

# Integrating Recruiting and Marketing for the Total Air Force

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## ISSUE

The Air Force faces challenges with recruiting. Externally, the number of individuals who are both interested in and eligible for military service is declining. Internally, those who conduct Air Force recruiting activities have for decades been stovepiped by organizational lines, separate recruiting and marketing activities, and incompatible information systems, as shown in Figure 1. The result has been a collection of separate Air Force recruiting entities that are not well positioned to collaborate to meet the Air Force's human capital objectives.



## APPROACH

Across fiscal year (FY) 2017 and FY 2018, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Force Management Integration (SAF/MRM) asked RAND researchers to assist with its efforts to integrate the recruiting function across the Total Force. SAF/MRM asked RAND researchers to identify possible areas of synergy and integration across the recruiting entities, assist with the evaluation of the New England Recruiting Test, and examine practices in the private sector to identify avenues for improvement in Air Force recruiting. To accomplish these objectives, we conducted extensive document and literature reviews and interviews and meetings with recruiting stakeholders across the Air Force.



## CONCLUSIONS

From this work, we drew the following conclusions:

- The current organizational structure, which provides no shared leadership for recruiting other than the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, is ill-suited to integration.
- There are some similarities among the stovepiped recruiting entities that recruit uniformed personnel, suggesting opportunities for integration.
- The marketing activities for recruiting are mostly separate, with separate marketing vendors and very limited sharing or coordination.
- The marketing outreach through Air Force websites reflects the separation and lack of coordination among the various Air Force recruiting entities.
- The New England Recruiting Test provided important experiences and insights related to collaboration and information-sharing to inform the move toward Total Force recruiting.
- Case studies of five private sector companies demonstrate that integrating and streamlining recruiting across a large organization requires investments in technology and deliberate organizational change and attention to the people who will use the technology.

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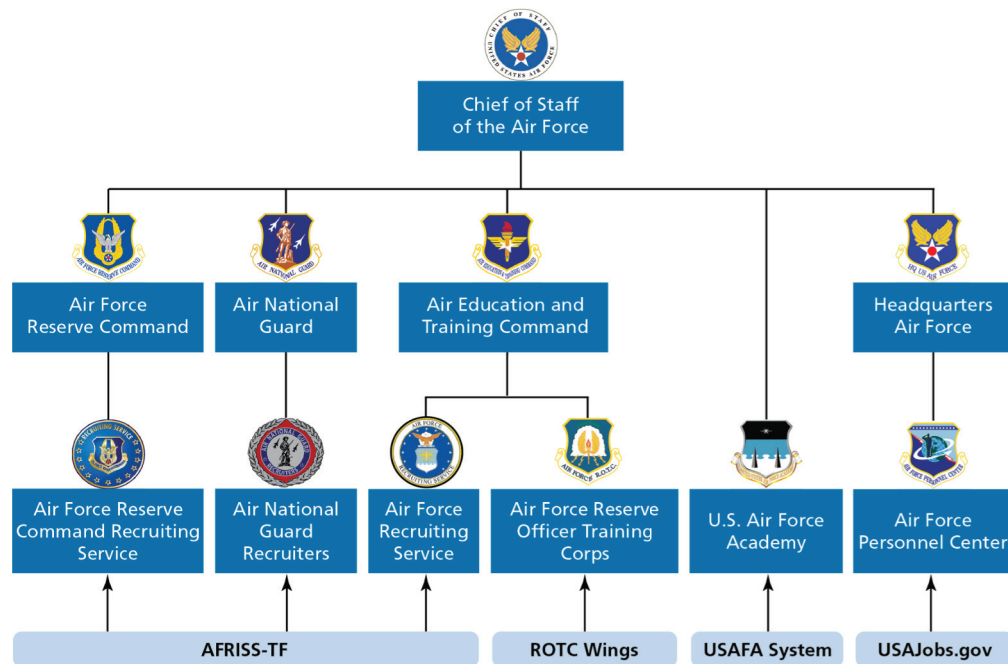


## RECOMMENDATIONS

Building on these conclusions, we offer the following recommendations, beginning first with broad, organizational issues and following with steps related to the implementation of subsequent changes:

- Establish an organizational structure with a single point of authority that is responsible for all recruiting across the Total Force and that operates between the Chief of Staff of the Air Force and the recruiting sources.
- Move forward with integration of selected marketing activities, such as establishing a unified call center (for which recruiting stakeholders across recruiting entities expressed support).
- Reduce the sense of competition among the Air Force recruiting entities by developing recommended practices for channeling leads and reexamining the incentive structure to best serve the needs of the Total Force.
- Without requiring a separate marketing contract (which we do not recommend), establish a more-unified web presence for Air Force recruiting.
- Continue to pilot processes that integrate recruiting across the Total Force and foster collaboration among the recruiting sources, applying lessons from prior phases of the New England Recruiting Test to improve the outcomes of the pilot testing each time.

**FIGURE 1. CURRENT ORGANIZATION OF AIR FORCE RECRUITING AND SUPPORTING DATA SYSTEMS**



NOTE: AFRISS-TF = Air Force Recruiting Information Support System – Total Force; ROTC = Reserve Officer Training Corps; USAFA = U.S. Air Force Academy. With no single authority overseeing all of recruiting for the Total Force and no integrated data system, the activities of the six recruiting entities have been stovepiped and uncoordinated. Other than the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, there is no single point of authority over the entire collection of Air Force recruiting entities to provide leadership or require accountability.



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