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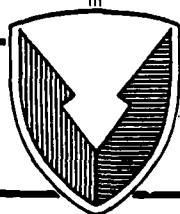
TECHNICAL REPORT CPO-90-6

**RECRUITMENT OF THE HANDICAPPED
AT THE U.S. ARMY MISSILE COMMAND
FY 84 - FY 89**

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Recruitment and Placement Branch
Personnel and Training Directorate

JULY 1990

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U.S. ARMY MISSILE COMMAND

Redstone Arsenal, Alabama 35898-5000

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I. INTRODUCTION

Equal rights for all citizens has been one of the primary, or perhaps the primary, social movement in the United States since the end of World War II. Within this movement, and almost overlooked at times, has been an attempt to awaken the American collective consciousness to the needs and concerns of the physically and mentally handicapped citizens [1]. The disabled are a large minority group, however, they have not been a vocal or active group in calling attention to either their individual or collective needs.

The concept of discrimination because of disability has been difficult for most Americans to accept and, for some, that the disabled actually exist. Schultz and Schultz state: "The impetus for the civil rights movement for the handicapped is rooted in the demographic fact that handicapped individuals are estimated to make up 17 percent of the working age population in the United States" [2]. Frey, in 1985, stated: "The unemployment rate in the United States for disabled workers is 72.6 percent." Additionally, Frey stated: "The poverty rate is 26 percent for disabled workers, while only 10 percent for people without disabilities" [3].

II. BACKGROUND

The American society has, and has always had, concern for the welfare of handicapped persons; however, this concern has never been appropriately emphasized to insure equal employment opportunities for the handicapped. The physically and mentally handicapped represent a disadvantaged minority group that, for the most part, have been unable to provide for their own livelihood and had to rely on public assistance, not only for support but for basic survival. The Federal Government, since 1963, has initiated numerous actions to improve the employment opportunities and labor standards for handicapped persons [4]. The opportunity to earn a living is still an elusive goal for many handicapped persons despite efforts of the Federal Government and other concerned organizations and individuals.

Architectural and other type barriers often cause difficulties for the handicapped to receive adequate educational training. Those fortunate enough to attain the proper training often find it very difficult to obtain jobs related to their abilities and at pay that is commensurate with that of the nondisabled. There is a tendency, among persons responsible for hiring, to ignore qualifications because of disabilities that are unrelated to job performance.

III. DISCUSSION

Most areas of our society do not provide full access to our handicapped citizens. The moderately handicapped individuals are, in most cases, able to overcome this lack of access, however, the severely handicapped are not as fortunate. The severely handicapped are in the Department of the Army's special recruitment category of targeted disabilities which are defined as: deaf, blind, missing extremities, partial or complete paralysis, convulsive disorder, mentally retarded, mental illness, and distortion of limb and or spine.

American society has made progress in eliminating barriers to the handicapped; however, public transportation, in most cases, is not accessible to the severely handicapped. As a result, they are unable to freely move about to obtain needed education and training and to compete in the workplace when they are fortunate enough to find employment. The problems handicapped persons face was reported by Thoben [1], where she states:

Architectural barriers and discrimination by landlords often exclude the disabled from public or private housing areas. Many cannot use public streets because of high curbs; they are denied access to a theater or restaurant because the presence of a wheelchair or crutches supposedly constitutes a fire hazard; they are denied employment because the office space is too small for a wheelchair; they are denied the right to test drive a car before purchasing it because of the need to use a hand-control; they are denied protection from the economic exploitation reflected in the high prices of drugs and special equipment.

There are numerous areas that need to be addressed regarding handicapped individuals. Employment is one of the most significant in terms of defining an individuals self-worth, social acceptance, and equal opportunity in our society. The Federal Government has long been the leader in employment of the handicapped. Thoben [1] reports that in 1948, Public Law 617 was enacted to amend the Civil Service Act to state "that no person shall be discriminated against in any case because of any physical impairment." There still exists, however, substantial barriers to employment for the handicapped. In spite of the support of Federal, State, and local governments, and the increasing activity of handicapped groups and their advocates, there yet remains a serious employment problem.

A six-year study of recruitment efforts in hiring the handicapped at the U.S. Army Missile Command was conducted to determine if this Command was within established DA goals. The study was twofold in nature; first, to determine if the Command was meeting the goal of 4 percent handicapped accessions against total accessions and secondly, was the Command meeting the goal of 1.5 percent of targeted disabilities against total accessions.

IV. RESULTS

The population considered in this study included all persons hired from outside Government service into the U.S. Army Missile Command from fiscal year (FY) 84 through FY 89. Total hires were considered along with total of handicapped hires and total of targeted disability hires. Total population of this study was 6,523.

As evidenced from the data presented in Tables 1 and 2, the U.S. Army Missile Command exceeded the 4 percent DA goal for each of the 6 years under study. In recruitment year FY 89, the 7.25 percent recruitment almost doubled the DA goal of 4 percent. In contrast, the accessions for the targeted disabilities (the more severely handicapped) did not meet the DA goal in any recruitment year under study and in only two of the years did the Command come within 50 percent of meeting the goal.

TABLE 1. USAMICOM Recruitment of Handicapped.

FY	TOTAL ACCESSIONS	ACCESSIONS WITH HANDICAP	DA GOAL	% OF TOTAL
89	813	59	(4%)	7.25%
88	613	31	(4%)	5.05%
87	1,386	62	(4%)	4.47%
86	1,083	64	(4%)	5.90%
85	1,122	50	(4%)	4.45%
84	1,506	81	(4%)	5.37%

TABLE 2. USAMICOM Recruitment of Handicapped (Targeted).

FY	TOTAL ACCESSIONS	ACCESSIONS TARGETED DISABILITIES	DA GOAL	% OF TOTAL
89	813	4	(1.5%)	0.49%
88	613	3	(1.5%)	0.48%
87	1,386	13	(1.5%)	0.93%
86	1,083	4	(1.5%)	0.93%
85	1,122	7	(1.5%)	0.62%
84	1,506	13	(1.5%)	0.86%

V. CONCLUSION

This study reveals that an agency such as the DA, which has developed an affirmative action program for the handicapped and has the support of top management, can meet the overall goals for recruiting the handicapped but still have difficulty in meeting the goals for the severely handicapped.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

There are many reasons for the lack of success in recruiting the severely handicapped. These reasons range from the fact that the severely handicapped face much more difficulty in developing a productive skill, being able to actively seek employment, cost of modifying equipment in the work place to accommodate them, etc. The more subtle or hidden reasons for the lack of success in employing the severely handicapped need to be addressed by employment and career counselors. Career counselors and rehabilitation centers need to insure that severely handicapped individuals are provided training in accordance with what the work place has to offer in employment opportunities. Employment counselors need to develop in-service training programs to help raise the consciousness of managers concerning their own hidden prejudices toward handicapped individuals, which leads to discrimination. A study supporting the existence of this form of discrimination involved 50 employment agencies that were visited by a qualified job applicant. In half of the visits, the applicant was in a wheelchair and in the other half, the applicant was ambulatory. The qualifications were the same in both situations. The "handicapped" job applicant was given fewer job interviews by the employment agencies and was actively discouraged from looking for routine employment [5]. This prejudice against hiring the handicapped worker is totally at variance with actual job performance. Research by personnel psychologists in a variety of organizations has consistently shown that handicapped employees perform at least as well as, and in many cases better than, non-handicapped employees [6]. Companies such as Dupont, 3M, McDonnell Douglas, Control Data Corporation, Sears, and Inland Steel have routinely hired handicapped workers because they make good employees [7]. As the U.S. moves into a period of insufficient workers to meet employer's demand, it becomes more and more important to consider all qualified applicants regardless of the source. Some 36 million people in the U.S. have some mental or physical handicap, and many of them have found it difficult to secure employment because of the bias against them held by many employing organizations. The handicapped include not only persons with hearing, vision, motor and mental disorders, but also those with less visible conditions such as arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, cancer, and back problems [2]. Together these groups constitute approximately 17 percent of all Americans of working age and some 7 percent of college freshmen [8] [6].

Elementary school counselors and teachers should be made aware of the early age that children develop negative attitudes toward the handicapped. Researchers have consistently documented the existence of negative attitudes toward people with physical disabilities and have claimed that these attitudes developed during childhood [9]. Elementary counselors and teachers with proper training can begin attempts to uproot negative attitudes at an early age. It is imperative to examine what factors influence the development of attitudes, either positively or negatively. Because events that occur in

childhood have a lasting impact, young children are a particularly important target group for attitude enrichment programs. Through such programs, positive experiences introduced early in life should be effective in overcoming and preventing further adherence to stereotypes associated with disability [10]. If rehabilitation placement specialists are to make much needed progress in the placement of handicapped individuals, they must increase their understanding of the ability to relate to employers. Martin and Viecel [11] state that the more the placement counselor understands and can use business language, the more comfortable the employer will be in talking with the counselor. They list the following as basic keys to improvement of placement:

1. There is a need to understand that an employer factors human resources inputs into a basic cost/benefit equation and generally hires a person if convinced that the benefits exceed and/or equal the costs of the human resource input.
2. To understand that there are different levels of membership within an organization, each with a different skill mix, and that fitting the client's skills into that framework has an important placement purpose.
3. Managers have to perform certain managerial functions and if the disabled client can help the manager perform these functions, then the client has the opportunity to provide additional benefits to the organization.

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