Black representation among high-quality Army recruits has changed over time, with the black share of gross contracts falling 8.3 percentage points between fiscal years (FYS) 2000 and 2004, then increasing 1.2 percentage points between 2004 and 2007. (A recruit is deemed high-quality if he or she has a high school diploma and scores above average on the Armed Forces Qualification Test.) Black representation among Navy recruits has been generally stable. In contrast, Hispanic representation among high-quality recruits increased in both the Army (3.3 percentage points) between FYS 2000 and 2003 and in the Navy (5.3 percentage points) between FYS 2002 and 2005. These disparate trends suggest that black and Hispanic youths’ enlistment decisions respond differently to resources, external opportunities, and other factors.

A team of RAND researchers identified factors correlated with trends in black and Hispanic representation among high-quality recruits in the Army and Navy. The researchers also suggested policies likely to be most effective in increasing high-quality enlistments among black, Hispanic, and white youth.

How Do Groups Respond Differently to Recruiting Resources?
The military relies on many resources to recruit youths, including enlistment bonuses, educational benefits (such as the Montgomery GI Bill), military pay, and recruiters. The researchers estimated enlistment models by race and ethnicity and identified several patterns:
- In the Army, black high-quality enlistments are more responsive to enlistment bonuses and less responsive to military pay, compared with high-quality enlistments of other groups.
- In the Army, Hispanic high-quality enlistments are highly responsive to military pay, Army educational benefits, and recruiters.

In the Navy, both black and Hispanic high-quality enlistments are responsive to recruiters, while the estimated effects of bonuses, military pay, and educational benefits are not statistically different from zero.
- Finally, enlistments respond differently to resources in the Army versus in the Navy. In general, Navy responsiveness to resources is lower, in percentage terms, than Army responsiveness.

What Accounts for the Recruiting Trends by Group?
In addition to the above-mentioned recruiting factors, the researchers identified economic and demographic factors (e.g., the unemployment rate and noncitizen population), eligibility factors (e.g., obesity rate and crime rate), and political factors (e.g., the war in Iraq and the presidential approval rate) that help explain high-quality minority enlistment trends. The table identifies factors that explain recruiting trends over time in the Army: specifically, the 8.3 percentage point decline in black representation between 2000 and 2004, and the increase of 1.2 percentage points between 2004 and 2007.

Abstract
Between 2000 and 2007, the representation of blacks among high-quality Army recruits declined, while in the Navy, black representation remained stable; the representation of Hispanics among high-quality recruits in both the Army and Navy grew during this period. RAND researchers identified factors that explain these recruiting trends and found that potential black and Hispanic recruits respond differently to recruiting resources and that these differences, along with economic and demographic factors, factors related to eligibility, and political factors, explain much of the changes.
Policy Implications

Because potential black and Hispanic recruits respond differently to recruiting resources, the military might effectively target resources to specific groups in each service, and even across services. However, such an approach may run counter to notions of equity and fairness—that is, the services might be reluctant to target resources based on race and ethnicity. Still, as policy allocation decisions are made, the services should recognize that these decisions will affect not only the quantity of high-quality enlistments but also their distribution across groups, and that some policies could alter minority representation.

The analysis also suggests the possibility of targeting resources across services by group, given the differential responses of different groups across services. Because researchers did not estimate joint models of Army and Navy enlistments, the study does not address the question of resource allocation across services; however, such analysis should be explored in future research.

Factors Explaining Recent Recruiting Trends Among Blacks and Hispanics in the Army

This research brief describes work done for the RAND National Defense Research Institute documented in Recruiting Minorities: What Explains Recent Trends in the Army and Navy?, by Beth J. Asch, Paul Heaton, and Bogdan Savych, MG-861-OSD, 2009, 118 pp., $24.00, ISBN: 978-0-8330-4717-5 (available at http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG861/). This research brief was written by Paul Steinberg. The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit research organization providing objective analysis and effective solutions that address the challenges facing the public and private sectors around the world. RAND’s publications do not necessarily reflect the opinions of its research clients and sponsors. RAND® is a registered trademark.