

Alignment of U.S. Space Force Military Human Capital Management Functions

A Qualitative Review

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Last December, having recently celebrated its fourth anniversary, the U.S. Space Force (USSF) has a rare opportunity to revolutionize military human capital management (HCM). The service is placing considerable emphasis on pushing the boundaries of traditional approaches to HCM and adopting innovative approaches to talent management. Recognizing that an organization's structure creates a framework for effective and efficient mission execution, the USSF deputy chief human capital officer (deputy S1) asked RAND Project AIR FORCE to assess the alignment and effectiveness of HCM functions at all organizational levels.



APPROACH

The research team's assessment of USSF HCM functions was based on a review of policy and doctrine and subject-matter expert interviews with key stakeholders. The research team reviewed relevant HCM policies, doctrines, and plans to gain an understanding of the breadth and depth of HCM policies, programs, and practices. During May and June 2023, the team conducted semistructured interviews with 26 subject-matter experts from across the HCM enterprise, with the aim of gaining insight from stakeholders across all organizational levels. These stakeholders included the USSF chief human capital officer (S1), the Enterprise Talent Management Office, field commands, deltas, force support squadrons (FSSs), the Air Force Personnel Center, Air Force Materiel Command, and the Department of the Air Force headquarters organizations.



KEY FINDINGS

- USSF leaders acknowledge that HCM functions are evolving as the USSF determines what works best for the nation's newest military service.
- Senior leaders appreciated the importance of getting HCM right and have significant insights into what is working well in HCM, as well as what improvements are needed.
- Areas that need improvement include personnel policy; force development; completion of USSF macro force design; processes related to interservice transfers; functionality of the myFSS personnel platform for USSF use; and resourcing HCM functions.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Recognizing the challenges inherent in establishing and building a new military service, the research team developed 25 implementable recommendations divided into the following eight categories:

- Implement robust personnel policy development efforts.¹
- Adjust current S1 staff structure.
- Adopt myFSS for USSF use.
- Improve communication.
- Increase commander involvement in HCM.
- Improve the transition experience for guardians transferring to the USSF from the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps.
- Prioritize completion of USSF macro force design and expand force development efforts.
- Increase resourcing for HCM functions.

¹ As the newest military service, the USSF will likely make refinements to the alignment, structure, and composition of various units. These refinements will have implications for the numbers of people the USSF can make available for force development (e.g., professional military education, advanced education).



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