



Navigating Current and Emerging Army Recruiting Challenges

What Can Research Tell Us?

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Recruiting is the foundation of the U.S. Army's ability to sustain its overall force levels, but it has become very challenging. The author draws on a large body of research on military recruiting and examines tools and resources—including recruiters and recruiting management, selection and eligibility criteria, advertising, bonuses, and pay—that can help the Army meet this challenge.



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What tools and resources can the Army use to meet its recruiting challenges?



KEY FINDINGS

- There is no one-size-fits-all solution to developing the most-effective recruiting program or selection criteria.
- Recruiting station success or failure is substantially affected by station performance goals, but mission (target recruitment) difficulty varies considerably across stations because of differences in market demographics, economic conditions, market size, and other factors. Recruiter productivity responds to performance goals, but the degree of that response varies with the level of mission difficulty.
- Research demonstrates that individual recruiter characteristics—such as gender, race, education, scores on the Armed Forces Qualification Test, military experience, career management field, and age—can be linked with significant increases in recruiter productivity.
- Recruiters assigned to their home state are more effective.
- There are differences in recruiter productivity that cannot be attributed to observed characteristics, suggesting that also using personality screens that incorporate “soft” factors could improve recruiter selection.

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- Team-based incentives can encourage cooperation within a station, but individual recruiter incentives should also be carefully managed because these incentives affect individual recruiter productivity.
- Recruiting resources such as recruiters, advertising, and bonuses are effective in expanding enlistments, but their effectiveness is affected by recruiter effort and recruiter incentives to reach out and process more enlistments.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Take advantage of recently developed tools to inform recruiting activities.
- Explore opportunities to improve station productivity by setting station missions to better reflect differences in recruiting markets and the resulting difficulties that recruiters face.
- Exploit opportunities to better target the Army's outreach and recruiting resources in different market segments, including varied geographic areas, older recruits, college market recruits, and other demographics.
- Consider adjustments to recruiter selection policy to increase recruiting productivity.
- Redesign recruiter incentive plans to include both individual and team-based incentives to increase recruiter productivity and resource effectiveness.
- Coordinate recruiting and retention resource decisions.



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