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MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION CHALLENGES WITHIN DHS

by

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December 2023

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RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION CHALLENGES WITHIN DHS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents findings from a comparative analysis focused on guiding the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) through its recruitment and retention challenges. The study underscores the importance of progressive human capital management, cautioning against the misinterpretation of endorsing untested methods. Instead, lessons from the Army's Special Forces warrant officer cadre highlight the positive impact of involving personnel in decision-making to alleviate bottlenecks in professional advancement. The research emphasizes data-driven governance and differentiates between tailoring policies and a suggested, evidence-based approach, with reference to the U.S. Air Force Intelligence Community's practices. It suggests that strategic financial incentives, as seen in Florida's Critical Teacher Shortage Program, might mitigate DHS's attrition rates. A multi-dimensional strategy, inspired by entities like the Air Force and Los Angeles Police Department, is recommended to address DHS's layered challenges. The success of such strategies hinges on robust governance and broad stakeholder support. The analysis offers a roadmap for DHS, emphasizing evidence-based reforms to enhance operational efficiency and resilience.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION	1
A.	PROBLEM STATEMENT	1
B.	RESEARCH QUESTION	6
C.	LITERATURE REVIEW	6
1.	Human Capital and Attrition.....	6
2.	Resources and Technology	8
3.	Burnout and Attitude	10
D.	RESEARCH DESIGN	11
II.	RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION CHALLENGES	13
A.	HUMAN CAPITAL	13
B.	ATTRITION	16
C.	RESOURCES.....	18
D.	BURNOUT	22
E.	ATTITUDE.....	25
F.	CONCLUSION	28
III.	CASE STUDIES OF SUCCESS	29
A.	AIR FORCE BURNOUT CASE STUDY	29
B.	ARMY CASE STUDY	35
C.	FLORIDA TEACHERS CASE STUDY.....	38
D.	LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT CASE STUDY	42
E.	CONCLUSION	44
IV.	CONCLUSION.....	47
A.	COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS	47
1.	Human Capital and Strategic Planning	48
2.	Data-Driven Decision-Making	48
3.	Financial Incentives	49
4.	Holistic and Multi-pronged Approaches	49
5.	Governance and Community Support.....	50
B.	FINDINGS	50
C.	RECOMMENDATIONS.....	51
1.	Innovate in Human Capital Management	52
2.	Adopt Data-Driven Decision-Making	53
3.	Revise Financial Incentives	54

4.	Implement Multi-Pronged Strategies	55
5.	Engage Governance and Community Support	56
6.	Long-Term Strategic Planning	57
D.	FUTURE RESEARCH	58
LIST OF REFERENCES.....		61
INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST.....		73

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	Air Force ISR Personnel Authorized and Assigned.....	30
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LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.	2020 Impact Table from Retention Early Warning System	34
Table 2.	2014 180A Assigned/Authorized	37

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFGE	American Federation of Government Employees
CBP	Customs and Border Protection
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CISA	Cyber Infrastructure and Security Agency
CREW	Civilian Reservist Emergency Workforce
DCGS	Distributed Common Ground System
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DOD	Department of Defense
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FCTSP	Florida's Critical Teacher Shortage Program
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FEVS	Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey
FY	Fiscal Year
GAO	Government Accountability Office
ICE	Immigration and Customs Enforcement
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
LAPD	Los Angeles Police Department
LAPPL	Los Angeles Police Protective League
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
PED	Processing, Exploitation, and Dissemination
SERB	Selective Early Retirement Bonus
SF	Special Forces
TSA	Transportation Safety Administration
TSO	Transportation Security Officers

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) faces significant challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified personnel, a problem shared by various sectors including the military, education, and policing.¹ This study aims to examine the issues through a multi-case study analysis, drawing lessons from a diverse range of organizations facing similar workforce challenges. It contributes both to the academic dialogue on recruitment and retention causes, and offers actionable solutions for policymakers dealing with the complex issue of recruitment and retention within DHS.

At DHS, five critical elements—human capital, attrition, resources, burnout, and attitude—have been identified through various sources to include academic and Government Accountability Office reports, as significant influences on recruitment and retention difficulties.² Systemic issues within DHS manifest as low morale, high attrition rates, and dissatisfaction among lower-tier employees.³ However, a comparative of the United States Air Force Intelligence community, the Army’s Special Forces warrant officer cadre, Florida’s Critical Teacher Shortage Program, and the LAPD shows that while each organization faces unique challenges with respect to recruitment and retention, common strategic levers are effective for mitigation. These range from the use of actionable data analytics and financial incentives to multi-dimensional, adaptive strategies that have the potential to contribute to long-term staff retention and operational effectiveness.

The study delineates six sophisticated recommendations, each designed not merely as reactive measures but as forward-thinking strategies to robustly enhance DHS’s recruitment and retention landscapes. These recommendations encompass:

¹ Jason Miller, “DHS Optimistic about Future Thanks to Innovative Recruiting, Engagement Efforts,” Federal News Network, March 28, 2023, <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/federal-insights/2023/03/dhs-optimistic-about-future-thanks-to-innovative-recruiting-engagement-efforts/>.

² Department of Homeland Security, *Department of Homeland Security Annual Employee Survey: 2022 Summary of Results* (Washington, DC: Department of Homeland Security, 2022), 8.

³ U. S. Government Accountability Office, “DHS Employee Morale: Some Improvements Made, but Additional Actions Needed to Strengthen Employee Engagement | U.S. GAO,” accessed October 1, 2023, <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-21-204>.

1. Nuanced refinement in human capital management, recognizing the intrinsic value of every recruit.
2. The integration of a data-informed, decision-making framework, ensuring policies resonate with potential and existing personnel alike.
3. A strategic recalibration of financial incentives, making the DHS an attractive and competitive employer.
4. The initiation of comprehensive, multi-dimensional strategies, addressing the multifaceted nature of modern recruitment and retention challenges.
5. An unwavering emphasis on fortified governance, complemented by dynamic community engagement, fostering a supportive ecosystem.
6. A resolute commitment to long-term strategic envisioning, signaling the department's dedication to its personnel's growth and stability.

By adopting and meticulously implementing these strategies, DHS can proactively address existing recruitment and retention deficits, reinforcing its stature as an employer of choice and ensuring sustained operational excellence in its crucial national security mission.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Department of Homeland Security is grappling with pressing challenges in the recruitment and retention of qualified personnel, affecting its ability to effectively fulfill its critical national security mission. These challenges are multi-faceted, with key contributing factors such as human capital limitations, high attrition rates, resource constraints, employee burnout, and negative organizational attitudes causing a cascade of issues. From dissatisfaction among lower-tier employees seeking professional growth opportunities to high turnover rates and low morale often attributed to poor leadership, these challenges underscore a systemic problem ingrained within DHS's current human capital management strategies. Despite the complexity of the issue, the necessity for immediate and decisive action is evident, not only to bolster the agency's workforce, but also to ensure the organization's future success and resilience.

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT

On June 17, 2019, a United States Coast Guardsman jumped on top of a semi-submersible vessel carrying 17,000 pounds of cocaine.¹ That was a lifetime ago, and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) had thousands of personnel executing similar missions daily. In July 2022, expressing every department and agency's fear worldwide, the Coast Guard Commandant came before the House Homeland Security Transportation and Maritime Security Panel to highlight the recruiting and retention problems growing because of a lack of tools to mitigate them.² Like the U.S. Coast Guard, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is struggling with workforce concerns due to the increase in natural disasters over the past five years and the level of burnout among

¹ Leah Asmelash and Brian Ries, "Watch the U.S. Coast Guard Board a Narco-Sub Carrying 17,000 Pounds of Cocaine," CNN, July 12, 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/2019/07/11/us/cocaine-coast-guard-trnd/index.html>.

² John Grady, "Coast Guard Commandant Needs the 'Right Tools' to Improve Recruitment, Retention," USNI News, July 14, 2022, <https://news.usni.org/2022/07/14/coast-guard-commandant-needs-the-right-tools-to-improve-recruitment-retention>.

current employees.³ These are two examples of the more significant problem DHS faces in recruitment and retention. Identifying the concerns and evaluating successful case studies may provide an opportunity to take different approaches in recruiting and retaining DHS employees.

The Coast Guard Commandant may speak only for the Coast Guard, but his statement highlights a dissatisfaction within DHS that impairs daily operations and its ability to accomplish the mission. DHS Enterprise is reeling from a retention and recruitment gap, not just on the law enforcement side. Indeed, according to the Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, DHS attrition rates are 7 percent higher than other cabinet-level departments, with an average of 13 percent.⁴ Several factors might account for these numbers. First, law enforcement mandates law enforcement officers retire at 57. Second, higher-paying job opportunities in other government branches and the private sector may offer higher pay with less management oversight.⁵ The third factor is the inability to fill positions created by retirements and resignations because of a lack of viable applicants with the correct skill set to do the job.⁶ With the opportunity to telework or work remotely, DHS has difficulty balancing how to manage and hire personnel who prefer new working methods.

Ineffective leadership, policies (including training, procedural issues, and processing), morale, and limited resources are some of the root causes of recruitment and retention issues within DHS, as highlighted in the 2019 GAO survey and a 2019 DHS

³ Eric Katz, “FEMA Experiences ‘Mass Exit’ of Employees amid Surge in Disasters,” *Government Executive*, January 20, 2022, <https://www.govexec.com/workforce/2022/01/fema-experiences-mass-exit-employees-amid-surge-disasters/360974/>.

⁴ Robert Goldenkoff, *Homeland Security: DHS’s Actions to Recruit and Retain Staff and Comply with the Vacancies Reform Act*, GAO-07-758 (Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office, 2007), 1, <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-07-758>.

⁵ “CyberSecurity Operation Engineer,” Field Engineer Skills, accessed January 8, 2023, <https://www.fieldengineer.com/skills/cybersecurity-operation-engineer>.

⁶ Wayne A. Dumais, “The DHS Acquisition Workforce: The Threat’s Not Leaving, Why Are You?” (master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2018), 3, <https://hdl.handle.net/10945/60396>.

Office of Inspector General audit.⁷ The study's concerns were low employee engagement, low employee morale, and dissatisfaction with how supervisors and managers work with employees.⁸ A 2022 bipartisan bill, as mentioned on the Government Executive website, mandates DHS to boost recruitment, aiming to address prolonged understaffing issues in agencies such as Customs and Border Protection (CBP).⁹ This agency's shortfall is a small sample of what may be a bigger problem.¹⁰ By addressing the concerns through the bill, Congress would encourage DHS to take action using innovative techniques to engage their employees and end the cycle of understaffing.

The latest DHS surveys of CBP employees identify some issues, such as government shutdowns, pay freezes, ineffective policy changes, rights violations of employees, and lack of funding, reiterating the theme of weak leadership from the prior survey.¹¹ The issues pinpointed by the study account for employees' negative views of DHS and their profession. Similarly, an Office of Inspector General (OIG) audit of the Transportation Security Agency (TSA) triggered by TSA's high turnover rate revealed several concerns with policy and procedures related to lack of career growth, pay issues, and training.¹² Specifically, the report concluded that "morale, staffing, and scheduling, management, employee, attrition, and TSA pay scale worsened recruitment and retention

⁷ Chris Currie, *DHS Employee Morale: Some Improvements Made, but Additional Actions Needed to Strengthen Employee Engagement*, GAO-21-204 (Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office, 2021), 9, 14, <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-21-204>.

⁸ Nicole Ogrysko, "DHS Workforce Is More Diverse than Most, but Struggles to Prime Employees for Leadership Roles," Federal News Network, March 2, 2020, <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/workforce/2020/03/dhs-workforce-is-more-diverse-than-most-but-struggles-to-prime-employees-for-leadership-roles/>.

⁹ Eric Katz, "The Homeland Security Department Would See a Staffing Surge under a New Bipartisan Bill," *Government Executive*, March 18, 2022, <https://www.govexec.com/workforce/2022/03/dhs-would-see-staffing-surge-under-new-bipartisan-bill/363353/>.

¹⁰ Currie, *DHS Employee Morale*.

¹¹ DHS sends an annual survey to employees to ascertain the issues the employees perceive as a problem. These surveys are often foundational in changing the department. H.R., *CBP Workforce Challenges: Exploring Solutions to Address Recruitment and Retention; Hearing before the Committee on Homeland Security*, House of Representatives, 116th Cong., 1 (2019), 15–18.

¹² Department of Homeland Security Inspector General, *TSA Needs to Improve Efforts to Retain, Hire, and Train Its Transportation Security Officers*, OIG-19-35 (Washington, DC: Department of Homeland Security, 2019), 11, <https://www.oig.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/2019-04/OIG-19-35-Mar19.pdf>.

issues.”¹³ Additionally, continuing resolutions and operating without approved budgets for growth require DHS employees to continue doing more for less and less. This situation causes low employee ratings and problems in attracting and retaining talent, because employees either have no interest in joining or leave for better opportunities.¹⁴ A 2019 article in the *Wall Street Journal* provided statistics through interviews of government employees, showing an increase of 59 percent of government workers looking for other jobs and opportunities because of government shutdowns.¹⁵ In sum, years of attempting to identify the critical issues through employee surveys continue to be the most common approach to identify trends explaining why recruitment and retention problems persist. The surveys have guided DHS to try different strategies to address recruitment and retention. However, they still fail to explain why the problem continues.

Some DHS components have attempted to improve recruitment and retention policies. For instance, the policies created to aid the Human Capital Division provide guidelines and flexibility for the recruiting and hiring authority; for example: developing workforce plans and strategies, creating staffing positions to support them, and developing and posting new job announcements. Processing suitability requirements should ensure the department hires the best candidates, while offering development plans for employee growth and happiness.¹⁶ The effects of these changes are still under research, but initial claims through recent surveys appear to show positive changes.¹⁷ Similarly, based on the

¹³ Department of Homeland Security Inspector General, 6–8.

¹⁴ Congress must create annual agreements to fund government positions within DHS.

¹⁵ Sharon Nunn, “During Shutdown, Federal Employees Considered Leaving Government Work,” *Wall Street Journal*, February 1, 2019, sec. Economy. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/during-shutdown-federal-employees-considered-leaving-government-work-11549038667>.

¹⁶ The Department of Homeland Security relies on the Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) and various other components within the Human Capital division to identify Agency needs and create ways to attract, recruit, assess, and select the right employees with the skillsets needed to ensure mission success. Whether the policies act as guidelines during the final hiring of personnel or offer strict guidance on who must be selected for specific positions remains unclear. Therefore, it does not address why recruitment and retention remain a major issue for DHS. Department of Homeland Security, *Privacy Impact Assessment for the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer Talent Acquisition*, DHS/ALL/PIA-043(a) (Washington, DC: Department of Homeland Security, 2020), 1, <https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/privacy-pia-dhs-all043-talentacquisition-september2020.pdf>.

¹⁷ Department of Homeland Security, *Department of Homeland Security Annual Employee Survey*, 1.

recommendations of the 2019 TSA audit, the TSA has increased its pay scale in 2022 for its employees and included additional management training requirements across the agency to improve retention and recruitment.¹⁸ In 2018, DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs referred to a bill, “The CBP Hiring and Retention Act or CBP HiRe Act, to provide CBP with sufficient hiring and pay flexibilities to help recruit and retain employees in rural and remote areas.”¹⁹ Thus, several agencies within DHS have endeavored to correct its recruitment and retention approach. These changes will take time to reveal any positive changes, but appear to be taking a step in the right direction.

Despite efforts to rectify policy and compensation challenges within DHS divisions, the desired improvements in recruitment and retention remain elusive. For instance, the CBP HiRe Act struggles with both attracting and keeping employees, largely due to the department’s inadequate measures to tackle personnel concerns.²⁰ A recent article from the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) indicated that in five agencies under DHS, including TSA, low salary is still a significant source of employee dissatisfaction and causes some of DHS’s struggles with recruitment and retention.²¹ In addition, not all DHS agencies have employed such strategies, which perpetuates the recruitment and retention shortfalls in these agencies.

In this context, this thesis aspires to explore additional policies, measures, and comparative case studies from other groups that DHS might use to reduce recruitment and retention shortfalls. This thesis intends to only use a few components within DHS and Department of Defense (DOD) to show the effect of human capital, attrition, resources, technology, burnout, and attitude on recruitment and retention. Through these topics and

¹⁸ Department of Homeland Security Inspector General, *TSA Needs to Improve Efforts*, 11–12.

¹⁹ U.S. Customs and Border Protection Hiring and Retention Act of 2017, S.1305, 115th Cong. (2017), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/1305>

²⁰ Kevin Couch, “Hiring, Retention, Ethical Issues Persist at DHS, Says Report,” *FEDweek*, December 4, 2019, <https://www.fedweek.com/issue-briefs/hiring-retention-ethical-issues-persist-at-dhs-says-report/>.

²¹ “A Peek into 5 DHS Agencies Explains Why DHS Constantly Ranks Last in Employee Surveys,” *AFGE Stories*, January 27, 2020, <https://www.afge.org/article/a-peek-into-5-dhs-agencies-explains-why-dhs-constantly-ranks-last-in-employee-surveys/>.

case studies, this thesis will discuss how DHS component agencies have identified successful steps in addressing the concerns and any lessons learned that other agencies could adopt.

B. RESEARCH QUESTION

What additional policies and measures can DHS undertake to combat the recruitment and retention challenges across the organization?

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many scholars have differing explanations for the retention and recruitment challenges within the DHS. The debate on the root causes of these challenges is particularly interesting to DHS stakeholders, because they consistently fail to fill critical positions. Several stakeholders attribute the recruitment and retention failures to human capital concerns, whereas others argue that the lack of resources and technology play a more significant role. Several studies in other federal departments with similar retention and recruitment concerns offer another view, noting that the level of candidates applying for employment in departments like the DOD has led to low recruitment and retention rates. In contrast, other scholars note that family structure and the changes over time contribute to fewer candidates applying and qualifying for government service.²² This literature review addresses the primary schools of thought: recruitment and retention challenges through human capital concerns and attrition, a lack of resources and technology, and burnout and attitudes across the government.

1. Human Capital and Attrition

Experts in human capital debate the retention and recruitment challenges within DHS. According to Mikaela Ellenwood of FEMA, human capital and attrition concerns

²² Jack Kelly, "A Worker Shortage and Companies Refusing to Offer Job Candidates Remote and Flexible Options Lead to Stressed Recruiters and Hiring Gridlock," *Forbes*, October 13, 2021, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jackkelly/2021/10/13/a-worker-shortage-and-companies-refusing-to-offer-job-candidates-remote-and-flexible-options-lead-to-stressed-recruiters-and-hiring-gridlock/>.

dominate as the agency attempts to stem its losses and backfill critical positions.²³ Chris Currie emphasizes that studies have shown that hiring continues to increase for FEMA, but retention still suffers because of several human capital factors, most notably the low staffing and high natural disaster requirement and attrition.²⁴ Eric Katz agrees that during a press event, the FEMA administrator highlighted the increase in natural disasters and the toll it takes on employees who must respond to such events.²⁵ FEMA has increased staffing by 30 percent over the past five years, yet increased severity and frequency of natural disasters render FEMA employees unable to manage the workload, leading to high attrition to other agencies and an inability to recruit and fill positions.²⁶ FEMA represents one agency where government hiring struggles continue because of human capital concerns.

One school of thought promotes using incentives to lessen the outflow of employees. Many authors contend that providing such incentives as pay increases, bonuses, and time off to decrease attrition and increase the tolerance for human capital concerns would mitigate the issues without a qualifying metric.²⁷ Likewise, Li Feng and Tim Sass assert that offering bonuses or student loan forgiveness could increase recruitment and retention.²⁸ Linda Darling-Hammond suggests higher compensation for hard-to-fill critical positions bolsters recruitment and retention.²⁹ Jackie Wiles of Gartner Human Resources group maintains that money would not fix all the problems in recruiting and retaining top

²³ Mikaela Ellenwood, “Addressing FEMA’s Recruitment Challenges: Lessons from Teach for America” (master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2021), 34, <https://hdl.handle.net/10945/67706>.

²⁴ Tom Temin, “FEMA Suffering Staffing Shortages as Natural Disasters Intensify,” Federal News Network, January 26, 2022, <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/agency-oversight/2022/01/fema-suffering-staffing-shortages-as-natural-disasters-intensify/>.

²⁵ Katz, “FEMA Experiences ‘Mass Exit.’”

²⁶ Katz.

²⁷ Tamara Scott, “6 Ways to Reduce Employee Attrition That Have Nothing to Do with Beer,” *TechnologyAdvice Human Resources* (blog), March 10, 2021, <https://qe.technologyadvice.com/blog/human-resources/reduce-employee-attrition/>.

²⁸ Li Feng and Tim R. Sass, *The Impact of Incentives to Recruit and Retain Teachers in “Hard-to-Staff” Subjects* (Atlanta, GA: Georgia State University, 2018), 6, https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/uwrg_workingpapers/277.

²⁹ Linda Darling-Hammond, “Recruiting and Retaining Teachers: What Matters Most and What Can Government Do?” (working paper, Stanford University, January 2007), 3, <https://www.help.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Darling-Hammond.pdf>.

talent; instead, creating more options, such as opportunities for self-actualization, would improve retention.³⁰ For example, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) posits that employees intending to leave federal service should only qualify for incentives if they have shown exemplary performance and will agree to an extension of service with their current agency, saving cost and protecting agency equities.³¹ This finding clashes with the previous authors' positions on applying incentives as a retention and recruitment tool without specific requirements of performance and argues that it qualifies who is eligible while providing limits to the incentives. With the differing approaches and research on methodologies to mitigate the recruitment and retention challenges, the incentive structure needs more quantitative data that might verify an increase in members who join or stay.

2. Resources and Technology

A body of literature discusses the role of resources and technology in recruitment and retention. According to a 2014 survey conducted by Deloitte, employment agencies struggle to employ Millennials because of a lack of innovation and Millennials' tendency to criticize the government's approach to hiring practices.³² Sociologist Jan Yager supported this claim by discussing how technology opens up professional growth and introduces candidates to the company's mission.³³ Additionally, David Karandish suggests the entrance of Generation Z into the workforce will force businesses to improve resources and technology to recruit and retain these new employees; outdated technology can

³⁰ Jackie Wiles, "4 Ways to Attract and Retain Talent That Aren't Just about Comp," Gartner, January 17, 2022, <https://www.gartner.com/en/articles/4-ways-to-attract-and-retain-talent-that-aren-t-just-about-comp>.

³¹ "Retention Incentives Likely to Leave the Federal Service," Recruitment, Relocation & Retention Incentives, accessed February 8, 2023, <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/recruitment-relocation-retention-incentives/fact-sheets/retention-incentives-likely-to-leave-the-federal-service/>.

³² Deloitte, *Big Demands and High Expectations: The Deloitte Millennial Survey* (London: Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited, 2014), 2, <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/global/Documents/About-Deloitte/gx-dtl-2014-millennial-survey-report.pdf>.

³³ Jan Yager, "10 Ways Technology Can Improve Employee Retention," SHRM, November 15, 2022, <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/technology/pages/10-ways-technology-can-improve-employee-retention.aspx>.

determine whether the Generation Z employee accepts employment with the company.³⁴ The Chartered Institute for Information Technology Research Department argues that technology offers flexibility in work, increasing recruitment and retention through telework, remote meetings, and instant data sharing through company secure portals.³⁵ New generations of employees may demand change in the work setting before accepting positions the company requires.

Several Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and companies like Deloitte emphasize resources and technology's impact on recruitment, but businesses diverge as to their importance. For example, journalist David Roe reports that Bill Donaghue, CEO of Skillsoft, points out that the requirement for vertical skills such as analytics differs from the technology requirements for recruiting itself, offering a contradictory view.³⁶ Jacob Morgan concurs and claims employees have different purposes for joining or remaining within a company, and the latter depends on whether the company invests in the employee's interests and growth.³⁷ According to Sven Blumberg, Ranja Reda Kouba, Suman Thareja, and Anna Wiesinger, establishing capable personnel or departments to manage employees' on-boarding, development, promotion, and eventual retirement may increase recruitment and retention.³⁸ Technology and resources play an integral part in recruitment and retention, and further research may conclude that newer generations may

³⁴ David Karandish, "Technology Is Critical to Recruit and Retain a Workforce That Is Only Getting Younger," *Forbes*, April 9, 2019, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbestechcouncil/2019/04/09/technology-is-critical-to-recruit-and-retain-a-workforce-that-is-only-getting-younger/>.

³⁵ "The Impact of Technology on the World of Work: 5 Key Takeaways from Business Leaders, Employees, and HR Specialists," BCS, April 19, 2022, <https://www.bcs.org/articles-opinion-and-research/the-impact-of-technology-on-the-world-of-work-5-key-takeaways-from-business-leaders-employees-and-hr-specialists/>.

³⁶ David Roe, "7 Ways Technology Is Impacting Recruitment, Retention and the Workplace," CMSWire, March 27, 2018, <https://www.cmswire.com/digital-workplace/7-ways-technology-is-impacting-recruitment-retention-and-the-workplace/>.

³⁷ "How Does Technology Influence Employee Retention?," *Weoll Blog* (blog), November 1, 2022, <https://weoll.com/how-does-technology-influence-employee-retention-and-experience/>.

³⁸ Sven Blumberg et al., "Tech Talent Tectonics: Ten New Realities for Finding, Keeping, and Developing Talent," *McKinsey Digital*, April 14, 2022, <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/mckinsey-digital/our-insights/tech-talent-tectonics-ten-new-realities-for-finding-keeping-and-developing-talent>.

force organizations to adapt to new resources and technology while balancing employee needs to improve recruitment and retention.

3. Burnout and Attitude

Research by scholars and government think tanks identifies divergent explanations for recruitment and retention challenges in the government, yet agrees that some are similar. For example, John Langley of the Pardee RAND Graduate School highlights burnout and how increased feelings of exhaustion and cynicism demonstrate it, as do reduced feelings of professional efficacy, leading to higher attrition rates in the government.³⁹ Jeremy M. Wilson, Erin Dalton, Charles Scheer, and Clifford A. Grammich support the burnout theory with a study from Memphis, TN, concluding that traditional management styles created “frustration and dissatisfaction among veteran officers leading to resignations “from the culmination of “occupational burnout.”⁴⁰ Carrie M. Farmer, Katie Whipkey, and Margaret Chamberlin argue that DHS employees work long hours, rotating shifts, and support missions with poor rest periods and performance, ultimately leading to burnout and voluntary termination. Amanda Schiavo of Employee Benefit News surmises employers must address burnout during recruitment to acknowledge employee concerns.⁴¹ These authors collectively concur on issues that cause burnout throughout federal and state departments.

Burnout hampers retention and recruitment. Through the studies cited, including internal and external discussions of employees experiencing burnout, the direct effect on potential new hires and current employees nearing burnout affects recruitment and retention.⁴² Justin Newton Scanlan and Megan Still argue that burnout does not affect every facet of employment, and unhappiness in a career outside of burnout is a factor and

³⁹ Langley, “Occupational Burnout and Retention,” 32.

⁴⁰ Jeremy Wilson et al., *Police Recruitment and Retention for the New Millennium: The State of Knowledge* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2010), 63, <https://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG959.html>.

⁴¹ Amanda Schiavo, “HR Will Need to Address Burnout When Recruiting,” Employee Benefit News, April 7, 2021, <https://www.benefitnews.com/news/hr-will-need-to-address-burnout-when-recruiting>.

⁴² “Managing for Employee Retention,” SHRM Toolkits, November 22, 2022, <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/toolkits/pages/managingforemployeeretention.aspx>.

needs more dedicated research.⁴³ Jacalyn Beales offers another perspective by separating the feeling of burnout versus stress and the employee's inability to differentiate the two. The analysis fails to distinguish how employee attitude ultimately affects the desire to stay, but does not influence others seeking employment.⁴⁴ As Jacalyn Beales advises, the inability to determine the level of burnout that may correlate with stress requires more research to determine what has the most significant impact on recruitment and retention and how organizations might address it in the future.

Overall, the literature review reveals that many experts and scholars considering recruitment and retention challenges within the government agree that recruitment and retention merits further investigation for causes and solutions. Despite the lack of consensus on the best approach to mitigate these challenges, scholars remain critical of government concerns. Scholars' arguments on retention and recruitment shortfalls dominate the conversations, providing insufficient attention by government departments and leading to continued struggles with workforce and mission requirements. DHS's vital recruitment and retention needs justify many studies and approaches to identify a workable solution that scholars and administrators suggest will make the most significant improvement.

D. RESEARCH DESIGN

This thesis seeks to identify additional policies and measures that DHS can undertake to combat the recruitment and retention challenges across the organization. To this end, this thesis conducts a qualitative—comparative case study analysis—research design. This research examines positive recruitment and retention practices and policies for the following case studies: Recruitment and retention challenges inside the U.S. Military 180A Special Forces Warrant Officer and the Air Force Distributed Ground System Intelligence Personnel; recruitment and retention challenges of teachers in

⁴³ Justin Newton Scanlan and Megan Still, "Relationships between Burnout, Turnover Intention, Job Satisfaction, Job Demands and Job Resources for Mental Health Personnel in an Australian Mental Health Service," *BMC Health Services Research* 19, no. 1 (2019): 3, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-018-3841-z>.

⁴⁴ Jacalyn Beales, "How Talent Leaders Can Address Recruiter Burnout," *Lever* (blog), January 10, 2022, <https://www.lever.co/blog/overcoming-recruiter-burnout-5-tips/>.

designated “hard-to-staff” areas, such as special education, math, and science in Florida’s Critical Teacher Shortage Program (FCTSP); recruitment and retention challenges for the LAPD.⁴⁵ These case studies offer empirical evidence and qualitative data related to similar challenges DHS faces in recruitment and retention, and presents best practices for addressing them effectively.⁴⁶

This thesis assesses the case studies regarding mission support, natural attrition, the process of backfilling critical positions, the effect of professional training opportunities on retention and recruitment, and technology’s impact and its impact on recruitment and retention. Lastly, an assessment of these case studies provides critical arguments on the effect of burnout and attitude in DHS compared to other case studies to show the positive and negative trends of burnout and mood. The case studies examine a framework for identifying what works and does not work. These case studies offer comparative analyses, findings, recommendations, and expand on the opportunities for future research on DHS.

In the research process, the thesis used primary sources such as government policies, documents, and laws, and secondary sources such as academic, peer-reviewed journal articles, think tank studies (including Congressional Research Service reports and RAND studies), scholarly papers, books, and media articles.

⁴⁵ Feng and Sass, *The Impact of Incentives*, 4.

⁴⁶ This thesis will neither address every DHS agency, nor cover every facet of employment for DHS; its intent is to discuss the challenges for the non-law enforcement side of DHS and how they confront their problems.

II. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION CHALLENGES

Evidence overwhelmingly shows that DHS is facing enormous challenges in its mission of national security and is struggling to keep pace with these challenges due to its dwindling personnel numbers.⁴⁷ This chapter discusses five out of some indeterminate number of factors—human capital, attrition, resources, burnout, and leadership attitude—and the impact these factors have on recruitment and retention challenges within DHS to understand why the challenges in recruitment and retention exist.

This chapter explains how each of these five factors together create a systemic problem of reducing DHS’s inability to recruit and retain personnel. Each section of these factors will describe empirical analysis from industry experts and provide data sets that argue against DHS maintaining its current posture regarding recruitment and retention. The sections will also indicate the intent to provide a comparative analysis through case studies of other agencies and departments within and outside of DHS, showing levels of success in changes that were made to mitigate recruitment and retention challenges.

A. HUMAN CAPITAL

Human capital has positive and negative effects on recruitment and retention within DHS through such varying mechanisms as professional growth, training, and promotions. One positive is offering a process for professional growth geared toward posturing the employee in a position to advance their career while providing benefit to the department. One negative is the focus on Federal Viewpoint Surveys (FEVS) as the primary pulse check mechanism to change policy for employees, since the results are often not reflective of all tiers of employees.

Human capital is an integral role in recruitment and retention by focusing on the needs of the department, the needs of the employees, and developing a process to provide pathways to entice employees to stay while capturing the results of the effort. Jessica

⁴⁷ Eric Katz, “Mass Turnover and Retirements Could Soon Plague the Overtaxed DHS Workforce, IG Warns,” *Government Executive*, May 5, 2023, <https://www.govexec.com/management/2023/05/mass-turnover-and-retirements-could-soon-plague-overtaxed-dhs-workforce-ig-warns/386039/>.

Knight, VP of Research at Gartner indicates that organizations that are progressive in adapting their approach to professional growth, training, and promotions are more successful because they do more than incremental approaches regarding recruiting and retaining talent.⁴⁸ For example, during the COVID pandemic, both the government and private sectors adopted teleworking options that allowed employees to work from home, attend virtual training that otherwise would not have been available, and promoted remote work as a way for productivity to remain high while keeping employees safe.⁴⁹ This effort increased productivity and happiness, in some places up to 55 percent, which is a key indicator of employees likelihood to remain with their agency.⁵⁰

However, although DHS is committed to increasing retention and recruiting through human capital efforts, it is constrained in its ability to increase funding and incentives without congressional approval or sacrificing mission essential budgeted tasks. Goal six of the 2020–2024 DHS Strategic Plan is focused on championing the DHS workforce through optimizing Departmental Governance and Management by developing and maintaining a high performing workforce.⁵¹ This strategic plan responds to studies conducted by the GAO that recognized that elements of human capital have a direct correlation to low recruitment and retention numbers due to policy and statutory authorities governing flexibilities to develop, train, recruit, and retain employees through compensation such as professional growth, training, and promotions in the federal government.⁵²

However, within these bounds, DHS has been seeking out new ways to develop human capital through reforming professional education options to develop diverse skill

⁴⁸ Wiles, “4 Ways to Attract and Retain Talent.”

⁴⁹ Grace Dille, “DHS Looks to Continue Hybrid Trainings beyond Pandemic,” July 14, 2021, <https://www.meritalk.com/articles/dhs-looks-to-continue-hybrid-trainings-beyond-pandemic/>.

⁵⁰ Nicole Ogrysko, “Telework May Be the Recruitment and Retention Solution Agencies — and Congress — Are Looking For,” Federal News Network, November 18, 2020, <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/workforce/2020/11/telework-may-be-the-recruitment-and-retention-solution-agencies-and-congress-are-looking-for/>.

⁵¹ Department of Homeland Security, *The DHS Strategic Plan: Fiscal Years 2020–2024* (Washington, DC: Department of Homeland Security, 2022), 7.

⁵² Goldenkoff, *Homeland Security*, 1.

sets to retain employees. In a 2020 congressional hearing, Chairperson Bennie G. Thompson indicated that the low morale in DHS and low human capital rankings by employees is a failure of leadership and requires aggressive reform.⁵³ Since then, DHS continues to focus on developing personnel in a structure that is, only recently, undergoing change based on feedback from the current workforce and reform recommendations from Congress. The largest change focuses on diversity and professional growth. Diversity of the workforce allows DHS to seek out specialty skill sets and offer professional growth for the newest generations entering government service. In 2019, DHS Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas launched a 60-day cyber sprint to recruit talented individuals in cyber security.⁵⁴ As of 2022, DHS had one of the most diverse workforces in the government.⁵⁵ Continuing to build on the diverse skill set of personnel showed one of the few progressive changes DHS has undertaken. These changes have allowed DHS to recruit, hire, and retain employees within their Cyber Infrastructure and Security Agency (CISA), which is now 2,800 employees strong.⁵⁶

However, there are several other agencies within DHS that have current employees searching for professional growth outside of the cyber security occupation. Professional growth continues to be a focus on the DHS FEVS. There are over 260,000 employees in DHS, and approximately 72,000 responded in the 2022 FEVS, split between 59 percent positive and 41 percent negative in their perception of opportunities for professional growth within DHS.⁵⁷ More importantly, the percentage of positive responses from the year prior shows a decrease in the employees' perception of their ability to improve their

⁵³ H.R., *Seventeen Years Later: Why Is Morale at DHS Still Low?: Hearing before the Committee on Homeland Security*, House of Representatives, 116th Cong., 2, 2020, 10, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-116hrg40966/pdf/CHRG-116hrg40966.pdf>.

⁵⁴ Natalie Alms, "DHS Recent Hiring Sprint Shows Promise, but Lawmakers Still See Gaps in the Federal Cybersecurity Workforce," Nextgov, July 29, 2021, <https://www.nextgov.com/cybersecurity/2021/07/dhs-recent-hiring-sprint-shows-promise-but-lawmakers-still-see-gaps-in-the-federal-cybersecurity/259241/>.

⁵⁵ Lauren Walker, "A Changing Workforce Makes DEIA a Priority at DHS," GovLoop, October 18, 2022, <https://www.govloop.com/a-changing-workforce-makes-deia-a-priority-at-dhs/>.

⁵⁶ Jen Easterly, "Looking Back to Chart Our Path Forward," *CISA Blog* (blog), January 12, 2023, <https://www.cisa.gov/news-events/news/looking-back-chart-our-path-forward>.

⁵⁷ Department of Homeland Security, *2022 OPM FEVS AES Report* (Washington, DC: Department of Homeland Security, 2022), 1.

skills in their organization; from 60 percent positive in 2021 to 59 percent positive in 2022. Furthermore, the majority of employees that participated in the FEVS are from the middle management tier, which indicates it is not middle management that is not providing data.⁵⁸ The data indicates the most recent survey that only 29 percent of employees are considering leaving their organization, which would equate to the majority of the middle management within five to ten years of retirement, and not considering career disruptions which are counterintuitive to federal retirement benefits.⁵⁹

B. ATTRITION

Drawing parallels between the DHS personnel challenges and historical events in the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Wayne Dumais underscores the pressing issue of the workforce attrition and the consequential risks to national security and public safety.⁶⁰ These concerns can be forecast through mandatory retirements and appear to fit within a federal model like the FAA. In 1981, the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization famously went on strike, and President Ronald Reagan fired the controllers and banned them from being rehired.⁶¹ When this event happened, the Federal Aviation Administration hired controllers at a rapid pace to replenish the workforce, knowing that the newly hired controllers had a shelf life of forty years.⁶² The air traffic controllers hired in 1981 were set for retirement in 2021, and even though this workforce attrition was known by the FAA, years of mismanagement and failure to establish policy to maintain hiring to fill the retirees' spots jeopardizes air safety and created personnel concerns.⁶³ The FAA continues to struggle with air traffic controllers and per the Transportation

⁵⁸ Homeland Security, 8.

⁵⁹ Department of Homeland Security, *Department of Homeland Security Annual Employee Survey*, 18.

⁶⁰ Dumais, "The DHS Acquisition Workforce," 22.

⁶¹ Michael Barera, "The 1981 PATCO Strike," *UTA Libraries Blog* (blog), September 2, 2021, <https://libraries.uta.edu/news-events/blog/1981-patco-strike>.

⁶² Steven Pociask, "Blame the FAA for Air-Traffic Controller Shortage," *CNBC Airlines*, February 12, 2019, <https://www.cnbc.com/2014/12/15/blame-the-faa-for-air-traffic-controller-shortage-retirement-commentary.html>.

⁶³ Pociask.

Department Office of Inspector General “has made limited efforts” to address employee shortages.⁶⁴

DHS employees in armed law enforcement operate under the same retirement constraints as the FAA air traffic controllers, mandatory retirement at age 57.⁶⁵ Like the FAA, DHS has struggled to create policies to mitigate these losses through attrition in a timely manner. In 2017, the Office of Inspector General stated that two of the critical agencies within DHS, CBP, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) would need a collective 1,251,750 applicants to increase agent and officer positions to keep up with the levels of attrition in these positions.⁶⁶

For the non-armed law enforcement careers within DHS, the levels of attrition are not due to mandatory retirement, but attributed to several other factors including workload.⁶⁷ In 2023, FEMA reported a 35 percent staffing shortage, which FEMA linked to burnout and attrition.⁶⁸ The GAO found that FEMA staffing has decreased over the last four years and the target number of staff needed to deal with the workload has increased from 16,000 in 2019–2020, to 18,000 in 2022–2023.⁶⁹ With the higher workload creating higher attrition rates, FEMA has agreed, in accordance with the GAO, to improve the recruitment and retention process.⁷⁰ Unfortunately for FEMA, its failure in addressing

⁶⁴ Suzanne Rowan Kelleher, “FAA ‘Lacks a Plan’ for Air Traffic Control Shortage, Per Government Report,” *Forbes*, June 26, 2023, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/suzannerowankelleher/2023/06/26/faa-lacks-a-plan-for-air-traffic-control-shortage-per-government-report/>.

⁶⁵ “LEO Special Retirement Coverage,” Customs and Border Protection, October 31, 2022, <https://www.cbp.gov/employee-resources/benefits/retirement/leo-ecbpo/leo-special-retirement-coverage>.

⁶⁶ Department of Homeland Security Inspector General, *Special Report: Challenges Facing DHS in Its Attempt to Hire 15,000 Border Patrol Agents and Immigration Officers*, OIG-17-98-SR (Washington, DC: Department of Homeland Security, 2017), 13, <https://www.oig.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/2017/OIG-17-98-SR-Jul17.pdf>, <https://www.oig.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/2017/OIG-17-98-SR-Jul17.pdf>

⁶⁷ “Low Morale among DHS, DOD Employees Unsatisfied with Work Environment,” FEDagent, May 5, 2022, <https://www.fedagent.com/news/low-morale-among-dhs-dod-employees-unsatisfied-with-work-environment>.

⁶⁸ Eric Katz, “FEMA Is Losing Employees at an Alarming Rate,” *Government Executive*, May 8, 2023, <https://www.govexec.com/workforce/2023/05/fema-has-shed-staff-alarming-rate/386092/>.

⁶⁹ Chris Currie, *FEMA Disaster Workforce: Actions Needed to Improve Hiring Data and Address Staffing Gaps*, GAO-23-105663 (Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office, 2023), 18, <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-23-105663>.

⁷⁰ Katz, “FEMA Is Losing Employees.”

attrition has led to President Joseph Biden signing the Civilian Reservist Emergency Workforce (CREW) law, which addresses critical shortages for FEMA due to the large wave of departures.⁷¹ Presidential precedent has been set for actions required by the executive branch due to agency inaction and failed planning.⁷² FEMA relying on presidential action infers a lack of ability by FEMA leadership to address critical staffing elements and further degrades FEMA's ability to adequately recruit and retain employees.

The parallels that exist between departments such as the FAA and DHS indicate attrition due to several factors, including workload, which contribute to degradation of national security and public safety. An article in *Government Executive* by Eric Katz discusses the concerns of increased workload and the impact attrition is having on the DHS workforce, as well as recruitment and retention efforts.⁷³ Through multiple surveys and an Inspector General (IG) synopsis, Katz concludes that DHS is in an unsustainable cycle of these two things, reduced staffing numbers, and workload increase that continues to grow year over year.⁷⁴ It can be argued that the increased workload and attrition rates could have been avoided with early planning for impending retirements and identifying pain points in hiring to ensure staffing numbers are adequate to address national security and safety concerns.

C. RESOURCES

Addressing the intricate relationship between resource availability and staff retention, the discussion explores how the lack of adequate personnel, tools, and flexible working conditions can profoundly impact the recruitment and retention strategies of organizations like the Department of Homeland Security. Resources challenge DHS recruitment and retention in terms of people, tools to do the job, and flexibility in working environments. Successful companies recognize that people are the largest and most

⁷¹ Katz.

⁷² Civilian Reservist Emergency Workforce Act of 2021, Pub. L. No. 117-178, 136 Stat. 2110 (2022). <https://www.congress.gov/117/plaws/publ178/PLAW-117publ178.pdf>

⁷³ Katz, "Mass Turnover and Retirements Could Soon Plague."

⁷⁴ Katz.

significant resource, and can affect public perception of a business.⁷⁵ The inadequacy of resources, such as the right tools and flexible working environments, has had a tangible impact on DHS's ability to successfully recruit and retain staff, thereby affecting its mission effectiveness.

The DHS effectively adapted to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic by implementing large-scale teleworking options from 2019 to early 2023, thereby ensuring both the safety of its personnel and the continuity of its operations. Flexibility in working schedules became a necessity due to the COVID pandemic, creating the opportunity for an innovative way to allow employees to continue to operate in remote locations.⁷⁶ From 2019 to early 2023, the DHS dealt with the COVID crisis by implementing a large-scale telework option and issuing employees technical equipment so they could remain safe at home while still completing mission requirements.⁷⁷ The Acting Secretary of DHS delivered a video to all the employees discussing the change in posture for teleworking and showed a progressive step to stop the spread of COVID.⁷⁸ Focusing on protecting the first resource, people, by providing them tools and flexibility allowed DHS to continue to operate effectively through an unprecedented time in recent history. The need for both computers and cellphones for all employees, as well as a new policy to direct how DHS would operate in a fully remote situation, was unprecedented but necessary.⁷⁹ In 2021 DHS, through OPM published the *Guide to Telework and Remote Work in the Federal Government*, which provided direct guidance of how to better meet the human capital and

⁷⁵ Karolina Hobson, "Council Post: Five Reasons Employees Are Your Company's No. 1 Asset," *Forbes*, December 12, 2019, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinessdevelopmentcouncil/2019/12/12/five-reasons-employees-are-your-companys-no-1-asset/>.

⁷⁶ Office of Personnel Management, "Telework Trends," Reports & Studies, accessed July 13, 2023, <http://www.telework.gov/reports-studies/telework-trends/>.

⁷⁷ Angela Bailey, "COVID-19 Update 6 – Telework and Self-Observation)," Employee Resources, March 13, 2020, <https://www.dhs.gov/employee-resources/blog/2020/03/13/covid-19-update-6-telework-and-self-observation>.

⁷⁸ "Employee Message from Acting Secretary Chad Wolf on DHS's COVID-19 Efforts and Teleworking," Employee Resources, March 19, 2020, <https://www.dhs.gov/employee-resources/blog/2020/03/19/employee-message-dhss-covid-19-efforts-and-teleworking>.

⁷⁹ Department of Homeland Security, *U.S. Department of Homeland Security COVID-19 Safety Plan* (Washington, DC: Department of Homeland Security, 2021), 11, https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2022-01/DHS%20COVID%20Safety%20Plan_01252022.pdf.

resources need to improve mission effectiveness.⁸⁰ This document placed strict requirements on DHS executive management for data collection of effectiveness, performance management, and employee well-being.⁸¹

This innovative use of resources by providing employees with the technology and flexibility to telework for three years had positive results in recruitment and retention, according to a survey of employees.⁸² According to Sydney Rose, Chief Human Capital Officer of the Labor Department, managers and supervisors were delighted that their employees were teleworking successfully, countering their expectations.⁸³ The impact on the workforce appeared positive, as there are many sources and surveys showing a steady improvement in employee engagement, leading to DHS jumping nine points in the best places to work rankings, according to a survey conducted by Public Service and Boston Consulting Group.⁸⁴

However, the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability’s push for a “return to office” plan in 2023 has negatively impacted DHS’s ability to retain and recruit employees. A survey revealed that 59 percent of federal workers would consider leaving if telework options were revoked, thereby exacerbating existing retention and recruitment challenges for the department. DHS advised that the telework, remote option, and additional resources were a temporary option due to the pandemic, and required agencies to create a return to work plan when it was necessary.⁸⁵ In 2023, the House Committee on

⁸⁰ Office of Personnel Management, *2021 Guide to Telework and Remote Work in the Federal Government: Leveraging Telework and Remote Work in the Federal Government to Better Meet Our Human Capital Needs and Improve Mission Delivery* (Washington, DC: Office of Personnel Management, 2021), 2.

⁸¹ Office of Personnel Management, 65.

⁸² Mark McGraw, “Federal Workers Say Telework Has a Positive Effect on Productivity,” Public Sector HR Association, May 1, 2023, <https://pshra.org/federal-workers-say-telework-has-a-positive-effect-on-productivity/>.

⁸³ Ogrysko, “Telework May Be the Recruitment and Retention Solution.”

⁸⁴ Nicole Ogrysko, “DHS Sees More Employee Engagement Successes, Even in a Pandemic Year,” Federal News Network, July 5, 2021, <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/workforce/2021/07/dhs-sees-more-employee-engagement-successes-even-in-a-pandemic-year/>.

⁸⁵ Office of Personnel Management, “2021 Guide to Telework and Remote Work in the Federal Government,” November 2021, 23.

Oversight and Accountability suggested DHS was not doing enough post-pandemic to get the workforce back to the workplace to better serve the American people.⁸⁶ However, the argument to get the workforce back into the workplace appears to be a catalyst of DHS's inability to retain and recruit employees. A survey of more than five hundred federal workers indicated that 59 percent would leave federal positions if telework ends and the resources they were given to telework were changed.⁸⁷ DHS's "return to office" plan likewise had a negative impact and is a catalyst for retention issues, as DHS employees are now seeking employment where they can continue to operate in telework status at nearly a 50 percent rate.⁸⁸ The policy change has provided data sets that were not favorable to retention and recruitment for DHS. In this context, it seems paradoxical that despite the clear advantages, federal agencies are being directed to scale back telework as of April 2023.

DHS successfully navigated the COVID crisis by adopting large-scale teleworking, which protected employees and maintained operational effectiveness. This innovative approach exceeded managerial expectations, demonstrating telework's potential benefits for productivity. Despite high employee interest in continued telework, as evidenced by studies like those from Drew DeSilva of Pew Research, DHS is considering ending this option. Such a decision could jeopardize recruitment and retention efforts, given the positive workforce response to teleworking.⁸⁹ Understanding the value of human resources and workplace flexibility will be key to DHS's future success.

⁸⁶ Robert Shea and Andrew Stegmaier, "Rushing the Return to Office: Why Forcing Feds into In-Person Work Could Backfire," *Government Executive*, May 11, 2023, <https://www.govexec.com/management/2023/05/rushing-return-office-why-forcing-feds-person-work-could-backfire/386028/>.

⁸⁷ Mia Hunt, "Nearly Half of U.S. Government Workers 'May Quit If Telework Reduced,'" *Global Government Forum*, May 23, 2023, <https://www.globalgovernmentforum.com/nearly-half-of-us-government-workers-could-quit-if-telework-reduced-survey-finds/>.

⁸⁸ Mia Hunt, "Nearly Half of U.S. Government Workers 'May Quit If Telework Reduced,'" accessed August 26, 2023, <https://www.globalgovernmentforum.com/nearly-half-of-us-government-workers-could-quit-if-telework-reduced-survey-finds/>.

⁸⁹ Drew Desilver, "Before the Coronavirus, Telework Was an Optional Benefit, Mostly for the Affluent Few," *Pew Research Center* (blog), accessed August 26, 2023, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2020/03/20/before-the-coronavirus-telework-was-an-optional-benefit-mostly-for-the-affluent-few/>.

D. BURNOUT

Burnout, as defined by the Mayo Clinic, is a severe work-related stress that has far-reaching consequences for DHS, affecting its ability to recruit and retain quality personnel.⁹⁰ This phenomenon deteriorates workplace culture, increases attrition rates, and negatively impacts the department's reputation, ultimately threatening both immediate operations and long-term mission success. The Mayo Clinic further explains how burnout can cause physical or emotional exhaustion and can affect how a person feels about their accomplishments, job, position, or agency.⁹¹ According to a survey conducted by Envoy, one in four employees in the private sector plan to leave their jobs after the pandemic due to burnout.⁹²

DHS is no different from any other agency that suffered through the pandemic, and, per a DHS Inspector General's report, are losing employees due to burnout, including very critical positions such as Border Patrol.⁹³ A request for an independent review of the staffing situation in Border Patrol was denied by DHS Secretary Mayorkas, so the exact number of losses remains undefined.⁹⁴

Like Border Patrol, FEMA is dealing with recruitment and retention concerns due to burnout. According to the FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell, FEMA has been suffering losses year over year, which Congressional representative Val Demings intimated is likely attributed to workload burnout, since FEMA employees were working twelve hour days with no recovery between assignments.⁹⁵ In an immediate response to mitigate the impact of burnout, FEMA tactically deployed their FEMA Corps reservists to temporarily

⁹⁰ Mayo Clinic Staff, "Know the Signs of Job Burnout," Mayo Clinic, June 5, 2021, <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/burnout/art-20046642>.

⁹¹ Mayo Clinic Staff.

⁹² Schiavo, "HR Will Need to Address Burnout When Recruiting."

⁹³ "DHS Inspector General Sees Border Patrol Burnout; Mayorkas Says No Problem," *FAIR* (blog), June 14, 2023, <https://www.fairus.org/blog/2023/06/14/dhs-inspector-general-sees-border-patrol-burnout-mayorkas-says-no-problem>.

⁹⁴ FAIR Staff.

⁹⁵ Katz, "FEMA Experiences 'Mass Exit.'"

supplement the workforce.⁹⁶ Simultaneously, the agency initiated a long-term strategy, developing an individualized approach that included targeted recruitment activities at colleges and workforce events.⁹⁷ These events showcased part-time employment opportunities as an interim solution for those contemplating longer-term career paths with FEMA. Despite these multifaceted efforts, FEMA remains below its desired staffing levels and has set an ambitious objective to hire new full-time employees by the year 2024, underscoring the enduring challenges and complexities of effectively addressing employee burnout and attrition.⁹⁸

TSA suffered similar employee losses due to burnout and changes in their occupational requirements. TSA officers are the first line of defense against danger in the context of transportation dealing with challenges such as, disgruntled passengers, terrorist, explosives, and physical threats.⁹⁹ With the extent of the occupational requirements to remain on the job during an unprecedented pandemic, aircraft delays, weather events, and airport shutdowns, the TSA suffered losses of double to quadruple the percentage of other federal agencies.¹⁰⁰ During a Congressional hearing with the Subcommittee on Transportation and Maritime Security, the Executive Assistant Director of TSA, Darby LaJoye, acknowledged the losses due to burnout and stated the TSA is offering bonuses for new recruits as well as to existing employees for referring new recruits.¹⁰¹ These bonus appear to be a short term fix to a larger problem that may require additional support.

To mitigate the losses and provide incentive to retain and recruit personnel, President Biden signed a Fiscal Year 2023 Omnibus Appropriations Bill, increasing pay

⁹⁶ Katz.

⁹⁷ Ellenwood, “Addressing FEMA’s Recruitment Challenges,” 67.

⁹⁸ Katz, “FEMA Is Losing Employees.”

⁹⁹ “4 Reasons Why TSA Officers Quit Their Job,” AFGE Stories, December 16, 2018, <https://www.afge.org/article/4-reasons-why-tsa-officers-quit-their-job/>.

¹⁰⁰ American Federation of Government Employees.

¹⁰¹ H.R., *Taking to the Skies: Examining TSA’s Strategy for Addressing Increased Summer Travel: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Transportation and Maritime Security*, House of Representatives, 117th Cong. 1, 2021, 28, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-117hhr45828/pdf/CHRG-117hhr45828.pdf>.

by thirty percent for TSA employees.¹⁰² The impact of the omnibus legislation is too incipient, and the data set indicating positive or negative trends in recruitment and retention will not be available for years to come. The changes in pay do not address the burnout TSA employees are facing. However, it shows that Congress understands there are disparities in workload and pay for agencies like TSA that contribute to burnout and high turnover. The House Appropriations Committee disagreed with the administration's decision to provide the pay increase and are proposing a bill that prohibits the pay reform for all of TSA and focuses on the Transportation Security Officers (TSO) that are in direct contact with the public.¹⁰³ TSA Administrator David Pekoske has spoken on Capitol Hill during several congressional meetings expressing the concern for TSA pay, burnout, and the consequences of removing the pay reform, and the impact it will have on TSA's ability to retain and recruit talent needed for their mission.¹⁰⁴

Burnout is significantly affecting DHS agencies like Border Patrol and FEMA, with one in four employees considering leaving their jobs due to this stress, according to Envoy. FEMA has employed reservists and new recruitment strategies to mitigate staff losses but still faces a hiring gap set to be filled by 2024. TSA's attrition rates are exceptionally high due to job demands, outpacing those of other federal agencies by two to four times. While President Biden's 2023 Omnibus Appropriations bill aims to address pay disparities, its impact on long-term recruitment and retention is uncertain and does not directly address burnout. Congressional disagreements on pay reform indicate a need for a comprehensive approach that tackles both burnout and compensation issues to maintain staffing for critical missions.

¹⁰² "Historic Victory: TSA Officers to Get an Average 30% Pay Raise, Expanded Rights under Title 5," AFGE Stories, January 9, 2023, <https://www.afge.org/article/historic-victory-tsa-officers-to-get-an-average-30-pay-raise-expanded-rights-under-title-5/>.

¹⁰³ Justin Doubleday, "TSA Chief Pushes Back on Bill That Would Reverse Pay Increases for Non-Screening Workforce," Federal News Network, June 22, 2023, <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/pay/2023/06/tsa-chief-pushes-back-on-house-bill-to-scale-back-pay-for-non-screening-workforce/>.

¹⁰⁴ Doubleday.

E. ATTITUDE

Leadership attitude, defined as the mindset and behavior of those in managerial roles, significantly influences the organizational culture and thereby impacts recruitment and retention.¹⁰⁵ Within the DHS, a positive leadership attitude can create an engaging environment, fostering loyalty and attracting new talent. Conversely, negative leadership can contribute to a toxic work culture, leading to high turnover and making it challenging for DHS to maintain adequate staffing levels for its critical missions. Therefore, leadership attitude is a pivotal factor affecting both the recruitment and retention of personnel within DHS.

An intangible recognized by most employers is the workforce attitude and how it is reflected in how they operate, how they communicate, and how their expressions reflect how they feel. President Woodrow Wilson stated, “The ear of the leader must ring with the voices of the people.”¹⁰⁶ Management has a responsibility to the people they represent. Internal communications within an organization, “water cooler discussions,” can change the dynamic of the day’s events. Communication and leadership intertwine creating an environment for employees to either trust or distrust management. If the management is not resilient and communicative to the workforce and then the odds are the workforce attitude will reflect the missing components of positive leadership.¹⁰⁷

Management can have a significant impact on employee attitude toward retention and recruitment by not providing an environment where the employees needs are met.¹⁰⁸ Additionally, management can determine how employees build relationships and

¹⁰⁵ “Successful Leadership Attitudes and Behaviors,” *WGU Blog* (blog), accessed September 25, 2023, <https://www.wgu.edu/blog/successful-leadership-attitudes-behaviors2006.html>.

¹⁰⁶ Institute of Medicine, “Leadership, Communication, and Culture in the Department of Homeland Security,” in *A Ready and Resilient Workforce for the Department of Homeland Security: Protecting America’s Front Line* (Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2013), 89, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK201684/>.

¹⁰⁷ Institute of Medicine, 93.

¹⁰⁸ Strategic Human Resources Management, “Managing for Employee Retention.”

manage significant changes in their workload.¹⁰⁹ As shown in previous sections overworking and underpaying employees can have a significant impact on recruitment and retention. The impact changes the attitude of leaders as they struggle to retain and recruit talent as well as the employees within DHS.

In fact, organizations that focus on recruiting and retaining top talent through competitive benefits and compensation see a direct impact not just on turnover and retention rates but also on employees' attitudes. Offering benefits and compensation that match the value of the talent employed sends a strong message to the workforce that they are valued and appreciated. This, in turn, fosters a positive emotional connection between the employee and the organization, as opposed to merely a transactional one based on the rational calculation of labor value.

When employees feel valued and appreciated, their emotional investment in the organization increases, which often leads to higher job satisfaction, greater motivation, and a stronger commitment to the company's goals. This emotional connection can often be more powerful in retaining employees than a simple financial calculus. In fact, organizations with such a management structure have shown a reduction in turnover by twenty-six percent and increases in retention of fourteen percent, underlining the importance of aligning emotional and rational incentives for employees.¹¹⁰

The DHS suffers from a pervasive attitude problem within its leadership, which has not only created a culture where employees feel undervalued but also hampers the agency's ability to make informed decisions, conduct necessary training, and improve leadership behavior.¹¹¹ This toxic environment exacerbates existing recruitment and retention challenges, especially given the stressful nature of the work and potentially inadequate compensation and benefits. The organizational culture negatively impacts not just the

¹⁰⁹ Ahlam Al-Qathmi and Haya Zedan, "The Effect of Incentive Management System on Turnover Rate, Job Satisfaction and Motivation of Medical Laboratory Technologists," *Health Services Research and Managerial Epidemiology* 8 (2021): 2, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2333392820988404>.

¹¹⁰ Al-Qathmi and Zedan, 4.

¹¹¹ Charles S. Clark, "Homeland Security Employees Aren't Disciplined Consistently for Misconduct," *Government Executive*, June 20, 2019, <https://www.govexec.com/management/2019/06/homeland-security-employees-arent-disciplined-consistently-misconduct/157897/>.

rational calculations employees make about their labor value but also their overall attitude toward work. To turn things around, DHS leadership must focus on creating a positive work environment that values employees both emotionally and rationally, addressing both compensation and broader cultural issues.

These attitude problems affect recruitment and retention resulting in the lack of communication by leaders to identify the employee concerns and department recruitment needs in order to support the front line personnel, effectively creating an attitude of contention amongst the junior core of employees.¹¹² The discord and dissatisfaction engendered by a lack of support from DHS leadership significantly affect the recruitment and retention of younger generations. According to data from the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, these individuals frequently cite inadequate management and unmet needs as primary reasons for departing the agency.¹¹³ TSA is a large focus for DHS since TSA has recorded the lowest morale of the twenty-two agencies within DHS and are at the forefront of dealing with the American public on daily basis.¹¹⁴

As a corrective measure, DHS attempted to reform the employee process on how management needs to change the approach to the newer generation of employees to meet retention and recruitment needs by sending jump teams to the field to address employee concerns and provide them with the support they need to be better for themselves and the department.¹¹⁵ In 2021, DHS Secretary Mayorkas intimated during an interview that DHS employees need to be delivered a department they deserve to retain and recruit new personnel.¹¹⁶ With low morale as a major focus of DHS, yet no exact way to deal with it, reviewing outside agencies for solutions is the likely pathway.

¹¹² Couch, “Hiring, Retention, Ethical Issues Persist at DHS.”

¹¹³ Department of Homeland Security, *Department of Homeland Security Annual Employee Survey*, 19.

¹¹⁴ Ellen M. Gilmer, “Worst Federal Worker Morale Spurs DHS Secretary to Make Changes,” Bloomberg Government, August 10, 2021, <https://about.bgov.com/news/worst-federal-worker-morale-spurs-dhs-secretary-to-make-changes/>.

¹¹⁵ Jason Miller, “DHS Optimistic about Future Thanks to Innovative Recruiting, Engagement Efforts,” Federal News Network, March 28, 2023, <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/federal-insights/2023/03/dhs-optimistic-about-future-thanks-to-innovative-recruiting-engagement-efforts/>.

¹¹⁶ Gilmer, “Worst Federal Worker Morale.”

In the context of DHS leadership, the pervasive discord and dissatisfaction have been notably detrimental to the recruitment and retention of younger generations, who cite poor management and unmet needs as salient factors for departure, as evidenced by the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey. The Biden Administration’s recent legislative move to increase pay offers a glimmer of hope that such financial incentives may positively influence the attitude of TSA employees, potentially enhancing retention and recruitment outcomes.¹¹⁷

F. CONCLUSION

This chapter has detailed the significant influence of five elements—human capital, attrition, resources, burnout, and attitude—on the recruitment and retention challenges faced by the DHS. A close examination of these elements, corroborated by industry expert analyses and extensive data sets, underscores the urgent need for DHS to rethink its approach to recruitment and retention strategies. Examples from across the agency, such as low morale due to leadership issues, high attrition rates related to workload stress and mandatory retirements, and dissatisfaction among lower-tier employees seeking professional growth opportunities, are testament to the systemic problems ingrained within the department’s existing human capital management policies.

A comparison of the situation in other agencies and departments reveals that strategic planning and innovative policy changes are possible and could provide a road map for DHS to improve its workforce management, morale, and productivity. If left unaddressed, these issues may continue to hamper DHS’s ability to fulfill its critical national security mission effectively. The onus is now on DHS leadership to take decisive action, incorporate best practices, and implement aggressive reforms to ensure the organization’s future success and resilience.

¹¹⁷ “Transportation Security Administration Implements New Compensation Plan,” Transportation Security Administration Press Releases, July 27, 2023, <https://www.tsa.gov/news/press/releases/2023/07/27/transportation-security-administration-implements-new-compensation>.

III. CASE STUDIES OF SUCCESS

A. AIR FORCE BURNOUT CASE STUDY

Despite facing burnout, recruitment, and retention challenges, the Air Force has successfully implemented multi-faceted strategies, including holistic medical assessments, stress relief breaks, and external medical outreach programs. These initiatives, coupled with collaboration with RAND Corporation and internal surveys, have effectively reduced burnout and improved recruitment and retention rates, reflecting the Air Force's dedication to its personnel and operational effectiveness. Building on the Air Force's proactive measures to address internal challenges, it's essential to understand the broader context in which these decisions were made.

The United States Air Force Intelligence community plays a vital role in national security by exploiting intelligence information through means such as ISR (intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance).¹¹⁸ From the early to late 2000s, despite dwindling manpower, the Air Force leadership heavily depended on the intelligence community because it consistently delivered high-level results. Ultimately, however, the Air Force's escalating demand for Processing, Exploitation and Dissemination (PED) of intelligence information outstripped the Air Force's analytical capabilities, compelling the service to acknowledge a critical shortage of intelligence analysts to meet the burgeoning requirements.¹¹⁹ With the continued increase in workload and the minimal increase in manpower the Air Force Intelligence community began experiencing burnout.

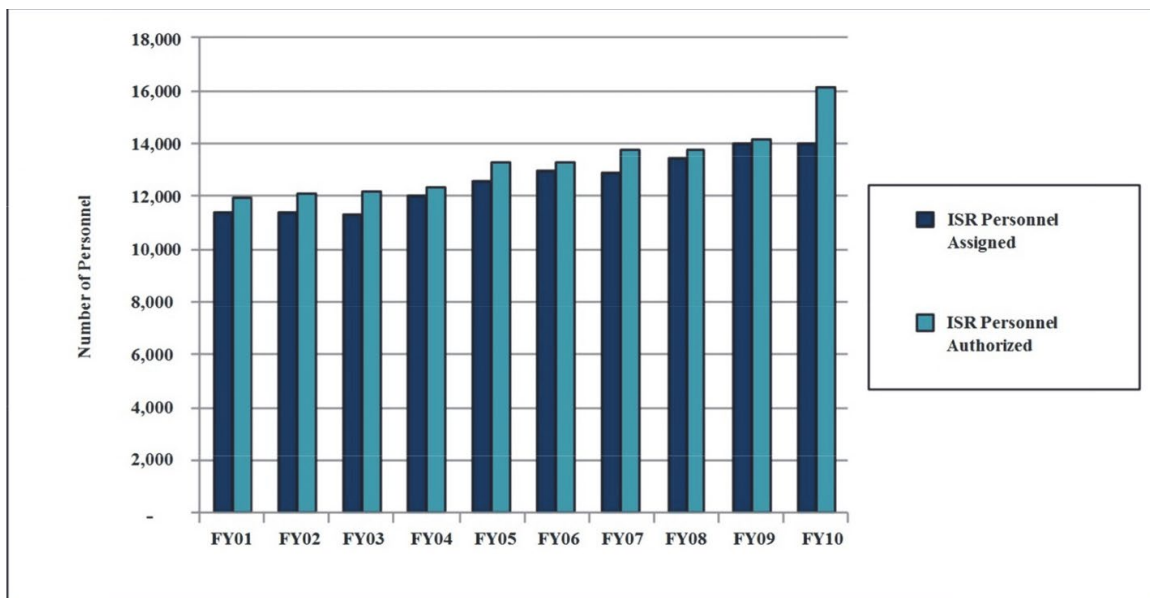
Burnout, like what TSA, FEMA, and CBP have dealt with, is a growing trend in the Air Force Intelligence community that affects recruitment and retention. Between fiscal years (FY) 2001 and 2010, the marked discrepancy between authorized and assigned ISR personnel underscored an escalating demand for such expertise, suggesting an upward trajectory in subsequent years, shown in Figure 1.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Langley, "Occupational Burnout and Retention," 4.

¹¹⁹ Langley, 6.

¹²⁰ Langley, 6.

Figure 1. Air Force ISR Personnel Authorized and Assigned¹²¹



The growth trajectory of personnel within the Air Force since the year 2000 is vividly illustrated in Figure 1, which delineates the evolution of ISR personnel numbers from FY 2001–2010. Originating from the data, one can infer a consistent augmentation in the number of ISR personnel assigned, peaking around FY 2005, and then experiencing minor fluctuations in subsequent years. Alongside this trend, the ISR personnel authorized demonstrated a relatively constant pattern, paralleling the trajectory of assigned personnel but with a consistently lesser volume. This consistent disparity between the assigned and authorized personnel across the decade hints at a systematic and deliberate management strategy in terms of personnel allocation.

The Air Force has adeptly tackled the issue of burnout through a comprehensive suite of interventions. A pivotal component of their strategy involves garnering feedback from airmen to discern the foundational causes demanding intervention. While many of these initiatives appear pragmatic on the surface, it is imperative to assess their genuine efficacy. Such assessment requires discernible differences in both quantitative and

¹²¹ Source: Langley, 6.

qualitative data, contrasting the period before and after the implementation of these remedial actions.

John Langley identified five factors that put Air Force Intelligence personnel at risk regarding burnout.¹²² He described the effects of operational, organizational, combat-related, deployed in garrison, and demographic risk factors on burnout and ultimately recruitment and retention. A meticulously crafted survey was disseminated to over 1,000 Air Force airmen, with an even distribution between those in the intelligence career field and those in non-intelligence fields, probing the influence of specific factors on burnout and its subsequent impact on their inclination to continue their tenure within the Air Force. His results showed that the majority of the non-intelligence career field airmen were content, and 2/3 intended on remaining in the Air Force, while less than half of the intelligence career field airmen reported intending to remain in the Air Force due to burnout factors.¹²³

These results, highlighting a growing concern in the Air Force that required action, were accepted by the Air Force leadership. Subsequently, a specific intelligence division within the Air Force instituted protocols permitting periodic breaks during work hours, endorsing practices of mental rejuvenation, emphasizing the importance of self-care, and advocating for true detachment from duties during off-days.¹²⁴ The data provide an analytical insight into the prevalence of burnout; however, while it hints at the efficacy of interventions, it does not delineate specific outcomes, suggesting potential positive mitigation results.

The 480th Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance leadership has intricately refined the Comprehensive Fitness Model, an initiative strategically designed to assist airmen in achieving equilibrium amidst their demanding roles, leveraging tailored

¹²² Langley, 13.

¹²³ Langley, 54.

¹²⁴ Greg Chadwick, "AFMC Promotes Avoiding Job Burnout Awareness," Air Force Medical Service, September 27, 2017, <https://www.airforcemedicine.af.mil/News/Display/Article/1326122/afmc-promotes-avoiding-job-burnout-awareness/>
<https://www.airforcemedicine.af.mil/News/Display/Article/1326122/afmc-promotes-avoiding-job-burnout-awareness/>.

programs, activities, and resilience-enhancing mechanisms. Emphasizing the depth of this commitment, Colonel Timothy Haugh, the wing's commander, elaborated on the comprehensive resources now embedded within each operational group, including dedicated medical, psychological, and spiritual professionals. Colonel Haugh further underscored the wing's continual endeavors to optimally position these airmen, ensuring they are poised to fulfill the mission while remaining invigorated throughout their service tenure.¹²⁵

The leadership of the 480th Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Wing discerned, based on the outcomes of the assessment forms, that a significant challenge confronting their airmen pertains to the social dimension, given the prolonged durations they spend in confined spaces with limited interpersonal interactions.¹²⁶ Through strategic policy modifications that permitted intermittent eight-hour closures of the intelligence division, and by directing airmen to participate in "Warrior Day" sessions; emphasizing camaraderie and stress alleviation, these professionals effectively mitigated burnout sensations, returning to their roles rejuvenated and proficient.¹²⁷ A scholarly study spearheaded by RAND elucidated that events emphasizing cohesion and external interactions beyond the airmen's operational environment yielded propitious results. This was evinced by a compelling correlation to airmen retention rates, registering ninety percent for enlisted personnel and ninety-three percent for officers in the subsequent year following the RAND analysis.¹²⁸

The Air Force's endeavors to mitigate stress for their airmen extended beyond initial policy alterations. Recognizing the cumulative strain from recent conflicts, which

¹²⁵ Oriana Pawlyk, "Leaders Monitor Burnout among Intel Analysts," *Air Force Times*, November 22, 2014, sec. Your Air Force, <https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2014/11/22/leaders-monitor-burnout-among-intel-analysts/>.

¹²⁶ Pawlyk.

¹²⁷ Pawlyk.

¹²⁸ Stephanie Brooks Holliday et al., *Assessing the Association between Airmen Participation in Force Support Squadron Programs and Unit Cohesion: An Evaluation of the UNITE Initiative* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2022), 147, <https://doi.org/10.7249/RR-A554-1>; Greg Hadley, "Retention Returns to Pre-COVID Levels as More Airmen Depart," *Air & Space Forces Magazine*, January 5, 2023, <https://www.airandspaceforces.com/retention-returns-to-pre-covid-levels-as-more-airmen-depart/>.

manifested across all military branches due to repeated deployments, constrained support resources, and declining morale at both field and managerial levels, the Air Force inaugurated an outreach initiative. This program actively incorporated external providers to address airmen's mental health challenges and stressors, ensuring comprehensive care and intervention.¹²⁹ This step toward improving the resources of the Air Force by utilizing outside medical providers and focusing on developing camaraderie-focused events has shown an increase in Air Force Intelligence community reporting a desire to remain in the Air Force because of these benefits.¹³⁰

To bolster the efficacy of initiatives addressing recruitment and retention challenges, the Air Force recognized the imperative for advanced research into a predictive system that would alert leadership to looming personnel shortages and occupational issues. RAND Corporation was contracted to develop an Air Force Retention Early Warning System, which provided the Air Force with some key findings to counter retention issues.¹³¹ RAND Corporation presented the Air Force with an alternative strategy to enhance retention and recruitment metrics through the provision of bonuses for continued military service. The augmentation of bonuses across most career fields has been correlated with a projected rise in both retention and recruitment. Based on Rand's data, these increases in recruitment and retention are anticipated to continue, especially as the Air Force prioritizes resource acquisition and the welfare of its existing personnel, in alignment with its mission readiness objectives. Table 1 presents and delineates RAND's suggested policy impact indicators, measurable over a thirty-year span, which manifest a discernible augmentation in retention.¹³² The table elucidates that while a more substantial bonus

¹²⁹ Shireen Bedi, "New Mental Health Care Initiative Improves Access to Care and Readiness," Air Force Medical Service, May 8, 2023, <https://www.airforcemedicine.af.mil/News/Display/Article/3387966/new-mental-health-care-initiative-improves-access-to-care-and-readiness/>
<https%3A%2F%2Fwww.airforcemedicine.af.mil%2FNews%2FDisplay%2FArticle%2F3387966%2Fnew-mental-health-care-initiative-improves-access-to-care-and-readiness%2F>.

¹³⁰ Rachel Cohen, "New in 2023: Air Force Retention Remains Higher than Usual," *Air Force Times*, December 30, 2022, sec. Your Air Force, <https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2022/12/30/new-in-2023-air-force-retention-remains-higher-than-usual/>.

¹³¹ David Schulker et al., *Developing an Air Force Retention Early Warning System: Concept and Initial Prototype* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2021), 1, <https://doi.org/10.7249/RR-A545-1>.

¹³² Schulker et al., 45.

doesn't invariably correlate with heightened retention, especially among members with sixteen to twenty years of service, it does seem to exert the most pronounced influence on those within the six to ten years of service bracket.¹³³

Table 1. 2020 Impact Table from Retention Early Warning System¹³⁴

Policy Intervention	Estimated retention impact		Supporting literature and notes
Enlisted			
SRB multiplier increase of 1 unit	0.8% (across all career fields for members in the last year of their first enlistment contract)		Joffrion, Justin L. and Wozny, Nathan, Military Retention Incentives: Evidence from the Air Force Selective Reenlistment Bonus (April 28, 2015). Upjohn Institute Working Paper No. 15-226, https://ssrn.com/abstract=2600046 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2600046 Note: Change in the SRB multiplier was not found to affect retention rates of servicemembers outside of those in the last year of their first enlistment contract.
Officers			
\$5,000 annual bonus for all YOS	1-5 YOS 6-10 YOS 11-15 YOS 16-20 YOS 21-25 YOS 26-30 YOS	0.5% 2.5% 1.4% 0.5% 1.2% 0.8%	Mattock, Michael G., Beth J. Asch, James Hosek, Christopher Whaley, and Christina Panis, Toward Improve Management of Officer Retention: A New Capability for Assessing Policy Options. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2014. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR764.html . Note: Estimated changes in retention probabilities are computed using the basic dynamic retention model implemented in the above paper. Importantly, this model is based on an underlying dataset of Army officers. All policy impacts reflect steady-state (i.e. long-term) effects of retention.
\$10,000 annual bonus for all YOS	1-5 YOS 6-10 YOS 11-15 YOS 16-20 YOS 21-25 YOS 26-30 YOS	1.1% 4.7% 2.6% 0.9% 2.3% 1.6%	
\$15,000 annual bonus for all YOS	1-5 YOS 6-10 YOS 11-15 YOS 16-20 YOS 21-25 YOS 26-30 YOS	1.6% 6.8% 3.7% 1.4% 3.4% 2.5%	
\$20,000 annual bonus for all YOS	1-5 YOS 6-10 YOS 11-15 YOS 16-20 YOS 21-25 YOS 26-30 YOS	2.0% 8.7% 4.5% 1.7% 4.4% 3.3%	
Pilots			
\$5,000 increase on \$25,000 5-year ACP	1-10 YOS 11-15 YOS 16-20 YOS 21-25 YOS 26-30 YOS	0.0% 1.7% -0.4% -0.6% -0.2%	Mattock, Michael G., Beth J. Asch, James Hosek, Christopher Whaley, and Christina Panis, Toward Improve Management of Officer Retention: A New Capability for Assessing Policy Options. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2014. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR764.html . Notes: Estimated retention impact refers to retention of pilots only. Changes in retention probabilities are computed using the ACP dynamic retention model implemented in the above paper. All policy impacts reflect steady-state (i.e. long-term) effects of retention.
\$10,000 increase on \$25,000 5-year ACP	1-10 YOS 11-15 YOS 16-20 YOS 21-25 YOS 26-30 YOS	0.0% 2.9% -0.8% -1.0% -0.4%	
\$15,000 increase on \$25,000 5-year ACP	1-10 YOS 11-15 YOS 16-20 YOS 21-25 YOS 26-30 YOS	0.0% 3.8% -1.0% -1.2% -0.5%	
\$20,000 increase on \$25,000 5-year ACP	1-10 YOS 11-15 YOS 16-20 YOS 21-25 YOS 26-30 YOS	0.0% 4.3% -1.2% -1.4% -0.6%	
Increase in commercial airline hiring resulting in a change from 10% to 50% probability of being hired by a commercial airline	1-20 YOS >20 YOS	-6.3% -15.1%	
Mattock, Michael G., James Hosek, Beth J. Asch, and Rita Karam, Retaining U.S. Air Force Pilots When the Civilian Demand for Pilots Is Growing. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2016. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1455.html . Also available in print form. Notes: Estimated retention impact refers to retention of pilots only. All policy impacts reflect steady-state (i.e. long-term) effects of retention. In the year of the cited study, an increase in the probability of being hired by a commercial airline from 10% to 50% corresponded to an increase in 1,700 to 3,200 airline hires per year.			

¹³³ Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs, "Department of the Air Force 2024 Budget Proposal Invests in Modernization, Transformation," Air Force, March 13, 2023, <https://www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/3327903/department-of-the-air-force-2024-budget-proposal-invests-in-modernization-trans/>
<https://www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/3327903/department-of-the-air-force-2024-budget-proposal-invests-in-modernization-trans/>

¹³⁴ Source: Schulker et al., *Developing an Air Force Retention Early Warning System*, 45.

The Air Force adjusted their bonus options for initial enlistment, immediate ship-out (short notice basic training agreement), cyber intelligence bonuses, health care scholarship programs, and retention bonuses.¹³⁵ Taking care of the employees allows the Air Force to develop and recruit talent that will have the resources and support needed to make the military a career. The Air Force is expanding mental and physical health policies and addressing pay disparities to shore up losses from year over year shortfalls in recruitment and retention.¹³⁶

Overall, the United States Air Force Intelligence community has faced significant challenges related to burnout, recruitment, and retention, akin to issues in agencies like TSA, FEMA, and CBP. Amidst limited resources and surging requirements, especially within the spectrum of PED intelligence, the Air Force's adoption of multifaceted strategies accentuates the burgeoning necessity for intelligence-specific resources. Initiatives such as incorporating medical assessments focused on holistic well-being, periodic breaks for stress relief, and an outreach program employing external medical providers have not only alleviated burnout but also positively impacted recruitment and retention rates. Collaboration with RAND Corporation for an Air Force Retention Early Warning System and internal surveys have further empowered leadership with actionable data to make informed decisions. The diligent effort to address these challenges underscores the Air Force's commitment to both its current personnel and future operational efficacy.

B. ARMY CASE STUDY

In a methodological approach parallel to the Air Force, the U.S. Army conducted an in-depth case study centered on the Special Forces warrant officers, a segment grappling with pronounced recruitment and retention dilemmas. Structural disparities in rank distribution amplified these challenges for the Special Forces (SF) warrant officer cadre. Nevertheless, through judicious interventions—such as assimilating warrant officers into command frameworks and offering selective retirement incentives—the Army witnessed a

¹³⁵ “Bonuses,” My Air Force Benefits, accessed September 10, 2023, <https://www.myairforcebenefits.us.af.mil/Benefit-Library/Federal-Benefits/Bonuses>.

¹³⁶ David Roza, “Air Force Faces 10 Percent Recruiting Shortfall in 2023,” *Air & Space Forces Magazine*, March 9, 2023, <https://www.airandspaceforces.com/air-force-recruiting-service-shortfall-2023/>.

robust seventy-three percent rise in retention from FY 2020– 2021, and a one hundred and fifteen percent surge in the cohort of warrant officers by July 2019. This analysis not only highlighted the ramifications of attrition and human capital dynamics on this specialized occupation but also shed light on the pervasive role of attitudinal factors in shaping recruitment and retention trajectories within these elite ranks. The United State Army’s SF warrant officer is described by the U.S. Army Recruiting Command as follows:

Special Forces (SF) warrant officers are combat leaders and staff officers. They are experienced subject matter experts in unconventional warfare, operations and intelligence fusion, and planning and execution at all levels across the operational continuum. They advise commanders on all aspects of special operations and are responsible for the integration of emerging technologies.¹³⁷

Analogous to the challenges faced by DHS, the Army SF warrant officer program grapples with human capital retention and recruitment obstacles, attributable to a restricted pool of eligible recruits and limited avenues for ascension to senior ranks..¹³⁸ In his thesis on the recruitment and retention of SF warrant officers, Mike Varner presented quantitative data suggesting that the warrant officer occupation is notably understaffed, with an overconcentration at the senior ranks, as delineated in Table 2.¹³⁹ Table 2 delineates a discernible reduction in authorized warrant officer positions as one progresses through the ranks, accompanied by a limited number at the junior warrant officer tiers (W-1/W-2). In the context of AR135-32, which permits W-5s to remain on active duty until age 62 or complete 30 years of warrant officer service, junior warrant officers face challenges in ascending in rank. This regulatory stipulation, combined with the bottleneck of awaiting retirement of W-4 and W-5 officers, not only exacerbates retention and recruitment dilemmas but also impedes the promotional opportunities for those in subordinate grade plates.¹⁴⁰ Additionally, having a small pool of candidates as the SF warrant officers do

¹³⁷ “180A – Special Forces Warrant Officer,” Warrant Officer Prerequisites and Duty Description, June 23, 2023, <https://recruiting.army.mil/ISO/AWOR/180A/>.

¹³⁸ Varner, “The Recruitment and Retention of the 180A,” 10.

¹³⁹ Varner, 23.

¹⁴⁰ Varner, 23.

does not allow the Army to backfill the shortfalls at the lower warrant officer ranks and contributes to recruitment concerns.¹⁴¹

Table 2. 2014 180A Assigned/Authorized¹⁴²

Rank	Assigned	Authorized	Percent Filled
W-5	34	18	189%
W-4	95	85	112%
W-3	138	184	75%
W-1/W-2	273	359	76%
Total	540	646	84%

Like the Air Force, the Army conducted a survey to gather proposals to possible solutions to their recruitment and retention challenges for the warrant officer positions. Surveys were disseminated exclusively to senior leaders to discern their insights into potential solutions for the regiment's recruitment and retention challenges. The initial analysis of the collected data utilized grounded theory to elucidate a spectrum of concepts and themes that could inform avenues of change and potentially revolutionize the approach to warrant officer recruitment and retention.¹⁴³ A prominent recommendation for the SF warrant officers was their integration into command teams early in their career trajectory. This inclusion not only fosters their professional development but also positions them competitively for elevated ranks that necessitate command team experience.¹⁴⁴ In conjunction with early integration into command teams the survey analysis proposed the introduction of a Selective Early Retirement Bonus (SERB). This strategy aims to prevent an overconcentration at the upper echelons of the warrant officer cadre, thus ensuring fluid

¹⁴¹ Varner, 25.

¹⁴² Adapted from Varner, 8.

¹⁴³ Varner, 32.

¹⁴⁴ Varner, 36.

upward mobility for the junior ranks and averting stagnation.¹⁴⁵ After the adoption of these recommendations, there was a marked seventy-three percent surge in the retention of warrant officers within the Army from FY 2020–2021.¹⁴⁶

The United States Army’s SF warrant officer cadre confronts a complex array of challenges in recruitment and retention, mirroring trends observed in the DHS and the Air Force. Quantitative data reveals an organizational structure that disproportionately concentrates personnel at higher ranks, thereby obstructing upward mobility and having a small pool of candidates to enter the lower ranks of the SF warrant officer cadre thereby exacerbating retention and recruitment shortfalls. Initiatives such as incorporating warrant officers into command teams and implementing selective early retirement bonuses have been suggested and deployed, yielding a remarkable seventy-three percent increase in warrant officer retention from FY 2020–2021. The Army is now offering increased special duty pay, accelerated promotions, and increased time with family for the SF soldiers resulting in an increase of warrant officers by one hundred and fifteen percent as of July 2019.¹⁴⁷ Thus, strategic changes in organizational culture and targeted incentives can effectively address the persistent challenges of recruitment and retention, while bolstering the specialized skills and leadership warrant officers bring to the Army’s broader mission.

C. FLORIDA TEACHERS CASE STUDY

Across the United States, many school districts face pronounced teacher shortages in pivotal areas such as special education, mathematics, and science.¹⁴⁸ Resource constraints, attrition, and occupational burnout are significant contributors to these challenges. This analytical inquiry delves into the impact of monetary and non-monetary compensation mechanisms, focusing specifically on their role in teacher recruitment and

¹⁴⁵ Varner, 37.

¹⁴⁶ “Recruiting Challenges,” Facts and Figures, accessed September 10, 2023, https://recruiting.army.mil/pao/facts_figures/.

¹⁴⁷ “Summit Discusses Future of Warrant Officer Accessions,” U.S. Army Recruiting Command, July 25, 2019, <https://recruiting.army.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/1916513/summit-discusses-future-of-warrant-officer-accessions/>.

¹⁴⁸ Feng and Sass, *The Impact of Incentives*, 1.

retention within the purview of Florida’s Critical Teacher Shortage Program (FCTSP), administered by the Florida Department of Education.¹⁴⁹ Urban educational institutions, especially those catering to a significant segment of socio-economically disadvantaged pupils, encounter exacerbated staffing hurdles in these essential disciplines. Given the inflexibility of prevailing salary grids, educators exhibit a proclivity towards institutions populated by high performing students from affluent demographics, while manifesting reluctance towards schools predominantly attended by minority, underperforming, or behaviorally complex students.¹⁵⁰ The research underscores that educational subsidies, notably ex-post loan forgiveness for emerging educators, enhance retention in high-demand fields (estimates show a 32.5 percent reduction in attrition and a three percent increase in recruitment); incremental annual payments ranging from \$500 to \$1,000 can curtail attrition in specific disciplines, whereas areas like special education necessitate allocations nearing \$2,500. Additionally, direct financial incentives, illustrated by a singular \$1,200 bonus, appear to outstrip the cost-effectiveness and retention impact of analogous loan remittances.¹⁵¹

In contrast to areas like English, the pool of emerging teachers in mathematics and science does not significantly exceed the number approaching retirement. This disparity makes schools with high turnover rates more susceptible to challenges in securing qualified educators for these disciplines. Ingersoll and May’s research elucidated this discrepancy, highlighting the marked imbalance between the supply and demand of educators in hard-to-fill domains such as science and mathematics. Their findings underscored the pressing need for reformative measures to effectively address recruitment and retention impediments in these areas.¹⁵² Feng and Sass, referencing Ingersoll and May, indicated in their report on “The Impact of Incentives to Recruit and Retain Teachers in “Hard-to-Staff Subjects,” that wage increases have been shown to boost teacher retention in “high-need”

¹⁴⁹ Feng and Sass, 1.

¹⁵⁰ Feng and Sass, 3.

¹⁵¹ Feng and Sass, 25.

¹⁵² Richard M. Ingersoll and Henry May, “The Magnitude, Destinations, and Determinants of Mathematics and Science Teacher Turnover,” *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 34, no. 4 (2012): 437, <https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373712454326>.

areas.¹⁵³ Furthermore, the Florida Department of Education demonstrated a commitment to addressing critical shortages by offering to cover certification costs for current educators willing to qualify in designated areas of scarcity. Debt forgiveness for student loans, along with signing and retention bonuses, have been instrumental in alleviating recruitment challenges, consequently resulting in enhanced retention rates.¹⁵⁴

The case study furnished empirical data spanning from 1995–2013, encompassing a comprehensive array of variables such as demographic attributes, level of educational achievement, professional experience, certifications acquired, and the range of courses instructed by each educator under consideration.¹⁵⁵ To address the challenges of teacher shortages, one of the proposed solutions involved wage increases and the implementation of signing and retention bonuses. The viability and impact of these strategies were quantitatively assessed using the Cox Proportional-Hazards Model, denoted as:

$$h(t) = h_0(t)\exp(\beta_{1j}E_{ij}^{LF} + \beta_{2j}Z_{tj}^{LF} + \beta_{3j}(E_{ij}^{LF} \times Z_{tj}^{LF}) + \gamma(X_{it}) + \pi(D_k))$$

where probability (ti) signifies the likelihood that a teaching tenure concludes at the end of period t for a specific teacher i , contingent upon the tenure enduring through period t .

Within this model, E_{ij}^{LF} comprises indicators representing teachers meeting the criteria for loan forgiveness—namely being certified and teaching in subject j , where j spans from one to N (with N representing the total count of ever-covered subjects). In tandem, Z_{tj}^{LF} symbolizes a set of indicators representing the implementation of the loan forgiveness program during year t for subject j . Concurrently, X_{it} is a vector encompassing a myriad of teacher and school attributes known to predominantly influence decisions related to teacher attrition. These attributes include, but are not limited to, the demographic characteristics of the student populace, the magnitude of the class, historical behavior of students, prior academic accomplishments of students, the gender of the teacher, the teacher’s racial or ethnic background, the teacher’s accumulated professional experience,

¹⁵³ Feng and Sass, *The Impact of Incentives*, 3.

¹⁵⁴ Feng and Sass, 5.

¹⁵⁵ Feng and Sass, 10.

and the foundational salary of the teacher.¹⁵⁶ This formula provided descriptive evidence on the efficacy of debt forgiveness and the impact it can have on recruitment and retention.

During the high-payout phase of the loan forgiveness program, an evaluation revealed that the likelihood of special education/gifted teachers exiting their roles decreased by an estimated 10.1 to 12.3 percent, contingent upon the control variables included, achieving statistical significance at a confidence level exceeding ninety-nine percent. In this phase, the average loan forgiveness approximated \$2,000, analogous to a 5.7 percent augmentation in the net compensation for the prototypical educator. Thus, an attrition contraction of 10.9 percent points, as derived from the comprehensive control model, corresponds to an exit movement measure of -1.9 for special education instructors.¹⁵⁷ Contrastingly, during the low payout juncture, the average loan remission stood at a mere \$750, mirroring a two percent surge in the net earnings for a median-salaried educator. The ensuing impact on the attrition likelihood for special education/gifted teachers, in this context, was negligible at -0.5 percent and lacked statistical significance. Complementarily, in the 2000 bonus scheme assessment through the same analytical lens, a salient influence on the hazard ratio emerged, indicating a 32.2 percent decline in teacher attrition rates.¹⁵⁸ Emphasizing the progressive scope, this one-off bonus predominantly supported a brief influence rather than a sustained behavioral modification. Consequently, while this fiscal impetus might have momentarily anchored teachers within the public schooling ecosystem, it possibly lacked the potency to pivot their enduring career trajectories.

The FCTSP, both monetary and non-monetary compensations—manifested as wage enhancements or debt absolution—emerge as potent strategies to address the intricate recruitment and retention challenges confronted. This model exhibits parallels with the

¹⁵⁶ Feng and Sass, 12. “By comparing ever-eligible teachers to never-eligible teachers the categorization of teachers does not change over time.” “However, treatment depends on both being an “ever-eligible” teacher and being in a year in which the teacher’s subject area is a designated critical shortage area, i.e. $(E_{ij} LF \times Z_{tj} LF)$.” “Thus, treatment is time dependent.” “10 When estimating the model for each subject, we exclude teachers who are ever eligible in another covered subject.”

¹⁵⁷ Feng and Sass, 18.

¹⁵⁸ Feng and Sass, 17.

U.S. Army's promotional structure, wherein monetary incentives, though not the sole motivator, undeniably play a pivotal role in ascension dynamics. Fiscal recalibrations, propelled by policy innovations, seem to align most symbiotic with the objectives of the FCTSP. This strategic paradigm finds resonance in the Los Angeles Police Department's (LAPD) case study pertaining to similar recruitment and retention issues. However, the LAPD's approach distinguishes itself by its comprehensive nature, with the department's leadership adopting a multi-dimensional strategy to diligently navigate and address these challenges.

D. LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT CASE STUDY

The LAPD espouses core values such as “respect for people, service to the community, reverence for the law, commitment to leadership, quality through improvement, and integrity in all they say and do.”¹⁵⁹ To effectively execute their mandate of maintaining law and order while adhering to core institutional values, it is imperative for the LAPD to equip both their officers and auxiliary staff with the requisite competencies to serve the public efficiently and ethically. However, it has suffered from recruitment and retention challenges due to attrition, lack of support and resources from city leadership, and anti-police attitude.¹⁶⁰ In 2001, the Los Angeles Police Protective League (LAPPL) provided the department with a four-point approach to increase recruitment and retention consisting of streamlining the hiring process, auditing exit interviews to determine common resignation reasons, studying other law enforcement agencies not struggling with recruitment and retention, and developing a partnership between LAPD and LAPPL to collaborate on recruitment issues the department faces now and in the future.¹⁶¹

Since presenting the proposal to the department, the LAPD has instituted a series of transformative measures targeting the strengthening of recruitment and retention. A

¹⁵⁹ Horace Frank, “LAPD to Continue with Aggressive Recruitment Efforts without Compromising Standards,” LAPD Online, accessed September 25, 2023, <https://www.lapdonline.org/newsroom/lapd-to-continue-with-aggressive-recruitment-efforts-without-compromising-standards/>.

¹⁶⁰ Hailey Winslow, “LAPD Losing Personnel at Alarming Rates, Unable to Quickly Hire New Officers,” FOX 11, August 26, 2022, <https://www.foxla.com/news/lapd-losing-personnel-at-alarming-rates-unable-to-quickly-hire-new-officers>.

¹⁶¹ Frank, “LAPD to Continue with Aggressive Recruitment Efforts.”

prominent manifestation of these efforts is the recent contract ratified by the Los Angeles City Council in conjunction with the LAPD: a multi-year deal stipulating a thirteen percent augmentation in the initial base salary, complemented by an annual three percent wage enhancement, alongside notable enhancements in insurance subsidies and retention bonuses for the LAPD.¹⁶² Set to be operationalized in late 2023, the tangible outcomes of this contract may remain imperceptible for several ensuing years. Intriguingly, this tactic markedly diverges from the LAPD's experience under the former Los Angeles mayor's tenure. The current trajectory suggests an invigorated momentum within the LAPD, seemingly propelling officer acquisition rather than exacerbating attrition.

Confronted with an uncertain projection for staffing expansion, the LAPD has strategically pursued alternative approaches to ensure the seamless enforcement of law and order. Considering the pronounced challenges in recruitment and retention, the department has considered avant-garde measures, both as a mitigation strategy and to alleviate the strain on existing personnel. This includes embracing differentiated response systems like the deployment of the 311 lines for non-urgent criminal concerns and the mobilization of specialized mental health crisis teams to address non-lethal situations, relegating traditional police response.¹⁶³ Notably, historical precedents offer an optimistic outlook: after a significant salary adjustment in 2006, the LAPD saw the induction of one of its most substantial academy cohorts in 2007. Given the recent contractual enhancements and evolving paradigms in policing, there's a palpable anticipation that incoming academy intakes might emulate the robust numbers of 2007, propelling the LAPD's active force to a more sustainable capacity.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² "Mayor Bass Statement on Council Passage of Contract to Improve Retention and Hiring at LAPD," Mayor Karen Bass, August 23, 2023, <https://mayor.lacity.gov/news/mayor-bass-statement-council-passage-contract-improve-retention-and-hiring-lapd>.

¹⁶³ Jeremy M. Wilson and Justin A. Heinonen, "Police Workforce Structures: Cohorts, the Economy, and Organizational Performance," *Police Quarterly* 15, no. 3 (2012): 283–307, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098611112456691>.

¹⁶⁴ "LAPD Ranks Swell," LAPD Online, March 30, 2007, <https://www.lapdonline.org/newsroom/lapd-ranks-swell/>; "Council Approves Pay Hike of 10.25% for LAPD Officers," Los Angeles Daily News, July 4, 2006, <https://www.dailynews.com/2006/07/04/council-approves-pay-hike-of-1025-for-lapd-officers/>.

Should the LAPD observe a surge in staffing figures as anticipated, their adopted strategy could serve as a replicable blueprint for other agencies and departments grappling with similar recruitment and retention dilemmas.¹⁶⁵ Central to this strategy is the design of inducements tailored to attract the most apt candidates to the policing profession. Gaining the endorsement of both the Union and the Mayor underscores a harmonized effort toward addressing these challenges. Given the recent ratification of an incentive package, backed by both the city council and the mayor, there's a well-founded expectation that the LAPD will witness a significant uptick in officer numbers, reversing a trend absent for several years.¹⁶⁶

The LAPD faces complex challenges in recruitment and retention, issues that are exacerbated by a confluence of societal attitudes, governance obstacles, and systemic constraints. Despite these difficulties, the LAPD has recently shown an encouraging trajectory of change, underscored by a new multi-year contract that includes significant financial incentives, effectively reversing a period of attrition and indifference by previous city leadership. Recent initiatives, such as the introduction of a four-point approach to increase recruitment and retention by the LAPPL signify a collaborative and dynamic rethinking of the LAPD's approach to fulfilling its mandate. While the true impact of these recent policy shifts may not be immediately discernible, the newfound support from city leadership, the union, and the community suggests a promising future in which the LAPD may serve as a model for other agencies grappling with similar recruitment and retention challenges.

E. CONCLUSION

In synthesizing these disparate cases from the United States Air Force Intelligence community, the Army's SF warrant officer cadre, FCTSP, and the LAPD, a composite

¹⁶⁵ "LAPD Chief and Mayor Hope to Recruit and Hire More Officers," CBS Los Angeles, April 20, 2023, <https://www.cbsnews.com/losangeles/news/lapd-chief-and-mayor-hope-to-recruit-and-hire-more-officers/>.

¹⁶⁶ Melanie Mason, "LA Police Campaigned against Karen Bass. Now She Wants to Give Them a Raise.," Politico, August 17, 2023, <https://www.politico.com/news/2023/08/17/la-police-karen-bass-00111523>.

narrative emerges that speaks to the complexities of recruitment and retention across various sectors. While each entity grapples with a unique set of challenges—be it burnout in intelligence operations, structural bottlenecks in military promotion, or societal attitudes affecting policing—there are common strategic levers that have demonstrated efficacy in mitigating these issues. The leveraging of actionable data analytics, as evidenced by the Air Force’s collaboration with RAND Corporation and the Army’s internal surveys, underpins the importance of empirically informed decision-making. Furthermore, the deliberate calibration of financial incentives, be it in the form of targeted bonuses, wage increases, or debt forgiveness, showcases the influence of monetary policy as a potential solution for recruitment and retention dilemmas.

Additionally, the multi-dimensional approaches seen in these case studies—ranging from holistic well-being assessments in the Air Force to incorporating warrant officers into command teams in the Army, and from the four-point approach of the LAPPL to the LAPD’s collaborative strategies—demonstrate the necessity for adaptive, multi-pronged solutions. These initiatives not only alleviate immediate concerns but also contribute to the creation of organizational cultures conducive to long-term staff retention and effective operational capacity. While the full impact of these initiatives remains to be empirically verified, the preliminary data and newfound support from governance structures and communities suggest that these strategies could serve as instructive models for other organizations facing parallel challenges in recruitment and retention.

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IV. CONCLUSION

This thesis aspired to identify the multifaceted recruitment and retention challenges confronting the DHS, emphasizing the internal dynamics exacerbating these issues. To that end, it examined four case studies of the United States Air Force, the United States Army, the Florida Department of Education, and the Los Angeles Police Department, with the aim of illustrating successful strategies they deployed to ameliorate their respective recruitment and retention dilemmas. This chapter presents a nuanced comparative analysis of diverse entities, seeking to discern best practices that could aid DHS in mitigating its recruitment and retention challenges. Considering these findings, a set of robust recommendations is put forth, suggesting potential strategies that DHS might incorporate to effectively address its ongoing recruitment and retention issues.

This chapter conducts a rigorous examination of the multifaceted intricacies inherent in recruitment and retention, notably as shaped by factors such as human capital, attrition, resources, burnout, and attitude, through a comparative analysis encompassing both case studies and DHS perspectives. By juxtaposing the practices of notable entities such as the U.S. Air Force Intelligence community, the Army's SF Warrant Officer cadre, FCTSP, and the LAPD, there are discernable patterns and strategies germane to the DHS context. While each entity provides distinct insights, it is the synthesis of these collective understandings—ranging from the leverage of actionable data analytics to the deliberate calibration of financial incentives—that portend well for rejuvenating the DHS workforce. With the integration of multi-pronged solutions, this investigation paves the way for recommendations, pointing DHS toward viable solutions and establishing a foundation for future scholarly endeavors, ensuring the department's adaptive and sustained growth.

A. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

In the intricate landscape of recruitment and retention, the DHS confronts challenges that resonate with those faced by diverse entities including the U.S. Air Force Intelligence community, the Army's SF warrant officer cadre, FCTSP, and the LAPD. These entities, grappling with the nuanced interplay of human capital, attrition, resources,

burnout, and attitude, have implemented strategic measures with varying degrees of success. Central to these strategies are fiscal recalibrations—be they in the form of wage enhancements, debt absolution, or early retirement bonuses—and the leveraging of data analytics, as evidenced by the Air Force’s collaboration with RAND Corporation. Furthermore, organizational and governance changes, underscored by holistic well-being initiatives and deliberate policy shifts, have demonstrated potential in addressing these shared challenges. For DHS, a synthesis of these learnings highlights the pressing need to adopt a multi-pronged, empirically informed approach, integrating best practices and proactive reforms, to optimally address its recruitment and retention challenges and secure its operational efficacy.

1. Human Capital and Strategic Planning

In a comparative analysis spanning entities such as the United States Army’s SF warrant officer cadre, the U.S. Air Force Intelligence community, FCTSP, and the LAPD, salient commonalities emerge in their strategic approaches to human capital management and overarching organizational planning. Each institution delineates a profound emphasis on the critical value of human capital, addressing prominent challenges like burnout, managing optimal attrition rates, and refining the intricacies of organizational hierarchies. Essential to their strategies is an innovative approach to organizational dynamics. For example, the LAPD’s holistic reconsideration of recruitment methodologies or the Army’s pioneering integration of its warrant officers into commanding roles displays a deep-seated commitment to organizational flexibility and adaptability. This confluence of sophisticated strategies across the surveyed organizations illustrates an informed and encompassing perspective on human capital management, emphasizing that strategic adaptability stands central to successful recruitment and retention initiatives.

2. Data-Driven Decision-Making

Both the U.S. Air Force and the Army emphasize the role of actionable data analytics in their recruitment and retention policies. The U.S. Air Force Intelligence community, in navigating its challenges, has leveraged collaborations like that with the RAND Corporation to develop an Early Warning System and internal surveys to furnish

actionable insights. Similarly, the U.S. Army's SF warrant officer cadre has employed quantitative data analyses to pinpoint organizational bottlenecks, informing subsequent strategic initiatives that achieved marked improvements in retention. This emphasis on empirical evidence as the cornerstone of policy and strategy formulation, consistently witnessed across entities, underscores the criticality of data in addressing recruitment and retention challenges.

3. Financial Incentives

Across the examined entities, ranging from the U.S. Air Force Intelligence Community to the LAPD, financial incentives consistently emerge as a pivotal strategy in addressing recruitment and retention challenges. Specifically, these organizations have leveraged mechanisms such as wage enhancements, debt absolution, selective early retirement bonuses, and specialized duty pays as effective tools to combat workforce shortfalls. This unified approach underscores the indispensable role of fiscal incentives in driving positive change in workforce dynamics, irrespective of the sector's specific challenges or operational nuances. Such incentives, strategically deployed, not only mitigate immediate issues but also foster an environment conducive to long-term staff engagement and operational growth.

4. Holistic and Multi-pronged Approaches

In analyzing the challenges and strategies across the United States Air Force Intelligence Community, the Army's SF warrant officer cadre, FCTSP, and the LAPD, it becomes evident that a holistic, multi-pronged approach emerges as a consistent and effective strategy. The Air Force underscores this with initiatives centered on holistic well-being, such as medical assessments and stress relief programs. Similarly, the Army's approach emphasizes integration, seen in the incorporation of warrant officers into command teams, and balanced incentive schemes. The LAPD, too, exhibits a comprehensive strategy by adopting a multi-dimensional plan, further illustrated by its four-point approach. Collectively, these entities emphasize the value of viewing recruitment and retention through an encompassing lens, intertwining both organizational and individual well-being, to address inherent challenges effectively.

5. Governance and Community Support

In the realm of recruitment and retention, an underlying theme woven through the case studies of the U.S. Air Force Intelligence Community, the Army's SF warrant officer cadre, FCTSP, and the LAPD is the pivotal role of governance and community support. The Air Force's alliance with the RAND Corporation and its deployment of internal surveys exemplifies the integration of external governance to drive data-informed strategies. Meanwhile, the LAPD's trajectory change, punctuated by the endorsement of city leadership and union backing, emphasizes the transformative potential of collaborative governance and community alliances. Collectively, these case studies accentuate the profound influence of well-aligned governance structures and community collaboration in navigating and mitigating recruitment and retention challenges.

B. FINDINGS

In a meticulous comparative analysis spanning diverse sectors—specifically, the U.S. Army's SF warrant officer cadre, the U.S. Air Force Intelligence community, FCTSP, and the Los Angeles Police Department—several formative insights surface. Firstly, a universally resonant theme is the irreplaceable value assigned to human capital. Each of these entities underscores the imperative of strategic adaptability in addressing endemic recruitment and retention challenges. This is vividly illustrated in the LAPD's innovative recruitment paradigms and the Army's innovative inclusion of warrant officers in command frameworks. Such strategic foresight underscores a broader understanding of the importance of adaptability and fluidity within organizational structures and methodologies.

Secondly, the importance of empirical evidence and data-driven approaches is underscored by both the U.S. Air Force and the Army. These entities, through initiatives like the Air Force's symbiotic partnership with the RAND Corporation, emphasize the pivotal role of empirical insights in shaping strategic determinants. This convergence on data analytics across the board reveals its central role in sophisticated human capital management.

Furthermore, a theme across all the scrutinized entities is the deployment of financial incentives as a cornerstone strategy in the recruitment and retention domain. The

mechanisms such as wage enhancements, debt absolution, and early retirement bonuses are emblematic of shared recognition. This recognition pivots on the understanding that fiscal strategies, judiciously deployed, not only serve as immediate controls but also as catalysts that foster enduring commitment and institutional growth. In addition, the holistic, multi-pronged strategies employed by these organizations are substantial. Whether in the Air Force's initiatives centered on holistic well-being, the Army's intricate melding of roles and responsibilities, or the LAPD's comprehensive strategic blueprint, the importance of marrying organizational objectives with individual well-being stands paramount. Such an integrative strategy provides a robust scaffolding to effectively counteract recruitment and retention impediments.

Lastly, an underpinning narrative woven through these analyses is the fundamental role of governance structures and community synergies. This is manifestly evident in the Air Force's collaborations with external entities and the LAPD's invigorated backing from city leadership and representative unions. Such collaborations underline the transformative leverage that can be harnessed through the symbiosis of robust governance and engaged community support. Building upon the formative insights gleaned from the comprehensive analysis of disparate sectors, it becomes imperative to tailor these learnings to address the challenges specific to the DHS.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

The DHS currently confronts intricate challenges deeply intertwined with its human capital management. Foremost, human capital represents the backbone of any robust organization, and a holistic approach to its enhancement is imperative. Addressing attrition, particularly, is tantamount to fortifying this backbone. By delving into the root causes, be it lack opportunities for professional growth or unaddressed workplace concerns, targeted strategies can be formulated to reduce turnover and maintain institutional knowledge. In terms of resources, it's essential for DHS to adopt a judicious allocation strategy, ensuring that personnel are equipped with the necessary tools and training to excel in their roles. This resource allocation, in turn, can act as a deterrent against employee burnout, a pressing

issue that often stems from excessive workloads and the absence of adequate support structures. Addressing burnout requires not just resource adjustments but also a cultural shift within DHS to promote well-being, work-life balance, and mental health. Lastly, the overarching organizational attitude plays a pivotal role. Negative perceptions and attitudes can be detrimental, cascading into various challenges. Hence, fostering a positive, inclusive, and growth-oriented organizational culture is indispensable. By holistically addressing these elements—human capital, attrition, resources, burnout, and attitude—DHS can substantially bolster its operational efficiency and fulfill its national security mission with renewed vigor.

1. Innovate in Human Capital Management

In addressing the multifaceted challenges confronted by the DHS, an imperative emerges for a profound revaluation of the worth of human capital. Informed by the practices of established entities such as the U.S. Army and the LAPD, there's an undeniable affirmation of the irreplaceable value of human capital. For DHS to effectively address this, a strategic initiative must be adopted that repositions its workforce as a paramount asset. Such a recalibration necessitates the development of targeted training programs, mentorship initiatives, and continuous professional development modules tailored to accentuate the potential of everyone. By harnessing these tools, DHS can mitigate the feelings of dissatisfaction, especially among the lower-tier employees who are seeking opportunities to depart DHS.

Simultaneously, the concept of strategic adaptability in roles warrants meticulous implementation. Taking a leaf from the U.S. Army's innovative approach of integrating warrant officers into command frameworks, DHS should embark upon a rigorous assessment of its organizational structure. This could be executed through commissioned internal audits or by engaging external consultancy firms specializing in organizational behavior and human capital management. The findings from such an exploration would offer insights into potential areas where roles could be made more fluid, adaptable, and intertwined, fostering a culture of mutual respect and interdisciplinary understanding.

Furthermore, the introduction of rotational roles, where employees are given opportunities to work in various departments, could be instrumental. This not only diversifies their skill set but also provides a panoramic view of the department's operations. Parallely, feedback mechanisms, such as town hall meetings and suggestion boxes, can be instituted, ensuring that the transition to a more adaptable role structure remains dynamic, responsive, and grounded in the realities faced by the workforce.

Additionally, comprehensive workshops can be arranged, illuminating the intricate interplay of mechanisms within DHS leadership, thereby revealing for every member their intricate role within the larger framework. Such initiatives, rooted in transparency and open dialogue, would foster not just a cohesive work environment but also galvanize the workforce with a renewed sense of purpose and belonging. Through these deliberate steps, DHS can elevate its human capital management strategy, aligning it with best practices and ensuring resilience in an ever-evolving security landscape.

2. Adopt Data-Driven Decision-Making

To actualize the empirical approach outlined previously, the DHS can incorporate several actionable strategies grounded in data-driven concepts. Given the constraints in human capital, the DHS could contemplate the establishment of an intricate talent acquisition and developmental paradigm for its agencies, including TSA, CBP, and FEMA. This would be similar to the U.S. Army's strategic incorporation of warrant officers within their command structures. This platform could leverage analytics to identify skill gaps within the organization and then focus recruitment efforts on filling these gaps, ensuring that the workforce possesses a diverse range of skills that align with the agency's mission-critical objectives.

To address attrition, DHS could emulate the LAPD's innovative recruitment paradigms by analyzing exit interview data to determine primary causes of employee departure and then implementing targeted retention programs. Moreover, considering resource constraints, a data-driven approach might involve predictive analytics to forecast future resource needs, allowing the agency to better allocate its resources proactively. For the pressing issue of employee burnout, insights derived from regular employee surveys,

and well-being assessments can help the agency in designing wellness programs, like the Air Force's initiatives centered on holistic well-being. This not only underscores the commitment to personnel welfare but also ensures that workforce productivity isn't compromised due to burnout.

Finally, in confronting negative organizational attitudes, the application of sentiment analysis on internal communications and feedback can provide real-time insights into employee morale. Informed by these analyses, leadership within DHS can initiate open dialogues, perhaps drawing inspiration from the LAPD's collaborations with representative unions, to address concerns and cultivate a more positive, inclusive organizational culture. By actively integrating these empirically based strategies into its operational framework, DHS stands poised to foster a rejuvenated, resilient, and mission-ready workforce.

3. Revise Financial Incentives

Within the DHS, navigating the multifaceted and intricate realm of recruitment and retention, the judicious deployment of financial incentives stands out as a formidable strategic instrument. These incentives, when properly tailored and meticulously deployed, promise positive impacts in addressing challenges in recruitment and retention.

For instance, the cost of hiring and adequately training a new DHS employee can, hypothetically, average about \$100,000. This cost, when projected over a large volume of hires, manifests itself into a considerable financial burden. Contrastingly, the strategic reallocation of a fraction of these funds toward retention-centric financial incentives can yield significant cost savings. By enhancing retention, DHS could potentially avoid these initial hiring and training expenses, converting them into a direct saving.

To concretely address human capital deficiencies, DHS might consider the introduction of a tiered wage enhancement system, specifically designed to entice a diversified and adept talent pool. Such a compensatory framework, which proportionally rewards roles based on their inherent complexity, operational significance, or scarcity, can be pivotal in enticing top-tier professionals, thereby directly reinforcing the department's human capital reservoir. Concurrently, to tackle the pressing issue of attrition, the institution of debt absolution programs emerges as an enticing solution. By targeting

educational or training-related financial commitments, this initiative can act as a significant lure for early-career professionals. The brilliance of this strategy lies in its duality; while it attracts talent, coupling these programs with tenure-based requirements ensures their continued allegiance to the department, effectively curbing premature exits.

However, the challenges don't cease at recruitment. For optimal resource utilization and bolstering the department's functional capacities, financial bonuses for employees engaging in specialized training can be transformative. This strategy ensures that invested resources translate into tangible operational increases by incentivizing upskilling. In addressing the pervasive challenge of burnout, especially in roles of high stress or operational intensity, offering early retirement bonuses or specialized financial packages can be a viable approach to prevent high tier employee bottlenecks, like what happens at executive levels. Such provisions, while acknowledging the rigors of specific positions, also provide pathways for early exits or lateral transitions, safeguarding the mental well-being of the workforce.

Lastly, the rejuvenation of organizational attitude—a critical underpinning of a successful institution—can be realized through performance-based bonuses and recognition frameworks. Establishing a clear correlation between individual contributions and financial recognition instills a profound sense of value among employees. In such an ecosystem, the principles of performance-based incentives flourish, invariably fostering heightened engagement and cultivating a positive, results-oriented attitude. By carefully juxtaposing recruitment and training costs against incentivized retention strategies, DHS can wield a powerful financial strategy. This not only navigates its existent challenges but also ensures it remains equipped, resilient, and ever prepared to fulfill its overarching national security mission.

4. Implement Multi-Pronged Strategies

Embracing multi-pronged strategies becomes indispensable for such pivotal agencies with DHS. A compelling avenue for exploration lies in the prioritization of holistic well-being initiatives. Taking a leaf out of the U.S. Air Force's book, which places a pronounced emphasis on employee welfare, DHS could introduce programs such as

mental health workshops, flexible work schedules, and resilience training, that is standard for every agency within its purview. These measures not only underscore the agency's commitment to its workforce but also directly address prevalent issues of burnout and potential negative organizational attitudes.

Additionally, the strategic depth exhibited by agencies like the LAPD offers another exemplary model. By crafting an integrated recruitment and retention framework, DHS stands to gain significant operational advantages. For instance, DHS could implement mentorship programs, like those in LAPD, where seasoned officers provide guidance to newcomers and aid in helping individuals transition into the DHS family. This integrated approach could be further enriched by leveraging technology for predictive analytics, identifying potential attrition risks, and subsequently deploying preventive measures.

Such an integrated strategy, coupled with a commitment to individual well-being, equips DHS with the tools to navigate the multifaceted challenges associated with human capital, attrition, and resource constraints. By experimenting with and refining these strategies, DHS not only strengthens its internal structure but also bolsters its overarching mission of national security. Practical applications of these concepts, such as onboarding orientations tailored to specific departmental cultures or skill enhancement workshops, can further cement the agency's position as a desirable place of employment.

5. Engage Governance and Community Support

Given the interconnected nature of today's globalized society, a significant strategic lever for DHS resides in the active engagement of governance structures and community support. By forging robust external collaborations, much like the alliances evidenced by the successes of the Air Force and LAPD, transformative potential can be unlocked. Such relationships not only act as multipliers of influence and resources but also play a pivotal role in augmenting the perception and reception of the organization within the broader community. For instance, to tackle the issue of human capital, DHS could emulate the Air Force's approach by establishing mentoring programs and partnerships with academic institutions. Such programs can not only uplift the skill set of the workforce

but also foster a sense of belonging and purpose, countering negative organizational attitudes.

Drawing from the LAPD's successes, the incorporation of external collaborations emerges as an essential tool in addressing attrition and resources challenges. DHS could consider initiating public-private partnerships, offering dual-career pathways, where employees have the flexibility to transition between roles in the public and private sectors. Such avenues not only provide a varied experience for the employees but also reduce the burnout arising from monotonous job roles. This, coupled with regular town hall meetings involving community stakeholders, would ensure feedback loops are established, addressing issues before they culminate into systemic problems.

Furthermore, when addressing burnout and attitude, the foundation of a supportive work environment cannot be underestimated. Drawing parallels with the LAPD's approach, DHS might contemplate setting up wellness initiatives, emphasizing mental health and work-life balance, like programs within progressive private sector firms. By doing so, the agency can actively demonstrate its commitment to the well-being of its personnel, fostering a positive organizational attitude.

The strategic alignment of DHS, with successful models from entities like the Air Force and the LAPD, coupled with an emphasis on stakeholder engagement and long-term vision, can robustly address the multifaceted challenges the agency currently grapples with.

6. Long-Term Strategic Planning

The DHS is presented with an invaluable opportunity to holistically address the intricacies of its recruitment and retention challenges. By drawing lessons from the visionary planning exhibited by other agencies, DHS is positioned to craft a framework that can effectively navigate the multifaceted hurdles it currently confronts.

Foremost among these hurdles is the dimension of human capital. A comprehensive long-term strategy would necessitate a meticulous approach to talent acquisition, nurturing, and development. Such an approach not only ensures that DHS attracts the brightest minds but also retains them by offering a clear pathway of professional growth and enrichment.

By prioritizing this, DHS can decisively address the attrition rates that plague its ranks. The incessant loss of experienced personnel is not just a resource drain but a significant impediment to maintaining operational continuity and expertise. Through strategic planning, DHS can devise programs that not only offer competitive remuneration but also emphasize skill development, career progression, and opportunities for lateral movement within the organization.

The challenge of resource constraints can be mitigated by efficient allocation and utilization strategies embedded within the long-term plan. By forecasting future needs and potential shortfalls, DHS can preemptively enact measures to ensure that resource bottlenecks do not impede its mission objectives. Equally pertinent is the issue of employee burnout, which, if left unaddressed, can exacerbate attrition rates. A strategic plan would entail the development of wellness programs, flexible work arrangements, and periodic sabbaticals, all aimed at preserving the mental and physical well-being of its workforce.

Lastly, the overarching issue of organizational attitude can be fundamentally transformed through such planning. By cultivating a culture of inclusivity, recognition, and empowerment, DHS can alter perceptions and foster an environment where its personnel feel valued and motivated. Incorporating feedback mechanisms and open channels of communication can ensure that the agency remains attuned to the evolving needs and aspirations of its workforce.

Through astute long-term strategic planning, DHS is poised to not only confront but conquer the recruitment and retention challenges that currently plague it. By addressing the core issues of human capital, attrition, resources, burnout, and organizational attitude, DHS can pave the way for an era marked by resilience, efficiency, and unwavering dedication to its national security mandate.

D. FUTURE RESEARCH

Emerging from the comparative analysis are multiple prospective research trajectories that can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of recruitment and retention challenges within DHS. One avenue involves longitudinal studies that scrutinize the enduring impacts of integrating lower-tier employees into leadership roles, aimed at

providing empirical evidence to affirm or question the efficacy of such initiatives in bolstering morale and retention. Another direction for inquiry could be the evaluation of data-driven policy outcomes. This evaluation could include comparative analyses between DHS units that have integrated data analytics into their decision-making frameworks and those that have not, as well as the ethical dimensions associated with leveraging data analytics in human resources.

The role of financial incentives also warrants closer examination. A cost-benefit analysis could be deployed to assess the return on investment for financial perks like targeted bonuses and wage hikes, while a separate study might scrutinize the equity implications of such incentives to ascertain if they yield disproportionate advantages or disadvantages to demographic segments within the DHS. Furthermore, the effectiveness of multi-faceted strategies—spanning holistic well-being programs and cultural assessments—could be empirically evaluated to determine their impact on employee satisfaction, operational effectiveness, and long-term retention.

In the realm of governance and community support, stakeholder analysis could illuminate which internal and external actors most significantly influence DHS policy, and how their endorsement or lack thereof affects recruitment and retention. Complementary to this support structure, an appraisal of community and private sector partnerships could elucidate their role in shaping the public perception of DHS, and by extension, its recruiting and retention capabilities. Additionally, cross-sectoral studies could explore how DHS might collaborate with or learn from other agencies or sectors facing analogous challenges, thereby enriching its own strategic approach to workforce management. Lastly, post-implementation case studies could serve as valuable empirical evaluations of specific reforms, potentially offering granular insights into what works and what requires recalibration.

These myriad avenues for future research collectively enrich our understanding of the complexities involved in DHS recruitment and retention, thereby providing a substantive foundation upon which to build more adaptive and effective policy interventions.

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