

*Hearing to explore Diversity within the Senior Executive Service*



**Testimony Presented**

*To the Subcommittee  
on Civil Service and Agency Organization*

*The Honorable JoAnn Davis, Chair*

*Wednesday – September 15, 2003*

Rayburn House Office Building  
Room 2247  
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2 - 4 PM

*National President of Blacks In Government, Gregg Reeves  
Shirley Harrington-Watson, BIG National Legislative Review Committee Chair*

**To the Honorable Chairwoman, JoAnn Davis, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Subcommittee on Civil Service and Agency Organization,** I am honored to present on behalf of the National President of the Blacks In Government, Mr. Gregory Reeves. Mr. Reeves sends his regrets for not being able to personally address you because he is currently serving on a grand jury panel in Austin Texas.

### **Background on the organization: Blacks In Government**

Blacks In Government, (BIG) represents the interest, opinions and concerns of African Americans who are employed as government workers on the local, county, state and national levels. BIG in August 2003, completed its 25th Anniversary for the BIG National Training Conference with 5,000 government employees in attendance. As a part of this weeklong event, OPM trainers provided to BIGNTC attendees training on the SES preparation session. The approval ratings for this session were noteworthy.

Today, BIG wishes to raise the opinions of African Americans who are SES employees and know how difficult it is to get there and then advance within appropriate assignments as a part of the SES corps. We come to share the frustration of those African Americans who have been through OPM approved training programs to become certified and are still seeking selection into the SES Corps. And we as Blacks In Government come to raise the concerns of those African Americans who are GS-14 and GS-15 and who have aspirations of selection to SES Corps in the future.

Our stakeholders are front line government workers who provide service from blue collar to managers in government service. BIG represents the largest number of African American managers in the nation within our membership, and the largest feeder group of GS 9-13, as well as, many government employees in similar levels on the state, county and local levels.

For this potential SES pool of GS-9 to GS-13 federal workers and other potential government workers who are African American, we wish to ask your assistance as we work together to restore trust in the systems of democracy with regard to selection and advancement opportunities in the SES Corps.

### **Opening Discussion on Diversity and its meaning:**

Diversity is risk taking to make sure no individuals are left behind or excluded from the workforce in defined categories. Does this one person's opinion count - yes? By diversity inclusion, the government proves that each human capital investment is a sound business decision. Diversity is about individuality of a collective membership. Civil rights laws work to achieve equal access and are concern with balance of the whole to guarantee equal opportunity for all. Diversity speaks to the singling out to enhance one individual based on the intent of the Civil Rights Act where not one person is left out or misses an opportunity. Civil Rights look at the whole pie and identify the pieces in varying ways. Diversity starts with the pieces and brings them together to make a whole based on full participation of all pieces of the pie.

So how do we measure diversity progress and success, one life at a time? Each government employee is a citizen of the United States who comes to work in public service. Each individual who brings to the workplace a set of skills that may need refining for maximum productivity return on the investment. But from the diversity planning prospective, these are individuals that are just like external customers, people coming from varying backgrounds with many sets of differences. Our job in the diversity area is to achieve maximum efficiency and leave nobody behind that truly wants to work at their highest level of achievement.

Where Civil Rights work is expected to record the collective achievement that is acknowledged as progress, diversity stresses individual efforts, individual participation, individual development and individual accountability that add up within the whole. This means valuing each human capital investment within the

workforce. Full participation and teamwork is essential and individual development is critical. Some cannot progress at the expense of others.

The recognition that most government workforces are growing older serves as a point of urgency for human capital development within various agencies. Further, current trends of hiring practices demonstrate and Government Accounting Office reports support that current trends of hiring practices will make it difficult to maintain the 8-10 percent African Americans within the workforces of most agencies. To prepare for these emerging needs, BIG will assist in the identification and positioning of African Americans, who are ready and accessible to assume leadership within these higher levels of service in government.

## **1. The Current level of diversity among the SES workforce**

From the GAO Report dated January 2003 (GAO-03-34) on Senior Executive Service Enhanced Agency Efforts Needed to Improve Diversity as the Senior Corps Turns Over, it was found and we (BIG) concur, "that the current levels of SES will not change in the favor of minority selections based on current practices." Blacks In Government wish to raise the need to create a transparent system to include the recruitment, screening, training and selection processes for all SES corps members. Those previously submitted recommendations that Blacks In Government have sent forth to OPM are a part of the full testimony provided to this subcommittee today.

As we look at the SES workforce figures and the entire composition of the federal government workforce, it may be reasonable to state there is no obvious discrimination based on a 10.8 percent workforce data figure for African Americans, which meets the Civilian Labor Force (CLF) requirements under CR standards. There are many African American females in low paying support or clerical jobs and a large number of African American males in blue collar low paying support jobs in government service. Yes the statistics look favorable and people are at work, but what is the quality of work life when a permanent under class has been created based on the lack of bridging positions or upward mobility systems to the SES Corps?

This situation will become an issue for Civil Rights only when individuals decide that they are going to file an EEO charge under Title VII. But when one applies the standards of diversity, the current SES workforce statistics is an identified issue already without a single charge being filed.

The President's Management Agenda is in violation, when it is expressed that current practices and policies do not serve all. These concerns are compounded when any employee identifies a desire to advance and an agency does not have an avenue to assist that employee, or when those who are certified to advance to the SES workforce based on agency investments will find no placement. These are all related to diversity. When work life issues become priority, retention and advancement issues of each valued human capital unit, known as a government employee is in jeopardy.

Based on the investment of capital resources to hire, train and place within the work environment an employee, it is sound business to continue the development and assistance necessary to retain this same employee within the agency's human capital planning. This means increasing the expectation of return on the investment based on actualizing capital gain from the investment. In plain language it means paying up front to get what you want later. Grow your own can not be a slogan. It must be for real.

For most of this year, BIG has sought answers of the current makeup of the SES workforce, the documentation of questions asked of OPM in March 2003 of the current pool of SESCDP graduates from 2000 to 2002. BIG seeks answers to what is the placement of these certified individuals that included 43

African Americans within the total 249 persons. OPM reported to BIG that 152 have not been placed which represents 61 percent of all persons successfully completing the OPM certification process over the past two years. Of the 97 persons selected and identified as placed within all groups of these SESCO certified individuals, 15 were African Americans.

For this entire period of two years (2000-2002) that SES positions were filled, the use of SESCOs by agencies represents less than 30 percent of all SES positions filled. Blacks In Government has asked where the rest of the SES workforce hires coming from are and what are happening that makes it certain that the composition is not changing for the SES workforce.

From the GAO-03-307 Report to the Ranking Minority Member, Special Committee on Aging, U.S. Senate, OLDER WORKERS, Policies of Other Nations to Increase Labor Force Participation, it suggests and BIG concurs with this opinion:

*"The retirement policy reforms in some higher-income nations are expected to lead to higher labor force participation of older workers. National pension reforms in Japan, Sweden and the United Kingdom that increase eligibility ages, reduce pension benefits, and increase benefits when claimed at a later age may encourage or require older workers to remain in the labor force longer . . . Each of the three nations has begun to study or enact policies that have objective of reducing the barriers to employment at older ages. Such reforms include loosening or eliminating mandatory retirement age standards, encouraging the elimination of age discrimination in employment, improving older worker training, providing employment earnings incentives, and exploring quality of work life issues such as the flexibility of work arrangements. The experience of other nations we studies suggest that the scope and comprehensiveness of reforms, the transparency and availability of information, and the strength of the economy play important roles in encourage labor force participation by older workers . . . There was also agreement that reforms directed at older workers cannot achieve their intended purpose unless workers can recognize and understand the incentives being provided. Reforms must, therefore, be transparent, and workers must receive information about the changes that is understandable and useful to permit workers to make knowledgeable decisions. Finally, officials from all the nations agreed that a strong national economy that provides employment opportunities for all workers was a key component for the success of reforms that can raise the labor force participation by older workers."*

BIG raise this report because the Senior Executive Service workforce represents the older workers in most parts in higher numbers than most other levels of federal service. With the projected growth in the percentage of the labor force over 55 for both males and females in this country over the next two decades, the government reforms that are needed include provisions to encourage continued service of government employees with clear and understood progression tables on avenues for advancement in the federal service.

A review of those SES members referenced in the GAO-03-34 report that are eligible for retirement may continue to change from the projections by 2007, if the rules regarding eligibility for benefits from the national pension system - Social Security are reformed. The decision to continue working is primarily related to this system and the state of the economy. The federal retirement benefits and the defined contribution planning for federal employees in the past two years have resulted in many delayed retirements for the older workers. This trend will possibly continue unless the economy recovers at a faster rate and sustained projections are identified for current economic trends.

Therefore, Blacks In Government ask Congress to work on reforms that will help to eliminate the risk in investments that older workers must make of either to seek immediate retirement or not. Further, the

entire defined benefits plans system versus the defined contribution plan system needs studying and possible reform to address the aging workforce issues this nation is facing.

Early retirement options and different incentives for older workers should be reformed to consider that the medium age of government workers may reach the age of 55 in less than two decades. The health problems that make it more difficult to continue working for older workers is an area of growing concern; however, "there is evidence the health of older persons generally is improving. This suggest that compared with previous generations, today's older age population has an increased capacity to work to older ages."

With the current SES workforce, more than 70 percent of all SES selections were made outside of the established SES CDP concept, according to OPM officials. The question to be answered is what the standards, processes, factors, are and considerations given to these selected within each agency. Put simply, what do they have that gives them the edge over African Americans that worked hard to get to the GS 14 and 15 levels, only to see hope dashed with persons with little or no direct experience coming from the outside to fill these SES position. Agencies must be held accountable for this business case of inclusion. Where the general population can receive services from people who look like them, then the entire federal government approach to recruitment must become uniform and transparent.

## **2. The recruitment of minorities to the SES:**

When you asked the question of recruitment of minorities to the SES, it opens the avenue to discuss all the methodologies used to encourage participation, the avenues of screening and the actual processes used to select finalists for consideration to SES positions. BIG recommends that the federal government appropriate funds to develop the needed leadership development training, screening and selection processes to ensure that all populations are equitable represented in top management of this nations governing bodies. The accountability requires for selecting officials be directly tied to the fulfillment of the President's Management Initiatives that speak to fairness principals in the operation and service of the federal government.

Every citizen of the United States should be able to understand how to apply and complete the application process without feeling the cultural basis within the process. Under the leadership of OPM, the various departments' human capital experts should become sensitized to the fatigue in expectation of the federal workforce. Broken promises and incomplete program accomplishments are recorded in the minds of workers with alarming regularity.

From the GAO-03-446 Report (April 2003) to Congressional subcommittees on HUMAN CAPITAL Selected Agency Actions to Integrate Human Capital Approaches to Attain Mission Results it stated,

*"The federal government's acknowledgement over the past decade of the need to adopt a more businesslike approach to financial, information technology, ad performance-based management, the need for strategic management of human capital is meeting increased recognition. Since we placed strategic human capital management on our high-risk list in 2001, the President's Management Agenda (PMA) subsequently identified human capital as one of the five key government wide management challenges facing the federal government. The agenda specifically sets an expectation for agencies to integrate their human capital strategies with their organizational missions, visions, core values, goals, and objectives. In October 2002, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and OPM approved revised standards for success in the human capital area of the approved revised standards for success in the human capital area of the PMA, reflecting language that was developed in collaboration with GAO. To assist agencies in responding to the revised PMA standards, OPM released the Human Capital Assessment and Accountability Framework." (Background section)*

BIG has monitored the progress of these efforts since 2001 and kept watch of the PMA request of agencies. Those of us have reviewed the resulting Office of Management and Budget reports known as the Agency Scorecards in Blacks In Government. Where the agencies have assigned managers to complete the requirement of the Agency Scorecards, structured human capital committees and teams, and worked in concert with the PMA revised standards under the Human Capital Assessment and Accountability Framework, we still await the presence of progress in the areas of human capital approaches with strategies for achieving organizational missions. Possibly our frustration were best stated by the OMB opening for the Agency Scorecard summaries for FY2002 when it stated, "Good intentions and good beginnings are not the measure of success. What matters in the end is completion: performance and results. No just making promises, but making good on promises."

It is the expert opinion of those of us in Blacks In Government that results based on the millions of dollars in planning and documentation over the past two years on the Executive Branch Management Scorecard along, or the entire restructuring of major agency functions under the human capital management process are in question. If the business case is made on the investment in human capital hours of work on talking about diversity, performance based accountability and creating the red, yellow and green coding system, we may want to declare ourselves bankrupt. It is not impressive to see a Scorecard that shows a lot of green dots when real human beings are disenfranchised by lack of opportunity, misinformation, failed communication networks, or non-business practices of improper processing.

The real scorecard will be seen when people are hired and/or promoted internally based on inclusion principles. Accountability will not work when it relies totally on the victims to complain. The observable truth facing the federal sector about governance in America is more about who is willing and fit to serve the people of this country.

As a part of the Special Enhancement Program (SEP) one-day session during the BIGNTC, we called upon national leadership from five organizations to address the status of Governance In America. According to the expert leaders, the citizens want to be served by people who look like them and they want to hold management accountable for service delivery. That would mean they want to be able to report to top managers, who look like them that something is wrong or right about the service they receive. Further, these leaders reported that recruitment will become meaningful when recruiters that look like them come into their communities. Another area raised was the need to have a more diverse government, which represents diversity of America in race and sex. All panelists expressed that based on the need for national security; the various levels of government need to come together to work on solutions of diversity and sharing of information on services available to all citizens.

### **3. The implementation of the No Fear Act:**

With regard to the implementation of the No Fear Act, a review of the recent selection process of OPM for the 14 top management SES slots would be a prime test case. African Americans who are currently SES in status within the federal government and some did apply for those 14 announced positions at OPM. Several persons, who are SES and African Americans and did apply for those positions, when I have inquired of their rating and ranking reported they received at best a highly qualified ranking and then later a rejection notification based on non-selection by OPM. Many felt they were already suited for the positions and wanted to move up in service from a department leadership job to one of the nation's premier federal oversight agencies - OPM. Will either of these persons who confided in me file a charge of which one could conceive as discriminatory practices, the answer is a strong NO.

These seasoned federal managers who have worked more than twenty years getting to the top of their professions understand, as we all do, that top management officials who want to advance or stay within

good graces of those in higher positions, DO NO FILE COMPLAINTS. Shall we call this FEAR? No, they are using just good business sense if you expect to continue within the system?

When positions are announced by the various agencies, a code of conduct standard should be applied that identifies the position as a true opportunity that is open to all and not a position that has been announced to satisfy federal regulations. What this hearing will not address today is the current perception that everybody knows before hand that for many positions, someone is already pre-selected or a group is not going to have a chance based on current practices.

I have included the one-page document that BIG prepared and distributed with our opinions of the No Fear Act this summer. The document follows:

### *"No Fear" Act*

· *The "No Fear" Act was passed by the 107th Congress and signed into law by President Bush on May 15, 2002 as public law 107-174. BIG was one of the organizations pushing for this legislation's passage?*

· *"No Fear" stands for the Notification and Federal Employee Anti-discrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002. This requires that federal agencies be accountable for violations of anti-discrimination and whistle blower protection laws. This legislation is scheduled to go into effect on October 1, 2003.*

· *It will have a major impact on how Federal agencies will conduct their handling of EEO discrimination complaints in the future.*

· *First, agencies will no longer have the cost of lost discrimination cases paid out of a general government fund. In the future, each agency will (BE REQUIRED) have to pay such costs out of (THAT AGENCY'S BUDGET) its individual budget. It remains to be seen how this will play out - some folks think this will actually discourage agencies from settling. Time will tell.*

· *Second, agencies will be required to publicize on the Web, and other public information sources, detailed data related to their EEO complaint caseload. We're waiting for specific guidance from EEOC on this. For example, we're not sure how detailed the info will have to be.*

· *Finally, agencies are prohibited from conducting retaliatory actions such as reductions-in-force, or cutting benefits or staff in response to adverse judicial decisions, or to cover the costs of such adverse decisions.*

*The implementation guidelines for each agency should be monitored so that we can have input as BIG leadership as we move ahead. For more information about the "No Fear" Act, please contact Ms. Shirley Harrington, Chair, and National Legislative Review Committee.*

With regard to the No Fear Act, Blacks In Government awaits these final implementation guidelines and structural charts for each major agency. It is our expectation that this information will be provided soon since implementation was scheduled for October 1, 2003 of the Act. The current rumors and the anxiousness of our membership with regard to this major piece of passed legislation is that most agencies are moving cautiously slow in implementation guidance. We have not been informed of implementation guidelines to be published for most major agencies of the federal government.

We recommend a GAO report on the progress or at least a government oversight inquiry to each agency on the implementation guidelines completed, methods used to distribute to entire staff of respective agency and published posting of guidelines discussed with employee representative groups and organizations, as well as discussions held with all employees.

#### 4. Closing Statement to Subcommittee:

If the purpose of this hearing is to get to the root cause of why the US Government Senior Executive Service workforce lacks diversity in all of the six levels, then the real questions must be answered.

- When will current top managers be identified and awarded with a yardstick of justice, which holds the highest measurement of fairness, equity and parity?
- How will the Legislative Branch assist in changing the paradigm to create diversity channels for current and potential employees in all three branches of federal government will regain faith in this system?
- How can we work together to create the climate where Americans will continue to seek employment in government service and they will truly aspire to senior level positions as a career path and not see government work as a pass through to better employment opportunities otherwise?
- Where can renewed opportunity are created for those who have certified in the past and been never selected and who still offer themselves for service in the SES corps.
- What assurance will this subcommittee work offer of commitment to vitally needed changes with some uniformity from agency to agency in the procedures of application, rating, and ranking of candidates for SES?
- How can we work together to accomplish as Congressman Davis said on April 10, 2003 at the OPM Launch of the SES Candidate Development Program, "A federal government as diverse as those they service."

Finally ladies and gentlemen, Blacks In Government wish to go on record stating that the candidate development for leadership should be broadened to include certification for leadership development of recognized government membership organizations.

Government employees are skilled in leading membership bodies that many times are larger than small agencies and those that provide training conferences with more than 5,000 government employees in attendance annually. Many of these government workers are demonstrating executive core qualifications and could represent leadership within the top management operations of their home agencies. It is a known and documented fact that on job training is the experiential preferred once formal educational knowledge is obtained.

Blacks In Government is prepared to work with OPM to provide a certified cadre of qualified, trained, experienced and capable top managers who have given at least two years in service as senior officers in leadership of Blacks In Government. BIG is prepared to work with OPM and other to establish this avenue for SES candidate certification.

Madam Chair, I would add, "Blacks In Government will work to help assure that the national leadership of government is as diverse as the population that we service. We thank you and this subcommittee on Civil Service and Agency Organization for this opportunity to address this urgency leadership issue for our government. We think that when the answers are provided in actions to the questions we raised, America will be greater nation.

End - shw 10-14-03

***(Attachment One)***

**GAO-03-34 Report January 2003 entitled - Senior Executive Service Enhanced Agency Efforts Needed to Improve Diversity as the Senior Corps Turns Over**

**Objectives, Scope and Methodology of Survey**

The charge to GAO from the Congressional Requesters: Danny K. Davis, Elijah E. Cummings, Eleanor Holmes Norton, and Edolphus Towns included:

1. Identify the effect of estimated employment separations on the racial, ethnic, and general diversity among the Career Senior Executive Service (SES), GS 15s and GS-14s in the 24 Chief Financial Officer (CF) agencies and government wide.
2. Determine the effect of estimated appointments to refill these vacancies on diversity, and
3. Obtain from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), and four selected agencies their observations on our estimates and on SES diversity during this time of change.

***Findings and Conclusions SES Corp***

This GAO Report to Congressional Requesters provided the following summary:

1. More than half of the career SES members employed on October 1, 2000 will have left service by October 1, 2007. This is a total of 6100 with 55% leaving, which represents about 3400 SES vacancies to be filled.
2. With current SES appointment trends, the only significant changes in diversity will be an increase in the number of white women with an equal decrease in white males. White women will increase by 4% and White males will decrease by 5%.
3. Minority women and men will remain virtually unchanged in the SES corps based on the trend of retirements being about the same for all groups. This means no significant change in the 14% total representation of all minorities compares to 86% for all whites in the SES corp.
4. As of October 1, 2000 actual numbers for Career SES included 4,097 White men (67.1%) and 1,164 White females (19.1%); with 333 African American males (5.5%) and 179 African American females (2.9%). These totals for Whites represent 86.2% and for African Americans 8.4%.
5. After estimated attrition, the GAO projects Career SES members remaining as of October 1, 2007 will include 1,704 White males (62.7%); 648 White females (23.9%); 144 African American males (5.3%) and 85 African-American females (3.1%). These totals for Whites represent 86.5% and for African Americans 8.4%.

## Findings and Conclusions GS-15 and GS-14 totals

To ascertain what the racial, ethnic, and gender profile of the candidate pool for SES replacements will look like, GAO performed the same simulations and projections for GS-15s and GS-14s as they did for the SES. The results are as follow:

1. On board on October 1, 2000 in the GS-15 grades were a total of 33,567 White males (64.8%); 10,062 White females (19.4%); 1,711 African American males (3.3%) and 1,500 African American females (2.9). This represents a total of 43,629 Whites or 84.2% and 3,211 African Americans or 6.2%.
2. Based on projections as of October 1, 2007 with replacements at promotion rates continuing as shown from data of fiscal years 1995-2000 the GS-15s composition is reported by this GAO report to have changed with total Whites at 82.6% and African Americans at 7.4%
3. On board on October 1, 2000 in the GS-14 grades were a total of 49,548 White males (59.6%); 18,759 White females (22.6%); 3,401 African American males (4.1%) and 4,067 African American females (4.9). This represents a total of 68,307 Whites or 82.2% and 7,468 African Americans or 9%.
4. Based on projections as of October 1, 2007 with replacements at promotion rates continuing as shown from data of fiscal years 1995-2000, the GS-14 composition is reported by this GAO report to have changed with total Whites at 81% and African Americans at 9.5%.

## Background:

In an April 2002 memorandum to federal departments and agencies, the Director of OPM reaffirmed OPM's commitment to diversity in the SES. About 2 years before, in June 2000, OPM provided comprehensive guidance to federal departments and agencies for building and maintaining a diverse workforce. OPM recommended the following:

- Incorporate diversity program activities and objectives into agency workforce planning and executive succession planning;
- Incorporate diversity into recruitment planning and activities, and use tools and techniques that are more likely to discover and attract a more diverse filed of candidates (i.e., visits to majority-minority campuses, partnerships with minority organizations and advertisement in specialty media);
- Continually monitor the agency workforce profile, and the numbers of women and minorities participating in agency development programs and
- Build accountability for hiring, retaining, and developing a diverse, high quality workforce in to the performance management system for managers and supervisors.

## **History:**

The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 that established the SES states, among other things, that the policy of the federal government is to ensure equal employment opportunity in the workforce. It is generally recognized that a diverse SES corps can be an organizational strength that contributes to achieving results. In the GAO-02-372SP Report of March 15, 2002, it states under Empowerment and Inclusiveness section, "We consider diversity so important that we identify it in our model for federal agencies on strategic human capital management as one of the eight critical success factors for strategic management."

## **Current Situation and Business Case:**

The Senior Executive Service (SES) generally represents the most experienced, and one of the older in age, segments of the workforce, and retirements are expected to be even higher for SES members. This has important implications for government management and emphasizes the need for good succession planning for this leadership group. Racial, ethnic, and general diversity in the SES corps is important because they are the people who run the government's programs and diversity in the senior leadership is an important component for the effective operation of the government. Diversity can bring a wider variety of perspectives and approaches to bear on policy development and implementation, strategic planning, program solving, and decision-making and can be an organizational strength that contributes to achieving results.

The demographics of the public served by the federal government are changing, and diversity has evolved from public policy to a business need. SES losses over the next several years present both a challenge for the federal government in filling the vacant positions and an opportunity affect, through selections to the SES, the diversity of the corps.

GAO stated, "The importance that we place on workforce planning, including planning related to employee retirement, is illustrated by our designation of strategic human capital management as a government wide high-wish area that needs urgent attention to ensure that the federal government functions economically, efficiently, and effectively."

***Comments - Please provide feedback based on this summary  
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The ranking of agencies by total number of career SES members with White males and females and African American males and female are as follow:

<b>Agency Name</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>WM</b>	<b>WF</b>	<b>AM</b>	<b>AF</b>
1. Defense	1,144	909	163	21	10
2. Treasury	537	359	109	11	6
3. Justice	407	270	75	24	13
4. HHS	399	211	103	22	27
5. NASA	394	280	62	18	11
6. Energy	391	283	66	5	9
7. Commerce	296	290	160	23	36
8. Agriculture	283	168	58	28	11
9. EPA	255	150	66	18	5
10. VA	247	190	31	12	4
11. Interior	191	103	46	4	4
12. Transportation	178	111	41	7	0

From the five agencies with the smallest number career SES same data is represented:

1. AID	25	16	4	2	1
2. FEMA	32	25	6	0	1
3. OPM	36	17	12	2	1
4. SBA	39	18	8	6	4
5. Education	60	32	15	9	1

Note: All comments and statements contained in this summary have been extracted by the General Accounting Office GAO-03-34 – January 2003 Senior Executive Service Report.

Prepared by Shirley Harrington-Watson 3/10/03

**(Attachment: Two)**

**OPM Release – April 10, 2003 OPM Launches the SES Candidate Development Program**

OPM Director Kay Coles James today launched the Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program (SESCDP) with representatives present from employee organizations, labor groups and federal departments and agencies. Ms. James made comments prior to her prepared statement by saying, “The need is urgent for this SESCO because of the 7000 SESers, about 13% are minorities and 25% are women. These percentages are well below the federal workforce representation for these populations. Of the 249 total SESCO graduates since January 2001, about 30 % are minorities; however, only 39% of this total have been placed in the SES corp. Once persons have completed these programs, agencies need to do better in placing the CDP graduates. OPM is also looking at an Executive Readiness program for those persons who are two or three years away from SESCO program entry. Getting the next group readied is important to continued leadership development, and OPM is committed to actively recruiting with broad organizational support using merit system principles. This new SESCO would have 40 to 50 persons in each class with one or two classes per year.”

From Ms. James prepared text she stated, “Women, minorities and people with disabilities are making important contributions to America every day as valued members of the civil service. The Administration is committed to expanding opportunities to move into the executive ranks, and the program we are beginning today will make them more available – for everybody.”

As a plus to participation in this new SESCO, departments will be given temporary increases in the SES positions and candidates who graduate from OPM’s CDP are certified by an SES Qualifications Review Board and may be selected for an SES position anywhere in the federal government without further competition. As Director James concluded she added, “OPM’s CDP is open to individuals at the GS-14 and 15 grade levels, or equivalents from within and outside the federal government, with the duration of a candidate’s participation lasting between 12-24 months.”

Ms. James added, “Last year when I asked BIG for input and we met with their leadership, we promised to listen and come back with a way to be inclusive. I hope you see today we have been working. OPM will continue to seek input from BIG and other partners.”

Congressman Danny Davis of Illinois was present and declared “From words of Thomas Wolf, ‘To every man there is given chance’ and if he was here today he would have to say, ‘To every woman and man America offers a chance.’ Let me say thanks to OPM for this showing of commitment. We have come to OPM to inquire in the past about federal jobs online application process, the recruitment efforts, and this whole area of SES hiring. We have sought review and gotten GAO Reports as we asked about the implications on ethnic and gender issues related to federal workforce composition. The last report stated that unless meaningful action is taken the only increase would be in White women with a correlating decrease in White men. We in Congress see from the 2000 Census that minorities are increasing and that change should be reflected in our government. With 75 agencies, there should be a transformation of the federal government workforce. This CDP is the first.”

Davis stated that the people within the Federal government “should be as diverse as those they serve.” He stated he, and his colleagues on the Government Reform Committee, have called for a monitoring of the CDP and OPM other programs and have asked Congresswoman JoAnn Davis of Virginia to hold hearings. Those testifying are expected to come from organizations, civil rights and human resources to take part based on the potential of this great country. These hearings will probably occur this fall. Congressman

Davis concluded by thanking Ms. James and OPM officials and saying that we must “Recognize where we have been and where we have to go.”

After the formal SESCDP Launch, Steve Benowitz and Joe Riddle were introduced to take questions and comments from the audience:

1. There are currently numerous OPM “certified” candidates that have been waiting for placement into SES positions for several years – how does this SESCDP affect them? OPM response: Persons who have completed a similar SESCDP need not apply for this program. The Federal Executive Institute will run this program and they will use current merit system principles to evaluate candidates for the program.
2. Although the program sounds wonderful on its face, there are some real problems with it, and participants in the meeting representing Federal Employees noticed them right away. Robbie Graham-Exley, Federal Sector Representative of the Laborers’ International Union of North America stated and continued, “It appears to be another way to by-pass current in house qualified applicants, as the graduates of this CDP will be immediately placed into a position of not less than GS-15.” OPM response: OPM will seek buy-in from departments. There are currently many OPM “certified” candidates that have been waiting for placement into SES positions for several years. This is being looked into.
3. Shirley Harrington-Watson, representing Blacks In Government asked what efforts are underway to seek Congressional appropriations for this government-wide SESCDP or would departments be expected to fund all slots? OPM response: OPM does not control the funds within departments and each department or agency would be expected to fund candidates from their agency.
4. Another gentleman from a small agency stated that his agency would not be able to afford to pay the cost of employees going into this program. So how would an employee accepted from a small agency be included? OPM response: OPM is working on those details. Everyone will be encouraged to apply – even persons who do not work for the government. If a current Federal employee is accepted into the program, the agency must pay for the cost of training the employee in the program – however, OPM stated, “agencies are not required to participate in the program.”

Submitted by Shirley Harrington  
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