



Merit Systems Protection Board

Contact: Michael Hoxie
(202) 653-6772, ext. 1171
V/TDD 1-800-877-8339
(Federal Relay Service)

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MSPB'S OPM RETROSPECTIVE CITES BOTH ACHIEVEMENTS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has achieved many successes during its first 20 years in operation and is to be commended for its role in realizing the Civil Service Reform Act's vision for decentralization and deregulation of Federal human resources management (HRM) and for its revitalized program for overseeing Federal HRM. However, a number of critical, longstanding problems remain unresolved. In particular, OPM needs to respond in a more vigorous and timely manner to program areas such as applicant examining and employee compensation policies and practices. These are the conclusions of a new report issued today by the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB or the Board).

The report, "The U.S. Office of Personnel Management in Retrospect: Achievements and Challenges After Two Decades," also commends OPM for its equal opportunity and family-friendly workplace initiatives. At the same time, the report expresses the Board's concern that downsizing and dwindling resources have affected the way OPM operates and has threatened agency HRM effectiveness. Other areas of major concern include the Government's classification system, which has not changed in over 60 years, although the nature of work has changed tremendously in that time. Similarly, the Federal staffing

system has not been reformed in any significant way during OPM's existence, despite the need for easier and faster ways to hire talented individuals for Federal jobs.

The study on which the report is based was not intended as an all-inclusive examination of OPM's programs and activities. Rather, it provides an overall assessment of OPM's performance, while focusing on OPM's role in a number of significant improvements in human resources programs and processes. At the same time, it identifies some critical areas—such as compensation and staffing issues—that need more effective OPM leadership.

The report is the third in the Board's "Perspectives" series, which looks at human resources issues from the broad viewpoint provided by the Board's growing body of research. The report derives its conclusions from research on OPM activities and Federal HR issues over 20 years.

Order copies of the report from the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, Office of Policy and Evaluation, 1615 M Street, NW, Washington, DC, 20419; telephone (202) 653-6772, extension 1350; V/TDD 1-800-877-8339; or e-mail to studies@mspb.gov. The report may also be downloaded from the "Studies" area on the Board's website, <http://www.mspb.gov>.

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