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United States General Accounting Office Washington, D.C. 20548

General Government Division

B-247608.1

May 12, 1992

The Honorable William J. Hughes
Chairman, Subcommittee on Intellectual
Property and Judicial Administration
Committee on the Judiciary
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This report responds to the Subcommittee's request regarding the Bureau of Prisons' (BOP) ability to staff an unprecedented number of new and existing facilities. BOP projects that its inmate population should increase from about 60,000 in January 1991 to more than 98,800 by 1995. BOP plans to open 47 new facilities and expand 16 existing facilities between 1992 and 1995 to accommodate projected increases in its inmate population. The Subcommittee asked GAO to (1) ascertain recruiting results and whether difficulties exist in filling correctional officer, specialty, and technical positions; (2) determine whether BOP's practice of filling its management positions through internal promotions and lateral transfers will enable it to successfully fill future management positions; and (3) determine whether BOP's training plans will enable the agency to meet future training needs.

Results in Brief

BOP is building and expanding prisons at an unprecedented rate to accommodate substantial increases in the federal inmate population. To house more than 98,800 inmates by 1995, BOP plans to increase its institutions by about 70 percent from 68 in 1991 to 115 institutions by 1995. This expansion will require BOP to recruit large numbers of staff to operate new and existing facilities, while maintaining desired inmate-to-staff ratios. BOP's staffing levels almost doubled from about 12,000 to 22,000 between fiscal years 1986 and 1991 and are expected to almost double again from 22,000 to about 40,000 between fiscal years 1992

¹According to BOP's budget plans as of May 1991, 6 new facilities are to be opened in 1992, 13 in 1993, 14 in 1994, and 14 in 1995, for a total of 47 new prison facilities. The 16 expansion efforts include 6 expansions in 1992, 9 in 1993, and 1 in 1994.

²Specialty positions include professional and trade occupations, such as doctor, nurse, teacher, carpenter, and electrician. Technical positions include occupations, such as personnel specialist, employee development specialist, and recreation specialist.

³During a meeting to obtain agency comments, BOP told us that the estimates for institutions opening between 1992 and 1995 have been revised and fewer institutions are planned to open during the 4-year period. The total number of facilities expected to open by 1995 is estimated at 98 institutions in BOP's fiscal year 1993 budget. We did not revise the projections used in this report because the actual numbers are not relevant to the report message and recommendations.

and 1995. About 900 (or 6 percent) of the 16,000 new positions are expected to be for mid- and upper-level managers.

BOP has been generally successful in meeting its overall recruitment goals and staffing the seven facilities it opened in fiscal years 1990 and 1991. In fiscal year 1990, BOP had employees in 97 percent of its authorized positions, and staffing for its 35 major occupational categories ranged from 82 percent to 128 percent. These results met BOP's recruitment goals of filling 95 percent of all available positions and no less than 80 percent in any one occupation.

In fiscal year 1991 BOP had met its staffing goal of filling 95 percent of its authorized positions at institutions before it began establishing new positions that were funded for the second half of fiscal year 1991. However, as of the end of fiscal year 1991, BOP had employees in 91 percent of the authorized positions, and its staffing for its major occupational series ranged from 29 percent to 108 percent. BOP officials attributed the shortfall to (1) budget appropriations that funded over 4,000 new positions for half a year, thus preventing BOP from beginning to fill the positions until the second half of the fiscal year and (2) budgetary decisions to delay filling some positions until the fourth quarter to fund pay increases.

This early success notwithstanding, BOP faces a major challenge to recruit almost 16,000 new employees between 1992 and 1995 and to staff 13 institutions in fiscal year 1993 and 14 new institutions in each fiscal year for 1994 and 1995. BOP identified recruiting employees to staff new facilities as a high-risk area under the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act (FMFIA). If BOP is unable to adequately staff prisons, its ability to succeed in its massive expansion program could be jeopardized. Inadequate staffing can also result in compromising prison security and increasing overtime costs dramatically. To be better prepared to target recruitment efforts and meet its staffing challenge, BOP should take certain actions now to improve its information systems for managing human resources.

For example, BOP has a policy of filling prison department-level management positions primarily through internal promotions and lateral transfers. However, BOP has not used forecasting to determine whether it can expect to have a sufficient number of internal staff who could be eligible to meet future mid-level management requirements. To address this situation, we developed a forecasting model that analyzed 7 out of 18

prison management positions to determine whether BOP could expect to have a sufficient number of eligible internal staff to fill its anticipated needs. Our analysis showed that BOP could have difficulty filling its department head positions from 1992 through 1995. Furthermore, BOP's management planning efforts have not included identifying eligible internal staff who might fill these positions.

In addition, BOP plans to fill certain technical positions by encouraging current employees to develop the career plans and skills needed to qualify for these positions. However, BOP does not know whether employees are planning and taking steps to prepare themselves for careers that will meet BOP's anticipated needs.

BOP recently began to offer new training courses, but it is too soon to tell whether these courses will provide future BOP managers with the skills needed to quickly assume increased responsibilities. In addition, while BOP has been and continues to be in the process of obtaining additional training space, it has not yet analyzed all the specific space requirements (e.g., housing, firing ranges, classrooms) needed to accommodate the thousands of new students over the next 4 years.

Background

Traditionally, BOP's policy has been to direct recruiting efforts toward filling entry-level positions, which are nonsupervisory and nonmanagement positions. Supervisory technical and management positions have been filled primarily through promotions or lateral transfers of current BOP employees.⁴ Over the past few years, in anticipation of future growth needs, BOP has taken steps to enhance its recruiting efforts. These steps included the following:

- In 1987, BOP created the National Recruitment Office (NRO) and in 1989 and 1990, created six regional office recruitment positions to develop strategies and coordinate recruitment efforts with institution recruiters.
- In 1988, BOP created the Health Services Recruitment section. This section
 has developed recruitment strategies, carried out recruitment activities,
 coordinated recruitment efforts with regional offices and institutions, and
 monitored vacancies for all medical positions,
- Between 1989 and 1991, BOP undertook a recruitment campaign that included advertising in nationwide magazines and newspapers, visiting college campuses, and participating in local job fairs. BOP is encouraging

⁴Management positions at prison facilities include warden, associate warden, camp superintendent, assistant camp superintendent, jail and camp administrator, executive assistant, and department head.

- high-level management involvement in recruitment activities. These efforts have helped to substantially increase the number of applicants on BOP selection rosters (almost fourfold).
- BOP is also coordinating with the Department of Defense to take advantage of its outplacement programs, place advertisements in military magazines and newspapers, and conduct job fairs at military bases. According to the Chief of NRO, BOP does not know the extent to which applications have been received through these sources, but in a BOP survey given to job applicants, about 8 percent of the applicants responded that they heard about BOP job opportunities through military placement centers. BOP officials consider the military a good source for BOP recruitment.

BOP's training plans are essentially aimed at addressing two concerns. The first is developing the skills of current staff at an accelerated pace to meet the anticipated demand for managers and technical staff in the mid-1990s. In the past, BOP developed staff skills through on-the-job training, supplemented with some formal training. However, BOP recognizes that the unprecedented growth it anticipates over the next several years will not allow it the luxury of slowly developing the skills of its staff through work experience. In response to this need for skilled staff, BOP has established several training initiatives aimed at developing staff for management and technical positions.

The second concern is having enough space to provide training to an increasing number of employees. BOP provides its introduction to correctional techniques training to all new employees at its Staff Training Academy (STA), which is located at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Glynco, Georgia. BOP's management and specialty training courses are taught at STA, the Food Management, National Trust Fund, and Paralegal Training Centers in Texas and at the Management and Specialty Training Center (MSTC) in Colorado. The majority of BOP's employee training is conducted at the correctional institutions.

Approach

We used a multifaceted approach to address our objectives. To evaluate recruiting initiatives and results and assess the difficulties of filling correctional officer, specialty, and technical positions, we reviewed and analyzed BOP personnel reports and interviewed BOP recruitment officials

⁵The Department of Defense has a centralized program called the Defense Outplacement Referral System, which is located at the Defense Data Support Center in Dayton, Ohio. This central outplacement program provides assistance to military and civilian employees affected by reductions-in-force, base closures, consolidations, and other management actions. In addition, the military has about 350 placement centers throughout the nation to assist military personnel.

and prison managers. To determine if BOP's training plans will enable it to meet future training needs, we reviewed training plans and documents and interviewed BOP training officials. In addition, we used BOP's central personnel and training databases to analyze staffing levels and employee training hours. We did not assess the skills and abilities of employees hired or promoted by BOP, nor did we evaluate the quality of BOP's training courses.

To determine if Bop's practice of filling its management positions through internal promotions and lateral transfers would enable it to meet future needs, we developed a model to compare estimated future management requirements with a potential pool of staff from within BOP that could fill those positions. The model is discussed in greater detail in appendix II. Simply put, we estimated future requirements using BOP's staffing guidelines and its budget information on facilities that it planned to open through 1995. To estimate a potential pool of eligible staff, we identified current employees through the Department of Justice (DOJ) operating personnel and pay system database, reviewed job descriptions and job announcements, and interviewed agency officials.

In developing the model we made several assumptions in areas such as promotion rates, time-in-grade, retirement, and occupational paths. Some of our assumptions, such as that an employee could be promoted after meeting the minimum federal government requirement of one year in grade, provide for maximizing the number of staff available to fill a position. Other assumptions, such as that employees would remain in their respective occupational series and not migrate to other occupations, could restrict the number of staff available to fill a position.

We also based our analysis on a department head position being filled at a particular grade level. We selected the grade level based on information provided by BOP officials as to the grade level most common for the positions.

We did our work at BOP headquarters in Washington, D.C.; the Southeast Regional Office in Atlanta; STA; MSTC; and the Federal Correctional Institutions (FCI) at Jesup, Georgia; Marianna, Florida; and Fairton, New Jersey. The FCIs were judgmentally selected from the new facilities opened between 1988 and 1991 that had to recruit and train staff. STA and MSTC were selected because they are BOP's major training centers. We did our work between July 1990 and November 1991 in accordance with generally

accepted government auditing standards. (A detailed description of our objectives, scope, and methodology is in app. I.)

BOP Has Generally Met Its Recruitment Staffing Goals but Staffing New Facilities Could Pose a Challenge At the end of fiscal year 1990, BOP had employees in 16,267, or about 97 percent, of the 16,682 authorized positions at its institutions, and staffing for its 35 major occupational series ranged from 82 percent to 128 percent. These results met BOP's recruitment goals of staffing 95 percent of all available positions and no less than 80 percent in any one occupation.

In June 1991, BOP had employees in 17,923, or about 95 percent, of the 19,280 authorized positions at institutions. However, at the end of fiscal year 1991, BOP had employees in 17,922, or about 91 percent, of 19,648 authorized positions at its institutions, and staffing for several of its major occupational series fell below the 80-percent goal—29 percent for clerk typist and other service positions, 59 percent for nurses, and 66 percent for medical officers. (Apps. III and IV provide more details on staffing levels for institutions and occupations.)

BOP officials told us that positions were vacant for two reasons. First, 4,000 new positions were funded for half a year, thus preventing BOP from beginning to fill the positions until the second half of the fiscal year. Second, some positions were not established until the fourth quarter in order to have funds for pay increases. Because it usually takes 3 to 4 months to fill a position, some vacancies existed at the end of the fiscal year.

While it has been generally successful over the last two years in meeting its recruitment goals, BOP anticipates it will need to recruit almost 16,000 new employees between 1992 and 1995, staff 13 institutions in fiscal year 1993, and staff 14 new institutions in each fiscal year for 1994 and 1995. With this kind of anticipated growth, recruiting employees to staff new facilities could become more difficult. In 1990, the National Advisory Commission on Law Enforcement reported that entry-level and special skills recruiting were difficult for law enforcement agencies. The commission found that recruiting problems were attributable to low entry-level federal pay when compared to state and local law enforcement agencies. It also found that low pay was a recruiting problem in certain high-cost locations. BOP officials have expressed similar concerns regarding recruiting for certain BOP positions because of their perceptions that BOP cannot offer competitive salaries; is not competitive with other

⁶Report of the National Advisory Commission on Law Enforcement (OCG-90-2, Apr. 25, 1990).

federal, state, and local agencies; and is unable to attract employees to high-cost living areas. Legislation that took effect in January 1992 addresses the disparity in pay for federal law enforcement workers.⁷ Therefore, it is too early to tell the extent to which pay reform will enhance BOP recruitment.

BOP experienced particular difficulty filling specialty positions at some institutions and expects similar difficulties in the future. For example, at the Fairton, New Jersey FCI, the positions of dental assistant, assistant supervisor of education, education counselor, and psychologist were vacant for a year or more. Other positions that were vacant for longer than 6 months but under a year included food service administration trainee, laundry manager, laundry specialist, teacher, assistant recreation supervisor, paralegal, maintenance worker foreman, carpenter foreman, and utilities foreman. At the Marianna, Florida FCI, an assistant recreation supervisor position and a teacher position were vacant for 10 and 15 months, respectively.

BOP Should Assess the Need to Increase Recruitment of Experienced Staff From External Sources BOP's policy has been to fill management and supervisory technical positions through internal promotions and lateral transfers of current employees. BOP would like to continue this policy. However, BOP has not developed the information needed to assess whether it can expect to have a sufficient number of eligible internal staff to fill these positions.

On the basis of BOP's plans for opening new facilities and its staffing guidelines, we estimated that BOP would need to fill a total of 931 new management positions over the next 4 years. Of these positions, we estimated that 754 or 81 percent of them would be at the General Schedule (GS) GS-12 and General Management (GM) GM-13 department head level. (App. V shows the types and numbers of positions that need to be filled from fiscal years 1992 through 1995.)

BOP's policy has been to fill prison management positions (i.e., GS-12 and above) almost exclusively through internal promotions and lateral transfers. However, under certain circumstances, BOP has hired some midand upper-level employees in specialty fields on an exception basis. BOP officials believe that by increasing promotion rates and improving training they should have enough eligible internal staff to fill management positions. BOP has not used forecasting to determine whether it can expect to have a sufficient number of eligible staff within BOP to fill future

⁷5 U.S.C. 5305 note.

department head level positions. In addition, BOP has focused its management planning efforts on generally identifying individuals at the GS-12 and above level who have the potential to fill upper level management positions (i.e., GM-13 and above). Yet, our analysis shows that most of BOP's new management positions will be at the GS-12 department head level and that this level is where BOP is most likely to have a shortfall of eligible internal staff.

Traditionally, BOP has also filled supervisory technical positions through internal staffing using career planning and would like to continue this policy. However, BOP has not used past trends to develop information to assess the number of employees that could be expected to move into different technical positions.

BOP May Not Be Able to Fill Its Mid-Level Management Positions Through Internal Recruitment

We analyzed 7 out of 18 prison management positions to determine if BOP could fill anticipated needs internally in fiscal years 1992 through 1995. We found that if past promotion rates do not increase and if only current employees are considered, BOP could have difficulty filling department head positions. Table 1 shows potential shortfalls of eligible staff to fill five department head positions. Using past promotion rates for individual departments, all five department head positions in our analysis showed a potential for having a shortfall of a sufficient number of incumbents and eligible candidates to fill the estimated number of positions needed in fiscal years 1992 through 1995. Using BOP's overall promotion rates—which are less sensitive to fluctuations because they include a larger universe of employees than the individual departments—the psychology and food service department head positions may have a shortfall of eligible internal staff over the next four years. The supervisor of education position shows a potential shortfall in 1994 and 1995.

By increasing promotions or increasing external recruitments, BOP can address its potential shortfall of managers. However, BOP officials prefer to increase promotion rates and fill the positions through internal staffing. BOP could vary the increases in promotion rates at different grade levels, which would result in it having a sufficient number of people to fill the positions. For example, if BOP only increases the promotion rate into the food service department head position and does not change other promotion rates, the promotion rate from GS-11 to GS-12 would need to

⁶The promotion rate is based on a weighted average of employee promotions from 1987 to 1988, 1988 to 1989, and 1989 to 1990 with the last time period receiving double weight. See appendix II for more details on the calculation of the rate.

increase 72 percent (from 25 percent to at least 43 percent) to have a sufficient number of eligible staff to fill the positions over the next 4 years.

BOP may want to assess the various promotion rates that would result in achieving a sufficient number of eligible internal staff. Such information could assist BOP decisionmaking on the extent to which promotion rates might need to increase to meet the new requirements with internal staff. It could also assist BOP officials in deciding whether promoting from within is feasible or whether BOP should consider increasing external recruitment for these positions.

Our analysis did not show a shortfall of eligible staff to fill the warden and associate warden positions over the next four years. In addition, for the chief of psychology position, BOP routinely uses external recruitment at the Gs-12 level and above to fill these positions. This factor is not reflected in our model. However, since psychologist positions are considered difficult-to-fill, external recruitment for these positions may need special emphasis.

Position	1992	1993	1994	1995
Chief of Psychology				
Positions needed ^a	68	80	91	103
Eligible staff using BOP promotion rates ^b	32	29	28	27
Eligible staff using department level promotion rates	36	36	41	46
Food Service Administrator				
Positions needed ^a	71	84	98	112
Eligible staff using BOP promotion rates ^b	50	59	69	76
Eligible staff using department level promotion rates	55	70	84	96
Supervisor of Education				
Positions needed ^a	69	82	96	110
Eligible staff using BOP promotion rates ^b	69	83	91	92
Eligible staff using department level promotion rateso	54	61	71	78
Chief Correctional Supervisor		:		
Positions needed ^a	74	87	101	115
Eligible staff using BOP promotion rates ^b	108	192	286	387
Eligible staff using department level promotion rateso	49	62	77	96
Health Service Administrator		1		
Positions needed ^a	67	80	94	108
Eligible staff using BOP promotion rates ^b	124	172	195	202
Eligible staff using department level promotion rates	55	64	69	73

*Reflects the total number of positions in each fiscal year for existing facilities, expansion facilities, and new facilities.

bincludes all current employees in BOP who, given the assumptions of the model, would be expected to be at the specified grade level for the position accounting for incumbents, promotions, and retirements. See appendix II.

^oDepartment level promotion rates for these positions were based on calculations using a small universe of employees in the particular occupational series.

Source: GAO analysis based on BOP data.

Modeling Would Be a Useful Tool for BOP

A forecasting model that evaluates BOP's ability to meet its future management needs would indicate how well BOP is accomplishing its staffing objectives, provide information to identify problem areas, and provide data for improving the decisionmaking process. As demonstrated by our analysis, modeling could also provide BOP with information on the

prospect of filling management positions internally and help target outside recruitment efforts.

Our analysis of 7 out of 18 prison management positions found that BOP could potentially have problems filling department head positions. For example, our analysis might indicate a need to hire more experienced psychologists or food service administrators at higher grade levels who might be better qualified to manage a department in a shorter period of time than in the past. A model could be modified to consider various assumptions (such as promotion rates), be expanded to include the 11 prison management positions that we did not analyze, and be used to assess internal staffing of technical positions.

BOP Needs to Continue Monitoring the Effects of Increasing Promotion Rates

BOP's Director expressed concern that the agency's rapid growth will cause BOP to accelerate promotions and career development activity beyond comfort levels, placing staff with 3 or 4 years of experience in charge of departments. BOP believes that it can overcome the lack of job experience of its managers through formal training, but it is too soon to determine whether the new training initiatives will provide new managers with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to assume increased responsibilities. If training courses are unable to compensate for what had been gained through years of on-the-job training, faster promotions could lead to staff in management positions who lack the experience to handle the increased responsibilities.

BOP officials did not know the extent to which employees were being promoted faster than in the past. We did not calculate the number of employees who have been promoted at an accelerated rate, nor did we attempt to evaluate whether there have been any negative effects from promoting less experienced staff faster. However, BOP monitors the effectiveness of institutional performance through various internal audits that identify problem areas. In September 1990, an internal audit analysis by the Food Service program revealed that two regional offices cited that inexperienced food service administrators who had been promoted rapidly were having difficulties performing some of their duties.

As BOP accelerates promotions, it should continue to obtain information on the ability of new managers to assume increased responsibilities. This information can aid BOP to assess whether increasing promotions is the best way to meet increased needs or if other actions should be considered.

Training Plans Need to Be Assessed

BOP's training plans are aimed at developing the skills of staff. BOP established specific initiatives to develop staff for management and technical positions and believes that it can meet its future management and technical staffing needs through enhanced training efforts. However, it is too soon to determine whether the new training initiatives will result in staff having the acceptable level of knowledge, skills, and abilities that will enable them to take on new positions.

BOP established three major training courses to enhance mid- and upper-level managerial skills, given that lengthy on-the-job training would not be possible. One is a self-paced cross-development course that provides managers with information about departments other than their own, so that they have a better understanding of the institution operations. The second course is designed specifically to prepare new associate wardens for their job responsibilities. The third is designed to prepare new department heads for their new positions.

We found that (1) lower grade level employees were utilizing the cross-development training course more than mid- and upper-level managers, (2) the associate warden training course is being revised, and (3) the department head training course was only recently offered to staff in the spring and fall of 1991. In June 1991, BOP drafted training standards to require all new associate wardens and managers, grades GM-13 and above, to take a specified number of cross-development training courses.

Because these training initiatives are new and have not been fully implemented, BOP has not had sufficient time to measure their effectiveness and determine whether employees are acquiring the skills that were previously obtained through on-the-job training. BOP is developing an evaluation methodology to measure the effectiveness of training initiatives.

As mentioned earlier, BOP has traditionally filled supervisory technical positions through internal promotions and lateral moves using career planning methods and would like to continue this policy. As part of its 1991 annual training, BOP implemented an enhanced career development program with specific guidelines for assisting line staff to prepare for various technical positions. The BOP official responsible for staff development said that the program was fully implemented and that training managers were available to meet with staff to discuss and develop career plans. BOP recently provided training managers with a database system to aid in the development of career plans. This system should also

enable BOP to track employee participation in the program. BOP needs to use this system to assess whether or how many of its employees are taking advantage of the program. Furthermore, BOP should assess whether employees who have developed career plans are obtaining the necessary training and experience and whether training and developmental experiences can be completed in time to meet staffing demands.

We did not determine whether the space BOP is acquiring for its training programs will meet its long-term needs. At the time of our review, BOP had not finalized arrangements for increasing its training centers. In addition, BOP's space requirements are computed annually, based on the number of students that must be trained in the most current training year and are not computed for future years. Thus, we did not have available BOP estimates of space requirements for students in fiscal years 1992 through 1995.

In fiscal year 1991, BOP training centers provided training to 9,205 students, a 26-percent increase from fiscal year 1990. BOP projects its training requirements in fiscal years 1992 through 1995 should escalate to 11,290, 14,177, 15,695, and 15,116 students, respectively. BOP is obtaining additional space for training the increasing number of students, but it has not performed analyses or studies to determine how much space it will actually need over the next 4 years. Nevertheless, BOP officials are optimistic that it will be able to meet the increased training demands.

BOP plans to increase STA's entry-level training capacity at FLETC by working with the Director at FLETC to make better use of available facilities. These plans include coordinating classroom schedules with other agencies at the center and using other FLETC sites for BOP training. In addition, BOP expects to share in FLETC's renovations. These renovations will expand classroom, housing, physical techniques, and firing range facilities. However, the majority of FLETC's renovations will not be completed until 1995 and 1996—too late to meet BOP's increased student training needs in 1993 through 1995. BOP provided training to about 5,234 students in fiscal year 1991 at STA and estimates that it will need to train 6,720 students in fiscal year 1992. However, prior to completion of FLETC expansion efforts, BOP estimates its training needs at STA should increase significantly to 7,800 students in 1993, 9,900 in 1994, and 8,700 in 1995.

Because FLETC facilities cannot accommodate all of BOP's future needs, BOP is in the process of building an overflow training facility at the Jesup,

⁹Physical techniques are facilities used for self-defense, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and weight training.

Georgia FCI, which is located about 40 miles from FLETC. According to a BOP official, no detailed analysis has been done on whether arrangements made with FLETC or whether BOP-planned facility expansions will accommodate the training requirements facing BOP.

Concerning specialty and management training facilities, BOP acquired additional training space at MSTC to accommodate more students and to consolidate its food service, financial, and paralegal training centers there. BOP plans to complete the consolidation by June 1992. We do not know whether the relocation of training centers will affect BOP's ability to provide required training during fiscal year 1992. BOP estimates that 16,564 students can be taught at the combined MSTC annually. BOP's specialty and management training centers provided training to about 4,000 students in fiscal year 1991. BOP projects that its specialty training centers should provide training to 4,570 students in fiscal year 1992, 6,377 in 1993, 5,795 in 1994, and 6,416 in 1995.

Conclusions

The unprecedented prison expansion program has presented BOP with major challenges in the areas of recruiting, staffing, and training. To date, BOP has met these challenges. It has generally met its fiscal year 1990 and 1991 recruitment staffing goals and has provided training to its employees. Nevertheless, BOP faces additional challenges in these areas that result from the need to recruit almost 16,000 employees, develop managers to staff 47 new facilities, and provide training courses and facilities to accommodate about 56,000 students over the next 4 years.

To meet its staffing, recruiting, and training challenges in the future, BOP needs to closely monitor staffing and recruiting efforts and take action to improve its ability to promptly address any problem areas that may occur. BOP can improve its human resource management with better information on the expected number of eligible employees who could be available to fill department head and technical positions and an estimate of the number of actual employees who have the potential to be eligible to fill these positions. With this information, BOP should be in a better position to determine whether it needs to consider increasing external recruitment for certain positions. In addition, BOP could develop better information on whether its expansion plans will be sufficient to handle the expected increase in students.

Recommendations to the Attorney General

To identify and respond to potential problems, we recommend that the Attorney General have the Director of BOP incorporate the following into ongoing human resource management efforts:

- Use forecasting to project the number of staff expected to be eligible to fill management and technical position requirements for future years.
- Extend its identification of potential managers to include lower grade level employees as well as upper grade level employees.
- Collect information on whether a sufficient number of employees are taking actions to prepare themselves for technical positions.
- Assess the need to increase external recruitment of higher grade level employees.
- Analyze space requirements for fiscal years 1992 through 1995 to determine whether planned expansions will be able to accommodate the increased demand for training.

Agency Comments and Our Response

DOJ, in its oral comments on a draft of this report, generally agreed with the facts we presented and our recommendations. BOP's Assistant Director for Human Resource Management said that the agency has already begun to act on our recommendation to develop a forecasting model, which will be used to target external recruitment. BOP officials provided additional information to clarify BOP's establishment of new positions in fiscal year 1991 and the estimated number of students that can be trained at MSTC. This information was incorporated into the report.

BOP said that the 1993 fiscal year budget estimates for institutions opening between 1992 and 1995 have been revised and that fewer institutions are planned to open during the 4-year period. According to BOP, several factors have slowed the schedule for opening new facilities; the most common cause has been construction delays. The total number of facilities expected to open by 1995 is currently estimated at 98 institutions instead of the 115 estimated in the 1992 fiscal year budget. The number of institutions estimated to open between 1992 and 1995 directly affects staff projections. These projections include management positions needed during this time period and the potential for a shortfall of internal staff to fill these positions. However, BOP officials noted that although the potential for shortfalls would change based on the number of institutions planned, forecasting and other recommendations to better manage resources are still valid.

We are sending copies of the report to the Attorney General, BOP, and other interested parties. Copies will also be made available to others upon request.

Major contributors to this report are listed in appendix VI. Should you need additional information on the contents of this report, please contact me on (202) 566-0026.

Sincerely yours,

Harold A. Valentine

Associate Director, Administration

Horold A. Valenti

of Justice Issues

Contents

Letter	1
Appendix I Objective, Scope, and Methodology	20
Appendix II Management Planning Model	23
Appendix III BOP Staffing Levels by Facility for Fiscal Years 1990 and 1991	30
Appendix IV Comparison of Projected Needs With Actual Staffing by Occupation for 1990 and 1991	32
Appendix V Projections of Management Staffing Needs Due to New Facility Activation for Fiscal Years 1992 to 1995	34

Contents

Appendix VI Major Contributors to This Report		35
Tables	Table 1: Projections of BOP Management Needs Where Eligible Internal Staff May Not Meet Anticipated Needs	10
	Table II.1 Weighted Promotion Rate Percentages	27
	Table II.2: Grade, Series, and Paths for Seven Management	29

Abbreviations

BOP	Bureau of Prisons
DOJ	Department of Justice
FCI	Federal Correctional Institution
FLETC	Federal Law Enforcement Training Center
FMFIA	Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act
GM	General Manager
GS	General Schedule
JETS	Justice Employee Training System
JUNIPER	Justice Uniform Personnel System
MPP	Management Preference Profile
MSTC	Management and Specialty Training Center
NRO	National Recruitment Office
PHS	Public Health Service
SES	Senior Executive Service
STA	Staff Training Academy

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

The objective of our review was to assess the Bureau of Prison's (BOP) ability to recruit and train employees to staff its new and expanded facilities. We did our work at BOP headquarters in Washington, D.C. and the Southeast Regional Office in Atlanta. In addition, we visited federal correctional facilities in Jesup, Georgia; Marianna, Florida; and Fairton, New Jersey. We judgmentally selected these facilities from new facilities opened between 1988 and 1991 that had to recruit and train staff. We also visited BOP's two major training centers, the Staff Training Academy (STA) located at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC), Glynco. Georgia, and the Management and Specialty Training Center (MSTC) located in Aurora, Colorado. STA provides entry-level training to all new employees, and MSTC provides a significant portion of BOP's specialty and management training. We interviewed Department of Treasury officials about the availability of training space at FLETC because they are responsible for managing the center. We obtained data from the Public Health Service (PHS) on medical staff they have assigned to BOP.

At BOP headquarters, we obtained documentation and interviewed officials in the Human Resource Management Division and the Administration Division. We collected information on recruitment efforts, activation of expansion facilities, estimates of workforce projections, staffing guidelines, personnel databases, management needs assessments, training initiatives, and internal audits. We also identified and reviewed relevant laws, policies, and procedures. We based recruitment, retention, and staffing analysis on BOP's 1990 and 1991 Manpower Forecast reports (i.e., projections of future staffing needs), BOP's staffing authorizations, and the Justice Uniform Personnel System (JUNIPER). We also used BOP's Management Preference Profile (MPP) system as of May 1991 to verify information on incumbent managers. To analyze employee training, we used the Justice Employee Training System (JETS). We did not independently verify the reliability of the JUNIPER, MPP, or JETS, nor did we verify or validate BOP's methodology for estimating future workforce requirements. The majority of our data analysis used the JUNIPER database, which is the agency's personnel and payroll computer system and as such we consider it reliable.

At the three correctional facilities, we obtained documentation and conducted structured interviews with officials regarding their roles in recruiting and training employees. We interviewed these officials to determine BOP's recruiting results, identify difficulties in filling correctional and specialty positions, and determine the extent to which new training initiatives had been implemented. At the two training centers,

Appendix I Objective, Scope, and Methodology

we obtained documentation and interviewed officials regarding the content of training courses, training capacity, and alternatives for handling anticipated increased training demands.

We focused our efforts on determining the extent to which BOP has been able to recruit, staff, and train employees for current facilities up to November 1991, the time of our review. We also locked at how BOP is using personnel information to plan and monitor recruitment and training needs. Using forecasting methods, we assessed the likelihood that BOP could fill future management positions. However, we were unable to determine precisely the extent to which BOP will be able to meet its future needs because of constraints in determining future economic, social, or political factors that could affect BOP's ability to recruit, retain, and train employees. Furthermore, the methodology used in the review did not enable us to show a cause-and-effect relationship between recruitment efforts to solicit applicants and the ability to hire qualified employees.

We analyzed management needs for seven management positions: warden, associate warden, captain, health service administrator, food service administrator, chief of psychology, and education supervisor. We selected these positions because BOP has identified the particular positions or departments as being (1) hard-to-fill, (2) particularly critical to the safe and secure operation of the prison, or (3) expected to have the largest increases over the next 4 years.

The number of current management positions is based on JUNIPER and MPP databases, plus information from cognizant BOP officials on current vacancies. To estimate the number of future management positions that BOP would need for selected positions, we used BOP's staffing guidelines and BOP's activation schedule as of April 1991, which we updated to May 1991 through an interview with a budget official. Our model for estimating potential candidates to fill management positions was based on information in the JUNIPER database as of March 1991. The model makes the following major assumptions:

- only current BOP employees are eligible for positions,
- historical promotion rates are reliable estimators of future promotion rates,
- employees retire in the year when they become eligible,
- employees with one year in grade are eligible for promotion, and
- employees will choose to be promoted when given the opportunity, even if it means moving to a new location.

Appendix I Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Appendix II provides additional assumptions and more detail on our methodology for comparing future management requirements with a potential pool of candidates, given certain constraints. We did our work between July 1990 and November 1991 in accordance with generally accepted governmental auditing standards.

Management Planning Model

To evaluate BOP's ability to fill mid- and upper-level management positions through internal promotions and lateral moves, we developed a model to estimate the potential number of candidates among BOP's current employees who might fill seven management positions between 1992 and 1995. The seven positions selected were warden, associate warden, captain, health service administrator, food service administrator, chief of psychology, and education supervisor. We selected these positions because BOP has identified the particular positions or departments as being (1) difficult-to-fill, (2) particularly critical to the safe and secure operation of the prison, or (3) expected to have large increases over the next 4 years. Our analysis covers 4 years because at the time of our review BOP's budget planning was for fiscal years 1991 through 1995.

Information Sources

To estimate the number of management positions BOP will need to fill, we identified the following four components: (1) incumbents of current management positions, (2) the number and type of facilities BOP expects to open between 1992 and 1995, (3) the number of management positions needed to operate the new facilities, and (4) the potential pool from which candidates might be selected.

Incumbents were identified primarily through Juniper, supplemented by Bop's MPP system and interviews with agency officials. The MPP system was used because Juniper's information on position titles was not always consistent. To identify facilities that would be opening in the next 4 years, we used Bop's activation schedule (i.e. estimated dates for opening new and expansion facilities) as of May 1991. To identify the number of positions needed for each of the new facilities, we used Bop's staffing guidelines, which Bop uses for planning and managing facilities. To identify a potential pool from which candidates would be drawn to fill management positions, we reviewed job descriptions and announcements. We also interviewed appropriate agency officials regarding the grade level and occupational series that would normally precede promotion into management positions for each of the seven positions.

The major source for our analysis was JUNIPER. In March 1991, BOP provided us with a data tape consisting of seven files. The first six files contained information on BOP employees as of the end of each fiscal year from 1985 through 1990; the seventh file contained information on BOP's current employees as of March 1991. For each file, BOP provided information on a wide range of variables for each employee, including

length of employment with BOP, occupational series, grade level, promotion dates, and individual demographic information.

We did not verify JUNIPER. Because this database functions as BOP's operating personnel and pay system, it is likely to be a reliable source of information, particularly in relation to the descriptive data we requested. We interviewed key officials at BOP concerning the structure and quality of this database. We examined the coding manuals, gathered information about data entry, and concluded that the database was likely to yield reliable results, particularly at the aggregated level. Personnel responsible for the system assured us that a thorough system of edit checks is built into the data entry system and that errors were rare and corrected quickly whenever encountered. We performed various internal consistency checks on the data and compared the aggregated figures to both BOP estimates and other studies of BOP personnel. We were satisfied that the information was reliable enough for our analysis.

There are some limitations to both the JUNIPER and MPP databases. Although the JUNIPER files generally include all persons who have been employed at BOP during the previous three years, employees who have left BOP to move to another Justice agency are not included in the database. According to BOP officials, such employees are very few in any given year. However, as a result of this omission, our results may slightly underestimate the number of people who have left BOP.

In addition, neither JUNIPER nor MPP provide sufficient information to track any given individual throughout a BOP career. Although we attempted various approaches to compare people across different files, changes in the structure of the files or the way data were entered affected our ability to compare characteristics across different years. However, we have no reason to believe that this situation introduced any serious systematic errors.

Development of Our Model

In order to identify a potential pool of candidates, we had to make some key assumptions. We made these assumptions to develop a simplified model that could be applied to a wide range of employees and situations and that would reflect some of the most common career paths and policies at BOP. Although some assumptions may overestimate and others may underestimate the actual likelihood of promotions, we believe the overall model provides a balanced attempt to assess the likely direction of future

staffing pools. The model made the following assumptions for the seven positions in our sample:

- Only current BOP employees are eligible for positions. Because the model was designed to project eligibility for upper-level roles only and because BOP indicated that its policy has been to promote from within for these positions, we considered only current employees. In addition, for certain positions that we analyzed, employees hired at the entry level in 1991 would most likely not meet the 1-year-in-grade minimum requirement to qualify for management positions in the next 4 years.
- Historical promotion rates are reliable indicators of future promotion rates. The model uses a weighted average of promotion rates from the past 3 years. We did not use an increased promotion rate because it would be arbitrary for BOP or us to select a specific rate of increase.
- Each position is linked to a specific General Schedule (GS) or General Management (GM) level; when a person is promoted to a higher level, he/she becomes ineligible to hold that position. For example, we assumed that if the Director of Health Services is defined as a GS-12, only people expected to be GS-12s in a given year are eligible to hold that position. The only exception was made at the warden level, which is defined as either a GM-15 or Senior Executive Service (SES) position. Thus, a promotion from GM-15 to SES would not disqualify an employee from serving as warden.
- Employees only leave the system through retirement.
- Employees will retire in the first year in which they are eligible to retire.
- Employees must spend at least one year in grade before being eligible for promotion.
- Occupational paths frequently used in the past to reach each of the management positions are representative of paths that will be followed in the future. For example, if the usual progression was from GS-7 to GS-9 to GS-11 to GS-12, we assume that this same progression will be followed to fill GS-12 positions in the future.
- Employees will remain in the occupational series (tied to specific departments) where they were in early 1991. Our model allows no migration to occur between departments in order to fill the five department head positions.
- Wardens and associate wardens can be drawn with equal likelihood from all fields and departments within BOP.
- Employees either remain in their current grades or are promoted; no allowance is made for demotions.
- Employees will choose to be promoted when given the opportunity, even if they must move to a new location.

 Retirees are equally distributed among individuals with rapid and slow promotion rates.

Our analysis to identify potential candidates had four stcps. The first step involved identifying current incumbents in each of the occupational series that most frequently fed into a particular management position. For the warden and associate warden models, all BOP employees at the relevant levels were included, because BOP informed us that these two roles could be filled by someone regardless of his/her prior occupational series or departmental affiliation. For the five department head positions, occupational series codes were used to limit eligible incumbents, because we assumed that (1) occupational paths followed in the past represent the paths to be followed in the future and (2) there would be no transfers between departments.

The second step was to estimate the number of employees who would retire from each of these groups of incumbents for each fiscal year from 1991 through 1995. Using retirement information in Juniper for each employee, allowing for differences between the Civil Service Retirement Systems and the Federal Employees Retirement System, and assuming that employees would elect to retire the first year they became eligible, we calculated the number of employees expected to retire in each ensuing year. According to BOP officials, about half of BOP's employees retire when eligible, and the other half stay about 3 years beyond retirement eligibility. In addition, the number of employees eligible to retire over the next 4 years in the 7 management positions we analyzed is relatively small.

The third step was to estimate promotion rates. We calculated promotion rates for all BOP employees and for employees in occupations that would feed into the five department level positions. We used historical data in JUNIPER to calculate BOP promotion rates for employees during the following three periods: fiscal years 1987 to 1988, 1988 to 1989, and 1989 to 1990. For each time period, a separate promotion rate was determined for each grade level and its immediate next highest level. We used a formula in which the numerator consisted of all persons who had been in the lower level in the first year and were in the higher level in the second year; the denominator consisted of all persons in the lower level in the first year. We then calculated overall promotion rates for each promotion period by taking a weighted average of the three periods, using the following formula:

 $([PR87/88] + [PR88/89] + [(2) \times PR89/90])/4$

where

PR87/88 equals the promotion rate from 1987 to 1988, PR88/89 equals the promotion rate from 1988 to 1989, PR89/90 equals the promotion rate from 1989 to 1990.

Note that the formula provides double weight to the most recent promotion rates, in part, because of BOP's decision to continue promoting more rapidly in the future. A separate overall weighted average was calculated in this manner for each grade level and its immediate higher level for each of the positions. We also calculated departmental promotion rates using the same methodology. Table II.1 shows the promotion rates.

	Grade level progressions								
Unit	WS-8 to GS-11	GS-7 to GS-8	GS-8 to GS-9	GS-7 to GS-9	GS-9 to GS-11	GS-11 to GS-12	GS-12 to GM-13	GM-13 to GM-14	GM-14 to GM-15
BOP overall rate	5	22	18	11	27	20	18	24	10
Corrections department rate	а	27	15	а	15	5	21	a	
Psychology department rate	а	a	81	а	35	. 79	24	20	
Education department rate	а	а	a	70	48	9	9	a	
Food Services department rate	6	8	£.	а	a	25	16	a	
Health department rate	a	а	â	50	67	4	14	8	

*Grade level progression was not a common career path for the department head position.

The final step we used to identify the potential pool of candidates was to subtract expected retirements from incumbents in each year. We did this to determine the expected pool of available people to be promoted the next year and apply the relevant promotion rates.

To estimate how many people would be available at each level in a particular year, we developed a branching scheme that accounted for the different promotion paths a person could take from a given level within BOP. For example, employees at the GS-11 level in 1991 would be eligible to be promoted to GS-12 in 1992; but if they were not promoted, they would then be eligible again to be promoted to GS-12 in 1993. On the other hand, someone promoted to GS-12 in 1992 would then be eligible to be promoted to GM-13 in 1993. There are, therefore, many available paths a person can follow over a 4-year period. Our branching scheme accounted for every

possible path. The formulas were then created to calculate the number of people who would be expected at each level in each ensuing year. These formulas began with the number of incumbents, subtracted out expected retirements during that year, and applied the relevant retirement rate to that group. Separate paths were entered into the model, and a final tally was made of all persons in all paths that landed a person at a particular level in a particular year.

This analysis was performed separately for each of the seven positions, using the appropriate grade level and the common paths as identified to us by BOP officials. The relevant grade level and the occupational paths by which people would be expected to move to that level through 1995 are shown in table II.2.

Appendix II Management Planning Model

Position title	incumbent grade level (series)	Path for occupational series	Annual grade level progression
Warden	GM-15 or SES (correctional institution administrator-006)	all	GS-11 to GS-12 to GM-13 to GM-14 to GM-15
Associate warden	GM-14 (correctional institution administrator-006)	all	GS-9 to GS-11 to GS-12 to GM-13 to GM-14
Chief correctional supervisor	GS-12 (correctional officer-007)	correctional officer-007	GS-7 to GS-8 to GS-9 to GS-11 to GS-12
Chief of psychology	GM-13 (psychology-180)	psychology-180	GS-9 to GS-11 to GS-12 to GM-13
Supervisor of education	GS-12 (education and vocational training-1710)	education and vocational training-1710	GS-7 to GS-9 to GS-11 to GS-12
Food service administrator	GS-12 (steward-1667)	steward-1667 cooking-7404	WS-8 to GS-11 to GS-12
Health service administrator	GS-12 (health service administrator-670)	physician assistant-603	GS-7 to GS-9 to GS-11 to GS-12

Note: Office of Personnel Management grade codes, titles, and series are used for all columns except position title.

Source: BOP personnel documents and interviews with cognizant officials.

BOP Staffing Levels by Facility for Fiscal Years 1990 and 1991

Institution	1990 percentages	1991 percentages
Alderson, WV	99.56	95.36
Allenwood, PA	99.33	91.57
Ashland, KY ^b	99.04	83,43
Atlanta, GA ^b	97.29	97.33
Bastrop, TX	96.77	95.75
Big Spring, TX ^b	74.51	98.07
Boron, CA	94.70	93.28
Bryan, TX	89.36	91.00
Butner, NCb	105.19	91.21
Carville, LAª	N/A	83.87
Chicago, IL	97.72	89.45
Danbury, CT ^b	100.00	89.23
Duluth, MN	99.14	89.93
Eglin, FL	96.40	79.22
El Paso, TX ^b	91.67	92.39
El Reno, OK ^b	97.68	96.30
Englewood, CO ^b	94.85	89.08
Fairton, NJ	93.12	88.68
Fort Worth, TX	84.59	82,57
Homestead, FL	78.57	80.82
Jesup, GA ^b	91.40	98.48
La Tuna, TX ^b	97.69	92.45
Leavenworth, KS ^b	98.50	98.61
Lewisburg, PA ^b	102.74	92.88
Lexington, KY	99.79	90.52
Lompoc, CA ^c	94.35	89.18
Lompoc, CA	94.06	89.91
Loretto, PA	96.15	93.72
Los Angeles, CA	96.86	95.08
Marianna, FL ^b	100.33	83.52
Marion, IL ^b	99.47	96.68
McKean, PA ^b	107.91	86.65
Memphis, TN	95,80	91.15
Miami, FL	99.00	92.88
Milan, MI	99.28	87.57
Millington, TN	95.24	95.18
Montgomery, AL	98.44	90.14
Morgantown, WV	102.44	95.89
		(continued)

Institution	1990 percentages	1991 percentages
Nellis, NV	101.64	93.83
New York, NY	97.36	87.23
Oakdale, LA	96.41	93.87
Oakdale II, LA	96.34	84.87
Otisville, NY	97.84	93.29
Oxford, WI ^b	101.31	98.49
Pensacola, FL	96.36	91.89
Petersburg, VA ^b	97.61	88.95
Phoenix, AZ ^b	95.19	97.77
Pleasanton, CA ^b	100.77	97.60
Ray Brook, NY	93.25	91.13
Rochester, MN	99.10	73.36
Safford, AZ	98.82	90.00
San Diego, CA	92.37	96.67
Sandstone, MN	98.19	98.82
Schuylkill, PA ^{ab}	N/A	65.52
Seagoville, TX	93.83	92.80
Seymour Johnson, NC	89.06	92.71
Sheridan, OR ^b	98.26	94.12
Springfield, MO	100.30	97.87
Talladega, AL ^b	100.93	92.40
Tallahassee, FL	100.72	92.07
Terminal Island, CA	102.41	90.00
Terre Haute, IN ^b	102.96	96.07
Texarkana, TX ^b	96.13	90.33
Three Rivers, TX ^b	88.00	87.62
Tucson, AZ	95.31	93.20
Tyndall, FL	97.62	74.63
Yankton, SD	100.00	93.02
Average	96.72	90.88

^aThese institutions opened in fiscal year 1991.

Source: GAO analysis using BOP and PHS data.

^bThese institutions include employees assigned to a satellite camp.

^cLompoc, California has two separate institutions.

Comparison of Projected Needs With Actual Staffing by Occupation for 1990 and 1991

Occupation/industry	1990 percentages	1991 percentages
Accounting	103.41	89.17
Accounting technician	82.18	91.88
General accounting/ administrative	101.44	86.26
Business/other industry	91.67	97.09
Chaplain	93.71	89.41
Clerk/typist and other services	111.38	29.34
Clerical, general	98.59	107.65
Computer services	127.63	93.69
Contract and procurement	108.87	92.51
Cook foreman	90.41	88.21
Correctional institution administrator	100.40	90.57
Correctional officer	91.74	88.09
Education and training	97.68	92.45
Electrical installation and maintenance	92.23	82.45
Engineering and architecture	122.58	95.25
Equipment factory and service group	100.00	83.94
Financial/budget management	86.47	88.65
Food services	92.64	86,98
Legal clerk/technician	99.53	92.51
Maintenance mechanic	93.00	90.74
Medical officer	123.75	66.07
Medical series, other	93.16	59.94
Nurse/practical nurse	89.02	58.60
Paralegal	93.75	87.60
Personnel management	103.07	105.92
Other industrial relations/ personnel	115.48	98.67
Physician assistant	95.78	79.83
Psychologist	92.27	98.25
Recreation specialist	100.46	96.34
Safety management	102.40	93.41
Secretary	88.97	89.29
Social science	96.48	91.38
Utility system repair operation foreman	98.68	78.82
Warehouse	96.69	90.96
All other occupations	94.86	88.08
Average	94.98	87.54

(Table notes on next page)

Appendix IV Comparison of Projected Needs With Actual Staffing by Occupation for 1990 and 1991*

Note: BOP projections for 1990 were computed using calendar year data, whereas projections for 1991 were computed based on fiscal year data. In order to be able to measure BOP's staffing results, the 1990 analysis compares calendar year projections to the actual number of employees as of the end of the fiscal year. These are generally not comparable time periods, but we believe the analysis is representative of BOP's staffing levels because both include four quarters and BOP has a relatively low turnover rate which should result in employee data being similar whether it is based on calendar or fiscal year.

Source: GAO analysis using BOP Manpower Forecast data and JUNIPER.

Projections of Management Staffing Needs Due to New Facility Activation for Fiscal Years 1992 to 1995

			· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		
Position title	1992	1993	1994	1995	Total
Wardena	5	13	14	14	46
Associate warden ^b	11	28	26	27	92
Executive assistant	4	12	11	12	39
Chaplain	. 5	19	19	19	62
Chief correctional supervisor	5	13	14	14	46
Chief psychologist	4	12	11	12	39
Controller	5	13	14	14	46
Facility manager	5	13	14	14	46
Food service administrator	5	13	14	14	46
Health service administrator	5	13	14	14	46
Inmate system manager	5	13	14	14	46
Personnel officer	5	13	14	14	46
Safety manager	5	13	14	14	46
Supervisor of education	5	13	14	14	46
Employee development manager	5	13	14	14	46
Unit manager	15	40	34	32	121
Case management coordinator	4	12	11	12	39
Superintendent of industries	3	9	11	10	33
Total	101	275	277	278	931

^aincludes camp superintendents for independent camps.

Source: GAO analysis based on BOP data.

bincludes camp administrator for satellite camps and assistant camp superintendents for independent camps.

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