

CONFERENCE CALL



The Army civilian workforce is essential to ensuring that our warfighters accomplish their missions worldwide. Here, a class of approximately 150 DOD civilians and contractors, part of the Civilian Expeditionary Workforce, learn the basics of emergency medical aid at the Camp Atterbury Joint Maneuver Training Center, IN, June 29, 2010, before deploying to Afghanistan and Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by SPC John Crosby.)

Transforming the Army Civilian Workforce

Jaclyn Pitts

While DOD works hard to ensure that our Nation's military is the best in the world, Army civilians are equally important to ensuring that our warfighters accomplish their missions worldwide. DOD has recognized this through civilian workforce transformation, discussed in both the *2010 U.S. Army Posture Statement* and the *2011 Army Business Transformation Plan*.

A panel of senior leaders from several workforce management, training, and development offices across the Army discussed transformation initiatives and challenges Oct. 27, 2010, at the 2010 AUSA Annual Meeting and Exposition.

Lines of Effort

Thomas R. Lamont, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, was the keynote speaker for the panel titled, "Transforming the Civilian

Workforce; Strengthening Army Capabilities." He discussed the five major initiatives outlined in the *2011 Army Business Transformation Plan*:

- Integrate requirements determination, allocation, and resourcing processes that identify workforce capabilities.
- Improve workforce life-cycle strategy, planning, and operations to enhance mission effectiveness.
- Establish an integrated management system to support civilian human capital decision making and allow leaders and employees to perform their roles more efficiently in support of Army goals and missions.
- Execute Army Senior Executive Service (SES) Competency Assessments and develop Army civilian leaders.
- Take action to reform the civilian hiring process.

Lamont stressed the importance of managing civilian occupations in the workforce and identifying the competencies needed and how they can be developed effectively. "One objective in this plan is to establish a career program management structure for all occupations," he explained.

On the subject of an integrated management system, Lamont noted that currently, civilian workforce management is fragmented across the different commands, career programs, and proponents. "This line of effort will establish an integrated structure to more effectively manage the workforce and make decisions that make sense for career programs, the commands, and our employees," he said.

Lamont explained that the key to civilian leader development is creating leader development paths, which will include competency analyses and develop education, training, and experiential opportunities so that leaders may grow with the skills and abilities needed to manage the future Army. In addition to developing leaders, reforming the civilian hiring process will help the Army attract the talent it needs and wants. "The goal is not to be processing applications, but to actively recruit the right people for the right jobs," Lamont said.

Hiring Reforms and Efficiencies

Lamont discussed how the U.S. Army Civilian Human Resources Agency continues to lead the way with the development and execution of a beta test for hiring reforms and efficiencies at the Fort Myer Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC), Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, VA.

The first piece of the beta test focuses on the development of a projected annual staffing plan and recruitment requirements. Position descriptions are reviewed, validated,

and pre-classified to pre-position all recruitment-related documents in CPAC, allowing pre-planning for potential recruitment actions based on a command-generated vacancy projection list using historical trends and known or projected retirements.

The beta test also is implementing several business process improvement initiatives to streamline and shorten the hiring process, including expediting the time to process security clearances and Common Access Cards to bring new employees on board.

"Altogether, the beta test goal is to validate the premise that pre-planning by commands, to include the review of all position descriptions and development of an annual staffing plan in conjunction with several business process improvement initiatives, will enable CPAC to initiate recruitment actions more quickly with more accuracy and complete the hiring action sooner," Lamont said.

Taking Risks and Making Progress

"My personal observation is that, at times, we seem to look for the barriers in why we can't do something, rather than looking for mechanisms or rationales for why we can," Lamont said. "I suggest this calls for a little bit of self-reflection on all parts. We as leaders become so risk-adverse that we instinctively avoid decisions that somehow, somewhere, someone might question. To be the leadership side, we need to figure out how to overcome barriers, not necessarily just look for barriers. We have to reach out of ourselves."

Overall, the Army has made significant progress in civilian workforce transformation, Lamont said. Over the spring and summer of 2010, the Army completed its review of senior civilian positions, focusing on the leadership competencies most valued in the SES. The next step is to conduct a similar

analysis of GS-15 positions. "Together, this will provide a requirement we can use to build our future leaders," Lamont said. "This work will provide our young civilian leaders a clear target on which to focus as they move through their careers."

Force Development Training

Mark Lewis, Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff (DCS), G-3/-5/-7, gave insight into how the strategic environment has changed for Army civilians in recent years. Over the past 9 years of war, military officers have been pulled away from division commands, rapidly raising civilians into leadership positions more than ever. Lewis explained that there must be a developmental process to move civilians along in their education and training, just as military officers go through leader development courses and schools.

The goal, he said, is to draw a parallel between military and civilian leader development. "What we want to do in the G-3 is maximize the potential not only of what civilians are doing now, but also what they will do in the future and what they can do for the Army," Lewis said.

Strategic Talent Management

Gwen DeFilippi, Director, Civilian Senior Leader Management Office (CSLMO), discussed how the CSLMO is working to become a strategic entity that accomplishes more than executives' processing actions. She explained that in August, Secretary of the Army John McHugh rechartered CSLMO's Executive Resources Board, providing guidance that the board must follow merit staffing principles in hiring senior executives and must leverage strategic workforce planning.

"We are going to provide transparency in how we're doing talent management and trying to communicate better with senior executives and the rest of the workforce," DeFilippi said. "We

will be publishing minutes of all of our meetings, providing visibility to the workforce on how we think about talent management.”

CSLMO's Executive Resources Board has implemented three initiatives to strategically manage talent:

- On a quarterly basis, executive resources are allocated among commands, which is important for leader development and allows clearer visibility of where positions are and what the requirements are for those positions.
- On a monthly basis, the board will review hiring actions and look for trends in selections to the executive corps.
- The board created a Talent and Succession Management Board to create a clearer picture of what executives want in terms of competencies, career flow, and succession plans.

DeFilippi explained that the board has outlined steps for the next 6 months to define requirements for leader development; get resources for education, training, and experiential opportunities; and communicate this information to both leaders and individual employees. This process is important in determining what programs are necessary to build key GS-15 and SES-level leaders from the bottom up, she said.

Donald Tison, Assistant DCS, G-8, followed with his perspective on the importance of education in the workforce. “If we aren't an educated workforce, then what are we?” he asked. The challenge is obtaining funding for the appropriate amount of education and training. Most education funding is at the state and local levels; therefore, the civilian workforce must take advantage of these state and local programs. “What we can and should do is put those keystone programs in



Joseph M. McDade, Assistant DCS, G-1, discusses civilian workforce transformation Oct. 27, 2010, at the AUSA Annual Meeting and Exposition. (U.S. Army photo courtesy of AUSA.)

place to allow standard organization structures and have the right balance,” Tison said.

The Impact on Soldiers

LTG Mark P. Hertling, Deputy Commanding General, Initial Military Training, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, gave his perspective on how critical Army civilians are. “We at initial military training would fail our mission” without the civilian workers, who make up about one-third of his nearly 20,000 personnel, he said. Hertling's civilian workers not only issue uniforms to incoming trainees, run food service, and provide the majority of medical and dental care, but they also conduct some entry-level and skills training, including marksmanship. For example, when visiting Fort Huachuca, AZ, Hertling observed that civilians conducted most training for new unmanned aerial vehicle operators.

Conclusion

In summary, Joseph M. McDade, Assistant DCS, G-1, reiterated the main points of dramatic strategic change: maximizing and identifying civilians' potential and requirements,

creating transparency, and generating feedback. “We have got to link together education, training, and experience seamlessly,” he said. “If we are going to tell civilians they have to go through education and training, there has to be an alignment between what we expect them to do in their future jobs and why we're sending them to those places.”

McDade also explained how selection to the Senior Service College has changed. “We not only do paper reviews, but we also do interviews to make sure we are selecting the best and the brightest for the Army, because it's a big investment. We've got more work to do, but I think it was a tremendous advance in terms of what we're doing for the workforce.”

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