



# RAND RESEARCH ON **MILITARY RECRUITING**



RAND PROJECT AIR FORCE

Recruiting for the U.S. Air Force (USAF) and other military services has never been easy, but today, it is increasingly complex. The Department of the Air Force (DAF) is seeking more diversity and more technical knowledge in its recruits at the same time the pool of eligible candidates who have a desire to serve is shrinking. As the USAF works to recruit the right candidates, RAND Corporation research offers a host of lessons learned. This document highlights relevant research from RAND Project AIR FORCE (PAF), as well as research conducted for other service branches and the Office of the Secretary of Defense that may be applicable to DAF recruiting efforts.

### RESEARCH TOPICS

RAND research on recruiting addresses a variety of topics relevant to the DAF, including

- evaluations of DAF Total Force recruiting
- effects of economic conditions, military compensation, and eligibility policies on the candidate pool
- use of data analytics to improve the effectiveness of recruiting
- recruiting resource management
- special considerations for recruiting officers, special warfare candidates, and diverse populations.

### RESEARCH METHODS

RAND staff include more than 600 doctoral-level researchers with diverse areas of expertise. RAND Project AIR FORCE (PAF) draws from this broad research staff to address some of the most-challenging research questions and pressing issues affecting the DAF.

PAF also maintains a core set of researchers who have in-depth knowledge of the DAF, experience conducting research on harmful interpersonal behaviors, and methodological expertise involving different approaches, including

- program evaluation
- statistical modeling
- survey design, administration, and analysis
- interviews and focus groups
- analysis of archival records
- literature reviews.

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## AIR FORCE SPECIAL WARFARE RECRUITING

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**Assessment and Selection for U.S. Air Force Special Warfare: Vol. 1, Defining Attributes and Designing Rater Training**

2022, RR-A549-1, [www.rand.org/t/RR-A549-1](http://www.rand.org/t/RR-A549-1)

**Training Success for U.S. Air Force Special Operations and Combat Support Specialties: An Analysis of Recruiting, Screening, and Development Processes**

2018, RR-2002-AF, [www.rand.org/t/RR-2002](http://www.rand.org/t/RR-2002)

## AIR FORCE TOTAL FORCE RECRUITING

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**A Snapshot of the Department of the Air Force Total Force Recruiting Integration: Survey Results and Implications**

2022, RR-A548-1, [www.rand.org/t/RR-A548-1](http://www.rand.org/t/RR-A548-1)



## COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

### DAF-SPONSORED RESEARCH

#### Cost-Benefit Analysis of Special and Incentive Pays for Career Enlisted Aviators

2021, RR-A189-1, [www.rand.org/t/RR189-1](http://www.rand.org/t/RR189-1)

#### Department of the Air Force Civilian Compensation and Benefits: How Five Mission Critical and Hard-to-Fill Occupations Compare to the Private Sector and Key Federal Agencies

2021, RR-A334-1, [www.rand.org/t/RR334-1](http://www.rand.org/t/RR334-1)

### OTHER SPONSORED RESEARCH

#### OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

#### (OSD) An Updated Look at Military and Civilian Pay Levels and Recruit Quality

2020, RR-3254-OSD, [www.rand.org/t/RR3254](http://www.rand.org/t/RR3254)

#### U.S. ARMY Setting Military Compensation to Support Recruitment, Retention, and Performance

2019, RR-3197-A, [www.rand.org/t/RR3197](http://www.rand.org/t/RR3197)

#### OSD Are Current Military Education Benefits Efficient and Effective for the Services?

2017, RR-1766-OSD, [www.rand.org/t/RR1766](http://www.rand.org/t/RR1766)

#### OSD The Enlistment Bonus Experiment

1986, R-3353-FMP, [www.rand.org/t/R3353](http://www.rand.org/t/R3353)

#### OSD Enlistment Effects of Military Educational Benefits

1982, N-1783-MRAL, [www.rand.org/t/N1783](http://www.rand.org/t/N1783)

## DATA ANALYTICS

### OTHER SPONSORED RESEARCH

#### OSD Leveraging Big Data Analytics to Improve Military Recruiting

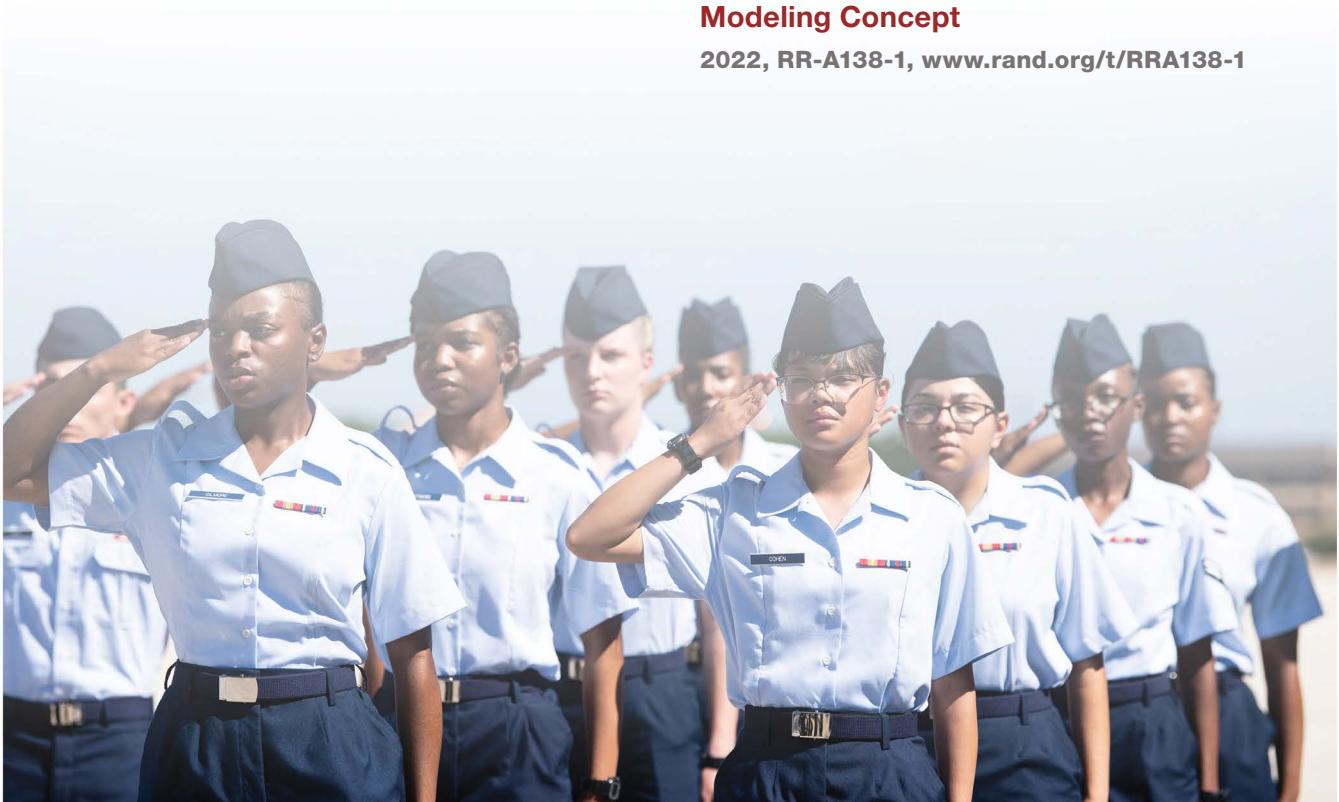
2019, RR-2621-OSD, [www.rand.org/t/RR2621](http://www.rand.org/t/RR2621)

#### U.S. ARMY Searching for Information Online: Using Big Data to Identify the Concerns of Potential Army Recruits

2016, RR-1197-A, [www.rand.org/t/RR1197](http://www.rand.org/t/RR1197)

#### U.S. ARMY Forecasting End Strength in the U.S. Army Reserve: An Integrated Modeling Concept

2022, RR-A138-1, [www.rand.org/t/RR138-1](http://www.rand.org/t/RR138-1)



## EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF RECRUITERS

### DAF-SPONSORED RESEARCH

#### Improving the Goal-Setting Process for U.S. Department of the Air Force Recruiters

2021, PE-A548-1, [www.rand.org/t/PEA548-1](http://www.rand.org/t/PEA548-1)

### OTHER SPONSORED RESEARCH

#### U.S. ARMY Performance Evaluation and Army Recruiting

2008, MG-562-A, [www.rand.org/t/MG562](http://www.rand.org/t/MG562)

#### U.S. ARMY Social Media and the Army: Implications for Outreach and Recruiting

2019, RR-2686-A, [www.rand.org/t/RR2686](http://www.rand.org/t/RR2686)

#### U.S. ARMY End-of-Pilot Assessment of the U.S. Army's Consolidated Recruiting Program

2022, RR-A955-1, [www.rand.org/t/RRA955-1](http://www.rand.org/t/RRA955-1)

#### U.S. ARMY Human Resource Management and Army Recruiting: Analyses of Policy Options

2006, MG-433-A, [www.rand.org/t/MG433](http://www.rand.org/t/MG433)

## EFFECTS OF ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

### OTHER SPONSORED RESEARCH

#### U.S. ARMY Developing a National Recruiting Difficulty Index

2019, RR-2637-A, [www.rand.org/t/RR2637](http://www.rand.org/t/RR2637)

#### OSD What Happened to Military Recruiting and Retention of Enlisted Personnel in 2020 During the COVID-19 Pandemic?

2022, RR-A1092-1, [www.rand.org/t/RRA1092-1](http://www.rand.org/t/RRA1092-1)

## ELIGIBILITY POLICIES

### DAF-SPONSORED RESEARCH

#### Evaluation of the Strength Aptitude Test and Other Fitness Tests to Qualify Air Force Recruits for Physically Demanding Specialties

2018, RR-1789-AF, [www.rand.org/t/RR1789](http://www.rand.org/t/RR1789)

#### Tailoring Medical Standards for Air Force Personnel

2021, RR-A571-1, [www.rand.org/t/RRA571-1](http://www.rand.org/t/RRA571-1)

### OTHER SPONSORED RESEARCH

#### U.S. ARMY An Empirical Assessment of the U.S. Army's Enlistment Waiver Policies: An Examination in Light of Emerging Societal Trends in Behavioral Health and the Legalization of Marijuana

2021, RR-4431-A, [www.rand.org/t/RR4431](http://www.rand.org/t/RR4431)

#### OSD Improving U.S. Military Accession Medical Screening Systems

2019, RR-2780-OSD, [www.rand.org/t/RR2780](http://www.rand.org/t/RR2780)

#### U.S. ARMY Prospective Outcome Assessment for Alternative Recruit Selection Policies

2018, RR-2267-A, [www.rand.org/t/RR2267](http://www.rand.org/t/RR2267)

#### U.S. ARMY Recruiting Strategies to Support the Army's All-Volunteer Force

2016, RR-1211-A, [www.rand.org/t/RR1211](http://www.rand.org/t/RR1211)

#### U.S. ARMY The Effect of the Assessment of Recruit Motivation and Strength (ARMS) Program on Army Accessions and Attrition

2011, TR-975-A, [www.rand.org/t/TR975](http://www.rand.org/t/TR975)

## MARKET EXPANSION

### DAF-SPONSORED RESEARCH

**Building the Best Offensive and Defensive Cyber Workforce: Volume I, Improving U.S. Air Force Training and Development**

2021, RR-A1056-1, [www.rand.org/t/RR1056-1](http://www.rand.org/t/RR1056-1)

**Building the Best Offensive and Defensive Cyber Workforce: Volume II, Attracting and Retaining Enlisted and Civilian Personnel**

2021, RR-A1056-2, [www.rand.org/t/RR1056-2](http://www.rand.org/t/RR1056-2)

**Attracting, Recruiting, and Retaining Successful Cyberspace Operations Officers: Cyber Workforce Interview Findings**

2019, RR-2618-AF, [www.rand.org/t/RR2618](http://www.rand.org/t/RR2618)

### OTHER SPONSORED RESEARCH

**U.S. ARMY** Identifying Opportunities to Recruit More Individuals Above the Age of 21 into the U.S. Army

2022, RR-A824-1, [www.rand.org/t/RR1824-1](http://www.rand.org/t/RR1824-1)

**U.S. ARMY** Life as a Private: A Study of the Motivations and Experiences of Junior Enlisted Personnel in the U.S. Army

2018, RR-2252-A, [www.rand.org/t/RR2252](http://www.rand.org/t/RR2252)

## OFFICER RECRUITING

### OTHER SPONSORED RESEARCH

**U.S. ARMY** Strategic Planning Tools for the Army Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps Program

2017, RR-1501-A, [www.rand.org/t/RR1501](http://www.rand.org/t/RR1501)

## RECRUITING A DIVERSE POPULATION

### DAF-SPONSORED RESEARCH

**Understanding Demographic Differences in Undergraduate Pilot Training Attrition**

2018, RR-1936-AF, [www.rand.org/t/RR1936](http://www.rand.org/t/RR1936)

**Diversity Outreach and Recruiting Event Site Selection (DORESS)**

2014, TL-130-AF, [www.rand.org/t/TL130](http://www.rand.org/t/TL130)

**Perspectives on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Department of the Air Force**

2021, PE-A909-1, [www.rand.org/t/PEA909-1](http://www.rand.org/t/PEA909-1)

**Establishing Feeder-Designation Relationships with Colleges and Universities to Increase Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Air Force Officer Accessions**

2021, PE-A909-3, [www.rand.org/t/PEA909-3](http://www.rand.org/t/PEA909-3)

### OTHER SPONSORED RESEARCH

**OSD** Recruiting Policies and Practices for Women in the Military: Views from the Field

2017, RR-1538-OSD, [www.rand.org/t/RR1538](http://www.rand.org/t/RR1538)

**RAND EUROPE** Leveraging Diversity for Military Effectiveness: Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging in the UK and US Armed Forces

2022, RR-A1026-1, [www.rand.org/t/RR1026-1](http://www.rand.org/t/RR1026-1)

**RAND HOMELAND SECURITY OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS CENTER (HSOAC)** Improving the Representation of Women and Racial/Ethnic Minorities Among U.S. Coast Guard Active-Duty Members

2021, RR-A362-2, [www.rand.org/t/RR1362-2](http://www.rand.org/t/RR1362-2)



## RECRUITING RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

### DAF-SPONSORED RESEARCH

**Improving Strategic Resource Management in the Air Force Recruiting Enterprise: Challenges and Next Steps for Policymakers**

2020, PE-A304-1, [www.rand.org/t/PEA304-1](http://www.rand.org/t/PEA304-1)

### OTHER SPONSORED RESEARCH

**U.S. ARMY Resources Required to Meet the U.S. Army's Enlisted Recruiting Requirements Under Alternative Recruiting Goals, Conditions, and Eligibility Policies**

2018, RR-2364-A, [www.rand.org/t/RR2364](http://www.rand.org/t/RR2364)

**U.S. ARMY Resources Required to Meet the U.S. Army Reserve's Enlisted Recruiting Requirements Under Alternative Recruiting Goals, Conditions, and Eligibility Policies**

2022, RR-A1304-1, [www.rand.org/t/RRA1304-1](http://www.rand.org/t/RRA1304-1)

**OSD Is Military Advertising Effective? An Estimation Methodology and Applications to Recruiting in the 1980s and 90s**

2003, MR-1591-OSD, [www.rand.org/t/MR1591](http://www.rand.org/t/MR1591)

## OVERVIEW OF ARMY RECRUITING RESEARCH

### OTHER SPONSORED RESEARCH

**U.S. ARMY Navigating Current and Emerging Army Recruiting Challenges: What Can Research Tell Us?**

2019, RR-3107-A, [www.rand.org/t/RR3107](http://www.rand.org/t/RR3107)

## WORKING WITH US

### WHAT WE DELIVER

PAF's studies and analyses are tailored to the needs of the sponsor. Generally, PAF provides

- continuous interaction with PAF subject-matter experts throughout the project
- accessible, timely, and policy-focused reports that address senior leader concerns and recommend courses of action
- descriptive, transparent, and rigorous supporting materials that describe the project's methodology and support the project's conclusions
- as appropriate, additional outreach materials to help socialize the work to other interested stakeholders, such as the DAF, DoD, Congress, or the public.

### SPONSOR IDENTIFICATION

All PAF research projects must be sponsored by a USAF general officer (GO) or member of the senior executive service (SES). Most sponsors assign one or more action officers (AOs) to manage the technical and administrative aspects of their PAF projects.

### LINES OF FUNDING

DAF organizations can initiate a PAF research project in two ways:

1. **Centrally Funded** (also referred to as “core projects”). Air Force Studies, Analyses, and Assessments (SAF/SA; formerly HAF/A9) employs a rigorous, iterative GO/SES voting process to select projects for inclusion in its annual research plan. This process accounts for about 70 percent of the projects that PAF will conduct during a fiscal year. Funding

for these projects is part of a line item in the congressional budget and is awarded through the competitive selection process. Project topics are submitted in January and the research plan is approved by a steering group consisting of three- and four-star GOs between June and July. Maintaining a balance of projects across the DAF and the four PAF programs is key to this selection process.

2. **Sponsor Funded** (also referred to as “add-on projects” because they are add-ons to the core research agenda). This process accounts for about 30 percent of the projects that PAF will conduct during a fiscal year. Funding for these projects comes directly from the organization requesting the research and does not require a competitive selection process because the requesting organization is paying for the research (and not competing with others). DAF sponsors may initiate a PAF add-on research project at any time of the year by requesting the work, submitting required documentation, and transmitting organizational funds. Ideas and requests for PAF add-on projects may originate from a variety of circumstances (e.g., continuation of prior PAF work or new challenges). To initiate the process, a sponsor or AO typically contacts the appropriate PAF program director or subject-matter expert. The timeline of add-on projects is flexible.

PAF also supports DAF organizations in many informal ways. To request Workforce, Development and Health (WDH) research reports highlighted here or to discuss pressing DAF challenges, contact the director of PAF's WDH program at [www.rand.org/paf/about/pafmanagement](http://www.rand.org/paf/about/pafmanagement).

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[www.rand.org/t/CPA2660-3](http://www.rand.org/t/CPA2660-3)

