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TECHNICAL
R E P O R T

Workforce Planning and
Development Processes
A Practical Guide

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Prepared for the United States Air Force

Approved for public release; distribution unlimited



RAND PROJECT AIR FORCE

The research described in this report was sponsored by the United States Air Force under Contract F49642-01-C-0003 and FA7014-06-C-0001. Further information may be obtained from the Strategic Planning Division, Directorate of Plans, Hq USAF.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Workforce planning and development processes : a practical guide / Georges Vernez ... [et al].

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-0-8330-4006-0 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. United States. Air Force—Personnel management. 2. Manpower—United States. I. Vernez, Georges.

UG773.W67 2007

358.4'1610973—dc22

2007000929

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Published 2007 by the RAND Corporation
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Summary

With more than 100,000 military, civilian, and contractor personnel, AFMC is responsible for developing, acquiring, and maintaining most Air Force weapons and other military systems. Unlike the rest of the Air Force, most AFMC personnel are civilians (56 percent) or contractors (26 percent), many of whom have specialized technical skills. As technology changes, as new weapons are developed, and as battlefields' operating requirements change, so do AFMC's personnel requirements.

To address its current and future workforce needs, AFMC is working to strengthen its capabilities to engage in proactive, analytically based workforce planning and development. This practical guide to workforce planning and development is a contribution to this effort. It describes the four main steps involved in analytically grounded workforce planning and development, outlining the policy decisions that need to be made at each step and substep; describes the methods, data, and tools that others have used and/or need to develop to support each step; and recommends how responsibilities ought to be divided among Headquarters (HQ) AFMC, business units, and functional managers:

- 1. Determine workforce demand (see pp. 7–23).** Determine what the workforce should be now and in the future in terms of its
 - size—the total number of positions needed
 - composition—the proportions of military, civilian, and contractor personnel
 - job competencies required—the backgrounds each position or group of positions requires.
- 2. Describe workforce supply (see pp. 25–30).** Describe the workforce as it is now and as it is projected to be in the future, given existing personnel policies and practices. This task requires describing the current and projected force in the same way as for the ideal current and future force demanded in step 1.
- 3. Compare the demand with the supply (see pp. 31–36).** Identify gaps between what the workforce is and what it needs to be, and assess the options for filling any such gaps.
- 4. Implement solutions (see pp. 37–39).** Implement changes to fill the gaps identified between workforce demand and supply, and administer them on an ongoing basis. This involves developing the processes, practices, and monitoring tools needed to assure that the force is managed on a day-to-day basis and over time to meet workforce requirements.

AFMC does not need to spread its planning and development efforts over its entire workforce. Rather, we recommend that AFMC focus on its core business units: the three product centers, three logistics centers, nine laboratory directorates, and three test units that account for 70 percent of its workforce. Within these units, AFMC should focus only on the positions that are central to the mission's respective units. Such positions may include nonleadership positions. (See pp. 9, 16–17.)

Consistent with AFMC's concept of operations, we generally recommend assigning the responsibilities for workforce planning and development to the business units. HQ AFMC's primary role should be to guide the process and provide support and assistance to the business units and decide on trade-offs that may need to be made between business units. Similarly, functional managers have an advisory role. (See pp. 3–5.)

Before it can fully engage in the workforce planning and development outlined in this document, AFMC needs to strengthen its analytical capabilities, both at HQ AFMC and in its business units. (See p. 5.)