill the shoes of those who leave. SSA is responding to the challenge, in part, by establishing development programs at the national, component, and regional levels. For example, during the past 3 years, over 1,200 people have been selected for participation in the following development programs:

- **Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program.**
Under this national program, grade 15 employees are selected for a 2-year program to develop the competencies needed for SES positions. In Fiscal Year 1998, 36 employees were selected for this program.

- **Advanced Leadership Program**
Employees in grades 13 and 14 are selected for this national program and participate in a 2-year program of training and developmental assignments. In Fiscal Year 1999, 35 employees were selected.
- **Leadership Development Program**
This national program features a 2-year period of training and development for employees in grades 9-12. Sixty-one employees were recently selected to participate in this program.
- **Presidential Management Interns (PMIs)**
The PMI program is an excellent vehicle for bringing high-potential individuals with graduate degrees into SSA. We have selected 106 PMIs over the past 3 years. They enter at the grade 9 level and participate in a national 2-year development program.
- **Component-level and Regional Development Programs**
The SSA components and regions have established a variety of development programs. During the past 3 years, 583 employees have been selected to participate.
- **Regional Job Enrichment Programs**
Several regions have established programs to broaden the experience of employees. For example, in the Seattle Region, 379 employees have been selected for its Job Enrichment Program during the past 3 years. Employees at grades 1-14 have participated by gaining experience in another job for a period of 120 days.
- **Leadership Seminars**
In addition to the above programs, during the past 2 years all managers and supervisors in SSA have participated in training seminars to prepare them for future management and leadership challenges. We are continuing this developmental effort, with one third of our managers and supervisors to receive additional training each year.

Appendix F contains more detail on the various career development programs. These programs also have a ripple effect because our succession planning is designed to create additional opportunities for the development of employees who fill in behind those who advance to higher-level management and leadership positions.

Diversity

In addition to developmental programs, another issue to be addressed now is the need to ensure a diverse workforce. Our Agency workforce needs to reflect the diverse population that we serve, both today and as demographic changes occur in the future. Individuals who are connected culturally with the various demographic groups in the U.S. population are better able to communicate with and understand the needs of those groups.

To accomplish this, we established both a short-term and a long-term strategy to recruit employees from historically under-represented groups.

These strategies have been extremely successful. For example, SSA has seen a 40 percent increase in the representation of Hispanics, from 6.7 percent of employees in 1990 to 9.4 percent at the beginning of fiscal year 2000. Similarly, the representation of Asian/Pacific Islander employees increased by 64 percent (from 1.4% to 2.3%) and that of people with severe disabilities by 63 percent (from 1.6% to 2.6%). All these changes were accomplished while maintaining the representation of women, African-Americans, and American Indians/Alaskan Natives at levels that compare favorably with the civilian labor force, and without the use of quotas or numerical objectives.

Improvements have not been limited to the lower grades. During the same period, African-Americans experienced an increase of 78 percent at the grade 13-15 level (from 548 to 973) along with a 37 percent increase in their number of Senior Executives (SES). Thanks to these changes, the representation of African-Americans at the grade 13-15 level is nearly twice the 8.3 percent average in the Federal government. At grade 15, the percent of African-Americans in SSA is nearly three times their 5.6 percent average governmentwide representation, and their 22.2 percent representation in SSA's SES is three and a half times their average governmentwide representation.

Other minority groups and women have experienced similar increases. For example, the number of women and Hispanics at grades 13-15 more than doubled, and the number of Asian/Pacific Islanders more than tripled since 1990, with similar increases at grade 15 and the SES.

SSA also has implemented a program of reasonable accommodation for employees with disabilities that won an award in 1996 from the Ford Foundation and Harvard's Kennedy School of Government as one of the top 25 innovations in American government. This program has been instrumental in raising the representation of employees with severe disabilities in SSA to the highest level among Federal agencies.

We believe that continued attention to the issue of employee diversity, and continued pursuit of our successful recruiting strategies, will position us well to meet the needs of our increasingly diverse population.

Training through Technology

SSA is committed to providing the training necessary to ensure that its workforce possesses the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to meet its goal of delivering world-class service. That training must reflect the most efficient and effective methods available if the Agency is to equip the thousands of new employees we expect to hire each year with necessary knowledge and skills as quickly as possible. Historically, classroom training was the predominant method of training employees, and it remains a

vital part of our training strategy. However, we recognize the limitations of a strict reliance on classroom training:

- Individuals have different learning styles; not everyone learns best in a classroom environment.
- Traveling to a centralized location for training is not always possible.
- Cost and timeliness become factors when many employees must be trained quickly.
- State-of-the-art technology allows us to provide more consistent training to our employees across the country.

By using technology, SSA now employs a number of different training methodologies to supplement traditional classroom training. These methodologies ensure that more of our employees can be trained, training can be more up-to-date, and our training resources can be expended in the most cost-efficient manner.

- **Interactive Video Teletraining (IVT):**

SSA has established an IVT system that utilizes digital video technology and a viewer response system with a keypad to provide real time interaction between students and instructors. It allows us to present training that links instructors and programmatic experts with employees nationwide. With five broadcast studios and almost 800 downlink sites, SSA used IVT in FY 1999 to provide over 2,000 hours of entry-level, in-service, management and general skills training to SSA employees. Our employees had over a quarter million IVT training experiences during FY 1999.

SSA set a new standard in FY 2000 by presenting entry-level training to almost 1000 new employees in one of 6 classes presented over IVT. This presents a significant return on our investment from several critical perspectives. First, we saved over \$5 million in travel and per diem costs by bringing the training to trainees in their home offices. Second, in line with the "Family Friendly" policies being promoted within SSA, IVT training means that many individuals no longer have to lose opportunities because of personal responsibilities that preclude their being away from home for extended periods. Third, we are carrying out this training at no risk to the learning process. Although evaluation is ongoing to continue to improve the process, prior independent studies consistently show IVT to be an effective way to deliver training with no difference in the level of learning achieved.

We are now looking to fulfill our original goal by expanding still further to bring IVT to all remaining offices. A third party analysis conducted in early 1999 determined that the savings projected for the first expansion had been realized. A new cost benefit analysis was then developed that supports the business case for full expansion.

- **Intranet:**

We offer a variety of self-study courses through the Intranet. Courses in business communications, time management, office automation and programmatic areas are available on any SSA computer with an Intranet link. They can be taken at any time, so that scheduling is more convenient. In the programmatic area, we have a large

inventory of computer-based training programs that are currently being converted to a new format, which allows them to be accessed through the Office of Training Home Page. This makes them available to any SSA employee with a link to the Intranet. The Agency is going to utilize its web-based training in support of piloting Individual Learning Accounts and to pilot core curricula, competencies and self-assessment tools for SSA's employees.

- **Multi-Media:**

There are a number of multi-media courses on CD-ROM that are available to SSA offices. These are self-study courses on subject matter that is generally stable, such as customer service, basic skills, management training, office automation and some programmatic topics. Additional topics are made available as they are identified.

- **Videotape:**

Although used less frequently, videotape is still valuable for certain topics. Since all IVT programs are taped, it is especially valuable for those employees unable to view the training when it is first broadcast.

In summary, SSA has taken a number of initial steps to address the challenges facing the Agency as a result of the retirement wave. Key to this is the continued use of early retirement to flatten the wave. In addition, we are focusing on succession planning through quality career development programs, taking action to establish a more diverse workforce to better reflect the population that we serve and transforming our training programs to make the maximum use of technology such as interactive video training.

BEYOND THE RETIREMENT WAVE: MEETING OUR FUTURE CHALLENGES

As we have taken immediate actions in response to our retirement wave studies, the Agency has also recognized the need to begin dealing now with the growing certainty of other challenges. The most compelling of these is the projected growth first in disability and then retirement workloads as the baby boom generation ages. Given the fiscal restraints we can reasonably foresee, these workload increases are projected at a level that demands SSA act promptly to devise major technology and process improvements. Along with explosive growth in workloads, we face a reorientation in the nature of our work as emphasis shifts, for example, toward helping disabled individuals return to independence. At the same time, in the global and national environment, business practices and customer demands are changing in ways unimaginable even a few years ago.

The 2010 Vision and Workforce Planning

Recognizing the import of these factors, Commissioner Apfel has made strengthening long range planning a priority, and in November 1999, he announced that the Agency is developing a long-term vision of service in the year 2010. The 2010 Vision will be about the Agency of the future--what work we will do and how we will do it. And while the

2010 Vision will be fully integrated with the Agency Strategic Plan, it will be developed not from an incremental strategic planning perspective, but from the perspective of service as it *should* be, given workload, demographic and technology projections, and the expectations of our customers. Once the 2010 Vision is incorporated into the Agency Strategic Plan and our overall direction is aligned with it, more detailed service planning will flow from the 2010 Vision, including specific human resource plans which will be designed to restructure and transition SSA's workforce to the requirements of 2010.

Anticipating release later this year of the 2010 Vision, and consistent with commitments in our 1997 Agency Strategic Plan, we have created a transition document (Appendix G) that describes near-term activities which set the stage for the more complex and detailed human resource planning we will need to realize the 2010 Vision. We have included input from our labor organizations and management associations in developing this document.

The transition document encompasses the following immediate actions and analyses:

- Improve the process for projecting our workforce needs and planning how to meet them.

Expanding our analysis from regular retirements to all forms of attrition at SSA will help us better estimate the number of vacancies overall and in our major occupations for the next 5 years. Also important will be our actions to determine the effects of predicted changes in workloads, processes, and enhanced technology on our workforce needs. Knowing how many people and what kinds of skills we need enables us to plan the best way to obtain them, through hiring, training or other means. Where possible, we plan to fill vacancies before experienced workers leave in order to facilitate training and mentoring of new employees.

- Use innovative recruiting strategies to recruit new employees.

In general, there is a shrinking percentage of young people in the U.S. labor pool and thus a need to expand our recruitment sources to include a wide range of job candidates (for example, older workers who want a second career or want to work part-time). To attract various types of people, we will develop improved recruiting techniques, better utilize modern tools like the Internet, emphasize employment features that appeal to specific target audiences, and maintain ongoing relationships with sources of candidates.

- Work with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to improve and simplify the hiring process, so we can hire more quickly and easily and can compete with other employers.

We are continuing to provide input to OPM regarding improvements in Federal hiring processes. Our transition document also includes actions SSA can take to compete better with other employers. For example, we often hire in the fall because of budget

considerations, while most college students are looking for job offers earlier in the year. So we are working to improve the timing of our recruitment and hiring. We are also enhancing our job announcements and taking other actions to help us hire more effectively.

- Improve the process for filling jobs internally.

We are making improvements in the internal process for filling jobs, such as using the Intranet for all vacancy announcements and making the process easier for employees to use and understand. Streamlining and enhanced technology changes are also underway.

- Expand family-friendly features.

SSA plans to continue and expand the features of its work environment that enable employees to balance their work and personal lives, including flexible work schedules, child care, elder care, fitness centers, and career/life counseling. These are important in making us an attractive employer and in retaining our employees.

- Benchmark to obtain ideas for innovation.

Our benchmarking with public and private sector organizations will enable us to gather ideas, innovations, and best practices that we can use in human resources management and workforce planning.

- Support legislative action.

In its 1998 report on "New Options, New Talents: The Government Guide to the Flexible Workforce," the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) recommended that Federal agencies be given the authority to hire Federal retirees to work not more than 700 hours a year, with no reduction in their salary or annuity. We believe this would be a valuable tool for SSA. It would help us train and mentor the large number of new employees we must hire to replace our retirement wave employees, and it would be useful for special studies or projects where we may need the short-term expertise of employees who have retired.

- Pursue NAPA recommendations for filling entry-level jobs. These recommendations are contained in a report entitled "Entry-Level Hiring and Development for the 21st Century: Professional and Administrative Positions."

NAPA's ideas would help us with hiring for our major occupations, such as claims representatives and computer specialists. We have urged OPM to take the action necessary to implement these recommendations as soon as possible, such as establishing authority for a Career Intern Program for hiring people at grades 5, 7 and 9; invigorating the College Cooperative Education Program; improving the

Presidential Management Intern Program; and developing a Federal careers website on the Internet.

- Assist OPM with a workforce-planning model.

OPM is developing a workforce-planning model for use by Federal agencies. The model covers the complete cycle of workforce planning, including strategic planning, projecting supply and demand, scoping discrepancies, developing an action plan, and monitoring and evaluating. As a large agency that is deeply involved in workforce planning, SSA has been asked by OPM to participate in preparing and testing a prototype of the model. The model will integrate workforce projections, demographic trends, educational data, and other factors necessary for effective workforce planning.

- Create new strategies for recruiting for SSA "staff" positions. These positions include program analysts, legislative analysts, regulations writers, attorneys, and budget analysts. The need for new recruiting strategies to appeal to individuals with these skills cannot be overemphasized.

One of SSA's significant workforce challenges involves our need to find creative ways to recruit and train new employees for staff positions in headquarters and in our regional offices. Because the vast majority of Agency jobs are committed to direct delivery of services, our recruitment and retention strategies to date focus on those positions. We are keenly aware, however, that a different strategy may be needed to most effectively resource the Agency's "staff" positions.

Historically, the Agency has relied upon its direct service employees as the primary resource pool for staff positions throughout the organization. With some exceptions, the Agency has operated on the premise that any educational discipline, coupled with sound grounding in the delivery of SSA programs and some specific training, can prepare any employee to function effectively across component lines. The business of staff components has, however, become increasingly complex, necessitating experience and formal training in disciplines unique to the functions that must be performed. The Agency is committed to expanding its planning to provide recruitment and retention strategies that will ensure the most effective and capable employees occupy all positions.

- Collaborate with State agencies.

As we proceed with workforce planning we will actively collaborate with all the State disability determination service (DDS) agencies. The DDS agencies are facing many of the same challenges as SSA, and sharing ideas may be mutually helpful in preparing for upcoming changes in our respective workforces.

In addition to the near-term activities described above, we will pursue comprehensive human resources planning to support the 2010 Vision. This longer-term planning will include actions to:

- Create profiles of the major positions needed to meet the requirements of the 2010 Vision and analyze their recruitment and retention potential.
- Establish specific action plans and timelines for these major positions, to transition from the mainstream positions we have today. Attrition projections, redeployment potential, skills assessment, job restructuring, and training will be included.
- Conduct supportive studies and develop action plans related to other innovations, which might include pay and benefits restructuring, associated legislative requirements, and transitioning to a human resource architecture based on "employability" with emphasis on growth in skills and a broad range of learning opportunities.
- Further develop and refine Agency culture and employee satisfaction studies and change management action plans flowing from that work.
- Strengthen labor-management partnership commitments.

GAO's Human Capital Guide

In September 1999, the GAO issued a guide on "Human Capital: A Self-Assessment Checklist for Agency Leaders." Two principles are central to the human capital idea: people are assets whose value can be enhanced through investment, and agencies should align their human capital policies to support the organization's shared vision, including its mission, core values, and goals. The GAO guide further validated these principles, which we have incorporated in our Strategic Plan, particularly in our goal to value and invest in our employees and our objective to promote mission-related organizational values and culture throughout the Agency.

GAO emphasized that Federal agencies need to give human capital a higher priority than ever before and to modernize their human capital policies and practices. At SSA, we are automating several human capital practices, such as time and attendance reporting and retirement annuity calculations, and are expanding the Employee Express tool for self-service changes such as addresses, health benefits, and taxes. We are also implementing an Integrated Human Resources System to modernize many aspects of our human capital management.

GAO's checklist is a very useful tool for agencies. Its five-part framework of strategic planning, organizational alignment, leadership, talent, and performance culture provides a

valuable guide for assessing areas that should be addressed. We will continue to use the guide at SSA as we address our near-term and future workforce planning challenges.

CONCLUSION

While many workforce challenges lie ahead for SSA, we believe the Agency is well positioned to meet those challenges. Our retirement wave study has identified where we expect our workforce losses to occur, and we have begun a number of initiatives to address those areas.

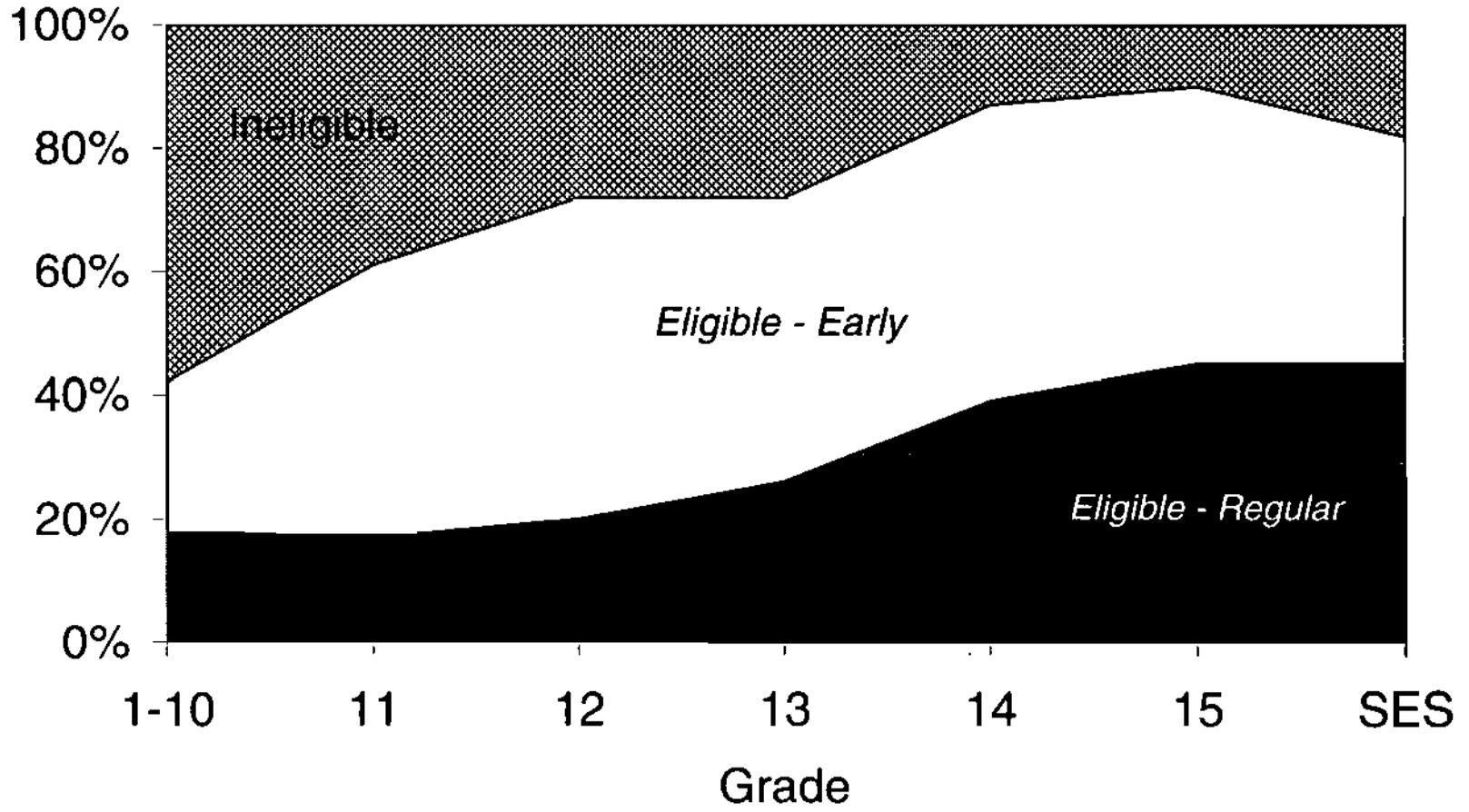
We have developed a strategy designed to mitigate the impact of the retirement wave and to hire new employees now, in preparation for the major workloads that face us as the baby boomers retire. We have established national, component, and regional development programs to assure that, as part of our succession planning program, the right people are gaining the experience they need to progress in their careers in order to fill leadership and other positions in the future. We have implemented recruitment plans to increase SSA's ability to hire qualified employees from all groups, including people with disabilities, so that SSA truly looks like the America we are serving now, and will serve in the future. Our training methods have been updated to use the latest technology, so we can train as many employees as possible, with the most up-to-date information, and in the most cost-efficient manner. In addition, we have developed a transition document that identifies a set of actions and analyses that will set the stage for the development of our more detailed human resources plan.

Looking to the future, we recognize the need for a more skilled, higher graded workforce at SSA. We realize that a profound degree of change will be needed in our human resources infrastructure simply to meet the challenges and growth facing the Agency in the next decade. Beyond those factors, more global economic, labor, technology and social trends suggest that aggressive retooling of workforce practices will be crucial to assuring the future success of organizations. Our developing 2010 Vision is the first critical step toward defining how we will deliver service and profiling the workforce we will need to deliver that service and then laying specific plans to create it.

Through redeveloping what is today arguably the best workforce in government, and adding to it fresh skills and a new generation of service-minded workers, we expect not only to meet the challenges we face, but to continue meeting the nation's expectations and building confidence in our service and our programs.

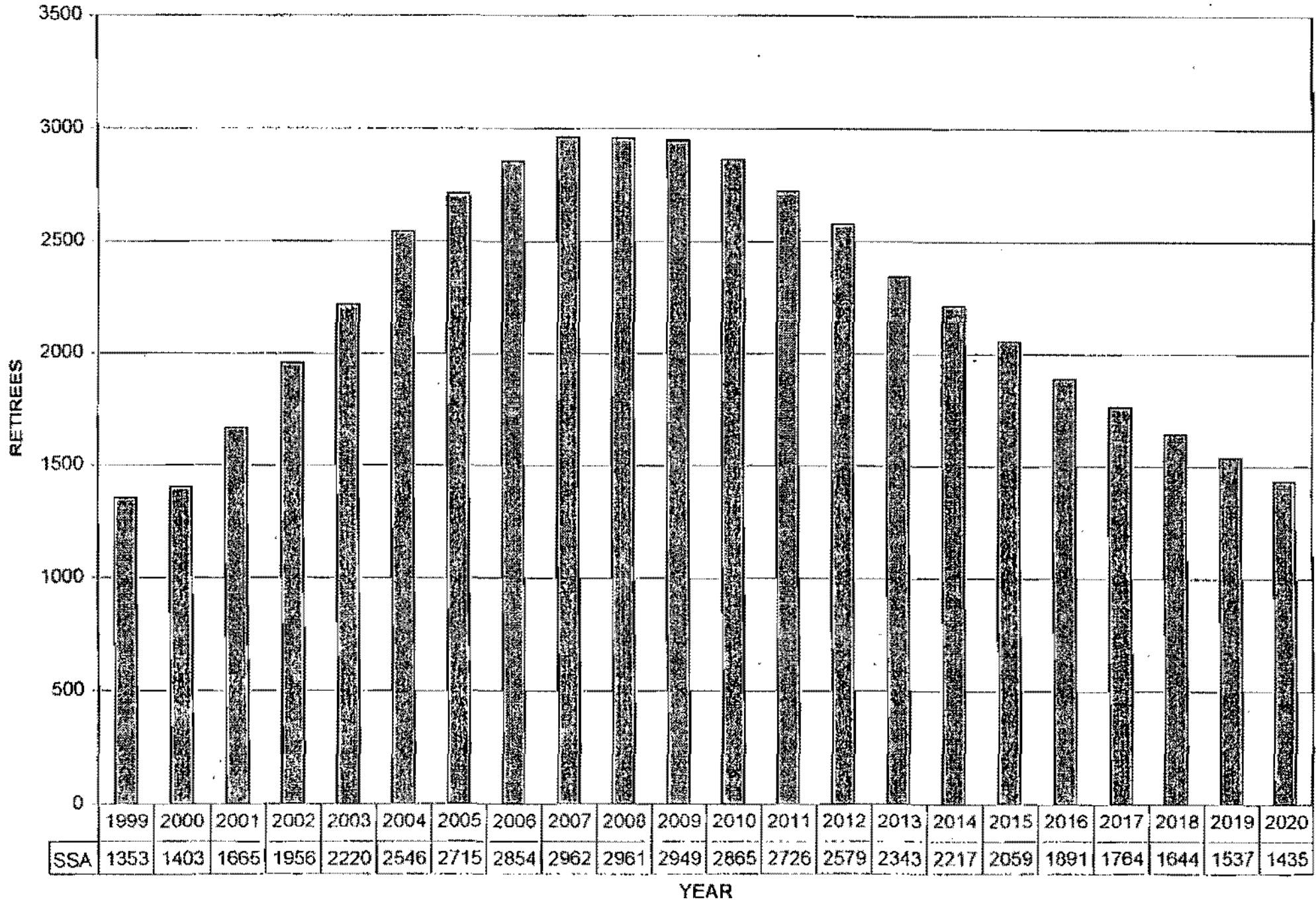
APPENDIX A

Retirement Eligibility at SSA 1997 - 2002



APPENDIX B

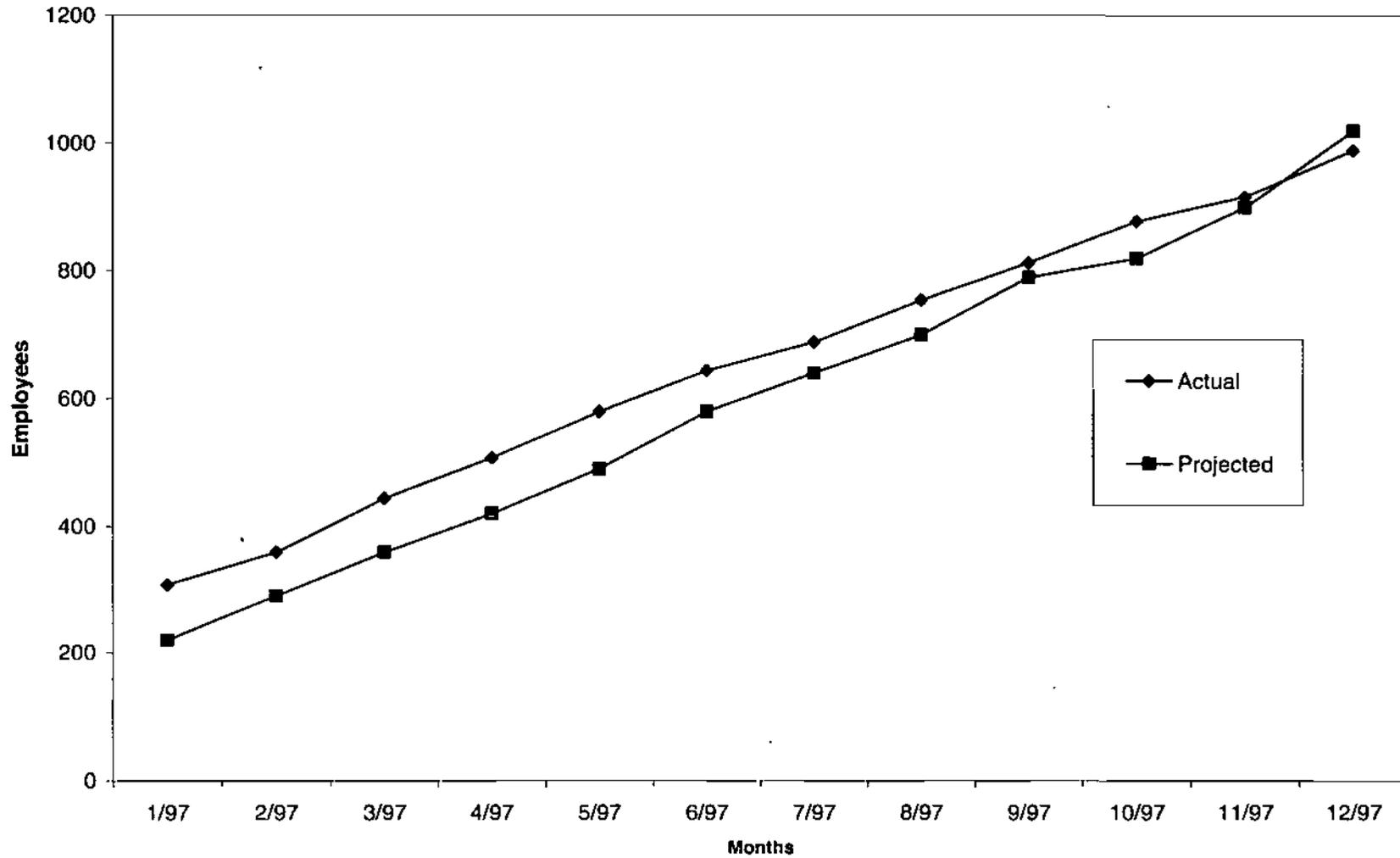
PREDICTED SSA RETIREES



B-2

APPENDIX C

SSA's 1997 Cumulative Retirement Experience



APPENDIX D

Predicted Succession Flow for Major SSA Positions

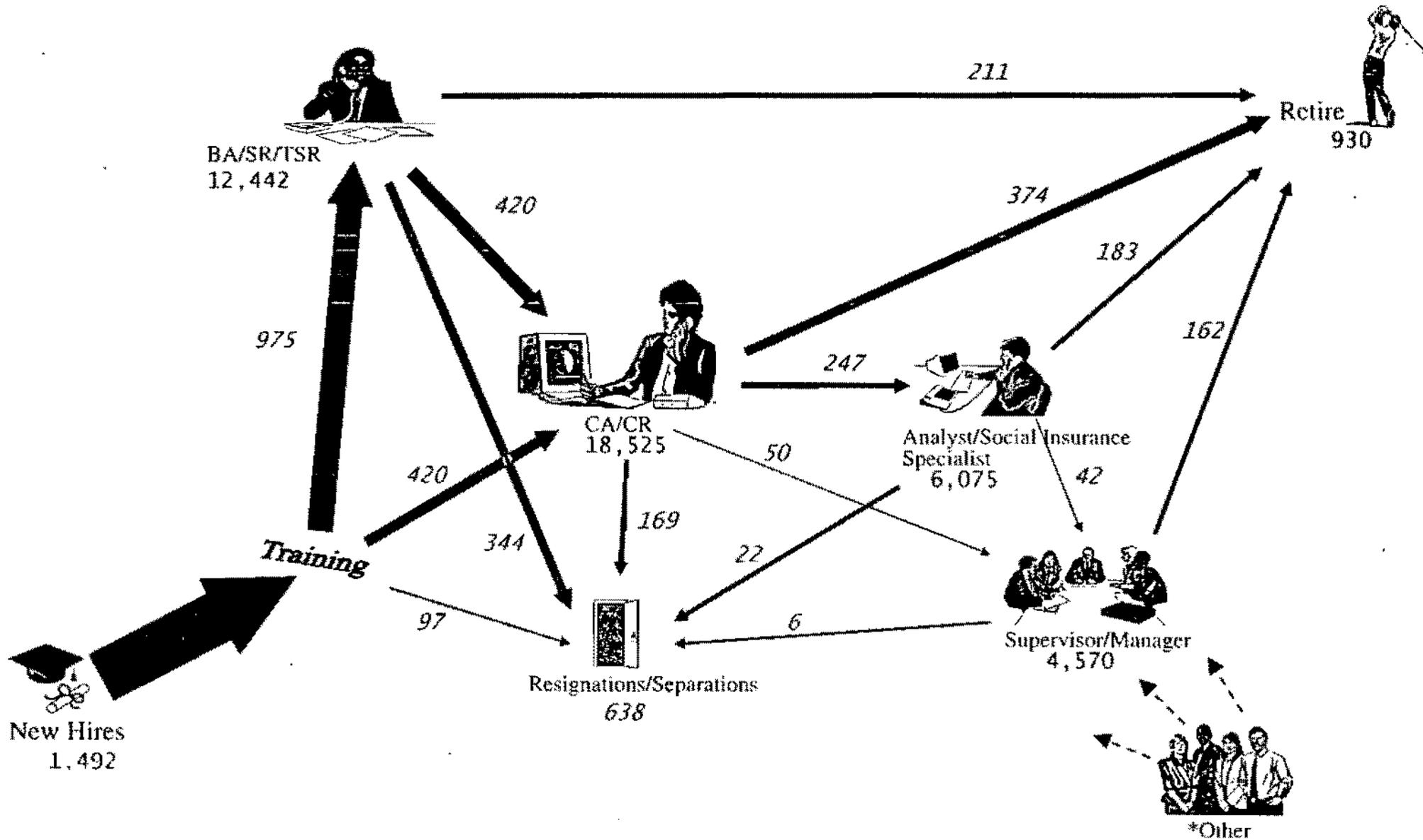
This flow chart shows the estimated number of employees who will move into or out of the most populous occupations related to SSA's programs, during 2000.

The abbreviations on the chart include the following:

- BA = Benefit Authorizer
- SR = Service Representative
- TSR = Teleservice Representative
- CA = Claims Authorizer
- CR = Claims Representative

The chart shows the number of employees in the various positions, the new hires into the positions, movement between the positions, and expected losses through retirements, resignations, and other types of separations.

Predicted Succession Flow for Major SSA Positions in Year 2000



* Employees from other SSA positions are also part of the flow into the major positions on this chart.

APPENDIX E

Acronym Guide for Appendices F and G

- **OT** Office of Training
- **SES** Senior Executive Service
- **OC** Office of the Commissioner
- **OGC** Office of the General Counsel
- **OIG** Office of the Inspector General
- **DCLCA** Deputy Commissioner for Legislation and Congressional Affairs
- **ODISP/** Office of Disability and Income Security Programs/**DCCOMM** Deputy Commissioner for Communications
- **DCFAM** Deputy Commissioner for Finance, Assessment and Management
- **DCFAM/** Deputy Commissioner for Finance, Assessment and Management/**OQAPA** Office of Quality Assurance and Performance
- **DCHR** Deputy Commissioner for Human Resources
- **DCP** Deputy Commissioner for Policy

- **DCS** Deputy Commissioner for Systems
- **DCO** Deputy Commissioner for Operations
- **DCO-Bos** Deputy Commissioner for Operations-Boston Region
- **DCO-NY** Deputy Commissioner for Operations-New York Region
- **DCO-PHI** Deputy Commissioner for Operations-Philadelphia Region
- **DCO-ATL** Deputy Commissioner for Operations-Atlanta Region
- **DCO-CHI** Deputy Commissioner for Operations-Chicago Region
- **DCO-DAL** Deputy Commissioner for Operations-Dallas Region
- **DCO-KC** Deputy Commissioner for Operations-Kansas City Region
- **DCO-DEN** Deputy Commissioner for Operations-Denver Region
- **DCO-SF** Deputy Commissioner for Operations-San Francisco Region
- **DCO-SEA** Deputy Commissioner for Operations-Seattle
- **DCO-OCO** Deputy Commissioner for Operations-Office of Central Operations

APPENDIX F

SSA-Wide, Deputy and Regional-Level Career Development Programs

COMPONENT	PROGRAM	LENGTH	GRADES ELIGIBLE	FREQUENCY ANNOUNCED (e.g., annually, as needed)	DATE LAST OFFERED/ NEXT OFFERING	BEGINNING/ENDING DATES	# SELECTED IN PAST 3 FYS (97, 98, 99)
SSA (OT Administered)	SES Candidate Development Program	2 yrs.	15	As Needed	9/21/97 - TBD	8/31/98 - 8/31/00	98=36
SSA (OT Administered)	Advanced Leadership Program	2 yrs.	13-14	As Needed	4/20/98 - TBD	12/07/99 - 12/07/01	99=35
SSA (OT Administered)	Leadership Development Program	2 yrs.	9-12	As Needed	12/28/98 - TBD	2/29/00 - 2/28/02	00=61
ODISP/ * DCCOMM	Headquarters Rotational Program	2 yrs.	5-14	PILOT /TBD	6/98 TBD	6/98 - 10/00	FY98=24
DCFAM	Experience Enrichment Program	1 yr.	5-13	As Needed	FY-95 - TBD	FY95	NA
DCFAM/ OQAPA	OQAPA Career Development Program	1 yr.	9-14	Annually	2/99 - 2/00	Oct. - Sept.	97=6, 98=9, 99=9
DCHR	OHR Rotational Program	2 yrs.	7-13	As Needed	12/18/98 - TBD	6/21/99 - 6/21/01	99=11
DCS	Graduate Level Training Program	1 yr.	12-14	As Needed	Sprg. 99 - 00	Sprg. 00 - 01	97=4, 98=3, 99=3
DCS	Systems Rotational Associate Program	1 yr.	3-12	As Needed	Sprg. 99 - 00	Sprg. 00 - 01	97=10, 98=0, 99=18

SSA-Wide, Deputy and Regional-Level Career Development Programs

COMPONENT	PROGRAM	LENGTH	GRADES ELIGIBLE	FREQUENCY ANNOUNCED (e.g., annually, as needed)	DATE LAST OFFERED	BEGINNING/ENDING DATES	# SELECTED IN LAST 3 FYS (97, 98, 99)
DCO	Operations Leadership Development Program	2 yr.	12-14	Every 2 years	12/99	6/00-6/02	0/0/23
DCO-BOS.	Short Term Development and Enrichment Program	NTE 120 days	11-13	Annually	10/99	1/00-NTE 5/00	0/0/9
DCO-BOS.	Development and Enrichment Program Management Intern	1 yr.	11-13	Annually	12/99	2/99-2/00	0/0/5
DCO-NY	Enhancement Program	2 yrs	11	Annually	3/99	3/99-3/01	23/25/7
DCO-NY	Enrichment 120	120 days	11-13	As Needed	12/99	TBD	24/9/0
DCO-NY	Enrichment 365	365 days	11-13	As Needed	2/99	TBD	0/12/14
DCO-NY	Project Managers	120 days	12	As Needed	12/99	TBD	10/16/7
DCO-PHI	PHI Regional Management Development Program	1 yr.	11-14	Annually	1/99	6/99-6/00	0/0/25
DCO-PHI	PHI Regional Employee Development Program	1 yr.	5-11 & WG Equivalent	As Needed (probably in 18 month intervals)	3/99	9/99-9/00	0/0/14
DCO-ATL.	Atlanta Management Development Program	1 yr.	11-13	Annually, as Needed	4/99	10/99-10/00	14/0/22
DCO-CHI >	Chicago Upward Bound Program	1 yr.	9-12	Annually	11/99	2/00-2/01	34/35/33

SSA-Wide, Deputy and Regional-Level Career Development Programs

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DCO-CHI >	Special Opportunities to Excel	1 yr.	2-8 & WG 2-6	Annually	New		0/0/0
DCO-DAL >	Dallas Career Development Program	2 yrs.	11-13	Every 2 years	2/99	6/99-6/01	26/0/21
DCO-KC >	KC Employee Development Program	1 yr.	9-14	Annually	5/99	10/99-10/00	11/9/11
DCO-DEN	Denver Region Management Development Program	2 yrs.	12-13	THD	1997		8/0/0
DCO-SF	SF Region Leadership Development Program	1 yr.	11-14	Annually	3/99	10/99-9/00	15/11/13
DCO-SEA >	Job Enrichment Program	120 days	1-14	Annually	10/98	Open	122/165/92
DCO-OCO	Internal Rotational Program	2 yrs.	3-12	As Needed	3/99	3/00-3/02	0/0/0

- * This is a combined rotational program for ODISP and DCCOMM employees.
- > Open to components outside DCO

APPENDIX G

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY—FUTURE WORKFORCE TRANSITION PLAN

(1-27-2000*)

In the Strategic Plan of the Social Security Administration, one of the goals is to value and invest in our employees and one of the objectives is “to create a workforce to serve SSA’s diverse customers in the 21st century.” To accomplish this, we have created and will implement this plan to transition from the workforce we have today to the workforce we will need in the future. The plan covers a five-year period (Fiscal Years 2000-2004), with updates to be done annually. The plan includes what we expect to happen in the future, what the effects will be on SSA’s workforce needs, and what actions will be taken.

Some of our key expectations for the future include:

- The number of SSA customers and claims will grow, since people are living longer and the “baby boom” generation will be reaching retirement age.
- There will be an increase in the number of non-English speaking customers. Hispanics and Asians are the fastest growing population groups in the U.S.
- SSA’s staffing will remain near its current level.
- Technology in America will continue to change and grow, and our customers will want to use it in dealing with SSA, in addition to traditional avenues.
- An increasing number of SSA employees will retire, and this “retirement wave” is already growing.
- The U. S. labor pool is changing, with a smaller percentage of young people and with “Generation X” having different desires regarding work.

Based on our future expectations, following are some of the key things SSA needs to do:

- We need more efficient ways to do our work. Many initiatives are underway, such as using technology to receive and process claims, prepare and distribute policy and guidance material, conduct hearings by video conferencing, train employees, etc.
- SSA will need a workforce that is skilled in the use of technology and flexible in adapting to changes. This will require training our current employees and filling vacancies with people who have the necessary competencies.
- We need to forecast the employees we will need, so we can do the advance work necessary to obtain them.
- In filling vacancies, we must recruit more effectively. We need to improve the hiring process, including use of the Internet and bilingual sources. We need to make hiring offers earlier in the school year, when students are looking for jobs. We must offer and market the features that will help us attract and retain employees. For hard-to-fill positions, we need to utilize tools that are currently available but are little used and to explore new ideas.
- SSA must provide an environment and culture that encourage and motivate employees to provide world-class customer service.
- The action items in the transition plan spell out in more detail how we intend to accomplish what is needed.

FUTURE WORKFORCE TRANSITION PLAN

(1-27-2000*)

Background

In the current Strategic Plan of the Social Security Administration (SSA), one of the Agency's five goals is "to be an employer that values and invests in each employee." To realize this goal, SSA has established an objective "to create a workforce to serve SSA's diverse customers in the 21st century."

To accomplish this, we have created and will implement this plan to transition from the workforce we have today to the workforce we will need in the future. The plan covers a five-year period (Fiscal Years 2000-2004), with updates to be done annually.

Our vision of the workforce we will need in the future is one in which employees are diverse, well-qualified, flexible, satisfied, and comfortable with technology. They have efficient work processes and the proper tools, training, environment, and leadership. They are committed to providing world-class service to our customers.

A. What's in the transition plan?

This plan includes what we expect to happen in the next 5 years, what the effects will be on SSA's workforce needs, and what actions will be taken.

B. What's coming in the future?

1. SSA's workload will grow. The number of SSA customers and claims will increase, as rising numbers of the "baby boom" generation reach retirement age or become disabled. People are also living longer, so they will receive benefits over a longer period of time and will have additional changes to be processed.

C-3 * Some portions of this plan may change as a result of satisfying our labor relations obligations.

FUTURE WORKFORCE TRANSITION PLAN

(1-27-2000*)

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2. The number of non-English-speaking customers will increase. Hispanics and Asians are the fastest growing groups in the U.S. Hispanics are projected to be 11.4% of the population in the year 2000 and 12.6% in 2005, according to the Bureau of the Census. Asians are projected to grow from 3.9% to 4.4%. Some population observers believe the increases will be even higher.
3. Staffing levels authorized for SSA are expected to remain near the FY 1999 level of about 64,000 employees (full-time equivalents).
4. Technology in America will continue to change and grow. Our customers will want to use technology in dealing with SSA (e.g., computer and telephone), in addition to traditional avenues such as the mail and personal contacts.
5. Within SSA, the use of technology will increase and change (e.g., taking claims over the telephone and by computer, paperless processing, video conferencing, e-mail, delivery of training to an employee's desktop, etc.).
6. More of SSA's retirement work will be automated, so the percentage of our human resources devoted to disability work will grow.
7. SSA's workforce is aging and an increasing number of employees will retire. This "retirement wave" is already growing and will peak in the year 2009. SSA will have a growing number of vacancies to fill. (See Appendices A and B).
8. The composition of the labor pool in the U.S. is changing. There will be a smaller percentage of young people. (People aged 20-29 were more than 29% of the civilian labor force in 1984. By 2004, they are projected to drop to less than 21%.) Minorities will be a larger portion of the labor pool.
9. There is a growing number of older workers who want to continue working, including retirees who want a second career.
10. The younger generation of workers, called "Generation X," is often characterized as having different expectations and desires regarding work. They move readily between employers and find security in their own skills rather than in one employer. They seek more control of their own destinies, a greater degree of choice, and more balance between their work and personal lives.
11. According to a recent American study, an increasing number of job applicants lack the skills required in the jobs they are seeking. A number do not have the basic math and reading skills needed to operate in an environment where computers are used.

C. How will these upcoming changes affect our current and future workforce needs?

1. Since the number of cases will grow but our staffing levels will not, we will need better ways to accomplish our work. Several initiatives are already underway. Use of the telephone and Internet to file claims will increase. An automated process is being established so that casework can be processed and transmitted electronically instead of the slower and more cumbersome handling of paperwork. Reference materials are being put on the computer so they can be consulted more easily by employees. They are also easier to update than printed materials and do not require cumbersome and labor-intensive distribution and filing. Methods of producing and interpreting SSA policies are also being modernized. Installation of the Agency's nationwide IWS/LAN system is being completed. Changes in the way SSA's work is done will require our workforce to learn new skills and to be flexible in adapting to the changes.
2. Increases and changes in automation will have several effects. Developing and installing new systems and processes will require staff resources that are in short supply in the labor market and for which SSA will have to compete with other employers. In addition, all SSA employees will need to be trained and motivated to use the automated tools. Current employees have received some technology training but much more will be needed in the future. Advances in technology will also enable work to be moved to where employees are located.
3. The growing number of non-English speaking customers will require us to hire more bilingual employees. SSA's policy is to provide services to our customers even if they cannot communicate with us in English. Our goal for field office staffing is to achieve proportional representation of bilingual employees for each group constituting 10% or more of an office's workload. In addition to hiring bilingual employees, we need to continue developing and providing technical training and interviewing guides for them.
4. As more of our employees leave in the retirement wave, we must determine how to meet the need for new workers. In filling vacancies, we need to consider recruitment from groups with particular skills and backgrounds. In addition to finding employees with computer skills and bilingual abilities, SSA needs to address its substantial under-representation of Hispanics, Asians, and people with disabilities. In addition, Native Americans are under-represented in some of our major occupations. A recent review by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management also identified a need for us to increase the hiring of veterans.

5. SSA must recruit and hire more effectively. In filling retirement wave vacancies, we will be hiring a substantial number of people, and we will be competing with other employers. One source of new employees--college students--look for jobs early in the year, while we often hire later. We need to make hiring commitments earlier, and we need to plan ahead so that we can use the best means available for filling jobs and developing new workers. Our recruitment methods and announcements need to be updated and to be more aggressive—to use more automation, highlight our attractive features, and obtain the competencies we need. Where we have difficulty in competing for candidates for hard-to-fill jobs, we need to use available tools such as recruitment bonuses or payment of moving expenses. We can also offer incentives to our current employees to help recruit. We need to recruit from a broad variety of sources, including entry-level and experienced workers. If there are not enough candidates in the labor pool with the basic skills we need, we will need to provide necessary education. We will continue to work with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to improve and simplify the currently complex hiring processes. When new employees enter on duty, we must provide timely orientation that clearly communicates our expectations.
6. We must develop and effectively utilize our current employees. In addition to training all SSA employees in technology skills, we need to make automated systems such as the Intranet easy to use. We must continue our leadership in government and expand the use of new training technologies to improve the delivery and accessibility of training to employees. The training must be designed to develop the necessary competencies to meet current and changing needs. The leadership development programs currently underway should be continued, so that excellent leaders are available to replace the large number who will be retiring in the next few years. Developmental opportunities should be expanded and should include assignments to other SSA components. We need to create an atmosphere in which everyone at SSA supports a “one agency” concept and we do not have isolated “stovepipe” components. Our current process for filling jobs internally needs to be easier to use and understand. Retention of employees is also important, especially as the American labor pool shrinks. In addition, we need to ensure that employees are performing well.
7. SSA must provide a work environment and an organizational culture that encourage and motivate employees and enable them to provide world-class customer service. We need to provide a variety of resources, such as child care, elder care, fitness, career counseling, etc. to assist employees and make us an attractive employer. We must continue to work closely with our employees and labor organizations and to keep them well informed and involved as changes occur. Periodically, we need to obtain feedback from employees on their level of satisfaction and identify areas for improvement. We also need to promote an organizational culture that embodies the values that are important to the Agency. At all levels within SSA, we need to demonstrate by our actions that we truly believe in valuing and investing in each of our employees.

D. What's the plan of action to meet our future workforce needs?

Following are the action items for meeting our workforce needs for the future. Included are milestones and dates for measuring our progress. The Lead column indicates the SSA component that will spearhead an activity, but other SSA components will also be involved.

What is needed	Action Item	Milestones	Lead	Target Completion Date
I. SSA needs to improve the process for projecting its workforce needs and for planning how to meet them far enough in advance to allow adequate time for recruiting and training	a. Establish process for projecting vacancies in major occupations for each of the next 5 years and determining actions necessary to fill them	1. Provide information to components on the historical and projected attrition in their major occupations (including retirement wave)	DCHR	Annually by October 31. In FY 2000, by June 2000.
		2. Estimate number of jobs to be filled in each major occupation, factoring in component's predictions of future	All components	Annually by November 15 (July 2000)
		3. Work with servicing personnel office to estimate number to be filled through various internal and external mechanisms, including permanent, temporary, term, etc.	All components	Annually by December 15 (August 2000)
		4. Provide ceiling allocations as early as possible from DCFAM to components (and from components to subcomponents)	DCFAM and all components	Annually within 30 days after appropriation enacted
		5. Allow components to fill some vacancies before experienced workers leave	DCFAM	Ongoing

What is needed	Action Item	Milestones	Lead	Target Completion Date
<p>II. SSA needs to recruit new employees who reflect the diversity of our customers, who have the necessary competencies, and who stay with us long enough to give us a return on our investment</p>	<p>a. Target recruitment efforts to a wide variety of sources, including bilingual and diverse/under-represented candidates (e.g., Hispanics, Asians, Native Americans, people with disabilities, veterans)</p>	<p>1. Establish and maintain relationships with sources of candidates from target groups (e.g., schools, organizations, agencies). Include use of Internet.</p>	<p>DCHR, DCO Regional Offices, and components involved in recruiting</p>	<p>April 30, 2000 and ongoing</p>
		<p>2. Have regions with large numbers in target groups assist in recruiting for all SSA components</p>	<p>DCO Regional Offices</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
		<p>3. Ask SSA advisory committees for advice on recruitment from under-represented groups</p>	<p>DCHR and DCO Regional Offices</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
		<p>4. Increase use of Project ABLE and Federal Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students with Disabilities</p>	<p>DCHR, DCO Regional Offices, and components involved in recruiting</p>	<p>May 31, 2000 and ongoing</p>
		<p>5. Use Student Career Experience Program to help develop future workers. Determine if we can use a service agreement with students.</p>	<p>DCHR, DCO Regional Offices, and components involved in recruiting</p>	<p>May 31, 2000 and ongoing</p>
		<p>6. Expand recruitment sources (e.g., junior colleges; experienced workers (federal and non-federal), including those who want to continue working after retirement; veterans; etc.)</p>	<p>DCHR, DCO Regional Offices, and components involved in recruiting</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

What is needed	Action Item	Milestones	Lead	Target Completion Date
		7. Provide periodic monitoring reports to SSA top managers on the composition of all hires	DCHR	Monthly
	b. Implement pilot for identifying and using competencies in hiring process	1. Develop competency model for pilot position	DCHR	September 30, 2000
		2. Develop competency-based tool for external hiring	DCHR	September 30, 2001
		3. Evaluate results and expand implementation as appropriate	DCHR	September 30, 2002
	c. Improve recruitment timing, practices, and materials	1. Recruit and make hiring commitments during winter and spring where possible and necessary	DCHR, DCO Regional Offices, and components involved in recruiting	March 1, 2000 and ongoing
		2. Improve clarity of our vacancy announcements and job information and make them easily accessible via Internet and other routes	DCHR and DCO Regional Offices	September 30, 2000
		3. Update recruitment materials and displays to highlight the attractive features of SSA. Make materials available in formats accessible to people with disabilities.	DCHR and DCO Regional Offices	April 30, 2000 and ongoing
		4. Issue model or guidance for recruiters. Include modern	DCHR	September 30, 2000

What is needed	Action Item	Milestones	Lead	Target Completion Date
		<p>recruiting practices (e.g., have employees from target groups on recruitment teams, emphasize what is attractive to the audience from which we are recruiting; send follow up e-mail to desirable candidates, etc.)</p> <p>5. Work with educational institutions to tailor their curriculum to include the skills and knowledge we need.</p> <p>6. Implement features of Integrated Human Resources System that store data on job applicants</p> <p>1. For major occupations, track people we hire through various mechanisms and see how well they perform, how long they stay, and why they leave, so we can focus recruitment efforts</p> <p>1. Work with OPM to simplify its electronic process for applicants to obtain rating needed for federal jobs</p>	<p>DCHR, DCO Regional Offices, and components involved in recruiting</p> <p>DCHR</p> <p>DCHR</p> <p>DCHR</p>	<p>May 31, 2000 and ongoing</p> <p>September 30, 2000</p> <p>September 30, 2002</p> <p>September 30, 2000</p>
	<p>d. Conduct longitudinal studies to determine which hiring mechanisms provide the best candidates for our major occupations</p> <p>e. Work with OPM to improve and simplify hiring processes</p>			

What is needed	Action Item	Milestones	Lead	Target Completion Date
	f. Use tools for filling hard-to-fill jobs (e.g., recruitment bonuses, payment of travel and transportation to first duty station, salary advance, awards for employee referrals, etc.)	2. Request OPM to allow case examining rather than written test for filling SR, TSR, and clerical positions	DCHR	May 31, 2000
3. Provide input to OPM on its activities to improve hiring mechanisms		DCHR	June 30, 2000	
1. Provide a central reference point for managers showing a comprehensive list of the various tools that can be used for hard-to-fill jobs.		DCHR	July 31, 2000	
2. Establish procedures for providing a salary advance where necessary for hard-to-fill jobs		DCHR	September 30, 2000	
3. Develop criteria for incentive awards to current employees who refer candidates hired for hard-to-fill jobs.		DCHR	December 31, 2000	

What is needed	Action Item	Milestones	Lead	Target Completion Date
<p>III. SSA needs to fully develop and utilize its employees and provide them with the necessary tools and training</p>	<p>a. Provide appropriate training to employees for current jobs, changes occurring in SSA jobs, and other jobs within the agency</p>	<p>1. Provide training to SSA employees on automation skills</p>	<p>DCHR</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
		<p>2. Use a variety of media (e.g., Interactive Video Teletraining, Intranet, multi-media, classroom) to provide training</p>	<p>DCHR</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
		<p>3. Provide training in formats accessible to employees with disabilities</p>	<p>DCHR</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
		<p>4. For nonsupervisory employees, develop a curriculum of the core competencies that employees need to have. Emphasize employees' role in their own development and need for flexibility in adapting to change. - Assess employees' training needs - Provide necessary training</p>	<p>DCHR</p>	<p>September 30, 2000 and ongoing</p>
		<p>5. Provide training needed on leadership competencies identified for SSA supervisors, managers, and executives. Include focus on long-term needs of the agency, such as developing employees, handling poor performers, dealing with cultural differences and disabilities, etc.</p>	<p>DCHR</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

What is needed	Action Item	Milestones	Lead	Target Completion Date
	<p>b. Provide new employees with effective orientation</p> <p>c. Provide developmental opportunities to meet needs of employees and agency</p> <p>d. Improve process for filling jobs internally</p>	<p>6. Retrain employees as required by shifts in workload or new directions for the agency</p> <p>1. Issue reminder on providing orientation as soon as employees enter on duty</p> <p>2. Update orientation material as necessary, including CD-ROM on SSA's mission and structure</p> <p>1. Continue leadership development programs and provide increased developmental opportunities for all employees. Include rotational assignments to other components</p> <p>2. Use a variety of media to provide periodic information to employees about opportunities for career broadening and advancement</p> <p>3. Encourage mentoring and coaching. Tailor to the needs and interests of the employees involved.</p> <p>1. Expand use of Intranet for merit promotion information and make it easier to use and understand</p>	<p>DCHR and components involved in changes</p> <p>DCHR</p> <p>DCHR</p> <p>DCHR and all components</p> <p>DCHR and DCCOMM</p> <p>DCHR</p> <p>DCHR</p>	<p>As needed</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>As needed</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>June 30, 2000 and annually</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>May 31, 2000 and ongoing</p>

What is needed	Action Item	Milestones	Lead	Target Completion Date
	<p>e. Take measures to retain employees, especially those with hard-to-replace skills</p>	<p>2. Determine where merit promotion process can be streamlined</p> <p>3. Automate appropriate portions of process</p> <p>1. Use tools such as retention allowances and relocation bonuses</p> <p>2. Keep employees informed about the family-friendly services we offer in areas such as child care, elder care, flexible work schedules, etc.</p> <p>3. Express to OPM our support of the recommendation by the National Academy of Public Administration for a legislative change to allow retirees to work not-to-exceed 700 hours a year without a reduction in salary or annuity</p>	<p>DCHR</p> <p>DCHR</p> <p>DCHR and all components</p> <p>DCHR and DCCOMM</p> <p>DCHR</p>	<p>May 31, 2000 and ongoing</p> <p>September 30, 2001</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>April 30, 2000</p>
	<p>f. Improve administration of the performance management and reward processes. Handle poor</p>	<p>1. Work with unions and managers on improving the processes for performance management and awards so employees clearly understand what is expected and are recognized for good</p>	<p>DCHR</p>	<p>September 30, 2000 and ongoing</p>

What is needed	Action Item	Milestones	Lead	Target Completion Date
	<p>performers more effectively.</p> <p>g. Make Intranet tools easier for employees to use</p>	<p>performance. Encourage supervisors to provide frequent feedback to employees regarding their performance.</p> <p>2. Review OPM's CD-ROM on Dealing with Poor Performers and distribute to supervisors if appropriate</p> <p>3. Complete study on disciplinary and adverse actions and implement necessary changes</p> <p>4. Promote the early use of an interdisciplinary approach to address problems with performance or conduct</p> <p>1. Create an index or reference tool to help employees find popular SSA sites (e.g., training, forms, employee services, etc.)</p>	<p>DCHR</p> <p>DCHR</p> <p>DCHR</p> <p>DCCOMM and DCS</p>	<p>September 30, 2000</p> <p>December 31, 2000 and ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>August 31, 2000</p>
<p>IV. SSA needs to provide a work environment and an organizational culture that support employees and enable them to provide world-class customer service</p>	<p>a. Provide family-friendly features to employees</p>	<p>1. Open or expand child care centers where appropriate</p> <p>2. Provide input to OPM on getting its handbooks of child and elder care resources on the Internet to ensure they are easy for employees to use. Advertise their availability to SSA employees.</p>	<p>DCHR, DCFAM, and DCO Regional Offices</p> <p>DCHR</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>April 30, 2000</p>

What is needed	Action Item	Milestones	Lead	Target Completion Date
		3. Support OPM's efforts to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Submit legislation to authorize on-site elder care centers - Advance legislation for long-term care insurance 	DCHR and OLCA	April 30, 2000
		4. Provide elder care material to employees, including expansion of information available through Intranet	DCHR and DCO Regional Offices	Intranet expansion by May 31, 2000. Other ongoing
		5. Expand the availability of fitness centers for employees	DCHR, DCFAM, and DCO Regional Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing - June 30, 2000 for HWSSC (Chicago) - June 30, 2000 for Metro West (Baltimore)
		6. Provide career/life resource material and counseling to employees, including increased availability through the Intranet	DCHR and DCO Regional Offices	Intranet expansion by April 28, 2000. Other ongoing
		7. Use IVT and other media to disseminate pre-retirement information to meet demand from growing number of employees eligible for retirement	DCHR	Ongoing
		8. Evaluate expanding telecommuting	DCHR	September 30, 2000

What is needed	Action Item	Milestones	Lead	Target Completion Date
		9. Periodically remind employees and managers of the services available	DCHR and DCCOMM	Ongoing
	b. Provide a physical environment that promotes the health and well-being of employees	1. Conduct assessments of SSA facilities to determine status of environmental health, security, etc. and make necessary improvements	DCFAM	Ongoing
	c. Promote a desirable organizational culture	1. Evaluate results of employee survey, reach agreement on desired organizational values and culture, and initiate necessary action to produce them	DCHR, OCSI, and Executive Staff	March 31, 2000 and ongoing
		2. Educate new and current employees on desired organizational values and culture	DCHR, OCSI, and all components	Ongoing
	d. Work toward the "one agency" concept in SSA and not organizational stovepipes	1. Provide opportunities for employees to move between SSA components	All components	Ongoing
		2. Promote a cooperative relationship among SSA components	All components	Ongoing

What is needed	Action Item	Milestones	Lead	Target Completion Date
	<p>e. Communicate effectively with employees</p> <p>f. Obtain input from employees to determine level of satisfaction and to identify areas for improvement</p>	<p>1. Communicate with employees and keep them informed through the Commissioner's Broadcasts, News Bytes, OASIS, etc.</p> <p>1. Conduct survey of employees for Market Measurement Program</p> <p>2. Provide feedback to employees on results and actions to be taken.</p>	<p>DCCOMM and all components</p> <p>DCHR</p> <p>OCSI, DCHR and DCCOMM</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>June 30, 2000 and ongoing</p> <p>December 31, 2000 and ongoing</p>
<p>V. SSA needs to explore additional avenues for meeting its future workforce needs.</p>	<p>a. Seek innovative practices that can be used to meet the Agency's needs.</p>	<p>1. Benchmark with public and private sector organizations to gather ideas, innovations, and best practices in human resources management and workforce planning.</p> <p>2. Participate in OPM's interagency discussions on exploring new ideas and flexibilities in Total Compensation</p>	<p>DCHR</p> <p>DCHR</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

Social Security Administration
Office of Workforce Analysis
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