RAND RESEARCH ON
MILITARY RECRUITING
Recruiting for the U.S. Air Force (USAF) and other military services has never been easy, but today, it is increasingly complex. The Department of the Air Force (DAF) is seeking more diversity and more technical knowledge in its recruits at the same time the pool of eligible candidates who have a desire to serve is shrinking. As the USAF works to recruit the right candidates, RAND Corporation research offers a host of lessons learned. This document highlights relevant research from RAND Project AIR FORCE (PAF), as well as research conducted for other service branches and the Office of the Secretary of Defense that may be applicable to DAF recruiting efforts.

RESEARCH TOPICS
RAND research on recruiting addresses a variety of topics relevant to the DAF, including
- evaluations of DAF Total Force recruiting
- effects of economic conditions, military compensation, and eligibility policies on the candidate pool
- use of data analytics to improve the effectiveness of recruiting
- recruiting resource management
- special considerations for recruiting officers, special warfare candidates, and diverse populations.

RESEARCH METHODS
RAND staff include more than 600 doctoral-level researchers with diverse areas of expertise. RAND Project AIR FORCE (PAF) draws from this broad research staff to address some of the most-challenging research questions and pressing issues affecting the DAF.

PAF also maintains a core set of researchers who have in-depth knowledge of the DAF, experience conducting research on harmful interpersonal behaviors, and methodological expertise involving different approaches, including
- program evaluation
- statistical modeling
- survey design, administration, and analysis
- interviews and focus groups
- analysis of archival records
- literature reviews.

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<tr>
<th>AIR FORCE SPECIAL WARFARE RECRUITING</th>
<th>AIR FORCE TOTAL FORCE RECRUITING</th>
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COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

DAF-SPONSORED RESEARCH

Cost-Benefit Analysis of Special and Incentive Pays for Career Enlisted Aviators
2021, RR-A189-1, www.rand.org/t/RRA189-1

Department of the Air Force Civilian Compensation and Benefits: How Five Mission Critical and Hard-to-Fill Occupations Compare to the Private Sector and Key Federal Agencies
2021, RR-A334-1, www.rand.org/t/RRA334-1

DATA ANALYTICS

OTHER SPONSORED RESEARCH

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (OSD) Are Current Military Education Benefits Efficient and Effective for the Services?

OSD The Enlistment Bonus Experiment

OSD Enlistment Effects of Military Educational Benefits
1982, N-1783-MRAL, www.rand.org/t/N1783

U.S. ARMY Setting Military Compensation to Support Recruitment, Retention, and Performance

U.S. ARMY Forecasting End Strength in the U.S. Army Reserve: An Integrated Modeling Concept
2022, RR-A138-1, www.rand.org/t/RRA138-1

U.S. ARMY Searching for Information Online: Using Big Data to Identify the Concerns of Potential Army Recruits

U.S. ARMY Forecasting End Strength in the U.S. Army Reserve: An Integrated Modeling Concept
2022, RR-A138-1, www.rand.org/t/RRA138-1
EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF RECRUITERS

DAF-SPONSORED RESEARCH

Improving the Goal-Setting Process for U.S. Department of the Air Force Recruiters
2021, PE-A548-1, www.rand.org/t/PEA548-1

OTHER SPONSORED RESEARCH

U.S. ARMY Performance Evaluation and Army Recruiting

U.S. ARMY Social Media and the Army: Implications for Outreach and Recruiting

U.S. ARMY End-of-Pilot Assessment of the U.S. Army’s Consolidated Recruiting Program
2022, RR-A955-1, www.rand.org/t/RRA955-1

U.S. ARMY Human Resource Management and Army Recruiting: Analyses of Policy Options

EFFECTS OF ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

OTHER SPONSORED RESEARCH

U.S. ARMY Developing a National Recruiting Difficulty Index

OSD What Happened to Military Recruiting and Retention of Enlisted Personnel in 2020 During the COVID-19 Pandemic?
2022, RR-A1092-1, www.rand.org/t/RRA1092-1

ELIGIBILITY POLICIES

DAF-SPONSORED RESEARCH

Evaluation of the Strength Aptitude Test and Other Fitness Tests to Qualify Air Force Recruits for Physically Demanding Specialties
2018, RR-1789-AF, www.rand.org/t/RR1789

Tailoring Medical Standards for Air Force Personnel
2021, RR-A571-1, www.rand.org/t/RRA571-1

OTHER SPONSORED RESEARCH


OSD Improving U.S. Military Accession Medical Screening Systems

U.S. ARMY Prospective Outcome Assessment for Alternative Recruit Selection Policies

U.S. ARMY Recruiting Strategies to Support the Army’s All-Volunteer Force

U.S. ARMY The Effect of the Assessment of Recruit Motivation and Strength (ARMS) Program on Army Accessions and Attrition
MARKET EXPANSION

DAF-SPONSORED RESEARCH

Building the Best Offensive and Defensive Cyber Workforce: Volume I, Improving U.S. Air Force Training and Development
2021, RR-A1056-1, www.rand.org/t/RRA1056-1

Building the Best Offensive and Defensive Cyber Workforce: Volume II, Attracting and Retaining Enlisted and Civilian Personnel

Attracting, Recruiting, and Retaining Successful Cyberspace Operations Officers: Cyber Workforce Interview Findings
2019, RR-2618-AF, www.rand.org/t/RR2618

OTHER SPONSORED RESEARCH

U.S. ARMY Identifying Opportunities to Recruit More Individuals Above the Age of 21 into the U.S. Army
2022, RR-A824-1, www.rand.org/t/RRA824-1

U.S. ARMY Life as a Private: A Study of the Motivations and Experiences of Junior Enlisted Personnel in the U.S. Army

OFFICER RECRUITING

OTHER SPONSORED RESEARCH

U.S. ARMY Strategic Planning Tools for the Army Senior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps Program

RECRUITING A DIVERSE POPULATION

DAF-SPONSORED RESEARCH

Understanding Demographic Differences in Undergraduate Pilot Training Attrition

Diversity Outreach and Recruiting Event Site Selection (DORESS)
2014, TL-130-AF, www.rand.org/t/TL130

Perspectives on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Department of the Air Force
2021, PE-A909-1, www.rand.org/t/PEA909-1

Establishing Feeder-Designation Relationships with Colleges and Universities to Increase Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Air Force Officer Accessions

OTHER SPONSORED RESEARCH

OSD Recruiting Policies and Practices for Women in the Military: Views from the Field

RAND EUROPE Leveraging Diversity for Military Effectiveness: Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging in the UK and US Armed Forces
2022, RR-A1026-1, www.rand.org/t/RRA1026-1

RAND HOMELAND SECURITY OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS CENTER (HSOAC) Improving the Representation of Women and Racial/Ethnic Minorities Among U.S. Coast Guard Active-Duty Members
RECRUITING RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

DAF-SPONSORED RESEARCH

Improving Strategic Resource Management in the Air Force Recruiting Enterprise: Challenges and Next Steps for Policymakers
2020, PE-A304-1, www.rand.org/t/PEA304-1

OTHER SPONSORED RESEARCH

U.S. ARMY Resources Required to Meet the U.S. Army Reserve’s Enlisted Recruiting Requirements Under Alternative Recruiting Goals, Conditions, and Eligibility Policies
2022, RR-A1304-1, www.rand.org/t/RRA1304-1

OSD Is Military Advertising Effective? An Estimation Methodology and Applications to Recruiting in the 1980s and 90s

OVERVIEW OF ARMY RECRUITING RESEARCH

OTHER SPONSORED RESEARCH

U.S. ARMY Navigating Current and Emerging Army Recruiting Challenges: What Can Research Tell Us?
WHAT WE DELIVER

PAF’s studies and analyses are tailored to the needs of the sponsor. Generally, PAF provides:

- continuous interaction with PAF subject-matter experts throughout the project
- accessible, timely, and policy-focused reports that address senior leader concerns and recommend courses of action
- descriptive, transparent, and rigorous supporting materials that describe the project’s methodology and support the project’s conclusions
- as appropriate, additional outreach materials to help socialize the work to other interested stakeholders, such as the DAF, DoD, Congress, or the public.

SPONSOR IDENTIFICATION

All PAF research projects must be sponsored by a USAF general officer (GO) or member of the senior executive service (SES). Most sponsors assign one or more action officers (AOs) to manage the technical and administrative aspects of their PAF projects.

LINES OF FUNDING

DAF organizations can initiate a PAF research project in two ways:

1. **Centrally Funded** (also referred to as “core projects”). Air Force Studies, Analyses, and Assessments (SAF/SA; formerly HAF/A9) employs a rigorous, iterative GO/SES voting process to select projects for inclusion in its annual research plan. This process accounts for about 70 percent of the projects that PAF will conduct during a fiscal year. Funding for these projects is part of a line item in the congressional budget and is awarded through the competitive selection process. Project topics are submitted in January and the research plan is approved by a steering group consisting of three- and four-star GOs between June and July. Maintaining a balance of projects across the DAF and the four PAF programs is key to this selection process.

2. **Sponsor Funded** (also referred to as “add-on projects” because they are add-ons to the core research agenda). This process accounts for about 30 percent of the projects that PAF will conduct during a fiscal year. Funding for these projects comes directly from the organization requesting the research and does not require a competitive selection process because the requesting organization is paying for the research (and not competing with others). DAF sponsors may initiate a PAF add-on research project at any time of the year by requesting the work, submitting required documentation, and transmitting organizational funds. Ideas and requests for PAF add-on projects may originate from a variety of circumstances (e.g., continuation of prior PAF work or new challenges). To initiate the process, a sponsor or AO typically contacts the appropriate PAF program director or subject-matter expert. The timeline of add-on projects is flexible.

PAF also supports DAF organizations in many informal ways. To request Workforce, Development and Health (WDH) research reports highlighted here or to discuss pressing DAF challenges, contact the director of PAF’s WDH program at www.rand.org/paf/about/pafmanagement.