

CHAPTER SIX

RECRUITMENT AND DIVERSITY

The objective of diversity is to achieve over time a workforce whose composition approximates that of the society at large. For the effort to be sustainable, the principle of diversity has to have worth and meaning to the organization.

It is tempting to bend to pressure from your top management and EEO staff and select the only woman or ethnic minority on a selection list, even though there are better-qualified candidates, so that your agency can show better numbers on diversity. Resist the temptation. The pressure point for diversity is recruitment, not assessment and selection. You recruit for diversity and select for competency.²

To increase the diversity of your workforce, first you must work to increase the diversity of the pipelines leading to your key jobs. This takes time and conscious effort. Changing the demographics of an organization also means changing its habitual approaches to staffing and its tolerance for difference.

The staffing options highlighted in this chapter were selected based on several criteria:

- They throw a wide net that encompasses all populations, including persons with disabilities, possibly the largest

² Since 1988, Federal agencies are no longer required to set affirmative action hiring goals. Although they still keep statistics of job categories in which different groups are underrepresented, they are not required to translate these into numerical hiring goals except in rare situations of “manifest imbalance.” However, even where hiring goals have been established, EEOC says that they do not mandate selection or preferential treatment. It is still illegal to discriminate against somebody based on one of the prohibited factors, no matter what the reason.

untapped talent pool in the country;

- They cut through the red tape of Federal hiring by providing applicants direct routes into jobs;
- They enable you to hire for talent and potential, not current competence, giving you your best chance to change the composition of the pipeline into full-performance positions; and
- They have fail-safe qualities because you have the opportunity to observe performance in the job before making a final commitment.

We have selected four programs for this discussion:

- (1) Outstanding Scholar Authority
- (2) Bilingual/Bicultural Program
- (3) Presidential Intern Program
- (4) Student Educational Employment Program

Outstanding Scholar Authority

Legal Basis

Both the Outstanding Scholar and Bilingual/Bicultural program were established by a consent decree approved by the United States District Court for the District of Columbia on November 19, 1981. Although the programs are aimed at addressing underrepresentation of African Americans and Hispanics, they have never been restricted to those groups. To achieve its intent, the *Luevano* consent decree relies on agencies to focus their recruiting on sources that would increase the pool of African American and Hispanic candidates for employment.

Advantages

The program gives managers direct access to applicants with high academic achievement. This is a noncompetitive appointment to the competitive service. Formal ranking of candidates is not required. Neither the rule of three nor veterans' preference applies

in making your selections. Displaced employees must be given preference, but otherwise your freedom to select is unrestricted.

General Requirements

Eligible applicants are college graduates from accredited schools who obtained a grade point average of 3.5 or higher on a 4.0 scale for all undergraduate courses completed toward a baccalaureate degree. The authority can also be used to appoint those who stand in the upper 10 percent of a baccalaureate graduating class, or major university subdivision such as a College of Arts and Sciences. In addition to their academic achievements, applicants must also meet both OPM's and the agency's qualifications for the position to which appointed.

Restrictions

- (1) Outstanding scholar appointments may be used to hire only into certain career fields. *A list of occupations covered is provided at the end of this chapter.*
- (2) Appointments may be made at the GS-5 and 7 levels only. The authority cannot be used to enter the designated career fields at a higher grade.
- (3) The authority can be used only as a *supplement* to competitive examining.
- (4) Before making appointments under the program, an agency must advertise positions, including posting them through OPM's job information system.

Bilingual/Bicultural Program

General Requirements

Agencies may appoint applicants who obtain a passing score in an examination, without further regard to rank, provided that:

- (1) The job is one in which interaction with the public or job performance would be enhanced by having bilingual and/or bicultural skills and is at grade GS-5 or GS-7 in a covered occupation (*see listing of occupations at the end of this*

chapter); and

- (2) The agency has determined through use of a reasonable questionnaire or interview that the applicant to whom the appointment is to be offered has the required level of oral Spanish language proficiency and/or the requisite knowledge of Hispanic culture. Agencies must maintain documentation that these requirements have been met.

Advantages

As in the case of the Outstanding Scholar program, this is a noncompetitive appointment to the competitive service. The program provides a direct route into the occupations covered by the *Luevano* decree.

Restrictions

Appointments are subject to the same restrictions described above for the Outstanding Scholar program. However, applicants for the Bilingual/Bicultural program, in addition to being eligible and qualified, must also receive a passing score through an appropriate examining procedure.

Presidential Management Intern Program (PMI)

Legal Basis

The PMI program was established by Executive Order 12364 in 1977. It is designed to attract to the Federal service outstanding graduate students (master's and doctoral level) from a wide variety of academic disciplines who have an interest in careers in the analysis and management of public policies and programs.

Advantages

PMIs have graduate level academic credentials. They become candidates on the recommendation of their college or university, after formal assessment, and based on their interest in public policy. They can make contributions to your programs and workload from the outset since the lowest level for these appointments is grade GS-9, with promotion potential to grade