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THESIS

**IF YOU LOVE THEM, LET THEM GO:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ROTATIONAL PROGRAMS
AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE HOMELAND
SECURITY ENTERPRISE**

by

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March 2021

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OF ROTATIONAL PROGRAMS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR THE HOMELAND SECURITY ENTERPRISE**

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ABSTRACT

Rotational programs—whereby employees temporarily work within a different part of an organization to gain new skills and knowledge—have become the rage across the country. Benefits of these programs in the private sector include continual learning, agility in job skills, and a “try before you buy” approach to job satisfaction for both the employee and employer. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has implemented two rotational programs; however, these initiatives are in the early stages of implementation, and their effectiveness remains unclear. To identify opportunities for optimization, this thesis draws upon the work of Campion and Griffiths to analyze case studies from mature federal rotational programs within the Department of Defense and the Intelligence Community and determines the benefits and challenges of each. Based on these findings, it investigates to what degree DHS can leverage best practices from these programs to strengthen its workforce, augment the effectiveness of the program design, and fulfill the mission of the programs. Ultimately, DHS has opportunities to improve on key elements, such as inclusivity, encouraging participation through credits and incentives, ensuring a strong foundation for the program, and developing a continual review process through metrics, data collection, and review.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CBP	Customs and Border Protection
CISA	Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DHS OIG	DHS Office of Inspector General
DOD	Department of Defense
E-JDAs	experience-based joint duty assignments
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GNA	Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act
GS	General Schedule
HSRP	Homeland Security Rotational Program
IC	Intelligence Community
ICD	Intelligence Community Directive
ICPG	Intelligence Community Policy Guidance
IG	Inspector General
JDA	joint duty assignments
JDAL	Joint Duty Assignment List
NPS	Naval Postgraduate School
NSPD	National Security Professional Development
ODNI	Office of the Director of National Intelligence
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
PKEMRA	Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act
S-JDAs	standard joint duty assignments

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rotational programs and developmental assignments—whereby employees temporarily work within a different part of an organization to gain new skills and knowledge—have become the rage across the country. Benefits observed in the private sector include continual learning, agility in job skills, and a “try before you buy” approach to job satisfaction for both the employee and employer. *Forbes* published an article in 2016 claiming that rotational assignments may be key in employee retention, especially among millennials and those entering the job market.¹ This newer generation seeks job satisfaction and the opportunity for frequent and recurring training. Major companies like Facebook are capitalizing on rotations, typically lasting one to two years, to develop future leaders within their organizations.² The marketing and application of these programs suggest that companies value these options to attract top candidates and to capitalize on the desire of new employees to have a vast array of choices and experiences early in their careers.

The federal government has also undertaken several initiatives to enhance professional developmental opportunities and offer rotational assignments to employees. In particular, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has outlined the importance of workforce development and culture in its policies and campaigns. For example, the 2020–2024 DHS Strategic Plan lists developing a high-performing workforce as one of the priorities of the department. The plan outlines that this development can be accomplished through recruiting and maintaining talent, as well as increasing opportunities for professional development and advancement.³ DHS has tried multiple approaches to creating a collaborative culture through the “One DHS” campaign—the efforts to integrate

¹ Kaytie Zimmerman, “Are Rotational Programs the Key to Retaining Millennial Employees,” *Forbes*, August 8, 2016, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kaytiezimmerman/2016/08/08/can-a-millennial-quarter-life-crisis-be-cured-by-their-employer/#6e0668b6446f>.

² “Rotational Project Manager Program,” Facebook RPM Program, accessed October 5, 2018, <http://fbrpms.com>.

³ Department of Homeland Security, *Fiscal Years 2020–2024 Strategic Plan* (Washington, DC: Department of Homeland Security, 2020), 53–54, https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/19_0702_plcy_dhs-strategic-plan-fy20-24.pdf.

departments under a common mission—as well as crowdsourcing ideas from employees for a new mission statement and introducing the Leadership Year initiative.

Offering rotational assignments is another means of augmenting professional development. DHS has developed and branded two new rotational opportunities. The first is the Homeland Security Rotational Program (HSRP), which aims to help personnel “develop a broader understanding of the DHS mission through assignments that cross organizational lines.”⁴ The second rotational program is the DHS Joint Duty Program, which is intended to give middle- and senior-level staff the opportunity to work temporarily in inter- and intra-departmental organizations. These newly branded initiatives are in the early stages of implementation, but DHS has recently updated and expanded departmental rotational programs. These programs could be a solution to the challenges DHS has faced in bolstering and developing the workforce.

However, the effectiveness of DHS rotational programs remains unclear. No in-depth evaluation of the benefits and challenges of rotational assignments in government has been conducted, which makes information on this issue elusive. However, both the Department of Defense (DOD) and the Intelligence Community (IC) have mature joint duty rotational assignments. These programs offer an opportunity to understand the organization of a structured, established rotational program to glean best practices and ascertain optimal functionality.

This thesis therefore asks the following questions:

- What are the current benefits and challenges of DHS rotational programs?
- What are the benefits and challenges of rotational programs analogous to those in DHS?
- To what degree could DHS leverage best practices from the rotational programs of other federal agencies to strengthen the DHS workforce?

⁴ Department of Homeland Security, *Homeland Security Rotation Program (HSRP) Frequently Asked Questions* (Washington, DC: Department of Homeland Security, 2018), v5.

To answer these questions, this research draws upon Michael C. Campion, Lisa Cheraskin, and Michael J. Stevens's study on rotational programs and the thesis work of John Griffiths, which provide foundational insight into essential elements of a well-designed rotational program.⁵ Using these benchmarks, it assesses the benefits, challenges, and best practices of rotational or joint duty assignments in the federal government, examines the extent to which these programs are well designed according to criteria established in the literature relative to comparable programs, and provides recommendations to DHS on how to implement its rotational programs more effectively.

This research finds that, although the DHS rotational programs are in the early years of implementation, two key elements of the program are well designed. The first is that two distinct rotational programs are in existence vice one program. Since more employees can take advantage of rotational opportunities by way of the two programs, DHS can encourage the cross-pollination of its staff and fulfill the mission of employees' acquiring organizational knowledge. The second is that some staff are designated to promoting and coordinating these programs, which ensures that the programs are highlighted and endorsed within the agency.

However, when comparing the HSRP and the DHS Joint Duty program with key elements of rotational programs, as well as best practices derived from the case studies, it is apparent that DHS programs have many opportunities for optimization. To augment the effectiveness and fulfill the mission of the programs, DHS has opportunities to improve on key elements, such as inclusivity, encouraging participation through credits and incentives, ensuring a strong foundation for the program, and developing a continual review process through metrics, data collection, and review. These enhancements will ultimately ensure that rotational opportunities within DHS meet the intention of cultivating future generations of homeland security leaders.

⁵ Michael C. Campion, Lisa Cheraskin, and Michael J. Stevens, "Career-related Antecedents and Outcomes of Job Rotation," *Academy of Management Journal* 37, no. 6 (December 1994): 1518, <https://doi.org/10.5465/256797>; John Griffiths, "A Whole of Government Approach through Interagency Partner Development: National Security Professional Development" (master's thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2014), 12–15, <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a611024.pdf>.

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little one—my sweet daughter, my happiness—who was only three weeks old when she joined me during thesis lab. I hope my adventures in higher education will inspire her to reach for her own dreams and realize that anything is possible with determination and desire.

I. INTRODUCTION

Rotational programs and developmental assignments—whereby employees temporarily work within a different part of an organization to gain new skills and knowledge—have become the rage across the country. Benefits observed in the private sector include continual learning, agility in job skills, and a “try before you buy” approach to job satisfaction for both the employee and employer. *Forbes* published an article in 2016 claiming that rotational assignments may be key in employee retention, especially among millennials and those entering the job market.¹ This newer generation seeks job satisfaction and the opportunity for frequent and recurring training. Major companies like Facebook are capitalizing on rotations typically lasting 1–2 years to develop future leaders within their organizations.² The application and marketing of these programs suggest that companies value these options to attract top candidates and to capitalize on the desire of new employees to have a vast array of choices and experiences early in their career.

The federal government has also undertaken several initiatives to enhance professional developmental opportunities and offer rotational assignments to employees. In particular, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has outlined the importance of workforce development and culture in policies and campaigns. For example, the 2020–2024 DHS Strategic Plan lists developing a high-performing workforce as one of the priorities for the department. The plan outlines that this development can be accomplished through recruiting and maintaining talent, as well as increasing opportunities for professional development and advancement.³ Offering rotational assignments is one means of augmenting professional development. DHS has tried multiple approaches to creating a collaborative culture through the “One DHS” campaign campaign—the efforts to integrate

¹ Kaytie Zimmerman, “Are Rotational Programs the Key to Retaining Millennial Employees,” *Forbes*, August 8, 2016, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kaytiezimmerman/2016/08/08/can-a-millennial-quarter-life-crisis-be-cured-by-their-employer/#6e0668b6446f>.

² “Rotational Project Manager Program,” Facebook RPM Program, accessed October 5, 2018, <http://fbrpms.com>.

³ Department of Homeland Security, *Fiscal Years 2020–2024 Strategic Plan* (Washington, DC: Department of Homeland Security, 2020), 53–54, https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/19_0702_plcy_dhs-strategic-plan-fy20-24.pdf.

departments under a common mission—as well as crowdsourcing ideas from employees for a new mission statement and introducing the Leadership Year initiative. DHS has recently updated and expanded departmental rotational programs, but these newly branded initiatives are in the early stages of implementation. These rotational programs could be a solution to the challenges DHS has faced in bolstering and developing the workforce.

However, the effectiveness of DHS rotational programs remains unclear. Although rotational programs prove successful in the private sector, in government agencies, ascertaining program effectiveness may prove more difficult. Federal agencies have a clearly defined and articulated public service mission, with specific goals and parameters that do not vary much from year to year. Fluctuations in the economic and political environment and cultural climate may have some effect on strategy, but agency missions remain steadfast. Government culture encourages stability, whereas creative thinking and innovation may be downplayed or suppressed. Unlike industry, governmental organizations may be constrained by money and resources, especially in an era when government budget cuts require departments to do more with less. In addition, the information readily available on the types of programs available to federal employees is lacking. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) website houses an online searchable database of Federal Government Leadership Development Programs. Twelve agencies in the database have established “rotational assignment” programs; however, many only apply to Senior Executive Service candidates.⁴ In addition to the comparative rarity and exclusivity of these programs, no in-depth analysis of the benefits and challenges of rotational assignments in government has been conducted, which makes evaluation elusive. In particular, established long-standing, strategic rotational programs are limited in the homeland security enterprise, and minimal data has been collected on their effects related to morale and retention.

However, both the Department of Defense (DOD) and the Intelligence Community (IC) have mature joint duty rotational assignments. These programs aim to develop leaders

⁴ “Federal Leadership Development Programs,” Agency Services, Office of Personnel Management, accessed September 29, 2018, <https://www.opm.gov/services-for-agencies/federal-leadership-development-programs/#url=Overview>.

who have a broader perspective of the security enterprise and can understand and integrate concepts among differing and distinct components at a strategic level. Senior level promotions require these joint duty assignments (JDAs), which are considered a necessity for enhancing skills to collaborate within and among other security components in government. These programs offer an opportunity to understand the organization of a structured, established rotational program to glean best practices and optimal functionality.

Through an examination and study of rotational benefits, similar programs, existing data, and best practices, recommendations can be proposed to ensure these opportunities within DHS meet the intention of cultivating future generations of homeland security leaders.

A. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This thesis examines the following questions:

- What are the current benefits and challenges of the DHS rotational programs?
- What are the benefits and challenges of rotational programs analogous to DHS?
- To what degree could DHS leverage best practices from the rotational programs of other federal agencies to strengthen the DHS workforce?

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review defines rotational programs and explores the principles behind and design of these types of collaborative assignments. The review examines studies and literature that address common practices and benefits of rotational programs including government policies, official reports, agency and industry websites, think tanks, scholarly studies, and journals.

1. Rotational Programs—Definition, Benefits, and Application

While scholars disagree on the intention and outcome of professional job rotations, the majority of the literature describes rotational programs as a lateral transfer of an employee from one job in an organization to another. In *Business: The Ultimate Resource*, Jonathan Law defines job rotation as “the movement of employees through a variety of jobs in order to increase interest and motivation.”⁵ The Society for Human Resource Management further characterizes job rotations as lasting for a year or longer in some cases.⁶ Job rotations can vary in time and length, but the main objective of a rotation is to expose employees to cross-training opportunities by working in a new area and learning new skills. This thesis explores different subcategories of rotational assignments to include details, rotations, and joint duty programs. The study does not include internship programs, mentorship programs, or short-term shadowing opportunities.

Rotational programs can prove beneficial to organizations. Scholars widely concur that corporations benefit from offering rotational programs to their employees at various stages in their careers. One report from *Organizational Development* projected that businesses invest more than \$200 billion on training and development programs, which increasingly includes rotational programs.⁷ Not all job rotations incur a cost, however, and can be considered as a viable option for a low-expense training solution to meet the government's needs.

Previous studies have examined both benefits and the application of rotational programs in government specific to elements in within the military, intelligence, and security community. In her thesis on rotational assignments for military acquisition

⁵ Jonathan Law, “Dictionary,” in *Business: The Ultimate Resource*, 3rd ed. (London: A&C Black, 2011), <https://search.credoreference.com/content/title/ultimatebusiness>.

⁶ Margaret Fiester, Angie Collis, and Naomi Cossack, “Job Rotation, Total Rewards, Measuring Value,” *HR Magazine*, August 1, 2008, <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/pages/0808hrsolutions.aspx>.

⁷ Scott J. Allen, “Job Related Interventions as Sources of Learning in Leadership Development: Widely Used in Industry—Wildly Absent in the Literature,” *Organization Development Journal* 1, no. 1 (March 2013): 39–54. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263580624_Job_Related_Interventions_as_Sources_of_Learning_in_Leadership_Development_Widely_Used_in_Industry_-_Wildly_Absent_in_the_Literature.

professionals, Jennifer Worton outlines three main benefits of rotational assignments: innovation, morale, and networking.⁸ Her research supports the claim that rotational assignments could assist in retaining employees in key specialized positions. Similarly, the Office of Personnel Management touts the benefits of rotational development assignments not only as a learning opportunity but also as a vehicle to “break down cultural barriers and promote professional relationships that have valuable practical applications during national security missions.”⁹ Griffiths specifically examined joint duty requirements under the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 (GNA) and how this program could be applied to develop national security professionals.¹⁰ Former Director of Civilian Personnel for the Defense Department Ronald Sanders stated that many claim the joint duty requirement and unifying effects of the GNA ultimately led to the successes of Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm.¹¹ Sanders advocates using the GNA joint duty model and adapting it for civilian government professionals. He argues that it should be a requirement for national security staff to rotate to different posts across security-related agencies before receiving a senior-level promotion.¹² While the IC has adopted this requirement, it has not been similarly embraced for the federal homeland security enterprise. The literature agrees that adopting principles of GNA into homeland security opportunities can similarly enhance jointness among discrete and isolated homeland security entities.

⁸ Jennifer Worton, “Retaining a Resilient and Enduring Workforce: Examination of Duty/Position Rotational Assignments for Civilian Acquisition Positions” (master’s thesis, Defense Acquisition University, 2015), 14–20, <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/1040569.pdf>.

⁹ Office of Personnel Management, *National Strategy for the Development of Security Professionals* (Washington, DC: Office of Personnel Management, 2007), 8.

¹⁰ John Griffiths, “A Whole of Government Approach through Interagency Partner Development: National Security Professional Development” (master’s thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2014), 16–44, <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a611024.pdf>.

¹¹ Ronald Sanders, “Leading the National Security Enterprise,” *Prism: a Journal of the Center for Complex Operations* 7, no. 1 (2017): 33–45, <http://cco.ndu.edu/PRISM-7-1/Article/1298309/leading-the-national-security-enterprise/>.

¹² Sanders, 33–45.

2. DHS Rotational Opportunities—History and Status

The history of leadership development, training, and rotational programs in DHS has been riddled with turmoil and instability. Both the DHS Office of Inspector General (DHS OIG) and the Government Accountability Office (GAO) have noted, in multiple reports, the insufficient progress DHS has made in training and equipping its workforce. In DHS OIG’s report *Major Management and Performance Challenges Facing the Department of Homeland Security*, auditors claimed, “the Department does not always determine how to properly support employees once hired to ensure they are well-equipped to carry out their responsibilities while maintaining a high level of morale.”¹³ The report did not contain official recommendations, but sternly stated DHS has yet to exhibit improvements in performance and development issues. Various employee development initiatives have waxed and waned as the department has matured, and currently DHS has two different types of rotational opportunities for employees to work in other components of the organization to work outside their normal mission scope.

The initial DHS Rotational Program was designed to nurture a team culture among DHS and encourage information sharing across components. According to DHS, “rotational assignments are one means to obtain depth and breadth of experience while cross-pollinating knowledge, experience and corporate perspective.”¹⁴ This directive focused on assignments within the DHS enterprise, but allowed for certain opportunities outside the department both nationally and internationally, in related homeland security disciplines. Yet, the initiative contained no evaluation component to assess whether the program delivered the intended benefits as envisioned.

Another recent program similar in design to the program enacted under the GNA is the DHS Joint Duty Program for employees at higher career levels. While detail assignments and rotations are limited in length and scope, the Joint Duty program is

¹³ John Roth, *Major Management and Performance Challenges Facing the Department of Homeland Security*, OIG-18-11 (Washington, DC: Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General, 2017), 5.

¹⁴ Department of Homeland Security, *Rotational Assignments*, DHS Directive 250–01 (Washington, DC: Department of Homeland Security, 2007), 4, https://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/foia/mgmt_rotational%20assignments_md%20250-01.pdf.

intended for senior professionals to spend one year in another DHS agency or outside the department. Unfortunately, the benefits of neither the DHS Rotational Program nor the Joint Duty Program were ever validated in any formal or informal study that can be located.

3. Scholarship, Studies, and Evaluation

Although it is widely accepted among academics that rotational programs are an essential and effective ingredient in overall professional development design, few studies conducted on the usefulness and return on investment of these programs have been conclusive. A few prominent but dated studies include those conducted in the private sector, internationally, and more specifically, a few studies that examined rotational programs as a deterrent to developing musculoskeletal injuries.¹⁵ Their findings showed a connection between rotational assignments and higher output or performance after the subsequent position exchange.¹⁶ Additionally, a common theme among the studies supported benefits of general rotational assignments, including increased flexibility, diversification, and enhanced skill sets. Tangentially, rotations also increased job satisfaction.

Michael C. Campion, Lisa Cheraskin, and Michael J. Stevens in 1994 conducted a key foundational study at a large pharmaceutical company that did validate some of the advantages claimed for job rotations.¹⁷ Polling 255 employees of the company, Campion and his team discovered multiple outcomes: participation was more common for high-performing employees early in their career, employees perceived an increase in their knowledge and skills after the assignment, and a rotational program decreased satisfaction in those not participating. Benefits of rotation included increased commitment to the

¹⁵ S. Asensio-Cuesta et al., “A Method to Design Job Rotation Schedules to Prevent Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders in Repetitive Work,” *International Journal of Production Research* 50, no. 24 (2012): 1–12.

¹⁶ Patrick Kampkötter, Christine Harbring, and Dirk Sliwka, “Job Rotation and Employee Performance—Evidence from a Longitudinal Study in the Financial Services Industry,” *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 29, no. 10 (2018): 1709–1735, DOI: 10.1080/09585192.2016.1209227.

¹⁷ Michael C. Campion, Lisa Cheraskin, and Michael J. Stevens, “Career-related Antecedents and Outcomes of Job Rotation,” *Academy of Management Journal* 37, no. 6 (December 1994): 1518, <https://doi.org/10.5465/256797>.

company, expanded networking, continual learning, and enhanced self-awareness of skills and strengths.

Both Worton and Griffiths conducted interviews and surveys of subjects in their theses to capture thoughts and general rotational practices. Worton's results were more conclusive. One of her key findings was that rotational assignments must be flexible and strategic and have support from supervisors and managers in an organization. Additionally, she ranked accountability as an essential factor in success for both management and employees' commitment to continual learning.¹⁸ Additional research lacks depth on effectiveness and outcomes of rotational assignments in the public sector.

Multiple schools of thought approach how to best measure the effectiveness of rotational programs. Using a qualitative approach, Griffiths developed six criteria for examining rotational assignments: interagency culture, shared values, mission, mandates, an expeditionary mindset, and funding.¹⁹ By contrast, Campion, Cheraskin, and Stevens's study concluded with eight proposals to ensure a successful rotational program:

- Job rotation should be managed as a piece of the training and career development function.
- Organizations should be clear about the specific skills they hope to develop with job rotation.
- Job rotation should be used with employees at all levels of the organization; not just exempt employees.
- Use job rotation with both older (plateaued) and younger employees. This rotation may help retention and keep people engaged.
- Job rotation can serve as a career development intervention without offering a promotion.

¹⁸ Worton, "Retaining a Resilient and Enduring Workforce," 74–75.

¹⁹ Griffiths, "A Whole of Government Approach through Interagency Partner Development," 12–15.

- Job rotation plans for women and minority workers should be given special attention.
- Job rotation should be linked with the career development function so the path of needed skills and abilities is clear.
- Systems that maximize the benefits of job rotation and minimize costs should be implemented.²⁰

These suggestions can be used as a baseline when examining current professional rotational opportunities and predicting long-term success of the program. Although scholars widely agree on the benefits and challenges of rotation programs, no theory or results adequately validates them. Using benchmarks proposed by Campion, Cheraskin, and Stevens and Griffiths could better evaluate rotational assignments and case studies could provide a more concrete analysis based on models.

C. RESEARCH DESIGN

The intention of this thesis is to assess the benefits, challenges, and best practices of rotational or JDAs in the federal government, the extent to which these programs are successful as established in literature and other comparable programs, and to provide recommendations to DHS on how to implement its rotational programs more effectively. To that end, this thesis is a qualitative study of select federal government rotational opportunities to include JDAs and rotational programs. Policies, logistics, best practices, short- and long-term implications of programs, successes, and challenges are dissected. A majority of government agencies has rotational assignments available to employees; however, this study focuses on those most similar to programs available DHS. The thesis is bound by specific case studies and examines the Joint Duty Program within the DOD and the IC. Criteria established from previous studies on job rotation (Campion, Cheraskin, and Stevens) and established methodology (Griffiths) is used in the case study analysis as a guideline for current and future success. These measures assist in assessing and shaping

²⁰ Allen, "Job Related Interventions as Sources of Learning in Leadership Development," 39–54.

recommendations for DHS rotational programs. By examining current available research and reports, this thesis synthesizes and compares findings to develop strategic recommendations for homeland security rotational assignments, including effective strategies, policies, and methods to achieve program goals and success.

Overarching analyses and comprehensive studies on rotational programs is restricted. Similarly, data and statistics regarding former and current participation in these programs to ascertain their popularity and intended effectiveness are limited in nature. However, sources and data are derived from government reports, academic research on the topic, and human capital policies and statistics. Open source documentation is examined for comparisons, and policies obtained from specific agencies or programs are scrutinized for more in-depth analysis.

D. OVERVIEW OF UPCOMING CHAPTERS

The remainder of this thesis is organized as follows: Chapter II delves into the history and current status of DHS rotational programs with an examination on current initial best practices. Chapter III and IV examine case studies on the IC's Joint Duty Program and the DOD's JDAs under the Joint Duty Officer Management program. Both chapters focus on the history of the programs, the missions and goals of each, and synthesize the benefits and challenges facing these opportunities. Best practices and brief recommendations are outlined for each.

Finally, Chapter V offers a synopsis of the previous case studies and details key elements of each program that should be considered for adoption or adaptation into DHS rotational programs. Additional recommendations are made for DHS to encourage rotational assignments as a low cost professional development opportunity to fill hard to replace vacant positions, expand skillsets for future leaders, optimize performance, and create flexibilities among workforce staffing.

II. CASE STUDY—DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Determining best practices and opportunities for improvement for DHS rotational programs requires first understanding the opportunities and offerings available to DHS employees since the department was established in 2002. DHS has struggled with executing a stable rotational program since it was founded. This chapter examines the history of rotational programs within the department, reviews parameters and policies of current DHS rotational programs, and analyzes benefits and challenges of these rotational offerings available to DHS staff. Furthermore, a comprehensive analysis of current DHS rotational programs will assess these programs according to optimal rotational criteria derived from the work of Campion, Cheraskin, and Stevens and Griffiths. Based on this analysis, the initial best practices of the current program are outlined.

A. HISTORY OF DHS ROTATIONAL PROGRAMS

Rotational programs within DHS began through official decree in the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA), Public Law 109–295, passed on October 4, 2006.²¹ This act established the Homeland Security Rotation Program, which was intended for departmental employees at the mid- to senior-career levels. Prior to this department-wide program, the Homeland Security Act of 2002, which created DHS, only required a managerial rotation program within the Bureau of Border Security and Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services.²² These bureau-specific programs were intended to allow personnel in higher-level management positions to rotate through different major bureau operations and also have the opportunity to work in a local field office. PKEMRA further codified and extended this rotational program to all employees at the department. It did not expressly establish eligibility requirements or grade-level limitations; however,

²¹ Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006, Public Law 109-295, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 120 (2006): 1355–1463, <https://www.congress.gov/109/plaws/publ295/PLAW-109publ295.pdf>.

²² Homeland Security Act of 2002, Public Law 107-296, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 116 (2002): 2193–95, https://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/hr_5005_enr.pdf.

the program was targeted to mid- and senior-level staff.²³ The intentions of the program were clear:

Expand the knowledge base of the Department by providing for rotational assignments of employees to other components; build professional relationships and contacts among the employees in the Department; invigorate the workforce with exciting and professionally rewarding opportunities; and incorporate Department human capital strategic plans and activities, and address critical human capital deficiencies, recruitment and retention efforts, and succession planning within the Federal workforce of the Department.²⁴

The following year, the department clarified the mission and parameters of the program and issued DHS Directive 250-01 on Rotational Assignments. Through the directive, further participation in the rotational program was restricted to managers and supervisors, senior executives, and employees currently in a career development program.²⁵ However, it did include a disclaimer that exceptions for individuals could be made on a case-by-case basis by the employee's supervisor. The directive highlighted the importance of a unified "Team DHS" culture and touted the significance of rotational assignments as a means to cross-pollinate talents and knowledge among the different facets of the organization, "to effectively carry out the DHS goals, it is imperative that Departmental offices and Components share a common understanding of DHS goals and how Components contribute to achieving them."²⁶

A peripheral precursor to the current DHS rotational program was the National Security Professional Development (NSPD) program. Enacted through Executive Order 13434, the National Security Professional Development program was intended to provide a more formalized venue to educate and train security professionals with the aim of protecting the United States.²⁷ This program, much like the DHS rotational program, was

²³ Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006, 1416–1417.

²⁴ Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006, 1416–1417.

²⁵ Department of Homeland Security, *Rotational Assignments*, 2007, 1.

²⁶ Department of Homeland Security, 4.

²⁷ George W. Bush, Executive Order 13434, "National Security Professional Development," *Code of Federal Regulations*, title 3 (2007 comp.): 28583–28585.

borne of the same concerns arising from Hurricane Katrina: the lack of interagency partnerships and familiarity among different federal components.²⁸ It created a steering committee headed by OPM consisting of multiple members of lead federal departments and agencies, including DHS. The committee was tasked to “ensure an integrated approach” to professional development programs and to identify, enhance, and develop necessary opportunities for advancement and education.²⁹ The Director of OPM was called to “lead the establishment of a national security professional development program...that provides for interagency and intergovernmental assignments and fellowship opportunities and provides for professional development guidelines for career advancement.”³⁰

Thus, the overall vision of the NSPD initiative was to facilitate interagency collaboration. However, the program was slow to start, and according to the GAO, was put on hold in its initial years pending executive review.³¹ The program was reinvigorated in 2011 after the change in presidential administration.³² Nevertheless, according to GAO, only one cohort ever utilized the NSPD design; 16 employees participated in the program in 2012.³³ The NSPD showed promise as a rotational program for understanding homeland and national security among all layers of government. Yet, NSPD has not been fully realized as intended through a “whole-of-society” or “whole-of-nation” approach, a term used by Morton in his analysis of the program.

²⁸ John Fass Morton, *Next-Generation Homeland Security : Network Federalism and the Course to National Preparedness* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2012), 290.

²⁹ Bush, Executive Order 13434, 28584.

³⁰ Bush, 28584.

³¹ Bernice Steinhardt, *National Security: An Overview of Professional Development Activities Intended to Improve Interagency Collaboration*, GAO-11-128 (Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office, 2010), 26.

³² Morton, *Next-Generation Homeland Security*, 293–8.

³³ Brenda S. Farrell, *National Security Personnel: Committed Leadership Is Needed for Implementation of Interagency Rotation Program*, GAO-16-57 (Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office, 2015), 10n22.

Finally, in 2013, Congress established the Interagency Personnel Rotations program, another federal rotation program, which in essence subsumed NSPD.³⁴ Its mission and goal were the same as prior programs were. It further specified that the rotations were to be carried out for the next four years after enactment with no fewer than 20 participants per year.³⁵ However, GAO’s review of the program in November 2015 found that although policies and guidance had been developed in support of the program, the mandated rotations had not yet occurred.³⁶

B. PROGRAM PARAMETERS AND IMPLEMENTATION

These former rotational programs formed the foundation of the current DHS Directive 250-01, *Employee Developmental Rotations Policy*. Published in 2016, the participation guidelines for rotational assignments now allow for the inclusion of all DHS employees.³⁷ The accompanying DHS instruction defines rotations as a temporary placement to another DHS office or other federal agency (to include the White House or Congress) for a period of six months, with a potential extension to one year.³⁸ Furthermore, the instruction clearly differentiates a rotation from a detail assignment: “A Rotational Assignment is not a detail.”³⁹ Whereas a detail assignment is meant to improve the department’s efficiency and meet operational requirements, a rotation is intended to “broaden employee’s skills, help gain organizational knowledge, and enhance personal and professional growth” for “qualified employees and future leaders.”⁴⁰

³⁴ National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013, Public Law 112-239, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 126 (2013): 1974, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-112publ239/pdf/PLAW-112publ239.pdf>.

³⁵ National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013, 1975.

³⁶ Farrell, *National Security Personnel*, 10.

³⁷ Department of Homeland Security, *Employee Developmental Rotations Policy*, DHS Directive 250–01, Revision Number: 01 (Washington, DC: Department of Homeland Security, 2016), 1–3, https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/mgmt/human-resources/mgmt-dir_250-01-employee-developmental-rotations-policy_revision-01.pdf.

³⁸ Department of Homeland Security, 2.

³⁹ Department of Homeland Security, 1.

⁴⁰ Department of Homeland Security, 2–3; “Detail Opportunities,” Department of Homeland Security, accessed October 12, 2018, <http://dhsconnect.dhs.gov/org/comp/mgmt/dhshr/emp/Pages/Detail-Opportunities.aspx>.

Based on its current policies, the department has developed and branded two new rotational opportunities. The first is the Homeland Security Rotational Program (HSRP). The purpose of the HSRP is to “develop a broader understanding of the DHS mission through assignments that cross organizational lines.”⁴¹ The program requires only that applicants must:

- Be full-time federal employee
- Have been with DHS for at least one year, unless part of an intern/student/development program
- Currently performing at a “fully successful” or equivalent level
- Have no disciplinary actions or grievances pending⁴²

Thus, in accordance with the DHS directive, the HSRP is open to all permanent DHS employees at every level. It is a government-wide program “designed to engage and strengthen [the] DHS workforce,” enabling employees “to cultivate leadership qualities, while fulfilling critical mission assignments.”⁴³

The second rotational program is the DHS Joint Duty Program. While both the HSRP and Joint Duty programs were available in 2018 and opportunities were posted on the DHS internal website for employees, it was only in 2020 that the official DHS Joint Duty Directive and accompanying instruction were published.⁴⁴ Similar to and modeled after the IC Joint Duty Program, examined in Chapter III, the DHS Joint Duty Program is intended for middle- and senior-level staff to have the opportunity to work temporarily in inter- and intra-departmental organizations. Another notable feature of this program is that the Joint Duty opportunities allow for rotations into state, local, tribal, and territorial

⁴¹ Department of Homeland Security, *Homeland Security Rotation Program (HSRP) Frequently Asked Questions* (Washington, DC: Department of Homeland Security, 2018), v5.

⁴² Department of Homeland Security, 1.

⁴³ “Homeland Security Rotation Program,” Department of Homeland Security, accessed October 12, 2018, <http://dhsconnect.dhs.gov/org/comp/mgmt/dhshr/emp/Pages/RotationalAssignments.aspx>.

⁴⁴ “Joint Duty Program,” Department of Homeland Security, accessed October 12, 2018, <http://dhsconnect.dhs.gov/org/comp/mgmt/dhshr/emp/Pages/JointDuty.aspx>.

government positions, in addition to other federal departments and agencies.⁴⁵ The DHS directive on joint duty describes it as a “strategic initiative” that provides “professional developmental opportunities and unity of effort.”⁴⁶ While the Joint Duty program is similar to the HSRP in its goal of encouraging information sharing and cross-component networking, the Joint Duty program has an additional objective; the directive states that joint duty can support succession-planning efforts. However, it does not provide further detail on how this planning can be accomplished through the program.⁴⁷ The Joint Duty program is more structured than the HSRP and additionally requires participation in specific training and professional development related to the program, as well as creating and following a formalized progress plan.⁴⁸

C. CURRENT STATUS OF THE HSRP AND THE DHS JOINT DUTY PROGRAMS

Both DHS rotational programs offer a range of assignments among the DHS components; however, because of the constantly changing nature of listed opportunities and limited posting for the HSRP, it is important to examine the monthly changes on the internal DHS listing site. As the offerings are fairly dynamic, establishing an overview of the current state the program requires gathering data over several months. Most rotational positions are located in the Washington, D.C., area.

In August 2020, 39 offerings were under DHS’s HSRP.⁴⁹ Almost half of these placements were within the Customs and Border Protection (CBP). The Immigration and Customs Enforcement had four opportunities available, and only one for the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Both of these DHS early components were the first to be singled out for rotation programs; therefore, it is surprising to see so few posts for

⁴⁵ Department of Homeland Security, *Joint Duty Program*, DHS Directive 258–07 (Washington, DC: Department of Homeland Security, 2020), 1.

⁴⁶ Department of Homeland Security, 1–3.

⁴⁷ Department of Homeland Security, 1–3.

⁴⁸ “About the DHS Joint Duty Program,” Department of Homeland Security, accessed January 26, 2021, <https://www.dhs.gov/employee-resources/about-joint-duty-program>.

⁴⁹ “Department of Homeland Security Rotation Program,” Department of Homeland Security, accessed August 12, 2020, <http://dhsconnect.dhs.gov/Resources/Career/rotations-program>.

these components. With respect to grade distribution among the rotations, most postings are between the General Schedule (GS) GS-12 and GS-14 levels, but the range of opportunities fall between the GS-5 and GS-15 levels.⁵⁰ Many postings were open to multiple grade levels. However, over half of all opportunities were for mid- to senior-level employees (24 postings for GS-12s, 28 postings for GS-13s, and 21 postings available for GS-14s).

A month later, in September of 2020, a shift in HSRP postings occurred.⁵¹ Out of the 33 opportunities that month, less than a third were located in CBP. The grade levels offered were again predominantly in the mid- to higher-level career categories of GS-12 to GS-14; only two postings were available for a GS-7 and only one for a GS-8.⁵² Examination of the geographic dispersal reveals a heavy skew of opportunities only available within the Washington, D.C., metro area.

Finally, in October 2020, the 30 HSRP offerings revealed that the majority of placements were available in CBP and DHS's newly branded Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), at seven listings and nine listings, respectively.⁵³ Almost one-third of the placements (9 of 30) were virtual assignments, to be conducted from a home-duty station or via telework. The remaining 21 HSRP positions were posted to be conducted at offices in Washington, D.C., or Virginia.⁵⁴ Lengths of assignments ranged from three months, 3–6 months, six months, to one year. The shorter opportunities are not consistent with the DHS Rotations Policy, which identifies optimal assignment lengths at 6 to 12 months.

On the other hand, the Joint Duty offerings remain similar in type, and the gradient of opportunities does not fluctuate much over time. In August 2020, 26 opportunities for

⁵⁰ Department of Homeland Security, "Department of Homeland Security Rotation Program."

⁵¹ Department of Homeland Security, "Department of Homeland Security Rotation Program," accessed September 26, 2020, <http://dhsconnect.dhs.gov/Resources/Career/rotations-program>.

⁵² Department of Homeland Security, "Department of Homeland Security Rotation Program."

⁵³ Department of Homeland Security, "Department of Homeland Security Rotation Program," accessed October 3, 2020, <http://dhsconnect.dhs.gov/Resources/Career/rotations-program>.

⁵⁴ Department of Homeland Security, "Department of Homeland Security Rotation Program."

Joint Duty Program assignments were within DHS.⁵⁵ Of these total opportunities, 81 percent were available at the GS-13 level, 58 percent were slotted for GS-14 level employees, and only 19 percent were open for GS-15 staff (note that some vacancies were open for multi-level grades).⁵⁶ In terms of geography, 18 postings were located in Washington, D.C., six in Virginia, one in Connecticut, and one assignment that could be done virtually. Most assignments are located in the Washington, D.C., metro area. The one posting in Connecticut was for a visiting lecturer at the Coast Guard Academy. Of additional note, all the postings explicitly stated that they would not count for Joint Duty credit. As of 2021, DHS JDAs are posted on the USAJobs website, which is publicly available for interested candidates.

Lastly, some postings are duplicate or similar listings for the HSRP, the Joint Duty Program, and DHS detail opportunities. DHS defines each program as separate and distinct, yet the implementation of actual postings proves otherwise.

D. BENEFITS OF DHS ROTATIONAL PROGRAMS

Two benefits stand out when assessing the department's current rotational programs; the fact that two defined programs underscore the importance of rotational assignments and that actual DHS employees are dedicated to specifically supporting these programs.

First of all, DHS has more than one program dedicated to enabling employees to participate in a rotational assignment. The external-facing DHS website lists both the HSRP and the Joint Duty Program under "Employee Resources" on the "My Career" page.⁵⁷ Because they are highlighted as a resource for current and potential employees, they retain prominence as a type of employee benefit. While limited information is available on the HSRP, the Joint Duty Program has an additional webpage with instructions

⁵⁵ "Joint Duty Program," Department of Homeland Security, accessed August 12, 2020, <https://www.dhs.gov/publication/joint-duty-open-opportunities>.

⁵⁶ Department of Homeland Security.

⁵⁷ "My Career," Department of Homeland Security, accessed January 26, 2021, <https://www.dhs.gov/employee-resources/my-career>.

on how to apply and frequently asked questions.⁵⁸ DHS publicly highlights both programs that have rotational assignments as their core mission and focus. The DHS staff can obtain an opportunity to work in another aspect of the department via two programs, within other federal agencies, or in another related homeland security position. Thus, with two programs, employees have more availability to take advantage of these opportunities and participate in a rotational assignment.

An additional benefit is that staff are designated to promoting and coordinating these programs. The DHS Instruction directed DHS components to delegate a rotational programs coordinator, and promote and advocate for these types of developmental opportunities among DHS employees.⁵⁹ This dedicated position ensures the programs are highlighted and endorsed within the agency. For the Joint Duty Program, an actual office manages and promotes the program.⁶⁰ Support for any program is essential to program success.

E. CHALLENGES AND PUBLISHED CRITIQUES

Despite these benefits, DHS rotational programs have suffered from a lack of organization, unclear missions, and poor implementation. Further exacerbating the situation is that limited historical data has been collected on DHS rotations, which makes it difficult to evaluate program success.

First of all, while DHS touts multiple opportunities for professional development through rotational assignments, the department presently lacks clarity at the component level regarding the different opportunities and the programs may overlap in design. DHS has made great strides in developing directives and related guidance for its multitude of programs; however, the tactical presentation and delivery of these programs may conflict with the intended design. For instance, some of the exact same postings are listed on the HSRP website, the Joint Duty website, and the DHS details postings. The rotational

⁵⁸ “Joint Duty Program,” Department of Homeland Security, accessed January 26, 2021, <https://www.dhs.gov/employee-resources/joint-duty-program>.

⁵⁹ Department of Homeland Security, *Employee Rotations Policy*, 3.

⁶⁰ Department of Homeland Security, *Joint Duty Program*, 2.

programs and detail opportunities are all intended to be separate and distinct opportunities; it is confusing when the same positions are available under multiple programs. DHS has separate missions and parameters for the two separate rotational programs. The HSRP is usually shorter in duration, around six months in length, while the JDA can last up to a year. Additionally, the Joint Duty Program has an educational requirement of 12 additional professional development hours and is intended for higher-level employees.⁶¹ While both programs ultimately enable rotational assignments, meeting the general goal of expanding professional development opportunities and encouraging cross-training, the similar postings can be confusing to interested employees.

Secondly, the programs have suffered from meager execution and promotion. The postings for both HSRP and Joint Duty are limited in quantity and mainly are located in the nation's capital. DHS has 240,000 employees across the nation.⁶² With around 30–40 postings for each program in any given month, about 0.0001 percent of staff are allowed the opportunity to rotate into another position. Additionally, over the years, DHS has struggled with branding its rotational program. Only within the past couple of years has the HSRP existed in its current form, despite rotational policies and guidance in place since 2007. The Joint Duty Program had assignments available in 2018, but the policies for the program were not finalized until 2020.⁶³

Last, limited historical data is available on DHS rotational programs. The only publicly available information exists in a GAO report from 2011. It noted that in Fiscal Year 2009, 80 participants were in the DHS Rotational Program.⁶⁴ It cannot be presumed that this number directly correlates to the HSRP; this acronym is not mentioned in the report and it was not an existing program at that time. In fact, GAO notes that this number counts those DHS employees who rotated outside of the agency, not within.⁶⁵ The current

⁶¹ “Joint Duty Program Frequently Asked Questions,” Department of Homeland Security, accessed January 26, 2021, <https://www.dhs.gov/employee-resources/frequently-asked-questions>.

⁶² “About DHS,” Department of Homeland Security, accessed January 26, 2021, <https://www.dhs.gov/about-dhs>.

⁶³ Department of Homeland Security, “Joint Duty Program.”

⁶⁴ Steinhardt, *National Security*, 20.

⁶⁵ Steinhardt, 20.

list of HSRP opportunities only depicts internal rotational assignments. Since DHS has had multiple iterations of their rotational programs, it is difficult to ascertain which programs have been successful and if the program modifications over the years have been effective.

F. ANALYSIS OF ESSENTIAL ROTATIONAL PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Rotational programs in the federal government must abide by key criteria to ensure success and promote employee development. They must be inclusive, work in concert with other agency programs to grow employees, and supported by both word and action. Senior leadership should promote rotational assignments as a positive developmental opportunity, and support them through ample funding and resources to carry out the program. Finally, the program should be held to a continual improvement process through feedback, analysis, and revision to ensure it does not become stale and benefits both the employee and agency.

Comparing elements of the DHS Homeland Security Rotational Program and newly minted Joint Duty Program with criteria established using Campion, Cheraskin, and Stevens's and Griffiths's work, this section evaluates both programs under the following five categories:

- Is the rotational program available to employees at all professional levels in their career (entry positions, first-line supervisors, mid-level managers, senior executives)?
- Does leadership promote and value the rotational program as an asset to their organization and mutual benefit to the employer and employee?
- Is the program a part of the career development suite of opportunities and considered in succession planning and individual employee growth?
- Are support mechanisms in place for funding or resources to administer the program on a national level?
- Is the mission and expectations of the program clear, are program successes and challenges tracked, and is it reviewed for continual improvement?

Based on this analysis, the HSRP contains a multitude of opportunities and is inclusive of employees performing at a satisfactory level; however, the program has suffered limited support from the department and does not follow the guidelines set within policy. On the other hand, the DHS Joint Duty Program is limited in scope, is in the initial stages of implementation, and the reality of the assignments does not match the intent of the program.

To start, the HSRP doctrine states that the program is available to federal employees at all levels, while the Joint Duty Program is specifically tailored to mid- to senior-level staff at the GS-13 through GS-15 levels as is solidified in the directive. An analysis of rotational job postings for both programs shows that most opportunities are tailored for mid- to senior-career officials, which is appropriate for the Joint Duty Program. However, if the HSRP is truly meant to be a rotational program for all employees, the postings examined do not reflect that intention. It is not inclusive for all DHS employees and employees in entry-level positions miss out on these types of professional development opportunities.

Second, while evidence by GAO reviews and others suggests that DHS has not prioritized professional development programs in the past, and while these rotational programs have not had consistent support and participation, the department has been working to highlight the current offerings to employees. As part of this reinvigoration, DHS developed a new Chief Learning and Engagement Officer position in 2015.⁶⁶ However, employee engagement issues continue to plague the department, and professional development, including rotational programs, is a part of employee engagement. The annual Federal Employee Viewpoint survey continues to indicate staff dissatisfaction. From 2009–2019, DHS has consistently ranked 5–10 percentage points lower than the overall federal government average for the Employee Engagement Index

⁶⁶ Nicole Ogrysko, “New DHS Chief Learning and Engagement Officer to Lead FEVS Rebound,” Federal News Network, last modified September 29, 2015, <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/workforce/2015/09/new-dhs-chief-learning-engagement-officer-lead-engagement-rebound>.

Score.⁶⁷ The 2019 survey results confirm, “DHS remains the lowest-scoring large or very large federal agency.”⁶⁸ Part of the Employee Engagement Index is related to career development and training, of which rotational assignments are a piece. This assessment reveals the reality that leadership is not promoting and valuing professional development and rotational programs by association.

Third, both the HSRP and the DHS Joint Duty Programs’ missions state that the purpose of the program is for departmental employees to understand various facets of the organization and homeland security enterprise. It is a part of an employee’s career development. Both programs allow for inter and intra-departmental assignments. Both program descriptions state the value to both the organization at large and the employee; it is a part of individual employee growth. However, in neither the policy nor guidance analyzed was a reference made to succession planning.

Fourth, limited funding is available for both programs; however, DHS staff are dedicated to managing and coordinating the rotational programs. Both the HSRP and Joint Duty Program documents state that funding for the rotational assignments are usually the responsibility of the home office of record unless alternate agreements are made. For JDAs, travel costs related to the actual assignment are paid by the host organization.⁶⁹ Both programs do not have a separate funding stream to support their operations. Despite a lack of financial support for the programs, operational support structures are in place for both programs. A dedicated a Rotational Programs Coordinator and designated Joint Duty Program Office oversees the implementation and coordination of both programs.

Finally, the missions of both programs are outlined in their respective directives; however, the expectations and execution of the programs are muddled in practice. For example, the length of HSRP program assignments varies from three months to one year in duration. DHS is not following its established guidance for optimal rotational lengths of

⁶⁷ 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), 8.

⁶⁸ Currie, *DHS Employee Morale*, 2.

⁶⁹ Department of Homeland Security, “Joint Duty Program Frequently Asked Questions.”

six months to one year. Additionally, the Joint Duty Program postings state that the assignments do not qualify for Joint Duty credit; however, no reference to said “credit” is made in either the directive or instruction. Thus, more questions are left unanswered about the particulars of each of the programs. Furthermore, limited data is available on program participation or program studies. It is unclear if DHS is consistently evaluating both the HSRP and Joint Duty Programs to identify areas of improvement, or has done so with similar rotational programs in the past.

G. INITIAL BEST PRACTICES

Overall, an analysis of DHS rotational programs reveals a number of key insights and initial best practices of these types of professional development opportunities. The department has recently made a concerted effort to rebrand and promote its rotational programs. Policies and guidance documents define the program parameters, and the organization has dedicated program staff to oversee program implementation. Professional developmental opportunities available under the Joint Duty Program are now advertised to all, not just DHS or federal employees, on the USAJobs website, which provides not only transparency but also publicity.

The next chapters examine the IC Joint Duty program and the DOD Joint Duty Officer Qualification Program to analyze the benefits, challenges, and identify best practices among those rotational programs. Finally, these findings are consolidated to consider application to DHS and other homeland security rotational opportunities.

III. CASE STUDY—INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY

On December 17, 2004, Congress passed the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, which aimed to improve the coordination of intelligence activities in the United States.⁷⁰ This law amended the National Security Act of 1947 to create a sole advisor and lead representative for the intelligence enterprise by establishing a Director of National Intelligence. The Director of National Intelligence would have access to all intelligence information collected by federal agencies and would be tasked to, “establish objectives, priorities, and guidance for the intelligence community to ensure timely and effective collection, processing, analysis, and dissemination of national intelligence.”⁷¹ To further the mission in the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act stipulations included enhanced education programs for intel staff, provisions for incentives and bonuses for those willing to serve in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), and direction to facilitate rotations among intelligence employees. The law specifically ordered rotations within the IC be developed similar to the Joint Duty Program established through the GNA:

It is the sense of Congress that the mechanisms prescribed under this subsection should, to the extent practical, seek to duplicate for civilian personnel within the intelligence community the joint officer management policies established by chapter 38 of title 10, United States Code, and the other amendments made by title IV of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986. (Public Law 99-433.⁷²

The intent of the rotations, as stated in the law, was to expose members of the intelligence family to many different facets of the occupation. This rotational program would provide IC members with a wide variety of experiences and perspectives to aid in their understanding of federal intelligence components, roles, missions, and duties.

⁷⁰ Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, Public Law 108-458, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 118 (2004): 3638–3872, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-108publ458/pdf/PLAW-108publ458.pdf>.

⁷¹ Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, 3344–3468.

⁷² Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, 3652.

To extract best practices of the IC Civilian Joint Duty Program, this chapter begins by examining the history and legislation related to implementation of the program. Further examination focuses on the parameters of the program and the current status of the program, and presents opportunities available to intelligence employees through these rotational assignments. The program is critiqued according to focused criteria to ascertain benefits and challenges specific to this intelligence-specific design. Finally, best practices and recommendations are noted that may be considered and adopted for other rotational programs in the federal government or homeland security enterprise.

A. HISTORY OF THE IC JOINT DUTY PROGRAM

The ODNI issued Intelligence Community Directive (ICD) 601, *Human Capital Joint Intelligence Community Duty Assignments*, in May 2006.⁷³ This document outlined policies and procedures for rotational assignments and detail opportunities between governmental intelligence entities for IC civilian staff. Furthermore, the directive outlined the requirement that service to more than one intelligence component or coordination center would be a requirement for future promotions, as specified by the ODNI Director. Joint Duty opportunities would be available to all members of the IC enterprise, with the exception of military personnel. The IC is not only composed of ODNI staff but encompasses 17 other organizations: intelligence components of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, Space Force, Defense Intelligence Agency, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, National Reconnaissance Office, National Security Agency, Central Intelligence Agency, Department of Energy, Department of Homeland Security, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Drug Enforcement Agency, Department of State, and the Department of the Treasury.⁷⁴ Specific components are listed as follows in Figure 1.

⁷³ Office of the Director of National Intelligence, *Human Capital Joint Intelligence Community Duty Assignments, Intelligence Community*, Directive Number 601 (Washington, DC: ODNI, 2009), 1, <https://fas.org/irp/dni/icd/icd-601.pdf>.

⁷⁴ “Members of the IC,” Office of the Director of National Intelligence, accessed February 9, 2021, <https://www.dni.gov/index.php/what-we-do/members-of-the-ic>.



Source: GAO analysis of ODNI information.

* The DSS is not a component of the IC, but falls under the USDI and, under DOD policy, is a participant in the Joint Duty Program.

This image does not include Space Force, which was incorporated in 2020.

Figure 1. Organization of the Intelligence Community.⁷⁵

The directive was further amended in 2013 and renamed ICD 660, *Intelligence Community Civilian Joint Duty Program*.⁷⁶ One of the biggest changes in the 2013 directive was the grade requirement for participation in the program. Initially, to be considered for a JDA, a candidate had to be at the GS-13 grade level or above. The 2013 directive lowered that requirement to allow GS-11 employees and above access to the program, which expanded the pool of potential participants.

The 2013 directive also further clarifies the definitions for both *IC Civilian Joint Duty Qualifying Experience* and *IC Joint Duty Rotation*. Qualifying experience provides, “substantive professional, technical, or leadership experience that includes policy,

⁷⁵ Source: Brenda S. Farrell, *GAO Intelligence Community Personnel: Strategic Approach and Training Requirements Needed to Guide Joint Duty Program*, GAO-12-679 (Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office, 2012), 6.

⁷⁶ Office of the Director of National Intelligence, *Intelligence Community Civilian Joint Duty Program, Intelligence Community*, Directive Number 660 (Washington, DC: ODNI, 2013), https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/joint_duty/policies_and_forms/ICD_660.pdf.

program, managerial, analytical, or operational responsibility for intelligence resources, programs, policies, analysis, or operations in conjunction with one or more other IC elements, or relevant organizations external to the IC.”⁷⁷ Rotations are described as assignments either internal or external to the participant’s agency that provide the Joint Duty experience.

B. PROGRAM PARAMETERS AND IMPLEMENTATION

The IC Joint Duty Program is guided by the directive and an accompanying Implementation Guidance, which was published over two years after the directive, much later than the 120 days dictated therein. This document, entitled Intelligence Community Policy Guidance (ICPG) 660.1, *Intelligence Community Civilian Joint Duty Program Implementation Guidance*, provides additional details on the Joint Duty Program requirements and procedures.⁷⁸ Guidelines are outlined for hosting agency responsibilities, home agency responsibilities, participant responsibilities, and general assignment expectations. It specifically sets parameters for the minimum and maximum length of the program assignment that states Joint Duty rotations consist of assignments lasting no fewer than two years but not exceeding three years in the alternate position.⁷⁹

The intention of the Joint Duty Program is made clear in the directive; to broaden partnerships within the IC and provide participants a greater strategic understanding of the community as a whole, not just the individual missions of the components. Additional goals of the program include unifying the community of intelligence professionals, breaking down workplace cultural barriers that hinder cooperation and collaboration, and providing opportunities for cross-training and increasing skill sets. The Joint Duty directive firmly

⁷⁷ Office of the Director of National Intelligence, *Intelligence Community Civilian Joint Duty Program*, 1.

⁷⁸ Office of the Director of National Intelligence, *Intelligence Community Civilian Joint Duty Program Implementation Guidance, Intelligence Community, Policy Guidance 660.1* (Washington, DC: ODNI, 2015), [https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/joint_duty/policies_and_forms/2015-07-24_DNI_Signed_ICPG_660-1_ES_2015-00360_\(U\).pdf](https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/joint_duty/policies_and_forms/2015-07-24_DNI_Signed_ICPG_660-1_ES_2015-00360_(U).pdf).

⁷⁹ Office of the Director of National Intelligence, *Intelligence Community Civilian Joint Duty Program Implementation Guidance*, 2.

dictates that IC civilians can only be promoted to a senior ranking through completion of the Joint Duty Program, unless a waiver is granted.

Another unique aspect of the program is an option to bypass the Joint Duty requirement for promotion by procuring waivers or Joint Duty credit for those seeking promotional opportunities at the senior level. The credit can be obtained through other rotational or professional developmental means, and a waiver can be applied to employees at the discretion of the Director of National Intelligence. IC civilians can earn credit for specialized service, education, or experience in lieu of participating in the rotation program. This credit can then be applied towards the requirement needed for senior-level promotions. As explicitly stated in the Implementation Guidance, “IC Civilian Joint Duty Credit shall be a requirement for assignment to any IC civilian position classified above the GS-15 grade or equivalent.”⁸⁰ Credit for qualifying experience could be earned in one of three ways: working in a position that could be categorized as a type of qualifying experience for a minimum of 365 days, being deployed in a combat zone for no less than 179 days, or obtaining a degree from the National Intelligence University.⁸¹ Thus, the ultimate objective and purpose of the rotational experience can be bypassed, which diminishes the purpose of the program. Without rotating into other positions or assignments within the intelligence realm, the broadening opportunity is possibly missed.

C. CURRENT STATUS OF THE PROGRAM

ODNI lists opportunities for Joint Duty Program rotations on their outward-facing website.⁸² As of February 2020, 131 total vacancies were posted. Of those, 129 rotational opportunities were available at ODNI and two opportunities were available at DHS. No other component of the IC had rotational postings listed for Joint Duty. In all, 105 vacancies were posted on the unclassified outward-facing website where it was possible to obtain more information on each position; classified rotations must be accessed on the classified

⁸⁰ Office of the Director of National Intelligence, *Intelligence Community Civilian Joint Duty Program Implementation Guidance*, 5.

⁸¹ Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 4.

⁸² “Joint Duty,” Office of the Director of National Intelligence, accessed February 25, 2020, <https://www.dni.gov/index.php/careers/joint-duty>.

ODNI site.⁸³ All 105 positions were geographically placed in Washington D.C., Maryland, or Virginia. A further breakdown of the postings reveal the following:

- 4 were available for the GS-12 level
- 14 were available for the GS-13 level
- 36 were available for the GS-14 level
- 45 were available for the GS-15 level
- 1 was available at the Senior Executive Service level
- 5 were available at the Senior National Intelligence Service level⁸⁴

At mid-level, 14 percent of assignments were available for GS-12 and GS-13 participants. However, over 77 percent of rotational opportunities for the IC Joint Duty Program were accessible for GS-14 or GS-15 employees.

D. BENEFITS OF THE IC JOINT DUTY PROGRAM

The IC Joint Duty Program has merits that potentially contribute to its success including a strong social presence, transparency, and support from a community that focuses on growing their employees. For example, ODNI has a robust website for its Joint Duty Program. It describes the intent of the program, provides a brief history of the program, and has a section for frequently asked questions with links to accompanying policies.⁸⁵ Information is open source and freely available not only to the IC, but to the public at large. The program lists all its unclassified assignments on their website, which is routinely updated and refreshed with new assignments on a continual basis. The website provides ample, clear information for interested parties to learn more about the program in detail that increases the likelihood of more applications and participants. As increasing

⁸³ “Joint Duty—Vacancies,” Office of the Director of National Intelligence, accessed February 25, 2020, <https://www.dni.gov/index.php/careers/joint-duty/vacancies>.

⁸⁴ Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

⁸⁵ Office of the Director of National Intelligence, “Joint Duty.”

numbers of intelligence staff are aware of the program, the likelihood of them taking advantage of the opportunity also increases, and ODNI can then fulfill its mission of preparing the next generation of leaders.

Another benefit of the program is inherent in the community in which it is based. The IC is touted as one of the best places to work in the federal government by the Partnership for Public Service and was ranked the third best large organization in the government for job satisfaction in 2019.⁸⁶ The IC has received this award for 11 consecutive years since and has steadily increased scores in the categories examined by this annual survey.⁸⁷ Categories assessed include effective leadership, performance-based awards and advancement, innovation, and training and development. In responding to the score, ODNI's Chief Human Capital Officer stated this award is a result of "focusing our attention on how we nurture, grow and continuously develop our workforce."⁸⁸ The IC Joint Duty Program is a part of this workforce development, and while the scores cannot directly be attributed to the success of the program, it can be inferred that the Joint Duty offerings contribute to the positive scores. Moreover, the IC Joint Duty Program has been hailed as a "key to improved national security" and an "innovative solution for improving cross-agency understanding."⁸⁹ The program was recognized by Harvard University and granted the Innovations in American Government Award in 2008.⁹⁰

This culture and focus on enhancing employee professional growth and development supports rotational programs within the intelligence agencies.

⁸⁶ "Intelligence Community Named a "Best Place to Work" for the 11th Consecutive Year," Office of the Director of National Intelligence, January 10, 2020, <https://www.dni.gov/index.php/newsroom/press-releases/item/2081-intelligence-community-named-a-best-place-to-work-for-the-11th-consecutive-year>.

⁸⁷ Partnership for Public Service, "Best Places to Work in the Federal Government: Agency Report—Intelligence Community," Best Places to Work, accessed February 25, 2020, https://bestplacestowork.org/rankings/detail/IC00#tab_category_tbl.

⁸⁸ Partnership for Public Service, "Best Places to Work in the Federal Government: Employee Engagement Improves in the Intelligence Community, Reversing Four-Year Trend," Best Places to Work, accessed February 25, 2020, <https://bestplacestowork.org/analysis/agency-profiles/#ic>.

⁸⁹ Office of the Director of National Intelligence, "Joint Duty."

⁹⁰ Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

E. CHALLENGES AND PUBLISHED CRITIQUES

However, the IC Joint Duty Program has faced challenges throughout implementation and while ODNI has taken action to address these issues, some remain. As the program was in its infancy, concerns about inclusion, mission clarity, and allocation of resources were raised. Additionally, the program has not taken advantage of collecting data and examining trends in participation over the years to provide any type of reflective analysis. Both the GAO and the internal ODNI Inspector General have reviewed the program to uncover and resolve issues.

The GAO assessed the state of the Joint Duty Program in 2009, at the request of the Chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee.⁹¹ From 2010 until 2012, the GAO investigated the program and interviewed components of the IC participating in Joint Duty. Findings revealed that the program lacked inclusion, and at the time, the United States Coast Guard was not actively engaged in the program. It was one of GAO's recommendations that the Coast Guard become involved and its civilian staff working intelligence be offered the opportunity for rotation into other IC elements.⁹² The Coast Guard complied, and in response, issued Commandant Instruction 12333.1, *Coast Guard Intelligence Civilian Joint Duty Assignment Program* in November 2012.⁹³ While a policy remedy to encourage participation among all the government intelligence components, inclusion issues remain as evident in the postings on the website. Out of the 17 different intelligence organizations, only two are represented in the job postings during the timeframe analyzed.

Other GAO findings uncovered that the mission of the Joint Duty Program during the first few years of the program was unclear among the participating intelligence components. Some viewed it as a career development opportunity—it truly was a requirement for senior level promotions—while others believed the intention was to foster

⁹¹ Brenda S. Farrell, *Intelligence Community Personnel: Strategic Approach and Training Requirements Needed to Guide Joint Duty Program*, GAO-12-679 (Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office, 2012), 3, <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-12-679>.

⁹² Farrell, 22.

⁹³ Farrell, recommendations tab.

collaboration among the federal intelligence family.⁹⁴ Further observations noted that the program did not differentiate between internal rotations, whereby employees would take a qualifying position within their own agencies, versus external rotations in which employees would rotate outside of their home components. GAO argued that this differentiation went against the intent of the program and ODNI's guidance that participants work outside of their agencies to gain a broad perspective of intelligence collection and strategy.⁹⁵

Also of note in the report were disparities between funding and resources allotted to the Joint Duty Program for different rotational opportunities. Certain rotational vacancies are funded by the host institution, while others are not.⁹⁶ Determining whether to fund rotational opportunities in-house and deciding who should participate can be difficult for supervisors and leadership. The Joint Duty Program is not independently funded and feasibility must be based on financial support. Funds from the National Intelligence Program can be utilized for JDAs, but only for 10 out of the 17 components of the intelligence sphere.⁹⁷ It is not inclusive and equitable among all the intelligence agencies. When weighing options for Joint Duty experiences, an employee may not be free to choose a position of interest but may be forced to choose a rotation with the least financial burden or inconvenience for the home agency.

As with rotational programs, challenges remain with collecting data from the program and following participants to determine program success. Although the GAO discovered that ODNI actually did administer surveys to employees who completed the program, these surveys were not required. Information from these post-participation surveys could prove beneficial in determining if the program was meeting the intended goals and mission of cross-training and imparting a strategic and national perspective on the federal intelligence discipline. At the time of GAO's investigation, not enough of the optional surveys were completed, and thus, no clear trends or outcomes on the program's

⁹⁴ Farrell, 13.

⁹⁵ Farrell, 14.

⁹⁶ Farrell, 15.

⁹⁷ Office of the Director of National Intelligence, *Intelligence Community Civilian Joint Duty Program*, 4-5.

success could be deduced.⁹⁸ Moreover, the program lacked performance measures and metrics. GAO suggested that a strategic framework was needed, which should include “establishing performance goals, developing quantifiable metrics for measuring progress toward achieving performance goals, using performance information and metrics to make decisions to improve the program, and communicating results effectively with each of the IC elements.”⁹⁹ This recommendation was released with the GAO report in 2012, and six years later, ODNI reported that it “implemented this recommendation and completed a strategic plan for the Joint Duty Program,” and considered the GAO recommendation closed.¹⁰⁰

Thus, ODNI complied with auditors’ recommendations—not only GAO—but also its internal Office of the Inspector General (IG) report recommendations issued in 2009. The ODNI IG reported in 2012 that the 20 recommendations in the report had been closed.¹⁰¹ While the report is not available publicly, references to the findings were included in the ODNI OIG Semiannual Report from June 2010. It stated that ODNI authored and employed a Joint Duty communications strategy, and that IC components developed agreements to standardize program processes and terminology.¹⁰² Challenges identified in the OIG report related to communication and support from senior IC officials, awareness of the program and Joint Duty vacancies, and allowable reimbursement for those participants traveling much farther for Joint Duty opportunities outside their home base.¹⁰³ Ironically enough, the report mentioned that OIG staff participated in Joint Duty rotational assignments to increase collaboration; an example that joint duty is indeed valued and utilized even among the investigators.¹⁰⁴ Recommendations may be officially closed in the

⁹⁸ Farrell, *Intelligence Community Personnel*, 26.

⁹⁹ Farrell, 23.

¹⁰⁰ Farrell, recommendations tab.

¹⁰¹ Farrell, 16.

¹⁰² Office of the Director of National Intelligence Office of the Inspector General, (*U*) *Semiannual Report 1 January 2010–30 June 2010* (Washington, DC: ODNI, 2010), 15, <https://www.dni.gov/files/ICIG/Documents/Publications/Semiannual%20Report/2010/IG%20Semiannual%20Report%20-%20January%202010%20to%20June%202010.pdf>.

¹⁰³ Office of the Director of National Intelligence Office of the Inspector General, A1–A27.

¹⁰⁴ Office of the Director of National Intelligence Office of the Inspector General, 3.

GAO and ODNI IG reports; however, challenges are still prevalent in opportunity inclusion, variety of postings, and funding logistics.

F. ANALYSIS OF ESSENTIAL ROTATIONAL PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Rotational programs in the federal government must abide by key criteria and factors to ensure success and promote employee development. They must be inclusive, work in concert with other agency programs to grow employees, and supported by both word and action. Senior leadership should promote rotational assignments as a positive developmental opportunity, and support it through ample funding and resources to carry out the program. Finally, the program should be held to a continual improvement process through feedback, analysis, and revision to ensure it does not become stale and benefits both employees and agency.

Comparing elements of the IC Joint Duty Program with criteria established using Campion, Cheraskin, and Stevens's and Griffiths's work, the author evaluates the program under the following five categories:

- Is the rotational program available to employees at all professional levels in their career (entry positions, first-line supervisors, mid-level managers, senior executives)?
- Does leadership promote and value the rotational program as an asset to their organization and mutual benefit to the employer and employee?
- Is the program a part of the career development suite of opportunities and considered in succession planning and individual employee growth?
- Are support mechanisms in place for funding or resources to administer the program on a national level?
- Is the mission and expectations of the program clear, are program successes and challenges tracked, and is it reviewed for continual improvement?

The ODNI Civilian Joint Duty Program is an exclusive rotational program characterized by a clear mission, support from leadership among the intelligence community, and allows long-term assignments to provide participants with more strategic expertise in the intelligence realm.

First of all, the Joint Duty Program is not available to all personnel, but is only available to employees at certain grade levels. The IC Joint Duty Program was initially intended for mid-level and senior career employees at the GS-13 level and above, but has since been expanded to include participants from the GS-11 level to the Senior Executive Service level. Since the intent of the program is to give participants a rotational assignment to fulfill their requirement to be promoted to a senior position, it may not be appropriate to extend the program to employees at all levels. Generally, a GS-11 employee would not be considered entry-level, as education and experience requirements are extensive according to OPM, the organization that defines guidelines for federal government employment.¹⁰⁵ To be hired as a GS-11 employee, it is necessary to have a PhD or at least three years of graduate level education.¹⁰⁶ Although someone could be hired into a GS-11 at “entry level,” this person’s education and experience may prove otherwise. According to OPM’s *Position Classification Standard Flysheet for Intelligence Series, GS-0132*, intelligence positions start at a GS-5 level.¹⁰⁷ If this is the case, then it can be deduced that the rotational program is not in fact open to entry positions, even though during the course of the program, it was extended to lower levels than originally intended.

Second, leaders in the IC have taken a more active approach in endorsing the IC Joint Duty Program as the program has evolved through statements, socialization, and recognition. As stated earlier, the ODNI OIG had proposed multiple recommendations after an initial review of the program in 2010 during the early stages of implementation. Out of

¹⁰⁵ “Policy, Data, Oversight: Classification & Qualifications,” Office of Personnel Management, accessed March 8, 2020, <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/classification-qualifications/general-schedule-qualification-policies/#url=General-Policies>.

¹⁰⁶ Office of Personnel Management.

¹⁰⁷ Office of Personnel Management, *Position Classification Standard Flysheet for Intelligence Series GS-0132* (Washington, DC: Office of Personnel Management, 1960), 11, <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/classification-qualifications/classifying-general-schedule-positions/standards/0100/g0132.pdf>.

22 recommendations for Joint Duty listed in the semiannual audit report, five focused directly on communication and leadership endorsement.¹⁰⁸ According to the OIG report, the Director of ODNI disseminated a memo on January 29, 2010 that promoted “strong support for the Joint Duty program, its continued implementation, and requirements as identified in ICPG 601.10.”¹⁰⁹ Additional support from leadership is apparent from the robust website on IC Joint Duty. Additionally, a special service award is given to IC Civilian Joint Duty participants from the Director of National Intelligence. This prestigious gold Service Lapel Button, as shown in Figure 2, was designed to represent secrecy, confidence, service, excellence, and high ideals.¹¹⁰



Figure 2. IC Joint Duty Service Lapel Button.¹¹¹

Furthermore, the IC Joint Duty Program, by nature of its intent, promotes individual development and employee growth. It is a requirement to participate in the program, or at least, to obtain Joint Duty credit, to be promoted to senior-level positions. Even the National Intelligence Strategy touts the Joint Duty Program as a priority, “the IC will make long-term strategic investments in the workforce to promote agility and mobility

¹⁰⁸ Office of the Director of National Intelligence Office of the Inspector General, *(U) Semiannual Report 1 January 2010–30 June 2010*, A–6, A–21.

¹⁰⁹ Office of the Director of National Intelligence Office of the Inspector General, A–21.

¹¹⁰ “About Joint Duty,” Office of the Director of National Intelligence, accessed February 25, 2020, <https://www.dni.gov/index.php/careers/joint-duty/about-joint-duty>.

¹¹¹ Source: Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

throughout employees' careers, including joint duty rotations."¹¹² Furthermore, the strategy lists Joint Duty under IC workforce accomplishments, which states that thousands of employees have participated, "broadening their professional development, enhancing collaboration and information sharing, and promoting transparency and cooperation."¹¹³ The GAO additionally found in 2011 that all but one person who participated in the program had been promoted, which further supported the argument that Joint Duty enhances skills for promotional and developmental advancement.¹¹⁴

Yet, funding and resource support for the Joint Duty Program is still lacking. In particular, both the OIG and GAO reports identified employees' continual concerns for reimbursement or incentives for added travel due to reassignment in the program. As specified earlier, all 104 opportunities on the ODNI public-facing website for Joint Duty are in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. Thus, little to no prospects exist for those outside the beltway in other parts of the country to participate in the Joint Duty Program unless it is a reimbursable position. Although further data on additional confidential openings for assignment are lacking, it can be presumed that a lack of geographic variety on the open website limits the availability for regional intelligence personnel to participate. Without direct funding for IC Joint Duty, the program will remain limited in scope to a limited amount of geographically advantaged individuals. Furthermore, the Joint Duty ICD states that National Intelligence Program funding can be used for assignments, but is only applicable to 59 percent of the IC agencies. The current funding structure deprives some participants of the opportunity to participate in the IC Joint Duty Program.

Lastly, the mission of the IC Joint Duty program has been made clear and over the years, documents and directives have been developed to illuminate goals and objectives. However, not much data has been collected or made publicly available on program effectiveness or participation data. The GAO's report found that program participants are

¹¹² Office of the Director of National Intelligence, *National Intelligence Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: ODNI, 2019), 20, https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/National_Intelligence_Strategy_2019.pdf.

¹¹³ Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 26.

¹¹⁴ Farrell, *Intelligence Community Personnel*, 25.

issued optional surveys to complete after their rotations, but information gleaned from this data is not disseminated in a meaningful way.¹¹⁵ Moreover, data is collected on number of program participants, but at the time of the GAO report, this information was not being used strategically to inform program improvements.

G. BEST PRACTICES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Examining the ODNI Joint Duty Program indicates that it currently has a clear mission and solid policies in place to achieve the goal of broadening employees' understanding and inter-relational partnerships within the IC. Analyzing the program reveals two best practices that could be adapted to similar programs within the homeland security enterprise.

First, the program commits to lengthy rotational assignments lasting from two to three years in duration. This quality length of time in a rotational assignment allows participants the ability truly to understand and comprehend the new position. Instead of just a brief introduction or sample of an alternate career, Joint Duty participants are given time to indoctrinate themselves in the rotational assignment, truly learn and achieve new skills, and complete in-depth projects.

Second, the program benefits from strong promotion from within the agency. The extensive information available on ODNI's webpage about the Joint Duty Program includes a plethora of information about the history of the program, goals, mission, accolades, and opportunities. This transparency and availability of information serves to promote the program, which in turn, expands the circle of potential interested applicants. By garnering interest, ODNI can recruit top candidates for rotational assignment. Furthermore, the program is supported by the innate culture of the IC and places priority and worth toward employee engagement and growth. This focus and support is paramount to a successful program. If the leadership and support structure does not support an initiative, it is doomed to fail.

¹¹⁵ Farrell, 26.

However, the program could potentially be more successful with the incorporation of two recommendations relating to inclusivity and routine evaluation.

The current ODNI Joint Duty policy only allows mid- to senior-level career participants. To cast a wider net, the policy should be revised to include all members of the IC, for widest participation and ultimate inclusion. By limiting the participants to only a certain grade level, the IC could be overlooking talented candidates and future leaders.

Additionally, the IC Joint Duty Program could benefit greatly by gathering more information on the positive and negative aspects of assignments to make calculated decisions on program effectiveness and engagement in the future. Without clear data and metrics, the success of the program cannot truly be evaluated. It is incumbent upon ODNI and imperative to the long-term sustainment of the program to prove it is accomplishing the mission intended.

In conclusion, this chapter analyzes the characteristics and attributes of the ODNI Civilian Joint Duty Program, and evaluates its effectiveness through comparison of criteria necessary for a successful rotational program. The next chapter examines the DOD Joint Duty Program.

IV. CASE STUDY—DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

This chapter examines the characteristics and attributes of the DOD Joint Officer Management Program. It first explores the history of the program, examines the current status of the program, and analyzes the benefits and challenges of the program. Finally, the program is critiqued according to established markers that measure the success of a rotational program. Lastly, best practices and recommendations are gleaned from the program that may be applicable to other professional rotational programs.

A. HISTORY OF THE DOD JOINT DUTY PROGRAM

The U.S. military was transformed in 1986 with the passing of the GNA. This legislation, aimed at better coordinating the military services, was passed on October 1, amidst much controversy. At the time, the DOD was struggling with interoperability issues among the services, an inability to coordinate joint missions, and a lack of strategic oversight of operations. Three military blunders prompted investigations that ultimately led to sweeping military reform: Desert One (1980), Operation Urgent Fury (1983), and the terrorist bombing in Beirut (1983).¹¹⁶ In each of these incidents, it was apparent that the military was not performing in an effective, synchronized, efficient manner. Due to the inability of the military branches truly to coordinate and understand their unique roles and the roles of others in specific operations, lives were lost.

In response to these events, President Regan ordered a Blue Ribbon Commission on Defense Management in 1985 to examine various aspects of the DOD, to include policies, procedures, operational and organizational management.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, the House and Senate Armed Services Committees independently conducted reviews to investigate the military tragedies and focus on flaws in the organizational structure.¹¹⁸ Although it was apparent that changes needed to be enacted, viewpoints were strongly

¹¹⁶ Kathleen J. McInnis, *Goldwater Nichols at 30: Defense Reform and Issues for Congress*, CRS Report No. R44474 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2016), 3–5, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R44474.pdf>.

¹¹⁷ McInnis, 2–3.

¹¹⁸ McInnis, 6.

polarized. In the Senate Committee, the Goldwater-Nichols reform was passed by only a one-vote margin.¹¹⁹

B. PROGRAM PARAMETERS AND IMPLEMENTATION

The main purpose of the GNA was to reorganize America's military forces, improve the efficiency of operations, and strengthen the overall coordination and management of the DOD.¹²⁰ The failures in the early 1980s uncovered major issues in the department, and America's largest employer was called to restructure to develop a more cohesive military. Specifically, Goldwater-Nichols outlined the following eight tenets, which formed the basis of the legislation:

- (1) to reorganize the Department of Defense and strengthen civilian authority in the Department;
- (2) to improve the military advice provided to the President, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense;
- (3) to place clear responsibility on the commanders of the unified and specified combatant commands for the accomplishment of missions assigned to those commands;
- (4) to ensure that the authority of the commanders of the unified and specified combatant commands is fully commensurate with the responsibility of those commanders for the accomplishment of missions assigned to their commands;
- (5) to increase attention to the formulation of strategy and to contingency planning;
- (6) to provide for more efficient use of defense resources;
- (7) to improve joint officer management policies; and

¹¹⁹ John J. Hamre, "Reflections: Looking Back at the Need for Goldwater-Nichols," Center for Strategic and International Studies, January 27, 2016, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/reflections-looking-back-need-goldwater-nichols>.

¹²⁰ Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, Public Law 99-433, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 100 (1986): 992-1075b, https://history.defense.gov/Portals/70/Documents/dod_reforms/Goldwater-NicholsDoDReordAct1986.pdf.

(8) otherwise to enhance the effectiveness of military operations and improve the management and administration of the Department of Defense.¹²¹

An underlying theme in the GNA stressed the importance of officers having experience in joint matters or joint duty. The act defined joint matters as “relating to the integrated employment of land, sea, and air force” in aspects of planning, strategy, and command and control.¹²² The legislation mandated that officers obtain joint experience and understanding through joint military education and JDAs. More specifically, Goldwater-Nichols stated this assignment had to take place outside the officer’s home department.¹²³ In fact, it became a requirement even at the highest levels; while the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff became an elevated leadership position, Goldwater-Nichols put forth a requirement that the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff must have served in a JDA prior to being appointed by the President.¹²⁴ These requirements, at the time considered by some to be drastic, would ultimately transform the military and nurture a culture of joint integration through cross-training and rotational assignments.

In the years since Goldwater-Nichols was passed, the DOD has made revisions to its joint duty policies and definitions to define and refine the program further. The first DOD Directive 1300.19 was posted on September 9, 1997.¹²⁵ The inaugural guidance was accompanied by DOD Directive 1300.20: *DOD Joint Officer Management Program Procedures*.¹²⁶ These original documents outlined responsibilities and processes for implementation and defined assignments, length of tours, and requirements for promotions. DOD Directive 1300.19 was amended in 2003, 2007, 2010, 2014, and again on April 3,

¹²¹ Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, 993–994.

¹²² Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, 1029–1030.

¹²³ Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, 1030.

¹²⁴ Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, 1006–1008.

¹²⁵ Department of Defense, *DOD Joint Officer Management (JOM) Program*, DOD Instruction 1300.19 (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2003), 1, https://biotech.law.lsu.edu/blaw/dodd/corres/pdf/d130019_090997/d130019p.pdf.

¹²⁶ Department of Defense, *DOD Joint Officer Management Program Procedures*, DOD Instruction 1300.20 (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 1996), https://biotech.law.lsu.edu/blaw/dodd/corres/pdf/i130020_122096/i130020p.pdf.

2018, which is the current iteration.¹²⁷ As the program has evolved, the document has further expanded, changed from a directive to an instruction, and clarified requirements and waivers for JDAs.

C. CURRENT STATUS OF THE PROGRAM

The DOD Joint Duty Program is extremely organized, yet extremely complex in its use of points, waivers, and credits. Furthermore, to understand the current status of rotational JDAs, it is prudent to first understand the overall requirements of the DOD Joint Qualified Officer Program; of which rotations are only a part.

Defined in the most recent DOD Instruction 1300.19, *DOD Joint Officer Management Program*, a JDA is, “an assignment in which an officer gains significant experience in joint matters.”¹²⁸ Thus, it can be considered the military’s joint duty program as a relatable rotational program in the sense that it is a required period of time spent in another position external to the service member’s primary organization.

JDAs are further subcategorized into standard joint duty assignments (S-JDAs) and experience-based joint duty assignments (E-JDAs).¹²⁹ The S-JDAs are traditional rotational assignments whereby an officer spends at least 24 months in an approved assignment “in a multi-service, joint, or multinational command or activity that is involved in the integrated employment or support of the land, sea, and air forces.”¹³⁰ Conversely, an E-JDA is not bound by time limits and is an assignment where “an officer demonstrates knowledge, skills, and abilities in joint matters.”¹³¹ E-JDAs can account for time spent in

¹²⁷ Department of Defense, *DOD Joint Officer Management (JOM) Program*, DOD Instruction 1300.19 (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2014), <https://standards.globalspec.com/std/1668358/dodd-1300-19>; Department of Defense, *DOD Joint Officer Management (JOM) Program*, DOD Instruction 1300.19 (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2010), <https://prhome.defense.gov/Portals/52/Documents/RFM/MPP/OEPM/Docs/130019p.pdf>; Department of Defense, *DOD Joint Officer Management (JOM) Program*, 2003.

¹²⁸ Department of Defense, 2018, 44.

¹²⁹ Department of Defense, 2018, 43–46.

¹³⁰ Department of Defense, 2018, 46.

¹³¹ Department of Defense, 2018, 43.

joint training, exercises, and dedicated professional development.¹³² Prior to 2007, the only way to obtain joint duty credit was through a traditional S-JDA. The National Defense Authorization Act was then passed to allow E-JDAs. Officers can now count joint experience as part of their joint duty credit requirements.

One key feature of the Joint Duty Program is that it uses points to acquire credits that fulfill Joint Officer requirements. Both the S-JDA and E-JDA satisfy the intent of the law and can be used together or separately to earn points for overall credit towards appointment to a Joint Duty Qualified Officer. Figure 3 depicts how points can be acquired in different situations towards officer credit. No longer does a Joint Duty Qualified Officer require a traditional rotational career assignment, but can obtain credit or points that can similarly achieve the same competencies gained from a rotational program. These points take into account the leadership level and length of experience, as well as education and training certifications.

Joint EXPERIENCE Points = Duration (Months) x Intensity Factor*

*Combat: HF/ID: 2, Non-Combat: 1

DISCRETIONARY Points = Education + Training + Exercise

Education / Training = degree or certification related to "Joint Matters"

Exercise Points = Key Participant/Planner/Leader (1pt)

JOINT QUALIFICATION LEVEL = EXPERIENCE Pts + DISCRETIONARY Pts + JOINT EDUCATION

Figure 3. Point Accrual Formula.¹³³

¹³² Paul W. Mayberry, William H. Waggy II, and Anthony Lawrence, *Producing Joint Qualified Officers: FY 2008 to FY 2017 Trends*, RR-3105-OSD (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2019), 10, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR3105.html.

¹³³ Source: Department of Defense, *DOD Joint Officer Management (JOM) Program*, 2018, 13.

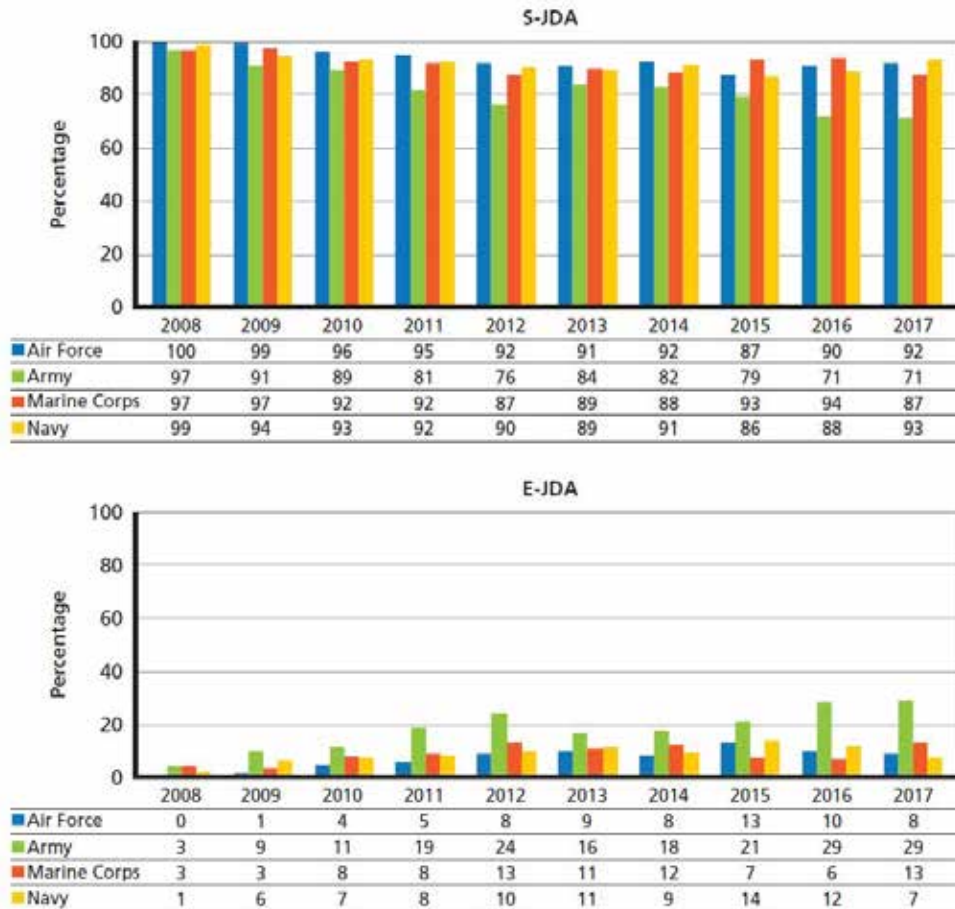
While current rotational assignments are not publicly available for analysis, a report published in 2019, sponsored by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Education and Training, observed trends in the Joint Officer Management Program from 2008 to 2017.¹³⁴ The study examines various branches of the military and depicts the use of S-JDAs versus E-JDAs, outlines the number of waivers used, and categorizes promotions by military branch.

The use of E-JDAs has steadily increased over the years to account for 15 percent of overall credit qualification.¹³⁵ The Army is the branch with the most constituents utilizing the flexibility of the E-JDA; almost 30 percent of personnel used the experience option in 2017.¹³⁶ Figure 4 sections out each branch of service and use of S-JDA versus E-JDA. The charts show that service members have increasingly used the E-JDA option for Joint Duty credit, which thereby decreases the use of the S-JDA traditional rotational program.

¹³⁴ Mayberry, Waggy, and Lawrence, *Producing Joint Qualified Officers*, iii.

¹³⁵ Mayberry, Waggy, and Lawrence, 43.

¹³⁶ Mayberry, Waggy, and Lawrence, 42.



SOURCE: Longitudinal data files created from JDAMIS and the officer master file.

Figure 4. Joint Duty Assignment Path for Individuals Appointed as Joint Qualified Officers, by Fiscal Year and Service.¹³⁷

Another key feature of the current Joint Duty Program is that it permits the use of waivers for promotion and credit. DOD Instruction 1300.19 outlines various ways that waivers can be utilized in the Joint Officer Management Program to adjust the length of a rotational tour, to advance in military education without taking required prerequisites, or to receive approvals without required prerequisites or qualifications.¹³⁸ Waivers are approved for special circumstances only, and the more forgiving the type of waiver, the higher the approval required.

¹³⁷ Source: Mayberry, Waggy, and Lawrence, 42.

¹³⁸ Department of Defense, *DOD Joint Officer Management (JOM) Program*, 2018, 27–30.

The only data available to compare waivers given over the time span studied was for tour of S-JDA length. The 2019 report demonstrates that over time, the percentage of these waivers granted are steadily around 10 percent of total participants. Of note, data reveals that higher-ranking officers receive more waivers for S-JDA length than their lower-ranking brethren, which paves a smoother road to promotion.¹³⁹ Figure 5 depicts tour length waiver trends by year, officer level, and branch.

S-JDA Tour Length Curtailment Waiver Trends

Fiscal Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
Waivers granted	81	113	116	141	89	131	75	94	90	65	1,045
FY inventory	938	1,027	1,555	1,116	856	1,089	900	916	910	714	10,021
Annual percentage	9%	11%	11%	13%	10%	12%	8%	10%	10%	9%	10%

Grade	O-4	O-5	O-6	Total
Waivers granted	48	361	636	1,045
Grade inventory	1,085	4,818	4,118	10,021
Grade percentage	4%	7%	15%	10%

Service	Air Force	Army	Marine Corps	Navy	Total
Waivers granted	460	359	53	173	1,045
Service inventory	3,523	2,948	1,128	2,422	10,021
Service percentage	13%	12%	5%	7%	10%

SOURCE: Longitudinal data files created from JDAMIS and the officer master file.

NOTE: Analysis is based on individuals granted waivers relative to their respective populations based on field grade officers across FY 2008 to FY 2017 who have completed JPME-II and an S-JDA assignment and have been designated a JQO.

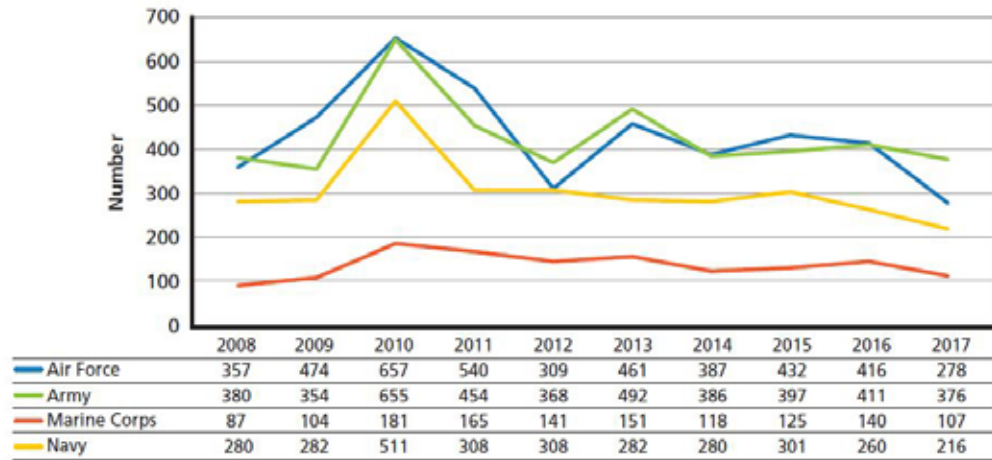
Figure 5. S-JDA Waiver Trends for Assignment Length.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ Mayberry, Waggy, and Lawrence, *Producing Joint Qualified Officers*, 61.

¹⁴⁰ Source: Mayberry, Waggy, and Lawrence, 61.

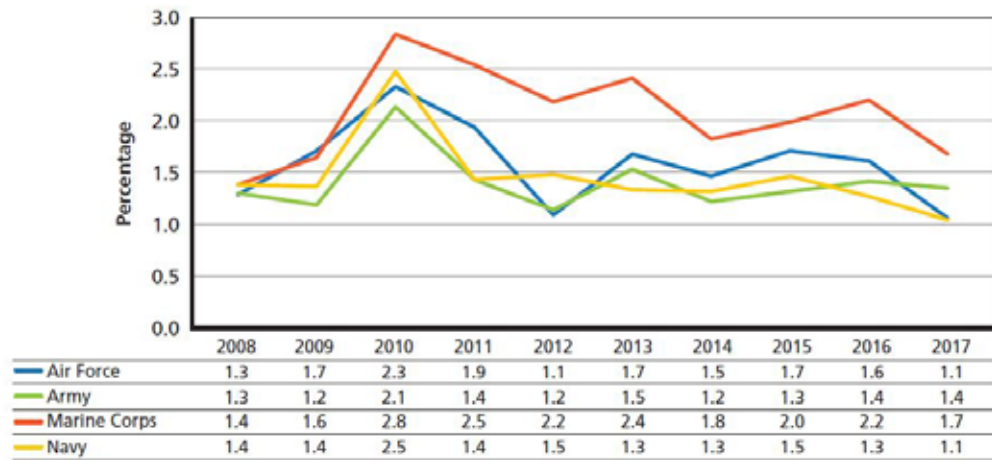
A final key component of the Joint Qualifying Officer Program is that it currently requires both a JDA, as well as additional joint military education. To complete the program and earn Joint Qualified Officer status, both facets of the program must be fulfilled. The 2019 report compared the total number of those officers each year who earned Joint Qualified Officer status by military service. While the education portion of this qualification cannot be factored out, it can be deduced that these numbers are reflective of the total number of those who completed rotations outside their military branch per year. Over the 10-year timespan studied, Figure 6 illustrates the percentages of officers qualified for joint status remain fairly stable at around 1.5–2.5 percent. As of 2017, records show that 977 service personnel were appointed as a Joint Qualified Officer and thus completed a rotational JDA to widen their knowledge and experience.

**Field Grade Officers Appointed as Joint Qualified Officers, by Service and Fiscal Year—
Number**



SOURCE: Longitudinal data files created from JDAMIS and the officer master file.

**Figure 3.4
Field Grade Officers Appointed as Joint Qualified Officers, by Service and Fiscal Year—
Percentage**



SOURCE: Longitudinal data files created from JDAMIS and the officer master file.

Figure 6. Joint Qualified Officers Appointed Yearly by Number and Percentage.¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ Source: Mayberry, Waggy, and Lawrence, 23.

D. BENEFITS OF THE DOD JOINT DUTY PROGRAM

What are the benefits of having a Joint Officer Management Program? What has the military gained over the past 30 years since implementation of the GNA?

For one, the DOD culture has significantly changed and the value of strategic intra-military knowledge has ingrained an ethos of unified mission. In that sense, Goldwater-Nichols has been a success, and in turn, the JDAs have contributed to building that culture. Respected former military leaders have agreed. Colin Powell testified that Goldwater-Nichols helped the department become a “new team” and led to the success of Operation Desert Storm.¹⁴² Officers today “have “grown-up” in the joint environment.”¹⁴³ The Joint Duty Program and actions under Goldwater-Nichols led to enhanced strategic operations, a more clear line of authority for field forces, and developed military leaders into well-rounded comprehensive thinkers and communicators.

Next, the program has received accolades from participants, which also contributes to the success and long-term sustainability of the program. A GAO study on Joint Officer Management, conducted in 2002, surveyed almost 600 officers about their experiences with JDAs. A majority looked favorably on their rotational opportunity; 70 percent of the responders believed “a joint duty assignment was beneficial to their career to a moderate or very great extent.”¹⁴⁴ Service members understand the incentives to participating in joint assignments. They agree, “joint duty assignments broadened their experience, perspective, and knowledge of the multiservice and multinational environment,” and “joint duty assignments enhanced their promotion potential and professional development.”¹⁴⁵ This result again serves to prove that the intent and vision of the program is realized.

¹⁴² McInnis, *Goldwater Nichols at 30*, 9.

¹⁴³ Department of Defense, *Strategic Plan for Joint Officer Management and Joint Professional Military Education* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2006), 11, <https://archive.defense.gov/transformation/documents/DoDStratPlan-JOMJPME.pdf>.

¹⁴⁴ Brenda S. Farrell, *Military Personnel: Joint Officer Development Has Improved, but a Strategic Approach Is Needed*, GAO-03-238 (Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office, 2002), 49.

¹⁴⁵ Farrell, *Military Personnel*, 49.

Finally, the program is flexible; JDAs have evolved over time to account for the changing environment and landscape of threats faced by this country. The DOD has continually revised doctrine and revamped the program to make it more accessible and relevant to the underlying purpose of Joint Duty. JDAs have changed to allow those in combat to earn more credit towards qualification, and those with non-traditional, but no less equivalent joint experience, to earn points also. With both S-JDAs and E-JDAs, the opportunity for officers to have meaningful rotational experiences that count towards future promotions adds to the efficiency of the program. The DOD has implemented recommendations from countless reports and investigations to refine procedures and policies. Adding different levels and standards of qualifications further expanded the program and made it more accessible to officers with different backgrounds, restricted opportunities, or following unconventional career pathways.

E. CHALLENGES AND PUBLISHED CRITIQUES

However, in addition to the benefits, the DOD Joint Qualifying Officer Program has also faced challenges. Two characteristics unique to the program may also be problematic, the length of rotational assignments and the option to use waivers.

First, the DOD Joint Duty rotational assignment is required to be at least 24 months minimum in duration. Originally, JDAs were required to last for 36 months, but currently are mandated for a minimum of two years.¹⁴⁶ While a lengthy rotational opportunity is necessary not only to learn but master new skills, it fosters a more thorough understanding in another discipline. Nevertheless, this time away can be taxing for supervisors and colleagues of participants. Without proper backfill of a position, the rotation can leave a gap in the participant's originating division. In fact, in the 2002 GAO survey, participants claimed that the one downfall of JDAs was the time spent away from their home branches of service, "their ultimate concern was that multiple joint assignments would take them away from service assignments for too great a period and that this time away could adversely affect their career progression and promotion potential."¹⁴⁷ Officers in the study

¹⁴⁶ Mayberry, Waggy, and Lawrence, *Producing Joint Qualified Officers*, 18.

¹⁴⁷ Farrell, *Military Personnel*, 27–49.

commonly opined that joint assignments were truly only necessary for those aspiring to be admirals or generals.¹⁴⁸ Participating in a rotation may bring a higher awareness of the larger organizational mission but may diminish the departmental focus on targeted specialties needed in a nimble and fluctuating situation.

The issuance of waivers for promotion, and forgoing the requirement of officers to rotate through a JDA prior to higher-level promotions, is another issue raised about the DOD's program. In FY2001, the GAO found that the department used waivers to promote 25 percent of officers to general and flag officer pay grades.¹⁴⁹ These waivers are allowable under Goldwater-Nichols but only on a case-by-case basis by exception. As stated earlier, more current analyses show that waivers are used in 10 percent of promotional cases. While this downward trend is encouraging, waivers still negate the intent of the act to provide an opportunity to cross-train, share best practices, and gain knowledge of other branches to promote unity of effort.

F. ANALYSIS OF ESSENTIAL ROTATIONAL PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Comparing elements of DOD's Joint Officer Management Program, and more specifically of JDAs, with criteria established using Campion, Cheraskin, and Stevens's and Griffiths's work, the author is evaluating the program under the following five categories:

- Is the rotational program available to employees at all professional levels in their career (entry positions, first-line supervisors, mid-level managers, senior executives)?
- Does leadership promote and value the rotational program as an asset to their organization and mutual benefit to the employer and employee?
- Is the program a part of the career development suite of opportunities and considered in succession planning and individual employee growth?

¹⁴⁸ Farrell, 27.

¹⁴⁹ Farrell, *Military Personnel*, 19.

- Are support mechanisms in place for funding or resources to administer the program on a national level?
- Is the mission and expectations of the program clear, are program successes and challenges tracked, and is it reviewed for continual improvement?

First, the Joint Officer Management Program, and JDAs specifically, are not available to service members at all levels of their military careers and the program is not inclusive to all service members. Junior officers are considered comparatively inexperienced to be considered eligible for joint qualifications.¹⁵⁰ Data and surveys seem to illustrate that JDA requirements are waived for more high-ranking officers than others are, and with a resulting sense of inequalities in the waiver process.¹⁵¹ In fact, the Joint Duty Assignment List (JDAL), which lists all rotational opportunities, has more JDA options for lower-ranking officers than for higher-ranking officers looking for qualification.¹⁵² Whether by design or coincidence, equal opportunities and availabilities are not extended to all ranks.

Second, DOD leadership does indeed promote and value the rotational program as depicted in guidance and doctrine. Furthermore, it is a requirement for promotion. The 2005 Vision Statement for Joint Officer Development, set forth by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to provide direction, states “detailed work on joint leader competencies is both at the heart of the vision and an area to be more fully developed.”¹⁵³ The Strategic Plan for Joint Officer Development similarly states that an even greater need

¹⁵⁰ Mayberry, Waggy, and Lawrence, *Producing Joint Qualified Officers*, 6.

¹⁵¹ Mayberry, Waggy, and Lawrence, 44–61.

¹⁵² Mayberry, Waggy, and Lawrence, xvi.

¹⁵³ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *CJCS Vision for Joint Officer Development* (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2005), iv, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/education/jf2030/cjcs_jod_vision2005.pdf?ver=2018-11-30-094125-747#:~:text=This%20vision%20for%20joint%20officer,of%20the%20CCJO%2Denvisioned%20force.&text=This%20vision%20is%20intended%20to,leaders%20required%20by%20the%20Nation.

now exists for “jointness” than when Goldwater-Nichols was passed.¹⁵⁴ More recently, in March 2020, Deputy Defense Secretary David L. Norquist stated, “the military is doing better today than it was four years ago,” due in part to a more prepared and trained workforce.¹⁵⁵ JDAs that promote rotational assignments between services contribute to that readiness. Regardless of leadership endorsement, JDA is a requirement for promotions at this time and thus support is implied and codified in law.

Moreover, the requirements under Joint Officer Development directly influence succession planning. While not explicitly stated, the JDAs and joint program lead to a cadre of officers trained in joint operations and available to lead a more integrated military force. Yet, not possibly having enough jointly trained officers remains a concern. In the 2006 Strategic Plan, the DOD addressed GAO’s recommendation to estimate the number of officers with joint experience required across the forces. In 2006, the estimate was “about 14,100 positions (either required or desired) should be filled by officers with joint experience.”¹⁵⁶ However, active Joint Qualified Officer tallies ranged from an estimated 5,100 in 2007 to 7,300 officers in 2018.¹⁵⁷ While this number was much lower than was projected almost 15 years ago, it did not account for those who might have participated in JDAs but had not obtained overall qualification. That data is not readily available.

Additionally, the program is amply funded, stable, and supported. For Fiscal Year 2021, the DOD requested \$705 billion for its overall budget.¹⁵⁸ With the goal of building a “more lethal, agile, and innovative joint force,” the four focus areas can be indirectly tied to supporting rotational joint duty assignments:

¹⁵⁴ Department of Defense, *Strategic Plan for Joint Officer Management and Joint Professional Military Education*, 3.

¹⁵⁵ C. Todd Lopez, “Military Doing Better Today Than 4 Years Ago, Norquist Says,” Department of Defense, March 10, 2020, <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/2107939/military-doing-better-today-than-4-years-ago-norquist-says/>.

¹⁵⁶ Department of Defense, *Strategic Plan for Joint Officer Management and Joint Professional Military Education*, 28.

¹⁵⁷ Mayberry, Waggy, and Lawrence, *Producing Joint Qualified Officers*, 21.

¹⁵⁸ Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), *Defense Budget Overview: Irreversible Implementation of the National Defense Strategy* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2018), 1–3, <https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>.

1. Continues to strengthen military readiness and invest in the modernization of a more lethal force
2. Strengthens alliances, deepens interoperability and attracts new partners
3. Reforms the Department for greater performance and accountability
4. Supports service members and their families, recognizing that our people are our most valuable resource¹⁵⁹

Improved readiness, interoperability, increased performance, and supporting staff are all objectives in a JDA. The Joint Officer Management Program is funded out of necessity and implemented through law, but the tenets of the program are fundamental tenets of the military's defense strategy. Not only is funding available for the program, but various resources are in place to make JDAs available and known to service men and women. The department keeps a JDAL, mentioned earlier, of all opportunities and regularly reviews and validates the assignments.¹⁶⁰

Finally, the mission of the Joint Officer Management Program and its JDA requirement is clarified in law, guidance, policy, vision statements, strategic plans, and instructions. These are reviewed and updated on a fairly regular basis. For example, the directive on the program has been amended five times since inception, about every 3–4 years. The department has sponsored numerous studies on the program and its elements. Data is collected and tracked on aspects of the program, and it has been modified and adjusted to fit the needs of officers and the military over time.

G. BEST PRACTICES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Analyzing the DOD Joint Duty Officer Program and JDAs reveals many tenets that could be duplicated in similar types of rotational programs either within the federal government or among the homeland security community. The program is adaptable and flexible, yet structured and systematic. However, expansion of the program to all service members could be beneficial to both the department and the employee by expanding the candidate pool for qualified officers equipped with Joint Duty experience.

¹⁵⁹ Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), *Defense Budget Overview*, 1–3.

¹⁶⁰ Mayberry, Waggy, and Lawrence, *Producing Joint Qualified Officers*, xii.

In comparing the initial guidelines for the Joint Officer Program to the most recent version, many changes are worth noting. Terminology over the years has changed. Once referred to as Joint Specialty Officers, those whom complete JDAs are now deemed Joint Qualified Officers. What was once considered a specialty to be trained and have experience in multiple military realms, is now a necessary qualification for officer promotion.

Additionally, the changes in policy over time increases flexibilities for obtaining Joint Duty credit, and the expanded definition of joint matters includes “broader specifications of joint activities (e.g., command and control, intelligence, fires, movement and maneuver, protection, or sustainment).”¹⁶¹ The DOD has adapted the concept of Joint Duty experiences to fit the modern interpretation of this experience. Ironically, what is stereotypically considered a traditional, massive federal organization is actually progressive and malleable with its policies and programs related to JDAs. Other organizations could benefit from the DOD’s example.

Furthermore, the DOD has a lengthy rotational opportunity within the Joint Duty Program, which provides the participant the opportunity truly to learn a new job and acquire new skills, unlike some programs that are only a few months in length. If the purpose of the program is to gain a more holistic view of the military enterprise, then a lengthy rotational experience is necessary to understand truly the inner workings of a military branch.

However, the DOD Joint Duty Program is not all-inclusive and is only available to service members at certain levels in their career. To create a fully integrated armed national force, joint rotational assignments should be mandatory for all. By expanding the program to employees at multiple levels, and enforcing rotations to the intent of the law, the program may serve its original purpose. The government may consider expanding joint duty as a requirement not only for promotion, but also for all troops, to carry out the mission and goals outlined in the FY2021 budget and overall National Defense Strategy effectively.

¹⁶¹ Mayberry, Waggy, and Lawrence, 15.

In summary, this chapter examines the characteristics and attributes of DOD joint duty rotation policies, and evaluates their effectiveness through key criteria including inclusivity, leadership support, and mission clarity. The next chapter compares benefits and challenges of the rotational programs analyzed, compiles best practices, and makes recommendations for enhancing DHS current rotational opportunities.

V. FINAL ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

This thesis has sought to assess the benefits and challenges of select rotational programs in the federal government to determine best practices that could be applied to the DHS rotational programs, the HSRP and the Joint Duty Program. Previous chapters have analyzed the DHS programs and reviewed case studies to determine best practices from the IC and DOD Joint Duty programs. This research has further identified which elements of these programs could be adopted or implemented within the DHS opportunities. This chapter offers recommendations for changes and enhancements to the DHS rotational programs to augment the effectiveness and fulfill the mission of the programs, and thereby enhance the DHS workforce. Ultimately, DHS has opportunities to improve on key elements, such as inclusivity, encouraging participation through credits and incentives, ensuring a strong foundation for the program, and developing a continual review process through metrics, data collection, and review.

A. SUMMARY AND FINDINGS FROM DHS

Although the DHS rotational programs are in the early years of implementation, two key elements of the program are well designed. The first is the simple fact that two distinct rotational programs exist vice one program. In theory, doubling the number of programs should increase the number of opportunities available to employees. The more rotational assignments available, the more that employees will be able to explore other positions and projects, which expands their understanding of the department and facets of the organization. Since more employees could take advantage of these opportunities by way of two programs, DHS could encourage the cross-pollination of its staff and fulfill the mission of employees' acquiring organizational knowledge.

Additionally, DHS has staff who are coordinating and managing these rotational programs. These are dedicated staff positions and not collateral duties. This focus on the program and attention to resources provides solid support and structure to build successful, thriving programs.

However, when comparing the HSRP and the DHS Joint Duty Program with key elements of rotational programs, as derived from Campion, Cheraskin, and Stevens and Griffiths, it is apparent that the DHS rotational programs have many opportunities for optimization. Five apparent challenges for both programs hinder the full realization of program goals.

First, the programs and therefore the rotational opportunities offered do not provide all DHS employees, at varying levels in their careers, similar opportunities; they are restrictive and narrow in scope. While one of the DHS rotational programs is inclusive; the HSRP, the other rotational program is not. This difference is by design; however, while the HSRP is nominally open to all employees, its distribution of opportunities is not comparable to the distribution of employees at various levels across the organization. In particular, the postings listed on the HSRP website are primarily opportunities for employees at the mid- to senior-levels, which deprives those below these grades. Similarly, the Joint Duty Program opportunities are skewed toward senior-level employees to reflect the participation parameters. Thus, the overall distribution of opportunities across both programs is imbalanced.

Second, the programs suffer from limited and disjointed promotion among DHS leadership. While the Joint Duty opportunities are listed publicly on the USAJobs platform, the HSRP program opportunities are only available on DHS's internal website. Many of the Joint Duty opportunities were posted prior to the DHS development of any established guidance or policies. Without a strong campaign to tout the benefits of these programs and rotational assignments in general, participation and involvement will be meager at best, and the mission of these professional development opportunities will suffer.

Third, as explained in Chapter II, according to the website's information page, the Joint Duty Program can support succession-planning efforts.¹⁶² Yet, no further details are available on how to accomplish it, and it is not referenced in policy or guidance. An effective succession plan devises tactics to develop the next cadre of leaders. Without a

¹⁶² Department of Homeland Security, "Joint Duty Program."

clear strategy on how this program fits into the overall succession plans for the department, the program may not receive the attention and value it deserves.

Fourth, while the programs are supported with dedicated staff, they are not budgeted, which creates limitations in geographic location and length of assignments. A dedicated funding stream for rotational assignments is not provided. The program relies on participants and host divisions to negotiate funding support, which may be hindered if extra monies are unavailable. As a result, while some opportunities are virtual, a sampling of program opportunities showed that rotational vacancies were consistently concentrated in one location—the Washington, D.C., area—and not offered in various places across the country. By contrast, the lengths of assignments varied drastically, from three months to one year (with options for extensions). Time spent in a rotational position was not consistent, which could leave some participants in a less-than-ideal short assignment; they would fall short of a substantial experience.

The fifth issue is that the missions and parameters of the HSRP and the Joint Duty Program overlap. The two programs, distinct by name, are not so distinct in practice. This similarity leads to confusion among potential participants and potential hosts; why two separate programs? The postings do not follow the guidelines outlined in the respective policies, which diminishes their authorities. Moreover, a comprehensive collection of data on the program or a historical analysis of the rotational programs has not been done from inception to provide insight into how and if the programs are meeting their intentions. Participant surveys are voluntary. As a result, a feedback loop for continuous improvement or reviews of these key professional development opportunities does not exist.

B. BEST PRACTICES

As Chapters II and III set forth, best practices and key components of the IC Joint Duty Program and the DOD Joint Officer Management Program JDAs do present ideas for DHS program improvements. Both the IC and DOD opportunities offer lengthy rotational assignments, are touted and endorsed by leadership, and use these programs as a vehicle to enhance succession planning efforts. Furthermore, the DOD has internal mechanisms for

dedicated funding and support for JDAs, which thereby ease logistics and accessibility for participants.

Foremost, the IC and DOD rotational programs are fully endorsed by the highest levels of leadership and are promoted on external websites, which emphasizes the value and importance of these opportunities. Reports have shown that the DOD and IC leadership have committed to endorsing rotational programs, and participants have lauded the benefits of these programs. This positive feedback and support from multiple levels within the organization, which DHS has yet to achieve, has enhanced the culture of these departments and promoted the “jointness” at the core of these programs.

Additionally, whereas DHS does not offer medals or credits for completing rotations, both the IC and DOD offer personnel incentives for finishing their Joint Duty programs. In both the IC and DOD, senior-level staff is required to have completed a rotational JDA prior to accepting a leadership role. These programs are therefore integral to succession planning, with the result that both organizations ensure that their future leaders have a broad, strategic understanding and knowledge of their departments and communities before promotion. By making these JDAs a requirement, the IC and DOD magnify the value of the rotational assignment and define it as a key element of leadership and succession planning.

Furthermore, both the IC and DOD rotational programs are properly resourced and supported in funding and length of assignments, which contributes to program stability and longevity. The DOD funds rotational assignments through its Joint Duty Program. This funding allows the DOD program to be fully accessible to all participants regardless of location; those who participate in the program do not have to worry about travel costs or restrict themselves to rotational assignments within a commutable distance. Without the constraints of funding limitations, opportunities are not limited by geographic boundaries. The DOD program also does not have to rely on participants to determine or negotiate their own funding support, which can restrict viable options and diminish the overall experience. A fully resourced and funded rotational program can greatly expand possibilities for placements while reducing the stress and burden on participants involved in funding negotiations and agreements. Similarly, the logistics of assignment length are aptly

appropriated within the DOD and IC. In contrast to the DHS rotational programs, which last anywhere from three months to one year, the JDAs in the IC and DOD are intended to be substantial in length, or at least two to three years in duration. Both organizations realize the value of spending quality and a large quantity of time in another role truly to understand, learn, and master new skills. While rotating into another position for a shorter duration may prove beneficial, it is superficial at best for employees to understand the complexities of a role without spending a substantial amount of time working in that role. By undertaking multi-year rotational assignments, participants are able to develop, coordinate, and potentially lead projects and initiatives to give them further insight into and understanding of the assignment.

Lastly, as mature rotational programs, both the IC and DOD have clearly defined program parameters, and the programs have subsequently undergone evaluation and assessment. The DOD routinely reviews and updates program policies every three to five years. Data and metrics are tracked on many facets of the program to allow the department to modify or adapt as needed. For example, the DOD rotational program has modified its guidelines because of changing operational conditions to allow credits and experiential JDAs as part of the DOD rotational program. This practice of routine monitoring and a continual improvement process help a program to shift and flex when needed.

C. CONSIDERATION OF ESSENTIAL ROTATIONAL ELEMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations and proposed courses of action for DHS to consider to improve and expand its rotational programs. The recommendations are organized according to the key elements examined throughout each case study. Ultimately, for a successful and meaningful rotational program, DHS should foster an inclusive program with expanded opportunities, provide substantial credit and benefits for participants, define program targets and optimal participation levels, and ensure a solid logistical support structure, and track program metrics and data to evaluate the program objectively for future continual revision and improvement.

Essential Rotational Key Element #1: The rotational program is available to employees at all professional levels in their career.

Recommendation: Expand rotational offerings and opportunities to be inclusive and representative of the workforce and cultivate an all-encompassing professional development rotational initiative.

Since the HSRP is to open to all employees, the distribution of opportunities should be comparable to the distribution of employees at various levels across the organization.

Recommendation: Expand the Joint Duty Program to more mid-career employees at least at the GS-11 level and above, similar to the IC Joint Duty Program.

Expanding the program would essentially expand the pool of applicants, increase participation, and magnify the mission. The restriction of the Joint Duty Program to higher-level employees should be reevaluated and rescinded, as the department could be missing the opportunities for earlier intervention to develop future leaders and managers by limiting those able to participate. While the intent of the program is to develop middle-level to senior staff, consideration should be given to high performing mid-career individuals at the GS-11 and GS-12 levels, also considered mid-level by OPM standards. DHS should expand the Joint Duty Program, thereby expanding the pool of applicants, increasing participation, and expanding the mission.

Essential Rotational Key Element #2: Leadership promotes and values the rotational program.

Recommendation: Require specific leadership commitment and advocacy.

DHS publicly endorses the rotational programs on its outward facing websites; however, to promote DHS rotational programs further, the department should require specific leadership commitment and advocacy. While DHS has made great strides in branding the HSRP and providing transparency about Joint Duty opportunities by posting openings on the USAJobs website, the organization could do more to promote them. Options for promotional consideration could include publishing testimonials from those who have participated in the program and working with federal social networks to broadcast program benefits and leadership endorsements.

Recommendation: Incentivize rotational programs for both employees and managers and make the rotational assignments count; i.e., Joint Duty credit.

Both DHS rotational programs provide growth and developmental experiences for employees, but no tangible recognition or credit once completed. DHS Joint Duty postings refer to a “joint duty credit,” but that credit is not defined or explained anywhere in the policies or doctrine. DHS should explore a credit system for Joint Duty and the HSRP for both employees and managers. Those supervisors who allow their employees to participate in these programs, as well as managers who offer rotational opportunities, should be rewarded. A rotation manager incentive credit could substitute for yearly mandatory DHS continuous improvement supervisor giveback assignments.

Essential Rotational Key Element #3: The program is a part of the career development suite of opportunities and considered in succession planning and individual employee growth.

Recommendation: Consider rotations to be a requirement to hold top leadership positions in the agency, similar to both the IC and DOD programs.

By requiring leaders to complete rotational assignments prior to assuming top positions, this strategy could incorporate these types of rotational programs into succession planning in both policy and action. Additionally, this focus on succession planning and individual employee growth would build a culture of learning and holistic engagement leading to retaining talent and increasing morale; problems that have plagued the department for many years.

Recommendation: Post a defined number of positions and subsequently have targets for employee participation, similar to DOD’s Joint Duty Program.

Setting targets and metrics for program participation would ensure that DHS is truly striving towards its goal of developing a high-performing workforce as stated in the Strategic Plan.

Essential Rotational Key Element #4: Support mechanisms are in place.

Recommendation: Create strong logistical support structures to fund DHS rotational programs and allow the opportunity for longer assignments.

In particular, most DHS postings have been located in or near the nation's capital. DHS has staff located all across the country; the department must further support participation in rotational opportunities near and far by expanding the geographical variety of postings. To that end, DHS should approve, encourage, or set aside dedicated funding streams to enable rotations to occur nationally, not just in the nation's capital, and for a substantial length of time.

Recommendation: Post rotational assignments that are one to two years in length.

The IC and DOD value lengthy rotational assignments that prove successful, and DHS needs to consider emulating this process. A basic awareness, obtained in a few months, of the roles and responsibilities of another position, does not compare to learning and working in a position for one to two years. Ample funding for and substantive rotational assignment length are crucial to a successful, well-balanced program.

Essential Rotational Key Element #5: The mission and expectations of the program are clear, program successes and challenges are tracked, and is it reviewed for continual improvement.

Recommendation: Define and clearly delineate the goals of the rotational programs, as well as collect information to inform future improvements and modifications.

While DHS does have policies and directives that outline the missions of the programs, the department should more clearly define the missions of each.

Recommendation: Collect and track information on such metrics as program participation, participant satisfaction and opinions, and types and actual lengths of assignments to determine if goals are met.

Recommendation: Undergo annual reviews to identify program successes and challenges.

Likewise, the department must start collecting and tracking information to baseline the program and determine if goals are being met. Once initial data is compiled, the program should undergo reviews at least annually to highlight program accomplishments, best practices, and areas for improvement. This review will ensure rotational programs have the wherewithal to adapt and evolve over time to meet the needs of employees and the agency while sustaining the core elements of successful rotational programs.

D. FINAL THOUGHTS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Rotational programs are a strategic component in professional developmental offerings. The opportunity to rotate into another role temporarily and be embedded in a different division of an organization can provide unparalleled insight. DHS has implemented two rotational programs designed to broaden the knowledge of its employees in an effort to increase the number of staff who have a more strategic vision of the department and understanding of linkages between components. As DHS develops its rotational programs, it must consider best practices and recommendations for improvement.

Additionally, based on the findings of this study, it is apparent and imperative that further data on rotational programs, not only in the federal government but as a whole, must be collected and analyzed. A lack of information makes it difficult truly to analyze the benefits and challenges of these programs. If that information becomes available, it should be evaluated to understand the value of these programs to employers and employees and the extent to which they offer a return on investment.

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