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**MSPB RECOMMENDS BETTER MANAGEMENT OF
SENIOR EXECUTIVE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

The U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) issued a new report, [*Training and Development for the Senior Executive Service: A Necessary Investment*](#). The report examines current Federal agency practices in executive development, focusing on the career Senior Executive Service (SES). Members of the career SES lead major programs and organizations, provide continuity during Presidential transitions, and typically serve through multiple administrations.

Training and development can improve individual and organizational performance when properly planned, designed, and delivered. In light of their responsibilities, the number of people they supervise, and the scale of the funds and resources they control, training and development is especially important for senior executives. As MSPB Chairman Susan Tsui Grundmann noted, “Even a small improvement in a senior executive’s skills and leadership can produce a marked improvement in results. For that reason, agencies other stake holders should view SES training and development as a necessary investment in performance, rather than an optional or unnecessary expenditure.”

Investment in SES training and development is not just a good business decision; it is also the Federal Government’s policy. The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 envisioned the SES would be managed to “provide for the initial and continuing systematic development of highly competent senior executives.”

However, data collected by MSPB and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) suggest that reality falls well short of this vision. First, development planning is inconsistent. Civil service regulation requires that each senior executive complete an

Executive Development Plan to guide his or her developmental activities. Yet, in a 2011 OPM survey, only half of career senior executives reported that they had done so. Second, the amount and types of training offered to executives varies widely across agencies, and sometimes even within agencies. Finally, a substantial portion (30 percent) of career senior executives believes that their developmental needs are not met. For many executives, investment in their development appears to be insufficient, inappropriately targeted, or both.

Accordingly, the report recommends that Federal agencies take a systematic approach to the training and development of senior executives. To help agencies develop and implement a strategy that best suits the executives' needs and aligns with agency goals and resources, the report—

- Identifies common barriers to training and development;
- Offers strategies to mitigate those barriers; and
- Examines training and development activities and provides information on their background, advantages, disadvantages, effectiveness, and costs.

This information can help agencies design an appropriate plan for training and developing their executives.

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