

15. Are there any outstanding GAO reports on this program? If so, what is the status of the GAO recommendations which the report contains?

There are no GAO reports outstanding on this program.

16. What significant problems, if any are you facing in accomplishing the program objectives?

The most basic problems being faced in this program area stem from dynamics of our society, the need to meet the changing program priorities of Government, manpower shortages in the labor market, etc. Shortages of staff, funds, and time also do not permit us to do many of the things we think should be done. Aside from these general, and not specifically relevant points, there are also specific problems in the various subcategories:

The accomplishment of our inspection objectives is complicated fundamentally by the character of the Federal workforce—its size, geographic dispersion, organizational complexity, and diversity. Other problems in this subcategory include the complex lines of communication and executive direction in Government, the increasing involvement of the Federal Government in new social programs, the need to accommodate disadvantaged citizens within the merit system, and the great scope of modern personnel and manpower management and of the related areas of the management and behavioral sciences.

In the executive manpower leadership area, there are such significant problems as:

The inadequacy of the number of positions available to the Commission and the executive branch for flexible, responsive, and modern executive manpower management.

The fragmenting of authorities and legislative requirements covering the varied types and numbers of positions at the supergrade level, without a sufficient focus of central authority and responsibility in the Commission as the central personnel agency.

In the training subcategory, the system for funding reimbursable training requires that the Commission obtain reimbursement for all costs incurred during a fiscal year. Because of the short span of time, the Commission cannot invest in capital equipment or make substantial investments in course development.

In the policy development subcategory, a major problem relates to the stepped-up pace and complexity of policy decisionmaking in our society, especially when urgent programs are involved, joined with the need to develop information systems and analytical techniques that facilitate the development of sound policy recommendations, fully backed up by facts and analysis, in order that they may be presented to top management in sufficient time to meet the requirements of the decisionmaking process. The range of subject matter and disciplines involved and the number of interested groups to be consulted and considered, compound the problem.

In developing systems and instructions, the major problems especially relate to the progressively complex relationships between new and existing programs, the need for full consultation with unions, veterans organizations, and other groups, the need to resolve the frequently conflicting interests of these groups in order to develop workable regulations and instructions, and, in general, the urgency surrounding the implementation of many new laws and programs.

In administering the position classification system, there is significant increased public awareness and interest in the development of classification and job grading standards and corresponding activity to influence the final product. This has resulted in greatly increased consultation with union officials, professional societies, and agencies and correspondence with Congressmen.

In equal employment opportunity activities, a significant overall problem faced in accomplishing program objectives is that of overcoming the effects of past segregation and inequities of opportunity in education, housing and employment which makes personal achievement for minority group citizens in a highly competitive society extremely difficult. As a result, it is difficult to convince members of minority groups that we are committed to the goal of equal opportunity for all.

In the special program of labor management relations, there is a problem of making a minority of management officials aware, particularly in the field offices of Federal agencies, that employee organizations in the Federal Government are here to stay and that full cooperation with them is necessary. Employee organizations must also recognize that satisfactory solutions to problems require their full cooperation.