

State of Renewal

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE TODAY,
TOMORROW AND BEYOND

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PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

The Partnership for Public Service is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that works to revitalize the federal government by inspiring a new generation to serve and by transforming the way government works. The Partnership teams up with federal agencies and other stakeholders to make our government more effective and efficient. We pursue this goal by:

- Providing assistance to federal agencies to improve their management and operations, and to strengthen their leadership capacity.
- Conducting outreach to college campuses and job seekers to promote public service.
- Identifying and celebrating government's successes so they can be replicated across government.
- Advocating for needed legislative and regulatory reforms to strengthen the civil service.
- Generating research on, and effective responses to, the workforce challenges facing our federal government.
- Enhancing public understanding of the valuable work civil servants perform.

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Executive Summary

Charged with leading America's foreign policy, the Department of State advances the country's diplomatic, national security and economic interests by fostering relationships with foreign leaders, providing assistance and advocating the values of American democracy around the globe, and delivering a broad range of services to U.S. citizens traveling and living abroad.

Global power shifts following the end of the Cold War and the rise of terrorism in recent decades have diminished the role of diplomacy in America's foreign policy and national security. The range and complexity of today's international issues, however, require the department's leadership. Organizational and management challenges have impeded its ability to realize the full potential of the civil and foreign services. These issues must be addressed so the department can reassert the primacy of diplomacy in ensuring productive international relationships, the safety of Americans and the spread of freedom, among other things.

The Partnership for Public Service examined the department's internal challenges and identified strategies for overcoming them and opportunities to accelerate efforts already underway. The research findings indicate that the department is hindered by many issues, including some that have persisted for decades:

- The department's end-to-end talent management system—inclusive of planning, recruiting, hiring, onboarding, performance management and professional development—is outdated and unable to fully meet the needs of a 21st century workforce.
- Federal Title 5 civil service rules, last overhauled 40-years ago, restrict the department from making improvements to its hiring and other talent management practices, which hinder its ability

to develop an agile workforce aligned to mission priorities.

- An institutional culture built on siloed organizational structures discourages coordination and collaboration across the bureaus and between the civil and foreign services. This stifles the potential for more productive partnerships, innovation and professional development.
- Inefficient corporate governance centralizes authority and consistently elevates decision making to higher-than-necessary levels, which impedes workflow and discourages initiative and accountability.
- An information technology infrastructure built on a patchwork of legacy systems makes communication inefficient, limiting teleworking, file sharing and other current business practices.
- Trust gaps between career employees and political appointees slow the workflow, blur the lines of responsibility and disrupt collaboration.

More recent issues also have negatively impacted the morale of career staff. These include the growing number of political appointees in top positions, a series of policy and management decisions that have decreased trust within the agency, and high turnover and vacancy rates that have depleted staff capacity.

To help the department address these issues and renew the power of diplomacy, there are a number of practical, high-impact recommendations that can be accomplished within 6-12 months without additional congressional authority. By focusing on the talent management life cycle—recruiting, hiring, orientation, performance management, professional development and

career advancement, succession planning and leveraging workforce data—the civil and foreign service staff can be better prepared to address deeper challenges and create momentum for a broader agency revitalization initiative. Moreover, through the quick wins of implementation of these proposals, the department’s leaders can garner the necessary support of the White House and Congress to implement a larger reform program.

Consideration of several additional long-term recommendations, however, should begin now. One is to create a civil service excepted service that would streamline hiring and create a more agile workforce better aligned to mission priorities. This will require congressional action. Other long-term proposals—which are related to improving the department’s workflow processes—will require resolving some structural issues and do not require legislative authorization.

Four overarching operating goals—increasing diversity and inclusion, and improving employee engagement, internal customer experience and institutional culture—are designed to shepherd implementation of the recommendations and best practices. These goals reflect the values of a modern workforce that is diverse, engaged and agile. The department should consider how each can shape any reform initiative it undertakes.

The report concludes with a discussion of adopting change management practices to ensure any effort to strengthen its workforce—and to begin the process of agency-wide revitalization—takes hold and yields lasting dividends.

Introduction

As one of the nation's oldest federal agencies, the State Department is a complex organization with a large workforce spread throughout the United States and across the globe. Over its 230-year history, the department's many successes—establishing treaties that secure the safety of Americans, leading a cooperative global community, and fostering freedom and economic opportunity abroad—have been critical to the prosperity of the nation and to the spread of democracy around the world.

The peaceful end to the Cold War was a high-water point for the department, but it also caused an international power shift that disturbed the longstanding leading role of diplomacy in America's foreign policy and national security. The terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001—and the subsequent deployment of 2.77 million military service members by 2015 to Afghanistan, Iraq and other conflict zones and strategic locations around the globe¹—have militarized foreign policy and further dislocated American diplomacy from the center of international relations.

Diplomacy is critical to U.S. security, with many existential threats facing the nation that can be resolved only through international cooperation. The United States cannot stop nuclear proliferation, curb climate change, solve international public health crises or address the weaponization of the internet on its own. To facilitate a global response to these and other risks, it is imperative that the department reassert the power of diplomacy, reaffirm its leadership of foreign policy and regain its place at the forefront of national security.

To this end, the department also must overcome the challenges that have long impeded its operational efficiency as well as address more recent issues that have depressed staff morale and disrupted their good work.

Since 1992, administrations of both political parties have launched 11 separate initiatives to organizationally reform the department.² The fact that many of the same challenges—such as underfunding, concentrated authority, cumbersome bureaucratic procedures and outdated IT

infrastructure—have persisted throughout the past 30 years despite these efforts indicates the stubbornness of the department's longstanding issues. It also suggests the need for a new approach to resolving them.

Agency transformation requires good ideas and realistic strategies—as well as clear focus and workforce buy-in, which are encouraged through committed leadership. As the Government Accountability Office explains in its primer on organizational transformation:

Because a merger or transformation entails fundamental and often radical change, strong and inspirational leadership is indispensable. Top leadership (in the federal context, the department Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and other high-level political appointees) that is clearly and personally involved in the merger or transformation represents stability and provides an identifiable source for employees to rally around during tumultuous times. Leadership must set the direction, pace, and tone for the transformation.³

During the most recent attempt to transform the department, however, many staff perceived that senior leaders were not fully invested in the work. “Leaders changed frequently, and executive-level direction was minimal,” according to a review of the initiative by the Department of State Office of Inspector General. This, staff noted, “hampered the reform effort.”⁴

Communication is also key. According to the GAO, “communicating information early and often helps to build an understanding of the purpose of planned changes and builds trust among employees and stakeholders.”⁵ According to the department's inspector general, “infrequent and vague” communication about the

1 Rand Corporation, “Examination of Recent Deployment Experience Across the Services and Components,” March 2018, 1. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/36UH2mT>

2 Department of State Office of Inspector General, “Review of the Department of State's Organizational Reform Effort,” AUD-MERO-20-09, November 2019, 25. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3lPIuNS>

3 General Accounting Office, “Results-Oriented Cultures: Implementation Steps to Assist Mergers and Organizational Transformations,” GAO-03-669, July 2003, 9. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/35NIKHg>

4 Department of State Office of Inspector General, “Review of the Department of State's Organizational Reform Effort,” AUD-MERO-20-09, November 2019, 21. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3lPIuNS>

5 General Accounting Office, “Results-Oriented Cultures: Implementation Steps to Assist Mergers and Organizational Transformations,” GAO-03-669, July 2003, 23. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/35NIKHg>

Previous Efforts to Reform the State Department

According to the department's Office of the Historian, there have been 11 separate attempts to reform the agency since 1992. These efforts were led by administrations of both parties and addressed many of the same issues, such as improving strategic planning, upgrading technology and communications infrastructure, improving management practices and restructuring the organization.

Another commonality is that previous reform efforts took a broader approach and tried to simultaneously address all the challenges, according to former senior leaders of the department.

Career staff, meanwhile, noted that some prior efforts took a top-down approach, appeared to be shrouded in secrecy or were perceived to be politically driven and not permanent. As a result, they were not well-received by the workforce. Many employees simply waited out initiatives that did not prioritize staff engagement. Others were reluctant to associate with initiatives led by political appointees.

Additional reasons why previous revitalization initiatives fell short, according to career staff, are that their premises were unclear and that their recommendations were neither concrete, realistic nor reflective of the reality of the civil and foreign services.

previous reform initiative made it opaque and discouraged career employees from fully embracing it.⁶ In fact, 84% of staff were dissatisfied with communication from senior leaders and other stakeholders about the reform initiative.⁷ This dynamic also may have contributed to outright resistance to the effort, as some staff perceived it to be an attempt to implement budget cuts and staff reductions.⁸

Informed by a review of this and other previous attempts to reform the department, what is needed is a different approach to strengthening the agency—one that is rooted in strong leadership engagement, effective communication and other strategies for ensuring that revitalization efforts take hold.

Agency transformation initiatives are neither simple nor guaranteed to unfold as planned, according to current staff and former leaders of the department. To secure lasting results, this report offers change management strategies related to mission focus, stakeholder management, staff capacity, data analysis, and patience and flexibility, among other things. It also focuses on the importance of the civil and foreign service workforces, since “at the center of any serious change management initiative are the people,” according to the GAO.⁹ By taking such a change management approach, the department can make its improvements durable, thereby preventing future disruptions to mission-critical work.

While a single report will not solve all of the historical and current challenges of the department, the proposed recommendations, best practices, operating goals and change management strategies are the necessary foundation for a larger revitalization effort. To effect transformational change, the department must first strengthen its talent management life cycle, make related improvements to its institutional culture, and gain the support of its workforce, Congress and the White House.

6 Department of State Office of Inspector General, “Review of the Department of State’s Organizational Reform Effort,” AUD-MERO-20-09, November 2019, 23. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3lPIuNS>

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid., 24.

9 General Accounting Office, “Results-Oriented Cultures: Implementation Steps to Assist Mergers and Organizational Transformations,” GAO-03-669, July 2003, 1. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/35NIKHg>

Historical Challenges

A number of longstanding pressures have created systemic challenges that undermine the State Department's institutional culture, organizational performance and staff morale—and threaten mission success. Outdated talent management practices, for example, hinder the department's ability to attract the best and brightest candidates, to leverage the numerous organizational benefits of a diverse workforce, to maintain staffing levels commensurate with mission requirements and to cultivate the next generation of career leaders.

Underinvestment is another historical challenge that continues to stress the civil and foreign services and impede their work. In particular, Congress has repeatedly failed to pass authorizing legislation for the department, “leading to budgetary pressures and diminishing [its] status in the hierarchy of national security agencies rather than reinforcing the nation's paramount foreign policy institution,” according to the Council on Foreign Relations.¹⁰ One former career official said that insufficient financial and staff resources are the biggest obstacle to the department's success.

A leadership culture built on centralized authority saps the agency of individual employees and discourages innovation, initiative and accountability. In 2005, there were 12 volumes of the Foreign Affairs Manual, the authoritative source for the structures, policies and procedures that govern the department's operations. Today, there are 18. The increased number of regulations and standard operating procedures, according to a former senior official, not only erodes the individual judgement of staff, but also drives decision making

to unnecessarily high levels within the organization. “This is how to treat widgets, not people,” the official said.

The department's siloed organizational structure and culture isolates bureaus as well as the civil and foreign service workforces, fostering a competitive atmosphere that is counterproductive. Some bureaus, for example, implement policies differently and do not always share information, making it difficult to spread best practices enterprise-wide. And many staff members describe the relationship between the civil and foreign services as being “like a caste system,” with most leadership positions and workforce flexibilities reserved for the foreign service. While many staff want to undo these divides, according to a current civil servant, “We do not have time to focus on silos, there is just not enough bandwidth or manpower to do it...it is too huge of a lift.”

Furthermore, many structures and rules are outdated, and calcifying bureaucratic processes burden the department's dedicated staff and discourage innovation, according to current staff and former senior leaders. As a result of these distractions, diplomats and their civil service counterparts may not be fully prepared for today's foreign policy challenges.

“The government is tackling 21st century global problems with a 20th century diplomatic corps trained for a 19th century world,” explained Anne-Marie Slaughter, chief executive of New America and a former director of policy planning at the department.¹¹

The department's IT and data management systems also need updating. The department relies on an unintegrated patchwork of IT legacy systems—“built like barnacles on a

ship,” according to one staffer—that have become dysfunctional over time. Additionally, there are many data management systems instead of a single agency-wide platform. Some serve just one bureau and were designed to compartmentalize information for security reasons. The antiquated infrastructure and outmoded data-management practices impede staff data sharing and collaboration, especially across bureaus. Furthermore, since institutional knowledge is largely stored with people, it can be lost when staff leave the agency.

Compounding all of these challenges is the fact that since the end of the Cold War, the State Department's role at the front lines of America's national security and foreign policy has been shifting relative to evolving global power dynamics, increasing threats from stateless groups with international reach and the growing influence of the Department of Defense and the National Security Council on international relations. Thirty years later, American foreign policy is still unsettled but more militarized, largely due to the military campaigns and security priorities that grew out of the nation's response to the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

Today, American foreign policy relies less on the power of diplomacy than it did during the Cold War, a dynamic that has made the talent and knowledge of career ambassadors, other foreign service officers and their civil service colleagues an underutilized national resource.¹² As a result, the nation is less prepared to further existing alliances, less able to build new relationships with former or current adversaries, and less capable to negotiate peaceful resolutions to international crises.

10 Council on Foreign Relations, “Revitalizing the State Department and American Diplomacy,” November 2020, 2. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/38YHH9q>

11 Anne-Marie Slaughter, “Reinventing the State Department,” *Democracy: A Journal of Ideas*, September 2020. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2HdkXHm>

12 Insigniam, “Listening Report for the U.S. Department of State & U.S. Agency for International Development,” June 2017, 12, 23 and 36. Retrieved from <https://brook.gs/32YtENj>

Recent Challenges

While these issues are longstanding—stretching back across presidential administrations of both parties—their impact has weakened an institution necessary for American security and prosperity. Recent challenges have brought this fragility into public view.

Politicization of Top Leadership

What the American Foreign Service Association calls a “historic deficit” in career appointees to senior roles raises questions about the politicization of the department.¹³ “For the first time in more than a century,” according to The Washington Post, “all assistant secretary slots are filled by acting heads or political appointees.”¹⁴ In 1975, comparatively, 60% of positions at the level of assistant secretary or above were filled by career foreign service officers and 37% by political appointees. By 2014 the ratio was reversed when 30% of these posts were occupied by career staff and 51% by political appointees.¹⁵ In late 2020, 21% of top positions were filled by confirmed or acting career staff, and 73% by political appointees.^{16,17} No career official has been nominated as an assistant secretary—a position responsible for leading bureaus and shaping distinct aspects of America’s foreign policy—since October 2019.¹⁸ And no career staff have been confirmed to a senior position since August 2018.¹⁹

The ambassador corps has experienced a similar inversion. Of the 189 ambassador nominees from 2017 through 2020, 43% were political appointments and 57% were career. From 1974 through 2020, comparatively,

33% were political and 67% were career on average.²⁰ As one former ambassador put it, “We’re in an era in which career expertise has been sidelined.”

While the leadership and diplomacy of political appointees are valuable—especially when they bring skills and perspectives that keep the department’s diplomatic strategies sharp and management practices current—political appointees are most effective when complemented by the institutional knowledge, relationships and broad perspective of career leaders. Too many political appointees can unsettle this symbiotic partnership to the detriment of America’s foreign policy.²¹ The imbalance decreases managerial capacity, discourages accountability and disrupts mission-critical work, diminishing trust between political and career staff.²² Such trust gaps, according to a former senior official, are one of its “biggest impediments to success.” Additionally, when most senior positions are filled by political appointees, the professional pathways for career staff are more limited. Undoing this dynamic would benefit not only career staff, who would have more opportunity to earn a leadership role, but also the entire agency.

“Restoring a better balance of career and non-career leadership is fundamental to restoring the department’s role as America’s chief diplomacy and foreign policy executor,” said one former high-ranking official.

13 Eric Rubin, “Back to the Gilded Age?” The Foreign Service Journal, Volume 96 Number 10, December 2019. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/38WrIJ7>

14 Lisa Rein, Tom Hamburger, Juliet Eilperin and Andrew Freedman, “How Trump Has Waged War on His Own Government,” The Washington Post, October 30, 2020. Retrieved from <https://wapo.st/3kIsHip>

15 The American Academy of Diplomacy, “American Diplomacy at Risk,” April 2015, 15. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/38ZadYv>

16 Department of State Office of the Historian, “Principal Officers by Title.” Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3lOqO4Z>

17 Department of State, “Biographies.” Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3ffPgdh>

18 P. Michael McKinley, “The Politicization of the State Department Is Almost Complete,” The Atlantic, October 2020. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/36Lf2SG>

19 Department of State, “Biographies.” Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3ffPgdh>

20 American Foreign Service Association, “Ambassador Tracker.” Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/33nZt2j>

21 Robert J. Silverman, “Righting the Personnel Balance at State,” The Foreign Service Journal, Volume 91 Number 11, November 2014. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3fcJIjq>

22 American Society for Public Administration and National Academy of Public Administration, “Strengthening Administrative Leadership: Fixing the Appointments Process,” March 2012. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/35LbffO>

Attrition

Attrition is another challenge that has grown in recent years. In 2017, Secretary Rex Tillerson set a goal of cutting the civil and foreign service workforces by 8%—or by about 2,000 full-time employees—offering buyouts of \$25,000.²³ While the department did not reach Tillerson’s goal, it did lose a significant number of staff between September 2017 and September 2019. During these two years, the department experienced a 3% net reduction of its combined civil and foreign service workforces (682 employees). The department’s civil service accounted for most of this reduction with a 6% net loss (599 employees).²⁴ Comparatively, government-wide the civil service workforce had a net increase of 2% over the same period.²⁵

The number of civil and foreign service staff who quit or retired in recent years—including high-ranking foreign service officers and other career staff who reportedly did so under pressure²⁶—is just one factor of these net staff losses. Another is the 16-month hiring freeze, which, according to the department’s Office of Inspector General, “was not guided by any strategic goals linked to a discrete, but related, exercise to prepare a plan to improve the economy and efficiency of Department operations.”²⁷ The moratorium—which continued for 13 months after the conclusion of President Trump’s 2017 government-wide hiring freeze—restricted the civil and foreign services’ ability to replenish their ranks.

Collectively, staff departures and the hiring freeze caused “significant management challenges,” negatively impacting staff morale and agency operations.²⁸ According to current employees, higher levels of attrition increased the workload of the remaining staff, who had to “keep the trains running” with less

23 Gardiner Harris, “State Department to Offer Buyouts in Effort to Cut Staff,” *The New York Times*, November 10, 2017. Retrieved from <https://nyti.ms/36OGJtP>

24 Department of State, “Department of State Facts About Our Most Valuable Asset—Our People (Trends Since 2007),” January 2020. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2ITWgAu>

25 Office of Personnel Management, “FedScope Employment Data.” Retrieved <https://bit.ly/3oaE2db>

26 Lisa Rein, Tom Hamburger, Juliet Eilperin and Andrew Freedman, “How Trump Has Waged War on His Own Government,” *The Washington Post*, October 30, 2020. Retrieved from <https://wapo.st/3kIsHip>

27 Department of State Office of Inspector General, “Inspector General Statement on the Department of State’s Major Management and Performance Challenges,” OIG-EX-20-02, January 2020, 22. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/331xchQ>

28 Department of State Office of Inspector General, “Review of the Effects of the Department of State Hiring Freeze,” ISP-I-19-23, August 2019, 2. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3lKnoAo>

Political Leadership

With over 4,000 politically appointed positions—more than in any other democracy around the world—the federal government is experiencing a leadership crisis. Many appointees are underprepared for the unique responsibilities of public-sector leadership. In addition, because their service is temporary, appointees have little time or incentive to make long-term investments in the agencies they lead.

Furthermore, about 1,200 of the appointed positions in the federal government require Senate confirmation, a process that has become more arduous and time-consuming in recent decades. According to [analysis by the Partnership’s Center for Presidential Transition](#), today it takes twice as long for the Senate to confirm a nominee (115 days) as it did during the Reagan administration (56 days). The slow confirmation process often results in long-term leadership vacancies, leaving agencies rudderless and civil servants unsupported.

Because it has 225 appointed positions requiring Senate confirmation—including 189 ambassador posts—the State Department is especially exposed to these challenges. It has more appointed positions than any other Cabinet-level agency. Exclusive of the State Department, Cabinet agencies on average have 18 positions each. The department also has more appointees than all other national security agencies. The Department of Defense has the second most, with 59 appointed positions. Meanwhile, the Department of Homeland Security has 17, the Office of Director of National Intelligence has 6 and the CIA has 3.

The [Political Appointee Tracker](#) is a resource from the Partnership and *The Washington Post* that charts the status of 757 of the 1,200 appointed positions in the executive branch that require Senate confirmation. These positions include Cabinet secretaries, deputy and assistant secretaries, chief financial officers, general counsels, ambassadors and other critical leadership positions. Among other things, the dynamic online database shows which nominations have been confirmed, which are pending, and which have been withdrawn by the president. It also notes which appointees have resigned.

support. Though career staff have a reputation of strong mission commitment that drives them to do more with less, they risk burnout when they take on too much.

Turnover among the department’s top leadership is particularly disruptive, leaving diplomats and civil service staff without direction and initiatives adrift. Assistant secretaries and other senior leaders are “essential to formulating, implementing, and coordinating U.S. foreign policy,” according to a Senate Foreign Relations Committee report.²⁹ The report continued:

“They drive international economic policy, oversee conflict prevention, and represent the United States in bilateral and multilateral negotiations on weapons nonproliferation, global health, and other critical matters. When they are filled with officials serving in an acting capacity, those officials have diminished authority, both within the Department and with foreign counterparts. When the positions are vacant, the work of the[ir] entire bureau suffers and slows.”³⁰

29 Senate Foreign Relations Committee, “Diplomacy in Crisis: The Trump Administration’s Decimation of the State Department,” July 2020, 13. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2IP66Ds>

30 Ibid.

Since 2017, one-quarter of positions at the assistant secretary level or above have turned over at least once.³¹ Currently, more than one-third of the assistant secretary or undersecretary positions are vacant or filled by acting officials.^{32, 33} There also has been significant attrition among top career leaders. From December 2016 through December 2018, the Senior Foreign Service lost 14 career ministers, 94 minister counselors and 68 counselors.³⁴ Furthermore, within 10 years nearly all of the current SFS and 80% of the agency’s Senior Executive Service will be eligible to retire.³⁵

The disruptions of senior-staff departures have been exacerbated by the slow pace of the nomination and

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid., 5.

33 Department of State, “Biographies.” Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3kLMeyz>

34 The number of career ministers fell from 33 to 19, minister counselors from 470 to 376 and counselors from 459 to 391. Barbara Stephenson, “The State of State: Putting the Back Channel Up Front,” *The Foreign Service Journal*, Volume 96 Number 4, May 2019. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3omDCRI>

35 Department of State, “Five-Year Workforce and Leadership Succession Plan: Fiscal Years 2018-2022,” February 2019, 36. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/33dOI2E>

Net Change in Workforce Levels by Administration

Administration	State Department Civil Service Workforce	State Department Foreign Service Workforce	Combined Civil and Foreign Service Workforces	Government-wide Civil Service Workforce*
Bush (2001-04)	+ 19%	+ 20%	+ 19%	+ 4%
Bush (2005-08)	+ 15%	+ 4%	+ 9%	+ 4%
Obama (2009-12)	+ 12%	+ 12%	+ 12%	+ 5%
Obama (2013-16)	+ 2%	+ 1%	+ 1%	+ 2%
Trump (2017-20)	- 1%	- 1%	- 1%	N/A (+ 2% over 2017-19)

*These data do not include employees of the foreign service (after March 2006), Postal Service, White House, Tennessee Valley Authority and intelligence agencies.

Sources: Department of State and Office of Personnel Management

confirmation processes.^{36, 37} Furthermore, fewer people are applying to the foreign service, draining the pipeline of career officers prepared to step into senior leadership roles when they become available. In fact, the number of people who took the Foreign Service Officer Test declined steadily between 2013 and 2018, from 21,069 to 8,685 people per year.³⁸

These talent gaps not only have left the department's efforts understaffed and strained its organizational effectiveness, but also have depleted the well of institutional knowledge and diplomatic relationships that buttress U.S. foreign policy.³⁹ Moreover, vacancies at the senior level disrupt the department's ability to coordinate with the White House and other national security agencies to develop a strong, coherent foreign policy. These deficits erode confidence in the department, both at home and abroad, which is a dynamic America's foreign competitors and adversaries can exploit.⁴⁰

Looking Forward

The common link between the historical and more recent challenges—and the resources that can solve them—are the dedicated people of the civil and foreign services. With greater support, they can help design, guide and realize major efforts to revitalize the department. A strengthened workforce is the prerequisite for overcoming institutional challenges and reaffirming the department's leadership of America's foreign policy and its role as the first line of national security.

36 Today it takes twice as long for the Senate to confirm a nominee (115 days) as it did during the Reagan administration (56 days). Partnership for Public Service Center for Presidential Transition, "Senate Confirmation Process Slows to a Crawl," January 2020, 1. Available at <https://bit.ly/2HHZLJO>

37 Partnership for Public Service, "The Replacements: Why and How 'Acting' Officials Are Making Senate Confirmation Obsolete," September 2020, 1. Available at <https://bit.ly/2KLUT7L>

38 In only two other years since 1980–2000 and 2008—has the number of people taking the test been below 9,000. Dan De Luce, "Fewer Americans are Opting for Careers at the State Department," NBC News, February 25, 2019. Retrieved from <https://nbcnews.to/2UFMgNR>

39 The hiring freeze negatively impacted the operations of 96% of the department's embassies and consulates and 95% of its bureaus and offices. Department of State Office of Inspector General, "Review of the Effects of the Department of State Hiring Freeze," ISP-I-19-23, August 2019, 8. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3lKnoAo>

40 Joshua Tucker, "Those Empty Desks at U.S. Embassies and the State Department? They're a Big Problem," The Washington Post, June 12, 2017. Retrieved from <https://wapo.st/3feNPeP>

COVID-19 and Evolving Workforce Practices

The upheavals of the COVID-19 pandemic—which resulted in some foreign service officers and their families having to leave their overseas posts and required civil and foreign service staff in Washington, D.C., to work remotely and adopt new work schedules—have shown that the department is capable of quickly adapting to maintain mission-critical policies and programs in the face of massive challenges. The global crisis also indicates that the nature of the department's operations may have to evolve to withstand similar emergencies in the future, such as climate catastrophes and cyberwarfare.

The department should consider whether the experience of working through the pandemic demonstrated the efficacy of telework and other flexibilities, and assess how it reset workplace expectations. It should incorporate its findings to these questions into any new talent management plans and operating models.

Long-term adoption of telework and other work flexibilities may require new technology and IT-infrastructure upgrades. These investments, however, can be offset by their benefits, such as enabling work practices that improve employee morale, mission alignment and productivity. Implementing them also will require a clear strategy and visible support and role modeling from top leadership.

Time for Revitalization

Now is the time to fully address the management and workforce challenges facing the department.

America needs the department to renew its leadership of U.S. foreign policy and to reassert the importance of diplomacy, so it is fully capable of addressing national security challenges.⁴¹ Such demands today include the exigencies of great power competition, climate change, global health and internet-enabled misinformation campaigns and other cyberattacks.

Meanwhile, morale levels indicate that civil and foreign service staff are ready for improvements. According to the [Best Places to Work in the Federal Government® rankings](#)—a resource produced by the Partnership and Boston Consulting Group that tracks staff satisfaction, commitment and willingness to put in extra effort—the department’s employee engagement score has trended downward since its high point of 70.8 out of 100 points in 2010. By 2019, it had fallen to 61.3 points,⁴² slightly less than the government-wide score of 61.7 points.⁴³ The agency ranked seventh out of 32 large federal agencies in 2010; in 2019, it ranked 13th out of 17 large agencies.⁴⁴

In the same time frame, 9 out of 10 of the department’s Best Places to Work workplace category scores fell. Government-wide, these scores increased in eight of the categories. The category scores measure important aspects of the employee experience and are indicators of what institutional improvements staff would welcome. For example, the department experienced a 5.4-point drop in the effective leadership category; an 8.4-point drop in the pay category; a 5.5-point drop in the training and development category; a 4.6-point drop in the work-life balance category; and a 3.9-point drop in the support for diversity category.⁴⁵

Staff and leaders are also up to the task of designing, implementing and adapting to major changes in effort to

Department of State’s Best Places to Work Rank in the Large Agency Grouping	
2003	19th out of 28 agencies
2005	10th out of 30 agencies
2007	6th out of 30 agencies
2009	5th out of 30 agencies
2010	7th out of 32 agencies
2011	7th out of 33 agencies
2012	3rd out of 19 agencies
2013	4th out of 19 agencies
2014	3rd out of 19 agencies
2015	3rd out of 19 agencies
2016	4th out of 18 agencies
2017	8th out of 18 agencies
2018	14th out of 17 agencies
2019	13th out of 17 agencies

41 Department of Defense Joint Chiefs of Staff, “Joint Doctrine Note 1-18: Strategy,” April 2018, vii–ix, II-5. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/38WBoDn>

42 Partnership for Public Service, “Best Places to Work in the Federal Government Agency Report: Department of State.” Available at <https://bit.ly/2T1s5ZM>

43 Partnership for Public Service, “Best Places to Work in the Federal Government.” Available at <https://bit.ly/3fTsbY>

44 Partnership for Public Service, “Best Places to Work in the Federal Government Agency Report: Department of State.” Available at <https://bit.ly/2T1s5ZM>

45 Ibid.

help the department better meet its mission. The nature of their careers prepares them to overcome adversity and to find solutions to intractable problems. Most recently, they demonstrated their commitment, innovation and tenacity by successfully working through the COVID-19 pandemic, and they have continued to achieve priority goals despite challenges related to governance, management and institutional culture.

Leadership gaps present opportunities to appoint visionary leaders with the management skills necessary to build on current initiatives and carry through a major revitalization effort. They also are opportunities to promote career staff to senior roles to ensure institutional knowledge complements the perspectives and wisdom of non-career appointees.

Senior leaders can encourage fresh ideas as well as elevate and build on current and previous efforts—including the significant improvement initiatives led by the undersecretary for management and department’s management bureaus and offices—to help the civil and foreign services do their best work. Furthermore, new leaders can heal trust gaps between the political and career workforces while also reaffirming the importance of accountability to the agency’s mission.⁴⁶

The department’s leaders should leverage these and other circumstances to reinforce its capacity, streamline its organizational performance and rejuvenate partnerships. In so doing, it should draw on the lessons of its many previous reform efforts as well as those of adapting to the COVID-19 crisis to implement a set of recommendations designed to overcome obstacles of agency transformation.

They also should build on the various complementary initiatives led by the undersecretary for management and the Bureau of Global Talent Management, such as the work of the Diversity & Inclusion Taskforce. Other ongoing foundational efforts that should be leveraged include streamlining the security-clearance process, promoting the “one team, one mission” ethos, encouraging participation in the iMentor program and rolling out Agility@State, the department’s new online platform for facilitating temporary assignments and other growth opportunities.

Finally, the department should leverage its deep well of workforce resilience, creativity and mission focus because the buy-in, guidance and hard work of the people of the civil and foreign services are necessary for a revitalization effort to succeed and yield lasting benefits.

Leadership Challenges of Revitalizing the Department

Leading any federal agency under normal operating circumstances can present significant challenges, requiring exceptional vision, tenacity and management skills to work through them. Effectively guiding the workforce to mission delivery also often requires personal sacrifice to the greater good of public service.

Current and incoming senior leaders must have this capacity and commitment to transform the agency to successfully carry out its mission in an evolving world. They also must demonstrate the courage of their convictions.

This important work must begin with building trust with the civil and foreign services. To that end, the department’s leaders should set the stage for the challenges and potential disruptions of agency transformation. For example, they should communicate a shared vision and accelerate efforts to build a more diverse and inclusive workplace. In addition, leaders should leverage the experience, perspectives and institutional knowledge of career staff by appointing more career leaders to senior positions and by learning from the workforce where investments and improvements are most needed.

⁴⁶ Center for American Progress, “The First 100 Days: Toward a More Sustainable and Values-Based National Security Approach,” October 2020, 9–11. Retrieved from <https://ampr.gs/33EnHp8>

Revitalization Strategy

An ambitious improvement agenda must start with incremental steps. This strategy is based on the review of previous departmental reform initiatives, which lacked practical focus and tried to address too much at once, according to former senior leaders.

The initial focus should be strengthening the capacity of the civil and foreign services by improving the talent management life cycle. Workforce challenges—such as staffing gaps, high rates of turnover and management issues—“are pervasive, affecting programs and operations domestically and overseas and across functional areas and geographic regions,” according to the department’s Office of Inspector General.⁴⁷ These issues can be addressed relatively quickly and without additional congressional authority, resulting in long-lasting improvements and preparing the workforce for the larger lift of resolving deeper institutional challenges. For example, a more inclusive orientation process could help break-down silos and improve institutional culture. And a more robust professional development system could prepare career staff to assume leadership roles through which they could help streamline corporate governance.

There are also several long-term issues that deserve attention now, such as creating an excepted service option for the civil service workforce and improving the department’s workflow processes.

Guiding each of this report’s recommendations are four overarching operating goals as well as an impact statement and a set of best practices. Because so many reform efforts have faded away after a first blush of success, a set of change management principles is needed to facilitate the department’s implementation of its recommendations and best practices. These principles are designed to make sure revitalization efforts are long-lasting.

Combined, the recommendations and related best practices provide a foundation for a more comprehensive reform effort. And once implemented, the results will demonstrate to Congress, the White House—as well as to members of the civil and foreign services—that the department is committed to and prepared for a larger overhaul. This evidence is critical to earning the support, trust and funding necessary for it.

⁴⁷ Department of State Office of Inspector General, “Inspector General Statement on the Department of State’s Major Management and Performance Challenges,” OIG-EX-20-02, January 2020, 20. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/331xchQ>

Operating Goals

Setting the Conditions for Revitalization and Mission Success

There are four overarching operating goals that can guide the success of any effort to strengthen the department. These goals reflect a workforce that is diverse, engaged and agile, and are imperative to prepare the civil and foreign services to meet future challenges.

Though the operating goals are long-term, their net benefits are numerous, cumulative and overlapping. By undertaking efforts to foster diversity and inclusion, for example, the department also can improve employee engagement and its institutional culture. The department should start working toward these goals now as it implements this report's recommendations and best practices.

Locally Employed Staff

While most of the workforce recommendations and best practices in this report may not apply to locally employed staff—who are hired and employed under local labor laws—the department should consider adopting this report's operating goals when engaging with them. The locally employed workforce, which is over 50,000 strong, is indispensable to the success of every U.S. embassy, consulate, and diplomatic mission around the world.



GOAL 1

Increase Diversity and Inclusion



GOAL 2

Improve Employee Engagement



GOAL 3

**Improve Internal
Customer Experience**



GOAL 4

Improve Institutional Culture



Goal 1: Increase Diversity and Inclusion

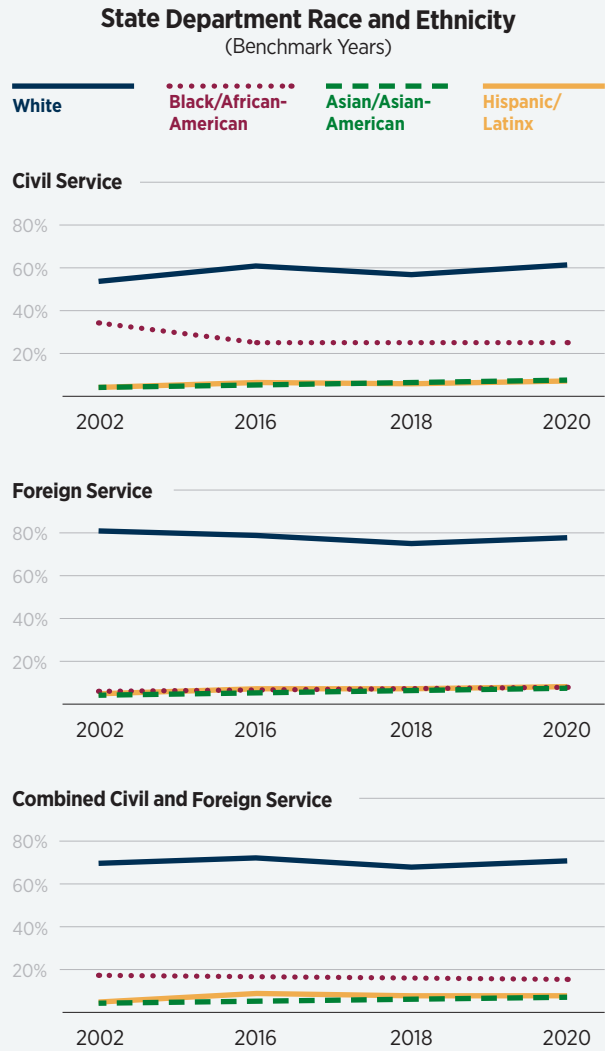
Diversity and inclusion are central to the department’s mission, and an institutional culture that commits to fostering these principles will enable leaders to fully support the workforce, maximize operational performance and best represent America abroad. Such commitment needs to be felt organization-wide by ensuring all opportunities are equitable and by diversifying the civil and foreign services, among other things. It also needs to be ongoing as the goal is perennial and should be considered a journey and not a destination.

While the department has made some strides in this area, the need for a stronger culture of diversity and inclusion was a prominent theme during interviews with current and former civil and foreign service staff and leaders. For example, the department has to overcome its longstanding reputation for having a dominant culture of white men hailing from elite educational institutions. And it needs to ensure that all staff who identify with an underrepresented community don’t experience exclusion, discrimination or other inequities, which can be detrimental to work performance, career advancement and mission success—as well as to the department’s standing in the global community.

Creating a culture of diversity and inclusion is a long-term goal that should be worked toward on all fronts instead of through a single recommendation. There are opportunities to advance diversity and inclusion in most if not all of this report’s recommendations and best practices, and senior leaders should embed a commitment to this operating goal in efforts to adopt any of them. At every turn, they also should foster equitable processes and behaviors. To this end, the report notes which recommendations and best practice are most conducive to improving the department’s diversity and to cultivating a culture of equity and inclusion.

Diversity Data⁴⁸

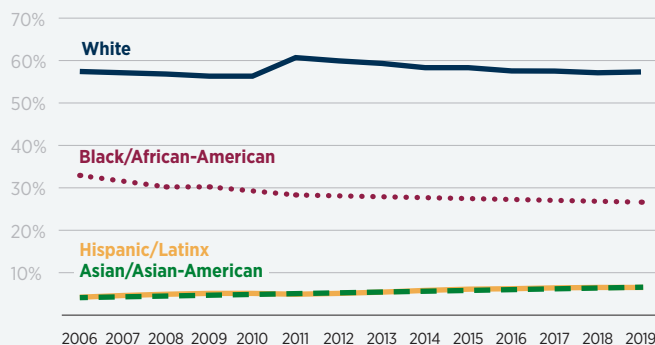
The degree of racial diversity within the department’s workforce has changed little over the last two decades. While the foreign service is slightly more diverse in 2020 than it was in 2002, the civil service and the combined civil and foreign service workforce have more white staff now than 18 years ago. Meanwhile, there are fewer Black/African American staff today in the civil service and in the combined workforce than there were in 2002. The proportion of Asian/Asian American and Hispanic/Latinx staff in the combined workforce, however, have increased somewhat over the same timeframe.



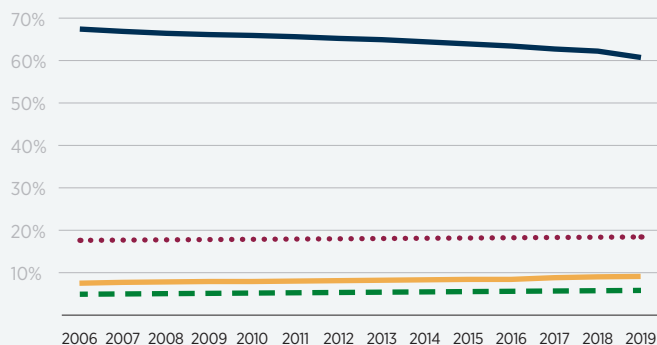
Note: These charts do not account for every racial category tracked by the department.

48 While FedScope—the Office of Personnel Management’s online interface for federal workforce data—includes federal diversity data going back to 2006, the data does not account for foreign service employees. As a result, this report draws its diversity data from the Government Accountability Office and the Department of State, which have published data accounting for both the civil and foreign services in 2002, 2016, 2018 and 2020. All 2020 data are from the Department of State (Department of State, “Diversity Statistics Full Time Permanent Workforce,” September 2020. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/33gv9a7>). All 2018 and 2002 data are from the Government Accountability Office (Government Accountability Office, “Department of State: Additional Steps Are Needed to Identify Potential Barriers to Diversity,” GAO-20-237, January 2020, 18. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3kMklaw>). All 2016 data are from the Department of State (Department of State, “Diversity Statistics Full Time Permanent Workforce,” September 2016. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/33wCOW6>).

State Department Civil Service Race and Ethnicity (2006–2019)



Government-wide Civil Service Race and Ethnicity (2006–2019)



Within the leadership ranks, the racial disparity is greater:

- In the Senior Executive Service in 2020, 86.4% of leaders are white, and only 4% are Black/African American and 7.2% are Asian/Asian American. In 2016, 90% were white, 4.2% Black/African American and 3.4% Asian/Asian American.
- In the Senior Foreign Service in 2020, 87.4% of leaders are white, 3.3% Black/African American and 4.6% Asian/Asian American. In 2016, 87.4% were white, 4.6% Black/African American and 3.8% Asian/Asian American. Comparatively, in 2008, almost 9% of the SFS were Black/African American.⁴⁹
- Only five ambassadors serving abroad—out of the 189 ambassador positions—are Black/African American. Only one of them is a woman. According to the Council on Foreign Relations, in their respective first terms Presidents Obama and Bush nominated 23 and 19 Black/African American ambassadors, 22 of whom were women.⁵⁰

Though the department’s civil service has been more diverse than the government-wide civil service since 2006, the government-wide civil service has been growing more diverse over the last 14 years.⁵¹ The department’s civil service has not. Today, Black/African American staff account for a smaller proportion of the department’s civil service than in 2006. The proportion of Asian/Asian American and Hispanic/Latinx staff has increased, and the level of white staff has remained about the same.⁵²

The ratio of men and women varies:

- Of the combined workforces, 44.2% of the staff are women in 2020. In 2016 and 2002, respectively, 43.8% and 44% were women.
- Within the civil service alone, 54.3% of the staff are women in 2020. In 2016 and 2002, respectively, 54.5% and 61% were women.
- Within the foreign service, 36.5% of the staff are women in 2020. In 2016 and 2002, respectively, 35.2% and 33% were women.
- In 2020, women account for 42.4% of the Senior Executive Service and 32.2% of the Senior Foreign Service. In 2016, they accounted for 41% of the SES and 32.4% of the SFS.
- The proportion of Black/African American women within the civil and foreign services decreased from 13% in 2002 to 9% in 2018. Within just the civil service, the decrease was greater, from 27% in 2002 to 17% in 2018.

From 2002 through 2018, people of color generally had lower rates and odds of promotion than their white counterparts.

- Within the GS-11–GS-15 range of the civil service, people of color experienced lower rates and lower odds of promotion than their white counterparts. Specifically, their odds were 26.2% lower for promotions from GS-11 to GS-12; 29.3% lower for GS-12 to GS-13; 19.4% lower for GS-13 to GS-14; and 21.8% lower for GS-14 to GS-15.⁵³
- Within the foreign service, the promotion rates for people of color were generally lower than for white staff. The only statistically significant difference between promotion outcomes, however, was from Class 4 to Class 3, “where both the rate and the odds of promotion were lower for racial or ethnic minorities than for whites.”

Among new hires, the proportion of people of color in the civil service fell from 38% in 2003 to 33% in 2018, but rose in the foreign service from 23% to 26% in the same years.

49 Council on Foreign Relations, “Revitalizing the State Department and American Diplomacy,” November 2020, 13. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/38YHH9g>

50 Ibid., 12.

51 The source of this data—FedScope, which is the Office of Personnel Management’s online interface for accessing federal workforce data—does not include data about foreign service employees. FedScope does not include civil service diversity data from before 2006.

52 Office of Personnel Management, “FedScope Diversity Data.” Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/39pjAky>

53 This analysis controlled for factors other than racial or ethnic minority status that could influence promotion.

The Department's Ongoing Diversity and Inclusion Efforts

The department is undertaking a number of efforts based on the fact that it is strongest when its civil and foreign service workforces are not only diverse, but also are able to thrive in an inclusive institutional culture.

- The department's Diversity & Inclusion Taskforce is developing its 2020-22 Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan. The taskforce gathered input from 16 employee affinity groups and more than 40 bureaus. It is building the plan on a two-year vision so that it can synchronize its next plan with the timeline of its 2022-2026 Joint Strategic Plan. This alignment will help better integrate its commitment to fostering diversity and inclusion into its strategic goals.
- The department has made diversity and inclusion a strategic priority of its recruitment efforts:
 - It has recruiters across the country seeking competitive applicants from people of all backgrounds, focusing particularly on historically underrepresented and disadvantaged communities. For example, recruiters target historically Black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, and tribal colleges and universities.
 - Through its Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship and Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Fellowship, the department has added hundreds of talented and diverse foreign service officers to its ranks, helping to increase the proportion of people of color in the foreign service from 17% to 24% between 2002 and 2018. And the department is growing the programs, increasing the number of Pickering and Rangel fellows from 60 to 90.⁵⁴
- The department has incorporated diversity and inclusion in its efforts to increase retention and accountability:
 - In one year, the department increased the number of diversity and inclusion councils across bureaus and missions from 14 to 75.⁵⁵

- The Bureau of Global Talent Management's diversity and inclusion unit has worked with the Office of Civil Rights to increase the diversity of the workforce and to become "an inclusive employer of choice."⁵⁶
- The department is weaving unconscious-bias training into other programs such as supervisory and management training courses at the Foreign Service Institute.^{57, 58, 59}
- To help supervisors succeed, the department has created new support mechanisms such as trainings on diversity awareness and equal opportunity employment.⁶⁰

54 Testimony of Carol Perez, Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Global Talent, Department of State. Hearing on "Diversity and Diplomacy: Assessing the State Department's Record in Promoting Diversity and Inclusion Hearing," House Committee on Foreign Affairs, 2020.

55 Melissa Ledesma-Leese, "GTM Diversity and Inclusion Unit: Bringing the Department Together," State Magazine, September 2020. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3dy4vxa>

56 Ibid.

57 Testimony of Carol Perez, Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Global Talent, Department of State. Hearing on "Diversity and Diplomacy: Assessing the State Department's Record in Promoting Diversity and Inclusion Hearing," House Committee on Foreign Affairs, 2020.

58 In October 2020, however, the department paused "all training programs related to diversity and inclusion" so it and the Office of Personnel Management could review content relative to President Trump's executive order on "combating race and sex stereotyping." Humeyra Pamuk, "U.S. State Department Suspends All Diversity Training after Trump's Directive," Reuters, October 24, 2020. Retrieved from <https://reut.rs/3IXUKM9>

59 The White House, "Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping," Executive Order 13950, September 22, 2020. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2J9u9xn>

60 Testimony of Carol Perez, Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Global Talent, Department of State. Hearing on "Diversity and Diplomacy: Assessing the State Department's Record in Promoting Diversity and Inclusion Hearing," House Committee on Foreign Affairs, 2020.

Goal 2: Improve Employee Engagement

Employee engagement—which is a measure of staff satisfaction, commitment and willingness to put in extra effort to get the job done—is more than a barometer of workforce morale. It also is a predictor of agency performance and outcome, which can alert federal leaders to potential challenges to meeting mission.

According to the Partnership and Boston Consulting Group’s [Best Places to Work in the Federal Government® rankings](#)—which assess how public servants view their jobs and workplaces based on responses to the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey and similar surveys conducted independently by the nation’s intelligence agencies and 10 other federal agencies—the department’s employee engagement has decreased most years since 2010.

The department’s Best Places to Work score reached a zenith of 70.8 out of 100 points in 2010—when it was 5.8-points higher than the government-wide score—before falling four times in the next six years, landing at 66.8 in 2016. Under the Trump administration, the high score of 64 points came in 2017 when it ranked eighth out of 18 large federal agencies.⁶¹ Since then, its score has fluctuated, reaching 61.3 in 2019—just below the government-wide score of 61.7 points⁶²—when the agency ranked 13th

out of 17 agencies.⁶³ This decade-long trend of declining employee engagement scores—which also was reflected in many of the interviews conducted with current and former civil and foreign service staff and leaders—indicates the need for the department to undertake revitalization efforts.

Improving employee engagement is an important goal, according to Partnership research, as “engaged employees are better employees.”⁶⁴ More specifically, engaged employees tend to be motivated, increase their productivity and improve their service to the public.⁶⁵

Improving employee engagement is a broad goal that can be addressed by many of the recommendations and best practices outlined in this report. For example, creating clearer civil service career paths and increasing leadership accountability through 360 reviews would likely increase staff morale. To realize this goal through the recommendations herein, however, it is imperative that leaders collect and analyze relevant data. Only through data awareness can the department prioritize, evaluate and evolve revitalization efforts relative to the benchmarks of staff spirit, dedication and productivity.

61 Partnership for Public Service, “Best Places to Work in the Federal Government Agency Report: Department of State.” Available at <https://bit.ly/2T1s5ZM>

62 Partnership for Public Service, “Best Places to Work in the Federal Government.” Available at <https://bit.ly/3ftTSbY>

63 Partnership for Public Service, “Best Places to Work in the Federal Government Agency Report: Department of State.” Available at <https://bit.ly/2T1s5ZM>

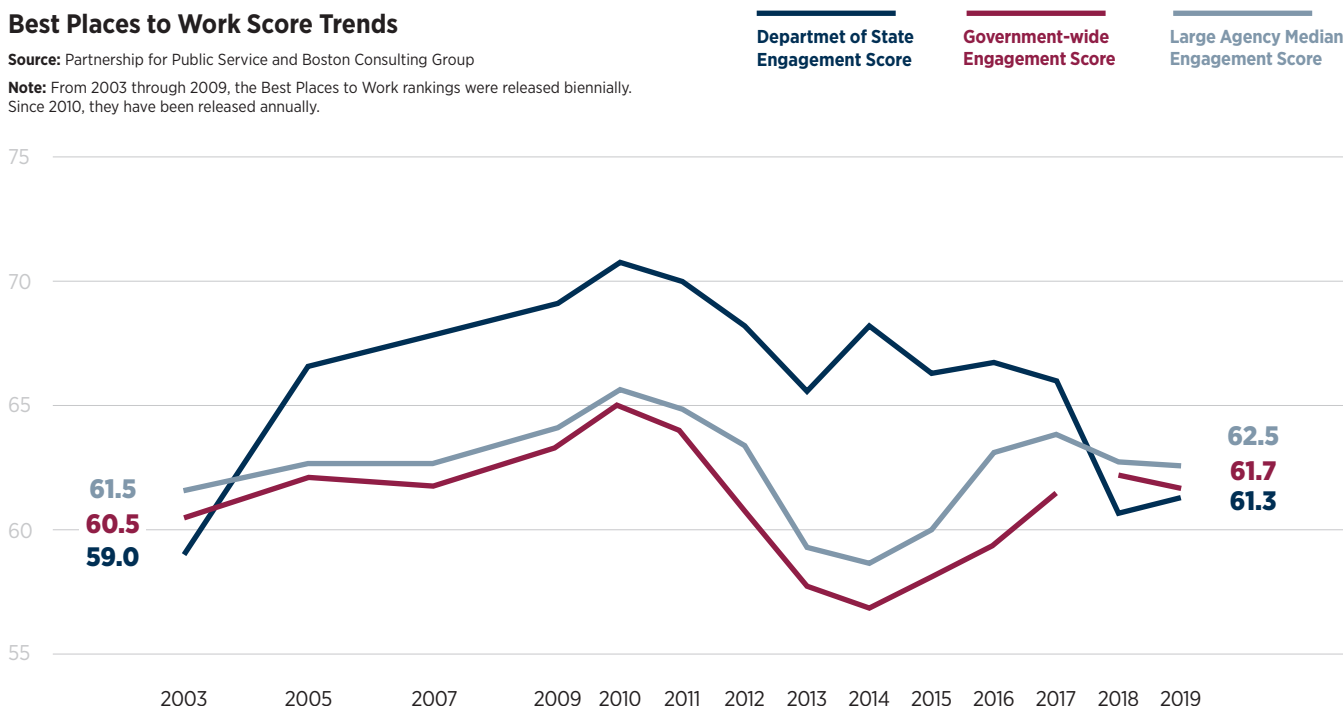
64 Partnership for Public Service, “A Prescription for Better Performance: Engaging Employees at VA Medical Centers,” March 2019, 1. Available at <https://bit.ly/3fPgmBq>

65 Ibid., 2 and 4.

Best Places to Work Score Trends

Source: Partnership for Public Service and Boston Consulting Group

Note: From 2003 through 2009, the Best Places to Work rankings were released biennially. Since 2010, they have been released annually.



Note: In 2018, the Department of Veterans Affairs decided not to participate in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, which is the main data source for the Best Places to Work engagement score. The government-wide employee engagement score from 2003 to 2017 includes the views of employees from the VA. The scores in 2018 and 2019 do not include their data. Because the VA represents approximately 18% of the federal workforce, the government-wide scores between 2003 and 2017 should not be compared to scores in 2018 and 2019.



Goal 3: Improve Internal Customer Experience

Customer experience is not just a private-sector business metric. Rather, it is a responsive approach to service provision that is useful to federal agencies working to strengthen their workforce and improve delivery of public goods.

Research shows that federal agencies committed to improving their customer experience tend to increase employee engagement and organizational performance.⁶⁶ In particular, efforts to improve an agency's internal customer experience—by improving the delivery of IT, talent management and other mission-support functions—can minimize bureaucratic impediments, facilitate effective collaborations and renew commitment to mission priorities.⁶⁷

All of these factors can improve staff morale and productivity, which is why many federal agencies, with encouragement from the Office of Management and Budget, are reframing their operations in terms of customer experience.

There are many opportunities to upgrade the internal customer experience in the talent management life cycle. For example, HR specialists can improve their support of recruiters and hiring managers throughout the staffing process. In addition, agency leaders can redesign professional development opportunities in response to staff feedback. Capitalizing on these opportunities can improve the department's workflow, increase inter-bureau collaboration and strengthen its institutional culture.

66 McKinsey & Company, "The Global Case for Customer Experience in Government," September 2019. Retrieved from <https://mck.co/2Kwaat7>

67 Partnership for Public Service, "Colleagues as Customers: How Mission-Support Services Can Improve the Customer Experience," August 2019, 4, 8 and 10. Available at <https://bit.ly/3731Rwp>



Goal 4: Improve Institutional Culture

As a federal agency with a history that goes back to our nation's beginning, the department has a deep-rooted institutional culture built on the pride of its accomplishments. But over time some aspects of the culture have become problematic. For example, the division between the foreign and civil services has become a divide, at times impeding collaboration. Likewise, a lack of trust between career and political staff can create bureaucratic hurdles, complicating decision making and slowing workflow. And pervasive grade inflation in the performance review process hinders the professional growth of individual employees.

A number of steps can be taken to improve the institutional culture. For example, efforts to enhance the performance management system could facilitate better working relationships between staff and supervisors. And more opportunities for professional development could improve institutional culture by expediting career advancement and reducing attrition.

Similarly, redesigning the orientation process—which is what the department calls onboarding—to ingrain the "one team, one mission" ethos could improve relationships between the civil and foreign service workforces as well as among bureaus. The Foreign Service Institute has begun working toward this goal by piloting its One Team course. Meanwhile, the Bureau of Global Talent Management has started this journey by updating the civil service orientation process.

Updating IT Infrastructure and Legacy Technology

The department's IT infrastructure is outdated and needs to be improved. As one career employee noted, "We sent a rocket to the moon, but I can't even email my colleagues. Our systems are so outdated...we're light years behind the world. Technology is such a huge piece of ensuring that we retain people and that we can communicate with people. It makes jobs easier."

And while there is broad agreement among current and former staff and leaders that the department needs new software, a modern data management system and robust infrastructure to replace the ad hoc array of legacy systems, there is common recognition of the financial and logistical difficulties in realizing this goal. The cost of these updates would be significant, requiring a level of funding that would be difficult to secure from Congress. Additionally,

the migration to a new IT system and related staff training would take considerable time. Furthermore, there are security questions—such as whether sensitive information should be stored in a separate data management system and whether staff should be able to access it remotely—that would need to be resolved through policy deliberations that could be lengthy.

The department should consider addressing broader IT infrastructure improvements during a later phase of a revitalization effort. Specifically, it should consider building on its current IT-modernization work—which is associated with the President's Management Agenda—once it has demonstrated the ability to strengthen its talent management life cycle, built momentum for further reform and secured critical support from Congress.

Short-Term Workforce Recommendations

(6–12 months)

- **Recruiting**
- **Hiring**
- **Orientation**
- **Performance Management**
- **Professional Development and Career Advancement**
- **Succession Planning**
- **Balancing Political and Career Leadership**
- **Leveraging Workforce Data**

There are a number of short-term workforce recommendations that can be implemented within 6-12 months without additional congressional authority. Such improvements can garner support from employees, lawmakers and the White House for longer-term reform efforts—such as overhauling the department’s IT and data management infrastructure, improving institutional culture, streamlining management practices, and cultivating a cadre of career leaders whose experience and institutional knowledge complement the perspectives of political appointees.

Some of these recommendations and best practices reflect goals of previous reform efforts. Others are drawn from research by the department’s Office of Inspector General, the Government Accountability Office, the Office of Personnel Management and nonprofit organizations. Most of them, however, were generated through interviews with current career staff and former high-ranking officials, who have first-hand experience with the department’s challenges and previous attempts to resolve them.

Long-Term Workforce Recommendations

(more than a year)

- **Civil Service Excepted Service**
- **Workflow Structures**

Other workforce recommendations will take more than a year to realize. One—creating a civil service excepted service—will require congressional action. The others, which are designed to improve workflow, are not dependent on legislation but will involve structural change. Efforts to implement all of them should begin now.

Recruiting is one of the most critical and challenging aspects of the talent management life cycle.

Good recruiting correlates with efficient hiring and the cultivation of dedicated staff who are prepared to support agency reform efforts and to raise the profile of American diplomacy.

While the department historically has attracted top graduates with degrees related to foreign relations, its competition with the private sector for the best talent is a structural deficit. The department often loses candidates—especially those applying to the civil service—to private-sector jobs that pay more, provide clearer career paths, and offer better technology and more workplace flexibilities. As one former career leader explained, “There is no way to recruit talent in short supply when the [department’s] grade and salary levels are based on a 1950-60s economy.”

Compounding this challenge, according to current career staff, is the perception that recruitment relies too much on the cache of the agency’s storied history. Staff suggested that its recruiting strategy should be more proactive and targeted.

RECOMMENDATION

The department should build on its ongoing efforts to design and deploy proactive recruitment strategies—maximizing current and creating new civil and foreign service talent pipelines—to enrich its talent pool and increase candidate diversity.

IMPACT

A more active and focused recruitment strategy can enrich the candidate pool. A strong, diverse group of applicants will enable the hiring of those who are best prepared to meet national security and foreign policy challenges.

Workforce diversity leverages the talents of individual employees, increasing creativity, driving innovation and improving decision making—all of which strengthens organizational performance. In addition, as a global champion of freedom and democracy, the department needs to ensure its workforce reflects the demographics of the nation and is prepared to engage with different cultures around the world.

BEST PRACTICES

1

The secretary of state and other top leaders should be the public face of civil and foreign service recruiting efforts, demonstrating the value of public service and cultivating a diverse pool of candidates. They should attend in-person and online recruiting events when possible. And during other public events, they should tell the story of and encourage careers in diplomacy and national security. Within the department, they should prioritize efforts to strengthen talent pipelines. For example, they should engage directly with HR specialists, recruiters and other staff responsible for attracting talent.

2

The department should accelerate recruitment of candidates with skills and experience related to critical global issues, such as cybersecurity, emerging technologies, economic competition, climate change and public health. Recruitment of candidates without a traditional foreign policy background should focus on the connections between diplomacy and innovation, technology, big data and other relevant topics. The U.S. Digital Service—which hires designers, engineers, product managers and bureaucracy specialists on a short-term basis to work with agencies to improve federal services—could be a model for recruiting nontraditional candidates.

3

Building on Department Efforts: To develop pipelines of diverse talent, the department should increase its efforts to recruit from historically Black colleges and universities, community colleges, and public and private institutions of higher education in rural and lower-income communities. To this end, it should continue to partner or forge new relationships with national organizations (and their campus representatives) that can help develop these pipelines. Such organizations include the American Association of Community Colleges, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, and Women in Cybersecurity. In cultivating these relationships, it should promote opportunities to join the foreign service through the Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Graduate Fellowship, Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Graduate Fellowship and Foreign Affairs Information Technology Fellowship. It also should highlight the Pathways Internship program, which allows the department to noncompetitively hire interns to the civil service upon completion of their internship.

4

Building on Department Efforts: The department should leverage the dedication and knowledge of its civil and foreign service workforces by deploying more staff as recruiters. For example, it should increase the number of Diplomats-in-Residence posted across the U.S. to enhance their campus recruiting efforts in partnership with national student organizations, career-services offices, and deans and professors who act as talent pipeline conduits at job fairs as well as in classrooms. It also should create more opportunities for civil and foreign service staff to serve as recruiters and offer them more training on how to sell the department's work, how to demonstrate mission match with candidates and how to build talent pipelines.

5

Building on Department Efforts: The department should leverage its experience with virtual recruiting—which, because of COVID-19, was its only method of recruiting for much of 2020—to leverage its online recruiting capacity and expertise to reach a broader and more diverse population of civil and foreign service candidates. Online recruiting—via social media campaigns, webinars, online town hall meetings, virtual hiring fairs and other means—is especially effective at connecting with populations that can't be reached in person, whether because of geography, a public health crisis like the coronavirus pandemic or other reasons.

6

The department should leverage the wealth of experience and expertise of its recruiters by assigning them to help hiring managers and HR specialists guide candidates throughout the hiring process. Such guidance can ensure candidates remain engaged and don't withdraw their candidacy for a quicker path to employment in the private sector.

The department's hiring processes are slow, even by federal government standards.

Hiring can take more than a year and lasts a minimum of eight months for the foreign service.⁶⁸ Government-wide, the average time-to-hire is about three months.^{69,70}

In an effort to expedite hiring and to avoid losing candidates who withdraw their application out of frustration, the department's bureaus often hire internally, depleting the staffing levels of other bureaus—a practice career staff described as “robbing Peter to pay Paul.” The department also frequently hires civil servants currently employed by another federal agency, which is the same dynamic at a different scale. This practice is counter-productive, a short-term solution that doesn't replenish the talent, but rather shifts the burden of staff shortages.

68 “Assuming no serious security or medical issues arise, candidates who take the Foreign Service Officer Test can expect that the minimum time from the test date to final clearance will be about eight months, but it can often be months longer.” Department of State, “Careers Representing America: Frequently Asked Questions.” Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/32VGJqD>

69 According to the most recently available Office of Personnel Management data, the government-wide average time-to-hire in fiscal 2018 was 98.3 days. Office of Personnel Management, “OPM Issues Updated Time-to-Hire Guidance,” February 2020. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/34hirHC>

70 In fiscal 2018, OPM defined “time-to-hire” as the length of time from “date the hiring need is validated to the entrance on duty (EOD) date.” Office of Personnel Management, “Time-to-Hire Reporting Requirements,” February 2020. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3ILTn2v>

RECOMMENDATION

The department should streamline its civil and foreign service hiring processes to become more competitive with the private sector and to increase hiring equity and staff diversity.

IMPACT

A long hiring process is inequitable, favoring candidates with the financial means to wait a year or more to begin their service. This effectively disqualifies candidates without the financial security to go through a lengthy staffing process, especially recent graduates and others without an existing source of steady income. The current hiring process also makes the department less competitive with the private sector, which generally not only pays more but also hires faster. A more streamlined process would push fewer candidates to seek opportunities in the private sector out of frustration or financial necessity. As a result, it also would increase the size and diversity of the department's candidate pool.

BEST PRACTICES

1

The department should train its HR specialists and hiring managers to strategically consider the many civil service hiring authorities and flexibilities available before reflexively staffing through delegated examining and merit promotions. The analysis of staffing data also should be prioritized to help HR specialists and hiring managers improve the staffing process. Relevant data includes time-to-hire and the number and frequency of unfilled hiring certificates.

2

Building on Department Efforts: The department should continue to identify and address inefficiencies and other challenges that slow hiring in order to improve its staffing processes. It should build on current efforts to this end, such as surveying new employees within 90 days of their start date about the hiring and onboarding processes; surveying hiring managers via its talent management accountability review; working with HR specialists to identify policy changes that could streamline hiring procedures; and leveraging relevant OPM data, such as the results of the USAJOBS survey.

3

HR specialists should better support and collaborate with recruiters and hiring managers—especially those new to the role—throughout the civil service hiring process. Hiring managers and recruiters also should communicate better with candidates at each step (including during the security-clearance process) so they know what to expect, what to do and when to do it, thereby ensuring their applications are not stymied by inaction.

4

Building on Department Efforts: The department should implement the best practices developed through its pilot effort to integrate subject matter experts into the civil service hiring process. Subject matter experts can help streamline hiring by determining the competencies and proficiency levels required for civil service positions and by guiding the assessment process (e.g., resume reviews, phone screens and interviews). Leveraging their perspectives in this way helps identify the most highly qualified candidates, facilitating the selection process and reducing the likelihood that a hiring action fails and must be restarted. (The U.S. Digital Service conducted a similar pilot and published the [analysis of its results](#).)

5

Building on Department Efforts: The department should continue its work to streamline the security-clearance process—drawing on Lean Six Sigma management principles as well as artificial intelligence and other technologies—in effort to make civil and foreign service hiring more efficient.

6

When appropriate needs arise, former career civil and foreign service staff should be rehired if they can bring seasoned skills, institutional knowledge and informed perspectives to support mission-critical work. Many former staff—especially those who were in leadership positions and those who recently left the department—also have valuable relationships within and beyond the department that can facilitate workstreams. To this end, the department should use hiring authorities that enable reemployment of civil and foreign service annuitants; reemployment of foreign service staff who have completed limited appointments; and reappointment of former career foreign service employees. In addition, the secretary may recall any retired foreign service career staff to their previous personnel category.

Apolitical and Accountable Hiring

The department may hire civil service staff through delegated examining, merit promotions or any number of special hiring authorities, including those that target specific groups of candidates, such as military veterans, the spouses of active-duty service members and returned Peace Corps volunteers.

A summary of the authorities most conducive to accelerated hiring can be found in the Partnership's report on the subject, "[Rapid Reinforcements: Strategies for Federal Surge Hiring](#)." This resource also describes strategies for

efficient hiring, such as developing recruiting infrastructure and applying a project management strategy. A roadmap visualizes how the strategies can be applied throughout the hiring process, from job announcement to onboarding.

Regardless of which authorities it uses, however, the department should adhere to the federal merit system principles and maintain its commitment to an apolitical, equitable, transparent and accountable hiring process.

Orientation—which is the department’s term for onboarding—is the process of not only acclimating new employees to policies, procedures and operating standards, but also socializing them to organizational norms and institutional culture.⁷¹

This bridge between hiring and working is critical to developing a collaborative workforce, breaking down silos, improving institutional culture and increasing staff morale.⁷² For example, orientation sessions can bring together staff from both the civil and foreign services as well as from bureaus across the agency, enacting the “one team, one mission” ethos.

According to career staff, however, the department’s orientation process is more about unofficial networking and first-hand experience than official training and events. As a result, it can take years for newly hired employees to really get to know the department and to learn how to be effective within its organizational structure and practices. Additionally, the unofficial orientation process can be inequitable and exclusive since access to knowledge and practical learning opportunities can depend more on interpersonal connections than professional development strategies.

71 Department of Defense, Defense Security Service, “Supervisors’ Toolkit for Onboarding,” May 2016, 3. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2KWgKtg>

72 Talya N. Bauer, Ph.D., “Onboarding New Employees: Maximizing Success,” SHRM Foundation, 2010, 2. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3ls2TY3>

RECOMMENDATION

The department should enhance its orientation process to help new civil and foreign service staff—as well as political appointees—more quickly adapt to its culture, mission, expectations and operating procedures; to cultivate strong working relationships among staff, among bureaus, between the civil and foreign services, and between career leaders and political appointees; and to continue to promote the “one team, one mission” ethos.

IMPACT

Through a robust orientation curriculum, new staff—as well as political appointees—can learn in short order about the department’s norms and how to operate effectively within its institutional culture. Without an impactful orientation curriculum, such knowledge has to be absorbed from colleagues and first-hand experience, a process that can take years. Additionally, official orientation events can be leveraged to improve longstanding institutional-culture issues, such as the lack of cooperation and collaboration among bureaus, between the civil and foreign services, and between career and political leaders.

BEST PRACTICES

1

Building on Department Efforts: The Foreign Service Institute should make its One Team course a mandatory part of the orientation process in effort to continue to promote the “one team, one mission” ethos. To embody the ethos, the course should include new civil and foreign service staff as well as political appointees and contractors. This would foster better relationships between the civil and foreign service workforces and among bureaus; ensure a line of sight between specific assignments and mission success; and, ultimately, improve employee engagement.

2

The department should implement a “buddy system,” pairing new civil and foreign service hires with experienced civil and foreign service staff, respectively, who can advise on both official rules and unofficial protocol and provide other guidance as needed.

3

The department should create a peer network connecting new civil service staff with new foreign service staff in effort to cultivate better interservice working relationships. Such a peer network should highlight both differences and similarities between the civil and foreign services to help staff within each better understand and work with their counterparts in the other service.

4

Building on Department Efforts: The department should integrate its 2020-22 Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan—and future diversity and inclusion plans—into its orientation programming.

Some current staff described the department’s existing performance management system as a pro forma process, not a tool for strategically cultivating the agency’s greatest asset.

Additionally, grade inflation is an endemic problem, and honest, constructive feedback is rare, according to staff members interviewed. As one employee put it, “A culture of pretending that everyone is perfect is not useful.”

Civil and foreign service staff cannot meet their full potential—and enable the department to do the same—without proper support and guidance. Performance management is an essential component of this. Performance management improvements would enable the department to better cultivate its staff. Furthermore, they would help prepare staff to see through an agency transformation initiative.

RECOMMENDATION

The department should enhance its performance management system to facilitate ongoing, supportive engagements between staff and supervisors that foster and inform professional development, equitable career advancement, employee engagement, mission achievement and accountability.

IMPACT

Constructive performance management can be an effective tool for professional development, career advancement and employee engagement. It also can hold all leaders accountable for their stewardship of diversity and inclusion, workforce and succession planning, recruiting, hiring, employee engagement and other efforts. By fostering a culture of performance management, the department can better support the growth of both civil and foreign service staff and better position the whole of workforce for mission success.

BEST PRACTICES

1 Senior career and political leaders should demonstrate their commitment to a culture of performance management based on frequent and supportive engagements between staff and supervisors. They should discourage “grade inflation” and instead encourage honest and constructive employee evaluations.

2 To set agency-wide expectations for accountability, the department should apply 360 reviews to the performance management of all its leaders—including supervisors, managers, Senior Executive Service and Senior Foreign Service members, and political appointees. Additionally, all career and political leaders should have performance plans reflecting policy objectives and institutional management priorities, such as staff development and the stewardship of diversity and inclusion.

3 Demonstrating commitment to performance management should be a prerequisite for assuming supervisory responsibilities.

4 To foster a culture of transparency, fairness and accountability, the department should provide adequate performance management training to staff and their supervisors and ensure their individual employee development plans are integral to the performance management system.

5 Individual performance goals should be aligned with bureau and agency-wide priorities, providing civil and foreign service staff with a clear line of sight between their own work and the department’s mission-critical goals and “one team, one mission” ethos.

Professional Development and Career Advancement

According to one former senior official, the department is not investing enough in a “true training complement” that supports staff throughout their careers.

Furthermore, some career staff said they need more opportunities to apply and build on what they learned through professional development training.

Additionally, the department’s reliance on the expertise and institutional knowledge of the civil service staff is not commensurate with its investment in opportunities for their growth and advancement. The lack of clear career paths within the civil service restricts the potential of the workforce, according to a former department leader. Career staff noted that most leadership opportunities are reserved for the foreign service and, as a result, that the careers of many talented civil servants plateau at the GS-13 level. Few civil servants within the department rise to the GS-14 level, and very few reach the Senior Executive Service. This dynamic is demotivational, wastes potential and is not conducive to agency revitalization efforts.

Finally, both former senior leaders and current career staff said that many talented young people don’t want a lifelong career at the department—as was common in the past—but are interested in a shorter stint before making a career transition. The department would benefit from creating viable short-term options that attract recent graduates and skilled professionals who might otherwise forego public service and opt instead for the flexibilities and pay of the private sector.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT RECOMMENDATION ONE

The department should offer a continuum of professional development opportunities.

IMPACT

When the workforce is constantly strengthened through professional development, it fosters career advancement, leadership development, employee engagement and staff retention. In addition, equitable access to growth opportunities helps more people of color, women and other civil and foreign service staff from underrepresented communities rise to senior positions, countering what the Government Accountability Office has identified as a trend of low promotion rates within the department for racial and ethnic minorities.⁷³

⁷³ Government Accountability Office, “State Department: Additional Steps Are Needed to Identify Potential Barriers to Diversity,” GAO-20-237, January 2020, 111. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/345BOV7>

BEST PRACTICES

1

Building on Department Efforts: The department's continuum of professional development should include—in addition to formal training—mentoring, coaching, stretch assignments and informal support from supervisors and other leaders. Formal and informal professional development opportunities should be delivered in person or online depending on which mode best supports staff. The department should continue to address—through Foreign Service Institute courses, external training programs and other professional development efforts—a variety of soft leadership skills such as teambuilding, decision making, emotional intelligence, diversity and inclusion, conflict resolution and leading change.

2

The department should conduct needs assessments to identify professional development gaps and to design programs, curricula and performance measures to help fill them. It should create career development and mentoring opportunities specifically for people of color, women and other staff from underrepresented communities.

3

The department should align its professional development programming with workforce and succession planning efforts.

4

Supervisors and other leaders should cultivate a culture of professional development and encourage civil and foreign service staff to seek opportunities to enhance their skills and advance their career.

5

Building on Department Efforts: The department should increase its efforts to encourage employees—especially civil service staff trying to plot a career path—to participate in and benefit from its iMentor program. As more staff use iMentor for nine-month mentorships or for shorter, situational mentorships, the program's effectiveness should be evaluated based on surveys of mentors and mentees.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT RECOMMENDATION TWO

The department should create multiple career arcs and paths.

IMPACT

With multiple career arcs, it will be easier to attract talented staff who want to serve their country by supporting its diplomacy and foreign policy, but who do not want to commit to a lifelong career in public service. By offering such options, the department can hire recent graduates as well as talented people working in other sectors who have specialized skills related to foreign policy, national security, cybersecurity and other important disciplines.

With clearer career paths, civil service staff are able to chart their professional growth and work toward leadership roles, likely increasing their productivity and morale. Additionally, civil service career paths help leaders better deploy and develop their staff, which strengthens the workforce over time.

BEST PRACTICES

1 The department should develop multiple career arcs for civil and foreign service staff—ranging from lifelong careers to short-term assignments—in effort to attract and cultivate talented staff with various career goals.

2 The department should create clear civil service career paths based on the foreign service model, and provide civil service staff with the resources and support necessary to plot their career trajectories. For example, the department could create an office focused on helping civil service staff advance their career as well as a digital career-pathing tool that enables staff to map their advancement within various job series. It also could reserve certain leadership positions for civil service staff and enhance the civil service promotion process to better balance agency needs with career development opportunities.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT RECOMMENDATION THREE

Additional policies and practices to ease and encourage civil service rotational assignments within the civil and foreign services should be implemented to foster trust, integration and collaboration across bureaus and services.

IMPACT

Rotational assignments within the civil and foreign services can help civil service staff grow professionally, advance their careers and develop inter-bureau and interservice relationships—all of which can increase employee engagement and facilitate collaboration and mission-critical work.

BEST PRACTICES

1

The secretary of state and other senior leaders should encourage rotational assignments within both the civil and foreign service and help foreign service officers and the American Foreign Service Association see the value of them.

2

Building on Department Efforts: Agility@State—the department’s new online platform for facilitating details, temporary-duty travel assignments and other flexible work and developmental opportunities—should be leveraged to make it easier for civil service staff to undertake rotational assignments. The effectiveness of Agility@State should be routinely assessed relative to ease of use and other factors of customer experience to ensure the resource is being used to its full potential.

3

The department should consider establishing a limited complement of designated professional development positions to support civil service rotational assignments, longer-term training or other professional development opportunities to help minimize talent gaps.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT RECOMMENDATION FOUR

The department should build on its continuum of leadership development opportunities by providing a mix of classroom-based training, experiential learning, mentoring, coaching and peer networks connected to a common leadership framework. Such opportunities should be available to civil and foreign service staff throughout their careers.

IMPACT

Civil and foreign service staff who embrace a shared set of leadership standards and competencies will be equipped to lead and communicate effectively, work collaboratively and overcome challenges. A shared standard also enhances accountability as all leaders, from new supervisors to senior leaders, commit to the same set of principles. Leadership capacity is the lynchpin for all efforts to strengthen the department. In addition, according to the Partnership's Best Places to Work data for the entire federal civil service, it is the number one driver of employee engagement.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ "Statement of Margot Conrad, Director for Federal Recruiting and Hiring Programs, Partnership for Public Service." Hearing on "NextGen Feds: Recruiting the Next Generation of Public Servants," House Committee on Oversight and Reform Subcommittee on Government Operations, 2019. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/37k0881>

BEST PRACTICES

1

Building on Department Efforts: The leadership development framework for civil and foreign service staff put in place under former Secretary of State Colin Powell should be updated. Updates should build on the framework's basic, intermediate and advanced leadership-training courses (for FS-03/GS-13, FS-02/GS-14 and FS-01/GS-15, respectively). The revised framework should include a focus on 21st century leadership challenges such as accounting for unconscious bias and emotional intelligence. It also should aim to cultivate leadership capacity in staff at all stages of their careers.

2

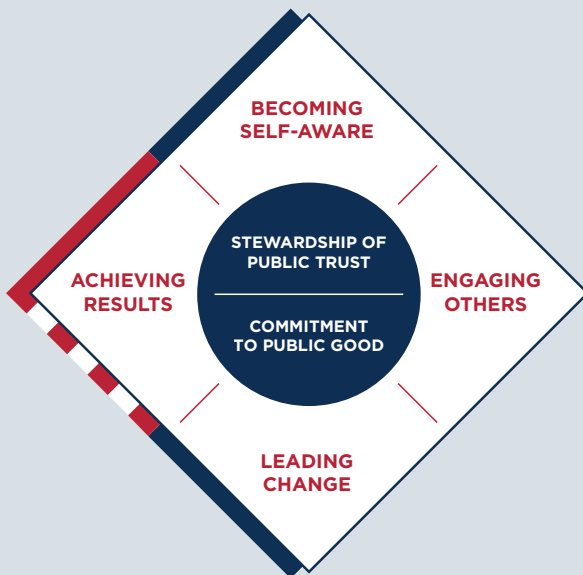
The Foreign Service Institute also should update the curricula of its Leadership and Management School to provide opportunities for political appointees to train alongside—and thereby build trust and good working relationships with—career Senior Executive Service and Senior Foreign Service officers.

3

The department's Leadership and Management Principles (as established in the [Foreign Affairs Manual](#)) should continue to guide a shared language about and to set expectations for current leadership priorities. An up-to-date leadership model can set unifying leadership standards (for political appointees and career staff as well as for the civil and foreign service workforces) and provide the scaffolding for relevant training.

4

Building on Department Efforts: Leadership development for civil and foreign service staff of all levels should include not only classroom-based training but also experiential learning, mentoring, coaching, networking and other opportunities to learn from working through real-life challenges. To that end, the iMentor and Leadership Development Coaching programs should facilitate relationships and opportunities that help staff develop and hone leadership skills.



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Public Service Leadership Model

The Partnership developed the [Public Service Leadership Model](#) as the new standard for effective federal leadership. The model identifies four key leadership competencies that government leaders need to master to best serve our country in the 21st century:

1. Becoming self-aware.
2. Engaging others.
3. Leading change.
4. Achieving results.

Federal leaders can use the model as a guide to steer their growth and make decisions at different stages of their careers. Agencies can use the model as a standard for building and measuring overall leadership effectiveness.

Succession Planning

SHORT TERM

According to the American Academy of Diplomacy, politicization of the department’s leadership undermines the agency’s institutional capacity to protect national interests.⁷⁵

With better succession planning, the department can rebalance the number of career and politically appointed leaders—and address the challenges associated with gaps in institutional knowledge embedded at top levels.

75 The American Academy of Diplomacy, “American Diplomacy at Risk,” April 2015, 15–16. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/38ZadYv>

RECOMMENDATION

Building on its succession planning pilot project, the department should continue to improve Senior Executive Service and Senior Foreign Service succession planning to ensure more career staff, women and people of color have opportunities to rise to senior leadership positions.

IMPACT

A strong SES and SFS succession plan not only can minimize leadership gaps, but also can identify diverse, high-potential candidates and facilitate the elevation of career leaders to senior positions. Career leaders complement the skills and perspectives of political appointees by preserving institutional knowledge and facilitating productive partnerships between the civil and foreign service workforces, among bureaus, and between the department and Congress across multiple administrations. Additionally, greater diversity at the leadership level demonstrates career possibilities for junior staff as well as the department’s commitment to an inclusive institutional culture.

BEST PRACTICES

1 The department should frame succession planning as a leadership responsibility guided by talent management experts.

2 **Building on Department Efforts:** The best practices identified through its pilot SES succession planning project should be implemented so the department can better identify current workforce challenges, forecast attrition risks, assess the sufficiency of existing talent pipelines, and develop strategies to close talent gaps relative to the skills and positions necessary to achieve current and future goals. Such strategies should include cultivating the talents and expertise of existing staff through professional development and growing the capacity of the civil and foreign service workforces through reskilling efforts.

Balancing Political and Career Leadership

The leadership of political appointees—who bring important perspectives and relationships to their roles—is valuable to the department.

Their contributions, however, are enhanced when complemented by the institutional knowledge and stewardship of career staff appointed to top posts. In recent years, an increasing number of political appointees have been serving in senior positions, leaving fewer assistant secretary and undersecretary roles for career staff and raising questions about the politicization of the department. Today, nearly three-quarters of top posts are filled by political appointees, compared to about one-half in 2014 and one-third in 1975. A better balance between political and career leaders would benefit the department and strengthen American diplomacy.

RECOMMENDATION

The department should rebalance the number of political appointees and career leaders.

IMPACT

With a better balance of political appointees and civil and foreign service career staff in leadership positions, the department can benefit from the symbiosis of fresh perspectives and institutional knowledge. Career staff—with their deep expertise and knowledge—are the ballast of the institution, while political appointees help align the agency with the current administration as well as with best practices in the private, academic and nonprofit sectors. Such a partnership between career and political leaders can close trust gaps within the department's workforce and improve its institutional culture, thereby increasing employee engagement and improving organizational performance.

BEST PRACTICES

1 Some of the most senior posts should be reserved for career leaders, including the deputy secretary, the director general of the foreign service and some undersecretary positions.

2 The department should use succession planning to identify the leadership potential of career staff, to facilitate their ascension to top positions, and to increase the number of them serving in politically appointed posts.

Leveraging Workforce Data

SHORT TERM

Because what can be measured can be improved, data collection and analysis must be a central component of any effort to revitalize the department.

The department’s new Center for Analytics—an enterprise-level data and analytics hub designed to support diplomats by synthesizing economic, political and security data—is a model for leveraging data to facilitate agency transformation. Furthermore, with its new chief data officer role, the department has a position primed to lead the data component of a reform effort.

RECOMMENDATION

Data collection and analysis should be prioritized when implementing any of the aforementioned workforce recommendations and best practices.

IMPACT

By making data actionable, the department can better facilitate revitalization efforts. For example, with renewed focus on analyzing data about staff morale, vacancy rates, time-to-hire and diversity of new hires—among other benchmarks—the department can identify areas most in need of attention or assess whether its efforts to strengthen the workforce are effective.

BEST PRACTICES

1 Plans for data collection and analysis should be “baked in” to any effort to revitalize the department—especially efforts to strengthen the talent management life cycle. Data on workforce and leadership diversity are particularly important to track and analyze.

2 **Building on Department Efforts:** The Office of Organization and Talent Analytics should continue to help bureaus understand and constructively respond to employee engagement data reflected in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey and the Partnership’s Best Places to Work rankings. It also should help the department integrate these data into all efforts to revitalize the department as the data can indicate impact while also helping hold leaders accountable.

3

The department should build an easy-to-read talent pipeline dashboard that provides up-to-date data, charts important trends and enables users to make informed decisions. Possible elements of the data dashboard, which could fall under the purview of the new Center for Analytics, are described in an example available in the Partnership's 2020 report, "[A Time for Talent: Improving Federal Recruiting and Hiring.](#)" These elements include:

- **Vacancy rates.** This metric tracks full-time equivalent employees. For the department, it could focus on the civil service, foreign service, Senior Executive Service, Senior Foreign Service and/or specific mission-critical positions.
- **Time to hire.** This metric helps guide efforts to streamline hiring, providing evidence for which process modifications work and which don't.
- **Turnover before one year.** This is an indicator of the quality of hiring as in most cases probationary periods are not completed in less than one year.
- **Percentage of all unfilled job announcements.** This metric not only indicates whether resources have been wasted on preparing and posting unfilled positions, but also whether an agency has met its implicit promise to job seekers—that a job posted on USAJobs is a job worth applying for and will be filled.
- **Hiring manager's satisfaction.** This metric can indicate the efficacy of hiring procedures. It is reflected by the first question of the [Chief Human Capital Officer's Management Hiring Process Satisfaction Survey](#), which is available from the Office of Personnel Management.
- **Effective recruiting.** This metric is a way to understand how a broader range of customers perceive the outcome of recruitment and staffing processes. It can be collected via question #21 of the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey: "My work unit is able to recruit people with the right skills."
- **Percentage of full-time employees under 30.** This metric indicates whether an agency has a sufficient number of younger staff relative to the number of staff approaching retirement.
- **Diversity of new hires.** This metric can help an agency track whether it is hiring staff that reflect the country's diversity. It could account for diversity relative to ethnicity and race, gender, disability, veteran status and more.

Civil Service Excepted Service

LONG TERM

The department's civil service does not have the same workforce flexibilities as the foreign service, a disparity that can turn a distinction between the two workforces into a divide—and that sets the department apart from other national security agencies.

The foreign service's excepted service affords the department greater latitude in how it hires and deploys foreign service officers. It also provides more leeway to foreign service staff to pursue rotational and stretch assignments that facilitate career growth. Civil service staff deserve the additional benefits of excepted service status as well as greater flexibility to pursue new opportunities and better support mission-critical assignments.

CIVIL SERVICE EXCEPTED SERVICE RECOMMENDATION

The department should begin the process of creating a civil service excepted service—which would require legislative changes to Title 5 rules—to improve workforce agility and better align talent to mission. It should design this excepted service so it could be a model for agencies government-wide.

IMPACT

A civil service excepted service built on the foreign service's rank-in-person framework will provide flexibilities for hiring and developing a more agile workforce that is better aligned to mission priorities and needs, foster staff mobility between positions, reduce workforce stagnation, and increase employee engagement and retention rates. With it, the department will benefit from workforce options similar to those already available in other national security agencies.

BEST PRACTICES

- 1** The department should socialize the mission-critical benefits of a civil service excepted service to build support among its workforce and with key stakeholders in Congress in effort to establish the designation.
- 2** The department should propose an excepted service model that addresses existing challenges so as to avoid creating new, unintended problems. For example, the design should incorporate lessons learned from the department's pilot effort to apply Title 50 workforce rules—which provide rank-in-person status and other staffing flexibilities to the intelligence community—in the department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research.
- 3** Elements of the department's proposed civil service excepted service should include rank-in-person status, which would enable supervisors and other leaders to prioritize developing people over managing positions; hiring flexibilities similar to those afforded by the foreign service excepted service, such as hiring in cohorts; and broader job classification and salary ranges that would provide more flexibility in compensation, making salaries comparable to those in the private sector and intelligence community.

Workflow Structures

LONG TERM

Both current staff and former senior leaders said the department’s workflow is inefficient. In part, this is because too many decisions—including those with little impact—rise too high up the chain of command.

According to the Atlantic Council, the department’s review and approval process can include “seven, eight, or more layers.”⁷⁶ Additionally, because of the siloed culture, there are too many redundant processes across the bureaus. Other redundancies exist because new processes accumulate on top of but don’t replace existing procedures. Combined, these dynamics discourage accountability at lower levels—and can dampen innovation and initiative.

Addressing these issues would improve the department’s workflow—as would enhancing internal customer experience related to talent management, IT and the delivery of other mission-support functions.

76 Atlantic Council, “State Department Reform Report,” August 2017, 10. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/33l7O7d>

WORKFLOW STRUCTURES RECOMMENDATION ONE

The workflow should be streamlined by decentering executive authority so decision making occurs more quickly at appropriate levels. The number of bureaucratic layers and silos also should be reduced so as to better facilitate communication, coordination and collaboration, thereby increasing inter-bureau and inter-division trust, accountability and overall staff productivity.

IMPACT

By more broadly distributing executive authority, the department can ensure that decisions do not rise to higher levels of leadership than necessary—which slows workflow, contributes to a culture of “passing the buck” and impedes productivity.

A delayed, decluttered bureaucracy, meanwhile, can increase staff morale, process efficiency and overall agility.

BEST PRACTICES

1

Leadership and decision-making layers should be condensed by consolidating or eliminating non-essential functions, by pushing decision-making responsibility down to the right level, and by breaking down the barriers of silos by fostering inter-bureau and interservice collaboration and/or by undertaking organizational redesign.

2

To improve workflow and management, the implementation of policies and practices should be standardized across bureaus.

3

The department should encourage the use of strategies and tools—such as RACI charts, which are project-management visualizations illustrating who is responsible, accountable, consulted and informed—that facilitate effective management, decision making and accountability.

WORKFLOW STRUCTURES RECOMMENDATION TWO

A chief customer experience officer position reporting to the undersecretary for management should be created. The department also should elevate customer experience experts to management positions while it cultivates related expertise among existing agency managers. (The Partnership's website includes a [suite of CX resources](#) that may be helpful.)

IMPACT

A chief customer experience officer and greater customer experience expertise at the management level would help ingrain a customer service mindset among the civil and foreign service workforces, which can increase employee engagement and organizational performance. In particular, internal customer experience—focused on IT management, talent management and other critical mission-support functions—can better ease bottlenecks, facilitate effective cross-team collaborations and ultimately increase productivity.

BEST PRACTICES

1

An agency-wide customer experience strategy tied to the mission should be developed. The strategy should set benchmarks and make clear how improving internal and external customer experience can increase organizational performance as well as improve staff morale and institutional culture.

2

Building on Department Efforts: The customer experience expertise of the department's global talent management team should be leveraged to further encourage staff, managers and top leaders throughout the civil and foreign services—especially those responsible for mission-support services—to adopt a customer-focused mindset, take action to understand customers' perspectives and strategically partner with internal customers.

3

Building on Department Efforts: Customer experience performance measures should be implemented to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of internal and external service delivery. The department should use evaluation practices in effort to better collect customer experience data that can be leveraged to improve delivery of mission-support services.

4

The department should cultivate customer experience expertise among mid-level civil service staff by providing relevant professional development and by encouraging them to participate in the [CXO Fellowship Program](#) run by the General Services Administration and the Office of Management and Budget. The free program helps develop customer experience leaders by convening up to 100 civil servants from across the federal government for group coaching, agency visits, networking and other professional development opportunities. It is open to GS-09 to GS-13 civil servants who work in human capital, acquisition, finance or IT.

Making the Changes Stick

Through its work with federal agencies, the Partnership has found common management challenges that hinder mission performance, including some that are deep-rooted and difficult to overcome. Federal leaders have initiated targeted or agency-wide transformation efforts to tackle such challenges, and some have produced meaningful benefits. Other efforts, however, have fallen short due to the difficulties of implementing new policies and practices as well as the challenges of making the changes stick.

Good change management strategies can help the department effectively address the challenges described in this report. There are a number of ways to guide the successful implementation of the workforce and management recommendations, best practices and other desired changes—and to ensure the benefits of the resulting improvements are long-lasting.



Relentless focus on mission is paramount. Change is disruptive and has the potential to cause real distractions from the department’s core mission. It is essential that leaders at all levels play a role in maintaining team focus on the agency’s critical mission throughout the period of change. Leaders should be able to consistently articulate a clear vision for change, what it entails and how it supports the mission.



Support and engagement from top leadership is essential. Senior leaders—including the secretary of state, deputy secretaries and undersecretaries—must invest significant time in communicating the vision, setting clear expectations, and visibly promoting and modeling the changes throughout the organization. Leader-led change isn’t limited to buy-in from the top—ownership and commitment are essential and must cascade down throughout the leadership ranks. Teams look to their leaders and seek answers during times of uncertainty, and leaders should be prepared and equipped to provide informed and consistent responses to initial reactions and questions as they arise. It also is important to identify top influencers within an organization and enlist their help in both formal and informal ways.



Necessary steps must be taken to prepare the playing field. Prior to rolling out the changes, it is important to set the conditions for success by spending time ensuring that agency leaders and key stakeholders—including those in the White House, Congress, the Office of Personnel Management, foreign policy-focused nonprofits and the media—understand what changes are being enacted and why. This also will help make any change-related tumult easier to manage inside the building and along the way. Leaders should be able to predict reactions from key stakeholders and proactively address any issues to ensure support, speed and results are not at risk.



Change management is a full-time job. The teams responsible for assessing and implementing the change should include leaders from throughout the agency who can focus full-time on the effort. It is best to appoint a diverse group of leaders whom employees respect and who can bring an enterprise mindset, putting mission and

organization above bureau-, office- or unit-specific interests. It's also important that employees feel that they are represented in the room, which will help build trust and support for the changes. Because trusted career leaders may be exceptional in their professional disciplines but may not have change management experience, it's important to assign, hire or contract the right expertise to help guide the effort if necessary. This additional assistance, for example, could focus on developing a change management plan, identifying best practices and helping guide their implementation.



Data is necessary to assess, validate and prioritize organizational needs. Before committing to the significant change effort, change managers should speak with senior leaders to gather their insights and support. They should consult with leaders from both inside and outside the agency as external perspectives can be just as valuable. Also, they should meticulously gather additional inputs from the workforce across disciplines and ranks. Agency staff know firsthand what needs to get fixed most urgently.



Manage change systematically and with care. Taking a systematic approach to effectively managing change is critical. It is important to create opportunities for small, meaningful changes by addressing the low-hanging fruit. This will produce some quick wins and can help bring the workforce along. This also will help build early momentum without putting too much pressure on limited resources. And it will enable learning from early successes and failures. Change managers also should continually assess progress along the way and make adjustments as needed. It's important to monitor the progress of agency transformation initiatives throughout as sustaining change requires vigilant leadership.



Patience and flexibility are key. Organizational change can be time consuming, and most efforts don't succeed or go as planned. When implementing significant organizational change, about 20% of the workforce will accept it and be eager to help; another 20% will resist it no matter what; and the remaining 60% will listen and decide over time how to respond. This is just people being people. As a result, it's important to understand who represents or influences the dominant culture in the agency, as they can often be the most resistant to change. It's also important to include members of the workforce in the change process, to garner their support, and to celebrate their wins, ideas and efforts.



Stay connected and clearly communicate with the workforce. It's important to understand the potential impact that these changes may have on the workforce. Communication should be well timed, coordinated and consistent. It's essential to be up front about what changes are being made and why—as well as how they will impact employees. When communicating updates, be brief and use plain language. Consider sharing the most significant updates in person whenever possible to field questions and provide clarity. Stay connected with the workforce through discussions and other simple feedback channels. Themes and questions will emerge and can be addressed. This will help change managers assess the effectiveness of their communication and make adjustments and improvements along the way as necessary.

Leading a large, complex effort to effect organizational change and enhance the department's performance will be challenging. But it also will be one of the most important and valuable contributions that can be made to strengthen the workforce and cultivate the next generation of leaders, ensuring they can more effectively deliver on mission and reassert the role of diplomacy on the frontlines of America's foreign policy and national security.

Conclusion

There are many challenges facing the department that impede optimal performance and distract from its essential responsibility to ensure that diplomacy is the primary driver of American foreign policy and national security. There have been many initiatives during the past three decades to overcome the management and talent challenges and to bring about reform. Despite good intentions and ideas, these efforts have not yielded lasting results, and many of the department's operational problems following the end of the Cold War persist today.

Nonetheless, the goal of strengthening the department remains vitally important and widely shared within the agency and among the broader foreign policy and national security communities. The setbacks of previous revitalization efforts should not deter future transformation initiatives. Indeed, they highlight the opportunities for enduring improvements.

To lay the foundation for a larger reform effort, the department should initially focus on implementing

practical but meaningful improvements within 6-12 months in order to gain the crucial support of its civil and foreign services, the White House and Congress. It also should build on the recent good work of the undersecretary for management, the Bureau of Global Talent Management and its other management bureaus and offices that complements agency reform.

The recommendations and related best practices included in this report focus on the talent management life cycle as a means to bolster the civil and foreign service workforces and create momentum for larger agency revitalization. Supporting this agenda are four overarching operating goals that can guide the implementation of the recommendations and best practices as well as the report's principles for managing change and ensuring it is sustained.

Appendix I

Best Places to Work Category Scores

As part of the [Best Places to Work in the Federal Government®](#) rankings, the Partnership and Boston Consulting Group measure views on 10 aspects of the employee experience and provide a government-wide score and individual agency scores for those specific issues. The workplace categories are effective leadership, employee skills-mission match, satisfaction with pay, strategic management, teamwork, innovation, training and development, work-life balance, leadership’s support for diversity and how employees are recognized for performance. The effective leadership category encompasses four leadership subcategories: empowerment, fairness, senior leaders and supervisors.

Below are the [workplace category scores for the State Department since 2003](#), when the Best Places to Work rankings began. The scores are color-coded to illustrate how they compare to those of other large federal agencies.

Category	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2007	2005	2003
Effective Leadership	55.7	55.4	56.1	58.2	57.8	57.8	57.2	59.5	61.0	61.1	60.3	56.9	58.7	49.2
Effective Leadership: Empowerment	50.1	49.3	52.1	52.0	51.6	51.2	50.3	52.5	55.0	54.8	56.9	52.6	51.7	37.7
Effective Leadership: Fairness	55.4	56.8	58.3	58.0	56.4	56.7	55.5	57.3	58.9	57.6	55.4	49.6	49.8	51.1
Effective Leadership: Senior Leaders	44.8	43.9	42.9	52.1	51.3	51.1	51.5	55.1	56.9	55.9	53.4	51.7	57.0	45.6
Effective Leadership: Supervisors	69.5	69.2	70.2	67.4	68.1	68.3	67.3	68.4	69.1	71.4	71.4	67.9	68.4	57.6
Employee-Skills Mission Match	77.6	77.8	78.7	77.5	77.9	78.5	77.0	78.9	80.3	80.6	80.2	78.9	76.8	76.1
Pay	62.8	61.2	63.0	64.8	60.6	62.9	55.9	62.1	65.8	71.2	59.5	64.0		
Strategic Management	60.3	59.9	60.1	59.4	59.4	59.2	59.4	60.9	63.2	61.7	62.3	59.0	60.6	57.8
Teamwork	70.6	70.9	72.6	69.1	70.1	69.5	69.7	70.3	71.8	70.6	77.0	74.3	74.6	67.6
Innovation	65.6	65.1	67.1	65.9	66.1	65.9	65.4	67.6	68.4	67.7				
Training and Development	59.2	59.0	60.5	60.8	60.6	61.5	59.6	62.0	63.3	64.7	63.2	60.9	61.5	48.9
Work-Life Balance	56.7	57.6	59.4	59.5	60.1	60.5	59.3	60.0	59.9	61.3	62.2	61.4	65.7	61.9
Support for Diversity	59.7	60.0	63.2	59.8	60.6	60.9	60.4	61.4	63.5	63.6	65.3	64.7	64.7	62.9
Performance-Based Rewards and Advancement	49.7	48.9	50.9	49.6	49.6	50.3	48.4	51.5	52.2	52.4	52.8	51.2	48.8	43.1



Category Definitions

- The [Effective Leadership](#) category measures the extent to which employees believe leadership at all levels of the organization generates motivation and commitment, encourages integrity and manages people fairly, while also promoting the professional development, creativity and empowerment of employees.
- The [Effective Leadership: Empowerment](#) subcategory measures the extent to which employees feel empowered with respect to work processes and how satisfied they are with their involvement in decisions that affect their work.
- The [Effective Leadership: Fairness](#) subcategory measures the extent to which employees believe disputes are resolved fairly in their work units, whether employees believe arbitrary action and personal favoritism are tolerated and if employees feel comfortable reporting illegal activity without fear of reprisal.
- The [Effective Leadership: Senior Leaders](#) subcategory measures the level of respect employees have for senior leaders, satisfaction with the amount of information provided by management and perceptions about senior leaders' honesty, integrity and ability to motivate employees.
- The [Effective Leadership: Supervisors](#) subcategory measures employee opinions about their immediate supervisor's job performance, how well supervisors give employees the opportunity to demonstrate leadership skills and the extent to which employees feel supervisors support employee development and provide worthwhile feedback about job performance.
- The [Employee Skill-Mission Match](#) category measures the extent to which employees feel that their skills and talents are used effectively. Furthermore, it assesses the level to which employees get satisfaction from their work and understand how their jobs are relevant to the organizational mission.
- The [Pay](#) category measures how satisfied employees are with their compensation.
- The [Strategic Management](#) category measures the extent to which employees believe that management ensures they have the necessary skills and abilities to do their jobs, is successful at hiring new employees with the necessary skills to help the organization and works to achieve the organizational goals with targeted personnel strategies and performance management.
- The [Teamwork](#) category measures the extent to which employees believe they communicate effectively both inside and outside their team organizations, creating a friendly work atmosphere and producing high-quality work products.
- The [Innovation](#) category measures employee perceptions of efforts to improve the way work is done, including their own personal motivation to promote change and the support and rewards they receive for promoting new ideas.
- The [Training and Development](#) category measures the extent to which employees believe their development needs are assessed and appropriate training is offered, allowing them to do their jobs effectively and improve their skills.
- The [Work-Life Balance](#) category measures the extent to which employees consider their workloads reasonable and feasible, and managers support a balance between work and life.
- The [Support for Diversity](#) category measures the extent to which employees believe that actions and policies of leadership and management promote and respect diversity.
- The [Performance-Based Rewards and Advancement](#) category measures the extent to which employees feel they are rewarded and promoted in a fair and timely manner for their performance and innovative contributions to their workplaces.

Appendix II

Acknowledgments

This report was based on extensive research, including a broad literature review as well as interviews with current civil and foreign service staff. All interviews were conducted on a not-for-attribution basis in effort to encourage candidacy about the challenges the department faces and possibilities for overcoming them. While the report does not specifically cite contributors, the Partnership appreciates their time, counsel and contribution to this study.

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The contents of this report do not necessarily reflect the views of those with whom we spoke. Additionally, the views of participating federal officials do not necessarily reflect positions or policies of the federal government or its agencies.

Appendix III

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